

INFRASTRUCTURE / Appeals to Ministry of Environment and Forests

# NGO for withdrawal of clearance

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DH NEWS SERVICE

**BANGALORE:** The Environment Support Group on Friday urged the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests to withdraw the environmental clearance for the 111-km Bangalore Mysore Infrastructure Corridor (BMIC).

It also backed the demand with allegations of acquisition of 'excess land' and encroachment of tanks against the corridor promoters, Nandi Infrastructure Corridor Enterprise.

According to the NGO, the withdrawal of clearance was imperative, considering that the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board had already withdrawn the Consent for Establishment to the project, after finding out that the NICE alignment of the Peripheral Road was 'vastly different' from that approved by the KSPCB and the MoEF.

Talking to reporters, ESG Co-ordinator Leo F Saldanha alleged that around 2,000 acres of excess land — including 400 acres of Government land — had been acquired for the 41-km BMIC Peripheral Road alone.

He said that while NICE claimed that the State government was holding back transfer of notified land, the truth was that the Government was only adhering



**Gottigere tank, near the proposed BMIC Peripheral Road interchange on Bannerghatta Road, is one of the tanks that NICE is alleged to have encroached upon.**

to the Supreme Court verdict on April 20, 2006.

The SC had directed the State to ensure that the project was implemented in accordance with the project's technical designs, as approved in the project Framework Agreement of 1997, he pointed out.

Mr Saldanha also alleged that the issues of human displacement and loss of agricultural land had not been addressed by NICE. "In Pillaganahalli (a

village near Gottigere that claims to have hosted Mahatma Gandhi) for instance, agricultural land has been a major casualty. Worse, not a single family has been rehabilitated by NICE," he said.

## KSPCB report

Reacting to ESG's allegations on the delayed rehabilitation of displaced families, NICE spokesperson Manjunath Nayaker told *Deccan Herald* that 18 to 20

families were being rehabilitated and pointed to a KSPCB report to validate the company's claims.

A KSPCB report, compiled after an inspection of the Peripheral Road by six environment officers on August 8 and 9 this year says, "There is not much displacement of families except three houses. The company has constructed two houses for two families at Somapura village with all facilities such as

## TROUBLED TANKS

The ESG alleged that close to 20 tanks — covering in excess of 165 acres — had been encroached by NICE in and around Bangalore for construction of the BMIC Peripheral Road alone. Dodda Thogur (57 acres), Konappana Agrahara (28 acres), Beratena (28 acres), Varahasandra (13 acres), Manganahalli (10.5 acres), Begur (six acres), Gollahalli (five acres), Gottigere (five acres), Hemmigeppura (4.2 acres), Ramasandra (three acres), Kammanahalli (2.75 acres) and Madavara (one acre) are among the tanks that have been encroached, the ESG said.

Regarding Gottigere Tank, where NICE has proposed the Peripheral Road alignment around the lake and not over it, Mr Leo Saldanha of ESG said that building the road on the bund or inflow region would destroy the water body.

drainage, drinking water supply and electricity."

The report also says that no construction activity has been taken up near Gottigere Tank, because, according to NICE, no land has been handed over.