

Telangana Today- 20- October-2023

Stop Veligonda project in AP, Telangana urges KRMB

STATE BUREAU

Hyderabad

State irrigation authorities on Thursday requested the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) to restrain Andhra Pradesh from executing works on the unauthorised Veligonda project and adding new components to it. Taking exception to the implementation of the project, Engineer-in-Chief (General), Irrigation, C Muralidhar wrote to the board arguing that the addition of new components to the project were intended to divert Krishna water beyond the basin.

He recalled that Chief Minister K Chandrashekar

Rao had opposed the “illegal and unauthorised diversion” of Krishna basin water to other basins and requested the union Minister for Jal Shakti in October 2020 for action against the diversion of Krishna water by Andhra Pradesh through Srisailem reservoir. The union Minister for Jal Shakti had also made it clear at the second apex council meeting that the inter-basin transfer of water can be considered only after fulfilling the in-basin needs by according its due priority. The union Minister also wrote a letter on May 1, 2021 directing Andhra Pradesh not to go ahead with the activity of awarding and construction

until the detailed project reports were appraised and approved by the KRMB and the apex council.

But AP sought to go ahead with the works on the project ignoring the directions of the Jal Shakti Ministry. He reiterated that the implementation of the projects based on surplus waters including Veligonda would be detrimental to the interests of Telangana State projects especially those serving the acute drought-prone areas and the fluoride-affected regions apart from the settled ayacut of the Nagarjuna Sagar project. It would also have a bearing on meeting the drinking water needs of Hyderabad city.

The Hindu- 20- October-2023

We will oppose construction of SYL canal, says Punjab BJP

As the issue of the construction of the Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) canal – the focal point of a water-sharing dispute between Haryana and Punjab – continues to be at the centre stage of Punjab's politics, the BJP's State unit on Friday said it would oppose and make every sacrifice to prevent construction of the canal or any new water channel for carrying Punjab's waters to non-riparian States. The BJP accused the ruling Aam Aadmi Party government of betraying the people of Punjab on the SYL issue. The party urged Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann to protect the vital interest of the State.

The Tribune- 20- October-2023

Central team visits Pandoh to probe flooding charge

DIPENDER MANTA

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

MANDI, OCTOBER 19

A team from the Central Water Commission visited Pandoh dam in Mandi district of Himachal to ascertain the veracity of the allegations that excess release of water from the reservoir during the monsoon led to flooding in

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Central team visits Pandoh to probe...

areas downstream. Led by the water commission's former chairman RK Gupta, the team investigated in detail whether the warning system to alert the people living downstream was functioning properly when the dam's spillway gates were opened, said sources. It also investigated the circumstances under which the water was released and how much damage was caused to public and private property. The team members also met the higher officials of the Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB), which manages the Pandoh dam.

The team included former Central Water Commission Director Harkesh Kumar, Director of Hydrology Govardhan Prasad, NDSA's Chandigarh region Director

RPS Verma and the Director of Central Hydroelectric Project and Investigation Division, Balwant Kumar.

During the inspection, Mandi Additional District Magistrate Madan Kumar and officials of the state's Energy Department and the BBMB were also present.

Following torrential rain, particularly in July and August, water was released from various dams in view of excess inflow. As areas downstream were flooded and massive damage was caused to public and private property near the banks of the Beas, the affected people put the onus on dam authorities. The central team is, thus, on a tour to inspect Pong, Parbati-3, Malana-2 and Pandoh dams in Himachal.

Himalayas heading towards a point beyond redemption



COL KS DHAMI (RETD)
MOUNTAINEER & PARACHUTE
REGIMENT VETERAN

RARELY has nature hit back with such devastating power as it has done in recent months in Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Sikkim, exposing the failure of the Central and state governments and aided organisations. The serious threat from heavy rain, cloudbursts, bursting of glacial lakes and water run-off due to deforestation has been ignored. People, too, are to blame for encroaching upon floodplains of rivers and lakes and raising buildings in low-lying areas.

All, however, is not lost due to the melting of glaciers — yearly rain and snow in the catchments areas will keep the rivers flowing. The danger is from glacial lake bursts, cloudbursts and the run-off due to reckless degradation of Himalayan forests and pastures — the storehouse of water — which for ages have kept the rivers flowing even when there is no rain. The source of the Indus, the Himalayas' oldest

river, is not a glacier but moss-covered earth named 'Senge Khabab' (lion's mouth) by the Tibetans.

In the entire Himalayas, Bhutan stands out as the country where forests are being preserved and potentially dangerous glacial lakes identified for taking protective and preventive measures.

Across the Himalayas, glaciers are not just retreating but also shrinking and cracking. Despite its limited resources, Nepal has also been proactive. A decade ago, Nepal had a network of 49 weather monitoring stations at selected locations. More have come up to collect ground-based data on glaciers/glacial lakes. Bhutan has set up a highly motivated, trained labour force for inaccessible places to empty glacial lakes through controlled bursting and help preserve some for their scenic beauty through stabilising works.

Precipitation in the Himalayas is in the form of rain and snow. With global warming, the snowline has gone higher. At some altitudes, where once it snowed, it rains now — nothing melts snow and ice more than rain. Trans-Himalayan regions, which were considered to be in the 'rain shadow', now have been infiltrated by monsoon rain. The combined effect of rain at higher heights, the rise in the ablation limit due to increase in



NATURE'S FURY: Sikkim is bearing the brunt of a glacial lake outburst. **PH**

temperatures and reduction of the accumulation zones is a major cause of fast-retreating/disappearing glaciers, ice caps and snow beds/shelves.

To get a true and broad view of the state of the Himalayan snow cover, glaciers and glacial lakes, there is a need for high-resolution remote-sensing satellite system, drones, ground-based monitoring stations and most importantly, ground observations.

Bhutan, which is highly prone to the formation of glacial lakes, has taken steps since 1994, when a glacier lake burst caused a heavy loss of life and massive damage to villages, roads, bridges and power projects. In 1998, Bhutan, with its labour force armed with digging tools, reduced

the water level of the high-altitude Raphstreng Tso glacial lake when it had reached the danger mark.

The surveillance and warning systems in Bhutan and Nepal consist of electronic sensors, transmitters, sirens and personnel deployed with wireless sets and satellite phones. A glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) can result in catastrophic consequences if timely steps are not taken, as witnessed across the Indian Himalayas this year.

A practical warning system, without modern gadgets, saved a town over 300 years ago. On November 10, 1762, an earthquake caused a shoulder of a mountain to fall into the Sutlej upstream of Seoni (Himachal Pradesh), where the river flows

through a narrow gorge. The dammed water rose to 400ft above the normal flow level and when it burst, a huge wave washed away the lower half of Bilaspur town. However, due to an efficient warning system based on firing matchlocks and beating drums, no lives were lost (sound travels far in the silence of the mountains).

In the Indian Himalayas, arguably the most destructive incident has been the bursting of a glacial lake on the Sutlej in Tibet. On the intervening night of July 31 and August 1, 2000, a massive wall of water — a Himalayan tsunami — 40-70ft high at the highest flow level, thundered along the Sutlej river from Tibet across the Great Himalayas. Overnight, it washed away roads, bridges, habitations and commercial establishments and threatened the Nathpa Jhakri Hydel Project.

The bursting of the Parechu lake formed on the Parechu river on the Chinese side of the border in Spiti in June 2005 is another example of the devastation GLOF can cause in the absence of reliable surveillance and warning systems and disaster management.

Lack of accurate data on water flows in the Himalayas in all seasons is a major cause of failure in terms of disaster management. It is equally important in the Indo-Gangetic plain, where

too reliable data is missing. For years, plans to interlink rivers at the national level have been discussed at the highest levels, but with no positive outcome.

In February 2012, based on water flow data and project details provided by the chairman of the Standing Committee on Water Resources, the Supreme Court directed the Union of India to "forthwith constitute a committee for the interlinking of rivers". Fully aware of the non-feasibility of this project, I wrote to the CJI and other members of the Bench: "Interlinking rivers at the national level with channels cutting across the grain of the country and the natural flow of water, that too against the muddied monsoon sea of water, will not only be an ecological disaster but a financial quagmire."

Rethinking took place and on April 1, 2012, the chairman described the data on river flows as 'half-baked' and asked the Water Resources Ministry to provide complete data on major river flows. Eleven years on, we still have no accurate data. Its lack has been a major cause of the recent calamities in the Indian Himalayas. Basically, unlike Bhutan, there is no spirit or motivation to perform. There is no accountability nor anyone to ensure it as the chair-borne advisers are too afraid to go out in the field.

Lack of accurate data on water flows in the Himalayas is a major cause of failure in terms of disaster management.

Millennium Post- 20- October-2023

Monsoon withdraws from India, four days after normal date

India records 'below-average' cumulative rainfall

MPOST BUREAU

NEW DELHI: The Southwest Monsoon withdrew completely from India on Thursday, four days after the normal date of October 15, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

It had started withdrawing from the country on September 25, eight days after the normal date.

Typically, the Southwest Monsoon makes its onset over Kerala by June 1 and covers the entire country by July 8. It starts retreating from northwest India around September 17, withdrawing entirely by October 15.

"The Southwest Monsoon has withdrawn today, October 19, from the remaining parts of the country," the IMD said in a statement.

With the setting in of easterly/northeasterly winds over southern peninsular India, the Northeast Monsoon rainfall activity is likely to commence over the region in the next three days, it said.

However, the initial phase of the Northeast Monsoon in general is likely to be weak, it added.



India recorded "below-average" cumulative rainfall — 820 mm compared to the long-period average (LPA) of 868.6 mm — in the four-month (June-September) monsoon season amid strengthening El Nino conditions.

The IMD said positive factors, primarily the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) and the Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO), mitigated some of the deficiency caused by El Nino conditions and gave "near normal" precipitation.

Before 2023, India recorded "normal" and "above-normal" rainfall in the monsoon season for four years on the trot.

Rainfall between 96 per cent and 104 per cent of the LPA is considered normal.

El Nino conditions — warming of waters in the Pacific Ocean near South America **Continued on P4**

are associated with weaker monsoon winds and drier conditions in India.

The IOD is defined by the difference in the sea surface temperatures between the western parts of the Indian Ocean near Africa and the eastern parts of the ocean near Indonesia.

The MJO is a large-scale atmospheric disturbance originating in tropical Africa and travelling eastward, typically lasting 30 to 60 days. It is known for increasing convection in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea.

The Morning Standard- 20- October-2023

Yamuna cleaning projects facing delays, NGT told

Project to restore floodplains delayed by months, says DPCC report

AGENCIES @ New Delhi

SEVERAL major projects aimed at cleaning the Yamuna in Delhi are reported to be running behind schedule, says a recent Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) report.

The report, submitted to the National Green Tribunal (NGT), highlights significant delays in projects undertaken by the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) and the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) to reduce pollution in the river.

The projects include the construction of new sewage treatment plants (STPs), rehabilitation of existing ones, trapping of drains, laying sewer lines in unauthorised colonies, desilting of trunk sewers and utilisation of treated wastewater. These initiatives are part of an NGT panel's "Action Plan to Rejuvenate Yamuna".

According to the DPCC report, the DDA project to restore the Yamuna floodplains, divided into several sections, has been delayed by 6-12 months.

The report reveals that the construction of a new 124 million gallons per day STP in Okhla has been delayed by nine months and it is now expected to be completed by March next year. Similarly, the construc-



tion of a 7 MGD STP in Sonia Vihar has been delayed by four months, with a new completion target set for the end of 2023.

The 22-kilometre stretch of the Yamuna between Wazirabad and Okhla, less than 2% of the river's total length, accounts for approximately 75% of its pollution load. High levels of pollution in the river are attributed to untreated wastewater from unauthorised colonies and jhuggi-jhopri clusters, as well as the poor quality of treated wastewater discharged from STPs and common effluent treatment plants.

Currently, the city generates 792 MGD of sewage while the 35 STPs across the city can treat up to 667 MGD, utilising around 70% of their capacity (550

MGD). Around 242 MGD of sewage directly enters the river.

Government data indicates that only 10 out of the 35 operational STPs in the city meet the prescribed standards for wastewater (BOD and Total Suspended Solids less than 10 milligrams per litre), with the capacity to treat 150 million gallons of waste water per day.

The DJB is in the process of upgrading and rehabilitating existing STPs to meet the prescribed norms and reduce the pollution load in the Yamuna.

While the DJB initially pledged to increase the sewage treatment capacity to 814 MGD by December this year, the deadline has been extended to June 2024, the DPCC report submitted to the NGT showed.