



Implement NGT directives on Ulhas river conservation: NGO to state

Activists are fighting for complete revival of the heavily polluted Ulhas river



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Armed with the Supreme Court order, which has stayed the orders passed by the Bombay High Court, Mumbai-based NGO Vanashakti has demanded that the state government should implement directives of National Green Tribunal (NGT) for conservation of Ulhas river.

As per Stalin D, director project for Vanashakti, it was only after seeing the rampant pollution of Ulhas River due to release of partially and untreated industrial effluents along with domestic sewage that they filed a petition in the NGT in 2013.

"The NGT gave a detailed order, including asking four local bodies, along with an organisation that represented industries to deposit Rs95 crore for implementation of scientific programme for cleaning of the Ulhas and Waldhuni rivers in an escrow account headed by the Konkan commissioner but these agencies approached the Bombay High Court and the NGT order was stayed," he informed. Stalin added that following the stay by the high court, Vanashakti file a Special Leave Petition (SLP) at the Supreme Court challenging the decision.

Meanwhile, during the hearing of the matter on April 18, the division bench of the Supreme Court comprising justices Pinaki Chandra Ghose and Amitava Roy stayed all the orders passed by Bombay High Court.

"This is the best gift a river can get on Earth Day. Now that the high court order is stayed, we expect the state government to comply with the NGT judgment and recover the fine imposed by the tribunal on polluters," said Ashwin Aghor of Vanashakti.

The NGT, that is hearing the petition currently, in an order dated March 30 stated that it was dismayed by Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) and it was clear that the board was not taking effective and urgent steps in the control nor monitoring of CETPs within its jurisdiction.

According to activists fighting for the complete revival of the Ulhas river, all government authorities had completely failed to stop the violation and were guilty of allowing toxic pollutants to not only enter the river but also destroy the biodiversity all around and it isn't a surprise that Dombivli industrial area has been identified as a critically polluted area.