

We direct that the standards be applied not only to new STPs, but also to existing/under-construction STPs without any delay, and giving seven-year time stands disapproved.

NGT BENCH

tribunal.

In January, the NGT formed an executive committee consisting of members of the National Environment Engineering Research Institute (NEERI), and scientists from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi and Roorkee to frame stricter norms to treat sewage. "There is no scientific justification offered for diluting the norms for these areas (other cities and deep marine outfall), in which a majority of country's population resides. Major population will be affected by diluted standards and only persons in mega and metropolitan cities will have comparatively better standards without any valid reason or distinction," the bench said, adding the standards recommended for mega cities will also apply to rest of the country.

"Following the environment ministry's notification from 2017, we were following the diluted norms. However, as the notification was stayed by NGT earlier this year, for the past three months, stringent rules for sewage treatment have been levied for the entire state," said YB Sontakke, joint director (water quality), Maharashtra Pollution Control Board. "The union environment ministry was not treating river pollution as a crisis being faced by India, as they blindly relaxed pollutant discharge limits for sewage treatment in 2017. This is a historic judgment as all corporations, councils, and district departments will have to design and update sewage treatment facilities as per new standards now," said Nitin Shankar Deshpande.

NGT STANDARDS FOR SEWAGE TREATMENT

PARAMETERS	NEW RULES	OLD RULES
pH	6.5-9.0	5.5-9.0
Bio-chemical oxygen demand (BOD)	10 milligram per litre (mg/L)	20 mg/L
Chemical oxygen demand (COD) - a parameter to check chemical contamination	50 mg/L	250 mg/L
Nitrogen - amount of nitrates present in water harmful for aquatic flora	10 mg/L	No limit
Phosphorus - presence of phosphorus leads to development of toxic foam	1 mg/L	No limit
Fecal Coliform (FC) - indication of human and animal excreta in sewage (calculated as most probable number per 100 millilitres)	Less than 100	Less than 1,000

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NITIN SHANKAR DESHPANDE, petitioner who challenged the dilution of norms

ULHAS RESTORATION

2 plants get notices for not paying ₹45cr

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MUMBAI: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has pulled up operators of an effluent treatment plant run by a consortium of industries for their failure to pay ₹45 crore to restore the polluted Ulhas River.

While hearing an execution application filed by environment group Vanashakti on Wednesday, the NGT principal bench passed an order, issuing notices to the Dombivli and Ambarnath common effluent treatment plants (CETPs), as to why action should not be taken against them for non-compliance with a 2015 court order. The order was made public on Thursday.

"As the directions were specifically issued against the Dombivli CETP and Ambarnath CETP, issue notice upon the two companies to show cause as to why appropriate orders shall not be passed for non-compliance. Let the show-cause be filed within

two weeks (from date of order)," read the judgment by the NGT bench of Justice SP Wangdi, judicial member Justice K Ramakrishnan, and expert member Dr Nagin Nanda.

The bench also issued a notice to Konkan commissioner, Belapur, as the officer was responsible for following up on the matter. "The divisional commissioner is at liberty to file an action taken report," the order said.

The next hearing has been scheduled on July 10.

On July 2, 2015, then NGT bench directed Dombivli CETP, having a total capacity of 16.5 million litres of sewage a day (MLD), to pay ₹30 crore and Ambarnath CETP, with a capacity of 7 MLD and operated at 3 MLD, to pay ₹15 crore as restitution and restoration amount, based on excessive chemical load released into the Ulhas river. The Konkan commissioner's office said they were following up with the CETPs, and an action taken report will be

submitted before the next hearing. "The lethargy, indifference of polluters and tactical support provided by the state to them are deeply disappointing. Despite the drought, no attempt is being made to keep the existing rivers free of pollution," said Stalin D, director, Vanashakti.

In February 2017, the state environment department directed the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) to bring all effluent treatment plants, including the Dombivli and Ambarnath CETPs, under its domain.

Private CETP operators refused to comment. "Effluent treatment at a few plants taken over by MIDC and run by contractors has improved significantly. The same will be implemented at Dombivli and Ambarnath, after the CETPs are transferred to us. Tenders will be released once the code of conduct ends," said R Sonje, chief engineer, MIDC.

