

'CENTRE HAS NOT GRANTED CLEARANCE TO CUT TREES FOR YETTINAHOLE PROJECT'

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Minister of state for environment, forest and climate change (independent charge) Anil Madhav Dave has clarified that the Union ministry has not given clearance for cutting of trees in the Western Ghats for the controversial Yettinahole project.

“I have come to know that some unnecessary activities are going on. We are going to review that. No permission has been given (to cut over 5,000 trees for Yettinahole project). I have checked with my ministry. Not a single letter is there,” Dave asserted, while speaking on the sidelines of Lake 2016, an international conference on “Conservation and Sustainable Management of Ecologically Sensitive Regions in Western Ghats” in Moodbidri on Friday.

On being asked about the ongoing work for the project, the minister said that it is being done by the state and if there is any wrongdoing they will bring it to the knowledge of the chief minister of the state. “Central government has not given a single letter in favour of the project. Eventually we are living in the federal structure. The matter was brought to my notice recently, I will review it, but National Green Tribunal (NGT) is there in the picture. So the matter is almost sub-judice and let the NGT decide (on stopping the project). There is no permission from the central government for the state to cut trees. I will look everything and act according to it,” he said.

Speaking on the impact of the project on the region, the minister said it was imperative to protect river Nethravati.

“Yettinahole project is not only related to Nethravati river. In fact, we are supposed to conserve all the rivers. As far as Mangaluru is concerned, Nethravati is almost a lifeline with a strong emotional relation with the river,” he said.

Lake Protection

The pathetic state of Bengaluru lakes has caught the attention of the minister. Earlier, he said illegal constructions and encroachments of lakes have led to floods in

Bengaluru. “We will have to protect the lakes. At the same time, the drainage system of the city must be properly connected. The local administration must initiate stringent action. Bad builders, bad bureaucrats and bad politicians are reason for encroachment and illegal constructions in Bengaluru,” he said.

Environment protection calendar: The minister has plans to release an environment protection calendar for all states. The calendar, which is being designed, will have certain set of guidelines and responsibilities that respective states are supposed to take up. It is expected to be released in January.

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