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Gundia power project referred to expert panel on Western Ghats

New Delhi, Jul 13 (PTI)

The Environment Ministry today referred the controversial 200 MW Gundia power project proposed in Karnataka to an expert panel on Western Ghats for further study of its ecological impact.

The ministry's Environmental Appraisal Committee (EAC) in its meeting last month had recommended the project to be cleared subject to various conditions such as scheme for adequate disposal of solid waste and budget for corporate social responsibility (CSR).

The EAC cleared the project after the state government agreed to drop Hongadhala dam from the scheme reducing land requirement for its construction from from 1,041 hectares to 478.96 hectares.

Under the first phase of the project, the Karnataka Power Corporation Ltd (KPCL) has proposed building a major dam between the rivers Hongadahalla and Betta Kumari. There was also a plan to build barrages on the rivers Hongadahalla, Keeri and Yethhinahalla and to join them through a tunnel at Horibetta where power would be generated.

Following protests from environmentalists and local Congress leaders who alleged that it would threaten the fragile ecology of the Western Ghats, the EAC visited the site, asking KPCL to drop Hongadahalla dam from the proposal which was promptly done.

But despite EAC's nod to the project, the ministry has forwarded it to the expert panel headed by environmentalist Madhav Gadgil for its recommendations before giving it a final go-ahead.

"The EAC had said that it (Environment Ministry) may consider the recommendation of the expert panel constituted under the chairmanship of Madhav Gadgil before according environmental clearance to the project," said a statement released by the ministry. The Western Ghats ecology expert panel was set up on March 4 to look at development and environmental issues in the context of the ecologically-significant, biodiversity-rich and environmentally-sensitive region.

"The ministry will take a final view on the project once the panel submits its report," the statement said. However, it was silent on the deadline for submitting the report. PTI

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By: Bala

On: 14 Jul 2010 06:13 am

We have utter disregard to environment. This project is a deadly blow to western ghat environment. I hope expert panel recommend to scrap the whole project

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By: Balwanth

On: 14 Jul 2010 04:11 am

Hope these politicians and ministers and officials will do the justice to environment.we do not need power please find out other source Solar etc it is pity for the Flora and fauna in western Ghats God only save them--

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