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Times of India - 03- February-2024

Didn't hand over dams to KRMB on a platter: Govt

Telangana Placed Many Conditions, Says Top Official

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Hyderabad: A day after the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) meeting, Telangana on Friday said it did not hand over Nagarjuna Sagar and Srisaillam projects to KRMB on a platter but placed several conditions.

The state govt claimed that in the earlier meeting with the Union Jal Shakti ministry secretary, it had made its stand clear, but its arguments were not recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

State irrigation secretary Rahul Bojja told reporters that they insisted that water sharing between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh should be 50:50 till Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal-II finalises the allocation and in-basin needs be given top priority as per the KWDT-I award.

During Thursday's KRMB meeting, Telangana engineer-in-chief C Muralidhar clearly said that out of total 15 outlets of Krishna, except power stations, the rest 10 outlets would be handed over after taking the state govt's permission. At

TELANGANA RIDERS FOR KRMB

- Water sharing between Telangana & AP should be 50:50
- It's KRMB's duty to release water & maintain outlets
- Allow states to carry over to next year as per KWDT-I
- No unauthorised diversion of water
- CRPF troopers should be withdrawn from Telangana side of Sagar



the same time, release of water and maintenance of 10 outlets would be KRMB's responsibility, Rahul Bojja said.

"But unfortunately, it was reported in a section of the media that Telangana govt has handed over the projects to KRMB without any conditions," Rahul Bojja claimed.

"Srisaillam was sanctioned as a hydroelectric project by the Planning Commission in 1962 for supplying 264 tmcft of water to Nagarjuna Sagar project and the minimum draw down level (MDDL) should be 830 ft as per the Krishna tribunal-I. Outside the basin, diversion from Srisaillam reservoir should be limited to 34

tmcft, which includes 15 tmcft for Chennai water supply and 19 tmcft for SRBC. This was approved by the Central Water Commission," Rahul Bojja said.

He said the state wrote to the Jal Shakti ministry on Jan 27 asserting its views expressed at the meeting have not been recorded in the minutes of the meeting and that certain points were recorded as 'agreed' though the state had not agreed to the terms.

He said the govt put the condition that states should be permitted to carry over to the next year as per KWDT-I and not be accounted in the next year's account.

The Tribune - 03- February-2024

HAU scientists develop new wheat variety with less water requirement

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE**HISAR, FEBRUARY 2**

Scientists of Wheat and Barley Section at Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural University (HAU) have developed a new high yielding wheat variety - WH 1402 - that requires just two spells of irrigation and moderate fertilisers.

This variety was most suitable for plains of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Jammu and Kashmir, HAU vice chancellor Prof BR Kamboj said here on Thursday.

The average yield of this variety can be 50 quintals per hectare and maximum yield can be 68 quintals per hectare in just two water-spraying sessions, Kamboj said.

He said the variety was also resistant against yellow rust, brown rust and other diseases, and it gives 7.5 per cent more yield than NIAW 3170 - a good variety in low

High yielding, disease resistant

water zones.

The vice chancellor said the new variety has been released at the national-level for sandy, less fertile and less water availability areas.

"It is recommended to use pure nitrogen 90 kg, phosphorus 60 kg, potash 40 kg and zinc sulphate 25 kg per hectare. It will help stop over-exploitation of groundwater in areas where the water table has depleted deeper. It will prove to be a boon for areas with less water," he said.

Agriculture College Dean Dr SK Pahuja said they recommend sowing of this variety in the last week of October to the first week of November and the quantity of seeds should be 100 kg per hectare. "It is also a good variety in terms of nutritional value of grain."

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Deccan Chronicle - 03- February-2024

'KRMB to supervise water release only'

DC CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD, FEB. 2

The irrigation department on Friday declared that it has not handed over any of its projects on the Krishna to the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) and that it had only agreed to a three member committee's decision on water releases from the river in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

"All that has been agreed to at Thursday's meeting is that KRMB will implement the decision of the committee with respect to water releases. The KRMB will have no other role other than to supervise the decisions of the committee," engineer-in-chief C. Muralidhar Rao told reporters.

"There has been no change in the share of water between the states though we have made it clear to KRMB that Telangana stands by its demands that include a 50-50 share of water until a final arbitration is made on the share by the Krishna Water Distribution Tribunal."

The explanation came in the midst of attacks from the opposition BRS that the Congress government has given up completely any controls over using the Krishna water.

Muralidhar Rao reiterated that no project of Telangana state on the Krishna was 'handed over to KRMB', and that the physical control of the structures remained with the respective states.

As far as hydel power generation stations on the river in Telangana state are concerned, he said this was not discussed and a final decision will be taken by the two state governments and hoped that this would be done by this year's monsoon season.

Principal secretary, irrigation, Rahul Bojja, said at no point of time had Telangana state agreed to hand over full control of the projects on Krishna to the board. "We have also written to the Centre that the minutes of the January 17 meeting in Delhi on the river

water sharing and other issues were incorrect and that we agreed to hand over the projects in 30 days to the KRMB," he said.

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Telangana Today - 03- February-2024

BRS MPs protest handover of projects to KRMB

Apprise Jal Shakti Minister, to raise issue in Parliament

STATE BUREAU

Hyderabad

BRS Members of Parliament on Friday lodged a strong protest with the Centre on the decision of the Ministry of Jal Shakti to hand over the jurisdiction and management of joint projects in the Krishna basin to the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB).

Led by Nama Nageswar Rao, BRS floor leader in Lok Sabha, a delegation of party MPs met Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and apprised him of the consequences of the decision to hand over the jurisdiction of Nagarjuna Sagar and Srisailem, along

with 15 of their outlets, to the KRMB.

People of Telangana would be deprived of their genuine entitlement to the Krishna water and it should be reviewed, they insisted. Districts that were part of the command of the Krishna basin projects would pay a high price, they stressed.

The Union Minister, however, made it clear that both States had agreed to hand over the projects to the KRMB and their decision had to be honoured.

The BRS MPs said they would fight the decision in a big way. The issues would be raised in Parliament, too, on Saturday, they said on the day.



The delegation of BRS MPs, led by Nama Nageswar Rao, with Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on Friday.

More rain likely in Capital over next 2 days: Weather dept



FILE PHOTO

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: A fresh western disturbance is likely to affect Delhi weather with light to moderate, scattered to fairly widespread, rainfall in next two days, the weather department has said.

The maximum temperature in the national capital on Friday was recorded at 18.5 degrees Celsius, four notches below the season's average, while the humidity fluctuated between 100 to 74 per cent during the day, according to the IMD.

Safdarjung, Delhi's main weather station, recorded a visibility of 50 metres at 8.30 am, with the minimum temperature on Friday recorded at 7 degrees Celsius, a notch below the season's average. The weather department has forecast a generally cloudy sky with dense fog in the morning for Saturday, with possibility of very light rain and drizzle in night due to a fresh western disturbance.

The maximum and minimum temperatures are expected to settle around 20 and 7 degrees

Celsius, respectively. Due to "very dense" fog, 23 trains are running behind, a statement from the Northern Railways said. Zero visibility was reported at Palam at 9 am with runway visibility at the airport here ranging between 300 to 500 metres, the IMD said.

Delhi's air quality significantly improved but still was in the 'poor' category with a reading of 222 at 6 pm on Friday, according to data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), due to heavy rains that lashed the national capital on Wednesday.

An AQI between zero and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', and 401 and 500 'severe'. The average maximum temperature in Delhi this month till January 30 stood at 17.7 degrees Celsius, the lowest in 13 years, according to official data till Tuesday. The average minimum temperature in the national capital during the same period was pegged at 6.2 degrees Celsius, the second lowest in 13 years, the data showed.

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The Indian Express - 03- February-2024

The future of water

It must be treated as a constitutionally protected natural resource for the people — not as a commodity to be traded



OPENING ARGUMENT
BY MENAKA GURUSWAMY

WHEN I THINK of stocks being traded, I think about shares of companies being bought and sold. However, my rather conventional understanding of shares and trades was turned upside down, when I recently read a piece about Wall Street's relatively nascent water futures risk. Bloomberg has reported on the 1.1 billion-dollar spot water market in California.

On December 7, 2020, a company called the CME Group launched the "world's first water futures contract for trading with the aim to help water users manage risk and better balance the competing demands for water supply and demand amidst the uncertainty that severe droughts and flooding bring to the availability of water. The new futures contract allows buyers and sellers to barter a fixed price for the delivery of fixed quantity of water at a future date."

Pedro Arrojo-Agudo, the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation responded to this by stating that "you can't put a value on water as you do with other traded commodities. Water belongs to everyone and is a public good." He added, "I am very concerned that water is now being treated as gold, oil and other commodities that are traded on Wall Street futures market." The Special Rapporteur's concerns were that if water was traded as a futures commodity, then hedge funds, banks, large industrial and agricultural players would buy into it and marginalise vulnerable sectors of the economy like small-scale farmers. According to *Al Jazeera*, these water futures options were announced in September 2020 when heat and wildfires ravaged the West Coast of the US.

Water is probably the most increasingly scarce and yet eternally indispensable resource for the human species. That its scarcity would result in efforts to trade it or privatise its supply is unsurprising. After all, humans have, through their ingenuity, put a premium or high price on scarce natural resources. Think oil, gold and diamonds. However, water is different. Water scarcity is caused by the overuse of groundwater, climate change, a warming planet and rapid migration to already overpopulated large cities. The UN 2023 World Water Development Report notes that 26 per cent of the world's population does not have access to safe drinking water. India is not exempt from water scarcity. The World Bank explains that India has 18 per cent of the world's population, but only four per cent of its water resources, making it among the most water-stressed in the world.

Given its increasing scarcity, how then do we control access and distribution of water? What is the protection from waters being traded or privatised beyond the reach of those who cannot afford high prices? Water and access to water is an issue that has occupied the minds of the drafters of the

Constitution as well as the judges of the Supreme Court. Water disputes were constitutionally envisaged during the founding of our Republic. Article 262 of the Constitution provides that Parliament may by law provide for the adjudication of any dispute or complaint with respect to the use, distribution or control of the waters of any inter-State river or river valley. Hence, Parliament enacted the Inter-State Water Disputes Act, 1956 which provides for the constitution of Water Disputes Tribunals that will hear complaints by various state governments against each other. Such disputes may arise out of the use, distribution, or control of water that flows between states.

States have triggered this water disputes statute such as the dispute between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka which resulted in the Cauvery water disputes tribunal being established in 1990. This tribunal delivered its final verdict in 2007. Not satisfied with the outcome, the parties were soon at the SC which arrived at a distinct verdict using different parameters to determine water allocation for each state.

The Court has often engaged issues of distribution of water. In *Narmada Bachao Andolan v Union of India* (2000), the Court concluded that water is part of the right to life enshrined in Article 21 of the Constitution. Subsequently, in *A.P. Pollution Control Board II v Prof. M.V. Nayudu* (2001) the apex court declared that it is the duty of the state under Article 21 to provide clean drinking water to its citizens. What the Court and the Constitution did is that they established a fundamental right for every Indian to access safe and clean water. This may be the eventual bulwark against pricing water outside the reach of the average Indian.

In India, water pricing is determined by states in terms of the mandates of their respective municipality frameworks. There is no central authority for the regulation of water pricing. What we do have is a Constitutional principle regarding the distribution of natural resources. Water would fall within this category of natural resources. Article 39 of the Constitution in the Directive Principles of State Policy chapter provides that the state shall direct its policy towards securing that the ownership and control of material resources of the community are so distributed to subserve the common good.

There is a strong movement to privatise water supply calling it "water sector reforms". In 2010, Manthan Adhyayan Kendra in its report *Water: Private Limited* noted that "water sector reforms" would involve "processes like unbundling, independent regulatory authority to free the sector from 'political interference', increasing tariffs, retrenchment, full cost recovery, elimination of subsidies, cutting off supplies for non-payment, removal of public standposts, public-private partnerships, allocation of water to highest value use through market mechanism." The future of water must not be that it is simply unaffordable to many of our species. For when water is traded or privatised out as a scarce commodity and not treated as a constitutionally protected natural resource to be distributed for the larger common good, then thirst will be the norm and quenching it unaffordable for many.

The writer is a senior advocate at the Supreme Court