

SC Restrains Karnataka Govt From Pumping Secondary Treated Water From Sewage Treatment Plants To Irrigation Tanks

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The Supreme Court today stayed the Karnataka High Court order which permitted the Government to pump secondary treated water from Sewage Treatment Plants(STP) to the irrigation tanks in Kolar, which is being carried out with the purported objective of recharging ground water level.

The Karnataka Government was carrying out this activity under the scheme "K&C Valley Project", which envisages pumping of 400 Million Liters per day secondary treated water or

reclaimed water from Koramangala, Challaghatta Valley and Belanduru Sewage Treatment Plants to fill 126 Minor Irrigation Tanks of Kolar and Chikballapura Districts.

The project was challenged by R Anjaneya Reddy, a local resident, contending that the water from STPs cannot be pumped into irrigation tanks, as it was heavily contaminated with toxic metals. He produced a report dated 27/09/2018 by the Energy and Wetlands research Group, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, which pointed out that "secondary treated water have been contaminated with higher heavy metals, high nutrients, higher Biochemical Oxygen Demand and Chemical Oxygen Demand"

On the basis of the this report, the High Court stayed the project on July 24. Later, this stay was vacated by the Court on September 27, accepting another report submitted by the Government, which endorsed quality of the water from STPs.

Challenging the High Court order, the petitioner approached the Supreme Court through Advocate Prashant Bhushan.

Today, the SC bench of Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justice S K Kaul stayed the High Court order, prima facie accepting the submission of Bhushan that the HC acted on a unilateral report filed by the Government.

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 the petitioner, a resident of Chikkaballapura in Karnataka.

The petitioner also submitted that the Sewage Treatment Plants established by the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) are not equipped with the technology that would neutralize the Industrial effluents and harmful chemicals that flows into the STPs from various corners of Bangalore city. The chemical contaminants remains as toxic as it was and harmful even in the secondary treated/ reclaimed water.

"Filling of tanks with contaminated water consisting of heavy metals and industrial chemicals would cause serious repercussions on the human health, aquatic life and environment across Kolar, Chikkaballapura and Bangalore Rural Districts", the petition said.

Read Petition

SYNOPSIS AND LIST OF DATES

The present Special Leave Petition has been filed under Article 136 of the Constitution of India against the Interim order dated 28.09.2018 passed by the Division Bench of Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka at Bengaluru in Writ Petition (Civil) No. 25087 of 2018 whereby the High Court has modified the Interim Order dated 24/07/2018 and permitted the respondents to pump the secondary treated water from the sewage treatment plants of Bangalore City to the Minor Irrigation Tanks situated in Kolar District of Karnataka State for the purpose of recharging the ground water table through the project named as K&C valley

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