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# Tamil Nadu moves Supreme Court, accuses Kerala of obstructing work on Mullaperiyar dam while 'crying foul' about its safety

Tamil Nadu contended that Kerala has managed to delay even routine annual maintenance works, including painting, patch works, repair to staff quarters, etc., for two months to more than a year.

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KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL



A view of the Mullaperiyar dam. | Photo Credit: The Hindu

Tamil Nadu has accused Kerala in the Supreme Court of “crying foul” about the safety of the over 125-year-old Mullaperiyar dam while at the same time “wilfully obstructing” work essential to maintain the structure.

“The State of Kerala on one hand raises the issue of comprehensive dam safety review, but on the other hand is obstructing in granting permissions and approvals for conveying materials and machinery to enable Tamil Nadu from completing the remaining strengthening works,” Tamil Nadu Water Resources Department said in an application.

It contended that Kerala has managed to delay even routine annual maintenance works, including painting, patch works, repair to staff quarters, etc., for two months to more than a year.

The State said the reconstituted supervisory committee, despite being endowed with powers under the Dam Safety Act, 2021 had miserably failed to ensure that Kerala and its instrumentalities permit and facilitate strengthening and other related works on the dam.

Tamil Nadu has sought the court to direct Kerala to allow Tamil Nadu to conduct the remaining strengthening works on the baby and earth dams; the grouting of the main dam; and permission to cut 15 trees to facilitate the strengthening of the baby dam.

Tamil Nadu said the permission to cut the trees was granted by Kerala in November 2021, but was withdrawn days later.

“Kerala has stated that the balance strengthening works, viz., strengthening the baby dam and earthen dam require forest and wildlife clearances, which is denied. Thus, Kerala has invented a new device to obstruct in carrying out the above strengthening works,” the application said.

In 2021, the Kerala government had made a strong pitch in the Supreme Court to decommission the 126-year-old “deteriorated” Mullaperiyar dam operated by Tamil Nadu, and build a new one, saying phenomena like climate change, erratic and heavy rainfall and floods had made the spectre of catastrophe real and near.

**Also read: SC to hear Tamil Nadu's suit against Kerala on Mullaperiyar dam mega parking project on July 10**

Kerala's affidavit had coincided with a red alert issued in Chennai following torrential rains that year. The Chennai rains had come on the heels of several days of downpour in Kerala.

The State had also referred to the Uttarakhand flood, also known as the Chamoli disaster of February 2021, mainly attributed to climate change in the environs of the Nanda Devi National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The suggestion for a new dam dates back to 1979. Kerala had referred to the decommissioning of another 19th century lime concrete structure, the Victoria dam in Australia, following the detection of seepages in its structure.