

I/170479/2024

The Mint– 26 April-2024

Water level in major reservoirs down to 30% of storage capacity

Puja Das

puja.das@livemint.com

NEW DELHI

The water level in India's 150 major reservoirs fell to 30% of their total storage capacity, with eastern and southern India seeing levels depleting more rapidly due to a severe heatwave.

While 26 reservoirs have 50% of normal water storage capacity, the level in reservoirs of eastern and southern regions has dropped to as low as 39% and 17%, respectively, as per the bulletin released by the Central Water Commission (CWC) on Thursday.

Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka have been facing significant shortfalls in water storage with Bengaluru in particular grappling with a severe water crises.

The depleting water level could be attributed to lower rainfall and the scorching summer caused by the El Nino weather phenomenon, (which finally ended on 16 April as per the Australian Bureau of Meteorology), resulting in insufficient rainfall in India, and leading to water scarcity in



As many as 26 reservoirs have half their storage. CCAFS/FLICKR

some regions, besides droughts and prolonged dry periods across Asia.

As many as 18 states have witnessed rain deficiency or no rainfall since March. The country has received 15% below-normal rainfall since March, as per the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

According to the CWC, the water level this week in these reservoirs was 53.358 billion cubic metres (BCM), 17.6% lower than the same period last year when it was 64.775 BCM and nearly 4% lower than the average of last 10 years

(55.523 BCM).

The live storage available in 150 reservoirs as of Thursday was 82% of the storage a year ago and 96% of storage of average of the past 10 years.

The weather bureau last month warned that most regions of the country will witness above-normal temperature during April-June. This prediction, coupled with drying water reservoirs, has prompted agriculture economists to warn of an adverse impact on the current rabi crop, especially in southern regions, as well as summer crops in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

Temperatures in eastern and southern India have been hovering at 42.2 -43.7 , according to the weather bureau. Severe heatwave is likely to prevail over East and South Peninsular India until Monday. However, northwest India is expected to get relief from with a likely fresh spell of rainfall accompanied by thunderstorms or lightning and gusty winds between Friday and Sunday.

I/170479/2024

Telangana Today— 26 April-2024

Telangana clears stand on Godavari diversion

Suggests Sammakka project should be source of water drawl instead of Inchampalli project

STATE BUREAU
Hyderabad

The transfer of Godavari water to the Cauvery basin was one of the key election issues in Tamil Nadu which went to polls in the first phase of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections this time. The same is likely to garner significant attention in Telangana too in the run-up to the Parliamentary polls that are due in the fourth phase. Irrespective of the party in power, the State remained steadfast in safeguarding its water interests.

As for Tamil Nadu, it is closely monitoring the moves afoot for the implementation of the project. It is of immense benefit to its water-starved districts in the Cauvery basin. Telangana experts emphasise that their concurrence would be hard to obtain in the absence of consensus among the stakeholder States.

As the debate gets intensified, the National Water Development Agency (NWDA) is finding it tough to maintain the delicate balance between the regional interests and river water entitlement of riparian States. The onus would be mainly on the task force spearheading the implementation of the project for the interlinking of Godavari-Krishna-Penna-Cauvery.

State requests National Water Development Agency to carry out a detailed hydrological simulation study

Telangana had already made its stand clear on the project, said a senior official in the Irrigation Department. It had also requested NWDA to carry out a detailed hydrological simulation study.

The NWDA had only called for suggestions from the State. It has not set any deadline for its response. But the Irrigation Secretary responded to it and vindicated the State's stand on the issue in his communication addressed to the agency. Now the Task Force is to come up with its analysis and studies, the official said.

It has been proposed to transfer 148 TMC, mainly from the unutilised share of Chhattisgarh State. Telangana has suggested that the Sammakka project should be the source of water drawl for the river linking scheme instead of going in for construction of the Inchampalli project, which is located some 12 km upstream, as it involved operational diffi-

culties in routing the flood. Pending such a study, Telangana would not be able to respond positively and it would reserve its stand with regard to the source of drawl, officials said. Telangana requested for 50 per cent share of the water sought to be diverted. Its share of the diverted water was in fact restricted so far to 45 TMC, which meant only 27 per cent of it.

The State has vast areas that are severely drought-prone. Some 16.8 lakh acres in the erstwhile Mahabubnagar district in the Krishna basin were in need of assured water for irrigation and drinking water supply. About 12.9 lakh acres in erstwhile Nalgonda and 7.2 lakh in Ranga Reddy district were in the grip of scarcity conditions. The scheme for interlinking of rivers is expected to help irrigate only some extent of 1.9 lakh acres of new area.

It would be appropriate to take up the interlinking process only after the adjudication of the water sharing by the Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal (KWDT)-II as the tribunal is in the process of operation protocols by taking into consideration the deficit inflows into Srisailem and Nagarjuna Sagar project, officials stressed.