

Interim Matheran Monitoring Committee Meeting Minutes

With reference to PIL .No. LD-VC-31 of 2020. Suresh Lad and Anr Vs Union of India and Ors, the Matheran Monitoring Committee meeting was held on 15th May, 2020 at 3.00 pm under the Chairmanship of Hon,ble Divisional Commissioner, Konkan Division. It was attended by the following attendees-

Sr.no	Name	Designation	
1.	Shivaji Daund, IAS	Divsional Commsioner, Konkan, Division	Chairman
2.	Nidhi Choudhari, IAS	District Collector, Raigad	Member Secretary
3.	J.S.Salunkhe	Representative of MPCB and Ministry of Environment, Government of Maharashtra	Member
4.	Owais A.Momin	Representative of Urban Development Department, Government of Maharashtra	Member
5.	Sanjay Deshmukh	Mumbai University	Member
6.	Shivkumar Malbhage	Representative Central Railway	--
7.	Suresh Narayan Laad	Ex-MLA, 189 Karjat Assembly Contituency	Petitioner
8.	Vivek Choudhari	Ex-President, Matheran Municipal Council	Petitoner

The Member Secretary briefed all the members about the order passed by Hon'ble High Court, Mumbai on 14.5.2020. She also explained about MoEF

notification dated 4th Feb 2003 and the latest MoEF guidelines about the vehicular restrictions in Matheran.

The Chairman requested the Petitioner to explain the key prayers of their petition. They represented that the livelihood of citizens of Matheran has been adversely affected during lockdown due to loss of tourism and inflationary rise in cost of essential goods. The peak tourism season of Matheran i.e. March-May was lost during lockdown period since March 2020. This has resulted into huge economic losses to the people of Matheran. It has thus, reduced the paying capacity of the people. Amidst loss of income, the current policy of not allowing goods transport by vehicles is adding to peoples' suffering because the cost of supply of essential goods like groceries, gas cylinders etc increases manifold. Therefore, the petitioners requested that essential goods transport be permitted by vehicle upto the city of Matheran on daily basis during current COVID-19 crisis.

In response to this demand, the members of the Committee deliberated upon the extant Guidelines of MOEF. The Committee studied the demographic profile of the city of Matheran. It was observed that the city has 977 households as per Census 2011 and 98% of its population is engaged in tertiary sector activities. It was also noted that 94.53% of Matheran's workforce is engaged in main business activity, while rest 5.47% only are working in marginal activities.


The hill station of Matheran has been declared ecologically sensitive zone since 2003 and the supply of essential goods is done through ponies and handcarts until today. Undoubtedly, the current pandemic situation arising out of COVID-19 is unique and has increased hardships for the people of Matheran. Therefore, the Committee unanimously arrived on the following recommendations/decisions-


- i. The Committee agreed that the most optimal solution for reducing hardships of people and maintaining the ecological balance would be operationalization of Dasturi Naka (Aman logde)-Matheran railway for goods transport. In this regard proposal to be submitted to Divisional Railway Manager, Central Railways for approving goods transport by

attaching dedicated goods bogies with Dasturi Naka (Aman logde)-Matheran train.

- ii. Meanwhile, to address the immediate issue of essential goods supplies, Municipal Council Matheran shall hire a Goods Tempo on RTO approved rates which meets the environmental norms (Bharat Stage VI – Vehicle). In this regard, The modalities for this goods tempo will be as following-
 - a. The Chief Officer, Municipal Council, Matheran to take concurrence from MPCB about pollution norms compliance for the hired vehicle.
 - b. The Tempo shall be allowed to operate once in a week (Wednesday) for carrying goods until commencement of goods transport by railways.
 - c. The District Collector to pay NDRF grant towards the operational cost of transport of essential goods until the private vendor is identified and selected by the Chief Officer following due process.

The Committee unanimously stressed upon the importance of protecting Matheran as eco-sensitive zone and the above recommendations/decisions suggested by this committee are only as an exceptional one time measure due to the unique crisis arising out of COVID-19, lockdown and loss of tourism activity. These recommendations will be applicable upto 30th September, 2020. These recommendations are subject to modifications depending upon the outcome of the current Writ Petition or any other Court orders. The Committee will review the functional aspects of these arrangements on 15th September, 2020.


Nidhi Choudhari, IAS.
Member Secretary,
Matheran Monitoring Committee


Shivaji Daund, IAS.
Chairman,
Matheran Monitoring Committee

Interim Matheran Monitoring Committee Meeting Minutes

With reference to PIL .No. LD-VC-3L of 2020. Suresh Lad and Anr Vs Union of India and Ors. the Matheran Monitoring Committee meeting is held on 22nd June, 2020 at 12.00 pm under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Divisional Commissioner, Konkan Division. It is attended by the following attendees.

Sr.No	Name	Designation	
1	Lokesh Chandra, IAS	Divisional Commissioner, Konkan Division	Chairman
2	Nidhi Choudhari, IAS	District Collector, Raigad.	Member Secretary
3	Sanjay Deshmukh	Mumbai University	Member
4	Laxmam Darade	RTO, Panvel	Member
5	Arvind Dhabe,	Executive Engineer, MMRDA	----
6	L.K.Ralyewale	Central Railways, Area Manager Panvel	----
7	Satish Shelve	Executive Engineer, PWD	----

8	Mahesh Kore	Manager, Mahanagar Gas Ltd.	---
9	Shivkumar Malbhage	Sr.Den.Central Railways	---

The Member Secretary briefed all the members about the order passed by Hon'ble High Court, Mumbai dated on 14th May, 2020, 16th May,2020, 2nd June,2020 and 19th June,2020. She also explained about MoEF notification dated 4th Feb 2003 and the latest MoEF guidelines about the vehicular restrictions in Matheran. She also explained that Matheran does not have any COVID case as on today . It is a green Zone and as per latest Guidelines of Govt. of Maharashtra i.e. Mission Begin Again Guidelines all intra district movement has been permitted As such there are no restrictions in Matheran & pre-COVID situation prevails. There are ponies available for movement of essential commodities as was done in pre-COVID times yet, according to the directions given by The Hon'ble High Court in above orders, MMA is conducting this meeting to discuss the following points.-

1. To allow Bharat Stage-IV vehicle for LPG Cylinder transportation.
2. Railways Freight bogies to run early in the morning between 9.00 am to 10.00 am.


Member Secretary briefed that Chief Officer Matheran has been directed to start a vehicle for once a week specifically for transportation of LPG cylinders as per the order of Hon'ble High Court Mumbai that


Gas cannot be carried on railway wagons being inflammable item. The committee discussed about the possibility of using electrically powered vehicle for movement of LPG cylinders. Shri Darade, RTO, Konkan Region informed that E-vehicle to carry goods is not registered as well as not allowed in MMRDA area.

The committee was informed about the instructions of Hon'ble High Court Mumbai that the vehicles should be allowed thrice a week to carry LPG cylinders upto 30th September 2020. The committee approved the transportation of gas cylinders through Bharat Stage - IV vehicles thrice a week from Dasturi to Community Centre Matheran only till 30th September, 2020 as per Hon'ble High Court Order. The Chief officer Matheran Municipal Council was informed to identify Bharat Stage-IV vehicle and coordinate with the Gas Agencies, Police and residents of Matheran to transport the gas cylinders thrice a week upto 30th September, 2020. Municipal Officer should abide with the instructions of MoEF notification dated 4th Feb 2003 and prevailing laws / rules.

Committee also decided to instruct to the railway authorities to restart the railway services from Dasturi to Matheran on daily basis early in the morning i.e. between 9.00 am to 10.00 am with immediate effect. On this point, Railway officials requested that, if passenger services are started then it will become operationally viable for Railways to start the parcel services. On this Hon'ble Chairman instructed Railways to seek permission from MHA for start of Matheran Railways. Member Secretary shall also recommend this service as it is intra- district & essential for Matheran.

These recommendations are subject to modifications depending upon the outcome of the current Writ Petition or any other Court orders.


Nidhi Choudhari, IAS.
Member Secretary,
Matheran Monitoring Committee


Lokesh Chandra, IAS.
Chairman,
Matheran Monitoring Committee