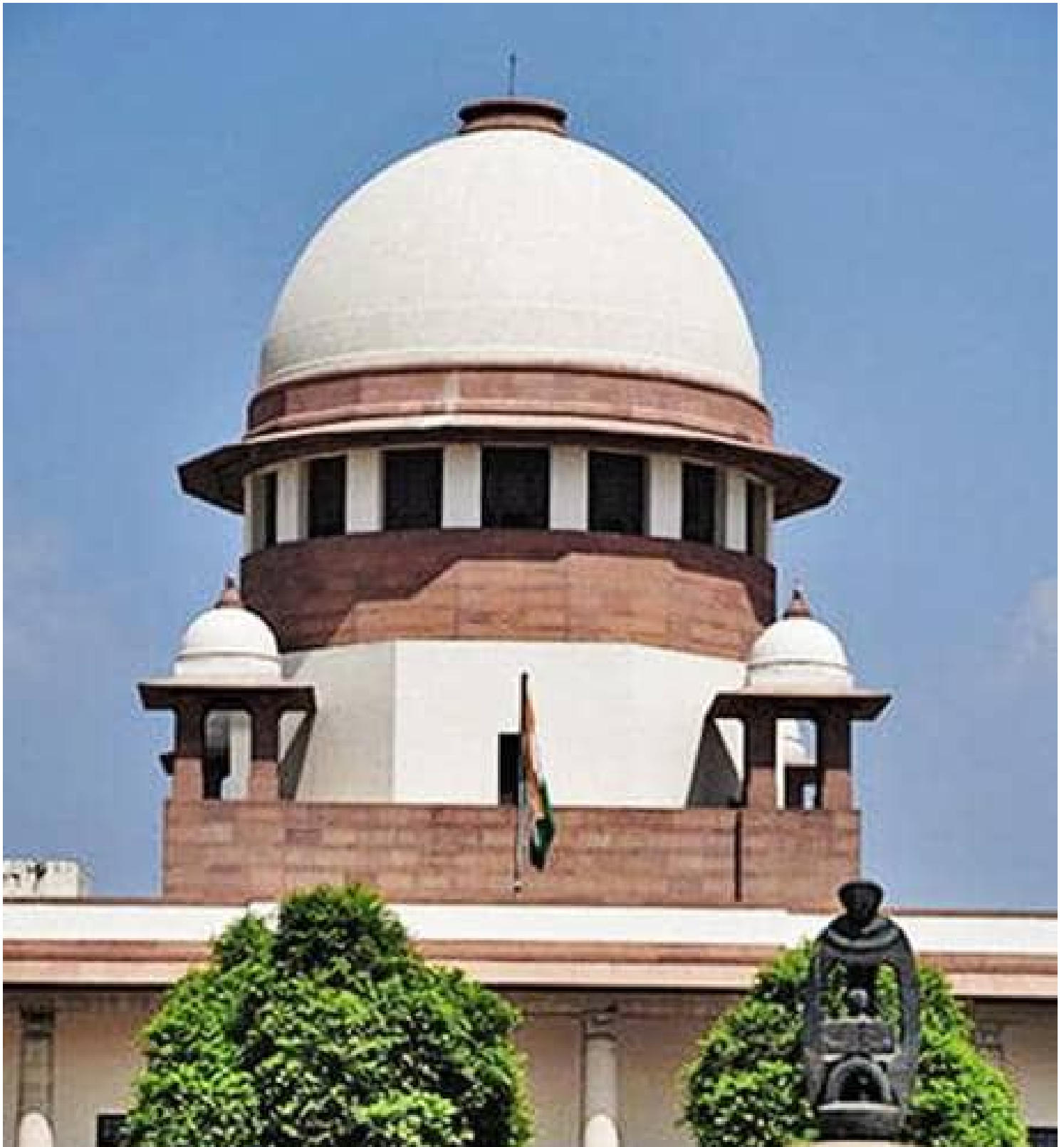


KARNATAKA

Supreme Court stays HC order on KC Valley project



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Petitioner cites research to contend water meant to replenish ground water table is contaminated

The Supreme Court on Monday stayed the Karnataka High Court order allowing the controversial KC Valley project to carry treated sewage from Bengaluru to parched neighbourhood areas.

A Bench of Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justice S.K. Kaul stayed the High Court order on a petition filed by a Karnataka-based activist R. Anjaneya Reddy, represented by advocates Prashant Bhushan and O. Kuttan, contending that expert research showed that the water meant to replenish the ground water table was, in fact, contaminated and contained heavy metal content.

The apex court issued notice to respondents State of Karnataka, Department of Minor Irrigation, Central Groundwater Board, Karnataka State Pollution Control Board, Energy and Wetlands Research Group at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc.), and the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board.

The High Court had passed an interim order on September 28, 2018 modifying its earlier direction on July 24 last year. The September order set aside the July direction and allowed the State to pump secondary treated water from the sewage treatment plants of Bengaluru city to the minor irrigation tanks in Kolar district for recharging the ground water table.

The July order had restrained the respondents from restarting the pumping of the secondary treated water.

Mr. Reddy highlighted a September 27 report by the Energy and Wetlands Research Group, Centre for Ecological Sciences, IISc., which had 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 had been contaminated with higher heavy metals, high nutrients, higher biochemical and chemical oxygen demand.

However, the High Court had not taken cognisance of the report. It had, without considering the impact of the project on the drinking water sources of the region, modified the July order by accepting the water quality analysis report submitted unilaterally by the State authorities.