



# THE ASSAM GAZETTE

অসাধাৰণ

EXTRAORDINARY

প্ৰাপ্ত কৰ্তৃত্বৰ দ্বাৰা প্ৰকাশিত

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHORITY

নং 388 দিশপুৰ, বুধবাৰ, 23 আগষ্ট 2023, 1 ভাদ, 1945 (শক)

No. 388 Dispur, Wednesday, 23rd August, 2023, 1st Bhadra, 1945 (S. E.)

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM

ORDERS BY THE GOVERNOR

ENVIRONMENT AND FOREST DEPARTMENT

## NOTIFICATION

The 23rd August, 2023

**ECF No. 178127/186.-** In exercise of the powers conferred under section 64 of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, (Act No. 6 of 1974), the Governor of Assam in consultation with the Board for Prevention and Control of Water Pollution is hereby pleased to make the following rules further to amend the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) (Assam) Rules, 1977, hereinafter referred to as the principal Rules, namely:—

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|------------------------------|----|--|
| Short title and commencement | 1. | (1) These rules may be called the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) (Assam) (Amendment) Rules, 2022.                                 |
|                              |    | (2) They shall come into force on the date of their publication in the Official Gazette.   |
| Definitions                  | 2. | In these rules, in rule 2, after clause (r), the following new clauses shall be inserted, namely :-  |
|                              |    | “(s) ‘Idol’ means an artificial/manmade object or representation of a God/ Goddess used for worship;   |
|                              |    | (t) ‘Synthetic paint’ means a paint made with synthetically manufactured resins rather than with naturally occurring oils or gums;             |
|                              |    | (u) ‘Remnants’ means the non-dissolved materials left after immersion of the idol which are considered waste generated from the immersed idol; |

- (v) 'Bio-degradable' means the material that gets decomposed by the action of micro-organisms such as bacteria or fungi biological (with or without oxygen) while getting assimilated into the natural environment;
- (w) 'Non-Biodegradable' means substance which cannot be broken down by natural organisms and acts as a source of pollution;
- (x) 'Turbidity' means the quality of being cloudy, opaque or thick with suspended matter (the measure of turbidity is a key test of water quality).
- (y) 'Idol immersion point' means a specific location of a river, water bodies where idol immersion is done after performing the rituals to the idols;
- (z) 'Designated and permanent immersion point' means a location of a river or water body (having proper approach, access, corner portion of a river or pond or lake, having shallow depth of water in river or lakes or ponds) which is selected by the local administration or Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) for idol immersion of the area under their jurisdiction during festival period when mass immersion of idols are required. The designated point shall be provided with all safety measures like wooden or steel barricade;
- (aa) 'Unprotected Reaches' means a immersion point having no safety measures or protection measures;
- (bb) 'Synthetic liner' means liner made of High Density Poly Ethylene material also called thermoplastic polymer produced from the monomer of ethylene;
- (cc) 'Supernatant Waters' means the clear water free of precipitate located above the solid part during settling;
- (dd) 'Earthen Bunds' means long sloped earthen structure made to harvest or store water;
- (ee) 'Non - toxic natural dyes' means Dyes that do not contain any toxic elements and are generally derived from natural substances which are eco-friendly water-based, bio-degradable and non-toxic;
- (ff) 'Individual Household' means to constitute a family performing idol puja at home privately but require immersing the idol after the Puja is over.
- (gg) 'Temple Committee' means the Committee constituted by any society or club or community for arrangement of the Puja on behalf of the committee and responsible for management of the related affairs till immersion of idol;
- (hh) '**POP**' means Plaster of Paris;
- (ii) '**NGO**' means Non Governmental Organization;

(jj) 'ULB' means Urban Local Bodies;

(kk) 'PCBA' means Pollution Control Board, Assam."

Insertion of new rules 46 to 54

3. In the principal rules after rule 45, the following new rules 46 to 54 shall be inserted, namely :-

**“Chapter-IX**

Regulation for Idol immersion

46 (1) The 'Idol Immersion Points' shall be encircled and barricaded and synthetic liners shall be placed in the bottom, well in advance. Designated and permanent immersion ghats along river banks shall be located where the reach is protected. Unprotected reaches may be avoided. Barricades at ghats to prevent damage to slope protection works shall be executed by the Water Resources Department.

(2) The liners shall be removed post immersion so that any kind of remnants or waste generated could be brought back to the bank. Commercial or private river liners too shall not be allowed to anchor or harbour at permanent idol immersion points so that ghats are not damaged. Water Resources Department shall construct ramps at the ghats for idol immersion.

(3) Temporary ponds having earthen bunds along river banks to be used for idol immersion shall be constructed. After the completion of immersion, supernatant water may be allowed to flow in the water bodies after checking for colour and turbidity. Lime shall be added in temporary confined ponds.

(4) Bio-degradable materials shall be collected separately for recycling or composting whereas, bamboos and wooden logs, if any, shall be reused. Non-biodegradable materials shall be collected separately for disposal in sanitary landfills.

(5) Worship material like flowers, decorating material (made of paper and plastic) etc. shall be removed before immersion of idols.

(6) The weapons used in the idol may be collected before immersion and recycled.

Regulation for the Idol makers

**47. Materials accredited for creating Idol**

Idols shall be made from the natural materials as described in the holy scripts.

(a) Idol shall be made from traditional clay. Backed clay and Plaster of Paris shall not be used in making any kind of idols.

- (b) Painting of Idols shall be discouraged. In case idols are to be painted, water soluble and nontoxic natural dyes shall be used.
- (c) Bio-degradable and water soluble paint compounds along with organic eco-friendly materials shall be used.
48. Restriction on using synthetic materials
- There shall be a complete ban on the use of synthetic colour for painting of idols that would require immersion as part of final ritual of the festival.
- (a) There shall be a complete ban on the use of Plaster of Paris (POP) in making idol.
- (b) No synthetic paint or colour shall be used for painting idols.
- (c) Thermo-col or any non-biodegradable items shall not be used for decoration and idol making.
49. Role of State Pollution Control Board
- (1) Pollution Control Board, Assam (PCBA) shall conduct water quality assessment of the immersion ghats at three stages i.e. pre-immersion, during immersion and post immersion to assess the quality of the physico chemical parameters and heavy metals of the water bodies. The analytical results shall be uploaded on the Board's website.
- (2) Ambient air quality and Noise level monitoring shall also be conducted at three (3) stages i.e. pre-immersion, during immersion and post immersion to assess the impact on air quality and noise level.
- (3) Pollution Control Board, Assam (PCBA) shall help local administration and puja organisers in preparing mass awareness on the ill effects of the toxic components of colouring materials of the idols etc.
- (4) Pollution Control Board, Assam (PCBA) shall monitor the river banks of the idol immersion points to ensure whether the local bodies have adhered to disposal of the left over materials as per the prescribed guidelines and failing which Pollution Control Board, Assam (PCBA) shall issue notice to the respective municipal bodies.
50. Duty of the Puja committee or Organisations or Idol Makers
- (1) A declaration shall be submitted by all the Puja Committees or individual or organisations or idol makers who organise the festivals and make the idols in pandals raised by them, before the respective Municipal Bodies, Municipalities and Gram Panchayats, as the case may be, specifying the following in the making of idols and raising super structure that,-
- (i) no Plaster of Paris (POP) shall be used;
- (ii) no synthetic paint or colour shall be used;

- (2) The copy shall be made available to the respective Regional Office of the Pollution Control Board, Assam by the Urban Local Bodies/Gram Panchayats.
- (3) Puja Organizing Committees shall procure eco-friendly idols only from the respective Urban Local Bodies registered or authorised craftsman or artisans.
- (4) Only eco-friendly paper plate, banana leaves, or clay plates shall be used by the Puja Committee or Organisations for distribution of Prasad.
- (5) Permanent Idol is encouraged for fixed puja mandaps, wherever possible.
- Duty of Households in Idol Immersion** 51. (1) Individual households should be encouraged to use only eco-friendly idols made of natural clay and bio-degradable materials as decorative and puja materials.
- (2) As far as possible, immersion of small idols shall be done at their homes in eco-friendly manner i.e., in a bucket filled with water and idols shall be kept in immersed state until it dissolves completely. After settlement of settle-able 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).
- (3) In case, individual households intend to perform idol immersions, then idols shall be immersed only in the designated on-land temporary artificial ponds or tanks located nearby or artificial movable tanks arranged by the Urban Local Bodies.
- Duty of Temple Committee** 52. In case of temples where biodegradable wastes are generated every day in the form of used flowers, leaves, fruits, coconut case etc. there shall be scientific disposal of biodegradable wastes and no such wastes shall be disposed of to water bodies. Disposal of such biodegradable wastes to water bodies shall invite penalty to be imposed by the local authorities on the Temple Committee.
- Duty of District Magistrate** 53. (1) A Co-ordination Committee comprising of the representatives from the District Administration, State Pollution Central Board (SPCB), Municipal bodies, Gram Panchayats, Police, Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs), etc. shall be constituted by the

District Magistrate for guiding the public and Puja Committees for carrying out immersion with minimum adverse effect to environment.

- (2) District Administration shall convene meetings with the concerned stakeholders and the idol makers of their respective districts and ensure that the prescribed rules shall be strictly adhered to.
- (3) Permission shall be granted by the 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.
- (4) District Administration shall impose penalty on the violators during the festival.

**Duty of Local Bodies**

54. (1) Adequate numbers of designated immersion ghats shall be arranged to avoid overcrowding and localization of water pollution.
- (2) To ensure sufficient numbers of bins/containers around the Puja Pandal to avoid littering of food and other wastes etc., these bins or containers wherever placed shall be cleared before they starts spilling over. Disposal shall be done as per the provision of Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016.
- (3) To ensure supply of clean and disinfected drinking water and adequate drainage facilities in the premises of the Puja Mandap and to avoid water logging.
- (4) In case of immersion of idols in rivers and lakes, arrangement shall be made for construction of temporary confined ponds with earthen bunds for the purpose of immersion of idols.
- (5) The left over material at idol immersion points on the banks of rivers, ponds, etc. shall be collected by the local bodies within forty eight (48) hours of immersion for disposal as per the provision of the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016, so that the final disposal in terms of specific measures under the provision of the above mentioned Rules can prevent contamination of surface water, and ground water.
- (6) To ensure use of bio-degradable materials such as flowers, clothes, decorating etc. and that the solid wastes comprising of used flowers, clothes, decorating materials, etc. shall not be burnt.
- (7) The Urban Local Bodies, Rural Local Bodies, Gram Panchayats may communicate with the concerned Water Resources Divisions or Municipal Bodies at

- Zila, Taluk, District level regarding their immersion projects/pujas at ghats to maintain safety of public and stability of structures.
- Penalty**            55.    (1)    If any Puja committee who organises the festivals and makes the idols in pandals raised by it, violates any of the provision of rule 50, the Board shall impose penalty for an amount of –
- (a) Rupees three thousand (Rs. 3000/- ) if the puja committee is located in the area of Panchayat;
  - (b) Rupees five thousand (Rs 5000/-) if the puja committee is located in the area of Municipality;
  - (c) Rupees seven thousand (Rs 7000/-) if the puja committee is located in the area of Municipal Corporation.
- (2)    The penalty amount shall be collected in the form of Bank Draft in favour of Pollution Control Board, Assam.”

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Environment and Forest Department, Dispur.