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Rajasthan Patrika (Hindi)
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M.P. Chronicle
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On Karnataka-Kerala border, harmony flows with water

Every year, villagers of Manila and Puttige build a barrage across Shiriya river to face summer

ANIL KUMAR SASTRY

MANGALURU: Two neighbouring villages, in Karnataka and Kerala, on Thursday almost completed this year's 'annual ritual' — something they have been doing for three decades.

The ritual is nothing but the construction of a *katta* (temporary barrage) across the Shiriya River, which acts as the border between Karnataka and Kerala. In a rare display of bonhomie, the villagers — belonging to Manila in Karnataka and Puttige in Kerala — join hands to build this barrage to face the summer.

The barrage is built at the Balekallu village of Bantwal taluk, about 56 km from Mangaluru.

30-year-practice

According to Rajesh Padekallu, Manila gram panchayat president, the practice has been on for about 30 years. For about eight years, the Puttige panchayat has been providing labour under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme while Manila villagers too provide men and material.

His brother, Jayaprakash Padekallu, said the water

stored in the barrage helps irrigate about 300 acres of land comprising areca nut gardens and paddy fields of both the States. It recharges the groundwater in the region. The 50-metre long barrage is built using boulders, sandbags and plantain trunks, he said.

Hemavathi, a member of the Puttige gram panchayat, told *The Hindu* that though the river flows in Karnataka abutting her ward, the panchayat facilitates the

barrage work for the benefits provided by it. This year, 538 man days of work had been completed so far, costing about Rs. 1.29 lakh, she said.

Appeal to governments

Usually, work starts in the first week of February. But this year, it was nearing completion because MGNREGA grants were made available early in January, Ms. Hemavathi said. This, she said, would help in storing more

water this season.

Mr. Rajesh Padekallu said the panchayat had been urging the Karnataka government to build a permanent barrage. He said the panchayat as well as residents were willing to share water with their neighbours in Kerala as was being done at present, and wanted both the governments to act in this regard.

River Shiriya has its origin near Kolthige village in the Puttur taluk of Karnataka.



LIVE & LET LIVE: People constructing a barrage using boulders, sandbags and plantain trunks at the Balekallu village across Shiriya river on Thursday. — PHOTO: SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

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Experts push for wetland shield

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New Delhi: World Wetlands Day was celebrated in style at Yamuna Biodiversity Park (YBP), where experts and students discussed how to conserve wetlands in the national capital.

Observed every year on February 2, this year's theme was —Wetlands for disaster risk reduction.

Several participants pointed out that wetlands play a critical role in reducing the effects of floods and cyclones by acting as a buffer. Faiyaz Khudsar, top scientist at YBP, said successful revival and restoration of wetlands is the need of the hour in Delhi with two such waterbodies restored through natural means at the park.

YBP developed a wetland over seven acres in Phase II, which is now attracting migratory birds like red-crested pochard, northern shoveler, northern pintails, great cormorants, painted stork, among several other species. The number of red-crested pochard spotted in 2016 at the park rose to 103, up from 52 in the previous year.

CR Babu, professor emeritus Delhi University and head of Centre for Environmental Management of Degraded Ecosystems, says wetlands in Delhi can also be used to treat sewage water in



BRINGING BACK TO LIFE

World Wetlands Day is celebrated every year on February 2, marking the adoption of Convention on Wetlands in 1971 on the shores of Caspian Sea in the Iranian city of Ramsar

Reviving Yamuna Biodiversity Park

Successful restoration and revival of wetlands by planting trees and shrubs along the waterbodies and carrying out desilting to allow rainwater to flow into them

Revival has made the park one of the largest breeding sights of black-crowned night herons in Delhi. Numbers of red-crested pochards and darters have increased over the last few years



How it was done

- Site was examined to check how deep aquifers were and what plants might grow well on it
- Tamarix & Phragmite trees were planted along the waterbody after determining that the soil had high subsoil aquifers
- Area was desilted to allow rainwater to flow
- Sages and aquatic plants like hydrilla, Potamogeton and Lemna were planted in and around the area to further purify water
- Several resident and migratory birds like pochards, herons and shovelers started arriving to the waterbody, breeding there and cleaning up the water surface that became a rich breeding ground for insects as well

the second stage, after the sewage first passes through a "constructed wetland", which is a combination of sand, gravel and aquatic flora.

"We successfully created a constructed wetland, which is treating sewage water at DDA's Neela Hauz Biodiversity Park. This can now

be replicated around the capital," Babu said.

Over 200 students from Delhi University and poor schoolchildren, brought together by National Museum of Natural History, took part in the event on Thursday.

"There has to be a balance between development and

preserving nature. Urban settlements are gradually encroaching upon wetlands, which is destroying the natural habitat of birds and animals. We must revive one waterbody at a time, and then preserve it," said T R Rao, an ecologist and the chief guest for the session.

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Survival of Indus waters pact weak, says UN report

STANDOFF Says it fails to address India's shortages in western side

Press Trust of India

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ISLAMABAD: The 40-year-old Indus Waters Treaty between India and Pakistan has been an outstanding example of conflict resolution but scarcity of water in the basin states since the early 1990s has brought the agreement under strain and its "survival appears weak", according to a UN report.

"The treaty fails to address two issues: the division of shortages in dry years between India and Pakistan, when flows are almost half as compared to wet years, and the cumulative impact of storages on the flows of the River Chenab into Pakistan," said the UNDP report, 'Development Advocate Pakistan'.

Wular Barrage and Kishenganga project on the Jhelum and Neelum rivers present a similar problem whereby water storage during the Rabi season is critical as flows are almost one-fifth of the Kharif season, according to the report, which was released on Wednesday. "For over 40 years, the Indus Waters Treaty has proved to be an outstanding example of conflict resolution. An increase in water stress in the basin states since the early 90s has brought the Treaty under strain. In fact, its survival appears weak, although there is no exit clause," it said.

The report said that Pakistan has gone as far as calling the treaty an inefficient forum for resolving water issues, elevating

WHAT IS THE TREATY ABOUT?

When was the treaty signed?

On Sept 19, 1960, Jawaharlal Nehru and Pakistan president Ayub Khan signed an pact to share water of Beas, Ravi, Sutlej, Indus, Chenab and Jhelum. Since Indus was the biggest of them, the treaty was named as the 'Indus waters treaty'

What necessitated the treaty?

After Partition, Pakistan and India locked horns over the share of water in the Indus Basin as its source remained in India. During the early years after Partition, an Inter-Dominion Accord of 1948 apportioned the share of water. But Pakistan was keen on a permanent solution.

What role did World Bank play?

The World Bank, in 1954, offered a proposal to the two nations under which India retain control over the three eastern tributaries while Pakistan controls the three rivers on the west. While India was eager to seal this deal, Pakistan turned hostile and even threatened to walk out.

the water issue to a "core issue" and including it in the composite dialogue. But India has refused to include the issue in the composite dialogue because it is not ready to discard the treaty.

The treaty permitted India to create storages on the western rivers of 1.25, 1.60 and 0.75 million acre feet (MAF) for general, power and flood storages, respectively, amounting to a permissible storage of 3.6 MAF.

"A clear ambiguity in the treaty occurs in its permission to be interpreted differently, thereby creating conflicts between Pakistan and India. The treaty also fails to clearly address India's share of shortages in relation to storage dams on the western rivers, an issue of major concern," the report said.

As a result of climate change, shrinking glaciers and changing

precipitation patterns render the need to address issues of water scarcity and resources. "During floods, for example, majority of the water runs into the rivers of Indus-Pakistan which leaves the province of Sindh flooded. Such negative setbacks on the economy will eventually have dire consequences if not addressed," the report said.

It said that with control of the River Chenab through the Salal dam, India has several plans under way for development of hydropower with enhanced water storage on the western river. Pakistan continues to face reduced flows from the Chenab owing to the recent storage of water in the Baglihar dam.

Awareness on trans-boundary water issues is a recent phenomenon and systematic studies are needed, the report said.

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Indus Water Treaty survival appears weak: UN report

ISLAMABAD, FEBRUARY 2

The 40-year-old Indus Water Treaty between India and Pakistan has been an outstanding example of conflict resolution, but the scarcity of water in the basin states since the early 1990s has brought the agreement under strain and its "survival appears weak", according to a UN report.

"The treaty fails to address two issues: the division of shortages in dry years between India and Pakistan, when flows are almost half as compared to wet years, and the cumulative impact of storages on the flows of the Chenab into Pakistan," said the UNDP report titled 'Development Advocate Pakistan'.

Wular Barrage and Kishenganga project on the Jhelum

and Neelum rivers present a similar problem whereby water storage during the Rabi season is critical as flows are almost one-fifth of the Kharif season, according to the report, which was released yesterday.

"For over 40 years, the Indus Water Treaty has proved to be an outstanding example of conflict resolution. An increase in water stress in the basin states since the early 90s has brought the treaty under strain. In fact, its survival appears weak, although there is no exit clause," it said.

The report said that Pakistan had gone as far as calling the treaty an inefficient forum for resolving water issues, elevating the water issue to a "core issue" and including it in the composite



The Indus at Choglamsar village in Leh. TRIBUNE PHOTO

Unaddressed issues

T-3.2

- The division of shortages in dry years between India and Pakistan, when the flows is almost half as compared to wet years.
- The cumulative impact of storages on the flow of the Chenab into Pakistan.

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As a consequence of climate change, shrinking glaciers and changing precipitation patterns render the need to address issues of water scarcity and resources, it said.

"During floods, for example, majority of the water runs into the rivers of Indus-Pakistan, which leaves the province of Sindh flooded. Such negative setbacks on the economy will eventually have dire conse-

quences if not addressed," the report warned.

It said that with control of the Chenab through the Salal dam, India has several plans underway for the development of hydropower.

Pakistan continues to face reduced flows from the Chenab owing to the recent storage of water in the Baglihar dam. According to the report, the annual flow in the Chenab during wet years has continued to decline since 1958-59 with an increase in droughts since 1937-38.

"Same is the case with the Jhelum being controlled by India. Since the river is a major source of irrigation and hydropower for Pakistan, it will pose dire impacts for the country if India chooses to close the gates of the barrage," the report said. — PTI