

Newspaper Cutting

IOC cleans up Mini river

GPCB Asks PSU To Stop Releasing Effluent In The River

TIMES OF INDIA, Monday, 14 Nov. 2011

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Vadodara: Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has cleaned up the oil sludge from Mini river on the outskirts of the city under the supervision of Gujarat Pollution Control Board (GPCB). The state pollution watchdog has also asked the public sector unit (PSU) to stop releasing effluents through the storm water drain that flows into the river. But after IOC told GPCB that it has not caused pollution in the river, the locals are wondering who polluted the river.

IOC had some days back replied to the GPCB notice asking the PSU why it shouldn't shut down some of its operations. The notice came on the heels of fire in Mini River that was caused by oil sludge. GPCB blamed IOC's Gujarat Refinery plant for the sludge. IOC however said that it has not released any sludge in the river. The GPCB is now studying the reply and planning for further course of action.

"We have received the reply from IOC and they have said that they haven't caused any pollution. But, our assessment says that the oil sludge found from the Mini River was of IOC. We have samples of the effluents. Our head office will take necessary action within few days," said GPCB regional director R B Trivedi.



RIVER ON FIRE

"As of now the PSU has cleaned up the river and it is also doing remediation of the area that was polluted," Trivedi added. Environment activist Rohit Prajapati said, "GPCB can take strict action if it finds that the PSU has indeed caused pollution. The board has authority to issue closure notice too but it will not take that strict action. I think that the state government is in favour of industries and hence any severe action may hurt the investment cause."

Prajapati too has samples of the effluents and he said that he too is going to raise the issue with the authorities in coming days. Huge flames had erupted from the Mini River about 10 days back spreading panic in the adjacent villages.

GPCB course in effluent handling

To Help Tackle Pollution Better, Generate Employment

TIMES OF INDIA, Sunday, 13th Nov. 2011

Tushar Prabhu | TN

Ahmedabad: In a move expected to generate employment for thousands of Industrial Training Institute (ITI) students in the state, the Gujarat Pollution Control Board (GPCB) has designed a specialized course for effluent treatment plant (ETP) operators.

What's more, associations of industries at Ahmedabad, Vapi, Surat and Vadodara have already assured the pollution regulator that they will absorb the entire batch of ITIs. "The demand for technically sound ETP operators is so large that we expect to open employment avenues for 4,000-5,000 ITI students in the near future by starting such specialized courses," GPCB member-secretary Hardik Shah told TOI.

"We have designed the syllabus for ETP operators in consultation with various industry associations and other stakeholders and provided the input to the department of personnel and training," Shah added.

Industries, mostly the small-scale ones, are running into severe compliance issues due to severe lack of technical persons to handle their en-



vironment-related operations like ETPs. Sources said that most small scale industries (SSIs) cannot afford to hire environment engineers and scientists. "Industries have engineers and scientists from the field of environment. But on the ground level, there is a severe scarcity of people to actually operate these important plants that require a different skill set," a chemical plant owner in Vatra said.

The ETP operator course will gradually be taken to ITIs in Saurashtra and Kutch too. "Several youngsters from this region have to go all the way to south Gujarat for jobs.

Such courses will help them get employment in their own areas," Shah said.

Industries can also post their job requirements on GPCB portal XGN Green Node, which students can also access and apply for suitable jobs.

Through such initiatives, GPCB is also trying to build an image of a facilitator rather than just remaining a regulator. "All these years, environment was not a field that could generate bulk employment. But, we have made an effort in this area by facilitating employment along with helping industries tide over their problems," Shah said.

Appoint professionals to handle pollution control: Regulator

GPCB has directed all the industries associations in the state to appoint a separate CEO to handle the common effluent treatment infrastructure in their industrial area. The CEO will be responsible for handling the common infrastructure such as incineration facilities and technically safe and disposable site (TSDS) site for hazardous pollutants. These associations will also have to maintain

professional environment engineers or scientists who will work in shifts round-the-clock. Shah said that having

professional CEOs with strong technical background will make running of ETPs and other facilities more reliable. They will also bring in lot of transparency into the pollution control mechanism of industries as these professionals will not have any personal interests in running the infrastructure.

Oil sludge sets river Mini on fire near city

Gujarat Refinery Denies Any Role, SDM To Issue Notice

TIMES OF INDIA, Wednesday, 2nd Nov. 2011

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Vadodara: Villagers living along Mini River on the outskirts of the city couldn't believe their eyes when they saw the river on fire on Monday. Huge flames leapt out of the river that runs close to Mahi river and it took a while before the fire brigade officials could contain the fire on Monday and Tuesday. The cause of the fire was the disposal of oil sludge in the river from Indian Oil Corporation's (IOC) Gujarat Refinery plant. A stretch of the river near Amrapura village was choked with the effluent over last few days.

Gujarat Pollution Control Board (GPCB) officials in fact said that Gujarat Refinery (GR) has been regularly disposing oil sludge through its storm water drain despite being issued several notices in the past.

"It is an open and shut case. The oil sludge that came out of GR's effluent treatment plant (ETP) gathered at one point in Mini River and it created a 9-inch thick sludge. It spread over about 200 metres at the spot and somehow caught fire. The fire was doused on Sunday afternoon but on Monday again flames erupted at the same spot," said GPCB region in-charge R B Trivedi.

"GR is allowed to use the storm water drain during monsoons but the refinery has been using the drain to



A fire caused by oil sludge in river Mini on the outskirts of the city

dispose of the effluents regularly. The effluents make their way to the river through the drain. It is possible that over last few days more sludge may have come out of the plant and got accumulated at the spot," Trivedi told TOI.

"In the past, too, we have issued number of notices to GR including one that was given three months ago over the same issue. But they have simply not acted on it. We have now issued a fresh show-cause notice to GR and have also reported the matter to

our head office," added Trivedi.

However, GPCB too may receive a notice in the same matter on Wednesday. Sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) J N Wagehla has decided to issue a notice to all the stakeholders including GR, GPCB and possibly the local gram panchayat under section 133 of CrPC that relates to causing public nuisance. "The stakeholders will be asked to reply to our notices within three days following which we will decide on further course

of action. We are investigating as to how the effluent from GR reached at the spot," said district collector Vinod Rao.

GR management, however, said that they are not responsible for the incident. "GR has a centralised ETP and it complies with the revised Minimum Acceptable Standards (MINAS). Majority of the effluent gets recycled and even if the surplus discharge goes into storm water drain it's under acceptable standards," said a GR spokesperson.