

Haryana asked to release water for Delhi

Delhi residents can hope for improved water supply as the Supreme Court Wednesday ordered the Haryana government to begin releasing 125 cusecs of water per day to the capital's Nangloi reservoir.

A bench of Chief Justice K.G. Balakrishnan, Justice P. Sathasivam and Justice Deepak Verma asked Haryana's principal secretary and the chief engineer of the state's irrigation department to be personally present in the court July 14 to explain why contempt of court proceeding should not be launched against them for ignoring the apex court order of May 2000.

The apex court orders came on a lawsuit by the Delhi Jal Board, the capital's water supply body, seeking contempt of court proceedings against the two officials for ignoring the court order.

The court had ordered Haryana to release 125 cusecs of water to Delhi on daily basis on May 10, 2000, while hearing a public interest lawsuit filed in 1992 by Delhi resident Sureshwar D. Sinha for the court's direction to the central government and Haryana to ensure a minimum flow of water in the Yamuna river to meet Delhi's drinking water needs.

Appearing for DJB, senior counsel and former solicitor general Harish Salve complained that Haryana was dithering on releasing water for Delhi, despite receiving payment for the same.

He said the national capital is seeking only 0.6 percent of around 9,800 cusecs of water that Haryana gets from Punjab.

Haryana counsel A. Bobde, however, contended that the state was getting only 9,525 cusecs of water from Punjab and it is not in a situation to release 125 cusecs of water to Delhi every day.

He also contended that the Bhakra dam mainline canal will not be able to sustain the water pressure if 125 cusecs of the water is released on daily basis.

But another counsel, appearing for the Central Water Commission, brushed aside Bobde's contentions saying the canal was robust enough to sustain the internal water pressure.

At this the apex court ordered Haryana to start releasing the water without any delay.

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