

The Hindu- 14- November-2021

Mullaperiyar dam is safe, T.N. tells SC

'It's a victim of social media campaign'

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NEW DELHI

The Tamil Nadu Government on Saturday stood firm by its position in the Supreme Court that the 126-year-old Mullaperiyar dam is "hydrologically, structurally and seismically safe".

The State said there is a "social media campaign" triggered in Kerala against the dam. The Tamil Nadu Government said the steady flow of petitions to the apex court from Kerala, questioning safety of the dam even calling for its decommissioning, is a bid to harass it.

Appearing before a Bench of Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and C.T. Ravikumar, senior advocate Shekhar Naphade accused Kerala of trying "somehow to prevent Tamil Nadu to raise the level to 142 ft. at the dam on one pretext or the other by raising issues which have been fully addressed by experts from the Central Water Commission [CWC]".

Tamil Nadu, in an affida-



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vit, said the safety has been supported by reports of the expert committee and the empowered committee after extensive study. It said the height of the storage level at 142 ft. was endorsed by the Supreme Court in 2014 in a judgment.

The safety aspects are being constantly monitored by the supervisory committee set up seven years ago. Decommissioning of the dam would be in violation of a series of judgments of the Supreme Court, Mr. Naphade argued on Saturday.

Senior advocate Jaideep Gupta, for Kerala, sought time to respond to Tamil Nadu's affidavit. The court scheduled the next hearing on November 22.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4

Tamil Nadu is firm that Mullaperiyar dam is safe

FROM PAGE 1

Advocate V.K. Biju, appearing for the Idukki-based Periyar Protection Movement, submitted that Tamil Nadu has not produced documents about 'deep' seepage issues in the dam structure.

Mr. Biju said the Tamil Nadu side cannot dismiss the apprehensions of 50 lakh people in Kerala about the safety of the dam by calling it a social media campaign. "Please call for the records, if any, on the seepage," Mr. Biju urged the court.

Bench calls for records

The Bench asked Mr. Naphade to keep the records available for the next hear-

ing. "They keep filing petition after petition... They want to keep the pot boiling. All the documents had been placed before the supervisory committee... That is what the committee was set up for," Mr. Naphade said.

T.N. also anxious

The senior lawyer said Tamil Nadu is as anxious as anybody else and keeps a close watch on the health of the dam. "The dam serves us too," Mr. Naphade said.

Tamil Nadu, in its affidavit, accused Kerala of "persisting with its obstructionist attitude in depriving Tamil Nadu from carrying out the various activities related to the dam".

Responding to Kerala's demand to reconsider the rule curve as the dam is situated in a seismic zone, Tamil Nadu said a comprehensive instrumentation plan was filed with the CWC in March. It said the seismic instruments would be installed soon by the National Geophysical Research Institute, Hyderabad.

CWPRS study

"It is relevant to mention that the dam was checked for seismic forces that would possibly occur in the zone where the dam is situated and found to be safe by the Central Water Power and Research Station [CWPRS], Pune," Tamil Nadu said.

The Tribune- 14- November-2021

Groundwater extraction in J&K well within safe limits, says study

JAMMU, NOVEMBER 13

Jammu and Kashmir's underground water resources are "safe" with less than 70 per cent groundwater extraction, a central government-backed study said.

The study, however, recommended judicious use of underground water through suitable scientific interventions for optimal agricultural and domestic use, besides a review of subsidised electricity policy to farmers, suitable water pricing policy and crop rotation for judicious cultivation of water extensive and non-extensive crops.

In its report 'National Compilation on Dynamic Ground Water Resources of India,



Girls collect water from a handpump on the outskirts of Jammu. FILE

2020', the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti said the ground water resources of Jammu and Kashmir had been assessed for valley areas and outer plains in all 20 districts.

"The annual groundwater recharge has been estimated

at 4.68 bcm (billion cubic metre) and the annual extractable groundwater resources is 4.22 bcm. The current annual groundwater extraction is 0.89 bcm and the stage of extraction is 21.03 per cent," it stated. — PTI