

Despite rising eco-concerns, KSPCB posts still vacant

Kochi: The Kerala State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) had no member secretary for more than a month. This vacancy comes at a time when the National Green Tribunal (NGT) and the Kerala high court have been issuing many judgments on environmental affairs in the state.

According to sources, the names of three senior-most environment engineers have been sent to the government. The names included Sudheer Babu, Lovely V T and Govindan Nair, who hold the posts of chief environment engineers. Sudheer Babu was given the member secretary in-charge post and he is likely to be nominated for the post.

Health minister K K Shylaja, who also holds the charge of PCB, recently held a meeting to discuss the issue.

There is no chief environmental scientist in the central laboratory in Ernakulam. The post has been lying vacant for a couple of years. Though the division bench of the high court had instructed the PCB to fill the vacancies, nothing has happened so far.

The recruitment had been entrusted to the PSC and it has not been filled yet. The PSC has directed the board not to fill up any vacancies even those which come up due to promotions without their concurrence. PCB officials are learnt to have communicated to the minister that there are so many officers, who are due for superannuation within one year. Hence the PSC decision may be quashed, considering the statutory nature of work of the board. They have sought that vacancies including that of the chairman and member secretary be filled from amongst the senior chief environmental engineers from service so that consecutively there will be eight promotions, in different cadres.

Meanwhile, there are rumblings in the PCB with the proposed move to transfer the coastal regulation zone management responsibility to the PCB member secretary. "There are enough and more issues to be looked into as of now itself. If we have to look at the CRZ also it will become difficult," said an official.

In the last two years, all the files related to major industries have been transferred to the headquarters making it a centralised rather than a de-centralised process.