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The Hindu Business Line - 09- February-2024

# Reservoir storage dips below 50% of capacity

**PRECARIOUS SITUATION.** Water level slips for 18<sup>th</sup> week in a row as 48% of storages are not even half full

**Subramani Ra Mancombu**  
Chennai

The storage in the major 150 Indian reservoirs dropped below 50 per cent of the capacity with the water level dropping for the 18th week in a row, data from the Central Water Commission (CWC) showed on Thursday.

According to CWC's weekly bulletin on live storage status of the 150 reservoirs, the storage was 87.9 billion cubic metres (BCM), which is 49 per cent of the 178.784 BCM capacity.

The level was 81 per cent in the same period a year ago and the last 10 year's average is 94 per cent. More disconcertingly, the storage in the northern region slipped to 45 per cent of the capacity, while it continues to be below 35 per cent in the southern region.

## JUST 3 ARE FULL

The water level in 48 per cent or 72 reservoirs of the 150 have a storage less than 50 per cent of capacity. In another 23, the storage is between 51 and 60



cent, while only three – all in the eastern region – are filled to capacity.

One of the reasons for the sharp drop in the reservoirs' level is that since January 1, 65 per cent of the 711 districts from where the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has received data received either deficient, large deficient or no rainfall.

This is apart from 26 per cent of the country reeling under drought conditions till December 2023. The setting in of the El Nino warm ocean water phenomenon has affected Indian weather, particularly leading to lack of rainfall.

Across the country, 12 States continue to have less than normal storage with Andhra Pradesh topping with water level being 56 per cent lower. Bihar was next with a 53 per cent lower level and Karnataka (-31 per cent).

In the southern region, 24 of the 42 reservoirs have a level that is less than 50 per cent with the storage in Tamil Nadu being 15 per cent below normal. The level this week was 17.377 BCM or 33 per cent (34 per cent last week) of the 53.334 BCM capacity.

In the northern region, eight of the 10 have a level lower than 50 per cent of the

## States with lower than normal storage\*

States	Departure from normal (in %)
Punjab	-29
Rajasthan	-5
Odisha	-5
West Bengal	-6
Nagaland	-17
Bihar	-53
Maharashtra	-12
Uttar Pradesh	-27
Chhattisgarh	-20
Andhra Pradesh	-56
Karnataka	-31
Tamil Nadu	-15

Source: Central Water Commission  
\*As of February 8

capacity. Only one has a storage higher than 80 per cent. In Punjab, the storage is lower than normal by 29 per cent (-31 per cent).

The level in the region was 8.789 BCM which is 45 per cent (46.49 per cent) of total 19.663 BCM capacity.

In the central region, the storage was 57 per cent (59 per cent) of the 48.227 BCM capacity at 27.358 BCM. The level

in Uttar Pradesh was 27 per cent below normal and in Chhattisgarh 20 per cent lower. Of the 26 reservoirs, the water in 15 was lower than 50 per cent of the capacity.

## IMD FORECAST

In the 49 reservoirs in the western region, the storage was 60 per cent (67 per cent) of the 37.130 BCM capacity at 22.266 BCM. Maharashtra had a 12 per cent lower storage, while storage in 15 of the reservoirs was 50 per cent below capacity.

Nearly treble the storage than normal in Assam is behind the eastern region showing better water level. The level in the 23 reservoirs was 59 per cent (61 per cent) of 20.430 BCM at 12.110 BCM. Odisha, Bengal and Nagaland had a lower storage.

The storage will likely decrease next week with the IMD forecasting a warmer than normal temperature this month. The national weather agency has forecast light rainfall in some parts of the country such as central India, Bengal and the southern peninsula.

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**Hindustan Times - 09- February-2024**

## **Water pollution bill passed in Lok Sabha**

**NEW DELHI:** The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Amendment Bill, 2024 was passed in Lok Sabha on Thursday. The bill which decriminalises almost all penal provisions in the earlier 1974 law, was passed in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday. The modified law will provide an impetus to industries and make progress towards environmental protection at the same time, Union environment minister Bhupender Yadav said while tabling the bill in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday. "One of the major provisions is decriminalising all penal provisions..." the Union environment minister said.

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Millennium Post - 09- February-2024

# Himachal: Lahaul Spiti's eco-fragile area Koksar under NGT lens

*Koksar experiences below-freezing temperatures for most parts of the year*

**ASHWANI SHARMA**

**SHIMLA:** National Green Tribunal (NGT) has issued notice to the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and also district administration over consistent environmental degradation of Koksar, one of the vibrant and eco-sensitive areas in Lahaul-Spiti, a high altitude tribal district in Himachal Pradesh.

Koksar, which for a long time has served as base camp and halting area for the tourists/hikers and local bound for Leh and Keylong across 13,059 feet Rohtang Pass, has been facing neglect and mismanagement due to waste dumping and haphazard growth.

In a petition filed by Akash Vashishtha, advocate and counsel for the petitioner, it has been alleged that because of the littering and waste dumping, mainly by the tourists, the place has become highly polluted and its impact on the environment could be serious, if goes unchecked.

"The waste dumped by the visitors/tourists at Koksar is the biggest cause of pollution. The



pristine streams and water channels therein are also bearing the brunt of the pollution and this can cause an irreparable harm to the extremely fragile ecology of the Koksar area," he informed the NGT. Koksar, for most parts of the year, experiences below-freezing temperatures, much like Siachen, is extremely rich in Alpine biodiversity.

Intervening in the matter, the National Green Tribunal, on Wednesday, sought responses from the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change and the Himachal Pradesh government, while also issuing notices to the CPCB, the Himachal Pradesh Department of Environment, the Himachal Pradesh Pollution

Control Board, the Deputy Commissioner, Lahaul & Spiti and the Village Panchayat, Koksar.

A Bench of Chairperson Justice Prakash Shrivastava and Expert Member A Senthil Vel took note of the massive environmental violations arising out of the non-compliance of the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016 in Koksar. However, after the commissioning of the Rohtang Tunnel, one of the world's longest tunnels at a height of 10,000 ft, Koksar has hardly received much attention from the administration and government agencies.

The Petition filed by 'Friends', an environmental organisation contended that despite being an extremely eco-sensitive region,

Koksar has been mindlessly converted into a tourist point, over the years, witnessing massive, uncontrolled volume of tourists, every single day. Almost every visitor and tourist visiting Manali heads to Koksar, situated hardly 42 km therefrom. The tourists are being taken and allowed entry beyond the Taxi Stand to Koksar without any checks.

As a consequence, tourists carry eatables in non-biodegradable materials, the petition averred, adding that the littering and waste dumping caused by visitors/tourists to Koksar is polluting the pristine streams and water channels therein and is causing irreparable harm to the extremely fragile ecology of the Koksar area. The said illegal dumping of the wastes is violation of the directions passed by the Supreme Court. The illegal dumping, non-disposal, non-segregation and non-processing of the wastes persists in Koksar, notwithstanding the directions passed by NGT earlier in 2018.

The case will be listed next on April 3, 2024.



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Telangana Today - 09- February-2024

# Navigating the waters of TS and AP dispute

**H**anding over management of water sector projects including other associated structures on Krishna river to the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) has resurfaced as a hot topic these days in Telangana.

It may be recalled that in accordance with the provisions of the Andhra Pradesh State Reorganisation Act 2014, the Government of India had notified (SO 2042 E dated July 15, 2021) the jurisdiction of KRMB. Almost all - important interstate projects on Krishna river falling in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana are to be managed by the KRMB. A similar mechanism is also in place for Godavari river.

Both Krishna and Godavari rivers face this peculiar situation to be managed by the respective river management boards. However, this problem is acute in case of Krishna river as one flank each of Srisailem and Nagarjuna Sagar projects fall in each State.

There are several other intricate issues (such as working of Pothireddy Padu regulator, ongoing and new lift irrigation schemes, and power generation from these projects) in case of Krishna river that further complicate the situation. We will, therefore, for the time being focus on Krishna projects. However sooner than later, Godavari projects will also need attention.

After issue of gazette notification, Andhra Pradesh had agreed to handover such projects to KRMB but Telangana has refused, inter alia, citing pending river water allocation between the two states.

What are the issues and their implications to hand over the notified projects to KRMB?

The genesis of the problem could be traced back to historic reasons including lack of a complete list of



projects, strict provisions for taking up new projects, and uncertainty about completion of ongoing projects by either state in the relevant provisions in the Andhra Pradesh State Reorganisation Act, 2014.

The Act also overlooked proper sequencing of actions especially, delineating the share between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The proposed institutional structure of the boards is inadequate and needs further strengthening to cope up with the quantum of work.

As there were constraints at the time of drafting and passing the Bill in 2014, such short comings were inevitable. The matter of concern is lack of follow up action subsequently on various contentious issues in consultation with all stakeholders. It is also a fact that the time and again, efforts had been made by organising two meetings of the Apex Committee making some progress but the core issues remained unresolved. As far as sharing of waters between Telangana and AP, an amicable solution can, through constructive and sustained dialogues, still be found within the ambit of the Act.

It is high time for different parties to take a united stand safeguarding interests of their States. In order to protect riparian rights and retaining operational flexibility for both States, it is important to have a clear-cut consensus and if possible, a long-term agreement, across the board.

Society will be greatly benefited by having a road map to take an appropriate stand based on relevant facts. Sagacity of concerned stakeholders demands a broad-based discussion generating more light than heat to safeguard interests of the states in sharing of Krishna waters.

In order to prevent any issue to snow ball into a water dispute, first step is to delineate the share of Water between the two states. Unfortunately, this was ignored and it took almost nine years for the Ministry of Jalshakti to refer this matter to a Tribunal. Urgency of matter needs to be emphasised to the Tribunal for adjudication in a time bound manner.

Proper allocation has to be made for normal, surplus and deficit years and a robust mechanism has to be in place to enforce utilisation of water as per the Allocated share by each riparian state. Ad hoc sharing of water based on predicted availability and other factors could only be a temporary arrangement. The functioning of river management boards during past ten years have not instilled enough confidence in the partner states to arrive at an optimum solution.

In nutshell, a serious consultation within the state and between the states is required to resolve sharing of inter state River waters and management of interstate projects.

— **Shailendra Joshi**  
(Retd IAS)



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Deccan Chronicle - 09- February-2024

# BRS ignored L&T plea for Medigadda O&M

## Original deed didn't specify O&M terms, firm said

**BALU PULIPAKA | DC**  
HYDERABAD, FEB. 8

The sinking of piers of Block 7 of the Medigadda barrage on October 21, 2023, raised serious questions on the maintenance of the barrage, which the then BRS government said was the responsibility of the contractor, Larsen & Toubro, who built the structure.

As reported in these columns earlier, the contract entered into with L&T by the irrigation department for the barrage included a brief that the company would have the responsibility for the operation and maintenance (O&M) for five years from the date of its completion.

The contract also placed the responsibility for any defect liability on the construction company for the first two years, with the balance of three years devoted to the operation and maintenance.

Although the contract includes this aspect, it is learnt that L&T had been contending with the irrigation depart-



A file photograph of the Medigadda barrage.

ment since May 2023 that a separate O&M contract was required as its scope in the original contract was not defined.

"It is typical for any irrigation project to have an O&M contract but, in this case, the irrigation department did not initiate any steps in this direction as the scope of work is different. It is not known why the department stayed silent," a source familiar with the goings-on between the company and the department on this matter said.

Incidentally, the irrigation department is learnt to have entered into O&M contracts with Navayuga

Engineering Company Ltd, which built the Sundilla barrage, and Afcons Infrastructure, which built the Annaram barrage only in July of 2023.

All three barrages are key to the Kaleshwaram lift irrigation scheme, but the one at Medigadda is the acknowledged lynchpin.

While the former BRS government was quick to claim that O&M for Medigadda was with L&T at the time of the barrage's partial collapse, what the irrigation department — which was then headed by K. Chandrashekar Rao who held the irrigation portfolio from 2019 in his second term in office as Chief

Minister — never mentioned was that the company had written to the department twice, before Medigadda's collapse, asking for conclusion of the O&M contract.

It is learnt that the company wrote to the irrigation department in May and again in June 2023, asking for formally concluding the O&M contract. But as was with other issues at Medigadda with respect to reports of structural damage since 2019, there was no movement from the irrigation department, sources said.

Asked if the O&M responsibility despite being mentioned in the original overall contract necessitated a separate contract, an irrigation engineer well-versed with the goings-on at the three Kaleshwaram barrages said if the irrigation department felt no additional contract was required for Medigadda, then the same logic should have been extended to Sundilla and Annaram barrages.



Amar Ujala - 09- February-2024

# जिंदगी बदलता जल जीवन मिशन

**भारत** आज जल क्षेत्र में सर्वाधिक निवेश और व्यापक लक्ष्यों के साथ कार्य करने वाला दुनिया का शीर्ष देश है। इस लिहाज से सबसे अहम है जल जीवन मिशन (जेजेएम) की सफलता। प्रधानमंत्री नरेन्द्र मोदी ने कहा भी है कि जल जीवन मिशन का विजन लोगों तक पानी पहुंचाने का तो है ही, साथ ही यह विकेंद्रीकरण का भी एक बहुत बड़ा माध्यम है। यह ग्राम-संचालित और नारी शक्ति-संचालित है। इसका मुख्य आधार जन आंदोलन और जन भागीदारी है। जेजेएम आज भारत की विकास नीति और दृष्टि की सफलता की जमीनी गवाही दे रहा है। 14 करोड़ से ज्यादा ग्रामीण परिवारों तक पहुंच रहा शुद्ध जल यह बताता है कि हम सिर्फ सरपट विकास की ओर नहीं भाग रहे, बल्कि आम लोगों के जीवन में बुनियादी बदलाव के संकल्प के साथ आगे बढ़ रहे हैं। इससे उत्तराखंड के व्याारकुली भट्टा गांव से पलायन रुक गया है। झारखंड के आदिवासी गांव कुसुमडीह में मानव-पशु संघर्ष में कमी आई है तो महाराष्ट्र के चांदपुर गांव की गलियों में शहनाई की आवाजें फिर से गूंजने लगी हैं। इन तीन गांवों में ही नहीं, बल्कि ऐसे हजारों गांवों में जल जीवन मिशन से आया परिवर्तन आज साफ दिखता है। यह मिशन न केवल संयुक्त राष्ट्र के सतत विकास लक्ष्यों की प्राप्ति में भी वरदान साबित हो रहा है, बल्कि महिला सशक्तीकरण और ग्रामीणों की जिंदगी में सकारात्मक बदलाव भी ला रहा है।

जल जीवन मिशन ने 73.98 प्रतिशत ग्रामीण घरों में नल से जल की उपलब्धता सुनिश्चित कर ली है। यह बड़ी बात है कि 14 करोड़ से अधिक ग्रामीण घरों को नल से जल का कनेक्शन दिया जा चुका है। अगस्त 2019 में ऐसे घरों की संख्या महज 3.23 करोड़ थी। प्रधानमंत्री मोदी ने वर्ष 2019 में लाल किले की प्राचीर से इस योजना की घोषणा की थी। इस मिशन के तहत ग्रामीण जनता के जीवन स्तर में गुणात्मक सुधार की दिशा और दशा निर्धारित की गई, जो आजादी के 75 साल बाद भी नल से जल सरीखी बुनियादी सुविधाओं से भी वंचित थी। देश के प्रत्येक ग्रामीण परिवार को प्रतिदिन शुद्ध जल आपूर्ति सुनिश्चित कराने के लक्ष्य के साथ जल जीवन मिशन की यात्रा शुरू हुई थी। सरकार यह सुनिश्चित करना चाहती थी कि देश के किसी भी नागरिक को जल आपूर्ति



गजेंद्र सिंह शेखावत



अतीत की बात बनती पानी की कमी • फाइल

से वंचित न रहना पड़े। भारत की विशालता और भौगोलिक विविधता के लिहाज से यह एक बड़ी चुनौती थी। सरकार ने समुदायों, भागीदारों और गैर सरकारी संगठनों को एक साथ लाकर अल्पकालिक और दीर्घकालिक योजना तैयार की। एक ही व्यवस्था सभी क्षेत्रों में लागू नहीं की जा सकती थी। उत्तर के पहाड़ी क्षेत्रों में पानी जमने की समस्या थी तो रेंगिस्तानी और सूखाग्रस्त क्षेत्रों में पेयजल स्रोतों की कमी थी। कहीं ग्रामीण बस्तियां दूर-दूर थीं तो कुछ जगहों पर प्रदूषण की बड़ी समस्या थी। इसलिए 'कोई भी पीछे न हूटे' की थीम के साथ जल जीवन मिशन ने सभी तरह की चुनौतियों से निपटते हुए अपनी राह बनाई। पहाड़ी और ठंडे क्षेत्रों में इंसुलेटेड पाइप का उपयोग किया गया। जिन बस्तियों में पानी की गुणवत्ता से संबंधित शिकायतें थीं, वहां के लिए मल्टी-विलेज योजना बनाई गई। साथ ही पीने और खाना पकाने के लिए सामुदायिक जल शोधन संयंत्र जैसे अल्पकालिक उपाय भी किए गए। ये उपाय उपयोगी सिद्ध हुए।

जल जीवन मिशन का प्रभाव केवल जल उपलब्धता तक सीमित नहीं है। इसमें ग्रामीण समुदायों की सुरक्षा, स्वास्थ्य और पर्यावरण के प्रति व्यापक प्रतिबद्धता भी शामिल है। यह जहां

**जल जीवन मिशन स्वास्थ्य जोखिमों को घटाने के साथ ही लोगों के जीवन स्तर में सुधार भी ला रहा है**

स्वास्थ्य जोखिमों को कम कर रहा है, वहीं लोगों के जीवन स्तर में सुधार भी ला रहा है। नोबेल पुरस्कार विजेता डा. माइकल क्रैमर ने कहा है कि सुरक्षित पानी उपलब्ध कराने से नवजात मृत्यु दर में 30 प्रतिशत तक की कमी आ सकती है। विश्व स्वास्थ्य संगठन ने कहा है कि हर घर जल की आपूर्ति सुनिश्चित होने से डायरिया से होने वाली चार लाख मौतों को कम किया जा सकता है। जेजेएम से 8.37 लाख करोड़ रुपये तक की आर्थिक बचत का आकलन भी किया गया है। जेजेएम से हर दिन पानी की व्यवस्था करने में लगने वाले समय में छह करोड़ घंटे से भी अधिक की बचत संभव है। इससे महिलाओं के जीवन पर सकारात्मक असर पड़ेगा, क्योंकि आम तौर पर महिलाएं ही पानी की व्यवस्था करती हैं।

जेजेएम के तहत ग्रामीण इलाकों में 'नल जल मित्र' पहल भी शुरू की गई है, ताकि ग्रामीण आबादी को पंप संचालन और जल प्रबंधन से संबंधित कार्यों में कुशल बनाया जाए। इसके तहत अब तक 5.14 लाख से अधिक ग्राम जल एवं स्वच्छता समितियां/पानी समितियां गठित हो चुकी हैं। 5.12 लाख विलेज एक्शन प्लान तैयार कर लिए गए हैं। फील्ड टेस्टिंग किट का उपयोग कर पानी के नमूनों की जांच करने के लिए 23.68 लाख महिलाओं को प्रशिक्षित किया गया है। अपने शुरुआती चरण में इससे औसतन 59.93 लाख लोगों को प्रतिवर्ष प्रत्यक्ष और 2.22 करोड़ लोगों को अप्रत्यक्ष रोजगार मिला। कार्यान्वयन और रख-रखाव चरण के दौरान इस मिशन से अतिरिक्त 11.18 लाख लोगों को प्रत्यक्ष तौर पर प्रतिवर्ष रोजगार मिला। इतनी बड़ी संख्या में लोगों को रोजगार मिलने से समाज आत्मनिर्भर हुआ और ग्रामीण विकास को नए पंख लगे। देश में पानी की स्वच्छता जांचने के लिए आज 2,118 लैब काम कर रही हैं। मामूली दरों पर पानी के नमूनों की जांच की जा रही है, ताकि हर परिवार को स्वच्छ जल मुहैया कराया जा सके। सरकार का लक्ष्य एक ऐसे भारत का निर्माण है, जहां सभी के लिए स्वच्छ जल उपलब्ध हो, पानी की कमी अतीत की बात हो जाए और किसी ग्रामीण परिवार को जीवन के इस अमृत के लिए मशक्कत न करनी पड़े।

(लेखक केंद्रीय जल शक्ति मंत्री हैं)

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Amar Ujala - 09- February-2024

# नमामि गंगे की 457 में से 280 परियोजनाएं पूरी

नई दिल्ली। नमामि गंगे कार्यक्रम के तहत 31 दिसंबर तक 38 लाख 438 हजार करोड़ रुपये की अनुमानित लागत वाली कुल 457 परियोजनाओं में से 280 परियोजनाएं चालू हो चुकी हैं। जल शक्ति राज्य मंत्री बिश्वेश्वर टुंडू ने एक लिखित उत्तर में लोकसभा को बताया कि अधिकांश परियोजनाएं सीवेज निर्माण से संबंधित हैं। ब्यूरो