

154 cases, 5 mines in the court

Continuous pollution: Cases registered against the mines

Bellary: Pollution related problems in the district, caused due to the uncontrolled mining have finally woken up the pollution control board.

In spite of the limited staff and scarce resources, the district unit of Central Pollution Control Board is taking action against the mines, sponge iron units, stone crushers, and many other industries. Till now, the board has registered 154 cases.

These cases have been registered under the water pollution law of 1981, the air pollution law of 1974 and the non-compliance with the environment clearance certificate.

Says Satish Kumar, the nature officer of the board's regional branch, "Already cases have been registered against Laxminarayana Mines and Minerals of Sandur, SKME, NMDC, MML Timmappanagudi Mines and Ramagadha minerals on the basis of having violated the rules of environment clearance certificate. Inquiry in these cases is going on in the JMFC court of Sandur."

He spoke to *Prajavani* and said the public and many organizations had complained about the pollution caused by the mines and the industries in the district. But only those complaints, which come under the purview of the board, have been registered.

Mining is carried on incessantly in Bellary, Hospet and Sandur taluks. Strict action will be taken against the mines and industries, which act as hindrances to the protection of nature, says Satish Kumar.

All the actions taken by the board are related to legal mines and industries. The board expresses its helplessness when it says "It is not possible to take action against "unauthorized mining" happening in the district. This is the job of the mining and earth sciences department and the tax department."

Lack of staff: Mining activities are going on in the district in a range of hundreds of square kilometers. Among these, the number of small, medium, and heavy industries is approximately one thousand. Also, the number of vehicles in the district is more than one lakh. But the number of staff in the pollution control board office is only 11, of which two positions are vacant!

Excluding nature and sub-nature officers, only nine people can get engaged in field activities. Two positions for assistant nature officer are vacant. Of the remaining seven positions one is an attendant appointed on contract basis, first division and second division assistants (one each) and two drivers appointed on contract basis!

The rest are supposed to work for the protection of the nature!

Order: Still, the board is taking action against the guilty firms.

According to Satish Kumar, an order has been passed to close down Potpuri, MJ stone crushers, Bellary Steels and Alloys.

**Violations:** Cases have been registered against the firms, which have not laid proper roads where mining products are transported and those mines, which have been mining more ore than their capacity. The board has also come forward to register cases where the polluted water is released without processing, where the dust is not prevented by using the conveyer belt-SMS sheet, and where air pollution control units are not installed.

If the necessary staff and facilities are provided to the Central Pollution Control Board, and if it is strengthened, it can work more powerfully.

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