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**Ref. No.**

CIDCO/ACP(BP/DP/NT)/2020/ 846

**Date :**

21.07.2020

To,

- ✓ The Addl. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests,  
Mangrove Cell, Mumbai  
302, Wakefield House, 3rd Floor, Ballard Estate,  
Above Britannia & Co. Restaurant,  
Fort, Mumbai-01

**Sub: Regarding conservation and protection of wetlands in Navi Mumbai region which are important habitats for avifauna**

**Ref: Your letter No. 22/2020-21 dtd. 29.04.2020**

Dear Sir,

This has reference to your letter cited above. As regards five locations mentioned as wetlands in your letter which are proposed for protection and conservation under Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972, this is to inform you that CIDCO had carried out a scientific survey in Navi Mumbai area in the year 2016 with reference to the wetland atlas published by GoI. As per the report of this survey, these five locations are not wetlands. This report has already been submitted to Department of Environment GoM in the same year and later in 2018 and 2019. Detailed observations and remarks on each of the five locations mentioned in your letter are as under

1. **Training Ship Chanakya (TSC) Wetland**
2. **Non-Residential Indian (NRI) Complex Wetland**

As per sanctioned Development Plan of Navi Mumbai (NMDP) these lands are in Residential and Regional Park Zone(RPZ). They are developable land parcels. As per revenue and land records, these lands were salt pans. CIDCO had constructed several bunds and roads along the coastline of Navi Mumbai as a part of its development strategy. However, over a period of time, the villagers started breaking these bunds/ roads and allowed the creek water to let in for fishing purposes. Owing to which several ponds have been created by the villagers in these areas. Present situation of water ponds at T S Chanakya and the area behind NRI complex are the result of this. As per the definition of the wetlands, given in Wetland (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017, these lands do not qualify to be declared as Wetlands.



Apart from this, these locations are situated within 5 kilometers radial distance from the proposed Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA) and are close to funnel area of Airport. Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) has conducted a baseline survey of bird movement near the proposed NMIA area. In chapter 5 of its Annual Report III, for Year 2014, BNHS expressed concerns about safety of aircraft movement in NMIA in future. The report concludes that high risk of bird's strikes are anticipated at the proposed NMIA. Having concern to the human life. BNHS recommended that proposed NMIA site and adjoining areas should be made unattractive for the birds.

In the meantime, the Govt. of Maharashtra has declared about 1690 Ha of land along the Thane Creek in Navi Mumbai as flamingo Bird Sanctuary vide it's Notification No WLP.0315/CR-76/F-1, dtd 06.08.2015.

Based on the BNHS report, CIDCO made a representation to MoEF, Gol, for waiving the conditions imposed while granting Environmental Clearance to NMIA and also requested Govt of Maharashtra not to declare any area as bird sanctuary near and in the vicinity of the airport. M/s GVK, the concessionaire for development of NMIA, also requested CIDCO to ensure air safety and to take immediate measures to resolve bird threats near NMIA site.

GoM had a series of consultations with the Revenue and Forest Departments, Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (PCCF) of Govt of Maharashtra. The Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, Nagpur, based on the recommendations/suggestion received from Chief Conservator of Forest, Thane and Chief Conservator of Forest, Mangrove Cell, Mumbai submitted his recommendation/suggestion to the Revenue and Forest Dept., GoM, Mantralaya, Mumbai vide Letter dtd. 03.03.2016 to not propose the Bird Sanctuary at NRI complex and behind TS Chanakya locations.

It may also be noted that, as the Hon High Court Order for development of Golf Course and various issues related to it, was challenged in the Supreme Court of India, a stay was granted on implementation of High Court Order so far the notification for zone change is concerned.

The final report of BNHS however, has overlooked the above aspects and recommended this location for declaration of wetlands. Thus, considering the bird threat for the proposed NMIA as mentioned in the foregoing paragraphs; being salt pan lands, which don't fit in the definition of wetlands and the pending Supreme Court case, it is not desirable to consider these locations for declaring as a wetlands

### **3. Panje Wetland**

As per sanctioned NMDP, these lands fall in 'Special Economic Zone'. They are developable lands. Most of these lands were agricultural lands/paddy fields as per land revenue records and were acquired by Govt and handed over to CIDCO for Navi Mumbai project. CIDCO has allotted most of the lands in this location to M/s NMSEZ Pvt. Ltd., which is the Planning Authority for the area allotted to them.

Also, there is a holding pond within the location, which is part of the storm water drainage system designed for the area. It is a manmade feature and requires regular maintenance to ensure proper functioning of the drainage system. If not done, will cause flooding of the area. Hence it may not be appropriate to consider it as Protected area under 'Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972'

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It is submitted that, as per the definition of wetlands, under Wetland (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017, being agriculture lands/paddy fields and existing manmade waterbody, they do not qualify to be declared as Wetlands.

#### **4. Belpada Wetland**

Regarding this location, it may be noted that this land was saltpan land and was allotted to Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) and is in possession of JNPT. It may be noted that, as per the definition of wetlands, under Wetland (Conservation and Management) Rules 2017, being saltpan lands, they do not qualify to be declared as Wetlands. However, being the land in JNPT area, views of JNPT be obtained.

#### **5. Bhendkhal Wetland**

As per sanctioned NMDP, these lands fall in 'Special Economic Zone'. They are developable lands. These lands were salt pan lands as per land revenue records and were acquired by Govt and handed over to CIDCO for Navi Mumbai project. CIDCO has allotted most of the lands in this location to M/s NMSEZ Pvt. Ltd., which is the Planning Authority for the area allotted to them.

*It is however, submitted that, as per the definition of wetlands, under Wetland (Conservation and Management) Rules 2017, being salt pan lands, they do not qualify to be declared as Wetlands.*

Thus, none of the five locations are wetlands and shall not be considered as wetlands.

Thanking you.

Yours faithfully,

*Rantunw* 21/7

Addl Chief Planner(DP)

Copy to:

- 1) The Principal Secretary/ Chairman,  
MCZMA, Environment Department, GoM
- 2) Director, Environment Department, GoM  
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Madam Cama Road, Hutatma Rajguru Chowk,  
Nariman Point, Mumbai, Maharashtra 400032
- 3) The District Collector, Raigad
- 4) The District Collector, Thane