

PASSAGE 3

Excessive use of plastic bags and their unregulated disposal has been choking lakes, ponds and urban sewage systems, the Supreme Court said on Monday while warning that it posed a threat more serious than the atom bomb for the next generation.

This observation from a bench of Justices GS Singhvi and S J Mukhopadhyaya came on a PIL filed by two Andhra Pradesh-based NGOs drawing the court's attention to 30-60 kg of plastic bags recovered from the stomachs of cows because of irresponsible disposal of plastic bags and defunct municipal waste collection system.

The court issued notice to the Centre and state governments on the PIL seeking ban on use of plastic bags in municipal areas which did not have a prompt garbage collection, segregation and disposal system. The NGOs said absence of a proper system allowed cows to rummage through garbage bins and eat foodstuff disposed of in plastic bags, which get stuck in their stomach. "Apart from the plastic choking the digestive system of the plastic residues enter the human food chain through dairy and animal products," he added.

But the bench wanted to address the larger questions arising from indiscriminate use of plastic bags, which not only posed a grave threat to nature and environment but also to the human race itself. It suggested that the petitioner make the manufacturers and a television channel, which has been running a campaign against use of plastic, parties to the PIL for a wider scrutiny of the important issue.

"We want to expand the scope of this petition. Unless we examine a total ban on plastic bags or put in place a system for manufacturers mandating them to collect back all plastic bags, the next generation will be threatened with something more serious than the atom bomb," the bench said. The court also drew the petitioner's attention to large quantities of water packed in plastic pouches, which were thrown around in undisciplined manner across the country every day, "A rough estimate shows more than 100 million water pouches are thrown away," the bench said.

- (a) On the basis of your reading of the above passage make notes on it using recognizable abbreviations (Minimum four) wherever necessary. Use a format you consider appropriate. Supply a suitable title. (5 marks)
- (b) Write a summary of the passage in about 80 words (3 marks)