

Green body admits gaffe

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The state pollution control board (PCB), on World Environment Day, admitted that it "lacks the expertise, especially in matters of water and greenery, to grant permission to housing projects".

This admission came on the day Metro reported how a committee set up by the board had recommended that "the entire work of South City (Project) be closed" and "Tower III and Tower IV (of the complex) be demolished", for allegedly flouting green norms.

Chairman Sudip Banerjee of the PCB added, at the Paribesh Bhavan programme on Monday, that the PCB never paid much attention to housing projects till July 2004.

South City had been granted a 'no-objection certificate' by the board without apparently taking into consideration critical issues like carrying

capacity and groundwater status in the area or traffic management, observed the panel.

The four-member committee, set up by the PCB in April, found the giant project on Prince Anwar Shah Road guilty of encroaching on Bikramgarh Jheel and failing to show any area that would be developed as a waterbody... against the filling up of a waterbody of 1.31 acres.

When contacted on Monday, South City CEO Sanjay Chowdhury said: "We will state our version soon, after internal discussions."

At the site of the dispute, Mohit Roy of NGO Basundhara, whose complaint to Raj Bhavan on the filling up of Bikramgarh Jheel had set the green ball rolling, said: "We have decided to hold a public convention soon. We will also be writing to the central ministry."

■ **Environment Day reports on Page 24**