

Times of India 27-March-2021

SC extends status quo on Yamuna supply by 10 days

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday ordered Punjab, Haryana and Bhakra Beas Management Board not to reduce water supply to Delhi for the next 10 days and said it would hear Delhi Jal Board's plea against repair work in the Bhakra main canal on April 6.

A bench headed by CJI S A Bobde extended the status quo on water supply to Delhi, which was granted for 24 hours on Thursday, till April 6 as it could not take up DJB's plea for hearing due to paucity of time.

The DJB said the Punjab government and the BBMB were scheduling repair of sluice gates of Bhakra main canal that carries water to Delhi and it was expected that supply would be hit by 25%. The Haryana government, through senior advocate Shyam Divan, said the status quo order would not hurt the state as it was providing full quota of water to Delhi.

Deccan Herald 27-March-2021

17 rivers in Karnataka highly polluted: Jal Shakti Ministry

NEW DELHI, DHNS: A total of 17 river stretches in Karnataka are polluted mainly due to discharge of untreated or partially treated sewage and industrial effluents in their catchments, Jal Shakti Ministry said on Friday.

According to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), stretches of Krishna, Tungabhadra, Bhadra, Tunga, Malaprabha, Kali, Kaggina, Bhima, Asangi Nalla, Cauvery, Kabini, Shimsha, Arkavathi, Lakshmantirtha, Yagachi, Kumardhara, Netravathi rivers are polluted, the Ministry informed Parliament.

A total of 351 stretches on 323 rivers has been identified as polluted in the country in terms of bio-chemical oxygen demand (BOD) levels, an indicator of organic pollution, said the Ministry.

The non-point sources of pollution like agricultural run-off, open defecation, run-off from solid waste dump sites also contribute to pollution of rivers, the Ministry added.

The CPCB, in collaboration with the State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs), is regularly monitoring the water quality of rivers and other water bodies in the country through a network of monitoring stations, Minister of State for Jal Shakti Rattan Lal Kataria in his written reply informed Lok Sabha.

Sewage generation in urban areas in the country is estimated at 61,948 million litres per day (mld), while the sewage treatment capacity was 23,277 mld, said the minister.

Karnataka has four grossly polluting industries and all of them are complying with environmental and pollution control board norms, Kataria said.

The CPCB has directed all 17 categories of highly polluting industries; including sugar industries, to install Continuous Effluent/ Emission Monitoring Systems (CEMS) to monitor the pollution levels.

Water canals of history

The Vijayanagara era canals are a brilliant testimony to indigenous engineering of the time. Is concretising the structures the right way to rejuvenate them, asks
Pavan Kumar H



The Basava canal in Vijayanagara district. PHOTOS BY SHIVASHANKAR BANAGAR

The Vijayanagara-era canals, which currently crisscross four districts of Karnataka, are an engineering marvel and a feat to behold, just as mesmerising as the UNESCO-protected monuments at Hampi and the surrounding areas.

However, experts and conservationists say, while prolonged negligence has affected the quality of these canals and aqueducts — which are more than 600 years old, the current concretisation has led to them losing their ability to nurture biodiversity.

Professor C S Vasudevan, Archaeology Department, Hampi Kannada University, says 16 canals and 12 aqueducts that were built during the Vijayanagara period are nothing short of 'great hydraulic-architecture'.

"Except for the few wear-and-tear and growth of vegetation that might have slowed its water flow, the 16 canals are still functioning in excellent condition," he says. The technology used by the engineers of the Vijayanagara period was so advanced that in its six centuries of existence, there was no single time when these canals and aqueducts had to be desilted.

One reason for this, Vasudevan says, is that the canals were built keeping in

mind the natural contours of the land.

Indigenous engineering

Since Hampi is at a greater elevation compared to the Tungabhadra river, the engineers created several aqueducts by 'throwing' large boulders at strategic locations, so a large quantity of water is withheld and at the same time, enough space was given for the water to trickle down the canals.

They also created a wide network of canals and temple tanks that supplied water not just for domestic and religious purposes but also agriculture.

Now, there are concerns that in the name of modernisation, these historically important structures are being harmed.

The 16 canals, a few of which stretch for more than 27 kilometres in Ballari, Koppal, Raichur and Vijayanagara districts, feed water to paddy and other fields spread over 11,154.05 ha. Now, the Minor Irrigation Department is planning to enhance cultivation in the command area to nearly 14,000 ha by embanking the canal walls in a trapezoidal shape with cement.

According to Rajesh Vastrad, who works as assistant executive engineer in the Minor Irrigation Department

(MID), the modernisation of the canals at an estimated cost of Rs 435 crore, with financial assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), is going to ensure minimal wastage of water and supply of water to the tail-end farmers.

"Currently, water released from the Tungabhadra reaches the tail-end of the canal after three days. In some canals, they hardly reach as water is pilfering into the fields or being prevented by the weeds that have grown in the canal," he says.

Sudarshan Varma, member of the Hampi World Heritage Area Management Authority, says the proposed project will have an adverse impact on the overall biodiversity of Hampi and surrounding areas. "Over the centuries, several fishes, frogs, other aquatic animals along with 232 species of birds (as per a study conducted by an organisation) have made these canals their home. However, with concretisation of the canals, the lifecycle of all these animals will be badly impacted," he says.

The cost of modernisation

Sudarshan says concretisation of canals will also create groundwater scarcity, as the cement wall canal will not allow

percolation of water to increase the groundwater table.

"No doubt, these canals need minor repairs and we should limit ourselves to fixing these problems and not create new ones. One should not forget that these canals are archaeological treasures and should not be tampered with, even if the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) or State government fails to protect it," he says.

MID Executive Engineer Nagabushan Sokke said all the necessary study, including environment impact assessment was conducted by the ADB. It was only after satisfying that no major environmental impact would take place with the modernisation of the canals did the bank release the funds.

He also said that all the required permission from the ASI and State government have been received for upgrading the canal. "Fish and other creatures will move to the nearby river and continue their life cycle," he says.

Birders say earlier they used to see a lot of birds breeding and nesting by the side of canals. However, now their numbers had gone down drastically. One of the main reasons for this is the removal of trees and the vegetation that had grown in and around the canal.



The Raya canal near Hampi.

Indian Express 27-March-2021

PM assures Bangla oppn party of inking Teesta water-sharing pact

SHUBHAJIT ROY

DHAKA, MARCH 26

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi on Friday told a delegation of Jatiya party leaders that he will do his best to ink a treaty with Bangladesh on water-sharing of Teesta and other common rivers.

Modi came up with the assurance while meeting with a four-member delegation of Jatiya Party, the official Opposition party in Bangladesh.

Although Khaleda Zia's BNP is also an Opposition party, they were not part of the delegation.

The delegation raised the longstanding issue of water-sharing of Teesta and other 54 common rivers with India and urged Modi to take effective measures to resolve the issue.

Bangladesh Opposition Leader Raushan Ershad, Deputy Leader of the Opposition G M Quader, Secretary-General of the party Ziauddin Ahmed Bablu and co-chairman Ruhul Amin Hawlader were present.

"Discussions at the technical

EXPLAINED

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Important signal

PRIME MINISTER Modi's assurance to the Jatiya Party leaders' delegation is an important signal ahead of the West Bengal polls. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has blocked the signing of the Teesta water-sharing pact and Modi's words are significant against that backdrop.

level are going on in this regard. We must sign the treaty," Bablu quoted Modi as saying.

"We have requested the Indian prime minister to introduce an on-arrival visa for Bangladeshi citizens, increasing people-to-people connectivity. We also urged him to increase scholarships for Bangladeshi students," Quader told *The Daily Star*. Later, Modi announced scholarships for students.

Deccan Chronicle 27-March-2021

Water Board cooked up supply figures: CAG

Not fixing meters causes Board ₹1,209 crore loss

MADDY DEEKSHITH
I DC
HYDERABAD, MARCH 26

The Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWS&SB), supposed to supply 150 litre per person per day has been supplying only an average of 71 litres in the city. By not fixing meters, the Board suffered a revenue loss ₹1,209 crore. The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) in a report said analysis of the monthly water lifted from source showed that water available for supply to the HMWS&SB area ranged from 109.69 to 118.19 litres per person per day during 2013-18.

The actual supply of water, as reflected in the monthly bills of domestic customers, ranged from 66 to 71 litres during 2013-2018.

The CAG said the difference between gross availability per person (based on quantity lifted) and actual supply per domestic connection (based on monthly bills) is due to water losses during transmission and distribution and water supplied beyond the Board's jurisdiction and to other consumers.

An analysis of the data furnished by the HMWS&SB revealed that the Board assessed water supply at 120-140 litres per person a day by using faulty methods.

● **WATER LOSSES** at 39% were added to the water distributed and divided by the population to arrive at per capita consumption. Surprisingly, the board initiated the meter fixing project in 2018 without revealing the CAG report.

The water losses at 39 per cent were added to the water distributed and divided by the population to arrive at per capita consumption. Surprisingly, the water board initiated the meter fixing project in 2018 without revealing the CAG report.

Asian Age 27-March-2021

No El Nino or La Nina; close to normal monsoon this year

PRATIK PARIJA
MARCH 26

India's all-important monsoon will probably be close to normal this year amid the absence of El Nino or La Nina weather patterns during the four-month wet season, according to AccuWeather Inc.

The monsoon, which typically runs from June to September, is considered normal when total rainfall is between 96 per cent and 104 per cent of the national average of just over 88 centimeters (35 inches), the weather forecaster said.

"It doesn't look like a drought year across India," Jason Nicholls, a senior meteorologist at AccuWeather in Pennsylvania, said in a



response to questions. "We are leaning toward a close to normal monsoon overall for the nation."

The wet season is critical for Indian agriculture as it not only irrigates fields directly, but also fills reservoirs for crops sown in the winter. It shapes the livelihood of millions of rural Indians and influences food prices. Insufficient rainfall in the country, the

world's second-largest producer of rice and wheat, often leads to drinking-water shortages, lower crop output and higher imports of commodities like edible oils.

About 60 to 90 per cent of India's total annual rainfall occurs during the monsoon, except for the state of Tamil Nadu that gets only about 35 per cent of its rainfall during the period, according to the India Meteorological Department.

"There is some concern the Indian Ocean Dipole goes negative in late summer or early autumn, which may mean rainfall comes up short of normal in northwest India with an easing of monsoon rains later in the season," Nicholls said.

—Bloomberg

Hindustan Times 27-March-2021

Punjab, Haryana told to maintain status quo on Delhi water supply

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NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Friday directed Punjab and Haryana to continue maintaining the status quo and ensuring regular water supply to Delhi till April 6. The direction was essentially a 10-day extension of a status quo order that the apex court passed on Thursday.

The status quo was extended as the top court was taking a break for Holi, and will resume hearings on April 5.

Friday's direction came on a petition filed by the Delhi Jal Board (DJB), which claimed that Haryana reduced the regular

supply to Delhi, due to which water levels at the Wazirabad reservoir fell by at least six feet. DJB moved a separate petition against Punjab and Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB) against a likely reduction in supply to the Capital owing to a proposed repair of reservoir gates at the Nangal Hydel Channel.

The court kept the petitions for hearing on Friday, but could not take up the matter due to lack of time.

A three-judge bench — headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) SA Bobde — posted the matter to April 6 and ordered: "Status quo on supply of water to Delhi will continue till April 6."

The Pioneer 27-March-2021

Ensure people's participation for efficient water management

The success of any Government programme depends on the participation of the people and mobilisation of women groups at the grassroots level

Water and soil are essential for sustaining life on Earth. Each year, the World Forest Day is celebrated on March 21 and, since 1993, March 22 is observed as World Water Day. All across the globe, land, forest and water resources have been degraded due to overexploitation by humans. Because of the growing population, these resources are under stress and their blatant misuse has made the condition worse. The problem is compounded by the climate change threat that is looming large over mankind.

Forests are essential for sustaining the flow of water in rain-fed rivers, for aquifer recharge and maintaining the level of ground water. Water is the most precious gift of nature but, across the world, over one billion people have no access to safe drinking



VK BAHUGUNA

The writer is Chairman of the Centre for Resource Management. The views expressed are personal.

water and more than three billion people face shortage of water for a few months every year.

Water scarcity repeatedly occurs in areas with scanty rainfall and high population density or in areas where intensive agricultural is practised and those which are heavily industrialised. The countries in Asia and Africa are the most water-stressed, and that includes India.

It seems that the world leaders are only paying lip service as nothing substantial has been done to deal with the water crisis. We must remember that due to climate change and lopsided development, many civilisations, including our own Indus Valley civilisation vanished.

The countries in the Middle East are the most threatened by water scarcity, however, Israel is a brilliant

example of how to meet the threat of chronic water shortages. This is because though 90 per cent of Israelis live in water scarce areas, they have solved their problem.

India is one of the top 10 water-rich countries with more than 4,000 Billion Cubic Meter (BCM) of water availability (sufficient to cater to four-five times our current population). However, ironically, as many as 256 districts in the country are facing acute water crisis. It has also been estimated by the NITI Aayog that 70 per cent of our water resources are contaminated and 600 million people are facing severe water stress. It is further estimated that more than 200,000 people die every year due to inadequate access to safe water.

According to a report of the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) 70 per cent of



the blocks in country are water-deficient with respect to the groundwater levels. More than 60 per cent of the farmers depend on groundwater for irrigation. The way the farmers of Punjab, Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh are utilising ground water, the day is not far when food grain production will come to a standstill in these areas.

The water table is already going down by a few metres

every year, especially in Punjab. The Central Water Commission (CWC) has indicated that per capita water availability in the country has already reduced by one-fourth to 1,368 cubic metres a year over the past seven decades. It is also ironical that some of the heavy rainfall districts like Palakkad in Kerala and Hooghly in West Bengal, that witness more than the average rainfall, are water stressed for a few months each year. In Palakkad, it is due to uneven distribution of rainfall and overuse by brick kilns and farmers, while in Hooghly it is due to overuse by industries.

But where there is a will there is a way. Israel has solved its water shortage by building desalination and water-treatment plants and by adopting innovative agricultural practices. Back home, Gujarat has created a people-centric

demand-driven approach to solve the potable water problem by creating lakes, de-silting ponds and the use of the Narmada water through the Sardar Sarovar canal network. It tapped every drop of rain water in the farms and as a result the irrigated area of the State has jumped from 38 lakh hectares in 2011 to 68.88 lakh hectares today.

The creation of the Ministry of Jal Shakti in 2019 was to implement and replicate the Gujarat model all over the country. Of the 19 crore households in the country, till 2019, only a little over three crore homes had access to tap water for drinking. In the last one year, another four crore families have been covered. The 'Jal Jeevan Mission' has made a mark within one year of its launch and the reasons for its success is the fact that it focuses on decen-

tralised, village-based demand-driven governance by the communities, coupled with innovative technology based on real-time monitoring. Recently the 'Jal Jeevan Abhiyan' has been launched to further scale up rain water harvesting and focus is on mobilisation of women groups at the grassroots level.

The larger participation of civil society is the key to success of any Government programme. Before the 'Jal Jeevan Mission' the Joint Forest Management was successful because it involved the communities to manage the forests. If the Jal Shakti Ministry succeeds in supplying potable water to every household it will be one of the biggest public welfare programmes post-Independence. It will bring health and prosperity and reduce the mortality rate in rural areas.

Haribhoomi 27-March-2021

छह अप्रैल तक यथास्थिति बनाए रखे दिल्ली की जलापूर्ति कम न की जाए: सुप्रीम कोर्ट

एजेसी ► नई दिल्ली

सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने शुक्रवार को पंजाब, हरियाणा की सरकारों और अन्य को निर्देश दिया कि दिल्ली को यमुना नदी के पानी की आपूर्ति पर छह अप्रैल तक यथास्थिति बरकरार रखी जाए, और यह स्पष्ट किया कि पानी की कमी का सामना कर रही राष्ट्रीय राजधानी की जलापूर्ति कम न की जाए। प्रधान न्यायाधीश एस ए बोबडे, न्यायमूर्ति ए एस बोपन्ना और वी रामासुब्रमण्यम की पीठ ने कहा कि वह होली के अवकाश के बाद छह अप्रैल को मामले की सुनवाई करेगी। पीठ ने कहा कि हमने कल यथास्थिति का आदेश पारित किया था। हम इसे जारी रखना चाहेंगे। दिल्ली को पानी की आपूर्ति में कटौती नहीं की जानी चाहिए। हम अवकाश के बाद मंगलवार को इस मामले को देखेंगे। हरियाणा की तरफ से पेश हुए वरिष्ठ अधिवक्ता श्याम दीवान ने कहा कि उन्होंने पानी की आपूर्ति नहीं घटाई है। इस मामले में एक पक्ष का प्रतिनिधित्व कर रहे वरिष्ठ अधिवक्ता विकास सिंह ने सुनवाई के दौरान दावा किया कि जल स्तर छह फीट नीचे चला गया है।



जारी किए थे नोटिस

गुरुवार को शुक्रवार तक के लिये यथास्थिति का आदेश देने वाली शीर्ष अदालत दिल्ली जल बोर्ड (डीजेबी) द्वारा दायर याचिका में हरियाणा सरकार को यह निर्देश देने का अनुरोध किया गया था कि वह यमुना में अशोधित प्रदूषकों को डालना रोके तथा राष्ट्रीय राजधानी के लिये पर्याप्त पानी छोड़े। न्यायालय ने इस पर हरियाणा, पंजाब और माखड़ा ब्यास प्रबंधन बोर्ड (बीबीएमबी) को नोटिस जारी कर उनसे याचिका पर जबाब दायर करने को कहा था। दिल्ली जल बोर्ड के वकील ने कहा कि राष्ट्रीय राजधानी में जलस्तर नीचे गिर गया है। हरियाणा के वकील ने हालांकि कहा कि पूर्ण जलापूर्ति की गई है। दिल्ली जल बोर्ड के वकील ने दलील दी कि हरियाणा के मुताबिक कुछ मरम्मत का काम चल रहा है और नहर की मरम्मत का काम मार्च और अप्रैल में नहीं किया जाना चाहिए जब पानी की मांग अपने चरम पर होती है।

Hindustan 27-March-2021

एक अप्रैल से पैकेटबंद पानी के लिए बीआईएस प्रमाण जरूरी

नई दिल्ली | एजेंसी

निर्देश

भारतीय खाद्य सुरक्षा व मानक प्राधिकरण (एफएसएसएआई) ने पैकेटबंद पानी और मिनरल वॉटर विनिर्माताओं के लिए लाइसेंस हासिल करने या पंजीकरण के लिए भारतीय मानक ब्यूरो (बीआईएस) का प्रमाणन अनिवार्य कर दिया है।

सभी राज्यों और संघ शासित प्रदेशों के खाद्य आयुक्तों को भेजे पत्र में एफएसएसएआई ने यह निर्देश दिया है। निर्देश एक अप्रैल, 2021 से लागू होगा। एफएसएसएआई ने कहा कि खाद्य सुरक्षा एवं मानक अधिनियम, 2008 के तहत सभी खाद्य कारोबार परिचालकों के लिए

- भारतीय खाद्य सुरक्षा और मानक प्राधिकरण ने निर्देश जारी किए
- सभी राज्यों के खाद्य आयुक्तों को एफएसएसएआई ने भेजा पत्र

किसी खाद्य कारोबार को शुरू करने से पहले लाइसेंस/पंजीकरण हासिल करना अनिवार्य होगा। नियामक ने कहा कि खाद्य सुरक्षा और मानक (प्रतिबंध एवं बिक्री पर अंकुश) नियमन, 2011 के तहत कोई भी व्यक्ति बीआईएस प्रमाणन चिन्ह के बाद ही पैकेटबंद पेयजल या मिनरल वॉटर की बिक्री कर सकता है।

Rashtriya Sahara 27-March-2021

जल संधि को लेकर हर संभव प्रयास का दिया आश्वासन

ढाका (भाषा)। प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने शुक्रवार को बांग्लादेश के प्रमुख विपक्षी दल जातीय पार्टी को तीस्ता एवं अन्य संबंधित नदियों को लेकर लंबे समय से लंबित समझौते पर जल्द हस्ताक्षर के लिए हरसंभव प्रयास का आश्वासन दिया।

मोदी ने सोनारगांव होटल में जातीय पार्टी के नेताओं के साथ हुई बैठक में यह आश्वासन दिया। बैठक

के दौरान जातीय पार्टी के प्रमुख

■ पीएम ने की जातीय पार्टी के नेताओं से मुलाकात

संरक्षक रौशन इरशाद ने चार सदस्यीय प्रतिनिधिमंडल का नेतृत्व किया। यह बैठक करीब 25 मिनट तक चली। बैठक के दौरान प्रतिनिधिमंडल ने भारत के साथ तीस्ता एवं 54 अन्य

आम नदियों के जल-बंटवारा मुद्दे को सुलझाने का मामला उठाया। जातीय पार्टी के महासचिव जियाउद्दीन अहमद बबलू ने प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी के हवाले से कहा, मैंने पहले ही तीस्ता नदी के जल-बंटवारे के मुद्दे पर एक समझौता करने को लेकर प्रतिबद्धता जतायी है। इस मुद्दे को लेकर तकनीकी स्तर पर चर्चा जारी है। हमें संधि पर हस्ताक्षर करने चाहिए।