

CJ takes suo motu notice, seeks data on usage of water by mineral water companies

Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Mian Saqib Nisar on Friday took suo motu notice of the exploitation of water resources by mineral water companies operating in the country, and sought data regarding water usage by these companies from concerned departments.

The chief justice issued orders to this effect during a hearing of the Katas Raj case. He has directed the companies to submit the data by Friday night (tonight).

CJP Nisar also directed the attorney general and all advocate generals to convey his directives to mineral water companies.

“Water is very precious for us. Mineral water companies are acquiring water free of cost after installing turbines and then selling it at exorbitant prices,” he remarked.

“We will take all possible measures to preserve water,” he added.

The chief justice said that the case will be heard on Saturday in the SC’s Lahore registry.

SC invites experts’ opinion on water conservation

In a separate case on the water shortage in the country, the Supreme Court invited the recommendations of experts regarding water conservation, with a view to forming a special committee on the issue.

CJP Nisar, who headed the three-judge bench, warned that if water is not conserved, it could one day “become more

expensive than oil, gas and gold”.

“Water should not be used so excessively,” he said. “Nations always conserve their water [resources], and we will also have to take measures to do the same.”

The chief justice held “Punjab officials responsible for wasting valuable water”, saying: “Their total water cess is two billion but they manage to recover even less than a billion.”

Justice Umar Atta Bandial pointed out that the irrigation system in “Pakistan is very old”.

“A lot of water gets wasted due to sewerage and leakage, and this needs to be reviewed from scratch,” he said. “We will have to hear from those experts who have conducted a lot of research on underground water.”

Justice Ijazul Ahsan stressed “the need to make Pakistan’s canal system more effective as well”.