

Punjab lacks proper collection, safe disposal of plastic waste

CAG Report Identifies Gaps In Implementation Of Plastic Waste Rules

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Chandigarh: Punjab was found wanting in the collection and safe disposal of plastic waste besides lacking a robust mechanism for assessment of generation of waste, reveal the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) report.

The audit, aimed at assessing the effectiveness and compliance of the provisions of the Plastic Waste Management Rules to address the risks posed by plastic waste to environment and health, was carried out in six districts of Punjab from 2015-16 to 2019-20.

Painting a sorry picture, the report, which was tabled in the Parliament, stated that the Punjab Municipal Infrastructure Development Company submitted that 100% of plastic waste generated by urban local bodies (ULBs) during 2015-20 was collected without providing any documentary evidence in support of the claim. The body further stated that the plastic waste collected contained 25% to 30% fraction of recyclable plastic, all of which was picked and segregated by the informal sector, that is, rag pickers and junk dealers and sent to recyclers directly.

Raising questions on the status of the remaining 70% of the plastic waste, which was predominantly non-recyclable, the report observed that in the absence of any data regarding its status, it can

MANAGING THE GREY AREAS

- Discrepancies in collection, processing and disposal of plastic waste
- Discrepancies in recycling of plastic waste
- Data inconsistencies
- Delay in application for registration
- Irregular grant of registration
- Irregularities in renewal of registrations



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be safely assumed that the leftover 70% of waste was indiscriminately dumped.

Waste generation projections are one of the key processes which help in policy formulation and waste management planning. In Punjab, none of the sampled gram panchayats nor PMDC for ULBs made any projections for plastic waste likely to be generated in future.

The report also pointed out variations in the data on plastic waste generation provided to PMDC by ULBs. The variation ranged from 12.04% to 51.93% from the data provided to the Punjab Pollution Control Board (PPCB) by these ULBs.

Due to lack of validation of the data, the ministry of environment, forest and climate change and Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) would remain unaware of the quantum of the waste being

generated and its decision making on addressing the problem of disposal would remain constrained by the poor data, reads the report.

The audit also found that there was no uniform method for assessment of plastic waste generation in the state. The data on plastic waste generation reported by ULBs was based on assumptions without any sound rationale. In Punjab, PMDC provided the quantum of plastic waste generation computed at 7% of total municipal waste generated. "In absence of any standard/ uniform methodology for assessment of quantum of plastic waste generated, it is impossible to obtain a clear and comprehensive status of plastic waste generated," the report added.

As per the laid down norms, no individual can manufacture carry bags or recycle plastic bags or multi-layered packaging without obtaining a registration from the state pollution control board. However, it was found that PPCB registered only 139 units out of 502, which accounts for 27.70% of the total plastic units, by March 2020. In response, PPCB had assured to make efforts to register the plastic units.

The report also highlighted delays in application for registration. PPCB granted registrations to 83 producers during 2016-20 which had applied for registration, with a delay ranging from four months to over 3.7 years, against the rules.

The audit observed that the PPCB, against the provisions, granted registration to seven producers and three recyclers beyond the validity period of their consents, under the Water and Air Acts. On being pointed out, PPCB assured that plastic units would be persuaded for renewal of their air and water consents. Irregularities in the renewal of registrations were also noted. As many as 24 plastic units, whose registration had expired during the period 2018-20, did not apply for renewal of registration as of March 2020, while 10 plastic units applied for renewal in 2017-20 with a delay ranging from four months to over 1.3 years.

It was also found that the selected ULBs in the state had not set up a system for plastic waste management by seeking assistance of producers as mandated under the law. Punjab contended that they were not aware of the producers functioning under their jurisdiction and assured the details of producers would be obtained from their respective PCBs and efforts would be made to ensure setting up a system for the plastic waste management with producers. The selected ULBs of the state did not utilise plastic waste for road construction or energy recovery during 2015-20.

“In absence of any standard/uniform methodology for assessment of quantum of plastic waste generated, it is impossible to obtain a clear and comprehensive status of plastic waste generated,” the report added

SGPC insists on marking day as ‘Shahadat Diwas’

Stays Away From Govt Functions

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Amritsar: While the SAD-backed Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) maintained that it was unfortunate that the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC) was towing an “anti-Sikh ideology” by supporting the BJP government’s decision to call martyrdom day of the Sahibzadas as “Veer Bal Diwas” and not ‘Shahadate Shahadat Diwas’, the DSGMC participated in the functions organised by the Centre to commemorate the supreme sacrifice, in Delhi on Monday.

The SGPC stayed away from government functions and will observe their martyrdom day on December 28 at Fatehgarh Sahib, the place where the two younger Sahibzadas were martyred in 1704.

DSGMC president Harmeet Singh Kalka argued that the Centre observed ‘Veer Bal Diwas’ dedicated to martyrdom day of Chhote Sahibzade and did not rechristen the day as was being propagated. Abiding by the Akal Takht directions, the DSGMC will observe martyrdom day of Chhote Sahibzade on December 28 at Gurdwara Mata Sundari Ji in Delhi, he said, adding that they had already observed martyrdom day of Wadda Sahibzade (elder sons) on December 23 at Gurdwara Damdama Sahib in the national capital.

Kalka claimed that an un-

DSGMC takes part in programme

Jalandhar: The Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC) was the only prominent Sikh body which actively participated in the Veer Bal Diwas programme organised by the Centre. It is for the first time that the Centre organised programmes to mark martyrdom of the Sahibzadas. The demand to organise Veer Bal Diwas in memory of Sahibzadas was first raised by Delhi BJP MP Parvesh Verma.



VEER BAL DIWAS: CM Bhagwant Mann with BJP leader Manjinder Singh Sirsa at a programme on Monday

On Monday, former DSGMC chief Manjit Singh G K said neither he nor any other SAD or DSGMC leader endorsed the demand to name the martyrdom day of Sahibzadas as ‘Bal Diwas’. “Neither during my tenure nor later, the DSGMC endorsed the nomenclature. Though we always appreciated the government’s move to observe the martyrdom of Sahibzade,” he said, adding that he had recently written to the PM to change the name to ‘Sahibzade Shahadat Diwas’.

necessary controversy was being created due to political reasons. The DSGMC had no objection over the name since it was dedicated to the martyrdom of Chhote Sahibzade, he said.

Baba Amrik Singh Ajnala, president of a breakaway faction of Damdami Taksal said: “It is not acceptable to us to observe martyrdom day of Sahibzadas both as ‘Bal Diwas’ and under the aegis of the government. It should be observed the way as it had been observed by the Sikhs in the past.” The DSGMC and the Sikhs, who had no objection over the name, are “colluding” with the BJP for their vested interests, he alleged.

Meanwhile, president of Delhi-based Dashmesh Sewa Society and former member of the DSGMC, Inder Mohan Singh urged people to refrain from calling martyrdom of Sahibzadas as ‘Veer Bal Di-

was’. “People world over pay respect to Sahibzadas by calling them ‘baba’, hence the use of the word ‘bal’ or child for them is not appropriate,” he said, while appealing to the government to observe martyrdom day on December 26 as ‘Sahibzade Shahadat Diwas’ instead of ‘Veer Bal Diwas’.

Notably, the SGPC has already rejected the name ‘Veer Bal Diwas’ and has maintained that a conspiracy was being hatched to divide the Sikh community and undermine the Sikh history.

“Kalka is working as a mouthpiece of the Union government,” said SGPC president Harjinder Singh Dhali. The Sikh community would never let the originality and importance of its history be diminished and will pay respect and reverence to Sahibzadas as per the spirit of its history, he said.

Mann joins Modi at ‘Veer Bal Diwas’ event in Delhi

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chandigarh: Punjab chief minister Bhagwant Mann participated in the ‘Veer Bal Diwas’ programme at Delhi even as political parties in the state, except the BJP, seemed cautious about the Centre’s nomenclature. The day has been marked to pay tributes to the martyrdom of the two younger Sahibzadas (sons) of the 10th Sikh master Guru Gobind Singh — Sahibzade Zorawar Singh (9) and Sahibzade Fateh Singh (6).

Speaking at the ‘Veer Bal Diwas’ event attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Major Dhyanchand Stadium in Delhi on Monday, Mann said that the Sahibzadas made a supreme sacrifice against cruelty. Mann also thanked the PM for taking their sacrifice to the world. He claimed that 3 crore people of Punjab were grateful to the PM.

Mann said that the supreme sacrifice made by Chhote Sahibzade will forever inspire humanity to



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Punjab chief minister Bhagwant Mann at ‘Veer Bal Diwas’ programme in Delhi on Monday

fight against tyranny, oppression and injustice. He said the Sahibzadas attained martyrdom at a tender age, showing exemplary courage to stand up against the might of the Mughal governor of Sirhind. They had inherited the traits of valour and selfless service from the tenth Guru, who fought relentlessly for the sake of humanity. Entire world was paying glowing tributes to the Sahibzadas for their unpa-

ralleled sacrifice, added the CM.

Mann said the history of Punjab was replete with countless sacrifices that had derived inspiration from Guru Arjan Dev and Guru Tegh Bahadur, both of whom had laid down their lives for the sake of mankind. Expressing gratitude to the PM, Mann said the event will go a long way in perpetuating the glorious legacy to the younger generations.

BJP leaders try to play down controversy

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chandigarh: With Sikh bodies vehemently objecting to the naming of martyrdom day of the younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh as ‘Veer Bal Diwas’, the Punjab unit of the BJP on Monday tried to play down the controversy surrounding the nomenclature.

The SGPC had recommended the Centre to name the day as ‘Sahibzade Shahadat Diwas’ as it resonated with the Sikh ethos.

A group of BJP leaders led by party state president Ashwani Sharma paid obeisance at Gurdwara Fatehgarh Sahib to commemorate the supreme sacrifice of the Sahibzadas. The three-day annual ‘Shaheed Jor Mela’ (congregation) began at Fatehgarh Sahib on Monday. Thousands of devotees are expected to pay obeisance at Fatehgarh Sahib during these days.

Interacting with media, Sharma hailed the sacrifice of Baba Fateh Singh and Baba Zorawar Singh and maintained that nomenclature was not important and people should desist from publicity gimmicks. “What is more important is that people across the world should know the reasons for their martyrdom,” said Sharma.

Refusing to comment on the statement made by the SGPC chief, requesting Sikhs to observe December 26 as ‘Sahibzade Shahadat Diwas’ instead of ‘Veer Bal Diwas’, Sharma, said: “Today is the day of remembering the sacrifice of Sahibzadas and it can be done in any name.”

He, however, said by dedicating ‘Veer Bal Diwas’ to martyrdom of Sahibzadas, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had done what no one else could in

the last 75 years.

Sharma also said: “The courage and sacrifice of Guru’s sons’ saved the country from conversions. Nine years and seven years old Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh refused the governor of Sirhind, who had given them the bait that if they converted to Islam their lives would be saved. The brave Sahibzadas refused to convert and were killed.”

Recalling the history, Sharma said: “The land of Punjab has stood like a firm wall to all invasions and crusades since ancient times. We are proud, honoured and humbled that we live on this land. The rich history of exemplary courage of the family of Guru Gobind Singh Ji is written in golden words. History is replete with the stories of gallantry and today the BJP state leadership took the initiative to come and

EXEMPLARY COURAGE

pay our deepest respects and gratitude to the Sahibzadas’ sacrifices. I am sure the younger generation will imbibe the courage of our Gurus and live in peace and harmony,” said Sharma. Union minister Som Prakash, Kewal Dhillon, Arvind Khanna, Jai Inder Kaur and others accompanied Sharma to Fatehgarh Sahib.

SAD leader and Bathinda MP Harsimrat Kaur Badal had also raised the issue in the Parliament and requested to name the event “in a manner that it symbolises panthic values and is in sync with the sentiments and heritage of the Khalsa Panth”.

Meanwhile, in Bathinda, devotees headed towards gurdwaras to pay homage to the Sahibzadas, two days before their martyrdom day. The Jalandhar unit of the BJP also organised the ‘Veer Bal Diwas’ event at DAV Institute of Engineering and Technology.

World Skill Centre to come up in Nanded

Chandigarh: AAP Rajya Sabha MP Vikramjit Singh Sahney on Monday announced that the Industrial Training Institute (ITI), Bidar, would be upgraded to a centre of excellence while a World Skill Centre in the name of Baba Fateh Singh will be set up at Sri Hazur Sahib at Nanded.

Sahney attended the Joga Singh Ji Kalyana Karnataka Award Ceremony-2022 in Bidar, Karnataka, on Monday.

He said the place had historic importance of the Sikh Gurus and the com-

munity was proud of ‘Panth Rattan’ Joga Singh. “All due clearances and permissions for the skill centre will be taken from National Skill Development Centre and the youth will be trained according to the latest industry requirements,” he said.

He also announced that any 20 students from Punjab, who would then join Bidar Engineering College, would be given scholarships from Bhagat Singh Scholarship Fund.

Sahney also visited Nanded to pay homage to Guru Gobind Singh. **TNN**

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