



River Protection Projects yet to meet targets

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THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The Comptroller and Auditor General's (CAG) first-ever 'Performance Audit of Water Pollution in India' has found that in Kerala the projects to check the flow of pollutants into Pampa river, for which a fund of `18.45 crore was allotted under National River Conservation Plan (NRCP), have not succeeded in their objectives.

◆Furthermore, the CAG report found that the construction of sewage treatment plant(STP) in Pampa projected to be completed by May 2007 and for which a fund of `4.47 crore was allotted under the National River Conservation Plan, is yet to take off. ◆

"The daily average sewage generated in Pampa town was 7 mld and 3.5 mld of untreated sewage was being discharged into the Pampa river. The daily average sewage generated in Sabarimala was 10 mld and the entire 10 mld of untreated sewage was being discharged into the river," the report said, raising the serious problem of water pollution.

◆Also, with regard to the projects, the audit report found that only 160 Low Cost Sanitation (LCS) were constructed at Pampa against the target of 300.

◆At Sabarimala, 320 LCS and 80 bathrooms were constructed against the target of 400 and 100 respectively. ◆ "While biochemical oxygen demand and dissolved oxygen were not measured, total coliform count in Pampa was 2.2 times than the allowed level as it leaves Pampa town indicating the presence of disease-causing faecal-related bacteria, viruses and protozoa which cause illness," the report states. ◆

The Ministry of Environment and Forests in its report to CAG had attributed the delay in STP project to non-availability of forest land and changes in design of STP as the initial draft engineering report was not based on detailed survey and investigation.

The report points out that the infrastructure and development works in Pampa for which `5.60 crore was allotted and which should had been completed by 2007, is yet to commence.

The CAG report observed that in Kerala, ◆ the most polluted stretches were along the Karamana, Puzhackal and Kadambayar rivers but Pampa, which did not figure in this list, was selected under NRCP.

◆The CAG report concluded that the project for restoration and conservation of Veli-Akkulam lake in Thiruvananthapuram district for which a fund of Rs 24.56 crore was allotted under NRCP, was yet to achieve its ◆ objectives. "The sanctioned cost of the project was Rs 24.56 crore and the amount was sanctioned in August 2005 with the project scheduled to be completed in August 2007. But the work is yet to be completed," the report said.

◆This project was entrusted with the Kerala Tourism Department as the nodal agency and the implementation was assigned to Kerala State Urban Development Project. The State Government in January 2006 appointed Theerapadham Urban Development Project as the nodal agency and the Kerala Water Authority and Irrigation Department as implementing agencies.

◆Later, Theerapadham Urban Development Project was merged with Kerala Sustainable Urban Development Project.