Times of India 18-March-2021

PM's B'desh trip next week likely to have poll ring to it

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: On March 27, the day West Bengal goes to polls in the first phase, PM Narendra Modi will be in Orakhandi in Bangladesh offering prayers at the Matua temple, a move redolent with intense political symbolism.

Modi will also offer prayers at the Jessoreshwari Kali temple at Satkhira outside Dhaka. Both these events are intended to resonate with voters in West Bengal. On his first visit in 2015, Modi had visited Dhakeshwari temple and offered prayers there, but then Mamata Banerjee had also accompanied him on his trip to Bangladesh. This time the two are locked in an intense political battle for Bengal.

On March 26, Modi will hold talks with Sheikh Hasina and call on President Mohammed Abdul Hamid. He would hold a public event at the National Parade Ground on March 26, Bangladesh foreign minister A K Abdul Momen told journalists. Modi and Hasina are expected to jointly inaugurate the Bangabandhu-Bapu digital exhibition later that day.

Modi will attend the National Day programme of Bangladesh on March 26, as the guest of honour. An MEA press statement said, "This visit is in connection with the commemoration of three epochal events — Mujib Borsho, the birth centenary of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman; 50 years of the establishment of diplomatic ties between India and Bangladesh; and 50 years of Bangladesh's war of liberation."

Bangladesh foreign secretary Masud bin Momen said India and Bangladesh would sign three agreements in the areas of disaster management and cooperation.

MEA said, "The visit of the PM to Bangladesh will be the first visit to a foreign country since the outbreak of the Covid pandemic. This highlights the priority India attaches to Bangladesh."

TIME-TESTED ALLIES: PM Narendra Modi with his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina during a meeting in New Delhi in 2019

India, B'desh to expand water ties

India and Bangladesh have decided to expand cooperation across the entire gamut of water issues, including framework for sharing of river waters, mitigation of pollution, river bank protection, flood management and basin management. During the water resources secretary-level meeting in New Delhi, it was noted that India and Bangladesh share 54 common rivers. The meeting was held under the framework of the Joint Rivers Commission on Tuesday. The Indian delegation was led by the water resources secretary Pankaj Kumar while the Bangladesh delegation was led by its senior secretary in the ministry of water resources Kabir Bin Anwar. TNN

Deccan Chronicle 18-March-2021

RAIN | ALERT **Few spells of rain expected due to trough, says IMD**

Thunderstorms likely in TS

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC
HYDERABAD, MARCH 17

Met officials on Wednesday issued an alert saying thunderstorms accompanied by lightning are likely to occur at isolated places in the state.

"Thundershowers will likely occur at Adilabad, Komaram bheem, Nirmal, Mancheriyal, Nizamabad, Kamareddy, Jagityal, Rajanna Siriilla, Karimnagar, Peddapalli, Warangal Urban, Warangal Rural, Jayashankar Bhupalpally, Mulugu, Mahabubabad, Khammam and Bhadradri Kothagudem districts on Thursday."

"A trough is travelling along the northern Karnataka region from the Madhya Pradesh side. Under its influence, there could occur a few spells of rain. However, most activity will be limited to districts on the northern parts of the state. The trough could last over four days," said A Sravani, a meteorologist with the IMD. Due to the rainfall, the temperature may fall by a degree.

GOING BY the climatological chart of the IMD, only one day of rain is logged as the mean number of rainy days for the month of March.

Going by the climatological chart of the IMD, only one day of rain is logged as the mean number of rainy days for the month of March. As per the daily weather bulletin issued by the department, the state would receive 5.9 mm of rain in March.

Indian Express 18-March-2021

Water resources: India, Bangla to boost alliance

New Delhi: India and Bangladesh have agreed to expand cooperation on issues relating to water resources including framework for sharing of river waters, the Ministry of Jal Shakti said on Wednesday. This was decided during the India-Bangladesh Water Resources Secretary-level meeting under the framework of the Joint Rivers Commission held on Tuesday. **ENS**

New Indian Express 18-March-2021

Narayanapuram and Keelkattalai lakes clean: TNPCB report

KV NAVYA @ Chennai

A sampling test by Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) and local bodies, has found that water from two major lakes in southern suburbs — Narayanapuram and Keelkattalai lakes — is safe for household usage. This comes after residents complained on poor water quality.

According to test results accessed by *Express*, neither bacteria nor chemicals were in excess to the prescribed limits. Residents had been worried about sewage contamination in the lakes over the years.

The Total Suspended Solid (TSS) levels, which is the dry-weight of suspended particles and Total Dissolved Solid (TDS) levels, which is a measure of dissolved combined content of all inorganic and organic substances, were quite less than prescribed limits. According to the data, TSS levels were 14 milligrams per litre in Keelkattalai lake and 20 mg/l in Narayanapuram waterbody against the permissable limit of 100 mg/l. Similarly, TDS levels were 860 mg/l in Keelkattalai and 719 mg/l in Narayanapuram against permissable limit of 2100 mg/l.

"This means that there is not much chemical content in both the lakes and not much sewage is being let out into the lakes. Water is completely safe for household usage. Iron, lead, zinc and nickel levels are also very low," said an official from the TNPCB.

> **The reports mean that there is not much chemical content in both the lakes and not much sewage is being let out into the lakes. Water is completely safe for household usage**
>
> A TNPCB official

Faecal bacterial levels were also found to be low in the lakes. This means that not much untreated sewage is being let into the lakes through illegal pipelines.

However, the test also showed low-level contamination in both waterbodies. "Solid waste management remains poor in Kovilambakkam, Moovarasampet and Nanmangalam areas. We have personally seen garbage being disposed of in the Keelkattalai lake. The civic body must look into such activities," said K Shankar, a resident of Kovilambakkam.

Hindustan Times 18-March-2021

Cycle tracks, eco-trails in revamp plan for 22km Yamuna riverfront

Risha Chitlangia
risha.chitlangia@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) is working on rejuvenating and making the Yamuna riverfront accessible to the public by building cycling tracks, walkways, eco-trails to wetlands and a floodplain forest along the 22 km area between Wazirabad Barrage and Okhla Barrage, a senior DDA official said.

Large parts of the 54km-long Yamuna riverfront have been rendered inaccessible for Delhiites for decades, while industrial waste and untreated sewage are dumped into the river.

The officials said the project will not only help people connect with the river but also check the dying ecosystem of the Yamuna floodplains, both flora and fauna. Under the plan, the DDA will develop close to 1,400 hectares of land on the eastern and western banks of the river.

DDA vice-chairman Anurag Jain said, "The entire stretch has been divided into 10 projects, each spread over 90 hectares and above. The work is moving at a fast pace, and three projects will be completed in the next few months. We aim to complete large parts of projects by the end of this year."

The project to restore the riverfront was conceived following a National Green Tribunal order in 2015. The work on the riverfront, DDA officials said, started in 2017 and was monitored by the NGT-appointed Yamuna Monitoring Committee that was set up in 2018. The committee concluded its proceedings in January this year after it submitted its final report. DDA officials said that the restoration work on the 22km-stretch in Delhi has been planned as per the committee's directions. The restoration work is being closely monitored by Delhi lieutenant governor (L-G) Anil Baijal, who has been taking regular review meetings. DDA submitted a status report to the L-G in February.

One of the biggest challenges in restoring the riverfront, Jain said, is removing encroachments and reclaiming the land. According to a senior DDA official, about 1,000 acres of land have been cleared of encroachment and are being developed, and work is going on in other parts.

DDA officials said they have installed CCTV cameras and deployed staff to prevent dumping of debris on the floodplains.

Of the total 10 projects, three —Kalindi Biodiversity, Park Asita East, Asita West—are in advanced stages of construction and will be completed in the next few months, officials in the know of the matter said.

Spread over 200 hectares, Asita West, located between the Old Railway Bridge and the ITO barrage, is one of the first areas being revamped. DDA has developed 4.8km of walkways, 1.5km of cycleways, three new water bodies, 300m of green buffer along the river, greenways, etc. on 93 hectares of land. The project is likely to be completed by June this year.

For residents of Walled City and nearby areas, this has become a popular spot. Kishore Kumar (35), who lives and works in Chandni Chowk, said that he often comes here with his children. "While there are parks in the area, there aren't many such large open spaces. We usually come here on weekends. They have now expanded the park and constructed a water body here."

DDA also plans to develop the three ghats (Qudsia, Yamuna Bazaar and Sur ghats). While work on Sur Ghat is expected to be completed by September this year, plans for the other two are yet to be prepared.

As part of the rejuvenation project, DDA is also developing a biodiversity park near Delhi Noida Direct (DND) Flyway. Spread over 116 hectares between DND Flyway and Okhla Barrage, the biodiversity park will have 11 constructed wetlands and will treat sewage from about 25 drains. It will also have 100m-wide greenways, about 6km-long walking trails and recreational parks.

The Delhi government has set a target of three years to clean the river.

CR Babu, who heads the Centre for Environmental Management of Degraded Ecosystems (CEMDE) at Delhi University, said, "Two of the 11 constructed wetlands are operational. We are treating drain water that has raw sewage from the Kilokri drain naturally via a constructed wetland system before the water is released into the river. A similar wetland system will be soon operational for the Maharani Bagh drain where 500MLD (millions of litres per day) of drain water will be treated. We are also constructing recreational spaces."

However, environment experts say that beautifying the floodplains will serve no purpose if the river continues to be dirty.

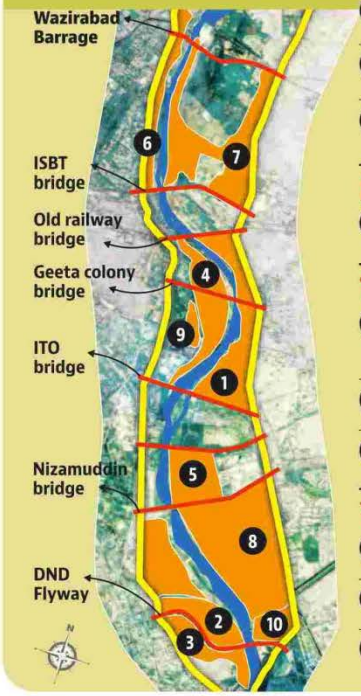
Faiyaz A Khudsar, a scientist in charge of the Yamuna Biodiversity Park who is involved in the development of Kalindi Biodiversity park, said, "The river has to be clean before you take people close to it. How can people sit near the river if it stinks? Just beautifying the floodplains is not enough, we have to restore the ecology of the area which will help not only rejuvenate the river but become an attraction for the people."

He added, "We are working on ensuring that sewerage water is naturally treated through constructed wetland systems before it is discharged into the river."

Making Yamuna accessible

The riverfront development project, conceived in 2015, entails the revamp of a 22-km area between the Wazirabad Barrage and the Okhla Barrage

Zone-O ■ Areas taken for restoration work on floodplains



Nearing completion

1. **Asita East** — Total area: **90 hectare**
2. **Kalindi Aviral** — Total area: **100 hectare**
3. **Kalindi Biodiversity park** — Total area: **115 hectare**

Initiation stage

4. **Asita West** — Total area: **200 hectare**

Tender/award stage

5. **New Railway Line to Nizamuddin Bridge** — Total area: 116 hectare
6. **Wazirabad to Old Railway bridge** — Total area: 66 hectare
7. **Yamuna Vanasthali** — Total area: 236 hectare

Yet to be taken up

8. **Mayur Natural Park** — Total area: 235 hectare
9. **30 Eco-tourism area** — Total area: hectare
10. **Hindon Sarovar** — Total area: 15 hectare

DDA is working on bringing the riverfront to life

₹800crore: Cost of the project
22 km (from Wazirabad Barrage to Okhla Barrage): Length of the stretch being developed
2017: Work launched
Deadline: Early next year (majority of the project to be completed by end of 2021)
1400 hectares: Total area to be developed
1100 acres: Area from where encroachment was removed

Project highlights

- Construction of walkways, cycle tracks and eco-trails
- Creation of new wetlands/water bodies and restoration of old ones
- 300 metres of floodplain forests and grasslands or green buffer area along the river
- Wetlands to treat sewerage from drains
- Public amenities
- Redevelopment of ghats
- CCTV cameras for monitoring

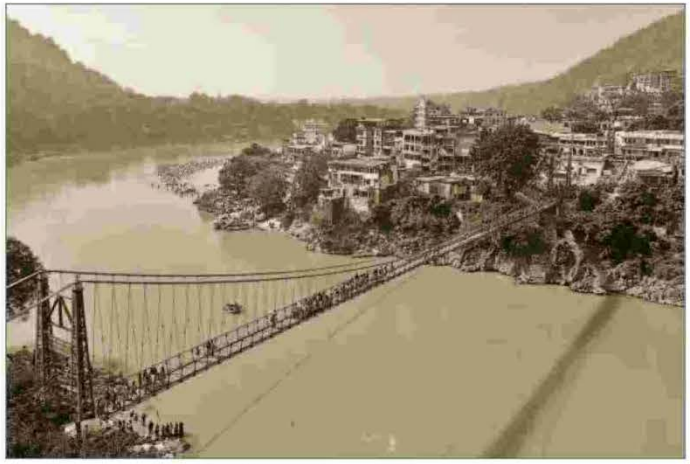
File No.T-74074/10/2019-WSE DTE
Hindustan Times 18-March-2021

{ OVER THE HORIZON }

Arunabha Ghosh

Save the Himalayan river systems

They are under stress. It's time to devise a new development pathway and decentralise water governance in the region



The Himalayas-Hindu Kush region is home to 10 major river systems. They are suffering from reduced water flow, pollution, deforestation and construction and the climate crisis SHUTTERSTOCK

This February was unusually warm. Delhi experienced average temperatures of 4.3 degree Celsius above normal, recording the warmest February (barring 2006). Less noticed was that many Himalayan states witnessed below-average rainfall. From January to mid-February, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhand had 56%, 24% and 33% less precipitation, respectively. I spent much of February in Uttarakhand. Every local villager or forest guard I spoke to mentioned low rains and their concerns about water availability through the spring and summer.

The Himalayas-Hindu Kush region (known as the Third Pole because of the amount of water stored as ice) is home to 10 major river systems. More than half of India's water resources are supplied by the tributaries of these river systems. The melting glaciers supply year-round water and the average economic productivity of the Himalayan rivers is nearly twice that of peninsular river systems. Beyond the large rivers are three million springs, which feed 64% of the irrigated land in the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR). These springs are the lifeline of mountain communities (50 million people across 12 Himalayan states), even as the larger rivers support the livelihoods of more than 500 million in the Indo-Gangetic plains. But they are facing multiple stresses.

First, reduced water flow. The Himalayan glaciers have been receding at alarming rates. In 2001, NASA images showed that Gangotri had shrunk by 850 metres since 1975. Later, an Isro analysis of 2,190 Himalayan glaciers found that three-quarters of them were rapidly retreating, by 3.75 km on average in 15 years. Low rainfall and absent snowfall impact the springs, rivulets and rivers that moderate the hydrogeology of the region. In 2018, NITI Aayog reported that nearly half the springs in IHR were drying up. In Almora, 83% of springs had dried up over 150 years. Even in more pristine Sikkim, the water supply from half the springs had reduced.

Second, pollution. It is well-known that we treat our major rivers as drains. More than six billion litres of sewage is dumped into the Ganga daily, but the capacity to treat it is just a fifth of that quantity. The Yamuna's course through Delhi is just 2% of its length but it receives 70% of the river's pollution. Less known is that water pollution is affecting the upper reaches of the Himalayan rivers. A 2016 study found the water quality index to be unsuitable for drinking purposes for rivers supplying half the water in Uttarakhand.

Third, construction and deforestation. The construction of large dams, canal diversions and hydropower projects has direct and indirect impacts. Obstruction of the river flow, even for run-of-the-river projects, increases siltation, reduces the efficacy of hydropower projects over time, while reducing farm productivity downstream. When hydropower projects divert rivers into underground tunnels, such as for the tributaries of Indus or Alaknanda or Mandakini, the surface water flow recedes. For non-glacial rivers (such as Gomti, Panar, Kosi), deforestation is the main threat, thanks to ill-planned construction. In Uttarakhand, 45,000 hectares of forest land have been diverted to other uses since 1980. As a result, water infiltration into the ground reduces. So, even when erratic rains arrive, mountain springs do not get recharged nor do non-glacial rivers get their water supply.

Fourth, the climate crisis. The World Meteorological Organization estimates that the decadal rise in temperatures in the Himalayan region is 0.4°C higher than the global average. The Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change had stark warnings: Himalayan glaciers would retreat 45% by 2100 if surface temperatures rose by 1.8°C. Basically, even if the goals of the Paris Agreement were met, IHR is likely to face severe impacts. If temperatures, instead, rose to 3.7°C (closer to the trajectory that the world is currently on), glaciers would be 68% smaller by 2100, fragmenting rivers, impacting flows and affecting seasonal water availability. Pollution concentrations would also increase during droughts; warmer water temperatures and reduced dissolved oxygen reduce the self-purifying capacity of Himalayan rivers.

There are no silver bullet solutions, but two approaches should be at the core of the response. First, IHR needs alternative development pathways, the absence of which makes the construction industry the default option. More sustainable models — high-valued-added agriculture, less water-intensive natural farming, food processing, ecotourism, investments in non-hydropower forms of renewable energy, or monetising the preservation of natural capital — cannot be restricted to pockets or pilots. Alternatives must be designed and deployed at scale to get buy-in from communities and policymakers. Secondly, decentralised water governance, especially of springs, is imperative. Then communities can understand the conditions of their spring waters, determine appropriate use, and protect or increase forest cover, because their livelihoods depend on replenished water resources.

Our mythology is replete with stories about the origins of the Himalayan rivers and their holiness. But it is a myth that our rivers can continue to be self-cleaning, self-healing and self-flowing beyond a point. The Himalayan water systems are under increasing stress and they need our attention — and course correction.

Arunabha Ghosh is CEO, Council on Energy, Environment and Water
The views expressed are personal

Telangana Today 18-March-2021

Krishna Water Tribunal resumes proceedings

STATE BUREAU
Hyderabad

After a gap of one-and-half year due to the resignation of a Judge followed by the Covid-19 pandemic, the Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal-II headed by Chairman Brijesh Kumar resumed proceedings on Wednesday, crossing examining Telangana expert witness Ghanshyam Jha on engineering aspects.

The cross-examination was mainly on the aspects mentioned in the affidavit filed earlier before the tribunal, on KC Canal besides covering some questions on the Nagarjunasagar project.

During the cross-examination, Jha clarified that the June 1944 Agreement and inter-State Conference of 1951 were more important regarding the KC Canal. He also clarified the aspirations of the Telangana people and the earlier Tribunal's response based on the submissions of erstwhile Andhra Pradesh. The circumstances responsible for water allocation changes over time and doesn't get a finality for all times to come. As such it is always subject to review.

Tribunal listed the proceedings for Thursday for further cross-examination of TS expert witness Ghanshyam Jha

The Joint Project Report 1954 and the project estimates of 1956 express the aspirations of the Telangana people and cannot be ignored. Planning Commission approval was accorded on the basis of facts, as mentioned in the detailed project report submitted by the State Government, he said. The tribunal listed the proceedings for Thursday for further cross-examination of Jha. The proceedings will continue till March 19.

Several questions including those related to the availability of water from regenerated flows and generation of yield in local streams of the Penna basin were asked. Questions related to the efficacy of assessment of 4.66 TMC and thus proposed savings of 27.3 TMC were also put up. Andhra Pradesh Senior Council Venkatramani cross-examined Jha.

Necessary Covid precautions were taken during the hearing. Protective glass shields were placed in front of judges, witness, lawyers and assessors. Mike was provided to witness and senior advocates and seating arrangements at three feet distance for each was also made.

Telangana Today 18-March-2021

'TS R&R package best in country'

State government following all guidelines of the Centre in implementing packages for oustees of various irrigation projects: CM

STATE BUREAU
HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao on Wednesday categorically stated that compensation for land acquisition in rural areas differ from urban areas as per the laws enacted by the Centre. The State government was following all the mandatory guidelines of the Centre in implementing the relief and rehabilitation packages for oustees of various irrigation projects in the State, he said.

Replying to issues raised by members during the discussion on the Motion of Thanks to the Governor's Address in the State Assembly, the Chief Minister said the State government was implementing one of the best relief and rehabilitation packages for the oustees of irrigation projects in the country. He said the Opposition parties were trying to create a ruckus over the submergence of some villages to gain political mileage and had filed 371 cases in different courts against the construction of Mallanna Sagar project.

"After Sri Ram Sagar Project (SRSP), Mallanna Sagar project has the second-largest storage capacity at 50 tmc. All the cases filed against its construction are being fought in the courts and the project is likely to be completed by next June," he said, adding that the State government was constructing a township with 7,500 houses for the oustees of Gandhamalla project near Gajwel.

He assured that there was no question of injustice to any displaced person as the government was pro-people and would resolve all pending issues soon. Chandrashekhar Rao informed the members that there was no official State Anthem for Telangana so far and would sing it in the Assembly as and when it is approved. With regard to issuing new ration cards and Aasara pensions, he said the State government was examining the applications and will issue them shortly.

He stated that the number of ration cards had increased from 29 lakh in 2014 to more than 39 lakh in 2021. The government had also increased the rice quota for ration card holders from 4 kg to 6 kg per person and also removed the upper limit of 20 kg per family. The number of Aasara pensions also increased significantly from 29.21 lakh in 2014 to 39.36 lakh in 2021 with a huge enhancement in pension amounts from a meagre Rs 200 to Rs 2,016 per month.

In response to AIMIM MLA Syed Ahmed Pasha Qadri, the Chief Minister said the officials will review the issues of hefty electricity bills after the lockdown and resolve them at the earliest.

He stated that the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) was preparing plans for improving the stormwater drainage system in Hyderabad to prevent flooding of the city in future. Necessary budgetary allocations will be made, he added. He reiterated that the State government will construct all the places of worships of all faiths that were demolished in the Secretariat complex as was promised earlier.

Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao speaking during the Motion of Thanks discussion in State Assembly on Wednesday.

OPPOSITION PARTIES ARE TRYING TO CREATE RUCKUS OVER THE SUBMERGENCE OF SOME VILLAGES TO GAIN POLITICAL MILEAGE AND HAVE FILED 371 CASES IN DIFFERENT COURTS AGAINST MALLANNA SAGAR PROJECT
— K CHANDRASHEKHAR RAO, CHIEF MINISTER

Telangana Today 18-March-2021

'Irrigation top priority for govt'

STATE BUREAU
Hyderabad

End-to-end planning and perfect execution enabled the government complete irrigation and other key projects in the State, TRS MLC Akula Lalitha said.

Participating in the debate on the motion of thanks to the Governor's address at the Legislative Council, she said the State government accorded top priority to the irrigation sector and completed many projects after amicably resolving inter-State water disputes. Apart from meeting the requirements of the agriculture sector and supplying urea on time that helped farmers to carry out cultivation without any delay, she said.

Asian Age 18-March-2021

NASA | STUDY **Using observations made by Mars rovers, the team focused on hydrogen**

Mars' 'missing' water buried beneath surface

Washington, March 17: Billions of years ago, Mars was home to lakes and oceans — but where all the water went to transform the planet into the desolate rock we know today has been something of a mystery. Most of it was thought to have been lost to space, but a new study funded by Nasa proposes that it didn't go anywhere but is trapped within minerals in the crust.

"We're saying that the crust forms what we call hydrated minerals, so minerals that actually have water in their crystal structure," Eva Scheller, lead author of the new paper in *Science*, said.

In fact, Scheller's model suggests anywhere between 30-99 percent of the initial water remains trapped inside these minerals.

Early Mars was thought to have enough water to cover the whole planet in roughly 100 to 1,500 metres (330 to 44,920 feet) of ocean. Because the planet lost its magnetic field early in its history, its atmosphere was progressively stripped away, and it was assumed this was how it lost its water. But the authors of the new study believe that while some of the water did disappear, the majority remained.

MOST OF it was thought to have been lost to space, but a new study funded by Nasa proposes that it didn't go anywhere but is trapped within minerals in the crust.

Using observations made by Mars rovers as well as of meteorites from the planet, the team focused on hydrogen, a key component of water.

There are different kinds of hydrogen atoms. Most have just one proton in their nucleus, but a tiny fraction, about 0.02 percent, have both a proton and a neutron, making them heavier. These are known as deuterium, or "heavy" hydrogen.

Because the lighter kind escapes the planet's atmosphere at a faster rate, the loss of most of the water to space would leave relatively more deuterium behind. But given how much water the planet is believed to have started with, and the current rate of hydrogen escape observed by spacecraft, the current deuterium-to-hydrogen ratio cannot be explained by atmospheric loss alone.

The study's authors instead say there was a combination of two mechanisms: The trapping of water in minerals in the planet's crust as well as the loss of water to the atmosphere.

"Anytime that you have a rock and it's interacting with water, there's a series of very complex reactions that form a hydrated mineral," said Scheller.

This process, called "chemical weathering," also takes place on Earth — for example, in clay, also found on Mars. But on our planet volcanoes recycle the water back into the atmosphere. Mars, however, doesn't have tectonic plates, making the changes permanent.

According to the teams' simulations, the planet lost between most of its water between four to 3.7 billion years ago, which means "Mars was pretty much like we see how it is today for the past three billion years," said Scheller.

She added she was excited about what the Perseverance rover, which landed last month for a multiyear science mission on the planet, might be able to contribute to the area of research. "The Perseverance rover is actually going to investigate exactly these processes and reactions that cause the sequestration of water in the crust," she said. — *AFP*

The Pioneer 18-March-2021

Meeting the challenges of urban water supply in India

We need to ensure water use efficiency across all sectors and reallocate water among them without compromising their productivity

SURABHI SINGH
MILAN JACOB

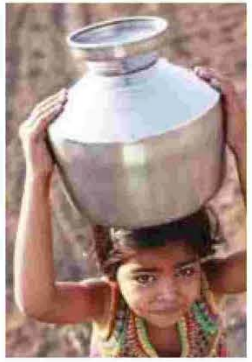
Singh is a Research Analyst and Jacob is a Communications Associate at CEEW. The views expressed are personal.

Early forecasts suggest that 2021 might be one of the hottest years ever recorded. If the mercury touches record highs while we are still recovering from a pandemic, can India ensure water supply to its vast urban population? Where do we stand in terms of water security for our economic hubs? In the Union Budget 2021, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman signalled that water security is one of the priorities of the Government and announced an outlay of ₹2.87 lakh crore for the national Jal Jeevan Mission (Urban) JJM(U). The Mission, which has set a target of supplying piped drinking water connections to 2.68 crore urban households by 2026, gets ₹60,000 crore this financial year.

It's a known fact that several parts of urban India are water-stressed. The crisis stems from a myopic understanding of water resources, lack of data-driven approach to water management, inadequate budgetary allocation, weak policies and archaic governance structures.

Further, the increasing frequency of non-linear tail-end risks such as extreme climate events — cyclones, floods, and droughts — and climate change-induced disruption in the pattern of rainfall, exacerbates water stress. Delhi recently faced water shortages after the Chamoli flash floods increased turbidity in water fetched from the Upper Ganga canal. In recent years, Chennai has been the biggest victim of urban drought but the ground and surface water availability in cities like Delhi, Bengaluru and Ahmedabad are also precarious. Meanwhile, a recent study by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) found a shift in the pattern of extreme climate events in over 40 per cent of Indian districts. Flood-prone areas are now becoming drought-prone and vice-versa, increasing water stress.

For the long-term success of JJM (U), the implementation strategy should be built on four pillars — identifying vulnerabilities, data-driven circular water management, utilities' financial sustainability, and reallocation. First, JJM (U) should focus on districts having a high proportion of vulnerable populations. While the National Sample Survey Office's (NSSO) study of urban slums is already available, more data could be crowdsourced through marathons and inter-Ministerial coordination to identify vulnerabilities. India's drought-affected district hotspots — Rajkot, Anantapur, Aurangabad, Barmer, Bijapur, Churu, Jaisalmer, and Jodhpur — should be prioritised in the first phase of implementation.



Second, we must readily adopt a data-driven circular water management approach for managing urban water resources. It starts with a shift from the "use and throw — linear" to a ""use, treat, and reuse — circular" approach that requires multi-stakeholder engagement. This can be facilitated through transparency in data sharing. Recently, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launched a pilot water survey under the JJM (U) in 10 cities. Data collected through such surveys should be made available on a digital dashboard. The dashboard should also integrate data on city-level water balances, water demand, near-real-time water availability and quality, wastewater generation and treatment, the potential for water reuse and rainwater harvesting, and the status of urban water bodies to facilitate smooth multi-stakeholder interaction. The data-driven approach also has the potential to minimise wastage by optimising supply. It's high time that we start conducting periodic water-use surveys both online and offline.

Third, if JJM (U) is to succeed, we must have a dialogue with citizens on the need for water pricing. Water utilities are often underfunded and their operation and maintenance suffer. While vulnerable populations can be covered through subsidies, ensuring utilities' financial sustainability, requires a viable revenue model. To enhance revenue collection, options such as prepaid meters, increased pay points and digital payment channels, which offer discounts and cashback for timely payments should be considered.

Finally, we need to ensure water use efficiency across all sectors and reallocate water among sectors without compromising productivity. By 2050, the JJM (U) supply would have to be pushed up to at least 54 billion cubic meters (BCM) compared to 17 BCM municipal water supply in 2010.

How can we source the additional supply? According to a study, about 20 to 47 per cent of irrigation water could be saved in 2030 to 2050, without compromising yield, if low-to-high water-saving irrigation methods are adopted. For instance, 1 BCM of water saved from agriculture could provide domestic water supply to 4.2 million urban households for a year. To facilitate water reallocations, we need to devise State-specific water reallocation strategies based on existing institutions, an enabling environment and participatory stakeholder engagement.

Equitable and reliable access to safe drinking water is not only a basic right but is also essential to maintain a healthy and productive workforce in urban India. It's safe to say that the Union Budget's ambition of laying the foundation of India's next phase of growth would have fallen short without investing in water security for urban areas.

The Tribune 18-March-2021

NGT panel: Water quality in drains of Malwa belt poor

KULWINDER SANDHU
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

MOGA, MARCH 17

Water quality in the drains in Moga, Fazilka, Ferozepur, Faridkot and Muktsar districts in the Malwa belt of the state is very poor. This was asserted by Justice Jasbir Singh (retired), Chairman, Monitoring Committee, National Green Tribunal (NGT), after holding a meeting with district magistrates of these districts in Moga recently.

A filthy drain flows through a village in Moga. FILE PHOTO

"If the health of people and animals is to be taken into consideration, this issue is serious in which any kind of laxity will not be tolerated by the NGT, a national constitutional body working under the apex court," he told the district magistrates.

He said the conditions created due to the discharge of untreated water and sewage in at least 22 drains and other water bodies passing through these districts were not conducive to the health and safety of human lives. "To rectify these conditions, it is necessary to instal sewage treatment plants at required places and to operate them properly," he said.

Justice Jasbir Singh said the NGT had directed the monitoring committee to take steps to address the problem in the Malwa region. He directed the district magistrates to ensure a review of the overall performance of sewage treatment plants being set up in the aforesaid districts and send a detailed report to him. He directed officials to ensure proper operation and maintenance of the sewage treatment plants which had been commissioned by the local bodies. Those that have not yet been activated should be activated as soon as possible. Tenders of contractors who do not work should be cancelled due to departmental action and work should be given to new companies, he told the district magistrates.

He asked municipal committees of the Local Government Department to make timely payment for the sewage treatment plants. He said the state government was considering that in future these sewage treatment plants should be paid for directly by the government. He said the decision of the government regarding old arrears and new monthly installments was going to be taken soon.

Millennium Post 18-March-2021

FOR A SOCIAL CAUSE

Haryana Chief Secretary Vijai Vardhan presiding over a meeting of Administrative Secretaries and District Commissioners on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's water harvesting countrywide campaign "Catch the rain, where it falls, when it falls" on World Water Day starting from March 22 through video conferencing, at Chandigarh, on Wednesday

Millennium Post 18-March-2021

India, Bangladesh to expand cooperation in river pollution mitigation, flood management

NEW DELHI: India and Bangladesh have agreed to expand cooperation across the entire gamut of water resources issues, including framework for sharing of river waters, mitigation of pollution, river bank protection, flood management, basin management, according to an official statement on Wednesday.

The India-Bangladesh Water Resources Secretary level meeting under the framework of the Joint Rivers Commission took place on March 16 here.

The India-Bangladesh Water Resources Secretary level meeting under the framework of the Joint Rivers Commission took place on March 16

The Indian delegation was led by Pankaj Kumar, Secretary (Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation). The Bangladesh delegation was led by Kabir Bin Anwar, Senior Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources.

Noting that India and Bangladesh share 54 common rivers which directly impact the livelihood of people in the two countries, both sides commended the close cooperation that exists between them in the matter.

"Both sides agreed to expand cooperation across entire gamut of water resources issues including framework for sharing of river waters, mitigation of pollution, river bank protection, flood management, basin management, etc.," the statement said.

A Joint Technical Working Group will provide inputs on the matter.

The discussions were substantive and held in a cordial atmosphere, it added.

The meeting took place ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bangladesh later this month.

On Tuesday, sources said, the two sides discussed sharing of waters of the Manu, Muhuri, Khowai, Gumti, Dudhkumar and Dharla rivers.

Discussions also took place to further cooperation in the area of flood forecasting, they added.

Both sides also agreed to schedule the next secretary-level meeting in Dhaka on mutually convenient dates.

Jansatta 18-March-2021

नदियों के जल प्रबंधन पर सहयोग बढ़ाएंगे भारत और बांग्लादेश

जनसत्ता ब्यूरो
नई दिल्ली, 17 मार्च।

भारत और बांग्लादेश नदियों के जल के बंटवारे की रूपरेखा, प्रदूषण खत्म करने, नदियों के जल संरक्षण, बाढ़ प्रबंधन, नदी घाटी प्रबंधन समेत जल संसाधन से जुड़े मुद्दों के विभिन्न पहलुओं पर सहयोग बढ़ाने पर राजी हो गए। एक आधिकारिक बयान में बुधवार को यह जानकारी दी गई। भारत-बांग्लादेश जल संसाधन सचिव स्तर की बैठक नई दिल्ली में मंगलवार 16 मार्च को हुई।

भारतीय प्रतिनिधिमंडल का नेतृत्व सचिव (जल संसाधन, नदी विकास एवं गंगा पुनरुद्धार) पंकज कुमार ने किया। बांग्लादेशी प्रतिनिधिमंडल का नेतृत्व जल संसाधन मंत्रालय के वरिष्ठ सचिव कबीर बिन अनवर ने किया।

भारत और बांग्लादेश 54 नदियों का पानी आपस में साझा करते हैं जो दोनों देशों के लोगों की आजीविका पर सीधे असर डालती हैं। दोनों पक्षों ने इस मामले में अपने बीच करीबी सहयोग की प्रशंसा की। बयान में कहा गया है, 'दोनों पक्ष नदियों के जल के बंटवारे की रूपरेखा, प्रदूषण खत्म करने, नदियों के जल के संरक्षण, बाढ़ प्रबंधन, नदी घाटी प्रबंधन समेत जल संसाधन से जुड़े मुद्दों के विभिन्न पहलुओं पर सहयोग बढ़ाने पर राजी हो गए।' दोनों देश अगली सचिव स्तर की बैठक ढाका में करने पर भी राजी हो गए।

The Pioneer 18-March-2021

मानसून में बरसाती पानी के संचयन को रेन वाटर हार्वेस्टिंग हों दुरुस्त

जिले के सभी रेन हार्वेस्टिंग स्ट्रक्चर को 30 जून तक चालू करने के निर्देश

पायनियर समाचार सेवा। गुरुग्राम

गुरुग्राम में रेन वाटर हार्वेस्टिंग और बरसाती पानी के संचयन को लेकर अधिकारियों की बैठक लेते उपायुक्त डॉ. यश गर्ग।

रेन वॉटर हॉर्वेस्टिंग को लेकर विभिन्न विभागों के अधिकारियों के साथ उपायुक्त डॉ. यश गर्ग ने अपने कार्यालय में अधिकारियों की बैठक ली। उन्होंने कहा कि जिन विभागों के अधिकार क्षेत्र में रेन वॉटर हॉर्वेस्टिंग स्ट्रक्चर बने हुए हैं, उन्हें हर हाल में उन स्ट्रक्चरों को चेक कराकर 30 जून तक चालू हालत में करने के निर्देश दिए। उन्होंने कहा कि संबंधित विभाग अथवा एजेंसियां अभी से जुट जाएं, ताकि मानसून के आगमन से पहले जिला में बरसाती पानी का प्रबंधन अच्छे तरीके से हो सके।

बैठक में बताया कि रेन वॉटर हॉर्वेस्टिंग के 413 स्ट्रक्चर नगर निगम क्षेत्र में पड़ते हैं, जिनका सर्वे वॉपकोस के सहयोग से कराया जा रहा है। नगर निगम के अधिकारियों ने उपायुक्त को अवगत कराया कि सर्वे में जिन स्ट्रक्चरों में खामी पाई जा रही है, उन्हें वॉपकोस की मदद से दूर भी कराया जा रहा है। उपायुक्त डॉ. गर्ग ने कहा कि नगर निगम सहित सभी ऐजेंसियां अपने अधिकार क्षेत्र में रेन वॉटर हार्वेस्टिंग अर्थात बरसाती पानी संचयन के स्ट्रक्चर चेक करा लें और उनकी मैपिंग करके खन मैप गुरुग्राम पर अपलोड करें। डॉ. गर्ग ने कहा कि गुरुग्राम नगर निगम के अलावा नवगठित मानेसर नगर निगम और ग्रामीण क्षेत्र में भी रेन वॉटर हार्वेस्टिंग स्ट्रक्चरों का सर्वे कराएं और जहां आवश्यकता हो, वहां पर नए स्ट्रक्चर भी बनवाएं। नगर निगम गुरुग्राम के अधिकारियों ने आश्वस्त किया कि बरसात से पहले उनके अधिकार क्षेत्र के सभी स्ट्रक्चर सुचारू कर दिए जाएंगे। अगले वित्त वर्ष में 150 नए स्ट्रक्चर बनाने का लक्ष्य रखा गया है।

मुख्य बड़ी सेवाएं सड़कें पेयजल और सीवरेज हैं

गुरुग्राम जिला में मुख्य बड़ी सेवाएं जैसे सड़कें, पेयजल आपूर्ति, सीवरेज आदि गुरुग्राम महानगर विकास प्राधिकरण के अधिकार क्षेत्र में पड़ती हैं। प्राधिकरण के प्रतिनिधि ने बताया कि अरावली क्षेत्र में बड़े-बड़े बेसिन और चैकडैम बनाकर बरसाती पानी उनमें इकट्ठा किया जाएगा, जो धीरे-धीरे रिसकर जमीन में जाएगा। इसके अलावा प्राधिकरण ने निर्णय लिया है कि जो भी बड़ी डेज़ बनेगी उनका तल (बैड) कच्चा रखा जाएगा। यही नहीं, बड़ी सड़कों के साथ बनी ग्रीन बैल्ट के लैवल को सड़क से नीचा रखा जाएगा ताकि सड़क का पानी ग्रीन बैल्ट में बह जाए और रिसकर जमीन में चला जाए।

उपायुक्त ने सभी सरकारी विभागों तथा ऐजेंसियों के रेन वॉटर हॉर्वेस्टिंग स्ट्रक्चरों को सुचारू करने के साथ-साथ निजी संस्थानों में लगे स्ट्रक्चर चेक कराने के आदेश भी दिए हैं। उन्होंने कहा कि जिन परिसरों में रेन वॉटर हार्वेस्टिंग के स्ट्रक्चर लगे हुए हैं, उनकी मैनेजमेंट अथवा रेजीडेंट वेलफेयर एसोसिएशन उन स्ट्रक्चरों को चेक कराकर उनका सही ढंग से संचालित होना सुनिश्चित करें अन्यथा बाद में सर्वे के दौरान यदि रेन वॉटर हार्वेस्टिंग का स्ट्रक्चर ठीक नहीं पाया गया तो उन्हें नोटिस जारी करते हुए उनका ऑक्युपेशन सर्टिफिकेट भी कैंसल किया जा सकता है। डॉ. गर्ग ने कहा कि स्ट्रक्चरों के सर्वे के लिए अधिकारियों की टीमें गठित की जाएंगी जो जिला के अलग-अलग हिस्सों में काम करेंगी।

Rajasthan Patrika 18-March-2021

जल संरक्षण की कार्य योजना होगी तैयार

चंडीगढ़. हरियाणा के मुख्य सचिव विजय वर्धन ने सभी विभागों के प्रशासनिक सचिवों तथा जिला उपायुक्तों को निर्देश दिए हैं कि प्रधानमंत्री नरेन्द्र मोदी द्वारा विश्व जल दिवस के अवसर पर 22 मार्च से आरंभ किए जा रहे कैच दा रेन, वेयर इट फॉल्स, वैन इट फॉलस देशव्यापी अभियान के क्रियान्वयन के लिए कार्ययोजना तैयार करें। बैठक में उन्होंने कहा कि पांच राज्यों जहां विधानसभा चुनाव हो रहे हैं, को छोडकर देश के अन्य राज्यों के जिला मजिस्ट्रेटों व सरपंचों को सम्बोधित करेंगे। इसके बाद अधिकारी सभी सरकारी भवनों की छतों पर रूफ टॉप वाटर हारवेस्टिंग सिस्टम प्रणाली लगवाएंगे।

Hindustan 18-March-2021

भारत-बांग्लादेश जल के प्रबंधन में सहयोग करेंगे

नई दिल्ली। भारत और बांग्लादेश नदियों के जल के बंटवारे की रूपरेखा, प्रदूषण खत्म करने, नदियों के जल के संरक्षण, बाढ़ प्रबंधन, नदी घाटी प्रबंधन समेत जल संसाधन से जुड़े मुद्दों के विभिन्न पहलुओं पर सहयोग बढ़ाने पर राजी हो गए। एक आधिकारिक बयान में बुधवार को यह जानकारी दी गई।