

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF MANIPUR
AT IMPHAL**

MC(PIL)No.14 of 2025

Ref: (i) MC (PIL)No.14 of 2019
(ii) PIL No.24 of 2017

The Loktak Development Authority, Manipur represented by its
Project Director, having its Administrative Office at Secure Building,
2nd Floor, AT Lane, North AOC, Imphal West, Manipur-795001.

Applicant

Vs.

Court on its own Motion.

Respondent

BEFORE

**HON'BLE THE CHIEF JUSTICE MR. M. SUNDAR
HON'BLE MR. JUSTICE AHANTHEM BIMOL SINGH**

For Applicant : Mr. Lenin Hijam, Advocate General for Mr. H.
Kenajit, learned Advocate.

Mr. I. Denning, Amicus Curiae.

Date of Order : 12.03.2026

JUDGMENT AND ORDER

(ORAL)

M. Sundar (C.J.):

[1] Captioned 'miscellaneous case' ('MC' for the sake of brevity)
has been taken out by Loktak Development Authority (LDA) with a prayer
to vacate 'interim order dated 17.07.2019' ('said order' for the sake of

brevity and convenience), to be noted, though said order is an interim order, the same has been made by Hon'ble predecessor Bench in the main 'Public Interest Litigation' ('PIL' for the sake of brevity) itself.

[2] In and vide 'said order', this Court, inter- alia ordered that no new project or development programme shall be taken up by LDA or any other State authorities in and around Loktak Lake without the leave of this Court.

[3] Pending said order, LDA took out an earlier miscellaneous case being MC(PIL)No.16 of 2019 with a prayer to allow LDA to initiate the process of floating tenders i.e., process of issuing Notices Inviting Tenders (NIT) for implementation/execution/completion of 'Loktak Inland Waterways Improvement Project'. This MC(PIL) No.16 of 2019 was disposed of by another predecessor Bench {to which one of us (Mr. Justice Ahanthem Bimol Singh)} was party in and vide an order dated 12.10.2020 inter- alia referring to Integrated Management Plan (IMP) of Wise Use of Loktak Lake, Manipur and saying that permission as sought for by LDA is accorded subject to the condition that necessary statutory clearances are obtained from all departments concerned more particularly from Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India ('MoEF' for the sake of brevity).

[4] In the hearing today, Mr. Lenin Hijam, learned senior advocate and learned Advocate General (AG) for the State of Manipur,

appearing on behalf of Mr. H. Kenajit, learned counsel representing LDA (to be noted, 'LDA' is respondent No.3 in main PIL), Mr. Boboy Potsangbam, learned Central Government Standing Counsel (CGSC) for Union of India, MoEF ('MoEF' is respondent No.4 in main PIL) and Mr. I. Denning, learned counsel and Amicus are before this Court.

[5] This Court heard learned AG, all the counsel and learned Amicus.

[6] After afore-referred 12.10.2020 order was made by Hon'ble predecessor Bench in MC(PIL) No.16 of 2019, MoEF in and vide letter dated 18.03.2024 bearing reference No. F.No.J-22012/2/86-CS(W) PtFile-Part(1) wrote to the Principal Pay & Accounts Officer conveying approval of Hon'ble President of India for administrative approval and expenditure sanction for implementation of afore-referred IMP. To be noted, this Court is informed that IMP has been prepared inter-alia by Wetlands International South Asia ('WISA' for the sake of convenience) which we are informed is knowledge partner of State of Manipur designated by MoEF. A careful perusal of IMP brings to light that re-organization of LDA has been suggested and this finds place in the executive summary of IMP originally prepared in 2019 too.

[7] Learned AG, drawing our attention to afore-referred 18.03.2024 communication submits that a sum of 145.2662 crores has been made available for implementation of 'IMP' qua Loktak Wetland in

Manipur. Learned AG submits that this budgetary allocation would lapse if it remains unutilized and that has necessitated the captioned MC.

[8] Learned AG, adverting to an affidavit dated 07.03.2026 (to be noted, Chief Secretary Government of Manipur is deponent of this affidavit), submitted that multi-disciplinary and multi-sectorial units have been put in place and that is in consonance with the re-structuring of LDA qua IMP, the multi-sectorial and the multi-disciplinary endeavor consists of 7(seven) units and the details as contained in the affidavit is as follows:

Sl. No.	UNITS & its Purpose	Supporting Department	Officials
1.	General Administrative Unit: - General administration - Administration of Pay and accounts - Personnel management including recruitment and contracts - General procurement - Maintenance of office assets - Handling legal matters	(i) Forest, Envt. & CC Department, Govt. of Manipur	(i) Administrative Secretary (For., Envt& CC), Govt of Manipur (ii) Spl. Secretary (For., Envt& CC), Govt. of Manipur
2.	Planning and Design Unit: - Project formulation, donor submission and liaison - Project monitoring and reporting - Exploring new technologies, technical know-how - Coordination between different units (except Establishment) - Stakeholder liaison and engagement - Securing and monitoring convergence funding - General representation of the organization within different line departments/ agencies	(i) Directorate of Envt. & CC, Manipur (ii) RD & PR, Govt. of Manipur	(i) Director, Directorate of Envt. & CC (ii) Administrative Secretary (RD & PR), Govt. of Manipur (iii) State Mission Director
3.	Wetland Monitoring Unit:	(i) Directorate of Envt. &	(i) Director, Directorate

	- Monitoring of wetland features as per the approved Wetlands Inventory, Assessment and Monitoring System (WIAMS) - Maintenance of laboratory and monitoring facilities - Maintenance of hydrometric stations and on-site monitoring equipment - Preparation of health cards and other technical and scientific publications - Evaluation of ongoing and new risks to the ecosystem - Maintenance and updation of the wetlands database	CC, Manipur (ii) Fisheries Department	<i>of Envt. & CC</i> (ii) Administrative Secretary (Fisheries), Govt. of Manipur (iii) Director (Fisheries)
4.	Community Engagement Unit: - Design and implementation of works related to communities and livelihoods - Identification of beneficiaries under various livelihood programmes - Socioeconomic studies and surveys - Capacity development programmes for communities	(i) Social Welfare Department	(i) Administrative Secretary (Social Welfare), Govt. of Manipur (ii) Director (Social Welfare)
5.	Communication and Outreach Unit: - Implementation of Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) Plan - Maintenance of visitor and interpretation center - Design, publication and dissemination of CEPA products - Conducting awareness and outreach events and campaigns - Maintaining wetland mitra network	(i) DIPR	(i) Administrative Secretary (IPR), Govt. of Manipur (ii) Director (DIPR)
ii.	Engineering Unit: Design and implementation of engineering works pertaining to water management	(i) Water Resources Dept.	(i) Administrative Secretary (Water Resources), Govt. of Manipur

	- Maintenance and deployment of machinery, tools and plant - Survey and investigation related to boundary delineation and water management (including bathymetry)		iii) Chief Engineer (WR)
7.	Watershed Management Unit	(i) Entire Unit entrusted to Forest Department	

[9] This Court carefully considered the submissions of learned AG and all the learned counsel and also the learned Amicus who is assisting the Court and finds that the following developments have unfurled post said order (order dated 17.07.2019) and order dated 12.10.2020 made thereafter in MC(PIL) No.16 of 2019 and an adumbration of developments is as follows:

- (i) the 'IMP' has been given administrative approval inter-alia by 'MoEF';
- (ii) 'MoEF' has allocated 145.2662 crores and this budgetary allocation will lapse if it remains unutilized in this financial year;
- (iii) the multi-disciplinary and multi-sectorial units suggested by the Chief Secretary of Manipur talks about multiple posts after re-organization but there is a shortfall of 89 posts and the same will be filled up by kick starting recruitment process shortly;

[10] In the light of the narrative thus far, we find that the interim order dated 17.07.2019 which is now operating need not be vacated but can be modified to facilitate use of the budgetary allocation without the same lapsing and in this view of the matter, we make the following order:

- (a) the Government of Manipur, more particularly the multi-disciplinary and multi-sectorial units set out in tabulation supra, shall now proceed with Conservation and Management work as per letter dated 18.03.2024 from MoEF to Principal Pay and Account Officer bearing reference No. F.No.J-22012/2/86-CS(W) PtFile-Part(1) and strictly in accordance with law. To be noted, this directive of ours can be traced to a statutory provision and the same is Rule 4 of Wetlands (Conservation and Management), Rules, 2017 (said Rules) which is a piece of subordinate legislation made by the Central Government in exercise of its Rule making power under Section 23 of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986;
- (b) the above is purely a temporary measure which shall now operate until further orders from this Court in the main PIL or in any MC thereat;
- (c) we requisition a report from the Chief Secretary, Government of Manipur regarding the steps taken and

the activities done as per IMP in the next listing which will be one quarter hence. Learned Amicus will have access to the site at any point of time and it is open to the Amicus to bring to the notice of this Court if there is any requirement of further orders from this Court;

- (d) the afore-referred report to be filed in the next listing by the Chief Secretary shall be one that gives fortnightly progress of implementation of IMP. The Chief Secretary, Government of Manipur shall be the State Coordinator for implementation of IMP and shall therefore, be responsible for the ensuing activity pursuant to this order;
- (e) the afore-referred report to be filed in this Court one quarter hence shall include details of utilization of the budgetary allocation on a fortnightly basis and learned Amicus Curiae shall be favoured with fortnightly interim-reports which shall be compiled and filed in this Court in the next listing of the main PIL and MCs thereat;
- (f) the quarterly report shall also set out the steps taken for recruitment and the stage of the same and every endeavor shall be made to complete the recruitment at

the earliest i.e., as expeditiously as the official business would permit, preferably, within 3(three) months.

[11] Captioned MC is disposed of in the aforesaid manner with aforesaid observations/directives. There shall be no order as to costs.

JUDGE

CHIEF JUSTICE

John Kom

FR/NFR