

GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA
FORESTS & ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

ORDERS BY THE GOVERNOR

NOTIFICATION

Dated Shillong, the 5th October, 2021

No. FOR/CC/13/2016/258:- In compliance with the direction of the judgment dated 06.10.2017 of the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal, Eastern Zone Bench, Kolkata in connection with O.A. No. 51/2016 (***Ambarnath Sengupta -Vs- The State of West Bengal & Ors***), the Government of Meghalaya, in consultation with the Meghalaya State Pollution Control Board, is pleased to hereby make, with immediate effect, the following Guidelines for idol immersion and idol making in accordance to Central Pollution Control Board Revised Guidelines for Idol Immersion Dated 12th May, 2020:-

1. GUIDELINES FOR IDOL MAKERS-CRAFTSMANS OR ARTISANS

- (i) Idols made up of only natural, bio-degradable, eco-friendly raw materials without any toxic, inorganic raw materials [such as traditional virtuous clay and mud as well as free from Plaster of Paris (PoP), plastic and thermocol (polystyrene)] should be encouraged, allowed and promoted and Idols made up of Plaster of Paris (PoP) shall be banned.
- (ii) Only dried flower components, straw etc. for making ornaments of idols and natural resins of trees may be used as a shining material for making idols attractive.
- (iii) Use of Single use plastic and thermocol materials shall not be permitted strictly and only eco-friendly materials as straw structure should be used in making idols or decoration of idols/pandals/tazias in order to prevent pollution in recipient water bodies.
- (iv) Use of toxic and non-biodegradable chemical dyes/oil paints for painting idols shall be strictly prohibited. Enamel and synthetic dye based paintson idols should be discouraged instead eco-friendly water-based, bio-degradable and non-toxic natural dyes should be used.
- (v) For beautification of idols, removable and washable decorative clothes made only with natural materials and dyes shall be used in place of disposable material containing paints and other toxic chemicals. Only naturally occurring colors from plants (flowers, barks, stamens, leaves, roots, seeds, whole fruits), feathers of different birds, mineral or colored rocks shall be used for coloring.
- (vi) Craftsmen or artisans or manufacturer involved in making idols shall get themselves registered with the civic bodies, and should involve in making eco-friendly idols in accordance with these guidelines. In case of Large Scale Idol manufacturers (at least involved in making more than 100 idols in a day) shall obtain registration from the concerned Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration (registration fee along with a deposit as decided by the Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration depending on the idol making capacity) and failing to comply with these guidelines or any

violation of registration conditions, the deposit shall be forfeited by the Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration apart from prohibition of idol making at least for two years.

- (vii) In the interest of protection of the environment, the craftsman or artisans shall prefer to adopt innovative approaches (Eg., use of natural clay, pyramid of sugarcane sticks that represents the pandals, natural clay mixed with alum for making idols (on disintegration of idol made out of mud mixed with alum in water, then alum act as a coagulant) in consultation with the Meghalaya State Pollution Control Board (MSPCB).

2. GUIDELINES FOR POOJA ORGANISING COMMITTEES

- (i) As far as possible, low height and eco-friendly idols (made with natural clay, idols stuffed with eco-friendly food materials such as corn, spinach, wheat and vegetable powder), idols decorated with biodegradable, organic colours such as turmeric, chandan and gerua etc., (list of natural, bio-degradable and non-toxic annexed as **Annexure-I**) only should be used for offering poojas to avoid impact on environment and in any case the size of superstructure of idol shall not be more than 40 feet and the idol shall not be more than 20 feet.
- (ii) Use of cleaned multi-use metallic or glass or plastic utensils is ideal choice, especially when such material is available from utensil banks. Only biodegradable plates such as Patravali or Pattal or Vistaraku or Vistar or Khali or trencher made with broad dried leaves such as Areca/Banana/Banyan/Sal leaves, biodegradable paper cups/plates and earthen pots may be used in place of single use plastic and polystyrene (Thermocol) for prasad distribution and other purposes.
- (iii) Worship material like flowers, Patri (leaves), *vastras* (clothes), decorating materials (made of paper and bio-degradable or compostable plastic but not single use plastic) etc. should be ensured to remove before immersion of idols and segregated in colour coded bins provided at the designated idol immersion areas/spots.
- (iv) In the interest of protection of the environment, Pooja Organizing Committees should procure eco-friendly idols only from the respective Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration registered or authorised craftsman or artisans.
- (v) Pooja Organising Committees should seek prior permission from concerned Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration as the case maybe by providing management plan and the required provisions (as per the format to be issued by the Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration) for ensuring safe idol immersion during festival season well at least one month in advance for making necessary arrangements in consultation with the concerned departments.

3. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES/ TOWN COMMITTEES/ DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

- (i) Licenses/permits be granted by the Municipal Authorities/ Town

Committees/ District Administration within their respective jurisdiction to only those Idol manufacturers or makers or craftsman or artisans who uses only eco-friendly natural clay materials (but not PoP or baked clay) in making idols, prior to festive times. Also, large scale manufacturers (involved in making idols more than 100 in a day) shall obtain registration from the concerned Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration along with the prescribed fee and a deposit (as decided by the Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration depending on the idolmaking capacity). Registered idol manufacturer or maker or craftsman or artisan failing to comply with these guidelines or any violation of registration or permission conditions, registration or permission granted shall be cancelled apart from prohibition of idol making manufacturer at least for two years and in case of idol manufacturer, the deposit shall be forfeited by the respective Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration.

- (ii) While granting licenses or permits to the idol makers a list of permitted and non-permitted substances to be used for making/coloring/decorating idols may be provided to the Idol makers or craftsman or artisans.
- (iii) Only registered or licensed idol maker or craftsmen or artisans should be strictly allowed to make idols within the jurisdiction of the respective Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration as the case may be, in accordance with these guidelines.
- (iv) As far as possible, instead of immersion of idols in water bodies, all the resident welfare associations or individual households in a city or town should be encouraged to create temporary ponds/tanks of suitable size and adequate capacity with necessary provision for collection and storage of segregated waste prior to immersion, and public should be involved for immersion of idols in such temporary/artificial ponds/tanks made by the resident welfare association or individual household within their campus itself. The waste generated from designated idol immersion activity sites shall be collected and disposed of safely by the Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration within 24 hours of completion of the idol immersion activity.
- (v) Arrangements for temporary artificial idol immersion ponds or tanks in close vicinity of the public or on the banks of water bodies with all necessary safety provisions and waste collection centres prior to idol immersion should be arranged for ensuring safe idol immersion during festive season, by the concerned Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration in association with the other departments as well as Pooja Organizing Committees.
- (vi) The temporary 'Idol Immersion Ponds/Tanks with the liner made with well graded/highly impervious clay or eco synthetic liner should be arranged at suitable locations including on the banks of rivers or stagnant water bodies such as ponds or lakes shall be cordoned off and barricaded by Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration and with all other necessary provisions keeping in view safety of the public (such as proper access, approach roads, sign boards, fire safety measure, barricades, designated space for keeping idols prior to immersion, suitable

platform with crane provision for idol immersion).

- (vii) In the interest of protection of environment, Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration shall impose restrictions on height of the idol to the idol making agencies or manufacturer or craftsman or artisans (as lesser the size of the idol better would be the immersion process and less consumption of materials required for making idols) depending on the availability of water bodies, provisions made for idol immersions by the Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration.
- (viii) Waste collection centre in the vicinity of the designated temporary/artificial idol immersion sites or locations should be arranged for ensuring collection of segregated materials (such as flowers, leaves, decorating materials etc.,) prior to idol immersion. All waste collection centres should have a provision of colour coded bins of adequate size for collection and storage of segregated materials.
- (ix) Also, all the collected and segregated materials should be transported and disposed of periodically or within 24 hours of completion of idol immersion in accordance with the prevailing provisions of Solid Waste Management Rules 2016, as amended notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (i.e., Reusable clothes may be sent to local orphan homes for reuse, bio-degradable materials for composting and non-biodegradable materials for ultimate disposal in sanitary landfills by the concerned Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration, as the case may be).
- (x) After completion of the idol immersion ceremony, within 24 hours, the liner material shall be removed and the temporary pits or tanks should be filled with native soil and levelled properly. Other disposable materials shall be managed in accordance with these guidelines (i.e., Clay, Bamboo and wooden logs, if any may be reused). The straw structure materials recovered from designated temporary or artificial immersion areas or spots shall be retrieved and processed for converting into organic manure.
- (xi) Public should be educated on aspects relating to procurement of eco-friendly idols only from the licensed or permitted idol makers or craftsman or artisans, location details of idol makers, type of materials to be used for ill effects of immersion of idols/Tazias in the holy water bodies and the existing guidelines for idol immersion through mass awareness programme.
- (xii) Immersion of Tazia during Muharram should be performed in Eco-friendly manner.
- (xiii) Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration should make efforts to identify and arrange adequate number of designated temporary or artificial immersion ponds or tanks in consultation with River/Pond Authority, Public Health Engineering Department, Irrigation Department and other concerned State Departments, in the close vicinity of the public colonies (such as open grounds) to avoid overcrowding at the water bodies and also to reduce pollution load on receiving water bodies. In case, the designated temporary artificial ponds or tanks are required to be arranged on the bank of the river, in such a case, it should be arranged at suitable places where flow of river/ stream is not harmful to the public, does not inundate in case of increase in flow of river during idol immersion period and river is cordoned off and barricaded suitably to avoid any loss of life specially during

immersion activities.

- (xiv) A co-ordination Committee comprising local Police Department, Non-Government Organizations, Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration, M SPCB, and representatives of *pooja organizing* committees and other concerned stakeholders may be set up for guiding the public in carrying out the immersion without affecting environmental damages to the water bodies
- (xv) To ensure safe immersion of idols during festive season, Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration should deploy adequate number of staff at all the designated idol immersion spots under overall supervision of the nodal officer to be designated by the concerned Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration. The Nodal Officers also should co-ordinate with the co-ordination committee constituted.
- (xvi) Details regarding arranged designated temporary or artificial immersion spots or areas need to be notified and public as well as *pooja organizing* committees preferably at least one week in advance of idol immersion through electronic and local media in vernacular language
- (xvii) Sanitary workers shall also be deployed at all the temporary immersion sites for ensuring removal of bio-degradable items like flowers, leaves, clothes, ornaments etc. prior to idol immersion at the designated areas. Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration shall provide separate colour coded bins for collection and segregation of biodegradable and non-biodegradable wastes at immersion spots.
- (xviii) Littering or burning of solid wastes comprising of used flowers, clothes, decorating materials, recovered material such as Bamboo and wooden logs, straw structures etc. so generated at the immersion sites or on the banks of water body should be prohibited strictly.
- (xix) In case of immersion of idols in rivers, lakes and ponds is inevitable, arrangement may be made for construction of adequate capacity temporary confined areas at designated places with earthen bunds for the purpose of immersion of idols atleast 50 m away from the waterbody. Temporary immersion ponds shall have a free board of at least 50 cm. Temporary ponds should be constructed with impervious liner (made with well graded/highly impervious clay or eco synthetic liner) with a provision of adequate landing platform for keeping the crane for idol immersion. Water in the temporary or artificial immersion ponds or tanks may be drawn from the nearby water body. After completion of immersion, only supernatant water may be allowed to flow into river/pond/lake, as the case may be, after checking for colour and turbidity as per BIS specification for Drinking Water IS 10500:2012. Natural coagulants shall be used for pre- treatment of wastewater mainly composed of polymers of natural origin extracted from plants, algae or animals. Among these are polysaccharides and water soluble substances that act as coagulation and / or flocculation agents. include microbial polysaccharides, starches, gelatin galactomannans, cellulose derivatives, chitosan, glues, and alginate.
- (xx) Concerned Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration also should consider option of construction of permanent cemented large sized artificial tanks for immersion

of idols/Tazias at suitable places for a village or town or city to avoid direct immersion of idols into lakes/rivers/ ponds/sea.

(xxi) Proper Sign Boards showing location of temporary idol immersion ponds/tanks, route charts to be provided at all salient points and also create awareness through local newspapers/electronic media in vernacular language, atleast one week in advance at all the salient points by the Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration.

(xxii) The Pooja Organizing Committees/ Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration be involved in organizing a public campaign on the ill effects of the toxic components of coloring materials, not only of the idols, but also other decorating materials used during the festive season, for immersing (visarjan) the idol or 'pratima' or tazias only in designated temporary artificial ponds or tanks. Specific leaflets and poster for mass awareness may be prepared in vernacular languages and displayed at salient points. Further, the Pooja committees/ Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration also be persuaded to display such posters and distribute leaflets among worshippers involving Eco Clubs, NGOs, Education Institutes/Universities and Schools.

(xxiii) Idol makers, pooja Committees may also be awarded for promotion of clay idols made with natural colors, consistent awareness for ensuring compliance to these rules. Imposing Spot fine for violation of these guidelines also be practiced by the Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration.

(xxiv) Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration also shall make arrangements for movable artificial tanks to reach residential welfare societies where people can do idol immersion without crowding and polluting the water bodies to avoid uncontrolled crowd conditions at Ghats during idol immersion and also to avoid accidents that may likely to happen at the time of idol immersion in rivers, lakes and ponds.

(xxv) Management of idol waste and treatment of polluted water from the designated temporary Idol Immersion ponds or tanks should be carried out as detailed below:-

(a) Practices that would lead to some economic benefits like returning the visarjit idols to the idol maker or management of solid wastes generated during visarjan activities in different localities for household as well as large community festivals shall be ensured in accordance with the prevailing rules by the Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration. As far as possible, only non-recyclable/non-biodegradable/non-recoverable materials should be disposed of in sanitary landfills by the Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration.

(b) Community festivals with large idols should be given permission by Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration only when the organisers submit a detailed management plan prepared in line with the prevailing rules or by the guidelines issued from time to time on environmental management charge basis to be decided by the Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration. The bamboo scaffolding/metal sub structure on which large idols are built shall be reused as far as possible and may be collected

separately from the degradable remains.

- (c) The charges of hiring/outsourcing agencies to clean-up the wastes from the designated idol immersion sites should be collected as 'visarjan charges' from every individual citizen or community. The visarjan charges collected should be utilized to clean-up the visarjan sites, to manage polluted water from the artificial temporary tank/ponds and for environmentally sound management of the solid remains of idol, etc. The waste water collected from the designated temporary artificial ponds/tanks after ensuring on-site pre-treatment shall be discharged into or public sewers leading to the Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs)/ Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETPs).
- (d) Disintegrated material/Non-biodegradable materials shall be dealt as per provisions of the Solid Waste Management Rule 2016, as amended.

4. GUIDELINES FOR IDOL IMMERSION IN RIVERS, LAKES AND PONDS

- (i) As far as possible idol immersion in Rivers/Ponds/Lakes shall be encouraged only at specific designated artificial confined tanks/ponds with liner made with well graded/highly impervious clay or eco synthetic liner, on the banks shall be promoted.
- (ii) A temporary artificial tank or pond with liner made with well graded/highly impervious clay or eco synthetic liner (HDPE), and having earthen bunds on the bank of the river/lake/pond shall be created for Idol Immersion by the concerned Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration. Temporary artificial tank or pond.
In case of immersion of idols in rivers, lakes or ponds is inevitable, a designated location (having proper approach, access, corner portion of a river/pond/lake, having shallow depth of water in river or lakes or ponds) should be identified and safety provision preferably steel or wooden barricades shall be made by concerned Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration.
- (iii) All the flowers, leaves and artificial ornaments of idols should be removed prior to immersion of idols and only such idols may be immersed in a designated place provided with safety provisions.
- (iv) Lime or alum or any other equivalent coagulant should be added in designated temporary lined pond/tank as pre-treatment option for ensuring settling of solids. After completion of immersion, only supernatant water may be allowed to flow into river/pond/lake, as the case may be, after checking for colour and turbidity as per BIS specification for Drinking Water IS 10500:2012.
- (v) Post immersion, with remains of idols and activities such as desludging of the designated area should be undertaken and ensured its disposal as per Solid Waste Management Rules

2016 as amended thereafter, within 24 hours by the concerned Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration, as per these guidelines.

5. GUIDELINES FOR IDOL IMMERSION BY HOUSEHOLDS

- (i) Individual households should be encouraged to use only eco-friendly idols made of natural clay and bio-degradable materials as decorative and pooja materials.
- (ii) As far as possible, immersion of small idols should be done at their homes in eco-friendly manner i.e., in a bucket filled with water and idol be kept in immersed state until it dissolves completely. After settlement of settleable and colloidal solids (if required alum powder or any other equivalent coagulant may be mixed and stirred vigorously using a stick at least for 30 seconds and thereafter slow mixing at least for 30 seconds and then allowed to settle), the supernatant liquid may be used either in gardening or discharged in a drain. Settled mud can be dried and then reused further for future idol making or may be used in gardening as soil).
- (iii) In case, individual households intend to perform idol immersions, then idols should be immersed only in the designated on-land temporary artificial ponds or tanks located nearby or artificial movable tanks arranged by the Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration.

6. ROLE OF MEGHALAYA STATE POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD

- (i) Meghalaya State Pollution Control Board (MSPCB) should conduct water quality assessment of the water bodies, preferably in Class-I cities (having population more than one lac), at three stages i.e. Pre-immersion, during immersion and post-immersion. During post-festival, samples should be collected preferably after 3rd, 5th and 7th and 9th day of the festival.
- (ii) Considering the size of water body, appropriate number of sampling locations may be determined in order to get a fairly representative assessment of water quality during the afore-said periods. Sampling should be done at least 100 m away (downstream side in case of flowing water bodies-rivers) from the immersion site/location to avoid turbulence effect. For ascertaining water quality, Physico-chemical parameters such as pH, DO, Color, BOD, COD, Conductivity, Turbidity, TDS, Chloride, TSS, Hardness, Total Alkalinity and Metals (such as Chromium, Lead, Zinc, Copper, Cadmium, Mercury, Antimony, Barium, Cobalt, Manganese, Strontium) may be analyzed. Apart from the water samples, sediment samples also be collected during pre-immersion, during immersion and post-immersion and collected sediment samples be analysed for the metals (such as Chromium, Lead, Zinc, Copper, Cadmium, Mercury, Antimony, Barium, Cobalt, Manganese, Strontium)
- (iii) MSPCB shall help Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration in preparing material for creating mass awareness purposes as well as to assess innovative approaches

for eco-friendly idol making by the idol makers or craftsman or artisans

7. MISCELLANEOUS:

(i) The concerned Municipal Authorities/ Town Committees/ District Administration/Local Authorities shall be the implementing agencies under these guidelines.

(ii) The Meghalaya State Pollution Control Board shall be the monitoring Agency regarding implementation of these guidelines.

(iii) If any violation of these guidelines is found to have been committed, action shall be initiated by imposition of penalty of such sum as may be decided on case to case basis by the Meghalaya State Pollution Control Board to be assessed considering the extent and effect of pollution caused on the basis of polluter pays principle and the will be recovered from the violator as environmental compensation.

(iv) In addition to the penalty the Meghalaya State Pollution Control Board may also pass orders to further prohibit them from organising festivals in future, either temporarily or permanently.

Sd/-

(D.P. Wahlang, IAS)

Additional Chief Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya
Forests & Environment Department.

Memo No. FOR/CC/13/2016/258-A Dated the Shillong 5th October, 2021

Copy to:-

1. P.S to the Minister of Forests and Environment Department for kind information of the Hon'ble Minister.
2. P.S to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya for kind information of the Chief Secretary.
3. The Director General of Police Meghalaya, Shillong.
4. The Commissioner and Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya, Urban Affairs Department.
5. All the Deputy Commissioners/Sub-Divisional Officer (Civil) Meghalaya for information and necessary action.
6. All the Superintendent of Police.
7. The Member Secretary, Meghalaya State Pollution Control Board for information and necessary action.
8. Director Urban Affairs Meghalaya, Shillong.
9. Chief Executive Officer, Shillong Municipal Board, Shillong.
10. The Director of Printing and Stationary, Meghalaya, Shillong with a request to publish the Notification in Meghalaya Gazette.
11. State Informatics Officer, NIC Shillong, Meghalaya with a request to upload in Government website.

By orders etc.

Secretary to the Government of Meghalaya
Forests and Environment Department

Annexure-I

Major Types of Natural Dyes and Their Origin

Chemical class	Coloring matter	Origin	Color obtained
Vat dyes			
Indole	Indigotin	Woad, indigo	Blues
Quinone	Juglone	Walnut	Browns
Mordant dyes			
Anthraquinones	Alizarin	Madder roots	Reds, oranges, browns
	Pseudopurpurin	Madder roots	Reds, oranges, browns
	Munjistin	Munjeet stems	Reds, browns, maroons
	Laccaic acids	Lac insects	Reds, purples, Maroons
Flavoid tannins	Catachin	Cutch	Browns, grays
Saffron, Flavone	Luteolin	Weld	Yellows, khaki
Flavonol	Quercetin	50% of all plants	Yellows, khaki
Anthocyanins	Cyanidin	Elderberries	Purples
Neoflavanoidones	Haematoxylin	Logwood	Violets, blacks
	Brazilin	Brazilwood	Reds, purples
Isoflavanoid	Pterocarpin	Sanderswood	Oranges
Direct dyes			
Cartinoid	Curcumin	Turmeric	Yellows
	Crocin	Saffron, gardenia	Yellows
Alkaloid	Berberine	Mahonia wood	Yellows
Orinol	Orcein	Orchil	Purples
Benzoquinone	Carthamine	Safflower	Pinks
Reactive dyes			
Depsides	Atranorin	Lichens	Fawns
Despidones	Salazinic acid	Lichens	Browns

Source:- Eco-friendly dyes and dyeing (<http://sciedtech.eu/journals/advmtenvsci/current-issue/>)