# NGT directs JSW to spend ₹1.61 crore on CSR after environmental rule violations at Dolvi plant



The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed Jindal Steel Works (JSW) to allocate ₹1.61 crore for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives following procedural violations related to environmental regulations at its Dolvi plant in Pen, Raigad district, Maharashtra.

The order, issued by the Western Bench of the NGT, requires JSW to complete the CSR expenditure within one year. The company must submit detailed reports on the CSR activities undertaken to its Board of Directors, publish these reports in its annual report, and update information on its website every six months until environmental restoration measures are completed.

This directive stems from a case filed in 2022 by social activist Samita Patil and agriculturist Sunil Kothekar, who alleged that JSW’s unauthorised expansion of its steel plant—including the construction of a coke oven facility and conveyor belt infrastructure leading to its private jetty—had caused large-scale environmental damage. The petitioners claimed that these developments encroached on sensitive mangrove ecosystems near Dharamtar Creek, resulting in the destruction of approximately 1.89 hectares of mangroves and disruption of natural water channels.

JSW contested these claims, asserting that it had secured all necessary environmental and Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) clearances for the projects. However, the NGT found that certain constructions, notably the conveyor belt, were built within 50 metres of mangrove areas, in violation of CRZ norms.

In its defence, JSW cited multiple clearances granted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), maintaining that no mangroves were within the stipulated 50-metre distance from their construction sites at the time of approval. The company also noted that inspections by the Maharashtra Coastal Zone Management Authority (MCZMA) and MoEF&CC had not identified any violations until recently.

Regarding the alleged damage to mangroves, JSW blamed the loss on waste being dumped by nearby village panchayats around the conveyor gallery. The company referred to observations by a Joint Committee and studies from the Maharashtra Remote Sensing Application Centre (MRSAC) and the National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM). These studies recorded that a significant area adjacent to the conveyor belt was occupied by domestic and solid waste dumping, which led to notable mangrove loss.

On the issue of Environmental Damage Compensation (EDC) claims made by the complainants—who cited satellite imagery from 2011 to 2021 showing depletion in mangrove coverage allegedly due to JSW’s activities—the NGT observed: “We find that the Joint Committee has suggested that, at the site in question beneath the conveyor belt, dumping of solid waste was found to have been done by local bodies. Calculation of EDC for the damage of 0.71 hectares has also been done against these local bodies. Therefore, while we find evidence of some damage to mangroves, the actual cause has not been conclusively determined.”

The Tribunal further addressed concerns about potential damage to the creek itself. JSW assured the NGT it would submit a time-bound restoration plan as a responsible corporate citizen. The order stated, “Although there is nothing on record proving JSW caused damage to the creek, we accept their proposal.” The restoration plan is to be implemented under the supervision of the State of Maharashtra and the District Revenue Department and must be completed within one year from the date the order is uploaded.

JSW also informed the NGT that it has already planted over 1.9 million mangrove saplings across 380 hectares. The company has committed to planting mangroves on an additional 15 hectares under the supervision of Maharashtra’s Mangrove Cell and the District Revenue Department.

The stipulations laid out by the NGT mark a significant step in addressing environmental concerns related to industrial development in ecologically sensitive coastal regions, while balancing corporate accountability measures through mandated CSR spending and restoration activities.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

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