ANDHRA PRADESH POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD
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Regd. Post with Ack Due

Order No.383/APPCB/UH-II/TF/TPT/2018-

Date: 14.09.2018.

DIRECTIONS

Sub:  APPCB – UH-II – TF – M/s. Uranium Corporation of India Limited (A Govt of India Enterprise), Velpula, Medipentla & Kotala Villages, Vemula (M), YSR District – Complaint received against the industry on ground water pollution due to disposal of thickened tillings - Legal hearing held on 08.08.2018 – Directions – Issued - Reg.

Ref:  
4. Representation received from Hon’ble Member of Parliament Sri Y.S.Avinash Reddy, MP on 28.04.2018 & 06.06.2018.
5. Complaint received from the surrounding villagers regarding damage of their borewells and crops due to discharge of Thickened Tailings in unlined ponds on 02.05.2018 & 09.05.2018.
6. The Board has received another complaint from Sri K.Babu Rao, Chief Scientist, (Rtd.), Hyderabad on 21.06.2018 alleging that no standards are followed and tailing pond is lacking proper plan and design.
8. Minutes of External Advisory Committee (Task Force) meeting held on 08.08.2018.

WHEREAS you are operating industry in the name & style of M/s.Uranium Corporation of India Limited (A Govt of India Enterprise) at Velpula, Medipentla & Kotala Villages, Vemula (M), YSR District and is engaged in mining of Uranium Ore of 9,00,000 TPA & production of Sodium-di-Uranate – 256.4 TPA & Sodium Sulphate of 29,187 TPA.

WHEREAS the Ministry of Environment & Forest, Govt. of India vide references 1st cited, issued Environmental Clearance (EC) to industry for opening a mine and to set up a Uranium Processing Plant. In the EC order a specific condition was stipulated that

"The tailings pond shall be lined to prevent ground water contamination and overflow shall be collected, treated and recycled in the ore processing plant and mine for industrial use. The ETP sludge shall be pumped back to the tailings pond. Effluent shall be treated in the sewage treatment plant and after conforming to the prescribed standards shall be used for irrigation".

WHEREAS the Board vide references 2nd cited, issued Consent for Establishment (CFE) to the industry for mining of Uranium Ore and to establish Uranium Processing plant.

WHEREAS the Board issued CFO order to the industry on 23.10.2012, the industry was directed to line the Thickened Tailing Disposal (TTD) area as mentioned in the CFE order dt.11.04.2007 before using and operate the system.

WHEREAS the Board vide references 3rd cited, issued CFO and also Auto renewal to the industry extending the validity of CFO upto 30.06.2021 with the following specific condition.
"The Thickened Tailings Disposal (TTD) area shall be lined with Bentonite with minimum 500 mm layer with 250 micron of polyethylene layer with adequate protective layer of clay or sand of 250 mm. The pond shall be provided with a holding pond to collect drainage from deposit and also rainfall precipitation. The water from holding pond shall be pumped for treatment. There will no water escape from the pond".

WHEREAS the Board vide references 4th cited, has received letters dt.28.04.2018 & 06.06.2018 from Sri Y.S.Avinash Reddy, MP, Kadapa Parliamentary Constituency, YSR District regarding contamination of ground water due to disposal of thickened tailings by M/s. Uranium Corporation of India Limited.

WHEREAS the Board vide references 5th cited, received complaints from the surrounding villagers regarding damage of their borewells and crops due to discharge of Thickened Tailings in unlined ponds. The Board vide reference 6th cited has received another complaint from Sri K.Babu Rao, Chief Scientist, (Retd.), Hyderabad alleging that no standards are followed and tailing pond is lacking proper plan and design.

WHEREAS the officials of ZO, Kurnool has inspected the industry & surroundings and issued show-cause notice to the industry on 23.03.2018 & 13.07.2018 and submitted a report to Board Office on 27.07.2018.

WHEREAS Legal Hearing was conducted before the External Advisory Committee (Task Force) Meeting of A.P. Pollution Control Board on 08.08.2018. The representatives of the industry and complainants (Sri K.Babu Rao & others) attended the legal hearing. The Committee noted that the Board has received complaints from the surrounding villagers regarding damage of crops due to development of white patches in agriculture lands and contamination of water resources due to seepage of effluents from Thickened Tailings disposal area/pond. The Board has received another complaint from Sri K.Babu Rao, Chief Scientist, (Retd.), Hyderabad alleging that no standards/technical specifications are followed during construction of tailing pond leading to damage to Environment and also stated that the industry has constructed seepage collection wells instead of monitoring wells. The Committee also noted the industry has not lined the tailing pond, inspite of specific conditions stipulated in the EC, CFE & CFO orders and not given any proof of lining of Tailing pond. The committee also noted that the industry has not provided proper monitoring bore wells for collecting representative water samples for which the ZO, Kurnool already addressed a letter on 14.06.2018. The representative of the industry informed that they will conduct detailed technical studies by the reputed agencies like NGRI-Hyderabad, IITs, JNTU-Ananthapur etc., and they will constitute a team for monitoring the air and water quality in the surrounding villages. It was also informed that the company has already conducting medical camps in the surrounding villages under CSR activities. The JCEE, ZO, Kurnool has informed that the industry has not lined the Tailing pond with 250 Micron Polyethylene layer as per CFE/CFO orders of the Board and informed that the ground water in the villages of Mobbuchintalapalli, K.K.Kotta, & Kannampalli villages are badly affected due to presence of high Alkalinity and Uranium concentrations. High concentrations of both of these parameters may be due to M/s UCIL as they use the Alkaline leaching method for producing Sodium Di-Uranate. Further stated that there is need to study the impact of Radio activity due to mining and processing of Uranium Ore to the surrounding environment.

The Committee, after detailed discussions, recommended to issue certain directions. The Board hereby issue the following directions under Sec.33 (A) of Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Amendment Act, 1988 and under Sec.31 (A) of Air (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Amendment Act, 1987:

1. The industry shall conduct detailed technical study by the reputed agencies like NGRI-Hyderabad, IITs, JNTUs etc., on impact of Radio activity due to mining and processing of Uranium Ore and tailing pond in the surrounding environment.
2. The industry shall constitute a team consisting of above mentioned agencies to monitor the air and water quality in the surrounding villages.
3. The industry shall also conduct the study through that reputed agency and justify the lining and thickness of tailing pond layer already provided by the industry in compliance with conditions of CFE/CFO of the Board.
4. The industry shall complete the above study within three months and furnish the report to the Board for further necessary action.
5. The industry shall provide monitoring bore holes at appropriate places with suitable sub-mersible pumps within 15 days for collection of representative water samples.

You are hereby directed to note that, should you violate any one of the directions mentioned above, action will be initiated under Sec.33 (A) of Water (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Amendment Act, 1988 and Sec.31 (A) of Air (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Amendment Act, 1987 without any further notice, in the interest of Public Health and Environment.

This Order comes into effect from today i.e., 14.09.2018.

Sd/-
MEMBER SECRETARY

To
M/s. Uranium Corporation of India Limited
(A Govt of India Enterprise), Velpula,
Medipenta & Kotala Villages, Vemula (M),
YSR District.

Copy to:
1. The Joint Chief Environmental Engineer, Zonal Office, Kurnool for information and furnish detailed report as directed by the Board vide letter dt. 09.05.2018 and to monitor frequently.
2. The Environmental Engineer, Regional Office, Tirupati for information and to pursue the industry to ensure continuous compliance of the directions.

// T.C.F.B.O //

JOINT CHIEF ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEER
UH-II