

ITEM NO.4

COURT NO.8

SECTION XII

S U P R E M E C O U R T O F I N D I A
RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Miscellaneous Application No. 1281-1282/2025 in C.A. No. 1280-1281/2025

[Arising out of impugned final judgment and order dated 30-01-2025 in C.A. No. No. 1280/2025 30-01-2025 in C.A. No. No. 1281/2025 passed by the Supreme Court of India]

VELLORE DISTRICT ENVIRONMENT MONITORING COMMITTEE Petitioner(s)

VERSUS

THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR VELLORE DISTRICT & ORS. Respondent(s)

FOR ADMISSION

Date : 16-09-2025 These petitions were called on for hearing today.

CORAM :

HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE J.B. PARDIWALA
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE K.V. VISWANATHAN

For Petitioner(s) :M/S. Mitter & Mitter Co., AOR
Mr. Amit Gupta, Adv.
Mr. Yogeshwaran, Adv.
Mr. Muskan Nagpal, Adv.
Ms. Poongkhulali, Adv.
Mr. Arun Singh, Adv.

For Respondent(s) :M/S. Shakil Ahmad Syed, AOR
Mr. Pradeep Rai, Sr. Adv.
Mr. Syed Ahmed Saud, Adv.
Mr. Daanish Ahmed Syed, Adv.
Mr. Mohd. Parvez Dabas, Adv.
Mr. Uzmi Jameel Husain, Adv.

Mr. Ghanshyam Joshi, AOR
Mr. Saurabh Mishra, AOR
Mr. Shrimay Mishra, Adv.
Mr. Rakesh Chander, Adv.

Mr. Kapil Sibal, Sr. Adv.
Mr. Amit Anand Tiwari, Sr. Advocate, A.A.G.
Ms. Purnima Krishna, AOR
Mr. M.f.philip, Adv.
Mr. Karamveer Singh Yadav, Adv.
Mr. Togin M. Babichen, Adv.

Mr. Muralikumaran, Sr. Adv.
Mr. Veeraragavan, AOR

UPON hearing the counsel the Court made the following
O R D E R

1. We heard Mr. Yogeshwaran, the learned counsel appearing for the original petitioner, Mr. Kapil Sibal, the learned senior counsel assisted by learned AOR, Ms. Purnima Krishna appearing for the State of Tamil Nadu, Mr. Amit Anand Tiwari, the learned senior counsel appearing for the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board and Mr. Saurabh Mishra, the learned counsel appearing for the Central Pollution Control Board.
2. The entire debate in today's hearing revolved around the monitoring protocol.
3. It goes without saying that periodical monitoring of the functioning of the CETP/IETP is very much essential. In such circumstances, we direct that two members from the IIT Madras as may be nominated and Dr. V. Nagarajan, Principal, Jansons

Institute of Technology, Coimbatore, shall be the members of the Environmental Audit Committee.

4. We also looked into the compliance affidavit filed on behalf of the Central Pollution Control Board dated 28.08.2025. The relevant averments in the said compliance affidavit read as under:

"9. That it is humbly submitted that TNPCB convened a meeting with CPCB and CSIR - NEERI on 22.08.2025 to finalize the study on environmental Audit of CETPs, member units of CETPs and IETPs operating at Tirupathur, Vellore and Ranipet Districts. It was informed by the TNPCB during the meeting that letter was addressed to both CSIR-CLRI and CSIR-NEERI on 18.08.2025 to conduct an environmental audit. In response to TNPCB letter, only CSIR-NEERI expressed the interest to carry out the audit.

In the Meeting, TNPCB officials explained the inputs given by the Appellant and also discussed the existing system of monitoring carried out. CPCB officials provided the following technical suggestion to carry out the environmental audit study with respect to Water balance and Salt balance;

- i. An Audit of 08 CETPs & their member units of 457 and 27 IETPs operating at Tirupathur, Vellore and Ranipet Districts has to be carried out.*
- ii. In case of CETP performance evaluation or auditing, the member units must also be audited in parallel.*
 - a. While auditing member units, records and log books must be verified with respect to water consumption (including both fresh water and recovered water received from CETPs), operational capacity, chemical consumption, effluent generation, and sludge generation from pre-treatment. Compliance with the prescribed inlet*

standards of TNPCB for CETPs must also be checked, along with the quantity of effluent generated, the quantity sent to the CETP, the mode of conveyance, and the existing monitoring mechanisms. All of this data must then be collected and analyzed to prepare a comprehensive water balance and material balance, enabling an accurate assessment of the pollution load generated by each individual member unit.

- b. In the case of CETPs, the audit must cover verification of influent quantity and quality, along with the performance of each treatment unit (including physical, chemical, biological, Reverse Osmosis (RO), and Multi-Effect Evaporator (MEE)/Agitated Thin Film Dryer (ATFD) systems, etc.). Flow meters must be checked to ensure they are installed at appropriate locations, and records or logbooks maintained for each treatment system must be reviewed to confirm the balance between effluent received and treated. Data on Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) concentration at the CETP inlet, RO inlet, RO permeate, and MEE inlet must be collected and analyzed to determine the quantity of salt generated. In addition, records of chemical consumption must be verified to cross-check the corresponding generation of biological and chemical sludge within the CETPs.
- iii. Similarly, for IETPS also all of the above data must be collected and analyzed in order to prepare the water balance and material balance.
- iv. Assessment of energy utilization by CETPs and IETPs based on energy consumption for various electrical equipment viz. pumps, motors, flow meters etc. using their rated capacity, operating hours and to compare with monthly Electricity Bills to ascertain whether the treatment system is operated or not.

- v. *Assessment of adequacy & efficiency of the chrome recovery system operated by individual member units and IETPS of tanneries by cross verifying records of purchase of Basic Chromium sulphate, quantity of consumption, quantity recovered, reused and sent for recycling. Further TNPCB requested CSIR-NEERI to submit the detailed proposal of activity to be covered for auditing and time line to complete the auditing of 8 CETPs and their member units (457 tanneries) and 27 IETPs.*

10. That it is most respectfully submitted that the aforesaid actions and consultations undertaken by CPCB, in coordination with TNPCB and expert institutions, aim not merely at documenting existing deficiencies but to also put in place a robust framework of compliance, monitoring, and accountability. The emphasis on comprehensive audits, scientific water and salt balance studies, energy efficiency checks, and verification of chrome recovery systems are aimed towards pragmatic approach in achieving environmentally safe operations of tanneries. These measures are designed to ensure that the problem of untreated or inadequately treated effluent is addressed at its root, thereby securing long-term environmental safeguards for the affected districts. CPCB is committed to continuously working with all stakeholders in a constructive and redressal-oriented manner."

5. The three-member Environmental Audit Committee shall proceed further in accordance with what has been stated above i.e. the contents of the affidavit filed by the Central Pollution Control Board.

6. In accordance with the directions issued by this Court in the main judgment, the audit shall be undertaken by the Members of the Committee, referred to above, every six months.

7. Let the first Audit Report be placed before us within a period of six months from today and after looking into the said report, we shall thereafter decide with what frequency the audit should be undertaken.

8. Insofar as the uploading of the data is concerned, we permit the petitioner to demand for the same from the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board as well as from the Committee headed by Justice (Retd.) M. Sathyanarayanan. As and when such demand is made, the necessary information shall be provided to the petitioner.

9. We expect the State to provide adequate infrastructure to facilitate convening of the meetings of the Committee and storage of the records, etc. If the Committee requests for any other help for its smooth functioning, the State shall immediately look into the request and do the needful.

10. Post this matter after six months.

(CHANDRESH)
ASTT. REGISTRAR-cum-PS

(POOJA SHARMA)
COURT MASTER (NSH)