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Telangana angry as Andhra withdraws 4tmc Sagar water

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Andhra Pradesh has withdrawn an additional 4 tmc ft of water — enough to fill 8 lakh 5,000-litre tankers — from the tail pond of the Nagarjunasagar dam, leaving irrigation and power sector officials flabbergasted and the Telangana state government seething in anger. The pond is owned by the TS Genco but is located in AP.

“The 4 TMC could have been pumped back into the reservoir by TSGenco and could have been used to augment supply of drinking water in Telangana state, including Hyderabad,” a TS irrigation department official said.

The siphoning off of the water happened on the night of April 13, and was discovered by TS Genco officials only two days later. Matters began coming to a head on Friday once the report trickled up to the government.

A furious TS government has issued a show-cause notice to TSGenco's hydel power wing chief, seeking an explanation on how AP drew the water. The irrigation department is learnt to have shot off a letter to the Krishna River Management Board complaining about the incident.

The KRMB had, just hours earlier, on April 12, had sanctioned drawal of 5.5 tmc ft of water by AP to meet its drinking water needs. Of this, 2.5 tmc ft was from a previous allocation that AP had not used. After the TS government agreed, the KRMB okayed an additional 3 tmc ft of water use by Andhra Pradesh against its demand of 9 tmc ft.

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THE NEW CENTRE OF CONTROVERSY

● The Nagarjunasagar tail pond can hold 7 tmc ft of water, or seven times the capacity of the Hussainsagar.

● The pond is a part of the hydel power generating system including reverse pumping.

● Water from pond is pumped back into the Nagarjunasagar reservoir during off-peak hours. When demand peaks, water is released through the hydel plant to generate electricity.

● It is called the tail pond because it is the last stop for Nagarjuna-sagar water in Telangana.

● Water then flows into Andhra Pradesh, where AP has a small reservoir and a 50 MW hydel station.

● From the tail pond, water reaches the Prakasam Barrage in Vijayawada.

● The tail pond is owned by Telangana state's Genco but is located at Satrasala in Guntur district of AP.

THE POLITICS

● On the eve of the November 30, 2023, TS Assembly elections, the AP police took control of the operations of the Nagarjunasagar dam.

● The then K. Chandrashekar Rao government did not initiate any action.

● The Centre deployed the CRPF on the dam to maintain peace.

● The two states subsequently decided to leave the release of water from the dam to the KRMB.

● It was also during the BRS government rule that the AP government went ahead with the Pothireddypadu head regulator upstream of the Srisailem reservoir, from where it has been drawing water to supply to Rayalaseema.

● The Congress has alleged that Rao was in cahoots with AP Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and deliberately allowed the neighbouring state to have its way.

Its construction began in 2006 and completed at a cost of **₹858 cr.**