

Outlook

THE NEWS SCROLL

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SC restrains K'taka from pumping treated water for recharging ground water table in Kolar distt

New Delhi, Jan 7 The Supreme Court Monday restrained the Karnataka government from pumping secondary treated water from its sewage treatment plants (STPs) in Bangalore into irrigation tanks in Kolar district for recharging the ground water table after taking note of a report claiming that the water was contaminated.

The apex court stayed the Karnataka High Court order by which the state government was allowed to pump the secondary treated water from Bangalore-based STPs to the minor irrigation tanks situated in Kolar District for recharging the ground water table under as the K & C valley project.

A bench of Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justice S K Kaul took note of the submission of lawyer Prashant Bhushan that the high court "overlooked" a report which had pointed out that the water, to be pumped for recharging the ground water table, was contaminated and had contained "higher heavy metals, high nutrients, higher Biochemical Oxygen Demand and Chemical Oxygen Demand".

It also issued notices to the state government and other government bodies including Department of Minor Irrigation, Central Ground Water Board and Karnataka State Pollution Control Board on the plea of R Anjaneya Reddy, a resident of Chikkaballapura in Karnataka.

Reddy has challenged the September 28, 2018 high court order by which an earlier direction was modified and the state government and its agencies were allowed to pump the secondary treated water from the STPs of Bangalore City to the minor irrigation tanks situated in Kolar district for recharging the ground water table under the project.

The plea alleged that earlier the high court on July 24 last year had restrained the government from restarting the pumping of the secondary treated water.

Reddy, in his plea, said that he had submitted before the high court a report of the Energy and Wetlands Research Group, Centre for Ecological Sciences and the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore on the quality of treated water meant for recharging the ground water table.

"The said report explicitly pointed out that the water quality from the pumping point outlet of Bellandur Sewage Treatment Plant and the Lakes of Kolar (Lakshmisagara and Narasapura Lake), which received the secondary treated water have been contaminated with higher heavy metals, high nutrients...", it said.

The High Court "did not take cognizance of the said report and without considering the impact of the project on the drinking water sources of the region" and modified the earlier order, it alleged.

The High Court failed to appreciate that the right to safe drinking water is a fundamental right guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution and by supplying water containing hard metals and pollutants harmful to the living being, a large population of Kolar, Chikkaballapura and Bangalore Rural District are curtailed of their fundamental right, it said.

It has sought a stay on the high court order and a direction to the state government to stop pumping secondary treated water from its STPs into the Minor Irrigation Tanks of Kolar District. SJK RKS RT