

Telangana Today- 29- October-2021

Don't go beyond brief, Telangana to GRMB

STATE BUREAU

Hyderabad

Telangana has urged the Godavari River Management Board (GRMB) only to look into aspects of projects that do not negatively impact water availability as per Tribunal Awards and refrain from commenting on other aspects including detailed project reports.

The DPRs are taken care of by exclusive directorates meant for hydrology, irrigation, planning, cost, and design of the Central Water Commission, New Delhi, and send recommendations to it without further delay, Telangana Irrigation and Command Area Development Engineer-in-Chief (General) C Muralidhar said in a letter to GRMB Chairman. Quoting provisions of AP Reorganisation Act, 2014, he said the function of GRMB and KRMB was to "make an appraisal of any proposal for construction of new projects on Godavari or Krishna and giving technical clearances

Asks the river management board to only look into aspects of projects that do not negatively impact water availability

after satisfying itself that such projects do not negatively impact the availability of water as per the awards of the Tribunal constituted under Inter-State River Water Dispute (ISRWD) Act-1956 for projects already completed or taken up before the appointed day.

In the second Apex Council meeting in October 2020, it was mentioned that "appraisal has to be done by CWC too, before placing them before the Apex Council as the Board does not have requisite wherewithal in terms of expertise." The DPRs are submitted for technical clearance as per the award of Godavari Water Disputes

Tribunal. But the GRMB was going into many other aspects of DPRs and issuing observations.

Muralidhar said all the projects were old for which DPRs were submitted to the CWC/GRMB. The KRMB has addressed a letter to the Chairman, CWC, on Rayalaseema lift scheme DPR stating that CWC may look into other aspects such as hydrology, irrigation planning, since the KRMB is not having requisite expertise and requested that such subject matters may kindly be examined by CWC.

Since GRMB and KRMB have same staffing pattern, it implies GRMB does not have requisite expertise to look into aspects such as hydrology, irrigation planning and inter-State issues in the DPR. This implies that GRMB is not following uniform process in scrutiny of DPRs of TS projects and exercising powers more than mandated in the APRA- 2014 under clause 85(8)(d).

Telangana Today- 29- October-2021

Stay close to nature at Kadem

Water bodies, green fields, villages en route make the long drive pleasant



Kaddam river originates from the hills of the Dedra reserved forest area and joins River Godavari at Dasturabad in Telangana State. — Photos: B Krishna Mohan

B KRISHNA MOHAN
HYDERABAD

November is here and there is a nip in the air. Rural landscapes being the best place to enjoy the chill, the Kaddam Narayana Reddy Project, also popular as Kadem project, a reservoir on the River Kaddam in Nirmal district, could be a perfect destination to combine a long drive with nature in its pristine form.

The journey to Kaddam is via the NH44 and is about 250 km from Hyderabad, and about 50 km from Nirmal town. The white and pink lotus blooms in the water bodies en route make for a perfect drive to the project.

The Kaddam river originates from the hills of the Dedra reserved forest area and joins River Godavari at Dasturabad in Kaddam mandal after about 80 km. The project taken up in 1949 across Kaddam river as part of Godavari Valley Scheme by the erstwhile Government of Hyderabad was completed in 1958. But that year saw unprecedented floods and the dam was breached. It was reconstructed with an increased spillway capacity adding nine flood gates, and with an increased storage capacity raising full reservoir level, in 1969. The reservoir is being supplemented through Saraswathi Canal of SRSP since 1984 to stabilise the lo-



Key points

- NH 44 drive is smooth
- Attempt in a day if you are used to driving about **500 km**
- Option is there to halt at Haritha for the night; Booking is online
- Dhabas and smaller hotels are along the way

About
**250 km from
Hyderabad**



calised ayacut in close to 100 villages.

The place being known for paddy, corn and cotton, we can see heaps of corn being sun-dried on the roadsides. The farmers do not mind if someone stops to click a few pictures of the corn, the fields or the wooden carts, which seem in good number along the road.

The Telangana Tourism's Haritha Hotel is a decent

place for a night halt, if required. The in-house restaurant is closed temporarily but you will not go hungry as there are some dhabas and small hotels on the main road. There is a play pen and even a trampoline to keep kids engaged. The place, lush with trees and a river view, is already a favourite place for pre-wedding and post-wedding photo shoots. Just a few paces away is the

boating point. There are four-seater speed boats and a 12-seater one too. It is the boatsman's call to wade into the waters or not, depending on the pulsating water intensity. The boat drives up to the hillocks. The view is scenic with the waterway between two hillocks. The water is clean and teal due to the greenery on the surrounding hillocks. There is a way up to the reservoir gates

with cars being allowed for some distance. It presents a scenic view of the villages downstream. Sign off your visit with a steaming hot chai offered in 'matkas' on the banks. One can also plan a visit to the Sriram Sagar Project, which is on the Nirmal highway, before or after visiting Kaddam. That will throw more light on the course as the two reservoirs are integrated.

Deccan Chronicle- 29- October-2021

TS hits out at GRMB for inaction on project reports

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, OCT. 28

The Telangana state government has criticised the Godavari River Management Board (GRMB) for its inaction on Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) of several irrigation projects proposed by the state government on the Godavari river for months in the name of scrutiny.

In a letter addressed to the GRMB chairman on Thursday, Telangana state irrigation engineer-in-chief C. Muralidhar said the GRMB was overstepping its mandate and demanded the river board to immediately send the DPRs to the Central Water Commission (CWC) without any further delay.

"In the AP Reorganisation Act, 2014, it was clearly mentioned that the function of GRMB/KRMB is confined to making an appraisal of any proposal for the construction of a new project on the Godavari or Krishna rivers and giving technical clearance after satisfying that such projects do not negatively impact the availability of water as per the awards of the Tribunal, constituted under Inter-state River Water Dispute Act, 1956, for the projects already

● **IN A LETTER** addressed to the GRMB chairman on Thursday, Telangana state irrigation engineer-in-chief C. Muralidhar said the GRMB was overstepping its mandate and demanded the river board to immediately send the DPRs to the Central Water Commission (CWC) without any further delay.

completed or taken up before the appointed day June 2, 2014," Muralidhar said. In the meeting of second Apex Council meeting held in October 2020, it was clearly mentioned that the "appraisal has to be done by CWC also, before placing them before the Apex Council for an approval as the river boards do not have the requisite wherewithal in terms of technical expertise," he noted.

In line with this, Muralidhar said the TS government had submitted the DPRs to the GRMB for giving technical clearance as per the award of GWDIT.

However, "the GRMB is going into many other aspects of DPRs and issuing observations/remarks, instead of examining whether the projects do not negatively impact the availability of water as

per the Tribunal awards for the projects already completed or taken up before the appointed day", he added. He cited a letter addressed by the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) to CWC chairman in December 2020, on the DPR of Andhra Pradesh's Rayalaseema lift irrigation scheme, wherein the river board had asked CWC to look into aspects such as hydrology, irrigation planning, water availability, inter-state issues etc because the KRMB was not having requisite expertise.

The KRMB had also requested CWC that such subject matters or issues or analysis relating to hydrology, irrigation planning, water availability and inter-state issues in the DPR may kindly be got examined at CWC.

"Since GRMB and KRMB have the same staffing pattern, the KRMB's December 2020 letter implies that the GRMB also does not have the requisite expertise in areas such as hydrology, etc in the DPR. This implies that GRMB is not following uniform process in scrutiny of DPRs of Telangana projects and exercising powers which exceeded its mandate under the AP Reorganisation Act," Muralidhar stated.

The Hindu- 29- October-2021

Kerala gears for water release from dam

People evacuated, ahead of opening of Mullaperiyar spillway shutters

A CORRESPONDENT
IDUKKI

The district administration has completed all arrangements anticipating the opening of the spillway shutters of the Mullaperiyar dam at 7 a.m. on Friday.

The Revenue Department evacuated 100 people from Periyar village and two from Manjumala village of Peerumade taluk and two from Ayyappancoil of Idukki taluk in the morning.

Relief camps have been opened at Peerumade and Idukki taluks. Control rooms have been opened in villages under Peerumade, Udumbanchola, and Idukki taluks.

Water released through the spillway shutters is expected to reach the first residential area of Vallakadavu



All set: Water Resources Minister Roshy Augustine travelling on a boat on the Thekkady lake on Friday. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

through the Periyar within 20 minutes. It will move through Manjumala, Vandiperiar, Mlamala, Santhipalam, Chappathu, Alady, and Upputhara to join the Idukki reservoir waters at Ayyappancoil, 35 km from the Idukki arch dam and the Cheruthoni dam.

It is expected that water discharge will be around

1,000 cubic feet per second through the Periyar and there will be a controlled flow, compared to the August 2018 situation when 4,000 cubic feet per second was released.

This was at a time when the Periyar was in spate following heavy rainfall. The water caused large-scale damage to crops and houses

upstream of the Idukki dam.

Meanwhile, water level continued to rise in the Mullaperiyar and Idukki reservoirs on Thursday. The level in Mullaperiyar at 5 p.m. was 138.15 ft. As per the rule curve, the upper rule level is 138 ft till October 31.

The water level in the Idukki reservoir was nearing the red alert level on Thurs-

day. At 9 a.m., the water level was 2,398.22 ft. The red alert level is 2,398.31 ft and the upper rule level is 2,399.31 ft.

The Government machinery was fully prepared for the release of water from the Mullaperiyar dam, Minister for Water Resources Roshy Augustine said on Thursday. Arrangements for ensuring the safety of people residing on the banks of the Periyar had been completed, Mr. Augustine said. "Evacuation strategies will be finalised after Tamil Nadu informs Kerala about the volume of water to be released," Mr. Augustine told reporters in Thiruvananthapuram before leaving for Idukki to oversee the arrangements.

"Disaster management, revenue, and police personnel and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) have been deployed in the region," the Minister added.

(With inputs from Thiruvananthapuram bureau)

The Indian Express- 29- October-2021



MIHIR SHAH

A new paradigm for water

New national policy calls for a multi-stakeholder approach to water management

IN NOVEMBER 2019, the Ministry of Jal Shakti had set up a committee to draft the new National Water Policy (NWP). This was the first time that the government asked a committee of independent experts to draft the policy. Over a period of one year, the committee received 124 submissions by state and central governments, academics and practitioners. The NWP is based on the striking consensus that emerged through these wide-ranging deliberations.

The policy recognises limits to endlessly increasing water supply and proposes a shift towards demand management. Irrigation consumes 80-90 per cent of India's water, most of which is used by rice, wheat and sugarcane. Without a radical change in this pattern of water demand, the basic water needs of millions of people cannot be met. Thus, crop diversification is the single most important step in resolving India's water crisis. The policy suggests diversifying public procurement operations to include nutri-cereals, pulses and oilseeds. This would incentivise farmers to diversify their cropping patterns, resulting in huge savings of water. The largest outlets for these procured crops are the Integrated Child Development Services, the mid-day meal scheme and the public distribution system. Creating this link would also help address the crisis of malnutrition and diabetes, given the superior nutritional profile of these crops. Reduce-Recycle-Reuse has been proposed as the basic mantra of integrated urban water supply and wastewater management, with treatment of sewage and eco-restoration of urban river stretches, as far as possible through decentralised waste-

water management. All non-potable use, such as flushing, fire protection, vehicle washing must mandatorily shift to treated wastewater.

Within supply-side options, the NWP points to trillions of litres stored in big dams, which are still not reaching farmers and explains how irrigated area could be greatly expanded at very low cost by deploying pressurised closed conveyance pipelines, combined with Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) systems and pressurised micro-irrigation. The NWP places major emphasis on supply of water through "nature-based solutions" such as the rejuvenation of catchment areas, to be incentivised through compensation for eco-system services. Specially curated "blue-green infrastructure" such as rain gardens and bio-swales, restored rivers with wet meadows, wetlands constructed for bio-remediation, urban parks, permeable pavements, green roofs etc are proposed for urban areas.

The NWP gives the highest priority to sustainable and equitable management of groundwater. Participatory groundwater management is the key. Information on aquifer boundaries, water storage capacities and flows provided in a user-friendly manner to stakeholders, designated as custodians of their aquifers, would enable them to develop protocols for effective management of groundwater.

From time immemorial, the people of India have had a reverential relationship with rivers. But water policy has seen rivers primarily as a resource to serve economic purposes. This overwhelmingly instrumentalist view of rivers

has led to their terrible degradation. While acknowledging their economic role, the NWP accords river protection and revitalisation prior and primary importance. Steps to restore river flows include: Re-vegetation of catchments, regulation of groundwater extraction, riverbed pumping and mining of sand and boulders. The NWP outlines a process to draft a Rights of Rivers Act, including their right to flow, to meander and to meet the sea.

The new NWP considers water quality as the most serious un-addressed issue in India today. It proposes that every water ministry, at the Centre and states, include a water quality department. The policy advocates adoption of state-of-the-art, low-cost, low-energy, eco-sensitive technologies for sewage treatment. Widespread use of reverse osmosis has led to huge water wastage and adverse impact on water quality. The policy wants RO units to be discouraged if the total dissolved solids count in water is less than 500mg/L. It suggests a task force on emerging water contaminants to better understand and tackle the threats they are likely to pose.

The policy makes radical suggestions for reforming governance of water, which suffers from three kinds of "hydro-schizophrenia": That between irrigation and drinking water, surface and groundwater, as also water and wastewater. Government departments, working in silos, have generally dealt with just one side of these binaries. Rivers are drying up because of over-extraction of groundwater, which reduces the base-flows needed for rivers to have water after the monsoon. Dealing with drinking water and irrigation in silos has meant

that aquifers providing assured sources of drinking water dry up because the same aquifers are used for irrigation, which consumes much more water. And when water and wastewater are separated in planning, the result is a fall in water quality.

The NWP also suggests the creation of a unified multi-disciplinary, multi-stakeholder National Water Commission (NWC), which would become an exemplar for states to follow. Government water departments include professionals predominantly from civil engineering, hydrology and hydrogeology. Without experts in water management, social mobilisation, agronomy, soil science, hydrometeorology, public health, river ecology and ecological economics, solutions to India's complex water problems will remain elusive. Since systems such as water are greater than the sum of their constituent parts, solving water problems requires understanding whole systems, deploying multi-disciplinary teams and a trans-disciplinary approach. Since wisdom on water is not the exclusive preserve of any one section of society, governments should build enduring partnerships with primary stakeholders of water, who must become an integral part of the NWC and its counterparts in the states. The indigenous knowledge of our people, with a long history of water management, is an invaluable intellectual resource that must be fully leveraged.

The writer chaired the committee to draft the new National Water Policy set up by the Ministry of Jal Shakti in 2019

The Indian Express- 29- October-2021

Keep Mullaperiyar water level at 139.5 ft till November 11, directs SC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 28

THE SUPREME Court Thursday directed that the water level in the Mullaperiyar dam be maintained at 139.5 feet — as recommended by the dam supervisory committee — till November 11, when it will again hear a plea filed by some residents of Kerala raising safety concerns on account of torrential rains.

The court was hearing a plea by one Joe Joseph and office-bearers of the Kothamangalam block panchayat in Kerala expressing apprehensions about the height of the water column, given the heavy rain lashing the state.

During the hearing, Kerala also submitted a note to the court saying the 126-year-old dam is vulnerable and must be decommissioned to make way for a new one.

“We will go by supervisory committee and it is 139.5 (feet) and that can continue till next day (of hearing),” said a bench headed by Justice AM Khanwilkar, giving Kerala time to submit the rule curve, which indicates the level of water to be maintained on different dates, as well as its objections to the committee’s report.

Appearing for Kerala, Senior Advocate Jaideep Gupta con-

tended that it is not safe to have the water level at the height proposed by Tamil Nadu (142 feet, as allowed by the Supreme Court in its past judgments). He urged that the water level be maintained at 139 feet till the next date of hearing.

Gupta said that though the south-east monsoon has withdrawn, Kerala and Tamil Nadu have started to receive rain from the north-east monsoon, which will continue till the end of November. He said if the level of the water column is 142 feet already, the reservoir will not be able to hold any more water and the gates will have to be opened. “It will flow downstream... downstream is Kerala and upstream is Tamil Nadu,” he said.

Appearing for Tamil Nadu, Senior Advocate Shekhar Naphade said the state would be able to maintain a level of 139.5 feet only till November 10. He said Kerala attempts to bring the water level below 142 feet every year through applications.

The court said that it will not enter into technical issues pertaining to the supervisory committee and will go by its advice of 139.50 feet till November 11, which both parties agreed to. The court clarified that it will be open to the committee reviewing its decision.

The Indian Express- 29- October-2021

Mullaperiyar dam: old dispute between TN & Kerala, revived after recent rains

SHAJU PHILIP

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, OCTOBER 28

ON THURSDAY, the Supreme Court directed that the maximum water level in Mullaperiyar dam should be 139.50 ft until November 10. The dam is at the centre of a decades-old dispute: for Kerala, where it is situated, the dam presents a threat to lakhs living downstream; and for Tamil Nadu, which controls the dam, the water it provides is the lifeline of people in five districts.

The dam is located in the upper reaches of the river Periyar, which flows into Kerala after originating in Tamil Nadu. The reservoir is within the Periyar Tiger Reserve. The water diverted from the reservoir is first used for power generation in lower Periyar (by Tamil Nadu) before flowing into the Suruliya, a tributary of Vaigai river, and then for irrigating nearly 2.08 lakh hectares in Theni and four other districts farther away.

The current dispute

The Supreme Court order on Thursday came after a court-appointed supervisory committee had suggested 139.50 ft as the permissible level. The court has directed both states to go by the committee's recommendation. Tamil Nadu had wanted the level increased to 142 ft as fixed by the Supreme Court in 2014, while Kerala wanted it within 139 ft as per a rule curve fixed until the end of the month.

What has revived the dispute is the unusual rains in the last couple of weeks, which have led to the water level inching towards its permissible level of 142 ft. On Thursday, it reached 138.15 ft. Kerala had wanted the level fixed at 136 ft, but the Supreme Court in 2014 allowed Tamil Nadu to raise it to 142 ft.

This time, while seeking a limit of 139 ft, Kerala pointed to a Supreme Court directive in August 2018 following the devastating floods in the state. One of the factors contributing to the floods was sudden discharge from the Mullaperiyar dam, after its water level went beyond 142 ft and all spillway shutters of the dam suddenly lifted. The excess water from Mullaperiyar had then



Mullaperiyar dam: Located in Kerala, controlled by Tamil Nadu. *Express*

flowed to downstream Idukki reservoir, which was also at maximum storage level. The unexpected flow forced Kerala to increase the discharge, leading to flooding of several parts of central Kerala.

The situation in 2021 is not different claims the Kerala government. The Idukki reservoir, which is in the same district as the Mullaperiyar dam, was at 94% of its live storage capacity on Thursday, despite the shutters being kept opened for two weeks before they were shut on Wednesday. The overflow from Mullaperiyar would find its way to the Idukki reservoir, the government has argued.

What next

As part of regulating the water level, Tamil Nadu has agreed to release water through spillway shutters from Friday morning. Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan recently wrote to Tamil Nadu CM M K Stalin to draw maximum water and release downstream water gradually to the Kerala side. Anticipating lifting of the shutters, Kerala has started evacuating families living on both banks downstream up to the Idukki reservoir, which is 35 km away.

Kerala has been demanding a new dam replacing the existing one, and located 366 ft downstream. While Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan recently expressed his support to the idea, such a project would

need the consent of Tamil Nadu. Construction of a new dam would also give rise to a demand for a new water-sharing treaty; at present, only Tamil Nadu has rights over the dam water.

How it began

In 1886, the then Maharaja of Travancore signed the 'Periyar Lease Deed' with the British government, which considered the Periyar waters useless to Travancore. It wanted to divert the water into arid regions of Tamil Nadu. The Maharaja signed the agreement after 20 years of resistance. In 1895, the dam was constructed. The Madras government started hydel power generation in 1959. Later, the capacity was increased to 140 MW.

Safety concerns around the dam date back to the early 1960s, when media reported it was unsafe. Kerala brought up the issue before the Central Water Commission in 1961. After a joint inspection by Kerala and Tamil Nadu in 1964, the water level was reduced for the first time, from 155 ft to 152 ft.

In the years that followed, Tamil Nadu witnessed public agitations demanding that the level be increased; Kerala opposed the demand.

Battle in courts

Over the years, petitions have been filed



in the high courts of both states. These were subsequently transferred to the Supreme Court. In 2000, the Centre appointed an expert committee to look into safety and suggest storage levels.

In 2006, the Supreme Court allowed Tamil Nadu to raise the water level to 142 ft. It said after completing strengthening work, the level could be restored to 152 ft if an expert committee examined and recommended it. In March 2006, the Kerala Assembly amended the Kerala Irrigation and Water Conservation Act, 2003, bringing Mullaperiyar in the schedule of 'Endangered Dams' and restricting its storage at 136 ft. Since then, the issue has shifted to the safety of the dam.

In 2007, the Kerala Cabinet permitted preliminary work on a new dam. Tamil Nadu approached the Supreme Court against the move. In 2010, the Supreme Court formed an empowered committee to look into the dam's safety. In 2008, a flood routing study by IIT Delhi found the dam was unsafe; in 2009, IIT Roorkee reported the dam was in an earthquake-prone area and would not survive a major quake. In November 2011, Kerala sought the Centre's intervention to bring down water levels to 120 ft after the area witnessed minor tremors. In 2014 came the Supreme Court order allowing Tamil Nadu to fix the water level at 142 ft.