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NMC to terminate garbage treatment BOT operator

NAGPUR: Finally, Nagpur Municipal Corporation (NMC) has decided to terminate the services of Hanjer Biotech Energies Private Ltd, BOT operator of the solid waste treatment plant (STP). The private company has failed to ensure operation of the plant consistently and at full capacity, bringing bad name for the civic body.

The civic body appears to have got some hint of severe action being initiated by Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) over the problems with the STP. The final termination notice was served to Hanjer Biotech on Saturday, before summons from MPCB could reach NMC.

A senior NMC official told TOI the agreement signed with Hanjer Biotech will come to an end after one month. "Show cause notice to terminate the agreement was issued a month ago. Hanjer Biotech is not operating the plant according to terms and conditions of the agreement. The plant was shut down some months ago over non-payment of power bills. National Green Tribunal (NGT) had slapped penalty on NMC. Also, MPCB had served prosecution notice to NMC. The process to rope in new operator will be started. Tenders will be floated once agreement is suspended," he said.

Confusion prevails over whether NMC will direct the operator

to continue treatment till appointment of new operator. Process to rope in new operator will take at least six months. There is also confusion about existing plant's ownership since Hanjer Biotech had constructed the plant with its own investment, on BOT basis.

According to the summons sent by MPCB, mayor and civic chief will have to submit a reply by September 12 and be present before member secretary Rajeev Kumar Mittal on September 15. MPCB had warned it will begin prosecution procedure against the mayor and civic chief in case reply is not filed or found to be unsatisfactory.

Hanjer Biotech was appointed as operator for 15 years from 2010 to treat 800 metric tonne garbage daily at Bhandewadi. Besides, the company was supposed to dispose off the remaining garbage in scientific manner. The company had failed to treat total garbage and ensure regular operation of the plant.

To ensure continued treatment of garbage, NMC had paid power bills of the company in April. The company was requesting NMC to allow amendments in the agreement and also to exit the agreement. NMC officials had visited the company's plant at Pune to think about its proposal. Looking into all aspects, NMC has refused to let the company move out, and instead decided to suspend the company's services.

Failed Bot Projects

Street-light: Agreement signed with Vibrant Infotech to maintain street lights in 2003. Agreement suspended following company's failure in 2006-07

Shopping Malls: Unity Infraprojects was given work order to develop shopping malls at four locations in 2006-07. Construction started at two locations but was never completed. Agreement for three locations was finally scrapped in 2009-10

Starbus: Vansh Nimay Infraprojects was roped in to operate city bus service in 2007. Operator failed to run all buses or give proper service. Final termination notice was served couple of months ago and process to appoint new operator is underway