

Minutes of the Environmental Public Hearing For Proposed Expansion In Existing Unit of Hot Rolled Stainless Steel Products Manufacturing from 1,95,840 TPA to 22,76,000 TPA (2,76,000 TPA Hot Rolled Stainless Steel Product and 20,00,000 TPA HRAP/CRAP Sheets Plates & Coils) at Survey Nos. 24/A, 24/B, 25/1, 25/2, 26 to 29, 31, 33, 34, 46, 55, 56, 60 at Village-Man and Survey Nos 44, 49, 50, 51, 55, 56, 57/1, 57/2, 58 at Village Warangade, Taluka & District Palghar, Maharashtra by Project Proponent M/s Viraj Profiles Private Limited, Gat No. 27, Village-Maan, Taluka & District-Palghar, Maharashtra.

The Environment Public Hearing in respect of Proposed Expansion In Existing Unit of Hot Rolled Stainless Steel Products Manufacturing from 1,95,840 TPA to 22,76,000 TPA (2,76,000 TPA Hot Rolled Stainless Steel Product and 20,00,000 TPA HRAP/CRAP Sheets Plates & Coils) at Survey Nos. 24/A, 24/B, 25/1, 25/2, 26 to 29, 31, 33, 34, 46, 55, 56, 60 at Village-Maan and Survey Nos 44, 49, 50, 51, 55, 56, 57/1, 57/2, 58 at Village Warangade, Taluka & District Palghar, Maharashtra by Project Proponent M/s Viraj Profiles Private Limited, Gat No. 27, Village-Maan, Taluka & District-Palghar, Maharashtra was held on Wednesday, the 08th April, 2026, Timing – 11.00 a.m. at M/s Viraj Profiles Pvt.Ltd., (SRM Unit), Near Haathi Gate, Gat No.27, Village-Man, Taluka , District-Palghar Maharashtra.

Shri Virendra Singh, Sub Regional Officer, Tarapur-II, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, Tarapur, Taluka, District-Palghar -401 504 and Convener, Environment Public Hearing Committee on behalf of District Collector Office, Palghar and Sub Regional Office, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, Palghar welcomed Shri Subhash Bhagade, Additional District Magistrate, Palghar and Chairman of the Environment Public Hearing Committee; Shri Kiran Hasabnis, Regional Officer, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, Thane and Member of the Environment Public Hearing Committee, Environmentalists, NGOs, Journalists, Representatives of media channels, Police Administration and Company Officials and local people/participants who were present and with permission of Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee started the proceedings.

Convener, Environment Public Hearing Committee informed that as per the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification of Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Govt. of India, (i.e. MoEF & CC, GoI) dated 14th September, 2006 as amended on 1st December, 2009, it is

mandatory to conduct prior public consultation to certain projects which are covered in the schedule of the said Notification.

Convener informed that the aim of conducting prior public consultation is to make aware, local people who can be participant in the hearing and they should know the developmental activities and Environment Management Plan of the unit.

He informed that Head Office, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, Mumbai was in receipt of application dated 12.02.2026 from Project Proponent M/s Viraj Profiles Private Limited, Gat No. 27, Village-Maan, Taluka & District-Palghar, Maharashtra in respect of Proposed Expansion In Existing Unit of Hot Rolled Stainless Steel Products Manufacturing from 1,95,840 TPA to 22,76,000 TPA (2,76,000 TPA Hot Rolled Stainless Steel Product and 20,00,000 TPA HRAP/CRAP Sheets Plates & Coils) at Survey Nos. 24/A, 24/B, 25/1, 25/2, 26 to 29, 31, 33, 34, 46, 55, 56, 60 at Village-Maan and Survey Nos 44, 49, 50, 51, 55, 56, 57/1, 57/2, 58 at Village Warangade, Taluka & District – Palghar.

Convener further informed that though as per EIA Notification No.1533 (E), Dated 14-09-2006 as amended, the proposed activities fall under Category B-1, Schedule No.3 (a) Secondary metallurgical processing industry but as the project site is located within 10 Km from the boundary of Critically Polluted Area 'MIDC Tarapur' it is categorized under A Category and hence it is mandatory for the said project to obtain "Environmental Clearance" from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, New Delhi, for which prior environmental consultation is mandatory.

Accordingly, Project Proponents submitted the proposal along with the Pre-Feasibility Report along with the prescribed application to the Environment, Forest & Climate Change Ministry, Govt. of India, New Delhi on 26.07.2025 and TOR has been approved by Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Govt. of India, New Delhi on 18.09.2025.

Accordingly, Project Proponent has appointed an Environmental Consultant who has obtained NABET approval as per the directives of the Government of India and have carried out the environmental assessment through the environmental consultant. A detailed environmental survey within a 10.0 km radius of the project site was carried out from -01 January, 2025 to 31st March, 2025 (three months).

A draft of the project site and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report was prepared and submitted to study the potential impact/impacts on the environment due to the establishment of the proposed project.

Sub-Regional Office, Tarapur-2, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, MIDC Colony, Post-TAPP, Boisar (West), Taluka, District-Palghar – 401 504 requested District Collector, Palghar vide letter dated 16.02.2026 to allow to conduct environmental public hearing regarding the proposed project.

Hon'ble District Collector, Palghar directed to conduct Physical Environment Public Hearing on Wednesday, the 08th April, 2026, Timing – 11.00 a.m. at M/s Viraj Profiles Pvt. Ltd., (SRM Unit), Near Haathi Gate, Gat No.27, Village-Man, Taluka, District-Palghar Maharashtra.

Then Member Secretary, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, Mumbai as per the Notification No. S.O. 1533 dated 14-09-2006 and as per Amended Notification S.O. 3067 (E) Dated 01-12-2009 as issued by Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Govt. of India, (MoEF & CC, Gol), New Delhi has constituted Environment Public Hearing Committee vide Board's Office Order No. E- 14 of 2026 under letter no. BO/JD(WPC)/PH/B-260312-FTS-0033 dated 12.03.2026 as under: -

- 1) District Magistrate-Palghar **Chairman**
or his representative not below
the rank of an Additional District
Magistrate
- 2) Representative of Maharashtra **Member**
Pollution Control Board, Mumbai -
Regional Officer – Thane,
Maharashtra Pollution Control Board,
Thane
- 3) Sub Regional Officer, Tarapur-II **Convener**
Maharashtra Pollution Control Board,
Boisar (West),
Taluka, District-Palghar

As per said Notification, 30 days' advance public notice was published by Sub Regional Officer, Tarapur-II, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, MIDC

Residential Colony Compound, Post-TAPP, Boisar (West), Taluka & District-Palghar – 401 504 has published public notice in a local newspaper in daily Lokmat for Marathi and in a national newspaper daily Free Press Journal for English on 06th March, 2026. The public were appealed to send their suggestions, views, doubts or objections regarding the proposed project.

Also copy of EIA report and executive summery were made available in Marathi and in English at various notified Government offices as under:-

1)	Hon. District Collector, Collector Office, Palghar;
2)	Chief Executive Officer, Zilla Parishad, Palghar;
3)	Sub Divisional Magistrate, SDM Office, Tal. & Dist.-Palghar;
4)	Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Zonal Office, West Central Zone, New Secretary Building, Ground Floor, East Wing, Civil Line, Nagpur – 440 001
5)	Director, Environment & Climate Change Department, Govt. of Maharashtra, New Administrative Building, 15 th Floor, Opp. Mantralaya, Mumbai – 400 032
6)	General Manager, District Industries Centre, Central Office, Taluka & Dist.-Palghar;
7)	Joint Director (WPC), MPCB, Sion, Mumbai – 400 022
8)	Regional Officer, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, 5 th Floor, Office Complex Building, Near Mulund Check Naka, Wagale Estate, Thane – 400 604
9)	Sub Regional Officer, Tarapur-II, MPCB, MIDC Residential Colony, Boisar, Tal. & Dist.-Palghar;
10)	Tahsildar, Tahsil Office, Taluka & District-Palghar;
11)	Block Development Officer, Panchayat Samiti, Taluka & Dist.-Palghar;
12)	Gram Panchayat Officer, Gram Panchayats-Maan, Warangade, Mahagaon, Gundale, Betegaon, Khairapada,
13)	Gram Panchayat Officer, Group Gram Panchayats, Maan-Warangade, Mahagaon-Gundale
14)	Web site of MPCB – Executive Summary in Marathi and English is made available

Convener informed that (until yesterday dated 07-04-2025) 357 suggestions / objections have been received from various notified offices/by hand/by post / by email by Sub Regional Office, Tarapur-II, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, Boisar regarding the proposed project.

Convener informed that an opportunity is given to all participants to raise any doubts, suggestions or objections regarding the proposed project in environmental angle, which can be submitted by orally or in writing also.

Convener asserted that this Committee is only for recording public opinion, views, suggestions, objections regarding the proposed project in environmental angle only and the Committee has no right to approve, reject or recommend the project. The suggestions/objections raised by the participants in the public hearing will be noted and it will be included in the minutes of the meeting. Similarly, the revised Environmental Assessment Report of the Project Proponent, written suggestions/objections and minutes of the meeting in Marathi and English after approval of Chairperson, Environment Public Hearing Committee will be submitted through MPCB Head Office to the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Govt. of India, New Delhi after taking note of the video recording of the said meeting, suggestions and objections recorded in the meeting. An Expert Committee there takes further decision regarding the same. He requested Chairman of the Environment Public Hearing Committee to inform Project Proponent to start the presentation.

With the permission of the Hon'ble Chairman, Project Proponent started to give presentation about the project and the project's Environmental Management Plan.

At that time, groups of some men and women present were collectively shouting that the proposed project should not be approved.

Chairman, Environmental Public Hearing Committee requested all participants to sit quietly. Chairman appealed to all that after the presentation is over, they can register their suggestions, objections, and suggestions. However, the majority of the attendees were collectively shouting slogans to cancel the project expansion.

Member, Environment Public Hearing Committee informed Project Proponent to make a presentation on the proposed project and the Environmental Management Plan (EMP).

Project Proponent stated that the preliminary approval (ToR) for the proposed project has been received from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, New Delhi on 18-09-2025, prior to conducting public hearings.

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Project Proponent further informed that though as per EIA Notification No.1533 (E), Dated 14-09-2006 as amended, the proposed activities fall under Category B-1, Schedule No.3 (a) Secondary metallurgical processing industry but as the project site is located within 10 Km from the boundary of Critically Polluted Area 'MIDC Tarapur' it is categorized under A Category and hence it is mandatory for the said project to obtain "Environmental Clearance" from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, New Delhi, for which prior environmental consultation is mandatory.

Project Proponent said that the proposed expansion will require manpower and the project has 700 permanent employees and will require 2000 employees after the expansion, while temporary employment contracts are currently available to 1,100 people, whereas 3,000 people will be provided with contracts.

Proposed expansion project will generate 1,812 KLD of wastewater, which will be treated in the project's pollution control system and will be recycled and reused in the project's production process.

Also, the domestic wastewater generated in the project will be treated, recycled and reused within the project itself. Thus, the proposed expansion project will be a "Zero Liquid Discharge" project.

Project Proponent provided information about the entire environmental management plan.

After the presentation was completed, Chairman, Environmental Public Hearing Committee informed all participants that a presentation had been made on the proposed project.

In line with this presentation, you are requested to submit your environmental suggestions, views, and objections regarding the proposed project. While presenting, you should first state your name and the name of the village.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee informed all that a video recording of your issues raised would be made, and minutes of the meeting will be prepared in Marathi and English. We request that the issue that has been raised should not be raised again, so that everyone can be given an opportunity to register their suggestions/ objections. Also, your suggestions/

objections/ issues should be raised without discussing among yourselves. It will be recorded.

At that time, some men and women were collectively raising slogans against the project and collectively demanding the cancellation of the public hearing of the project.

Views, questions, suggestions/objections raised during the Environment Public Hearing and the answers/ promises given by the Project Proponent/ Environment Consultant/ Environment Public Hearing Committee :-

1) Shri Moreshwar Bala Dauda, Ex.Sarpanch, Man Grampanchayat, Taluka, District-Palghar:-

Today, on 8th April, 2026, Sub-Regional Officer, Tarapur-2, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, MIDC Colony, Boisar (W), Taluka and District-Palghar organized an Environment Public Hearing regarding the expansion of the M/s. Viraj Profile Private Limited. This is illegal as it violates the rights of the Gram Sabha under the "PESA" Act and hence the meeting should be repealed. In this regard, the Gram Panchayat, Man, Taluka, District-Palghar had called a Gram Sabha on 24-03-2026, in which a resolution has been unanimously passed not to grant approval for the expansion to Project Proponent M/s Viraj Profiles Pvt. Ltd.

If the Gram Sabha itself has not approved the proposed expansion project, then it is basically illegal for the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board to hold an Environment Public Hearing for the proposed expansion project. Therefore, this public hearing should be cancelled.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee informed that objection has been noted.

2) Advocate Hemant Parshuram Patil, Residence-In boundary of Man Grampanchayat, Taluka, District-Palghar:-

It is hereby informed that Maharashtra Pollution Control Board has published a public notice for Environment Public Hearing on environment on 04-03-2026. It is received at the Gram Panchayat Office on 13-03-2026. Even though it is mandatory to receive public notice thirty days in advance at all Gram Panchayat offices, it has been received late at the Gram Panchayat office.

MPCB has made a mistake and illegally organized a public hearing on the environment on 08-04-2026 i.e. today.

Also, although it is mandatory to publish the environmental public hearing notice in a largely circulated local newspaper in the project area as per the rules, it has not been published in the local newspaper here.

This means that the environmental public hearing notice has been deliberately published in a newspaper that is not read largely in this area.

Also, since this Gram Panchayat falls under the constitutional provisions of the PESA Act, it is mandatory to obtain prior approval from the Gram Sabha for the project expansion before organizing this public hearing. Since such prior approval has not been obtained, this public hearing on environmental issues does not fall within the framework of the law.

Therefore, although this Environment Public Hearing illegal, I am of the opinion that this Environment Public Hearing should be cancelled.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee informed that suggestions, objections have been noted.

3) Advocate Rahul Patil, Ex Dy. Sarpanch, Grampanchayat Man, Taluka, District-Palghar:-

The "PESA" Act has been enacted under Article 43 of the Constitution of India. According to Section 4 of the PESA Act, it is mandatory to obtain a prior "No Objection Certificate" (NOC) from the Gram Sabha of the concerned Gram Panchayat for the establishment or expansion of any project.

In this regard, Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, New Delhi has given a ruling in the Petition Orissa Mining Corporation V/s Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, New Delhi that Column 60 states that if any project falls in a notified area as per the "PESA" Act, it is mandatory to obtain prior No Objection from the Gram Sabha of the concerned Gram Panchayat. There is no evidence that Project Proponent has submitted an application to the Gram Panchayat office in advance, nor is there any evidence that they have obtained prior No Objection from the Gram Sabha. Here, Project Proponent have violated the rights of the Gram Sabha.

Advocate Rahul Patil, Ex. Dy. Sarpanch, Gram panchayat Man, Taluka, District-Palghar further said that for projects like the "Bullet Train", the then District Collector, Palghar, submitted the first representation to all the project-affected Gram Panchayat offices in 2022 and obtained prior permission from the Gram Sabha. It means even a Central government project like the "Bullet

Train" requires prior approval from the Gram Sabha, but which new law is passed that expansion of this private project does not require a prior No Objection Certificate from the Gram Sabha?

Advocate Rahul Patil, former Deputy Sarpanch, showed a copy of the letter of the Hon'ble District Collector, Palghar to the Gram Panchayats regarding the passing of the Gram Sabha's prior No Objection Certificate for the Bullet Train.

He showed copy of the letter sent by then Sub Divisional Officer, Palghar on WhatsApp.

In such a situation, how has Maharashtra Pollution Control Board organized an Environment Public Hearing by violating fundamental right of Article 14 of the Constitution, despite not having obtained the No Objection Certificate from the Gram Panchayats under the PESA Act? If everyone is "Equal before the Law", then why didn't Viraj Company obtain prior No objection of the Gram Sabha as per the provisions of Section 4 under the PESA Act? Why didn't Maharashtra Pollution Control Board ask the Project Proponents about this?

Therefore, this Environment Public Hearing is illegal and violates the constitutional rights of the villagers. Hence, I am of the opinion that this public hearing on the environment should be cancelled.

He further said that under Article 21 of the Constitution of India, access to clean water and clean air is a fundamental right of citizens. For this only, State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) have been established in our country.

Our fundamental rights are being violated here. It is the responsibility of the Government Administration to protect the fundamental rights of the citizens and also provide fundamental rights to citizens as per the Duties of the State under Article 51.

If prior NOC of Gram Panchayats is required for government project like Bullet Train, then Maharashtra Pollution Control Board officials should explain in person why they have not asked Project Proponent to obtain prior NOC from Gram panchayats for a private project.

We have full faith on India's judicial system and the Indian Constitution that has given us rights, and we will fight against this project in the Supreme

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Court and get our rights. However, this public hearing is illegal and should be canceled immediately.

Environment Public Hearing Committee informed that suggestions, views, objections have been noted.

Here, Shri Kundan Sankhe, resident of Khairapada, Taluka, District Palghar, spoke and said that we have participated in many public hearings.

Before anyone else speaks, Shri Rahul Patil has raised some issues. Answers and clarifications were expected on the issues he raised, but they have not been given. However, answers should be given on those issues.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that it has been noted that there is no resolution of the Gram Sabha. Also, the suggestions, objections raised in the meeting are being noted.

4) Shri Mahendra More, Ex.Member, Zilla Parishad-Palghar, Mandal President, Bhartiya Janata Party, Boisar Area:-

Maharashtra Pollution Control Board has organized this Environment Public Hearing for the expansion of Viraj Profiles Company here. It is illegal. Therefore, we, the local Bhoomi Putra/ sons of soil of Boisar division, have come here to protest against it.

This is a company that is destroying the environment. This company is misleading the locals and our tribal brothers and sisters by showing very little tree plantation and education assistance to children in the presentation.

Everyone here knows that many people have died due to activities of Viraj company. Why government administration is behind the company that is responsible for this?

This Environment Public Hearing is organized by Sub Regional Officer, Tarapur-2, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, Boisar (West), Taluka, District-Palghar for the expansion of Viraj Profiles Company is illegal as it violates the rights of the Gram Sabha under the PESA Act and it is our prime demand that this public hearing be cancelled.

In this regard, the villagers of Man village, Taluka, District-Palghar have called a Special Gram Sabha on 24th March, 2026 and unanimously passed a

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resolution opposing the proposed project expansion. However, this illegal public hearing should be cancelled.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that suggestions, views, opinions, objections raised in the meeting are noted.

5) Shri Kundan Sankhe, Residence-Khairapada, Taluka, District-Palghar:-

When a project is going to be commissioned or expanded, information of the proposed impact on environment likely to be caused by the proposed project and Environmental Management Plan to be adopted by the Project Proponent is to be known to PAPs (Project Affected Persons) is main aim of Environment Public Hearing.

Government of India or Government of Maharashtra are trying to implement such projects through government enterprises for the local development, for development of district and increasing the GDP (Gross Domestic Product).

Shri Kundan Sankhe objected here that the display of the person raising suggestion/ objection is not being shown on the big screen. We are the local people of Palghar district. An attempt is being made to move forward with the public hearing without showing the display on screen.

Till now, many public hearings on environmental issues have been held, at each place, the display of those registering suggestions and objections is shown on a big screen. The person speaking must be visible on the display. That process is not here; I have a clear objection to this.

He said that a public hearing is a hearing of the people. There are some basic ethics while holding a public hearing.

The first basic ethics is that when different types of projects come up, it affects the progress of the district, state, and country. Before establishing such projects, it is necessary to know the feelings of the people and start such projects for the benefit of the state and the country.

That is why the public often co-operates. While setting up private industries, they sign MoU with the government to increase employment opportunities there. This environmental public hearing is to record the suggestions, views or objections of the public regarding the environment.

We demand that a public hearing be held near the project.

This will be the first example in Maharashtra where a public hearing on environmental issues has been organized for the expansion of an industry, and a public hearing has been organized on the side of the existing project itself. Today's Environment Public Hearing is being held on company-owned plot/premises.

This means that the public hearing is a violation of the directives that public hearings should be organized in a transparent manner without any pressure on the public.

Local people are being deprived of natural justice here. Therefore, there is a strong reason to cancel this public hearing. This public hearing is like being held in the house of Project Proponent.

If Environment Public hearing is to be held in a neutral and transparent manner, then there are public spaces, spaces available in government schools in the nearby area.

Hence, it was appropriate for District Administration and Maharashtra Pollution Control Board to organize this public hearing at a third party/ public place. This is the concrete point of our objections.

But here, Environment Public Hearing is arranged on the plot which is under the possession of respective industry who is demanding expansion and for which Environment Public Hearing is called by MPCB with prior permission of District Administration. This is a violation of the law and transparency. So, it is our firm demand that this public hearing be cancelled.

Second point is informed by Advocate Rahul Patil. It is said that "**Na Vidhan Sabha, Na Loksabha, Sabse Badi Gramsabha**" i.e. "**Neither the Vidhan Sabha nor the Lok Sabha, the greatest is Gram Sabha**" as per the Constitution of India, the Gram Sabha here is protected by the Government under the PESA Act.

Here one has to go all the way to the Supreme Court, only then will it be decided whether or not there will be relief under the PESA Act. This is not a government project. The government has no stake in this project. Can a private project violate the Gram Sabha resolution under the PESA Act?

Our Palghar district was formed on 01st August, 2014. The reason for this is that the tribal community, the Bahujan community should get protection in Palghar district. The tribal community which is on the sidelines of the social flow/development should get protection.

Separate rules have been made for it under the PESA Act. The name of the Gram Panchayat in which this project is being built is Man Gram Panchayat. Man Gram Panchayat has received a letter from Maharashtra Pollution Control Board on 13th March, 2026.

A Gram Sabha is to be conducted for any subject/ issue. It is the right of the village. As per the rules, an agenda has to be prepared for the six-day meeting.

After 13th/14th March, the agenda for the meeting was prepared and the Gram Sabha was conducted as per the rules on 24th March, 2026. More than 468 persons have registered their opposition to the proposed project expansion in the Gram Sabha.

Hence, the Environment Public hearing which is taking place today is completely illegal as it is complete violation of the law in the Pesa area, the power of the Gram Sabha in the Pesa area and power given to the Gram Sabha by the Constitution of India

The opposition to the expansion of the project has been made through a resolution of the Gram Sabha. Hence, conducting Environmental Public Hearing for the respective project today is violation of natural justice and rights granted by the Constitution of India by the law in the Pesa area and the rights of the Gram Sabha in the Pesa area.

Therefore, forcefully conducting this Environment Public Hearing today is illegal. Hence, our firm demand is that you should reject the project expansion.

He said that in 2012, Viraj Udyog held an Environment Public Hearing at the Nagzari Naka school. During the meeting, local residents raised suggestions and objections. Project Proponent assured the people that industry would never cause any form of pollution.

He further assured that sons of soil will be given priority for the job opportunities in the project. He promised that Skilled Development Program /Training will be given to the local people to empower them for the jobs.

So, from 2012 to 2026, how much CSR funds were made available in various villages here, how many local sons/ people were provided with employable training and employment opportunities?

Project Proponents have lied for fourteen years. This time too, they are going to cheat our local poor people. All the promises made in the presentation were made in 2012 as well.

Hence, this project should not be approved due to non-fulfillment of the promises made in the previous 2012 environment public hearing. He asked Environmental Public Hearing Committee under which category does this project fall?

Convener, Environment Public Hearing Committee informed that proposed project falls under Category – A.

Shri Sankhe said my Point of Objections should be noted:-

Tarapur Industrial Estate is adjacent to us. It has been developed by the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC). There are other factories. There are also factories of Viraj Industries.

Maharashtra Government has established Asia's largest industrial estate i.e. Tarapur Industrial Estate. We are not against any project.

He asked which zone the proposed project i.e. whether it is under Red Zone, Orange Zone or Green Zone. Is the project in MIDC or non-MIDC zone?

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee answered that the proposed project is in non-MIDC Zone.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee informed that all the suggestions, objections as raised are noted. It will be included in the minutes of meeting and the report will be submitted to Government of India. An Expert Committee will take further decision. Hence, suggestions, views, objections should not raise again and again. So that other speakers will get enough time to raise their issues.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee informed that the objections as raised by Advocate Rahul Patil regarding not obtaining prior permission though respective Gram panchayat falls under PESA is noted.

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Shri Sankhe remarked that it is observed that the proposed project expansion will be carried on the plot/ land which is not earmarked for Industrial Development.

Second Point -

The water canal of Surya River is adjacent to this project. Surya River is flowing at a distance of approximately 3.0 (three) Km from the project site and if we consider the circumference, it is flowing at a distance of 1.5 (one and a half) Km.

Water from this Surya River is provided for irrigation and agricultural purposes. The policy of the Government is that the farmer should be self-reliant.

Our objection is that several lakhs of litres of water is being used for industry by sump up agricultural water. The purpose/ goal of the Surya River is to provide water to Palghar, Vasai, Virar, Mira-Bhayander, which means the Surya River is our life line, our existence. We are surviving by drinking the water of the Surya river.

If any industry is spoiling the water of the river, then the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board should take action against it. Lakhs of litres of irrigation water will be used for this industry.

It has also been clarified recently that the project is in a non-MIDC and not a notified industrial area of the Government of Maharashtra. Lakhs of litres of water will be used in agricultural irrigation for the production of the project. There is no Common Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP). There are many companies in Tarapur. The industrial effluent from that company is processed at the Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) of that company and then discharged to the Common Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP) in Tarapur, where it is treated and neutralized and released into the sea. There is no Common Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP) here. The company will illegally use millions of liters of agricultural water to generate millions of liters of sewage water and pollute the irrigated water for production. Such a project being in a non-MIDC area is a threat to the environment. There is no CETP here. Although the company promises for ZLD - Zero Liquid Discharge project, the companies here discharge sewage by saying ZLD. The dust particles that will be released into the atmosphere due to the production process of the plant will pollute the air. It is our responsibility to conserve the water of the river Surya. However, the project should not be approved.

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We request the Project Proponent to take the project to the notified industrial zone of the Government of Maharashtra, i.e. wherever the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) is located. We are also ready to give a letter to the government that this project should be taken to the places where the "Red" category factories are located.

A few years ago, the central government had set up a textile park here. It had to be cancelled in view of the potential pollution. Locals raised a lot of objections to Karmatara as it was located next to the Surya river.

Hence, Environment Public Hearing Committee is requested not to approve the project. Our scenic surroundings should be preserved as a paradise. Through this is public hearing, it should be informed that the proposed project is not in the interest of the people.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions, objections raised have been noted.

6) Shri Sameer More, Local Sons of Soil:-

The public outrage seen in this public hearing is about the past actions of Viraj Company. The water and air pollution caused by this company has affected the public life. Hence, all sons of the soil say that this industry should not be allowed to expand due to the fear of those consequences.

The pickling process used in the project, in which hydro-chloric acid and nitric acid is used, everyone is opposing due to fear that the acid will go into the water of rivers, drains, borewells, wells and wells through the effluent.

I request Environment Public Hearing Committee that there is no need to tell us what is the present status state of pollution in Tarapur. The polluted gases/ fumes emitted from the existing Industrial Effluent Treatment Plants (ETPs) in the company operated by Viraj Company should be controlled. Necessary measures should be taken immediately to prevent accidents and road accidents caused by this industry. With the expansion of this project, the entire water in the area will be polluted. The natural beauty here is going to be spoiled totally.

If the directives passed by Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) are not followed, then all those industries which have various allegations against them should not be allowed to expand.

If the Govt. Administration continues with this public hearing, then we will adopt various constitutional ways and agitations. I would request the police administration here to file cases against the Viraj administration in the same way they do when we agitated, because they have ruined the lives of many people. And if you are going to be angry with the people who have come here after this public hearing today, then remember that the knot is with us.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions, objections and objections raised have been noted.

7) Shri Avinash Patil, Kunbi Sena, Palghar District President:

In fact, the Gram Sabha has opposed this public hearing. The people's representatives and local MLAs have also opposed this public hearing. However, we condemn that you have forcibly organized this public hearing. We have submitted a written objections opposing the proposed project expansion. Nevertheless, the sons of the soil, as a local farmer, I am raising some objections here –

Even though the proposed expansion project is taking place in the villages of Man and Warangade, the ill-effects will be in the periphery of 10 km of the project. This is a Category 'A' project and will have serious consequences in the coming days. In fact, this project has been working here for the last 25-30 years and it is working on 9.7 hectares. The proposed expansion will be in an area of 41.44 hectares. If the 9.7 hectare project has had serious consequences, how severe will it be for a project that will increase by 10-11 times?

Proposed expansion project will require 4,200 KLD of water, which is about 42 lakh litres of water per day. An official study of sources of water supply and the sustainability yield of that source should be made available.

If the groundwater is to be extracted, then the permission of CGWA, the concerned Central Government agency and hydrologic study report should be shown.

Technical and flow chart capabilities should be provided on how to actually achieve ZLD (Zero Liquid Discharge).

There will be chemical use and water and air pollution. The daily and annual consumption of NO₂, SO₂, H₂SO₄, HNO₃, HCl should be made available.

Also, a storage security plan should be provided,
Chemicals that are very hazardous will be used here.

Modelling data of acid fumes, NOx, SOx should be shown along with local wind velocity.

Sewage capacity, ETP capacity, outlet standards should be shown.

How long the baseline data was collected to prepare the EIA, whether it was collected in the three seasons of monsoon, winter and summer,

Disaster Management Plan (DMP), in case of chemical leakage, fire, explosion, 5 km radius, whether the health impact has been studied separately, if any, should be made available.

This project will affect 49 villages, 52,000 families and a population of about 2.25 lakh.

Employment and MoU claims, employment guarantee to 3,500 people, where is the mandatory condition of the law for this, agreement should be shown.

Official figures should be made available on how many local and how many migrant workers are in the existing project at Boisar.

In the next 5-10 years, new residents will come to this area, so whether there is a study report on air and water pollution, a map of the distances between schools, villages, housing complexes, should be given.

In fact, whether the industrial area has been studied from the residential area, its other side analysis report should be made available

Written reports should be made available to the locals on whether there is a written guarantee that drinking water will not be affected, whether the Company Director will take personal responsibility in case of chemical leakage.

So we are strongly oppose this project.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions, objections raised have been noted.

8) Shri Kundan Sankhe, resident of Khairapada, Taluka, District-Palghar –

He again raised objection that we all want this illegal public hearing to be quashed. However, you should give your opinion on this. A presentation has been made at the outset. Shri Rahul Patil has also submitted the decision of the Court. Accordingly, we demand that you should cancel this public hearing immediately.

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At that time, participants were collectively shouting for the cancellation of the public hearing.

9) Advocate Rahul Patil, former Deputy Sarpanch, Gram Panchayat Man, Taluka, District-Palghar:

He said that the Judgment passed by him was passed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, New Delhi and was binding on all. If you do not take action according to the decision of the Supreme Court, then there can be a Contempt of Supreme Court. However, it should be noted. Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) is expected to respond in this regard. Regarding the PESA Gram Panchayat, it's the Supreme Court's decision.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the views and objections raised regarding Hon'ble Supreme Court judgment have been noted. When the minutes of the meeting are submitted to the government, the concerned Regulatory Authority will take note of it. On this issue, Regulatory Authority always take seriously. The project cannot be approved unless the Supreme Court's verdict is taken seriously. This will be part of the minutes of the meeting.

At that time **Advocate Rahul Patil** opined that the Supreme Court judgment in Nimagiri should be noted.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that his suggestion has been noted. However, the other person should be given a chance to speak.

Advocate Rahul Patil said that this is a public hearing. However, the minutes of the meeting should be made available to the local people.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the minutes of the meeting will be made available to all the project affected Gram Panchayat offices, District Collector's Office, MPCB and all Regulatory Authorities. It will be made available for public information on its website.

10) **Shri Kundan Sankhe** demanded that people should get video recording of the meeting along with the minutes of the meeting.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that recording is also part of the minutes of the meeting. Regulatory Authority puts those recordings on their website.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions and objections as raised have been noted.

11) Mr. Dayaran D'Mello, local son of the soil, resident of Man village, Taluka, District-Palghar:

You have continued this public hearing despite taking note of the Supreme Court's decision. So declare that you are going to start a public hearing by overruling the Supreme Court Judgement, then we will ask the next question.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that your say about public hearing is illegal and that the suggestions raised on the judgment passed by the Supreme Court has been noted and it would be included in the minutes. The minutes are submitted to the Regulatory Authority. Further decision in this regard will be taken by the Regulatory Authority.

12) Advocate **Rahul Patil opined** that the PESA Act was framed in 1996 under Section 243. It is our constitutional right under Article 4. It should be informed whether it is binding on you or not. It is a constitutional right that the approval of our Gram Sabha should be obtained. Why wasn't it taken? Moreover, the Supreme Court has also ruled that it is mandatory to take prior permission from the PESA Gram Panchayat.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the objections raised by him have been noted and will be included in the minutes and submitted to the Regulatory Authority of the government. Further decision in this regard will be taken by the Regulatory Authority. However, now you are requested to give the other person a chance to speak.

Shri D'Mello objected that the timing of the public hearing was not in the notice sent to our gram panchayat. But, you were here at 11.00 a.m. When you started the public hearing at 11.00 am, the local people were not in the tent. However, the notice sent to the Gram Panchayat should be read by the officials of the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board in the meeting here. The notice dated 04-03-2026 of the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board was received by the Gram Panchayat on 13-03-2026. It does not mention the time of the public hearing. If the time is not written, then under which provisions the public hearing started at 11:00 a.m. This is repression. It is the misfortune of the country that the officers of the Administration are doing these unconstitutional things.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that suggestions, objections raised have been noted.

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13) **Shri Sanjyot Raut, son of the soil:**

You should cite the Supreme Court's decision in connection with this public hearing and this public hearing is illegal.

Secondly, there are Environment Public Hearings, despite opposition from the local people, the District Collector in his/her prerogative issues Order that the project has been approved.

Thirdly, with respect to the Constitution, I want to say that thousands of people have come here. Everyone says that we are opposed to this expansion project and this public hearing is illegal. However, Chairman should declare that since the people are opposed to this expansion project, I order that the expansion projects of Viraj Company should be cancelled. You don't issue orders, you don't talk about Supreme Court orders, you don't talk about anything. I have come from the Kisan Sabha. The water that is being polluted by the company, which is polluting the land, my Kisan Sabha has made representations, but no action has been taken on it.

Also, arrangements were made so that local activists could not reach the meeting. It is not known whether it was done by you or at the behest of the administration officials or by the Viraj administration. But it was planned that people should not come here. In a democracy, there is an attempt to suppress the voice of the people. But no one can suppress the voice of the people. I condemn the fact that you are holding this public hearing.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions, objections raised have been noted.

14) **Shri Ashok Shingada, Ulgulan Brigade Chairman, Tribal Activists:**

Advocate Rahul Patil has said that the Gram Sabha passed a resolution in the context of the Nimagiri Judgment that we do not want the project and the Supreme Court respected it, respected the Scheduled Area, the Gram Sabha, and reprimanded the Vedanta Company that the project could not be implemented here. Because this area is a Scheduled Area and belongs to the tribal community. The tribals have the right to self-regulation and self-governance in their area. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of the tribals. So are you bigger than the Supreme Court?

Now the second Supreme Court decision is the Samata Judgment. Administration should study the Samata judgment. According to the Samata Judgment, not even an inch of land belonging to you or the Central Government

is in the Scheduled Area unless the Gram Sabha gives its consent. Why don't you announce that you are cancelling this public hearing because the sons of the soil, the tribal society here are opposed to the project?

If this Environment Public Hearing is not cancelled and if there is an outbreak of tribal brothers and sisters here, then the District Administration will be responsible because they are insulting the Supreme Court, not we. We have asked you to cancel this illegal public hearing in a constitutional way. The Padas (localities) around this Viraj company belong to the tribal community.

I request you that the culture, traditions and customs of the tribal society should not be spoiled in any way, that is why the Constitution of India gave us the 5th Schedule and in 1996, the PESA Act came into existence and under Section 4 of the PESA Act, we have been given the right to preserve tribal customs.

There are hundreds of thousands of immigrants in this Viraj company. They live in a chawl in our Adivasi hamlet. There are 100-200 migrants living in the chawl. Their behaviour is affecting our society. This is unconstitutional.

We tribal communities do not get pure water. There is no clean air. When the right to clean water, air, environment, health is given under Article 21 of the Constitution of India the Right to Life, do you have the right to take it away?

However, today I request you to cancel this public hearing on the environment. There is opposition from the Gram Sabha, so your project will not be commissioned. Otherwise we should note that if we go to Court, you will be the first Respondent.

We give a final warning to the management of the project that the company's bullying and appeasement will not continue in the tribal areas. There is opposition from the Gram Sabha, so your project will not be started. I also appeal to the Public Hearing Committee on the Environment to declare that they are higher than the Supreme Court, otherwise this public hearing should be canceled.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that suggestions, objections raised have been taken into account.

15) **Shri Amol Garje:**

I am asking officials of Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) who are present here whether the company is polluting or not? He further said that

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it is a file with full proof that the company is polluting and he showed the file. He said that this file contains all the information about the hazardous, water and air pollution that Viraj Company is causing as well as the plants of Viraj Company in Tarapur Industrial Estate (G-3 and G-4). This file is not only with the MPCB, but also with Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee and with Additional District Magistrate, Palghar, Regional Officer, MPCB, Thane and Members, Public Hearing Committee on Environment - Palghar as well as District Collector-Palghar.

He said that answer should be given in this meeting by MPCB first that why only a show cause notice has been issued when Viraj Company is causing such harmful pollution, why strict action has not been initiated and why this Environment Public Hearing is held on the land owned by Viraj Company. We condemn this.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions, objections raised have been noted.

16) Mr. Dayran D'Mello, a local son of the soil, residing in Man village, Taluka, District-Palghar said that our original/ previous issue is not solved. You should declare that the Supreme Court's verdict is not binding on us. You make it public, then we will reiterate our points.

Here Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee answered that I have repeatedly told all that the issues, suggestions/objections raised by you are being noted of and will be included in the minutes of the meeting. However, the suggestions, objections that have been raised so far have been noted. It will be included in the minutes of the meeting. The minutes will be submitted to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, New Delhi through the Headquarters, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, Mumbai. An Expert Committee takes further decisions in this regard. The minutes of the meeting will also be available at the project affected gram panchayat offices. However, it is requested that others should also be given a chance to speak.

Shri D'Mello objected and said that our second demand is that the notice sent by MPCB to the Gram Panchayat Man should be read out in the meeting. Check if the time has been given in that notice.

Chairman informed Shri D'Mello that as per the Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006 as issued by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, New Delhi (EIA Notification, 2006),

the Public Hearing Notice of the proposed project has been published in a local newspaper in Marathi and one in a national newspaper in English thirty days in advance. The venue, date and time of the meeting have been mentioned in the notice. The public hearing notice on the environment published in the paper is for all citizens. It clearly states that the time of meeting is 11.00 am.

Shri D'Mello objected that you should express your views on the PESA Act, stating that the Supreme Court's order is not binding. Then we will put forth our views in the meeting.

Chairman, Environment Hearing Committee said that I have a request that I have said 4-5 times that the objections raised by you have been noted.

Yet Shri D'Mello was making the same objections.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the main purpose of the environment public hearing is to take note of the environmental suggestions, objections as raised by participants about the proposed project and to submit the minutes of meeting to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, New Delhi through the Headquarters, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, Mumbai. An Expert Committee takes further action on all objections and suggestions in this regard.

Shri D'Mello again objected that whether you are not watching this this public cry?

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee suggested Shri D'Mello to give an opportunity to another person to speak.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions, objections as raised have been noted.

17) At that time, Advocate Rahul Patil told Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee that it is requested by all to read out paragraph 60 of the Supreme Court judgment given to you.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that first the purpose and scope of public hearings should be understood by all. In the environment public hearing, local people, project affected people are expected to raise environmental suggestions, views, criticisms, objections about the proposed project. Our job is to take note of it and include in the minutes of the meeting and submit all the documents i.e. minutes of the meeting, revised EIA,

written suggestions/objections received along with them to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, New Delhi. An Expert Committee there takes further decision in this regard. Convener, Environment Public Committee while starting this Environmental Public Hearing Committee already informed that this Committee does not approve any project, reject the project or recommend the project. After submitting the minutes of the meeting to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, New Delhi, the Expert Committee takes further decision in this regard.

However, all participants are requested to raise suggestions, objections keeping in mind the purpose and scope of the public hearing. It is not expected here to read specific paragraphs of the Supreme Court judgment and discuss among themselves.

18) **Shri Kundan Sankhe inquired whether** Maharashtra Pollution Control Board has sent a letter to the Gram Panchayat regarding the conduct of Environment Public Hearing. Whether project affected villages have been informed about time of the public hearing?

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee replied that in accordance with the Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006 as issued by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Govt. of India, New Delhi, a public notice was published in a local newspaper in Marathi and one in a national newspaper in English with the date, venue and time of the meeting at 11.00 a.m. However, in the letter sent by the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board to the Gram Panchayat regarding the conduct of the public hearing on the environment, the time of the public hearing on the environment was not written, so many people were not aware. However, now the other person should be given a chance to speak.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that suggestions, objections as raised have been noted.

19) **Shri Ashok Shingada, Ulgulan Brigade Chairman, Tribal Activists:**

Mr. Ashok Shingada objected that why are you hurrying for a public hearing, first the consent of the Gram Panchayat should be obtained, then the public hearing should be held. We are not against anyone. First the consent of the Gram Sabha should be obtained, then the public hearing should be held in a public place instead of on the land owned by the company.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that suggestions, objections as raised have been noted.

20) Shri D'Mello again objected and demanded that the paragraph of the letter submitted by Advocate Rahul Patil be read. Just as Viraj gave information about the expansion of the company, the information about the judgment should be given to the attendees.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee reiterated his request that all suggestions, views, comments, objections raised by him are being taken into account. It is requested that the same issues should not be raised beyond the purpose and scope of public hearing, and others should also be given an opportunity to speak, only 2-3 people are speaking repeatedly. Women are present here. Women should also be given a chance to speak.

21) Shri Subhash Chumda, Resident-Maan, Taluka, District-Palghar:

Many locals here have expressed opposition to the expansion of the project. However, even though the locals had opposed the project in the past, the project gets approval later. Locals do not know anything about the project. Some leaders are cheating and misleading our locals.

So, I request that a meeting should be held in each of the Gram Panchayats. Those who are locals do not know anything about the Viraj company. Only those who oppose the company in the meeting will ask to give approval to company.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions, objections and objections raised have been taken into account.

22) Mrs. Anjali Sandeep Bhawar, Sarpanch, Man Gram Panchayat, Man, Taluka, District-Palghar-

The public hearing held today is highly suspicious and in justiciable. It is also a company about which many serious questions is being raised. First of all, let me raise a very basic point here that our village is a Gram Panchayat area under the PESA Act. In such a situation, it is mandatory by law to take full consent of the Gram Sabha. This process is being carried out without taking it. This is a blatant violation of the PESA Act. We held a special meeting on 24-03-2026 and resolved unanimously to cancel the public hearing on the environment for expansion of Viraj Company in the Gram Sabha of PESA Gram Panchayat. It has been submitted to the District Collector, Palghar. District Collector has

not taken any action in this regard. I, as Man Gram Panchayat Sarpanch strongly condemn this process and practice.

Hon'ble District Collector was to postpone the public hearing, but the administration is always on the side of the capitalists, who are the poor and who are the tribals, they do not go back when they come out on the streets. The purpose of the PESA Act is stated.

Administration of the village gives place to the Gram Sabha on the basis of the village principle. Culture preserves the traditional traditions, cultures and common resources of the Scheduled Communities. Freedom from exploitation, the rights of the tribals to land, forest and water were preserved and external interference or exploitation was prevented.

Now to the third point. In the last 10-12 years, Viraj Profiles has given only water pollution, polluted water. We don't want public hearings and we don't want Viraj.

The second most important issue is that the public hearing is being held in the land owned by Viraj Company. If public hearings are held in company-owned land to hear the voice of the people, how can it be fair? We don't accept that. That's why we don't want a public hearing.

Water Pollution - Water pollution has been occurring here for many years. Wells and borewells are getting polluted. In the past, villagers used to dig wells and drink water. Will they drink now? Participants shouted together that they will not drink.

Noise Pollution – Our people did not know about noise pollution. In the past, we used to hear the sound of animals and birds. Now comes the voice of the company. The constant noise is affecting the daily lives of the villagers. The elderly, the young, all are suffering. The government tells us to implement our projects. Make a prosperous village. And if there are such factories to make a prosperous village, will the village become prosperous?

They ask for the construction of forest dams. If the polluted water of Viraj Company comes to the village, will it be possible to build a forest there? All attendees shouted together 'No'.

We strongly oppose this project and the expansion of the project. The public hearing should be held only when our villagers tell you. Also, this public

hearing should be held in the Gram Panchayat office or in a public place. It is important that all villagers should express their views fearlessly. The public hearing process should be under the supervision of the administration. The process of public hearings should be made visible to all at the right time and clearly. It is mandatory for the project to take no objection from the Gram Panchayat.

Will the government officials drink the polluted water of Viraj? Will you drink water after bringing it now?

People say that the company sees garbage in front of the gram panchayat. Who's going to pick up this garbage? They don't remove the garbage first, and tell the gram panchayat to remove the garbage first. The company should remove its garbage itself, only then ask the gram panchayat to remove the garbage.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions, objections raised have been noted.

23) Mrs. Neeta Kishore Katkar, District Vice President of Bhumisena Adivasi Ekta Parishad, Former Sarpanch, Mahagaon, Taluka, District-Palghar:

We strongly oppose this public hearing on the environment. This public hearing is illegal and should be cancelled. If this public hearing has been organized in violation of the authority of the Gram Sabha, then the Viraj Company and the District Administration are fully responsible for it.

I have only one question to ask Government – are you with the people or with the Viraj company? So many projects have come up in our Palghar district, all our land has been forcibly taken away, projects have been imposed on us. If you don't have time to give to the public, then why are you sitting for Viraj's company?

Government officials are the servants of the people. If you are a Class-1 officer, you should teach us the rules. We are less educated, we know how injustice is done to us, you are directly violating the Gram Sabha Act under the PESA Act. Palghar district is a tribal-dominated district. There are PESA Gram Panchayats here. We have the right to this PESA Gram Panchayat area. We have the right to this land, to the water. Who are you, you will drink Bisleri water, where will we locals drink water from? You have to answer whether we can afford Bisleri water?

If you say proposed expansion is for the development, then whether we can do our farming activity in your company? Whether the paddy is going to grow or not, it will require land. Company has polluted our land here.

There's a activist here. He planted rice last year. The rice arrived and smelled strongly of chemicals. Will you compensate for it? Company have come here not to develop, but to do injustice?

This fight will remain like this till the end. The only thing we want to say the government that you should be on the side of the people. Our basic needs are food, clothing and shelter. If they are hammering at it, we will never tolerate it. Nature is our God, we believe in nature. If you hammer on nature, we will never tolerate it. There will be more intense agitation than this. We will not allow any vehicle to go in and come out of the Viraj company.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions, objections raised have been noted.

24) Mr. Sanjay Patil, Shiv Shakti Samajik Sangathan, Boisar:

Today's public hearing is an insult to the PESA Act and the tribal community. If the Gram Sabha is given powers, learn to respect it. Every time they are asked to hold a Gram Sabha and take a resolution. If you don't want to respect the Gram Sabha resolution, then why should we hold a Gram Sabha?

Today, if you look at the history of Viraj, I have fought against him. The project was imposed penalty of only Rs. 20,000/- or Rs. 25,000/-. Today the MIDC here is in the western belt. The water and air there are completely deteriorated. It has become difficult for people to live.

I request Government that this eastern belt should be preserved for the stay of the people, for the welfare of the people. If there is another project in Eastern belt, then how will people live and survive?

Locals feel that Viraj is the most air polluting. Viraj is the most water polluting. The canal here mixes chemical sewage from the Viraj company. Many wells and borewells in the area have been polluted. Locals here have to drink polluted water because not everyone can drink Bisleri water.

I also request Project Proponent Viraj not to bring such polluting projects here. This eastern belt is part of the greenbelt habitat. Adivasis and Kunbis do farming here. This expansion project should be cancelled so that agriculture is

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not destroyed. This public hearing is illegal. Public hearings should not be held where the project is going to be implemented as it should be conducted smoothly. During the meeting, it appears that the administration is supporting the Viraj project and the public hearing is farce. I request that such projects should not come up in the eastern belt of Boisar. Only then the tribals, the Kunbi people and the poor people will live here by farming. However, I condemn this project and the public hearing on the environment.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions, objections and objections raised have been taken into account.

25) Shri Prashant Prabhakar Patil, resident of Padghe village, Taluka, District-Palghar:-

There is a village near this Man village at its latitude - Padge. You've forgotten that. The adjacent village is mine and we allege that 400 KLD water for the first project has been stolen from my village by the Project Proponent, this is always the allegation of our village, so you must have forgotten us.

However, I request management of Viraj Company that I have seen your figures in the presentation and the question of where do you get only 0.4 MLD of water from is still not answered.

The next requirement of water you will need is 4.0 MLD. District Collector and Hon. Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee, Padge and 19 more villages needed 4.0 MLD water in the water supply scheme, then you have reported non availability of water, then what did Viraj has given you that they will get 4.0 MLD water, we want an answer from the Administration.

The Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report, which you showed in the presentation, should be one year in advance. We don't know the methodology of the water samples, air samples, sound samples that are collected. I make a serious allegation that the company which prepare the report is not registered, if the report on which we have organized this public hearing is illegal, how much it is democratic, it needs to be answered. Local data, interviews with local people should have been included in this report. It is not seen anywhere.

If question of 0.4 MLD water is not answered, how will the company respond to 4.0 MLD water? When 0.4 MLD of water comes out, the answer will be as to what the pipe inserted inside the Baripada does. We also want to know how many borewells have been dug inside the 9.0 acres of Viraj Company and how much sewage goes into it. At the same time, if this 4.0 MLD water comes

out, then you will damage the crops of my Padgha Sujalam, Sufalam village, Padghagaon and Maan village. If we look at it, there is no answer in the report as to what will be done with good forests, rich flora and fauna, protected plants and animals. If Viraj company does not think about water, air, noise and people living here, then why would Viraj company think about small animals in the forest?

He said that I condemn the fact that the company, which was established in 1995, has used the Palghar area for the selfish interests of the company and to destroy our truth, even though Viraj Company has made beautiful promises in the meeting here.

Chairman, Public Hearing Committee on Environment said that the suggestions, objections and objections raised have been taken into account.

26) Shri Sachin Ramesh Lokhande, Republican Party of India, Thane-Palghar State President, Yuva Aghadi:

It is my clear opinion that the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board should be dissolved because we have never seen such a corrupt board. Entire belt of Palghar West is polluted and now are you going to pollute the entire belt of the East? So now our demand is to maintain the sentiments of the people. You do not accept the decision of Gram Panchayat PESA, you have not taken our tribal society for granted, if the administration behaves like this, then what will happen to this Boisar region? If this Maharashtra Pollution Control Board remains like this, then this area will be completely displaced. Every citizen here will be healthy, educationally and socially prosperous. The citizens here will be completely destroyed.

However, our main demand will be that the expansion project should not be implemented here.

Our only request to the Hon. District Collector is that the decision given by the constitutionally recognized PESA Gram Panchayat should have been read in the public hearing. We publicly condemn you for not reading it.

Secondly, there is no CETP planned here. As a result, the wastewater generated in the plant here seeps into the ground to a large extent. Also, the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board has not given an explanation on how the sewage generated in the plant is treated and disposed of further. However, the government administration should take action against the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board. If the District Administration, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board does not follow the PESA Act passed under the Constitution and the judgment given by the Supreme Court accordingly, then where will the common man go?

However, even if you continue this public hearing with repression, this agitation will not stop. We will take to the streets and take it forward legally. However, the administration should take note of this.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions, objections raised have been noted.

27) Shri Ashok Wade, Former Agriculture Chairman, Bharatiya Janata Party, District General Secretary:

Many of the attendees of the meeting have raised their suggestions, objections regarding the proposed project. I request the administration that there is a gram panchayat area here under the PESA Act. But if you don't obey the PESA law, what is the use of the PESA law?

This public hearing is illegal and is being conducted immorally, forcefully. The Supreme Court judgment submitted by advocate Rahul Patil was expected to be read at the meeting here. All those present here say that the public hearing should be cancelled.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions, objections raised have been taken into account.

28) Mr. Pawan Kumar Sarada, resident of Srinivas Park, Maan Gaon, Taluka, District-Palghar:

In 2009, when we came to live here, it seemed as if we had come to live in the lap of nature. The natural beauty here was nice. When the water was analysed, Hardness – 175 – There were 225 in the month of May. 175 used to come in October-November. In the rainy season, the hardness was less. When we go to the drain from here, there Hardness 60 – 65, chloride, 40-45.

Now, if analysed, there is more than 900 hardnesses. And 1435 ppm goes. It contains more than 550 TDS and chloride, which is harmful to health.

Ever since the company started, dark brown sewage has been discharged from the drain next door. The dark brown sewage is released from the company's pickling plant, which contains hydro-chloric acid and other hazardous chemicals. So our borewell water is also damaged. We have to drink bad water. I had also brought a sample of the water there, will anyone drink the water? But the police refused to take it inside. The water is so contaminated that it is no longer potable as per ISO standards.

The standard of calcium as shown in the presentation is 200 ppm. If 200 ppm converts to hardness, it becomes 500 ppm. The magnesium hardness will go up to 1000 ppm. According to the Water Treatment Handbook, the standard of drinking water is 225 hardness. It is not fit to drink.

If the hardness is more than 225, it is no longer potable water. Also, if this water is used for green belt, the fruits and flowers do not bloom.

The expansion will result in a lot of water pollution from the project.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions and objections raised have been taken into account.

29) **Reshma Jagtap, local Bhumi Kanya - Gundale -**

In fact, the warning was given on the 4th, at that time the public hearing was expected to be canceled. Yet, you have organized this public hearing. Every time you are saying that you are recording our speech, then you should record these points-

You ask our mothers and sisters how many mothers and sisters here have lost their small children because of the threat they have created to the environment due to the water pollution created by the company?

How many mothers and sisters who had gathered here lost their brothers and children due to the accident of the company's overloaded truck?

Ask them these questions. They're not here just to pass the time. There is a need for pure water supply to the local people. They should also get pure air. They have that right. Ask each and every woman who comes here what is bothering them with the company?

We have opposed to hold this public hearing. We are opposing the expansion of the project that you are doing. If you try to start the project, the local people will oppose it in such a way that you have not seen such opposition. The agitation will continue until the company stops working.

Participants made a collective slogans to cancel the public hearing.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that suggestions and objections raised have been noted.

30) **Shri Prabhakar Patil, President, Bahujan Vikas Aghadi, Palghar Taluka:**

In fact, I would like to say that even if you want to build a small house, you do not build a house without the permission of the Gram Panchayat. While

expanding such a big company, District Administration, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) was required to tell the company to submit the No Objection Certificate (NOC) of the Man Gram Panchayat first, only then a public hearing for the expansion would be held. However, you have organized this public hearing on the environment without doing any such thing. This is unfair. However, the Bahujan Vikas Aghadi, Palghar taluka and I personally condemn the holding of this public hearing.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions and objections raised have been taken into account.

31) **Dr. Yogesh Subhash Ban, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) District Vice President:**

All the speakers and seniors have made good points here. The only thing that stands out from all the points is that the gram panchayat under the PESA Act has not given permission for the proposed project expansion. Here it was seen that you are working against the Gram Panchayat under the PESA Act. Why are these rules only for the common man and not for Viraj? Has the government made other rules instead?

If you are going to commit such atrocities, what is the benefit of the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board? The Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) is not taking action against Viraj.

Maharashtra Pollution Control Board has all the files. We have all the 150-200 cases, paperwork has been done on them and they have been submitted to the District Collector, Palghar and the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board. A social worker like Mr. Amol Garje has presented all the information to you.

We condemn this public hearing. The sisters present at the meeting said that we will not allow any of Viraj's vehicle to go in and out of the company. The NCP is with the people.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions and objections raised have been taken into account.

32) **Shri Vishwanath Mahadev Rinjad, Baripada, Viraj lives behind the company:**

Viraj company says there is no pollution. If there is no pollution, what is the problem with Baripada? I have videos of pollution from the company, I show it to everyone. If Viraj says that they do not cause pollution, then watch this video.

VA

He showed the video. If anyone speaks against Viraj, then the supply of water is stopped. So shut down this factory.

All the participants jointly started slogans to announce to stop the public hearings together.

At that time, participants expressed the opinion that this project should be cancelled keeping in mind the sentiments of the common man.

Shri Vishwanath Mahadev Rinjad, Baripada alleged that the company releases water to the drain at night. Now water is released from the pipe into the drain. As a result, the drain gets filled with water and it is difficult for the children to go to school.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions and objections as raised have been noted

33) Mrs. Bhavana Sudhir Vichare, former Zilla Parishad Member, Palghar:

We are not standing here to express the role of any party, but of the locals. Everyone has expressed their opinion. I would like to point out to you that lands have been allotted for MIDC in Boisar West. Sons of soil were never against the development. That is why this development has been possible. When the people there are fed up with pollution, they have to come to the east. Locals are forced to leave their homes and come here. So if you are going to take the same stand here, where should the locals go? So what's the use of opening these offices? When they are raising only one issue without taking into consideration the passion of the locals - don't waste time. It is necessary for the Public Hearing Committee on the Environment to make a proper statement keeping in mind the sentiments of the people.

We are certainly respecting your right. However, in view of our public outrage, we are making strong announcements in this public hearing, yet you feel that your presentation is important. If you don't even once wonder what the feelings of the locals are, let's respect the locals first. You are conducting these public hearings in your own way. However, it is important to take these raised issues forward. Where will we local stay? You look at Palghar West, after six in the evening, we don't just blame Viraj company. So it is the responsibility of your officer to keep an eye on all the polluting companies. But you don't pay attention to these things. You take the letters we give you and just acknowledge them, then where do they go?

We strongly condemn all these things so that we too can have a comfortable life and for our future generations.

VK

You bring the project. We were not opposed to anything. But it is very wrong to take a public hearing by forcing it.

When you do whatever you want without taking into account the Gram Sabha or the Gram Panchayat, then you should be thankful that the locals have not done anything wrong. All your words are honored.

I really request you again if the way this pollution is increasing, then you also stay here. So you also have a generation to come.

When every officer comes to Palghar with this struggle, there are developmental projects coming up here. That's why you come here and put us in pollution. However, you should take it seriously that the all people have asked what provision will be done for water pollution from the proposed expansion? Villagers of this place could not sleep peacefully at night due to noise pollution. As a result, the incidence of cancer is increasing. Here, one of our sisters told us that the trucks of Viraj or other companies run fast and the children die on the spot. Will their children and their fortune be restored by giving them compensation of one or two lakh rupees? It is because of these things that everyone is opposed to this public hearing.

In the projects that are brought here, first of all, the local people should be considered responsibly. Tell us about the measures you are going to take to deal with the pollution. We don't express our views in public hearings. When you are asked, give an answer, but you do not give any kind of answer. You say us to speak and you don't listen. What you are doing here is going the wrong way. Listen to the feelings of mothers and sisters. We have been saying repeatedly that we have never opposed development. Pollution, the manner in which it is arbitrary, should stop somewhere.

A committee should be formed for all the locals and officials for the upcoming projects. Take them into confidence. This arbitrariness must be stopped. Wherever the public hearings take place, we all local daughters and sons of the soil will protest together.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions objections raised have been taken into account.

34) Shri Datta Sambre, Palghar District President of Adivasi Ekta Parishad Bhumi Sena Sangathan:

Without saying anything to Officials of the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) who are present in the Environment Public Hearing Committee

FOR conducting environment public hearing, I would like to tell my brothers and sisters who have gathered here that this Environment Public Hearing is illegal.

Under the PESA Act, the Gram Sabha in the Gram Panchayat has passed a resolution to abolish this public hearing on environment, but the officers who are holding public hearings today are blind, deaf and dumb. They are not the people's guardians. They are guardians of Viraj company. They have come here for the Viraj company. I publicly condemn such people and I will make a public appeal to the President of the Gram Sabha to organize a Gram Sabha against such officials and give a letter to the police station to register cases against them.

Similarly, a case should be registered under the Atrocity Act against the management of Viraj, who have spoiled the drinking water of tribals deliberately. But you have to do it. Because as long as we tolerate injustice, these people will continue to do injustice to us.

Today there is a large police administration here. I want to publicly tell them that my tribal brothers and sisters belonging to all religions should be given the same protection while fighting for their rights.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions and objections raised have been noted.

35) Shri Santosh Kawale, former Gram Panchayat member, Gundale, resident of Baripada, Taluka, District-Palghar:

The management of the company lured us and told us that we would give various concessions. But they have done nothing. Our Baripada was heaven fifteen years ago. This Viraj company has made that heaven worse than hell.

He asked the cameraman to take over the shoot and show the video of the company's pollution to everyone.

Shri Santosh Kawale objected that the water of our Baripada has been spoiled so much that it cannot be explained. Look at the water from our wells, borewells.

Chairman, Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions and objections raised have been noted.

36) Mr. Rohan Patil, Villager, Gundale, Vice President, BJP Palghar East Division: Neither the Constitution of India, nor the Supreme Court, nor the directions of the PESA Act are accepted here. So why is this public hearing is

VH

being held? What is the use of this public hearing if they do not listen to the questions of the villagers who come here and do not answer them? Today, there is no potable water in my Gundala Baripada. MIDC is fully supplying water to Baripada. Such is the condition of Baripada today that it was once a paradise. At a distance of three hundred meters from this Baripada, there is a fort of Asavli. The fort is known as a rich forest. It is necessary to see what has happened to the fort and the people due to the pollution of Viraj.

Due to this Viraj company, many green belts have been completely destroyed. First check if the workers who are working in the Viraj project have given preference to the locals. In the public hearing on environment in 2012, big promises were made that the sons of the soil would get employment opportunities, the area would be developed more beautifully, the local people would get opportunities in the field of education.

But nothing like that has happened. The agricultural water of the local farmers here is being illegally used for the factory. Many questions and objections were raised by the dignitaries of the meeting, but no answer was received. However, the grievances of the locals should be reported to the government and the expansion of the Viraj Company here should be cancelled immediately.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions and objections raised have been taken into account.

37) Shri Dheeraj Gawad, Deputy Sarpanch, Nandgaon, Tarapur, Taluka, District-Palghar:

I condemn this Environment Public Hearing of Viraj Profiles which is being organized here today. It has come to our notice that people from different social strata, different political parties, different ideologies of Palghar district have gathered here to register their outrage against the proposed project. Here it is important to talk about the technical aspects of the project, not to talk emotionally.

In the executive summary of the proposed project provided by the Project Proponents, it is stated that in the last five years, eighteen crores of CSR funds have been spent in the local villages. This is shown in a presentation. Did you paint the walls of the Gram Panchayat, organize women's self-help group programs, hold haldi kumkum programmes, organize sewing machines and spend ₹ 18/- (₹ Eighteen Crore) on these activities?

Palghar district is a tribal-dominated district, this culture should be spread to the world. However, locals are protesting that the Project Proponent have staged a Russian cultural event.

This company is in Critically Polluted Area (CP Area) It's close to Tarapur Industrial Area, most polluted area, which is declared by Central Pollution Control Board. If it is in five km circumference of Critically Polluted Area (CP Area) and if it is a highly polluting company in the Red category, then Viraj is obliged to comply with the Order of the Green Tribunal dated 19-08-2019.

Accordingly, directives are not followed by Viraj Company. The measures given by Project Proponent in their draft EIA are inadequate.

So the capacity of the existing CETP here is falling short. There is a lot of pollution, fish are dying due to pollution in Creek. Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) says that the area is heavily polluted. However, it is wrong to allow this expansion project.

Various hazardous chemicals will be used for pickling in the project, hence hazardous fumes will be generated in the atmosphere. We have seen, once upon a time, Baripada was paradise now completely destroyed due to pollution. The same situation is going to happen here also.

The EIA report is totally misleading, inadequate and legally inadmissible. Therefore, the Public Hearing on Environment is illegal and should be quashed.

If Project Proponent is saying that they have developed green belts, then it is wrong. They have not planted trees, they have killed trees. Their budget is ten crores for three years. The public hearing should be quashed as the report made by the Project Environment Consultant is inadequate and misleading.

Next issue – ZLD – Project promoters uses fresh water of local people and do release polluted water. Hence area is completely polluted due to the polluted water. Project Proponent will use 4.0 lakh litres of water per day for the expansion. Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) should clarify what is the technology that will purify 4.0 lakh litres of water per day. If alkaline water is produced in the project, then how it will be purified? It's impossible. This report of Project Proponent is false. Therefore, this public hearing should be canceled.

Further Objection: The baseline survey in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report is for only three months. However, as per the EIA Notification, 2006, it is mandatory to scientifically survey all the elements of the environment in all seasons i.e. monsoon, winter and summer. However, the environmental consultant has conducted a survey only for three months. The wrong EIA has been prepared, hence public hearing on the wrong report should also be cancelled.

He objected that as per Appendix 4 of the EIA Notification, it is mandatory to hold public hearings in public places near the project i.e. schools, grounds, gram panchayat halls. Villagers are not allowed to speak freely if public hearings are held in the premises owned by the company. We observed what police force did in the name of security when we came in here. This is a violation of the principle of natural justice. Hon'ble Supreme Court said that we have the Right to Speak.

Hydro-chloric acid is a very lethal chemical that affects the internal organs of the body and causes serious diseases. The lungs get clogged. Its quantity will increase by eleven times due to expansion. However, it has not been studied in the EIA report. However, this public hearing has been organized and it is illegal, so it should be canceled.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions, objections raised have been taken into account.

38) Shri Bhavesh Fawade, Bhumiputra:-

I request the officials of the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board to hold this illegal public hearing. While Mr. D'Mello was raising the suggestions/ objections here in the meeting, you said that the same person should not speak again and again, but the other person should be given an opportunity to speak. So let me tell you that there are three expert lawyers in this fight. They have knowledge of pollution laws. Some dignitaries from the social sector spoke here. All of them have been working in the social sector for many years and have emerged as leaders. There is an Honourable Person who has prepared thousands of students in Boisar region. However, the approach of the Public Hearing Committee on Environment in the meeting is suspicious to the locals. Here you will continue a public hearing here, but we will appeal in the court. Because we have respected people who have spent their entire lives in social movements. We also have a team of expert lawyers with us.

39) **Shri Chetan Haribhau Churi, Group Gram Panchayat Man Member, Resident - Warangane-Man Village, Taluka, District-Palghar-**

It is submitted to you that the Man Gram Panchayat area has been declared as a Scheduled Area under the PESA Act and the Gram Sabha has been given specific powers. Exercising the authority of the Gram Sabha, Gram Panchayat Man has unanimously opposed the expansion of the proposed Viraj profiles in the Gram Sabha held on 24-03-2026 in the Gram Sabha and a resolution has been passed with the signatures of 437 villagers present in the Gram Sabha. I'll read it to you. At that time, he appealed to all those present to raise their hands that those who are opposing. All participants of the meeting raised their hands.

He requested to note that all the villagers here are opposing Environment Public Hearing.

Shri Churi said that I am reading out the resolution. He read out the resolution passed unanimously by the Gram Panchayat Man and said that a copy of the same has been submitted to the Sub-Regional Officer, Tarapur-2, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board.

A copy of this resolution has been given to the District Collector's Office-Palghar and the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board.

The resolution passed unanimously by the Gram Panchayat office should be included in the minutes of the meeting. All the villagers are protesting against this public hearing.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions/ objections raised have been taken into account.

40) Mr. Ramesh Dongre, Former Zilla Parishad Member, Man Group

First of all, I condemn the public hearing on the environment. Because public hearing is held here illegally. All the speakers have expressed their protest. I don't know by what authority a public hearing has been organized on Viraj. The pollution of water and air is here. We have seen pollution with our naked eyes. Now the people living near the project have shown photos and videos of the pollution from the company, it needs to arouse your senses. We have complained to you many times in the past. A huge pile of garbage is parked here. Along with the air, people in the area suffer from the company's pollution. You have organized this public hearing, it has been done to keep it rotten. You are not taking any responsibility in the public hearing, you are just taking the public hearing. When asked to read the Supreme Court judgment, you did not read which shows your mindset. On this side, if we say there is

going to be pollution, it is going to happen. This ongoing Viraj project has polluted water, air, land and forests here. Here the speaker said that by cutting dense forest, we are leading to forest destruction.

Also, we do not think that the land acquired for this project is legally taken. The lands of these tribal communities have also been acquired. While it is mandatory to take prior approval of PESA Gram Panchayat while acquiring land, it has not been taken. The administration of the company did not and you have not checked. This means you have eyes and blind, ears and limbs and lame. The thought have been expressed by the attendees that the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board should be dissolved first.

The Constitution has given us the fundamental right of clean air and clean water. The aerial distance of the project is 1.5 km. Above is the Surya River. It is our lifeline. It supplies water upto Mira-Bhayander. The textile park project was to come up 700 metres away from the river. MPCB also issued Consent to Establish (C to E). We staged an agitation and cancelled the project. If needed, we will take to the streets and intensify this fight. Also, our legal battle with the administration will continue.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions and objections raised have been noted.

41) Retired Teacher:- (Not informed name)

Viraj Company is a python. It was on 9 hectares of land, now it will be on 41 hectares of land. I don't think Viraj Company will keep any open land/freehold of land in the area next ten years. It needs to be stopped today. Officials of the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board are sitting. They should have announced in advance that no matter how much you shout, we will report that there will be no pollution of water, air, soil and noise. If the area outside the MIDC is as it is now, then how to maintain the scenic surroundings should be suggested. Representatives of the District Collector are sitting here. They should report that not a single person here has spoken in favour of the company, recommend implementation of measures to maintain this scenic area and cancel the Viraj project.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions and objections raised have been taken into account.

42) Shri Hemant Salunkhe, Sambhaji Brigade Palghar Taluka President:- So far, all the seniors have raised their issues, so I don't need to talk much. Because if you ask anyone what the Viraj Group is, he will tell you.

VA

Secondly, I condemn the drama being staged by the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) in the name of public hearing. We no longer trust Maharashtra Pollution Control Board. It's on the blacklist. We are going to fight this battle till the end.

I am the son of the soil. This is the fight of the villagers, we will fight together. Officials of the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board sitting behind the stage were laughing at the objections of the villagers. This public hearing is illegal and we do not accept it.

The report that the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board will give to its seniors should be given legally. Don't do it out of greed.

Secondly, if there is a disastrous company in Tarapur, then it is the Viraj profile. Re-inspect all Viraj's projects in MIDC and stop the drama of public hearings going on here. Speak according to the constitutional right given by the Constitution of India.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions and objections raised have been taken into account.

43) Shri Yogesh Patil, Former Panchayat Samiti Member, Mangaon, Resident-Gundale, Taluka, District-Palghar:

In particular, when the meeting started, the lawyers present at the meeting told how the meeting is illegal. Even so, officials of the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board sat there like a stone. We thought you would leave the stage after hearing that it was an illegal meeting. But if you sit like a stone, then we suspect that your feet are in the mud somewhere. The common people here are one and will buy the entire Viraj by taking one rupee. We have given you complaints against Viraj many times. Here was the mountain of ash thrown by Viraj. Where did it go now in ten days? Ashes were dumped in Baripada, completely ruining our water sources. So why did the officials of the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board not take cognizance at that time?

Hon'ble Collector Madam, Palghar requests you to take this recording and listen to it yourself, only then prepare a report.

There was a discussion on water, air, soil and noise pollution. However, there has been no discussion about human pollution. No one talks about human pollution due to expansion. Due to expansion, 4-5 lakh people will come here, migrants will come, due to which pollution will increase here. Are we locals to tolerate that? There is no mention of this anywhere.

While granting Consent to Establish (C to E) by Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, it is mandatory to mention whether the concerned project has no objection certificate from the Gram Panchayat or not? What did the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board see here? That is, even without the certificate of the Gram Panchayat, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board Consent to Establish (C to E) is granted.

Our village of Man was once a paradise. Now it has turned into hell. This public hearing is completely illegal and we condemn it.

Chairman, Public Hearing Committee on Environment said that the suggestions, objections raised have been noted.

44) Shri Prashant Prabhakar Patil, resident of Padghe village, Taluka, District-Palghar:-

One of my requests is, here there is 100% opposition to the project. Our sentiments should be reflected in your report. Otherwise, you (District Administration and Maharashtra Pollution Control Board) will be responsible for taking the law into their own hands. Your report should be based on the views of everyone in the meeting. If we want to die here because of pollution, then we will die by protesting. If our heavenly villages have turned into hell, the report should be transparent and according to the sentiments expressed by the people.

Advocate Rahul Patil said that there are women from Man village who has been working with the Viraj company for the last 15 years, wants to raise some issues in the meeting.

45) Ms. Ladku Vedga:-

We've been working here for so long. We have been working here ever since Mamaji took land here. No one pays attention to us, no one appreciates us. Even after working for so many years, he (Owner) did not even pay for the hospital. Mamaji calls me to work at 6-7 in the morning. We collect cow dung, buffalo dung, similarly, we go wherever they (management) send us. Then they do not think of us. We have grown old after working so much here, no one paid attention to us. What will we do by staying at home, we have grown old here.

Even when the road was closed during Corona and villagers prevented us to come here, yet we have come and filled the cow dung as their need. Even if it's a Saturday, we come and fill the cow dung and go home.

VH

They abuse us, but we do their job. We took care of their needs, no one cares for us.

Chairman, Public Hearing Committee on Environment said that suggestions and objections raised have been noted.

46) Local Women – (Did not tell name)

Mamaji used to come with the first bicycle to call us. He doesn't say anything. After working for so many years, Mamaji did not give us anything. Now tell me what to say.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions, objections have been noted.

47) Vanita Mor:-

We've been working for twenty-three years. Our hands and feet pains, yet we work. Mamaji did not pay attention to us. We still collect cow dung. We are working for forty rupees. Nobody cares us.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions, objections raised have been noted.

48) Advocate Rahul Patil said that the women here expressed their anguish. Now people must have come to know about their empowerment. Now I'm going to give the mic to the next speaker.

49) Shri Brandon Simond Almeida, resident of Srinivas Park, Man Village, Taluka, Dist. Palghar.

I am originally from Man village, my birthplace is Man village. Today, I am not standing here as an individual, but as the voice of the people of our village. Viraj Industries expansion is not just a project, but a direct attack on our lives, our water, our land and --- ourselves. Presenting the following statement in the public hearing held on the above subject regarding the disastrous expansion of Viraj Profiles and opposing the proposed expansion of Viraj Company at Man Warangade villages on the basis of the following points –

The information provided by the industry regarding local employment is misleading. The labour department has not provided any evidence of how many jobs have been given to the local people in this regard.

The company's claim that there will be positive impact on 2,24,999 people out of 52,999 families in the village is hollow and false.

As on date, there is no evidence of any positive impact from this industrial group.

No information has been given about the number of vehicles that will be used daily to transport raw materials, finished goods, scrap, etc.

Company has not given any concrete information about the number of vehicles used by the company, the parking arrangements.

The expansion of this unit/company is very risky near the existing company. The only road connecting Boisar to Chillar Phata is the Mumbai-Ahmedabad highway and it is very dangerous that proposed expansion will be near the Highway. It does not appear that a proper report has been received on what measures will be adopted in this regard.

Water is supplied by the MIDC in the area and it is available at low pressure. There is no concrete information that whether the MIDC has enough water.

Without implementing a concrete/permanent scheme for drinking water, the industry has not provided proper information about water supply.

However, in view of all these issues, Viraj is opposed to the proposed expansion and is demanding that the project be cancelled. This is because we have already experienced that the water containing chemicals released from the industry gets mixed into the drain.

The TDS of water has increased. And the borewell water is damaged. Aquatic lives like fish and frogs are disappearing. Water is life and our life is under threat today.

Smoke, dust particles and toxic gases emitted from industries make it difficult to breathe and there is tremendous increase of asthma, skin diseases patients and serious diseases in children and in elderly persons. Are we going to miss out on clean air, breathing?

Chemical waste makes agriculture land barren, degrades the quality of crops, poisons enter the food chain. Where will we get food tomorrow if the farm is bad?

Respiratory and stomach ailments are already being seen in the village. This is a slow-moving poisoning.

Our region falls under the tribal PESA area. Permission of the Gram Sabha is required. It is illegal to carry out a project without consent. The Gram Sabha is supreme and will not tolerate its humiliation.

We want to make it clear that the Viraj expansion project should be stopped immediately.

Separate environment and inspection should be done. Examine the water, air and soil. No work should be started without the written permission of the Gram Sabha.

We want development, but not at the cost of our lives. We want employment, but we don't want diseases. We want progress, but not pollution. If we don't raise our voice today, tomorrow our next generations will not forgive us.

Water, land and forest are our rights. And it is our responsibility to protect them. It is not development, it is destruction. Don't play with our water. Don't play with life. It is not just a question of development, it is a question of life.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions and objections raised have been taken into account.

50) Shri Sandeep Vishnu Bhawar, PESA President, Warangade Village, Man Gram Panchayat:-

First I would like to ask the administration and Viraj management whether they had taken the No Objection Certificate (NOC) of our Pesa village? Please answer yes or no. If the answer is no, then why did you not violate the PESA Act? The PESA Act is an abbreviation of the 5th Schedule. This is a right given to us by the Constitution. The Constitution is supreme. Judgement of Hon'ble Supreme Court is not read in the meeting, though Hon'ble Supreme Court is supreme judicial authority as stipulated by the Constitution. Committee don't say anything about the violation of the PESA Act. What is the meaning of this public hearing?

The presentation showed that there is no pollution from Viraj. I ask officials of the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board that the letter of the Maan Gram Panchayat dated 13-6-2025 has been acknowledged by MPCB. What further action is initiated Maharashtra Pollution Control Board taken in this regard? Water is released into the drain. If you dig bore well on the side, red water comes out. Can you drink this water? The government and administration should drink this water for fifteen days.

This is how Maharashtra Pollution Control Board operates. Time is not mentioned in the notice sent to gram panchayat offices to attend this public hearing. Earlier, we had a fight/struggle against the Encrop project.

W

Maharashtra Pollution Control Board had reported that the Surya river is 25.0 km from the project site. It's long. Surya river is 2.5 km from that project. The villagers complained and then MPCB clarified that there was a mistake in dropping the point/typographical mistake. This Company is just 200 metres away from our village, and we are suffering the consequences.

He said that I am a farmer. There is also a farmer named Sakharam Tode. He finally dug the pond because of the contaminated water of the company there. Red water also came out in the lake. We have no faith in the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board. It is snatching away the rights of the tribal community.

If our land is damaged due to Viraj, then everyone will come out on the streets and protest. Our fight is for the next generation.

However, this illegal public hearing should be cancelled respecting the sentiments of the local people. We don't want this project.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions and objections raised have been noted.

51) **I am a resident of Gundale Barapada.** Even though Viraj supplied water to our village, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board is expected to control water pollution which is occurring.

Maharashtra Pollution Control Board does not work efficiently, which is why people like Viraj pollute. I would blame the government administration for turning a blind eye to this act.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that the suggestions and objections raised have been taken into account.

52) **Shri. Bhavesh Churi, Warangade Village, Taluka, District-Palghar-**

Basically, this public hearing on the environment is mired in doubt. Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) conducted a public hearing on the environment. Its public notice was published in the newspaper on 4th March, 2026. The notice was received at the Gram Panchayat office on 13th March, 2026. As a result, local people, villagers, people of the project-affected villages got less time to lodge environmental suggestions/objections about the proposed project. Also, banners for the public hearing on the environment were put up last evening for the public to know. Therefore, all the villagers feel that this public hearing on the environment is to be held in secret. That is, the proposed expansion of Viraj Company was to be hidden from the general public here.

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In this meeting, all the participants have unanimously opposed the proposed expansion of this Viraj company. And the PESA Gram Sabha resolution passed on 24th March, 2026, is not a simple resolution but a unanimous one passed under the PESA Act. First, a resolution was taken to cancel the public hearing on the environment, then a unanimous resolution was passed to cancel the expansion of Viraj profiles.

If the government administration thinks that the public hearing should be taken away, then it is a misconception. Because we have filed a petition in the Bombay High Court against it. If it is decided, you will have to hold the public hearing again in accordance with the law. Because under the PESA Act, this public hearing on the environment cannot be held without the prior approval of the Gram Sabha. In the meeting, our colleague Advocate Rahul Patil said that as per the Supreme Court order, such a public hearing on environment cannot be held. So now against the Public Hearing Committee on Environment, Contempt of Court We're going to file. We are also going to drag you to the Supreme Court as you have contempt of the Supreme Court of our country. Government officers and employees are servants of the people.

How many projects are pending in Palghar district? All the dignitaries have expressed their views here and all the attendees have opposed Viraj's proposed project. Even if, district administration and the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board did not submit the report properly to the government, still we have a sustainable record.

Betegaon Gram Panchayat is within walking distance of Viraj Company. A mountain of chemical powder was made by Viraj company there. The common man has raised his voice against it and we have supported and given silent consent to him. We have repeatedly made written complaints to Maharashtra Pollution Control Board. We were fortunate that the bullet train project came and half the mountain was removed. There is a dangerous chemical called limestone in the mountain. The mountain has been built by throwing the ashes of Viraj by deceiving our native people. I condemn the district administration for not providing water to every household. So far, we are drinking water from wells and borewells. We are drinking water from rivers and streams.

In 2012, Viraj held a public hearing on the environment. At that time, Viraj management had made many promises. It should be noted that none of those promises have been kept. This company has not given us anything but pollution since 2012. Neither sustainable employment nor social development

work was done. Here, our sisters just mentioned how many people lost their lives and were disabled by the speeding vehicles of Viraj. The blame for their sacrifices lies with the Viraj Company and the district administration. Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) is incompetent. Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) is on the side of the company. This is our bitter experience.

However, we demand that this illegal public hearing must be cancelled. We are totally opposed to the proposed project expansion.

Chairman, Public Hearing Committee on Environment said that the suggestions, objections and objections raised have been taken into account.

53) Shri Prashant Prabhakar Patil, resident of Padghe village, Taluka, District-Palghar:

Some issues have to be raised. When MoU is signed, at that time, it was told that people in the area were displaced, and this project would be used to ensure that the locals were not displaced. Now the local ladies/sisters here have spoken that this project is going to be built on their land then if we see their plight after working for twenty years, what will happen next?

54) Shri Subhash Chumda, Resident-Man, Taluka, District-Palghar:

Mic was pulled from my hand. These people oppose Viraj. Then why did the locals give Viraj their land to commission the plant? There are many farmers, they don't understand, they gave land. If Viraj is opposed, why are you giving the surrounding land?

In 2012, Viraj promised to provide employment to locals, but did not keep his promise. You go to the PESA gram panchayat area and ask the locals, it is the leaders and their workers who are giving land to Viraj. So Viraj has only given pollution, no employment and the local people are just relying on it. People protest, then how does the company start?

Without taking the tribal community into confidence, leaders go to villages and hold meetings among themselves. I don't care about the company, I'm a social worker. Works for people, don't give land to Viraj. I'm against the company. This company should not be running. Even if we protest, the company is still running, who will take responsibility for it?

Here the locals were discussing among themselves. At that time, Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee appealed to the public to register environmental suggestions and objections without talking to each other.

One of the attendees explained that Subhashbhau used to say that if you oppose first and then consent, then you should not oppose it, you should always oppose it.

Advocate Rahul Patil clarified that Subhashbhau was not there, the special gram sabha had unanimously opposed the expansion of the project and the public hearing on the environment.

Chairman, Public Hearing Committee on Environment said that the suggestions, objections and objections raised have been taken into account.

Shri Prashant Prabhakar Patil, Residing-Padghe Village, Taluka, District-Palghar said that all the locals have collectively opposed this project. All of us locals stand together and raise our hands and show that we are opposed to the proposed expansion project in its entirety. He requested everyone to stand up and raise their hands.

All the participants stood up and raised their hands to oppose the expansion project.

Shri Prashant Prabhakar Patil suggested to take videos from all sides. It shows that all the villages, all the talukas, all the district here are against the expansion project of this Viraj project.

All the participants shouted slogans of victory for the Indian Constitution.

While concluding the meeting, Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that as per the Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986 and the Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006 and amended 2009, this Environment Public Hearing was held for the proposed expansion project of M/s. Viraj Profile Pvt. Ltd. In this public hearing, participants have raised suggestions, views, objections. All of these have been noted. Also, the citizens who have put their written suggestions/objections in the drop box and some have submitted suggestions/objections in different offices till date after the publication of the Environment Public Hearing notice in the newspaper, will be collected and submitted to Government along with the minutes of the meeting. An Expert Committee will take a further decision in this regard. All participated in this meeting in a peaceful manner, expressed their views in an impartial manner. He thanked all for participating in this meeting and declare that meeting is concluded.

Advocate Rahul Patil then suggested that the number of objections or letters in support received about the proposed project so far should be made public. Otherwise Viraj will take letters of support from many later in the company.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee clarified that the suggestions and objections raised in the meeting have been noted. There is nothing positive or negative here. Also, the written suggestions/objections received will be submitted to the government.

At that time, Advocate Rahul Patil asked how much support was received and for how long written suggestions/objections would be accepted.

Chairman, Environment Public Hearing Committee said that 600 (approx.) representations have been received in the drop box and 357 written suggestions have been received before the meeting. The minutes of the meeting will also be made available on the website.

Meeting ended extending thanks to the Chair.

Received 1,301 Suggestions/objections received are enclosed herewith.



(Virendra Singh)
Convener
Environment Public Hearing
Committee
And
Sub Regional Officer,
Tarapur-2,
Maharashtra Pollution Control Board,
Boisar (West),
Taluka, District-Palghar



(Kiran Hasabnis)
Member,
Environment Public Hearing
Committee
And
Regional Officer,
Maharashtra Pollution Control Board,
Thane



(Subhash Bhagade)
Chairman,
Environment Public Hearing Committee
And
Additional District Magistrate, Palghar,
District – Palghar