

The Times of India- 04- September-2022

# Medha Patkar was wrong about the Narmada project

SWAMINOMICS



SWAMINATHAN S ANKLESARIA AIYAR

Inaugurating several projects including a canal bringing Narmada water to Kutch, Prime Minister Modi said last week that Medha Patkar and her “urban Naxal” friends had opposed and delayed the Narmada project that had greatly benefited Gujarat. In fact, the project was opposed by a very wide range of critics including the World Bank’s Morse Commission which was anything but “urban Naxal.”

However, Medha and her fellow critics have proved dead wrong. In 1989 I attended a talk by Medha opposing the Sardar Sarovar Dam, the first of many dams planned on the Narmada. Her Narmada Bachao Andolan, ARCH Vahini and other activists had convinced a tribunal to award land as compensation to the tribal oustees, not just cash compensation that would be frittered away. The tribunal awarded 5 acres per adult male oustee plus additional cash compensation. Nevertheless, she said, the simple tribals had a unique way of life and would fail to cope with commercial life in resettlement villages. They would get trapped in debt, lose their land, and become paupers in urban slums, with their women becoming prostitutes. This must be stopped.

Medha also poooh-pooohed the supposed project benefits claimed by all Gujarat parties. The project aimed to provide millions with irrigation and drinking water, reaching arid and desert areas in Saurashtra, Kutch, and even Rajasthan. But, she said, experience showed that rich farmers near the canal head hogged the water in such projects, so no water would reach needy farmers in distant arid areas like Kutch. The Gujarat government had given up World Bank funding because of onerous conditions, and was funding the project itself through very high-interest loans that would bankrupt the state.

I found Medha’s arguments persuasive, and wrote an article opposing the project. Today it is clear I was wrong. She made a fool of not just me but thousands of concerned humanists who should also be angry at being taken for a ride.

Narmada water reached Saurashtra, Kutch and Rajasthan over a decade ago, benefiting millions. Water sold to municipalities and industries at commercial rates has made the project financially viable despite many delays and cost escalations. With land prices going sky-high, farmers refused to give up their land for constructing distributaries. So, the water is now being distributed under pressure through underground pipes. This is costly but means the irrigation is done through sprin-



**NOT A PIPE DREAM:** Narmada water has benefited millions who got irrigation and drinking water. Even tribals who were resettled say they are better off

klers and drip irrigation, far more efficient than conventional canal irrigation.

I had read of major travails in resettling tribals ousted by the dam. But others said resettlement was a success. To test this, Neeraj Kaushal of Columbia University and I planned a research project, funded by the London School of Economics, comparing living conditions of resettled tribals with those of their former neighbours still in the forest. In some villages tribals at lower elevations were resettled while those at higher elevations stayed in the forest, providing a good comparison.

The results were an eye-opener. Resettled tribals were far better off in ownership of land, dwellings, tractors, borewells, TVs, motorcycles, cellphones, and other parameters. They had better access to schools, hospitals, drinking water, electricity, and government offices. They said their tribal culture and traditions were intact despite resettlement. Even so, 54% said they would rather be back in the forest: material goods are clearly not everything.

We also asked their former neighbors and a second forest group whether, having seen the progress of resettlement, they would like to be “ousted” with the same compensation package. “Yes”, said 52% and 31% of the tribal groups respectively. They want to quit the jungle.

High ownership of motorcycles (31%), and cellphones (59%) in one forest group showed it was outrageous for Medha and other supposed intellectuals to claim that tribals would be devastated by contact with mainstream life and, hence, should be “protected” in the jungle. On the contrary, tribals need to be supported with property rights (land title and legal access to forest produce including bamboo). In research papers for the Cato Institute and Economic and Political Weekly we have given full survey results plus an account of how 31 tribal villages in Narmada district supplied Rs 32 crore of bamboo over four years to a paper mill. Tribals should become plantation owners, not a protected jungle species.

Land prices in the resettlement areas were up to Rs 30 lakh per acre by 2019. Many tribals with five acres are now crorepatis, not paupers as predicted by Medha and other intellectuals. Will they please apologise? ■

Indian Express- 04- September-2022

**30TH SOUTHERN ZONAL COUNCIL MEET**

# Solve water-sharing disputes amicably: Shah to south states

**SHAJU PHILIP**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,  
SEPTEMBER 3

UNION HOME Minister Amit Shah on Saturday exhorted southern states to find amicable solutions to end all outstanding issues, especially those related to river water sharing.

In his address at the 30th Southern Zonal Council meet in Thiruvananthapuram on Saturday, Shah said that the objective of the meeting was to promote regional cooperation among states on issues of common national importance.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Ministers of Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu; the Lieutenant Governors of Puducherry, Andaman and Nicobar Islands; and the Administrator of Lakshadweep. During the meeting, 26 issues were discussed, nine were resolved, 17 were reserved for further consideration, of which nine were related to the reorganisation of Andhra Pradesh.

Shah urged Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to settle their pending issues, which will not only benefit people of their states but also lead to all-round development of the entire southern region.

The Home Minister said since 2015, Rs 4,206 crores have been sanctioned for the Fisheries Infrastructure Development Fund scheme in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu and Telangana. He said QR-enabled PVC Aadhaar cards have been provided to more than 12-lakh fishermen.

In his address, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan stressed on cooperative federalism. "Fruitful discussions are needed on the proposed legislation based on the entries in the Concurrent List of Seventh Schedule of our Constitution before they are enacted by Parliament. There can be contestations, but through discussions and debates, consensus can emerge...this is the essence of a healthy federal democracy," he said. Vijayan said fiscal empowerment of the Union and the states are of equal importance to make for the impact of the pandemic on the economy.

Tamil Nadu CM M K Stalin urged the Centre to create a high-speed rail corridor, connecting specific locations within Tamil Nadu and neighbouring states. Such a move would be much more economical, more energy efficient and less polluting than aeroplanes and automobiles, he contended.

— WITH PTI INPUTS



Hindustan Times- 04- September-2022

# Shah seeks joint solution to southern water disputes

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**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM:** Union home minister Amit Shah on Saturday urged southern states to explore joint solution for river water sharing issues and to ensure better co-ordination to fight the drug menace.

Addressing the 30th Southern Zonal Council (SZC) meeting in Kerala's capital, Shah also asked Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to mutually resolve their pending issues, said a release issued by the council. "The Union home minister called on all states of the Southern Zonal Council to explore a joint solution to the issues related to the sharing of waters," it said.

While the Cauvery water dispute between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka dates back to the British era, the Krishna river water-sharing dispute remains a major contentious issue between the two Telugu states — Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

The meeting was attended by the chief ministers of Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu — Pinarayi Vijayan, MK Stalin and Basavaraj Bommai, respectively, while Andhra Pradesh and Telangana chief ministers sent their representatives. The lieutenant governors of Puducherry and Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and the administrator of Lakshadweep also participated in the meeting.

During the meeting, Vijayan urged the Centre to expedite the permission to the proposed high-speed corridor Silverline and added that it can be extended to Mangaluru in Karnataka. He said the chief ministers of the two states will soon meet to discuss the issue. Stalin also sought a high-speed rail corridor connecting specific locations within Tamil Nadu and to neighbouring states.

Representing Andhra Pradesh, state's finance minister Buggana Rajendranath said growth prospects of his state diminished due to loss of Hyderabad and other industrially developed areas, consequent to the state bifurcation in 2014.

"Steps for promoting industrialisation are imperative for the development of the successor state. Section 94 of the AP Reorganisation Act, 2014 and assurances made in Parliament provide



Union home minister Amit Shah addresses a convention in Thiruvananthapuram on Saturday. PTI

for tax incentives," he said.

"In the 30th meeting of South Zonal Council, 26 issues were discussed, nine issues were resolved, 17 issues were reserved for further consideration, out of which nine related to reorganisation of Andhra Pradesh," said the release.

The home minister, who is also the chairman of the council, said for the all-round development of the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has put the concept of Team India before the nation and all the states together form Team India, the release said.

Shah, in his address, said under the PM Modi's leadership, the nature of the zonal councils has changed in the last eight years. Before 2014, the zonal councils used to have an average of two meetings in a year, which this government has increased to 2.7, the minister said.

Shah said the main objectives of the zonal council meeting are — amicable settlement of disputes between the Centre and the states and interstate through mutual agreement, promotion of regional cooperation between states, providing a forum for all of them to brainstorm on issues of common national importance and setting up a collaboration system for strengthening cooperation among all stakeholders.

(With agency inputs)

Rajasthan Patrika- 04- September-2022

गृहमंत्री अमित शाह ने दक्षिण भारत के राज्यों को दी सलाह

# राज्य मिलकर करें जल बंटवारे की समस्या का समाधान

पत्रिका व्यू  
patrika.com

नई दिल्ली/ तिरुवनंतपुरम. गृहमंत्री अमित शाह ने दक्षिण भारत के राज्यों को आपस में मिलकर जल बंटवारे की समस्या का समाधान निकालने की सलाह दी। वेरल की राजधानी तिरुवनंतपुरम में 30वीं दक्षिणी क्षेत्रीय परिषद की बैठक की अध्यक्षता करते हुए गृहमंत्री अमित शाह का यह निर्देश तमिलनाडु, कर्नाटक, तेलंगाना और आंध्र प्रदेश के लिए महत्वपूर्ण है।

दरअसल, तमिलनाडु और कर्नाटक के बीच कावेरी और तेलंगाना व आंध्र प्रदेश के बीच कृष्णा नदी जल बंटवारा विवाद लंबे समय से छिड़ा हुआ है। गृहमंत्री अमित शाह ने नारकोटिक्स पर सख्ती बरतने के निर्देश राज्यों को दिए।

गृहमंत्री ने दक्षिणी क्षेत्रीय परिषद की बैठक में नारकोटिक्स की समस्या पर सख्ती बरतने के दिए निर्देश



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यह भी कहा कि सभी राज्य नारकोटिक्स को-ऑर्डिनेशन सेंटर (एनकोर्ड) की मीटिंग को नियमित करते हुए जिला स्तर पर ले जाएं।

30वीं दक्षिणी क्षेत्रीय परिषद की बैठक में केरल, कर्नाटक, तमिलनाडु

के मुख्यमंत्रियों, पुडुचेरी, अंडमान और निकोबार द्वीप समूह के उपराज्यपाल, लक्षद्वीप के प्रशासक, दक्षिणी क्षेत्र के राज्यों के मुख्य सचिव, केंद्रीय गृह सचिव आदि की मौजूदगी में गृहमंत्री अमित शाह ने कहा कि प्रधानमंत्री का

दक्षिण भारत से खास लगाव है इसी कारण 2014 में प्रधानमंत्री बनने के बाद नरेन्द्र मोदी ने तटीय राज्यों के विकास के लिए सागरमाला परियोजना के साथ-साथ प्रमुख बंदरगाहों के अपग्रेडेशन के लिए विभिन्न योजनाएं

## 61 परियोजनाएं निर्माणाधीन

गृहमंत्री अमित शाह ने कहा कि तटीय जिलों के समग्र विकास के लिए कुल 7737 करोड़ रुपये की लागत से 61 परियोजनाएं निर्माणाधीन हैं। ब्लू रिवॉल्यूशन के लिए प्रधानमंत्री मत्स्य संपदा योजना चलाई जा रही है। 2015 से दक्षिण भारत के आंध्र प्रदेश, कर्नाटक, केरल, पुडुचेरी, तमिलनाडु और तेलंगाना राज्यों

में फिशरीज इंफ्रास्ट्रक्चर डेवलपमेंट फण्ड स्कीम के लिए 4206 करोड़ रुपये मंजूर किए गए हैं। तमिलनाडु और आंध्र प्रदेश में बंदरगाह और मत्स्य पालन के बुनियादी ढांचे के विकास के लिए 2711 करोड़ रुपये की लागत से 56 परियोजनाओं को मंजूरी दी गई है।

शुरू की। इनमें से कुल 76 हजार करोड़ रुपये की 108 परियोजनाएं पूरी हो चुकी हैं जबकि 132000 करोड़ रुपये की 98 परियोजनाएं निर्माणाधीन

हैं। इस प्रकार कुल मिलाकर लगभग 2 लाख करोड़ रुपये से अधिक की परियोजनाओं पर तटीय राज्यों के लिए सागरमाला के तहत काम हो रहा है।