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M.P. Chronicle

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Pollution unchecked: This file photo shows sewage being let into the Ganga at Krishna Ghat in Patna. RANJEET KUMAR

Ganga unlikely to be cleaned up by 2018

Officials fault green tribunal's orders

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

The government is unlikely to be able to clean the Ganga by 2018, a target set by Water Resources Minister Uma Bharti. Key reasons, according to sources in the Water Ministry, include "unreasonable" directions by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) questioning the operating capacity of sewage treatment plants in Uttar Pradesh and a delay in clearances by State governments to execute projects.

According to a senior official, work at developing the sewage treatment plants (STPs) in Uttar Pradesh had stopped because different expert groups, tasked by the court to estimate the sewage in the drains, had conflicting figures. These estimates are necessary to determine the processing capacity of a treatment plant.

"STPs of certain sizes are commissioned based on studies of how sewage varies daily, existing oxygen levels and several other criteria...There's a scientific process to it," said the official, who is closely involved with commissioning plants. "But when this process is questioned and we are back to basics, it cannot function."

The deadline [to clean Ganga by 2018] cannot be met in this way."

Ever since the Supreme Court had transferred 30-year-old cases, which dealt with the tardiness in cleaning the Ganga, to the NGT, it has routinely pulled up officials in the Central Pollution Control Board and the Union Ministry of Water Resources and Ganga Rejuvenation, and the Uttar Pradesh State Water Board, for poorly executing projects. The NGT has fined officials for inaccurate information on the 30 drains in the State and "wasting public money" on commissioning projects that didn't properly account for the pollution load in the city. It has also tasked the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) with probing how certain projects were cleared by the Uttar Pradesh Jal Nigam in Garhmukteshwar.

Out of a ₹20,000-crore clean-up programme, only ₹2,000 crore has been sanctioned to the National Mission for Clean Ganga, the executive authority tasked with commissioning treatment plants, cleaning and beautifying the ghats and setting up improved crematoria.

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Water talks may thaw India-Pak chill

Indian officials likely to travel to neighbouring nation for meeting in March-end

SIMRAN SODHI
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

The first signs of a thaw in the India-Pakistan relationship will likely emerge at the end of this month when officials from both the countries meet for the annual Permanent Indus Commission meeting.

People familiar with the issue confirmed to *The Tribune* the commission would meet in Pakistan and the meeting will take off from where it left the last time. The last meeting was held in July 2016.

In September last year, India had called off any future talks after bilateral ties with Pakistan nosedived and Delhi insisted that the neighbouring nation must stop its sponsorship of terror for dialogue to continue.

In another goodwill gesture



PM Narendra Modi with his Pakistan counterpart Nawaz Sharif. FILE

today, India released 39 Pakistani prisoners, of whom 21 are civilians and 18 fishermen. The nationality of all 39 was confirmed by Pakistan and today they were all repatriated via the Attari-Wagah border. Many in the establishment believe India needs to reciprocate to some of the peace over-

tures that Pakistan has made of late. After the retirement of Pakistan Army Chief Raheel Sharif, one of the first things that PM Nawaz Sharif did was to release 200 Indian fishermen in December last. India's gesture today is an indication that it is willing to respond to Islamabad's peace overtures.

India at UN: Terror 'monster' devouring its own creator

Pakistan created terror outfits against India and the "monster" is now devouring its own creator, said India's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN Ajit Kumar in Geneva while addressing the 34th Session of the Human Rights Council. He hit out at Pakistan for destabilising the situation in J&K by promoting infiltration and cross-border terrorism. PTI

While any talk of both nations returning to a structured dialogue in the near future is premature as of now, the bellicosity in the bilateral ties is being brought down by both sides. The participation of Indian writers in literary festivals in Pakistan is being seen as another sign of India softening its stand.

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Withering highs

The forecast of a hotter summer must nudge us into preparing to mitigate public distress

The forecast from the India Meteorological Department of above-normal temperatures over much of India in the summer months is bound to bring back memories of last year's withering weeks. Global weather in recent times has come under pressure from the El Nino warming that began in 2015 and exerted its influence into the first quarter of 2016. What is significant is that the Australian international weather bureau says there is a 50% prospect of a similar phenomenon this year as well, making it a significant alert on hotter temperatures, and possibly a debilitated monsoon and weaker agricultural prospects. The early IMD forecast should help the official machinery to adequately prepare for public distress. A carefully planned school examination schedule could spare students the worst of the torrid season, and this should be among the top priorities. As the temperature edged past 40°C last year, schools in some States decided to extend their summer vacations by a week or two, something that may become necessary again. Urban water distress poses another challenge, because big cities in several States have not received adequate rainfall to replenish their reservoirs and are using up groundwater at unsustainable rates. For farmers, another harsh period would add to their difficulties, requiring a sensitive approach to their needs. Administrative decisions for summer management will need to be refined on the basis of coming IMD updates, although the overall trend appears to be clear. Temperatures in different parts of the world may have variations due to local weather phenomena, but as the U.S. space agency NASA has pointed out, there has been a record three-year warming trend, with 2016 the hottest; 16 of 17 warmest years based on globally-averaged temperatures occurred since 2001. The effect of El Nino on the global temperature average is only a small part of the overall rise, indicating that the trend could be correlated with the rise in greenhouse gases. India, a major emitter of GHGs, has classified 2016 as the century's warmest year, with an increase of 0.91°C over the long-term average; NASA's corresponding global figure is 0.99°C. These are clear signs that the world must shift away from further high-emission pathways in the economy and adopt leapfrogging technologies. It is also a call for policy initiatives to build resilience by improving water harvesting and expanding tree cover, including in cities. For rural India, building surface irrigation facilities such as ponds through the employment guarantee scheme and climate funds would seem a natural choice, while urban water supply augmentation needs more reservoirs to be built. If this year's forecast comes true, though, there is no escape route. The only hope would be an early date with the monsoon.

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SYL: Hearing on state's plea today

SATYA PRAKASH
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, MARCH 1

The Supreme Court will take up the Punjab Government's contention that the decree in favour of Haryana on issue of the Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) canal cannot be executed, on Thursday.

The matter will come up for hearing after lunch before a bench headed by Justice PC Ghose which had, on February 22, made it clear that the Sutlej-Yamuna Link canal had to be constructed and both state governments must maintain law and order.

On behalf of the Punjab Government, senior counsel Ram Jethmalani had said the water-sharing agreement was signed in 1981 and the quantity of water flow had significantly decreased since then. Therefore, it wasn't possible now to execute it.

But the Bench had said: "We are at a stage where the decree has to be executed."

The Sutlej-Yamuna Link canal had to be constructed first. Whether the water was there or not or it'll be there only in the rainy season or how much quantity was being maintained could be sorted out later, it had noted.

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गंगा सफाई को 1050 करोड़ की परियोजनाएं

■ एजेंसियां, नई दिल्ली : पटना में गंगा को स्वच्छ रखने के लिए 'नमामि गंगे' कार्यक्रम के तहत 1050 करोड़ रुपये की विभिन्न परियोजनाएं को मंजूरी दे दी गई है। जल संसाधन मंत्रालय के अधिकारी ने बताया कि यह राशि दो सीवेज ट्रीटमेंट प्लांट (एसटीपी) बनाने, मौजूदा एसटीपी के नवीनीकरण, दो पंपिंग स्टेशनों के निर्माण और लगभग 400 किमी तक का नया अंडरग्राउंड सीवेज नेटवर्क बिछाने पर खर्च की जाएगी। पटना के सैदपुर में 60 एमएलडी क्षमता वाले एसटीपी बनाने और 227 किमी के नए अंडरग्राउंड सीवेज नेटवर्क बिछाने के लिए 600 करोड़ का ठेका भी दिया जा चुका है।

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एसवाईएल मुद्दे पर नोक-झोंक

चंडीगढ़. हरियाणा विधानसभा में बुधवार को एसवाईएल का मुद्दा भी पूरी तरह छया रहा और इस मुद्दे पर सत्तापक्ष व विपक्ष के बीच न सिर्फ निरंतर नोकझोंक होती रही बल्कि इनेलो व कांग्रेस के बीच आरोप-प्रत्यारोप का सिलसिला चलता रहा। दोपहर बाद राज्यपाल के अभिभाषण पर चर्चा में भाग लेते हुए नेता प्रतिपक्ष ने कहा कि अभिभाषण में आधारहीन बातें कही गई हैं और सच्चाई को छुपाया गया है। उन्होंने इस मामले में कांग्रेस पर राजनीति करने का आरोप लगाते हुए कहा कि अगर पूर्व मुख्यमंत्री बंसीलाल एसवाईएल नहर की खुदाई पहले पंजाब की तरफ से शुरू करवाते तो आज यह नौबत न आती। उन्होंने कहा कि सर्वोच्च न्यायालय का फैसला हरियाणा के हक में आने के

बाद प्रदेश सरकार में बैठे लोग केंद्र पर दबाव बनाना तो दूर इनेलो द्वारा केंद्र पर बनाए जा रहे दबाव के प्रयासों का मजाक उड़ाने में लगे हुए हैं। उन्होंने सत्तापक्ष व कांग्रेस के विधायकों से केंद्र पर दबाव बनाने के लिए इनेलो की ओर से 15 मार्च को संसद के किए जाने वाले घेराव में शामिल होने का भी न्यौता दिया। उन्होंने कहा कि हम नहर खुदाई के लिए पंजाब की ओर जब कूच कर रहे थे तो प्रदेश सरकार उसमें जगह-जगह रुकावटें खड़ी कर रही थी और तीन जगह बैरिकेड्स भी लगाए गए थे।

उन्होंने इस मामले में सरकार पर गम्भीर न होने का आरोप लगाते हुए कहा कि अगर मुख्यमंत्री गम्भीर होते तो इस मुद्दे पर अब तक प्रधानमंत्री से मिलने का समय जरूर मिल जाता।

नाटिका-2-3-17

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नदियों में प्रदूषण पर एनजीटी राज्यों से खफा

नई दिल्ली | विशेष संवाददाता

एनजीटी ने नदियों में लगातार प्रदूषण बढ़ने पर बुधवार को नाराजगी जताते हुए पश्चिम बंगाल सरकार को नोटिस जारी किया। राष्ट्रीय हरित अधिकरण ने कहा कि नदियों में प्रदूषण मसले को कोई भी राज्य गंभीरता से नहीं ले रहे।

अधिकरण ने नयनाभिराम दार्जिलिंग में अंधाधुंध शहरी अपशिष्ट डाले जाने और महानंदा नदी में अपशिष्ट डाले जाने को लेकर पश्चिम बंगाल सरकार को नोटिस जारी किया है। जस्टिस स्वतंत्र कुमार की पीठ गंगा को स्वच्छ बनाने के

मुद्दे पर सुनवाई कर रही है। इस दौरान पश्चिम बंगाल में नदियों को प्रदूषित किए जाने के मुद्दे पर संज्ञान लेते हुए राज्य सरकार, प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड, सिलिगुड़ी नगर निगम और उसके उपायुक्त से 17 मार्च तक जवाब-तलब किया है।

पीठ ने कहा कि अधिकरण के संज्ञान में आया है कि सिलिगुड़ी, दार्जिलिंग जिले में महानंदा नदी में प्रदूषण और पूरे शहर में ठोस कचरा डाले जाने के संबंध में गंभीर पर्यावरण मुद्दे हैं। मामला सरकारी अधिकारियों के संज्ञान में लाए जाने के बावजूद कोई उपचारात्मक और एहतियाती कदम नहीं उठाया गया।