

Tanker trucks raise potable water price, allege residents

'Tanker Lobby Is Making Use Of Disaster To Fleece Public'

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Kochi: Exploiting the water crisis in the city and suburbs, residents allege that tanker trucks have hiked the rate of potable water supplied by these vehicles.

The All Kerala Apartment Owners' (Apex) Association secretary V S Somanathan said that the tanker lobby was making use of a natural disaster to fleece public. "Trucks which used to charge Rs 650 for a tanker having a capacity of 5,000 litre have now started to demand Rs 1,000. Due to increased turbidity in the river, the Kerala Water Authority (KWA) imposed restrictions on pumping water at the Aluva water treatment plant and curtailed drinking water supply. The tanker trucks are demanding higher rates saying that they must source water from far off areas. It is high time that the government acted against those involving in foul play," he said.

As sumps in large apart-



Tankers demand higher rates saying that they must source water from far off areas as KWA has imposed restrictions on pumping water

ment complexes become empty, the absence of facilities for pumping ground water force the residents to depend on tanker trucks. While the rich and affluent in the city have the power to buy water and ensure constant supply, the economically marginalized sections run hither and tither to get drinking water. Somanathan said he witnessed such situations in Pachalam and adjacent areas.

The Ernakulam District Residents' Association Apex Council (EDRAAC) president

Rangadasa Prabhu said the KWA as well as other government agencies failed in anticipating the situation. He said no alternative solutions were put in place. "Periyar is the lifeline of Kochi and its suburbs. It is surprising that the drinking water supply is not included in the disaster management plans. There is the issue of ruptures in pipelines. People are forced to fend for themselves," he said. EDRAAC also said in the coming days, they would take up the need of rain water harvesting

with city residents and encourage the people. "It is high time we thought about alternative solutions. Depending on a single source is not a great idea," added Prabhu.

Meanwhile, the Kerala Hotel and Restaurants' Association secretary T J Mathew said that 99 % of the hotels in the city have stored sufficient water. "Even if water supply gets disrupted the hotels can function for at least three years. Whenever the water is pumped, the hoteliers ensure it gets stored in the sumps in their premises," he said.

However, officials with KWA said that the turbidity of Periyar had come down to 230 NTU (nephelometric turbidity unit). On Thursday, it was 400 NTU. "It is expected that by night, the turbidity levels will further come down. But, the water authority is not able to resume pumping in its full capacity," said a KWA official.

"There is a 20% shortage in supply of drinking water. Residents will have to rationalize usage of water," he said.