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Water quality improves, 4 Bengal rivers go out of central board's pollution list

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Kolkata: Four major rivers in Bengal were excluded from the Central Pollution Control Board's draft report on country's most polluted river stretches after marked improvement in water quality.

"We are happy that Kaljani, Karola, Mayurakshi and Silabati were excluded from the list of critically polluted river stretches in India. Six more river stretches are expected to be de-listed shortly," said state environment



Sudipto Das

River Silabati: Off the list now

minister Manas Bhunia.

According to the draft report, six Bengal rivers — Dwarka, Damodar, Barakar, Darakeswar, Rupnarayan,

and Teesta — featuring prominently on the list in 2018 and 2022, have now been categorized as "Priority-V", the least polluted category, and are expected to be removed from the list soon.

Bengal had 17 such polluted river stretches, with Vidyadhari being the most polluted among them. After excluding five rivers, the list has now shortened to 12. "Most significantly, the water quality of the Ganga has also shown improvement," Bhunia said.

► **Ganga water quality, P 2**

Ganga water quality has improved, says minister

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Kolkata: State environment minister Manas Bhunia said: "With the improvement in water quality, Ganga has moved from Priority III in 2018 to priority IV in 2022. If the Ganga's water quality can improve further and be removed from the list, it will be a great achievement for us."

"We carry out water sampling and quality tests at 11 stations at strategic points of the river. Periodic tests over the years revealed significant improvement in two key issues — the level of biochemical oxygen demand (BoD) and the count of fecal coliform bacteria," said Bengal Pollution Control Board chairman Kalyan Rudra.

However, the pollution level of the three river stretches in Bengal — Mahananda, Churni, and Mathabhanga — has worsened. Mahananda is now the worst polluted river in

HEALTH OF RIVERS		
The improved river stretches in Bengal		
Rivers	2018 Max BOD	2022 Max BOD
Ganga	12.2	8
Dwarka	17	5.7
Damodar	8.2	5.2
Barakar	5.7	3.1
Rupnarayan	5.8	3.7

Bengal with its degradation from Priority II to Priority I. Priority I river exceeds BOD concentration 30 mg/L. Churni is another river stretch in Bengal that degraded from Priority III to Priority II. Priority II rivers have BOD levels between 20mg/L and 30 mg/L. Mathabhanga in Bengal has worsened from priority IV to

priority III, BOD of which falls between 10mg/L and 20 mg/L.

BOD is defined as the amount of dissolved oxygen needed by an aerobic biological organism in a water body to break down the organic material present in a water sample, at a specific temperature and specific period. Higher BOD indicates more oxygen is required, which is less for oxygen-demanding species to feed on, and signifies lower water quality.

The presence of fecal coliform, on the other hand, in aquatic environments may indicate that the water is contaminated with the fecal material of humans or other animals. Fecal coliform bacteria can enter rivers through the direct discharge of waste from mammals and birds, from agricultural and storm runoff, and from human sewage. But their presence may also be the result of plant material, and pulp or paper mill effluent.

Deccan Herald- 20- February-2023

WESTERN GHATS

Don't repeat Joshimath

The govt appears determined to disregard nature's warnings and continue with reckless 'development'

B K SINGH

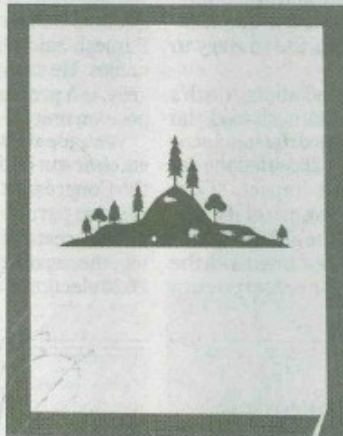
The role of power projects like Tapovan Vishnugad, which struck tragedy in Chamoli district in 2019 and killed over 200 people, has rung alarm bells against reckless exploitation of nature. It was forgotten, and the plundering of nature continued for Char Dham roads and power projects. What followed was land subsidence in Joshimath that put the lives of 25,000 people at stake. One-fourth of the buildings in this troubled town are unsafe for habitation and are being demolished. In the biting cold and sub-zero temperatures, people are being relocated. It is the responsibility of governments to ensure that towns like Joshimath are not allowed to expand when they are sitting on ancient landslide debris.

It is not just Joshimath. Cracks are reported in the houses at Karna-Prayag and Jharauta villages of Chamba district in Himachal Pradesh. Jharuta village lies below a 15 km long and 5.6 km wide tunnel of the 180 MW Bajoli-Holi hydro project. The data from the energy department of Himachal Pradesh show that there are 164 big and small dams, and another 916 are in the pipeline. Are we setting up these projects at the cost of human safety? Scientists have repeatedly warned that hydro projects exacerbate the fragility of already complex and dynamic, seismically active mountains.

The agreement reached recently at COP 15 in Montreal is to protect 30% of the planet's land and sea by 2030. Instead of moving towards the goal, we are moving away from it. Karnataka's Western Ghats have been subjected to plundering to make way for many projects like road widening, the laying of rail tracks, and power and mining.

The state has been regularly experiencing landslides, flooding, and drought in recent years. We are making no efforts to conserve nature as several big projects like the Hubballi-Ankola rail line and tunnelling through Shiradi Ghat loom large. Mindless tourism has taken its toll on nature too. Our sincerity in conservation is also lacking, and vested interests are preventing the notification of "conservation reserves" in river catchments.

A large part of Chikkamagaluru district has been a thickly forested landscape, providing major catchments for important rivers like the Tunga, Bhadra, and Hemawati, the lifelines for not only the people of Karnataka but also of the adjoining states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu. Hardly 30% of the wooded lands in the district were reserved, and more than 40% of the thickly forested areas were under the control of the revenue department, some of which were granted to individuals for growing coffee, but still bigger chunks have been encroached upon mainly by adjoining coffee growers. More than 8,000 ha of shola forests and grasslands in Mullyangiri, Baba Bu-



dangiri Hills, and Dattatreya Peetha areas have continued to remain under the control of the revenue department. This also includes the 1,200 ha "Inam lands" of Mysore Maharaja's administration. No attempts have ever been made to reserve these lands and bring them into the fold of the forest department for conservation, knowing quite well that sholas are the source of water supporting perennial streams that merge with the tributaries of important rivers; the dispensation failed to control large-scale encroachments.

Ideally, all such lands should have been reserved a hundred years ago. The resistance from people and politicians makes it difficult to do now. D V Girish and Shreedev, the activists who have supported conservation since Bhadra Sanctuary came into existence, worked with the authorities in the revenue and forest departments and brought even political figures on board to declare revenue-controlled areas, including "Inam lands," as "Conservation Reserves."

The move was supported by officers, and it was resolved by the State Board of Wildlife in 2019 to survey the land and

declare the area not included in the Reserved Forests and Bhadra Sanctuary as a "Conservation Reserve."

Despite six out of eight village panchayats in the landscape expressing no objection in writing, the activists pursuing the proposal were harassed. Revenue department officials surveyed the area and bargained for a reduction on the ground that some area would be needed for the future development of villages. They finalised nearly 6,000 ha for the "Conservation Reserve" proposal. Once the officers were transferred and politicians were not sure they could get any mileage out of it, the proposal was shelved.

Though high-altitude shola forests interspersed with grasslands are unsuitable for coffee cultivation, many shola forest areas have been illegally brought under coffee cultivation. The planters construct buildings for the homestays of the tourists as well. Several such buildings were found to have been constructed inside coffee plantations and some in encroached shola patches, generating sewage and polluting the original source of streams flowing all across the landscape and merging with tributaries and rivers. Is that what we aim for by expanding tourism? Another ill-effect of tourism is the crowding of vehicles on narrow, hilly, winding roads with several hairpin bends. I also faced traffic jams and remained stranded at several locations during my visit. The district administration has not worked out the maximum carrying capacity of these places. It must evolve a policy to stop all light vehicles at Chikkamagaluru and Lingdhal, where cars enter hilly roads and move towards Baba Budangiri and Mullyangiri hills, Dattatreya Peetha, and Kemmangundi.

People should be able to travel to and from all of these locations more easily if buses run frequently. A high fee of Rs 10,000 can be levied to those who insist on moving in their cars. If a doctor, judge, or police officer errs in judgement, the damage will be inflicted on one family or a group of persons, but if forest and revenue officers err in their judgement, they can inflict damage to the entire landscape and ecology, potentially polluting natural sources of water, disrupting ecological services, and increasing the carbon footprint. The tourism policy for such a fragile landscape should be reviewed, the mushrooming of homestays should be checked, and the plundering of nature should stop.

(The writer is a retired principal chief conservator of forests (head of Forest Force), Karnataka.)

Dainik Bhaskar- 20- February-2023

15 लाख कनेक्शन बकाया, अब 47.80 लाख का टारगेट और दिया

जयपुर | प्रदेश में जल जीवन मिशन (जेजेएम) से हर घर नल कनेक्शन की स्पीड बढ़ाने के लिए मुख्यमंत्री ने अगले साल के लिए इंजीनियरों को 47.80 लाख कनेक्शन का टारगेट दिया है, जबकि मौजूदा साल में 15 लाख से ज्यादा कनेक्शन बकाया हैं और अगले डेढ़ महीने में ये 15 लाख कनेक्शन करने हैं। जलदाय विभाग के इंजीनियरों की लापरवाही के कारण जेजेएम में राजस्थान 30वें स्थान पर है और लगातार पिछड़ रहा है। यहां कुल 1.05 करोड़ घर हैं, लेकिन अभी तक केवल 32.50 लाख घरों (31%) में नल से पानी पहुंचता है। प्रदेश के 29 जिलों में अभी तक 50% घरों तक भी नल कनेक्शन नहीं पहुंचा है। हालांकि मिशन में करीब 20 हजार करोड़ रुपए खर्च हो गए हैं। वर्तमान वित्तीय साल में 32.64 लाख घर को नल कनेक्शन देने का टारगेट रखा था, लेकिन 10 महीने बीत जाने के बावजूद भी 15 लाख से ज्यादा कनेक्शन बकाया हैं।

Hindustan- 20- February-2023

लोनी में अपैरल पार्क की 480 फैक्टरियां बंद कराईं

लोनी, संवाददाता। उत्तर प्रदेश प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड ने ट्रॉनिका सिटी अपैरल पार्क औद्योगिक क्षेत्र के सीईटीपी (कॉमन एफ्लुएंट ट्रीटमेंट प्लांट) को बंद करने के आदेश जारी किए हैं। सीईटीपी की बंदी के साथ ही अपैरल पार्क औद्योगिक क्षेत्र की करीब 480 गारमेंट फैक्टरियों को 22 फरवरी तक के लिए बंद कर दिया गया।

प्रदूषण नियंत्रण विभाग की जांच में सीईटीपी मानकों के अनुरूप चलता नहीं पाया गया है। जिसके बाद बोर्ड ने सख्त रुख अख्तियार किया।

राष्ट्रीय स्वच्छ गंगा मिशन (एनएमसीजी) और उत्तर प्रदेश प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड की संयुक्त टीम ने 22 जुलाई 2022 को सीईटीपी की जांच की थी। जांच रिपोर्ट में सीईटीपी को

- ट्रॉनिका सिटी के सीईटीपी को बंद करने के निर्देश
- मानकों के उल्लंघन पर प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड सख्त

मानकों के अनुरूप चलता नहीं पाया गया है। इस पर बीते शनिवार को उत्तर प्रदेश प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड ने सीईटीपी को बंद कर उसकी बिजली और पानी का कनेक्शन काटने के निर्देश जारी किए हैं।

उद्यमियों का कहना है कि सीईटीपी को यूपीसीडा चला रहा है। इस पर प्रति माह खर्च होने वाले 24 लाख रुपये उद्यमियों की एसपीवी (स्पेशल परपज व्हीकल) वहन करती है, लेकिन इसके बाद भी सीईटीपी को ठीक से नहीं चलाया जा रहा है।

Jansatta- 20- February-2023

पंप स्टोरेज परियोजनाओं के लिए मिलेगी कर में छूट

नई दिल्ली, 19 फरवरी (भाषा)।

भारत में पंप स्टोरेज हाइड्रोपावर परियोजनाओं को बढ़ावा देने के लिए बिजली मंत्रालय ने कर छूट, सुगम पर्यावरण मंजूरी समेत रियायती दरों पर जमीन उपलब्ध कराने जैसे प्रोत्साहन देने का प्रस्ताव दिया है। मंत्रालय ने पंप स्टोरेज परियोजनाओं (पीएसपी) पर दिशानिर्देशों का मसौदा जारी करते हुए 15 दिन के अंदर दो मार्च, 2023 तक राज्यों के साथ-साथ सरकारी और निजी कंपनियों के विचार मांगे हैं।

मंत्रालय ने अपने दिशानिर्देशों में कहा कि ग्रिड स्थिरीकरण में पीएसपी की अत्यधिक उपयोगिता को देखते हुए और बिजली की चरम मांग को पूरा करने के लिए, पीएसपी को बढ़ावा देने के उद्देश्य से एक स्वतंत्र दिशानिर्देश जारी करने की जरूरत महसूस हुई, जिससे इसके विकास के लिए निर्देश तय किए जाएं। केंद्रीय बिजली प्राधिकरण (सीइओ) का अनुमान है कि भारत में नदी पर पंप भंडारण की क्षमता 103 गीगावाट है। इसके अलावा, बड़ी संख्या में नदी से अलग पंप भंडारण की क्षमता भी उपलब्ध है। मंत्रालय के अनुसार, फिलहाल आठ परियोजनाएं संचालित हैं, चार परियोजनाएं निर्माणाधीन हैं।