

Pepsi gets court nod on Kerala plant

A division bench of the Kerala High Court Tuesday cleared the way for cola giant Pepsico to begin operations in their plant in Kerala's Palakkad district.

The Puthusery village council in the district had cancelled the firms' license to operate the plant in 2004, alleging that it drew excessive ground water leading to water shortage in nearby areas. Pepsi then approached the High Court in the same year.

In the court's verdict Tuesday, acting Chief Justice K.S. Radhakrishnan and Justice M.N. Krishnan set aside the village council's action saying it had no right to look into such matters as the factory is located in an industrial belt. They added that there is a government-appointed official who oversees such issues.

Villagers, under the aegis of Left parties, have been up in arms against both Pepsi and Coca-Cola, which has a plant in Placchimada in Palakkad, around 250 km from here.

Coke also had to fight a long-drawn legal battle on the same grounds.

Now it remains to be seen if Pepsi would commence operations or prefer to keep their shutters down like their competitor Coke, who despite a court order in their favour have decided not to open it for the time being.

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