

MINUTES OF THE 158th MEETING (Day 3 continued) OF MAHARASHTRA COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY HELD ON 13th May, 2022

The 158th meeting (Day 3 contd.) of the Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority (MCZMA) was held under the Chairmanship of Principal Secretary (Environment). In view of present pandemic situation of COVID-19, it was decided to appraise the proposal by using information technology facilities. Hence, the matters were appraised through Videoconferencing technology on Cisco WebEx platform on 13th May, 2022 at 3.00 pm. List of members present in the meeting is at **Annexure-I**.

Item No.1: Proposed clearing of waterways for Navigation channel of Savitri River (Bankot creek), from Rajewadi to Kemburli near Mahad, District Raigad by Water Resource Dept. (Raigad Division), GoM

Water Resource Department (Raigad Division), GoM officials presented the proposal before the Authority. The proposal is for clearing of waterways for navigation channel in Bankot creek (Savitri River) from Rajewadi to Kemburli near Mahad, District Raigad. Irrigation Department has received a communication from the Maharashtra Maritime Board (MMB) stating the necessity of the removal of the five (5) numbers of depositions (islands) present in the creek for proposed navigation channel and ensuring safety.

Water carrying capacity of the channel is reduced due to the depositions of the gravels, sand and small rocks carried by rivers from the catchment area. Project activity involves excavation / removal of heavy depositions present in river (Bankot creek) channel between Rajewadi and Kemburli.

Details of the location of the depositions in savitri river channel are as tabulated as follows:

Island No.	Village name	Sr.no.	Survey no.	Area
1	Chambharkhind	1	156	0-30-1
		2	62/1	0-92-0
		3	62/2	0-40-0
		4	62/3	0-56-0
		5	63/1	0-80-6
		6	63/2	0-21-0

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		7	63/3	0-15-5
		8	63/4A	0-15-5
		9	63/4B	0-16-5
		10	63/5	0-16-9
		11	63/6	0-35-9
		12	63/7	0-50-0
		13	63/8	0-05-0
Total Area:				4-79-50
2	Wadvali	1	27/0	0-96-9
Total Area:				0-96-90
3	Dadali	1	21/1	0-59-9
		2	21/2A	0-45-9
		3	21/2B	0-53-9
		4	21/3	1-36-7
		5	21/4A	0-68-9
		6	21/4B	0-20-0
Total Area:				3-83-80
4	Kemburli	--	--	--
5	Pale	--	--	--

The officials from Water Resource Department stated that certain large depositions (islands) is having private ownership and consent of the owners have been obtained for removal of the depositions.

The Authority noted that the EIA report has been prepared by Accredited Consultant. Anticipated impacts and mitigation measures suggested in the EIA report has been noted.

As per EIA report, Savitri River is one of those rivers that has its source at Mahabaleshwar which falls under heavy rainfall zone of Western Ghat Ranges. Depositions/ siltation has occurred at many places in the Saivtri River channel and the channel is reduced to a small stream. Also it has been observed that recent incidents of landslides in the upper catchment villages of Savitri and Kal River have carried the soil, pebbles, gravel and other material in the rivers. This material is carried by the rivers and deposited when the velocity of water decreases in the flat areas. Removal of such deposition will help in deepening of the channel thereby increasing the carrying capacity of channel and controlling overflow of the water from river channel, consequently reduce the intensity of flood along with ensuring the safety of water borne vessels. Excavation would be

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done by employing poclains, JCBs and tippers to clear the stretch of Savitri River between Kemburli and Rajewadi. The estimated quantity to be excavated is 11,16,470 Cubic meters. The excavation will be done up to varying depth from 1.5 m to 3 m or till the bedrock/ Basalt is encountered in river channel. At places, excavation will be ceased if the bedrock in river channel is encountered early than expected.

The EIA report further states that excavation activities are expected to cause agitation of the sediments which will impact the river fauna, and therefore to curtail the influence, excavation activity should be planned with focus on preserving the critical window of the spawning and larval period. Various studies and research indicate that the Savitri River has a good population of Marsh Crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris*) which is endemic to the Indian sub-continent. Due to suitable water parameters and terrestrial conditions of the river, Savitri River harbours a good population of Marsh crocodiles. Marsh Crocodiles are listed as Vulnerable under the IUCN conservation status. The project activity can be a potential threat to the crocodile species in the river and therefore the work should be executed by making using of movable barricade fencing to avoid any harm to crocodiles.

The Authority deliberated the probable likely impacts of the project activity on coastal environment. Dr. Anish Andheria, Expert Member, MCZMA asked the location of the identified site for disposal of excavated material. Irrigation Dept officials informed that site has been identified with the permission from Tehsildar for the disposal of excavated material which is at a considerable distance from river and excavated material would be used for road construction.

Dr. Mahesh Shindikar, Expert Member, MCZMA asked the impact of the removal of deposition on the downstream section of the creek. Irrigation dept officials presented that upstream section of the creek has been cleared. Downstream section is being regularly cleared by the MMB. Only stretch remaining is from Rejewadi to Kemburli and removal of the depositions from the said stretch is necessary to clear the waterway.

The Authority noted that MMB has written to irrigation department (Raigad division) expressing the need of removal of five (5) numbers of depositions (islands) present in the creek for proposed navigation channel and ensuring safety. The Authority felt that removal of depositions from the



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watercourse may improve the carrying capacity of the water channel. This will also act as flood mitigation measure for surrounding area.

The Authority discussed that project activity is necessary for clearing of the waterway, thereby achieving the navigability in the water channel. This may also ensure mitigation of flood situation in surrounding region. However, there is a need to strike an appropriate and necessary balance between need of the project activity and environmental concerns. The Authority felt that role of the project implementing agency is very crucial to achieve the said balance, by rightfully addressing the likely environmental concerns while planning and execution of project. Project implementing agency should proactively implement all possible appropriate environmental measures to achieve minimum disturbance to coastal ecosystem. Reckless excavation in the creek would causes adverse impact on creek bed & coastal environment. PP to ensure that removal/excavation of depositions from the water channel should be carried out in controlled & precise manner coupled with regular monitoring to prevent the negative impacts on geomorphology and marine ecosystem. Necessary training / awareness should be imparted to contractors & workers so that adequate environmental safeguards could be implemented on site, during execution of the project activities. All mitigation measures & Environment Management Plan as suggested in the EIA report should be followed in letter and spirit. Mangroves if any should not be cut for the project activities. Compensatory plantation of local species should be carried out, in case of cutting of trees if any, present on the depositions. Considering the existence of marsh crocodiles in the river, there should be an appropriate executable plan in place to avoid any harm to crocodiles. Competent organization working in wildlife conservation need to draw such plan for protection of crocodiles in the river. NOC from wildlife point of view shall be obtained by the PP. Further, in case of private ownership of depositions (islands), it is a responsibility of the District Revenue Authorities & other concern Govt agencies to obtain the consent of respective private owners.

It was further noted that there are certain ongoing matters pertaining to dredging in Savitri River, before Hon'ble High Court (WP No. 2946/2021 Abdul Samad Mandelkar Vs State of Maharashtra, WP No. 3608/ 2021 Shoukat Wahab Vs State of Maharashtra, WP No. 2564/ 2022 Dilip Babaji Ukirde Vs State Of Maharashtra).

In WP No. 2564/ 2022 Dilip Babaji Ukirde Vs State Of Maharashtra, Hon'ble High Court on 14th March, 2022 has passed an order: "The Collector will



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personally ensure that all mechanized dredging and sand mining activities between Gat Nos.1 and 4 on the Savitri River covered by our 8th March 2022 order are stopped immediately..."

The Authority noted the above said matters and order and observed that it is the responsibility of PP and District Collector that orders of the Hon'ble High Court & Hon'ble NGT are strictly complied with.

The Authority noted that the project activity is located in **CRZ IV** as per the approved CZMP 2011. As per para 3(iv)(c) of CRZ, 2011: following is permitted, "maintenance or clearing of waterways, channels and ports, based on EIA studies"

As per amended CRZ Notification dated 28th November, 2014 published by MoEF, For the projects specified under 4(i)(except with respect to item (d) thereof relating to building projects with less than 20,000 sqm of built up area) and for the projects not attracting EIA Notification, 2006, clearance from SEIAA is required based on the recommendation from MCZMA.

In the light of above, The Authority after deliberation decided to recommend the proposal from CRZ point of view to SEIAA subject to following conditions:

1. The proposed activity should be undertaken strictly as per the provisions of CRZ Notification, 2011 (as amended from time to time) and guidelines/ clarifications given by MoEF from time to time.
2. This CRZ recommendation is for clearing of waterways by excavating depositions in the river channel as per 3(iv) (c) of CRZ, 2011. It is to be noted that mining of sand, rocks and other sub-strata is prohibited as per para 3(x) of CRZ, 2011.
3. Excavated material should not disposed of in CRZ area and it should be used for road construction, as stated by the PP.
4. PP to ensure that removal/excavation of depositions from river channel should be carried out in controlled and precision manner to prevent the negative impacts on geomorphology and marine ecosystem. Excavated material should not be disposed in CRZ area. PP should monitor the disposal of mud and sludge.
5. PP in consultation with competent organization working in wildlife conservation shall draw a plan to protect the crocodiles in the river. NOC from wildlife point of view shall be obtained by the PP.



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6. Excavation activity should be carried out, considering the spawning and larval period of fishes.
7. Removal of depositions may result in inland propagation of tidal waves inside the river. Hence, PP should carry out monitoring of the tidal influence/ amplification to understand its impact on low lying areas around the creek.
8. Vehicles carrying excavated material will be properly covered with appropriate measures to minimize windblown fugitive dust emission during transport. The identified site of storage of excavated material should be fenced and the surface will be ensured to be impervious and the stored material will be covered appropriately. The storage area and storage of excavated material will be sprinkled with water to avoid fugitive dust generation.
9. Periodic monitoring of air quality will be carried out and prompt remedial action should be undertaken in case deviations from NAAQS are recorded.
10. The excavators and equipment/machinery used for removal of depositions will be strictly in conformity with CPCB standards with respect Noise and Air pollution norms.
11. During the work of excavation of depositions, all possible efforts/ measures should be taken to maintain the coastal ecology and biodiversity. Necessary training / awareness should be imparted to contractors & workers so that adequate environmental safeguards could be implemented on site, during execution of the project activities
12. Mangrove if any should not be cut for the project activities. Dredging activity is not allowed in fish breeding sites.
13. Compensatory plantation of local species should be carried out, in case of cutting of trees if any, present on the depositions.
14. The Environment Management Plan & Environment Monitoring Plan should be implemented in letter and spirit and it should be in consonance with the surrounding ecosystem. Specific budget should be allocated for the implementation of EMP.
15. PP to ensure that observations made in order dated 14 march, 2022 in WP No. 2564/ 2022 and other orders in WP No. WP No. 2946/2021, WP No. 3608/ 2021 and orders of Hon'ble NGT pertaining to dredging shall be strictly complied with
16. All other required permissions from different statutory authorities should be obtained prior to commencement of work.

-----Meeting ended with vote of thanks to chair-----


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Annexure I

List of members/officials present in the online meeting:

1. Mr. Reddy, DCF, Mangrove Cell, Member MCZMA
2. Mr. P. K. Mirashe, Representative from the Industry Dept, Member MCZMA
3. Dr. Mahesh Shindikar, College of Engineering, Pune, Expert Member, MCZMA
4. Dr. A. K. Chaubey, Ex Regional Director NIO, Expert Member, MCZMA
5. Mr. Maruti Kudale, Ex Director, CWPRS, Expert Member, MCZMA
6. Dr. Anish Andheria, Expert Member, MCZMA
7. Mr. Abhay Pimparkar, Addl Charge, Director, Environment &CC and Member Secretary, MCZMA.



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