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Valsaraj urges upward revision of water cess

Staff Reporter

Speech at meet of Ministers of Environment and Forests

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sufficient manpower

PUDUCHERRY: Home Minister E. Valsaraj, who holds the environment portfolio, has urged the Centre to increase the water cess in the Union Territory. He was participating in the National Conference of Ministers of Environment and Forests at New Delhi on Tuesday.

According to a copy of the address released to the media here, Mr. Valsaraj said the Puducherry Pollution Control Committee (PPCC), which has over 2,000 industries under its purview, did not have adequate manpower.

It is operating under severe financial constraints. The consent and monitoring fees collected from industries was the only source of revenue. Water cess, which stands at three to 10 paise per 1,000 litres, must be considered for upward revision by the Centre, or else the territorial government should be empowered to revise it based on demand and availability of resources to fetch more revenue for the PPCC.

According to the amended Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006, powers had been delegated to State-level environmental impact assessment authorities to issue environmental clearance for Category B projects. Mr. Valsaraj pointed out that according to the general condition of the notification, “any project or activity specified in Category B will be treated as Category A if located within 10 km from the inter-State boundaries.”

He suggested that small States and Union Territories be exempted from this general condition, so that the State governments are empowered to issue clearances and avoid delay.

Mr. Valsaraj said that while the Union Territory has proposed to develop the Common Municipal Solid Waste Disposal Facility, identifying a suitable site for a Treatment, Storage and Disposal Facility (TSDF) was posing a problem. He requested the Union government to formulate a mechanism to share the TSDF.

The Minister suggested that the Ministry of Environment and Forests carry out a detailed study in coastal areas all over the country, that would enable the State governments to undertake economic and developmental activities without spoiling the beaches.