

**Minutes of Public Hearing Conducted in respect of M/s. Meenakshi Agro Industries LLP for their existing grain-based distillery from 40 KLPD to 203 KLPD , 12 KLPD Malt Spirit Unit and a 7.0 MW Captive Power Plant.**

In accordance with the provisions stipulated under the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification dated 14.09.2006 issued by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, M/s. Meenakshi Agro Industries LLP intends to expand the production capacity of its existing grain-based distillery from 40 Kilo Liters per Day (40 KLPD × 365 days = 14,600 Kilo Liters per annum) to 203 Kilo Liters per Day (203 KLPD × 365 days = 74,095 Kilo Liters per annum). In addition to the above expansion, the industry has also proposed the establishment of a 12 Kilo Liters per Day Malt Spirit Unit (12 KLPD × 365 days = 4,380 Kilo Liters per annum) and a 7.0 MW Captive Power Plant.

For the said expansion project, the industry submitted an application to the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board for conducting a public hearing on environmental matters. Accordingly, with the permission of the Hon'ble District Collector, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, today's public hearing was scheduled on 25/05/2026 at 11:30 AM. Further, orders regarding the conduct of the said public hearing were issued vide letter dated 08/05/2026 by the Hon'ble Member Secretary, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board.

As per the office order dated 08/05/2026 issued by the Hon'ble Member Secretary, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, Mumbai, a Public Hearing Committee on environmental matters was constituted, and the following committee members were present for the said public hearing:

1. **Mrs. Neelam Bafna** – Chairperson  
Sub-Divisional Officer,  
Sub-Divisional Office, Paithan
2. **Mr. Manish Holkar** – Member  
Regional Officer,  
Maharashtra Pollution Control Board,  
Chh. Sambhajinagar
3. **Mr. Achyut S. Nandvate** – Convener  
Sub-Regional Officer,  
Maharashtra Pollution Control Board,  
Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar

At the outset, Mr. Achyut S. Nandvate, Convener of the Environmental Public Hearing Committee and Deputy Regional Officer, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, welcomed the gathering and, with the permission of the Chairperson of the Environmental Public Hearing Committee, initiated the proceedings of the public hearing. He stated that, in accordance with the provisions stipulated under the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification dated 14.09.2006 issued by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, M/s. Meenakshi Agro Industries LLP proposes to expand the production capacity of its existing grain-based distillery from 40 KLPD (40 KLPD × 365 days = 14,600 Kilo Liters per annum)

to 203 KLPD (203 KLPD × 365 days = 74,095 Kilo Liters per annum). In addition, the project also includes the proposed establishment of a 12 KLPD Malt Spirit Unit (12 KLPD × 365 days = 4,380 Kilo Liters per annum) and a 7.0 MW Captive Power Plant. For the said expansion project, the industry has applied to the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board for conducting an environmental public hearing. Accordingly, with the permission of the Hon'ble District Collector, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, today's public hearing was scheduled on 25/05/2026 at 11:30 AM. Further, orders regarding the conduct of the said public hearing were issued vide letter dated 08/05/2026 by the Hon'ble Member Secretary, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board. **Annex 1**

He further stated that, as per the notification dated 14 September 2006 issued by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, the proposed project requires Environmental Clearance, and as a part of the clearance process, conducting a public hearing for the said project is mandatory. In accordance with the rules governing environmental public hearings, a public notice regarding the hearing was published 30 days in advance on 24/04/2026 in the newspapers *Daily Sakal* and *The Times of India*. **Annex 2** Copies of the project information booklet, executive summary, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report, and other related documents in both English and Marathi were made available for public inspection and study at the following government offices in the district. **Annex 3**. A period of 30 days was also provided for submitting suggestions and objections regarding the project:

1. District Collector Office, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar
2. Zilla Parishad Office, opposite Amba Apsara, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar
3. District Industries Centre, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar
4. Tehsil Office, Paithan, District Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar
5. Panchayat Samiti Office, Paithan, District Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar
6. Regional Office, Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC), Padampani Colony, Station Road, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar
7. Branch Office, Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation, Paithan, Taluka Paithan, District Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar
8. Regional/Sub-Regional Office, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, Plot No. 4/1, Paryavaran Bhavan, behind Lokmat Press, Chikalhana Industrial Area, Jalna Road, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar
9. Maharashtra Pollution Control Board Headquarters, Kalpataru Point, 3rd Floor, Sion-Matunga Scheme Road No. 8, opposite Sion Circle, Sion (East), Mumbai – 22
10. Environment Department, New Administrative Building, 15th Floor, Madam Cama Road, Mantralaya, Mumbai – 32
11. Regional Office, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Western Central Zone, Ground Floor, East Wing, New Secretariat Building, Civil Lines, Nagpur

It was mentioned in the public notice published in the newspapers regarding the public hearing that copies of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report and Executive Summary related to the project had been kept available for study by project-affected persons, Bonafide and other interested individuals. It was also appealed that opinions, suggestions, objections, or representations regarding the project shall be submitted in writing to the Sub-Regional Office, Chhatrapati Sambhajanagar, before or on the day of the hearing. Such written submissions could also be presented during the hearing proceedings. He further stated that a period of 30 days had been granted for submitting suggestions or objections in this regard, Accordingly, the Sub-Regional Office has received 3 representations submitted to the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board up to the date of the said hearing. **Annex 4.** He further informed the gathering that the environmental public hearing serves as a platform for the public to express their opinions, while the final decision regarding grant of Environmental Clearance would be taken by the MoEF, Government of India. Therefore, he appealed to the public present for hearing to express their views, objections, suggestions, and concerns regarding the proposed project. He also informed that video recording of all opinions, suggestions, and objections expressed during the hearing would be carried out and the proceedings report would be submitted to MoEF, GOI for further needful decisions in this regards.

Thereafter, the Chairperson of the Public Hearing Committee and Sub-Divisional Officer, Mrs. Bafna, announced the commencement of the environmental public hearing and informed that the project proponent would make a presentation highlighting the environmental aspects of the project and the environmental protection measures proposed. Subsequently, the Environmental Consultant of the project proponent, Anacon Laboratories, Nagpur, made a presentation regarding the project. During the presentation, information was provided regarding the present status of the project, existing environmental baseline, proposed pollution control systems, Environmental Impact Assessment Report along with mitigation measures proposed for addressing the same. A copy of the presentation is enclosed herewith. After concluding the presentation, the organizer of the public hearing, Mr. Nandvate, addressed the gathering and requested that anyone having questions, doubts, suggestions, or objections may submit written representations or present their views, raise their questions, doubts, or suggestions before the committee. The questions, doubts, suggestions, or objections raised by public during presentation is summarised as below:

**1. Mr. Prakash Labde, former Deputy Sarpanch of Mudalwadi and a local resident, raised the following points:**

Out of the total land acquired for the Paithan Industrial Area, 70% belonged to the village of Mudalwadi. Consequently, the local villagers are left with only 30% of their original land, upon which their entire livelihood depends. He stated that after the villagers surrendered their land for industrial development, it was imperative to prioritize the "sons of the soil" (local natives) for employment within these industries, based on their educational qualifications. However, he noted that the majority of the current workforce consists of contract laborers, while the representation of local natives is negligible. He further stated that while the project has been presented in a very commendable manner, he would have no objection to its operation—provided that local workers are permanently absorbed into

the project workforce, a green belt is developed within the project premises, and adequate measures are taken to mitigate sewage and air pollution.

**Project Proponent:** This proposed project—a grain-based alcohol manufacturing facility—will utilize a minimal amount of chemicals. To treat the effluent generated by the industry, a state-of-the-art Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) will be installed, and an air pollution control system based on Electrostatic Precipitator (ESP) technology will be implemented. The development of the green belt will be carried out in strict accordance with prevailing government regulations and the Terms of Reference (ToR) issued by the central government agencies. The necessary environmental clearances for this project will be obtained from the Department of Environment at the central level and from the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) at the state level; furthermore, all project provisions will be implemented in strict compliance with the conditions stipulated in these permissions. Currently, we have proposed to develop a green belt covering 49.27% of the project area. Dr. Garway, the project's technical consultant, stated that the industry has proposed a 5-stage Electrostatic Precipitator (ESP) for the boiler, equipped with a continuous air quality monitoring system. The quality of the air emitted from the boiler will be continuously displayed on the websites of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB). An advanced Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD) effluent treatment system has been installed to treat the wastewater generated by the industry; the treated wastewater will be completely recycled and reused.

**2. Vishnu Asaram Bodke, Resident of Mudalwadi, Taluka Paithan, District Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar:**

Of the total land acquired for the Paithan Industrial Area, 70% belonged to the village of Mudalwadi. Consequently, the local villagers are left with only 30% of their original land, upon which their entire livelihood depends. He stated that after the villagers surrendered their land for industrial development, it was imperative to prioritize the "sons of the soil" (local natives) for employment within these industries, based on their educational qualifications. However, he noted that the majority of the current workforce consists of contract laborers, while the representation of local natives remains negligible. He remarked that the project has been presented in an excellent manner. He stated that he has no objection to the project's operation, provided that local workers are permanently absorbed into the workforce, a green belt is developed within the premises, and adequate measures are taken to mitigate wastewater and air pollution. He added that the project, as depicted in the industry's presentation, appears very sound; furthermore, it is evident that the company has prioritized residents during the establishment phase, for which he offered his congratulations. He pointed out that due to the industries established in the MIDC Paithan area—and the resulting wastewater pollution—the quality of groundwater in the lands adjacent to the industrial zone has severely deteriorated. The water has turned yellow in color and is no longer suitable for either drinking or agricultural purposes. The Honorable Deputy Collector, the Regional Officer, and the Sub-Regional Officer are well aware of these matters; however, the pollution occurring in the area has driven farmers to the brink of suicide. The quality of the farmland soil has deteriorated—and its productive capacity has diminished—due to the contamination of the soil with chemically laden water. Consequently, lands in the surrounding areas—specifically Mudulwadi, Wahegaon, and

Pimpalgaon—have become barren. This infertility of the land has already led two farmers to commit suicide; furthermore, a case regarding the pollution in this region, the resulting losses to farmers, and the degradation of water quality is currently pending before the National Green Tribunal in Pune. Laws exist mandating the permanent absorption of local workers into the projects established within industrial estates. While industrial regulations require a standard eight-hour workday, workers in the Paithan industrial estate are routinely compelled to work for twelve hours. Therefore, strict legal enforcement regarding labor regulations is urgently required. Although a state-of-the-art 'Zero Liquid Discharge' (ZLD) wastewater treatment system—designed to treat effluent discharged by industries—is documented on paper, it is not actually operational in practice. Consequently, it was stated that the area is suffering from significant wastewater pollution. The industries established within the MIDC Paithan area—and the resulting air pollution—are having an adverse impact on public health; residents are increasingly suffering from asthma and similar respiratory ailments. The groundwater in the vicinity of the Paithan Industrial Estate is unfit for consumption, thereby creating a critical shortage of potable water for both the local citizenry and their livestock.

Recruitment has recently taken place at Ajanta Pharma, yet local youth have been deliberately sidelined during this process. In the Paithan Industrial Estate, there are currently 476 permanent employees compared to 10,500 contract workers; therefore, he asserted that once industries are established, it is imperative to prioritize locals based on merit during the recruitment process. He argued that if the 10,000 workers in the Paithan Industrial Estate were locals—assuming an average monthly salary of ₹40,000 per person—approximately ₹40 crores in circulating capital would become available within the estate, thereby fostering the development of the Paithan Taluka. He emphasized that since the government acquired their lands for the Paithan Industrial Estate, their children—the "sons of the soil"—hold a rightful claim to the jobs generated by the industries operating within it. Consequently, he urged the government to take appropriate measures at the administrative level to address this matter. Furthermore, he demanded that the government—specifically the District Collector's Office, the Labor Department, the Pollution Control Board, the Department of Industrial Safety, and other relevant agencies—should inform the public regarding the specific duties and responsibilities assigned to each of these departments. He also insisted that the Honorable District Collector's Office and the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board provide a guarantee ensuring that the industries within the Paithan Industrial Estate will not cause pollution in the surrounding areas. He concluded by stating that he has no objection to the project, provided that the industry operates the facility exactly as outlined in their presentation; doing so would prevent environmental issues and ensure that locals secure employment.

**Sub-Regional Officer Mr. Nandvate:** Regarding the issues of water pollution and damage to agricultural crops within the Paithan Industrial Estate, a petition Petition No. 222/2023, titled Mangal Vishnu Bodke vs. Matrix Life Science and Others is currently pending before the Honorable National Green Tribunal; as such, the matter is sub judice. The Honorable National Green Tribunal has appointed ICT Mumbai an expert institution to handle this matter. An ICT study group has been constituted to conduct a survey of industries within the Paithan Industrial Estate, assess wastewater quality, evaluate



damage caused to agricultural crops, and address the restoration of groundwater quality. Work is currently being executed in accordance with the recommendations made by this study group and the directives issued by the Honorable National Green Tribunal. The report from ICT Mumbai regarding this assignment is expected within the next six months, and further action will be taken accordingly. Sub-Regional Officer Mr. Nandvate stated that, as this matter is currently sub-judice, it would not be appropriate to comment on it any further at this stage.

**3. Mr. Dinesh Parikh, Paithan:** Given the significant rise in pollution levels within the Paithan Industrial Estate, it is imperative that responsible officials from the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) be summoned to participate in these hearings. All relevant and responsible officials within the District Administration should conduct a bi-monthly review to compare the water management systems proposed at the time of project approval against the actual measures implemented during the construction phase. Furthermore, public representatives from the eight villages surrounding the MIDC estate should be taken into confidence during these review meetings. Appropriate measures must be taken to ensure the proper disposal of waste materials generated by the industries. Steps should be initiated to provide permanent employment opportunities within these industries to those individuals displaced by the Dnyaneshwar Udyan project, as well as to those displaced due to land acquisition by the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation. Finally, he urged the Pollution Control Board and other relevant departments to conduct regular site visits and inspections to ensure that the pollution generated—both during the construction phase and after the commencement of operation does not adversely affect the Paithan Taluka.

**4. Ms. Priyanka Vikram Bhujang, Member, Panchayat Samiti, Chitegaon:** She stated that the project proposal has been presented in an excellent manner. She further affirmed that she has no objection to the operation of the project, provided that local workers are permanently absorbed into the workforce, a green belt is developed within the project premises, and adequate measures are taken to mitigate wastewater and air pollution. He emphasized the necessity of prioritizing residents—the 'sons of the soil'—within industries, based on their educational qualifications. It is essential to undertake initiatives funded by the company's CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) corpus, such as adopting schools in the local area and providing free education to children. He expressed that CSR funds are often merely showcased on paper, they are frequently left unutilized in practice. Furthermore, he suggested that these funds should not be restricted solely to rural areas but utilized for the benefit of the entire Paithan Taluka.

**5. Anna Labde Patil, Shiv Sena Taluka Chief (Paithan):** The proposed project—a grain-based facility—is designed to minimize the use of chemical inputs. The presentation delivered by the industry representatives was executed very professionally; indeed, if the project promoters prioritize local residents, the region could witness significant development. The point raised by Panchayat Samiti member Priyanka Tai—regarding the necessity of utilizing CSR funds specifically within the local area—is highly pertinent. If the pollution control systems proposed by the project are duly installed, the rural communities surrounding the industrial estate will be spared from the adverse effects of pollution. He further stated that since the company intends to manufacture products derived from

grains, entering into procurement agreements with local farmers—and purchasing their produce at a support price—would provide substantial financial assistance to the farming community in the region. He added that if the compost fertilizer generated as a byproduct of the industry's manufacturing process were made available to local farmers at a subsidized rate, it would greatly benefit the surrounding agricultural community, thereby helping to ensure their prosperity and abundance. While the public hearing for this proposed project is currently being conducted by the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, it is imperative that the authorities clarify—specifically—the grounds upon which permissions were granted to the chemical industries currently operating within this industrial estate.

**Company representative Mr. Chikhale:** Stated that a state-of-the-art wastewater treatment system will be set up to treat the wastewater generated from the industry, along with an air pollution control system based on an ESP (Electrostatic Precipitator) system. The height of the company's chimney will be kept at 60 meters, ensuring that there will be no issues caused by pollution. He mentioned that the company's establishment is being carried out in accordance with the regulations of the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, and these regulations will be strictly followed in future. He also assured those present that the company requires damaged/broken grain for alcohol production, and priority will be given to residents while purchasing it.

**Anna Labde Patil, Shiv Sena Taluka Chief, Paithan:** Addressing the issue regarding CSR funds raised by Panchayat Samiti Member Priyanka Tai, he stated that the CSR funds generated by companies within the Paithan Industrial Estate should be utilized specifically within the Paithan Taluka.

**Company Representative, Mr. Rajesh Patil:** He stated, "I serve as the company's HR Head, and both the Chikalthana and Paithan units of the company operate under my jurisdiction. I welcome the feedback and suggestions expressed by the public. Meenakshi Agro acquired Moraya Distillery six months ago; during this period, approximately ₹20 lakhs from our CSR funds have been spent on the digitalization of two schools. The company's CSR funds will be utilized for the benefit of the entire Paithan Taluka. By employing state-of-the-art pollution control systems, our company will ensure a 'zero-pollution' footprint. Furthermore, as suggested by Annasaheb Labde, priority will be given to local residents during the procurement of raw materials." He added, "Our corporate group strictly adheres to all prevailing environmental and other statutory laws. Therefore, I assure you that you will have no grounds for complaint regarding our company's operations." He further stated that the facility would require approximately 1,200 workers, and priority in recruitment would be accorded to local candidates based on their qualifications and merit.

**Mr. Nandvate, Sub-Regional Officer:** Responding to the concerns raised by Mr. Anna Labde regarding chemical industries, he explained that environmental public hearings are conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification of 2006. He noted that industries established within Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) estates prior to 2006 have been exempted from the requirement of holding public hearings, except for specific categories. The list of

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industries for which a public hearing is mandatory & includes Thermal Power Plants, Nuclear Power Plants, Distilleries, and Sugar Factories. He stated that a public hearing is being conducted for Meenakshi Agro due to their proposed distillery project. He noted that, in accordance with the circular dated April 27, 2018, industries operating within the MIDC jurisdiction—specifically those engaged in the manufacture of pharmaceuticals, bulk drugs, intermediates, etc.—have been exempted from the requirement of holding public hearings.

**Mr. Anna Labde, Shiv Sena Chief (Paithan):** He pointed out that chemical companies within the Paithan Industrial Estate are manufacturing drugs, and the Gujarat Police have been taking action regarding this matter. However, the local Pollution Control Board appears to have absolutely no information regarding these activities. He raised the pertinent question: Does the Pollution Control Board not inquire about a company's specific products and production details when granting them permission to operate? In this regard, he requested the Deputy Collector to procure a report from the Pollution Control Board detailing exactly what products the company manufactures, and urged the Deputy Collector to personally look into this matter.

**Mr. Nandvate, Sub-Regional Officer:** He clarified that the Narcotics Department is currently taking action regarding an incident involving the production of drugs within the Paithan Industrial Estate that occurred two years ago. He explained that this specific issue does not fall under the purview of the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB); rather, the MPCB's jurisdiction is limited to matters such as industrial wastewater generation and treatment systems, as well as air pollutants generated during industrial processes and the corresponding control mechanisms. He stated that while the MPCB grants industries permission to manufacture specific products, the Board currently lacks the necessary infrastructure and mechanisms to conduct a detailed chemical analysis or breakdown of those specific products. He added that their laboratory facilities are equipped solely for the testing and analysis of wastewater and air pollutants. He further noted that incidents such as explosions occurring during industrial production processes, along with other related safety matters, are investigated by the Department of Industrial Health and Safety (DISH). He reiterated that the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board's mandate is strictly limited to the inspection and monitoring of wastewater and air pollutants.

**6. Shri Vishnu Bodke:** Local residents were not provided with information regarding the public hearing on environmental matters.

**Shri. Nandvate, Sub-Regional Officer:** As stipulated in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification of 2006, a public notice regarding the environmental public hearing was published in the newspapers \*Sakal\* and \*The Times of India\* 30 days prior to the scheduled hearing date. Furthermore, in accordance with the EIA Notification of 2006, the project's Environmental Impact Assessment Report—along with an Executive Summary of the project—was made available for public review at 11 designated offices within the Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar district. The public notice published in the newspapers explicitly stated that project-affected persons and other concerned individuals could review the project's environmental impact report and related documents; they were further informed that they could submit their opinions, views, objections, and suggestions

regarding the project either in writing (up until the date of the hearing) or verbally in person during the actual hearing proceedings.

**Vishnu Bodke:** Since very few people in rural areas subscribe to or read the \*Sakal\* newspaper, the residents did not receive timely information regarding this matter. However, despite receiving the information belatedly, residents from the four villages adjacent to the industrial estate are present here today. Therefore, for all future public hearings concerning industries within the Paithan Industrial Estate, arrangements should be made to place the relevant company-specific documents at the respective Gram Panchayat offices of the four villages situated in the vicinity of the industrial estate.

**Mr. Nandvate, Sub-Regional Officer:** Regarding the statements submitted during the hearing by residents of villages adjacent to the industrial estate—should they wish to submit any additional written representations, they are requested to do so by this evening. The opinions and views expressed by you during the hearing have been video-recorded; furthermore, the statements you submitted will be duly noted in the official minutes and forwarded to the Competent Authority. He clarified that the opinions and suggestions you expressed regarding environmental matters will be taken into consideration when granting environmental clearance to the industry.

**7. Suresh Madke, District President, Ex-Servicemen Association, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar:** Of the total land acquired for the Paithan Industrial Area, 70% belonged to the village of Muddalwadi. Consequently, the local villagers are left with only 30% of their original landholding, upon which their entire livelihood depends. He stated that once the villagers surrendered their land for industrial development, it was imperative to accord priority to the "sons of the soil" (local natives) for employment within these industries, based on their educational qualifications. However, he noted that the majority of the current workforce consists of contract laborers, while the representation of local natives remains negligible. I request the concerned officials to pay immediate attention to the issues of air and water pollution, which are reportedly being caused by several industries operating within the Paithan Industrial Estate. He remarked that the project proposal has been presented in an excellent manner, noting that the project intends to utilize spoiled grains as raw material while minimizing the use of chemicals. He further stated that he would have no objections to the project, provided the project proponent takes necessary measures—such as permanently absorbing local laborers into the workforce and ensuring the effective operation of wastewater treatment and air pollution control systems.

**8. Rameshwar Bobde, Resident of Wahegaon:** He remarked that the project proposal has been presented in an excellent manner, noting that the project intends to utilize spoiled grains as raw material while minimizing the use of chemicals. He further stated that he would have no objections to the project, provided the project proponent takes necessary measures—such as permanently absorbing local laborers into the workforce and ensuring the effective operation of wastewater treatment and air pollution control systems.

**9. Suresh Shinde, Gram Panchayat Member and Former Deputy Sarpanch, Mudalwadi:** "Your project has been presented in an excellent manner; however, it is essential to translate the plans demonstrated in the presentation into reality. Due to the rampant issues of wastewater pollution, air pollution, and various other problems within

the Paithan Industrial Estate, the daily lives of the local residents have become extremely difficult. Therefore, I have no objection to this project, provided that the project proponent takes necessary measures—such as permanently employing local workers and diligently operating the wastewater and air pollution control systems," he stated.

**10. A Resident:** "Officials from the Pollution Control Board have stated that public hearings for companies have been conducted since 2006; however, in the current scenario, wastewater and air pollution have spread extensively throughout the Paithan Industrial Estate. It is imperative that the Honorable District Collector pays immediate attention to this matter. The Pollution Control Board officials must exercise strict control over this situation and prioritize the reduction of pollution within the industrial estate," he asserted. "Furthermore, some industries within the MIDC area have installed borewells, into which they discharge wastewater using the 'reverse boring' method. The MIDC officials need to investigate and address this issue," he added. He also pointed out that despite filing complaints with the Pollution Control Board, no concrete action is subsequently taken. "Therefore," he concluded, "it is essential to convene a joint meeting comprising officials from the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, representatives from the District Collector's office, representatives from the villages adjacent to the Paithan Industrial Estate, and MLA Vilas Babu Bhumre."

**11. Mr. Ashish Labde, Gram Panchayat Member, Mudalwadi:** "Your project has been presented in a highly commendable manner; notably, the project involves the utilization of spoiled grains and aims to minimize the use of chemical substances. I have no objection to this project, provided that the project proponent takes the necessary precautions—such as permanently employing local workers, purchasing grains directly from farmers, offering permanent employment to educated youth from the surrounding area, ensuring insurance coverage for every employee, and diligently operating the wastewater and air pollution control systems," he stated.

**12. Mr. Manish Holkar, Member, Public Hearing Committee:** 1. What will be the daily condensate volume generated from Multiple Effect Evaporator? 2. What is your utilization plan for 36,000 metric tons MTA of Carbon Dioxide generated from fermentation process? 3. It is mentioned in the report that you are going to use highly specialized cell for fermentation. Whether they are genetically engineered / modified cell? If so have you obtained NOC from Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC).

**13. Mr. Raut, Representative of the Masiha Organization:** My industrial enterprises have been operational in the MIDC Waluj and Chikalthana areas for the past 35 years. In 2012, due to pollution issues within the Waluj Industrial Estate, the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board issued orders for the closure of several industries. During that period, a delegation of entrepreneurs visited Europe; inspired by the extensive tree plantation and natural beauty they witnessed there, we decided to undertake a tree-planting initiative within the MIDC Waluj premises. We planted ten million trees on both sides of Goodyear Road, starting from More Chowk; this effort has completely alleviated the pollution-related issues in the surrounding vicinity. I would like to convey to the villagers residing around the Paithan Industrial Estate that, instead of merely complaining about entrepreneurs, it is essential that we focus our attention on what positive contributions we can make toward

the environment. Once entrepreneurs acquire land plots from the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC), it is incumbent upon them to provide employment opportunities to the local residents—the 'sons of the soil.' As an entrepreneur myself, having managed a company for the past 35 years, I possess a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by entrepreneurs, the complexities of pollution control, and the prevailing public mindset. In addition to managing my industrial ventures, I also run a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO); for the past fifteen years, my NGO has been providing free medical services to the public during the annual 'Nathshashti' festival held in Paithan. Therefore, I appeal to all citizens and residents to undertake extensive tree-planting drives within the Paithan Industrial Estate to protect the environment, thereby mitigating the adverse effects and nuisance caused by pollution. He further stated that the growth of industries within the Paithan Industrial Estate would significantly contribute to the overall development of the surrounding region.

**Project Promoter :** The 'Meenakshi Agro Distillery' is a grain-based industrial project. As part of its operations, the carbon dioxide generated during the production process will be captured and subsequently sold to bottling plants and breweries. Of the wastewater generated during the production process, 70 percent will be recycled, while the remaining 30 percent will be utilized for landscaping within the industrial premises. This project is based on the principle of 'Zero Liquid Discharge' for industrial wastewater, ensuring that all effluent generated during the company's production operations is completely recycled. Consequently, the surrounding environment will face no risk whatsoever from wastewater pollution. He stated, "This industrial unit will fully comply with all legal requirements; I assure you that no regulations will be violated by this enterprise." Responding to a query from Mr. Holkar—a member of the Public Hearing Committee—regarding the specific type of yeast used in the company's production process and whether the necessary permits for 'Genetic Import' had been obtained in the event of it being imported from abroad, he assured the committee that this information would be provided in writing.

**14. Bharat Sahebrao Mukutmal, Member, Panchayat Samiti:** "Your project has been presented in an excellent manner; the plan involves utilizing spoiled grains in the production process while minimizing the use of chemical additives. The initiatives undertaken by the company through its CSR funds—such as the digitization of schools, providing employment opportunities to locals, and awarding work contracts to 'sons of the soil' (local residents) over the past year—are truly beneficial to the community. Therefore, I extend my best wishes for the company's future operations," he concluded.

**15. Vasant Hangrale, NGO Representative:** "The presentation delivered by the industrial unit was commendable; however, it is imperative that the company exercises due diligence in controlling both wastewater discharge and air pollution. It is essential that the company's CSR funds be allocated toward socially beneficial causes, such as addressing the health-related concerns of surrounding villagers and facilitating their skill development."

**16. Sarpanch Yogesh Rode:** "Meenakshi Agro is an excellent company, and their presentation was outstanding." We welcome the company for the socially beneficial initiatives it has proactively undertaken, as well as for the assurances it has provided regarding local job creation. However, within the Paithan Industrial Estate, numerous

small-scale chemical industries fail to operate their air pollution control and wastewater treatment systems; consequently, villagers in the surrounding areas are suffering from the adverse effects of air pollution. It was stated that whenever complaints are lodged with these industries regarding this matter—or whenever requests are made for the utilization of their CSR funds—they fail to extend any cooperation. Furthermore, even after lodging formal complaints with the Pollution Control Board regarding these issues, appropriate and timely action is not being taken by the Board. We, therefore, humbly request the Honorable District Collector to personally look into this matter and issue necessary directives to the concerned parties.

**17. Ambadas Gayke, Farmer :** Meenakshi Agro is an excellent company, and their presentation was outstanding. We welcome the company for the socially beneficial initiatives they have proactively undertaken, as well as for the assurances they have provided regarding local job creation. I request that the company procure the raw materials they require directly from local sources.

**18. Somnath Asaram Bodke:** Meenakshi Agro is an excellent company, and their presentation was outstanding. We welcome the company for the socially beneficial initiatives they have proactively undertaken, as well as for the assurances they have provided regarding local job creation. The company presented information regarding the geographical conditions and other aspects of the area; however, they did not address the issue of pollution within the locality. While regular inspections are conducted using mobile monitoring units, no reports regarding these inspections are made available to the public. He stated that although the Pollution Control Board collects wastewater samples from the industrial estate, no punitive action is subsequently taken against the industries involved.

**Mr. Nandvate, Sub-Regional Officer:** Regarding the issues of water pollution and crop damage within the Paithan Industrial Estate, Petition No. 222/2023 Mangal Vishnu Bodke vs. Matrix Life Sciences & Others is currently pending before the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (NGT); thus, the matter is sub judice. The Hon'ble National Green Tribunal has appointed the Institute of Chemical Technology (ICT), Mumbai—an expert institution—to examine this case. An expert committee from ICT has been constituted to conduct a survey of the industries within the Paithan Industrial Estate, assess wastewater quality, evaluate the extent of crop damage, and formulate measures to restore groundwater quality. Work is currently being executed in accordance with the recommendations submitted by this committee and the directives issued by the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal. The final report from ICT, Mumbai, regarding this matter is expected within the next six months, and further action will be taken based on its findings. Sub-Regional Officer Mr. Nandvate stated that, as the matter in question is sub judice, it would not be appropriate to comment further on it at this juncture.

**Honorable Chairperson, Public Hearing Committee:** Petition No. 222/2023 Mangal Vishnu Bodke vs. Matrix Life Science and Others\*—is currently pending before the Honorable National Green Tribunal (NGT); thus, the matter remains sub judice. I am fully apprised of the issues regarding water pollution within the Paithan Industrial Estate and the consequent damage to agricultural crops, having personally served as a member of the committee investigating these matters. Our committee has submitted a report to the

National Green Tribunal confirming that the groundwater has turned yellow and is unfit for human consumption. The National Green Tribunal has appointed the Institute of Chemical Technology (ICT) to undertake this assignment; the ICT is expected to submit a comprehensive report—covering aspects such as the technical audit of the industries and recommendations for farmers' compensation—within the next six months.

**Mr. Nandvate** further stated that, following the receipt of the report from the ICT, decisions regarding the pollution issues within the Paithan Industrial Estate will be taken in accordance with the orders issued by the Honorable National Green Tribunal. The Honorable Chairperson informed the attendees that today's hearing pertains specifically to the company Meenakshi Agro; therefore, participants should restrict their suggestions or observations to the environmental aspects and other relevant matters concerning that specific industry alone. Consequently, the Chairperson advised that it would be inappropriate to engage in discussions regarding unrelated matters.

**19 Somnath Asaram Bodke:** "The Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) conducts regular air quality monitoring; the MPCB should inform us of the specific levels of pollution detected during these inspections."

**Mr. Nandvate, Sub-Regional Officer:** "Pollution monitoring is conducted across various parameters, and the prescribed standards for these tests are those stipulated under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. A copy of the inspection report prepared by the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board will be made available to you." He further requested that, if any of the attendees held specific opinions or concerns regarding the environmental aspects of Meenakshi Agro the company under review today—they should proceed to express them. However, the gathered public stated that they do not oppose the said project.

**Local villager Somnath Bodke** said that the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board should take the people of the four nearby villages into confidence regarding the pollution in the Paithan industrial estate and focus on reducing the pollution.

**Mr. Nandvate** stated that by the day of the hearing, three written representations had been received by the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board via email from Rangarao Kothakonda's "SAVE EARTH," R. Venkatesh's Varsha Environmental and Rural Development Society organization, and V. Sunanda Reddy, and he read them out. Local resident Somnath Bodke said that regarding pollution in the Paithan Industrial Estate, the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board should take local people from the four villages into confidence and focus on reducing pollution.

**Honble Chairperson, Public Hearing Committee:** Hon'ble Chairman stated that Petition No. 222/2023 Mangal Vishnu Bodke vs. Matrix Life Science and Others is currently pending before the Honorable National Green Tribunal, and the matter is therefore sub judice. The National Green Tribunal has appointed the Institute of Chemical Technology (ICT) to assist in this matter; the ICT is expected to submit a report within the next six months covering aspects such as the technical audit of the industries and compensation for farmers.



Hon'ble Chairman further informed the gathering that, following the receipt of the report from the ICT, decisions regarding the pollution in the Paithan Industrial Estate would be taken in accordance with the orders issued by the Honorable National Green Tribunal. They added that, apart from the aforementioned matters, if anyone had any further grievances, they could submit a formal complaint application at the office of the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board. They noted that the public hearing regarding the company 'Meenakshi Agro' had concluded today, and the entire proceedings had been video recorded. They assured the audience that all opinions expressed and points raised during the hearing would be duly incorporated into the official minutes of the meeting, which would subsequently be forwarded to the competent authority. Finally, in their capacity as the Chairperson of the Public Hearing Committee, they formally declared the conclusion of today's public hearing.

After the hearing was concluded, representations regarding the proposed project were received from local villagers Mr. Nitin Subhash Jadhav, resident of Mudalwadi; Mr. Pandurang Maruti Jadhav, resident of Mudalwadi; Mr. Bhagwan Pandharinath Jadhav, resident of Mudalwadi; and Shrikant Deshpande, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar. Copies of the same are enclosed herewith.



**(Mr. Achyut S. Nandvate)**  
Convener Public Hearing Committee  
and  
Sub-Regional Officer,  
Maharashtra Pollution Control Board,  
Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar



**(Mr. Manish Holkar)**  
Member Public Hearing Committee  
And  
Regional Officer,  
Maharashtra Pollution Control Board,  
Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar



**( Mrs. Neelam Bafna)**  
Chairperson Public Hearing Committee  
And  
Sub-Divisional Officer,  
Sub-Divisional Office, Paithan  
Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar

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