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IIT Bombay Warns PCMC Against Approving Housing Projects Near Taloja MIDC Due to Pollution Risks

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IIT Bombay has issued a warning to the Panvel City Municipal Corporation (PCMC), advising against the approval of housing projects near the Taloja MIDC industrial zone. The recommendation comes after the institute submitted its latest environmental status report, highlighting serious pollution concerns in the region.

According to the report, both air and water quality in areas surrounding Taloja and Kasardi rivers are heavily compromised due to industrial activity and untreated sewage. The study, conducted by IIT Bombay's Department of Environmental Science and Engineering, revealed that these rivers are not under the regular monitoring of the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, since they are not used as a source of drinking water. As a result, significant environmental degradation has gone unchecked.

The report further points to the unmanaged waste problem in the area. It notes that approximately 471 metric tonnes of solid waste are generated daily in and around Taloja MIDC. This includes hazardous waste, plastic, rubber, construction debris and domestic refuse. The accumulation of such waste has led to foul odours, making the area nearly uninhabitable, especially near the industrial dumping ground.

IIT Bombay has recommended that PCMC immediately stop granting approvals for residential developments near the polluted zones. The institute has suggested a range of remedial actions, including setting up waste-to-energy technologies such as biomethanation and pyrolysis, upgrading sewage treatment infrastructure and ensuring proper monitoring of industrial effluents.

Local residents and environmental activists have long raised concerns about the impact of pollution in the region. Several have reported respiratory issues and discomfort due to poor air quality. Odour complaints have been widespread in nearby localities such as Kharghar and Kalamboli, where people often keep windows closed throughout the day due to the unbearable smell.

In response to these ongoing concerns, the Maharashtra Lokayukta had earlier directed the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board to identify polluting industries in Taloja MIDC and install air quality monitoring systems. Despite such interventions, IIT Bombay's report indicates that effective oversight is still lacking, especially when it comes to the Taloja and Kasardi rivers.

The PCMC has published the full environmental report on its website and is expected to hold consultations with stakeholders, including MIDC and environmental agencies. A formal response from the civic body is awaited.