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PIL Against Construction Company that Built Patna's Ganga Bridge

Patna: January 11, 2006

A Patna High Court division bench comprising Chief Justice J. N. Bhat and Justice R. N. Prasad, on Tuesday, issued a notice to the Gammon India Limited, the company that built Patna's Ganga Bridge, also known as Gandhi Setu, for using poor quality material in building the bridge that connects Patna with the northern parts of the state.

The court, while hearing a PIL filed by the Council for Protection of Public Rights and Welfare, asked its lawyer to file a case against the Gammon India Limited and ordered the private firm to submit its response against the allegations on February 6.

According to the PIL, its petitioner Mahendra Prasad Gupta also alleged that though the state had earned over Rs. 53 crore in the form of toll tax since the bridge opened to the public in 1987, it spent only about Rs. 50 lakh on its upkeep in the last 18 years.

"With sub-standard material used in the construction of the bridge and an utter disregard for its proper and timely maintenance, the bridge today stands in a shabby condition with the possibility of it collapsing one day being a real threat," Gupta said in his petition.

Even the Central government which earned over Rs. 50 crore in toll tax from the Ganga Bridge, spent only Rs. 6.80 crore on its maintenance between 1998 and 2005, the petitioner said.

The court will now reconvene on February 6.