

Sonia Gandhi has taken the issue seriously: Poojary

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MANGALURU: Former Union minister B Janardhan Poojary has brought the issue of Yettinahole project to the notice of Congress chief Sonia Gandhi.

Poojary said he held a discussion with Sonia Gandhi in New Delhi and submitted a detailed report mentioning the adverse impacts of Yettinahole project on the Western Ghats, futility of the project and why the project is being implemented for political mileage. He said Sonia Gandhi has directed chief minister Siddaramaiah through her political secretary Ahmed Patel to have a discussion on the issue.

"Sonia Gandhi has taken the issue seriously," Poojary said.

The report read: "This is to bring to your kind notice an issue that has angered the people of Coastal Karnataka and set them on agitation path. The genesis of the problem is the proposal of the Government of Karnataka to divert the waters of Yettinahole in Dakshina Kannada district purportedly to alleviate the water scarcity of Kolar, Chikkaballapur, Tumkur, etc. in Karnataka. Realising the futility of the project, the people of these areas too are agitating for a permanent solution. The above proposal was initially proposed by M Veerappa Moily and approved by BJP government in the state when D V Sadananda Gowda was the chief minister with an eye on securing votes from the people of Kolar, Chikkaballapur and Tumkur. It was, thus, a big conspiracy to fool the public for the sake of securing votes."

Poojary said he also has submitted the copy of 'Environmental Flow Assessment in Yettinahole: Where is 24tmc to divert', a study conducted by experts Ramachandra T V, Vinay S and Bharath H Aithal of Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru to Sonia Gandhi.

Quoting the IISc report, Poojary said the water yield in Yettinahole catchment is 9.55 tmc and available for possible diversion is only 0.85 TMC, whereas the state government is aiming to draw 24.01 tmc through the project.

"The manipulated DPR prepared by the State Government has been questioned by the scientists of IISc. The project will lead to further worsening of the water scarcity situation in Coastal areas, particularly in Mangaluru. This project will also not benefit the arid region of Kolar, Chikkaballapur, Tumkur etc. Agriculture, including coconut, arecanut plantation and fisheries would be adversely affected with depletion of fertile land. Since huge money is involved, the people are demanding deep probe into this matter by CBI or CID as they perceive it as a big scam," Poojary said adding that all these anomalies have been brought to the notice of Sonia Gandhi.

"On Thursday, Ahmed Patel contacted me and said the matter has been conveyed to chief minister Siddaramaiah and to major irrigation minister M B Patil," Poojary said.