

## Act on KG basin report, says HC

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** The Delhi high court on Thursday ordered the Centre to act on recommendations of the expert panel set up to examine ONGC's allegation that Reliance Industries siphoned off gas from its well in the Krishna-Godavari basin.

Disposing of the petition filed by the PSU, where it has accused RIL of "deliberately disgorging" natural gas worth Rs 30,000 crore from its well in the Krishna-Godavari basin, the court directed the Centre to take a decision within six months of receiving the expert panel's report. In case it fails to do so, ONGC can revive the petition by approaching the court again, Justice R S Endlaw said.

The PSU had raised the apprehension that if the expert panel rules in its favour, the government may not proceed against RIL. It also pointed out that the Centre has issued circular banning PSUs from approaching courts independently without the ministry's nod.

The HC then permitted advocate Prashant Bhushan and a former bureaucrat, who have intervened in the matter, to approach it if no action is taken by the government after receiving the report. The court clarified that its direction will not dilute the government's circular. It directed all

the parties involved in the matter to cooperate with the independent agency US-based DeGolyer and MacNaughton, which is examining the allegations. RIL contended that the petition can be disposed of since ONGC's plea for appointing an expert independent panel to examine its claim has been addressed.