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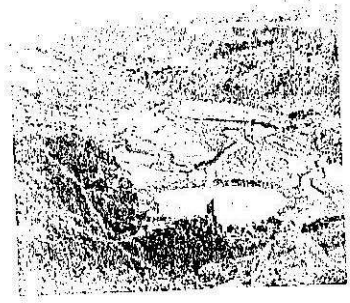
# State can build Mahadayi dam, but needs more permits

ANUSHA RAVI @Bengaluru

A week after its letter, keeping environmental clearance issued to Kalasa-Banduri drinking water project in abeyance, the Centre has now issued a clarification that Karnataka can start work on the project, albeit subject to two conditions. In what comes as a partial relief to Karnataka, Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar on Tuesday said that the project does not require environmental clearance — the same clearance that the environment ministry had issued to Karnataka in October this year, only to keep it in

abeyance last week.

State Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai had written to the ministry seeking clarity on the necessity for EIA (environmental impact assessment) clearance. On Tuesday, the Ministry clarified that the state can start work on Kalasa-Banduri, but the clarification comes with a rider. "Let me make the position clear: Government of India has not kept in abeyance EIA notification 2006, and has also not kept in abeyance the rule which clarifies that drinking water projects do not require EC (environmental clearance). Karnataka can start the work on Kalsa Bhanduri Nala project



after the gazette notification of the Tribunal and necessary forest and wildlife permissions. I hope this will dispel all doubts," said a letter from Javdekar. The

operative words here being gazette notification and forest and wildlife permissions.

"We have asked the Supreme Court to give an interim order directing gazette notification of Tribunal order, but Goa has contended it. Notification will happen only post the SC's order. But as of now, the minister has clarified that the letter we received keeping the clearance in abeyance is null and void," said Bommai. He, along with Union minister Pralhad Joshi and BJP MLA Umesh Katti, had met Javadekar earlier this week.

"Environment Minister @ Prakash.Javadekar has clarified about Kalasa Banduri scheme

that neither EIA notification 2006 nor rules therein which allow drinking water projects without EC have been kept in abeyance. This clears apprehensions created by the word 'abeyance' in earlier letter (SC). tweeted Pralhad Joshi, Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and MP from Dharwad.

The letter, dated December 10, 2019, read that the clearance had been kept in abeyance until the SC disposes off pending petition in the Mahadayi case. One of the key petitions in the SC is Karnataka's plea seeking directions to issue Gazette notification — one of the riders in the clearance — "clarification" or "Gazette