

News item/letter/article/editorial published on 2/6/15 in the

Hindustan Times
Statesman
The Times of India (N.D.)
Indian Express
Tribune
Hindustan (Hindi)

Kav Bharat Times (Hindi)
Punjab Keshari (Hindi)
The Hindu
Rajasthan Patrika (Hindi)
Deccan Chronicle
Deccan Herald

M.P.Chronicle
Aaj (Hindi)
Indian Nation
Nai Duniya (Hindi)
The Times of India (A)
Blitz

and documented at Bhagirath(English)& Publicity Section, CWC.

किसानों को राहत देने की प्रक्रिया सुस्त कैश सब्सिडी में

नंवर 7-6-15

राज्यों का रोड़ा

■ जोसफ बर्नार्ड, नई दिल्ली

एक तरफ देश में फसलें बढ़ा होने के चलते आर्थिक तंत्री के कारण किसान आन्वहता कर रहे हैं। किसानों के पास जीज खरीदने और खेती करने के पैसे नहीं हैं। इसका कारण है फटीलाइजर की कालाबजारी व सब्सिडी का किसानों तक सही तरीके से ना पहुंचना। इस कमी को दूर करने के लिए सरकार किसानों की फटीलाइजर पर डायरेक्ट कैश सब्सिडी देना चाहती है। मगर यह प्रक्रिया कहुए की चाल से चल रही है। कारण हैं राज्यों का सहयोग ना देना। इसके चलते केंद्र सरकार को किसानों के लिए फटीलाइजर पर डायरेक्ट कैश सब्सिडी शुरू करने में देरी हो रही है। सूत्रों के अनुसार पीएमओ से इस बात से खासा नाराज है और उसने फटीलाइजर मंत्रालय को संघीय तौर पर कहा है कि वह जल्द राज्यों से इस बारे में बात करके यह सुनिश्चित करें कि इस मामले में जो भी आड़कड़े चाहिए, वे जल्द उपलब्ध हो और औपचारिकताएं जल्द पूरी की जाएं।

यह हैं अड़चने

सरकार किसानों को फटीलाइजर पर कैश सब्सिडी देना चाहती है। इसका मतलब है कि किसानों को कंपनी से फटीलाइजर तो मार्केट रेट पर लेना होगा, मगर सब्सिडी उनके बैंक खातों में चली जाएगी। इसके लिए जरूरी है कि किसानों के पास



आधार नंबर हो, बैंक अकाउंट हो और साथ ही भोवाइल नंबर। इन सबके लिए केंद्र सरकार ने सभी राज्यों से किसानों की सूची मांगी है व सरकारों से कहा है कि वे किसानों का बैंक अकाउंट खुलासे में मदद करें। मगर कुछ को छाड़कर, अधिकांश राज्य इस काम में रुचि नहीं दिखा रहे हैं। ऐसे में अभी तक इस योजना को अंजाम पर लाने की जमीन तक तैयार नहीं हो पाई है।

कब तक मुमकिन?

फटीलाइजर राज्य मंत्री हंसराज अहीर का कहना है कि हम चाहते हैं कि किसानों तक सब्सिडी सही तरीके से पहुंचे। क्योंकि केंद्र सरकार चाहती है कि उसके और किसानों के बीच कोई न रहे। इस योजना को जल्द ही हम शुरू करने वाले हैं। मगर अहीर ने यह नहीं बताया कि कब तक यह योजना शुरू हो सकती है।

सूखा पड़ने पर तुरंत एवशन लेगी सरकार

विस, नई दिल्ली : मोदी सरकार के सामने इस बड़ा सबसे बड़ी चुनौती है संभावित सूखे की स्थिति से निपटना। यही कारण है कि एवशन प्लान तैयार करने के बाद पीएमओ ने सभी संबंधित मंत्रालयों को आदेश दिया है कि अबर कही भी सूखे की स्थिति की आहट होती है, जो एवशन प्लान तैयार किया है, उसके तहत एवशन होना चाहिए। यानी तुरंत कार्रवाई हो और स्थिति को जल्द नियंत्रण में लाने की कोशिश की जाए। मिस मैनेजमेंट की गुजाइश न रखी जाए।

News item/letter/article/editorial published on

27/6/15

in the

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Nai Dunia (Hindi)
The Times of India (A)
Blitz

and documented at Bhagirath(English)& Publicity Section, CWC.

Teesta takes back seat as land deal grabs spotlight

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Dhaka: Despite the game-changing nature of the land boundary agreement (LBA), a question mark hangs over the Teesta deal. PM Narendra Modi's visit, however, is focusing on the LBA, emphasizing its importance in transforming both India's boundary as well as bilateral relations.

Bangladesh's leadership understands this. The Bangladesh foreign minister, A H Mahmud Ali, told journalists on Friday that patience was essential for the deal. "Discussions are under way away from the public glare. You won't see what we are doing because diplomacy does not take place in public." Instead, he stressed on connectivity as the primary "deliverable" of Modi's visit.

In 2011, Mamata Banerjee torpedoed former PM Manmohan Singh's Teesta plans

ture in West Bengal that will enable the state to utilize Teesta's waters for northern Bengal farmers — he is also not likely to insist on a deal before the state elections in 2016.

Mamata is not playing the spoiler this time, but she too needs to secure her own backyard before agreeing to renegotiate the Teesta deal. At present, almost all of Teesta's waters flow into Bangladesh because West Bengal has little or no means to utilize the water. She wants to change that, but it's not yet clear how far she will be successful.

During the discussions here on Saturday and Sunday, Teesta figures prominently, but offline, said sources. There will be no mention of it in the joint statement either.

For ordinary Bangladeshis, though, the LBA is a definite sign that other outstanding issues too would be wrapped up. While in Bangladesh, the dom-



Posters of Modi, Hasina and Mamata put up at a traffic intersection in Dhaka to mark the visit of the Indian leaders to Bangladesh

Covering L... YIS

at the 11th hour... largely because the Centre ignored local political compulsions and failed to factor in Mamata's concerns as the newly elected CM of West Bengal.

Modi has much better political instincts. While incentivizing Mamata on Teesta — the Centre will help the state build irrigation infrastructure

inian narrative is that the LBA will prevent Bangladeshis from getting shot at by BSF rangers, in India, it's about securing the border to prevent infiltration and insurgents from crossing over.

There has been a definite interest here in reports that the BSF wants to legalize cattle trade to Bangladesh.

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NEW DELHI 7 JUNE 2015

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The Sunday Statesman

BEHIND-THE-SCENE NEGOTIATIONS ON WATER-SHARING; MAMATA'S ACCOMPANYING PM SEEN AS HOPEFUL SIGN B'desh banks on Modi for solution to Teesta tangle

uday basu

DHAKA, 6 JUNE : Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 36-hour-long visit of Bangladesh beginning today has triggered a whole range of emotions among the people here over one single issue ~ the botched Teesta water sharing agreement ~, even though it won't figure during his official engagements with Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

The deal is now mired in diplomatic manoeuvring, hair-splitting technical arguments and political calculations, but thousands of people living in

dozens of villages on the two flanks of the river are waiting with bated breath for the differences to be ironed out and a solution found at the earliest. For them it's a question of life and death.

The sharing of Teesta water is a highly emotive issue here because availability of water during the lean period from November to April is the only guarantee for economic and social prosperity of a large swathe of Bangladesh's population.

The problem of scarcity of Teesta water during the lean period has been acutely felt this

year like never before. Farmers living along the areas through which the river flows in Bangladesh complain they can't cultivate their land as the crops dry up around this time of the year. Around 3,000 boatmen depend on the flow of Teesta water for eking out a living. But, they find survival during the lean period extremely difficult as they can't row their boats for lack of water at that time. To over 5,000 fishermen of 24 villages the winter months bring untold miseries. With the river going dry, they can't get any fish. Even school children find themselves in the grip of a dif-



ferent kind of crisis for want of water in the Teesta during the lean season. They are left with no choice, but to walk for miles on sandy land after Teesta water stops flowing. On an average they have to walk 2-4 miles on sandy land to reach their schools and attend classes, whereas during the monsoon months they get jolly well boat rides to their schools. Sheikh



Reroze, convener of Teesta Raksha Sangram Committee, spearheading the movement for "better" sharing of Teesta water, said the last lean period was the worst ever.

According to Bangladesh Joint River Commission (JRC) estimates Bangladesh received only 232 cusecs of Teesta water on 22 March, while the average flow of Teesta in the last 10 days



of March ~ the peak of the lean period ~ dropped to 315 cusecs this year from 550 cusecs during the same period in 2014.

Against this bleak backdrop the only hope for Bangladesh is Mr Modi's "deft" handling of the unresolved issues between India and Bangladesh. The presence of Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee during the signing of the Land Border Agreement and

the introduction of Kol Dhaka-Agartala bus service today has raised hopes of people of Bangladesh that a solution to the Teesta tangle probably in sight.

Significantly, the foreign minister of Bangladesh Mahmood Ali said: "though the Teesta deal won't be during Mr Modi's ongoing visit, diplomatic negotiations are going on behind the scenes to reach a mutually acceptable formula for water sharing. The media will come to know about the outcome of Teesta negotiations when concrete results are achieved."

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Blitz

and documented at Bhuparat (English) & Publicity Section, CWC.

Mamata's presence is hope for stalled Teesta agreement

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DHAKA: "The land boundary agreement is historic, it will be good for all," was West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee's short response to the media on Saturday.

Banerjee's presence, and more importantly her one-on-one meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, was a key highlight of the first day of Modi's visit to Dhaka.

The West Bengal chief minister had a 40-minute meeting with Modi on Saturday afternoon as the two leaders, engaged in an animated conversation, walked to the venue where they flagged off the two bus services along with Bangladesh prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

An Indian officer said the three leaders later met in a private affair, without any officials.

The Bangladesh prime minister also spared no efforts to please Banerjee. Soon after her flight landed in Dhaka, Hasina phoned the chief minister and requested her to stay longer. Banerjee then altered her previous plans and



■ As soon as Mamata landed in Dhaka, Sheikh Hasina called her up and requested her to extend her stay. PTI PHOTO

attended the banquet.

"We were privileged to have with us the chief minister of West Bengal," Modi said in his statement to the media after meeting his Bangladeshi counterpart.

Banerjee's presence has brought some hope to the stalled Teesta water-sharing treaty, though the Trinamool leader, faced with the forthcoming

assembly elections in 2016, will not be changing her position on the treaty.

Unhappy over the treaty, the West Bengal chief minister had refused to accompany the then prime minister Manmohan Singh to Dhaka in 2011.

"No important water-sharing treaty has been signed in the world in this century, indicating how increasing water stress is making sharing and cooperation more difficult," said strategic affairs expert Brahma Chellaney, author of the book Water: Asia's New Battleground.

He added, "With states in India asserting their rights, it is no longer possible to do what Nehru did — ride roughshod over the interests of local Indian states, especially Jammu and Kashmir, by signing the Indus Waters Treaty with Pakistan."

The Teesta deal was set to be inked during then prime minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Bangladesh in September 2011 but was postponed at the last minute due to objections raised by Banerjee who had also dropped out of the prime ministerial delegation.

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Oh Teesta! A river which gives B'desh heartburn

HT Correspondent

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DHAKA: "Oh, Teesta!" ran a front-page headline in one of Bangladesh's leading newspapers Daily Star on Saturday. The accompanying smaller headline was equally stark – "Thin river to continue reminding Bangladesh about prolonged sufferings inflicted by India".

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Dhaka for what is being described as a "historic" visit, the spotlight invariably is on the Teesta waters, one of the most emotional issues for Bangladesh in its relations with India.

While the two countries are all set to settle a 41-year-old border dispute through the exchange of 161 enclaves, a consensus on Teesta water-sharing remains elusive despite several rounds of talks between both countries.

Bangladesh and India share 54

rivers but none evokes as much passion in Bangladesh as Teesta.

"For India, the visit (of PM Modi) will be a crowning success. But for Bangladesh, the visit without a Teesta deal will be a deep disappointment and a defeat of our diplomacy," wrote Abdul Harman, a former diplomat and columnist.

But water being a state subject, the Centre cannot hope to conclude a deal on sharing Teesta water without getting West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee on board. But with West Bengal headed for polls in 2016, Mamata Banerjee would find it difficult to move on the demand.

As per an agreement of 2011, which was not signed due to opposition from Banerjee, the two sides had agreed to share the river's water 50:50, the same as the 1996 Ganges water-sharing pact between the neighbours.

Of late, Dhaka is complaining



* PM Modi, on a 2-day visit to Dhaka, interacts with a child as Sheikh Hasina looks on.

REUTERS PHOTO

that the flow of Teesta is thinning alarmingly.

The Teesta deal was set to be inked during the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Bangladesh in September 2011 but was postponed at the last minute due to objections by

Banerjee, who had also dropped out of the Prime Ministerial delegation.

And though Mamata Banerjee has joined Modi on the Dhaka visit, they won't be quenching Bangladesh's thirst for Teesta waters.



A woman crosses the dry bed of a village pond in Kutch district. Express

AHMEDABAD

Village may lose only water supply source

RESIDENTS OF A REMOTE VILLAGE ON Khadir Island, around 250 km east of Bhuj town in Kutch district, are worried. Kalyanpar village has received barely any rainfall in the last two years. And now, the owner of a tube well which happens to be the sole source of drinking water for the village, has threatened to stop supplying water from August.

"Our village pond has remained dry for many years," said the sarpanch.

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PM assures Bangla on Teesta,

Water sharing is a human issue...I am confident that we can reach a fair solution on Teesta and Feni

EXPRESS IN BANGLADESH

In September 2011, with Mamata cancelling her trip at the last minute, Singh had said: "Our common rivers need not be sources of discord, but can become the harbingers of prosperity to both our countries."

While Modi on Saturday only pushed for a "fair solution", Singh had then said that they have decided to continue discussions to reach a "mutually acceptable, fair and amicable arrangement" for the sharing of the Teesta and Feni river waters.

On the issue of trade imbalance, Modi said he was "conscious" of the huge trade imbalance and will do everything India can to bridge the deficit.

"I am conscious of the huge trade imbalance, despite duty free and quota free access to Bangladesh in India on all but 25 items. Yet, I have assured the Prime Minister that we will do everything we can to bridge the deficit. Indian investments in Bangladesh will help. I will also try to make trade smoother and easier, including at the border. The agreement on standards and testing is a step in that direction," Modi said.

"Our rivers should nurture our relationship, not become a source of discord. Water sharing is, above all, a human issue. It affects life and livelihood on both sides of the border. I am confident that with the support of state governments in India, we can reach a fair solution on Teesta and Feni Rivers," Modi said.



Modi at the Bangabandhu Museum in Dhaka on Saturday. Tapan Dey

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