

Money can't buy water

States are quick to demand central funds to tackle drought, but show little drive to implement water conservation plans, writes KUMKUM DASGUPTA



■ In Bundelkhand, everyone, especially women, seem to have only one primary job: Search for water
GETTY IMAGES

We are floating on water,' Gulabi Bai said with a straight face. It wasn't a rhetorical statement; it was a rap on my wrist for enquiring about the severity of the water crisis in Jatara village in Madhya Pradesh's Tikamgarh district, one of the worst-affected districts in the drought-hit Bundelkhand region, which comprises seven districts of Uttar Pradesh and six of Madhya Pradesh. This drought is the 13th in 15 years.

As I travelled from Jhansi to other districts of Bundelkhand, the scene was frightening. The land is pre-dominantly brown with a few patches of greenery around fast-depleting waterholes, dry river beds, empty hand pumps and wells. In many wells, there was no water even at 80 feet. Everyone, especially women, seems to have only one primary job: Search for water. So intense is the scarcity that it is leading to social tension between the 'water haves and have-nots'. Many Scheduled Caste families complained about upper castes cornering water tankers; others talked about how panchayat heads of big villages are refusing to send tankers to smaller villages.

As in Marathwada, the tanker mafia is making a killing here too: Providing less water than what the government is paying for and, in some cases, compromising on water quality. This lack of availability of water is bound to impact the Centre's grand Swachh Bharat plans and also impact the health of the people. Besides shortage of drinking water, drought also poses the threat of hunger and malnutrition. A report released by Swaraj Abhiyan on Monday said 40% villages in Bundelkhand region of MP are left with two or less functioning hand-pumps.

Women, children and the elderly are bearing the brunt of this endless drought. It's summer holidays now, but children recounted how teachers would send students back to their homes during classes to quench their thirst since the hand pumps in schools were dry. "How will they ever learn like this," asked an anxious mother.

Leave alone daily life, celebrations are also on hold: Marriages will be held only after the rains because, as one elderly man said: "How will we host guests in this situation?" The elderly are waiting for the rains for one

more reason: They hope a good monsoon will bring back their family members who have migrated to cities for jobs. At Jhansi railway station, families with children, pots, pans and their meagre belongings can be seen leaving the region in droves. With the State almost abdicating its responsibilities, NGOs such as Parmarth Samaj Sevi Sansthan have opened community kitchens to feed the elderly and the disabled in some villages.

This wasn't my first visit to rural India. But I can't remember seeing so many bovine creatures walking aimlessly along the highways. With no fodder and water for the cattle, farmers are forced to release them. For a farmer, the cattle are not only draught animals but also a sort of fixed deposit to tide over emergencies.

A report in Down To Earth says that the Centre has spent ₹15,000 crore in the past decade to create water-harvesting structures. That includes the ₹7,000 crore package for Bundelkhand announced by the UPA at the behest of Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi. With this money, over 116,000 harvesting structures (700 check dams and 236 minor irrigation projects) were constructed in Bundelkhand between 2006 and 2015. But the impact of such structures in harvesting rainwater has been limited because of the bad construction quality and wrong location. In places, where quality check dams have been built, there is water—for example, in Chandrapur village, Lalitpur district, Uttar Pradesh. Thanks to the village's water-harvesting efforts, the groundwater level around the area has improved so much that villagers have left one pond exclusively for cattle.

Severe water crisis is not new to Bundelkhand but its rulers had found ways to tackle it. To drought-proof the area, the Chandelas and Bundelas, the Rajput clans who ruled these areas between the 10th and 16th centuries, built a network of tanks and ponds to harvest rainwater in good seasons. Many of them lasted centuries and some are still functional. But thanks to the State apathy in maintaining them and encroachment by the public, most have been destroyed.

Check dams and water-harvesting structures, however, alone cannot minimise the impact of such back-to-back drought on people. Preparing for drought requires action

on several fronts: Setting up constitutional, legal and institutional frameworks for monitoring, early warning systems based on identified indicators, relief measures, financial and economic support and dedicated financing. In other words, several departments have to work seamlessly. But the State has failed in this too. Thanks to delayed payments and corruption in the MGNREGA, which could stop migration, people have lost interest in it. The agriculture department's extension services, which could have helped farmers to decide on crops that take less water, are almost non-existent.

"While drought relief and management are important, a shift in public policy from drought management to drought mitigation is necessary," writes Indira Khurana, policy lead at IPE Global, an international development consulting company, in Reflections on Managing Water: Mitigation measures must include reducing soil erosion, augmenting soil moisture, slowing rainwater drainage and improving the efficiency of water use.

Kunal Shah, director, disaster management at World Vision India, said that drought or no drought, India is facing a grave water scarcity and only funds and schemes will not be enough to drought-proof the country. The State must involve communities in building and maintaining the water-harvesting structures. In fact, in many places I found people who are ready to walk long distances for water but wanted government to clean up/deepen wells.

There is tremendous anger among people but Bhopal, Lucknow and New Delhi don't seem anxious. On May 6, only 80 MPs were present during a debate on drought in the Lok Sabha when 10 states are drought-hit.

Late last week, the CMs of three drought-hit states met Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Uttar Pradesh chief minister Akhilesh Yadav demanded funds to buy 10,000 tankers and ₹11,000-crore central assistance. The demands of the two other chief ministers — of Maharashtra and Karnataka — were on similar lines. It's a pity that states are quick to demand central funds to tackle drought. But they show little leadership when it comes to devising and implementing long-term community-based water and land management plans to drought-proof their states.

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DATA

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LAST DROP: RIVER BASINS

Interlinking of rivers: an idea with flaws



- [Jacob Koshy](#)



- [Samarth Bansal](#)



A man carrying water from the dry Krishna river. Photo: Special Arrangement

The stark differences in water availability in the river basins in the country has thrown up the idea of interlinking of rivers, but this project is not foolproof.

The initial plan to interlink India's rivers came in 1858 from a British irrigation engineer, Sir Arthur Thomas Cotton. Since late last year, the scheme has been implemented by the Central government in several segments such as the Godavari-Krishna interlink in Andhra Pradesh, and the Ken-Betwa interlink in Madhya Pradesh. The evidence on the benefits of the interlinking scheme is mixed. On the one hand the project is built on hopes that it will boost per capita water availability for 220mn water-hungry Indians. The scheme also envisions an area more than twice the size of Andhra Pradesh receiving additional water for irrigation and to eventually even out the precarious swings between floods and droughts. Yet even as the project moves forward it must consider the risks at hand, which include the possibility that it could displace nearly 1.5 million people due to the submergence of 27.66 lakh hectares of land; and concerns surrounding

escalating cost projections, which have reportedly jumped to something closer to Rs. 11 lakh crore. Part five of the six-part series focusses on river basins.

For most of March and April, Thursdays are dismal news days for India's Central Water Commission (CWC), the nodal body responsible for commissioning dams and major water-storage bodies, and monitoring their health.

On that day they make public the state of water storage in India's principal reservoirs and the general news has been that water has plummeted to historic lows, both in terms of the corresponding period of last year and also compared to the average storage of last ten years during the corresponding period.

Their view of river basins is not very different.

For the purposes of monitoring, the CWC divides India's rivers into 12 major basins. The largest of them – the Ganga basin – is not the worst case. The CWC figures for April 28 show storage to be 7.8 BCM. While that may be less than the 10.6 BCM storage at the same time last year it is 22.8 per cent more than the decadal average of 6.35 BCM.

However the numbers for the Indus basin and the Krishna basins are far from inspiring. The Indus this year is 35 per cent and the Krishna 67 per cent less than their 10-year normal.

The most updated estimates of per capita water availability in India's river basins show stark inequality. The Brahmaputra basin, for instance, can annually support nearly 13000 cubic metres per person, whereas the Mahi has a scarce 260 cubic metres per person.

Inter-basin inequality

This well-known inequality in distribution is the reason why engineers at the CWC and India's water resources ministry have urged for the diverting water from the Ganga basin, which floods even in drought years as it did in Assam this year, through a complex of canals and medium-sized storages into less-endowed rivers.

“Storage provides you flexibility in the uses of water. Dams are required but whether they must be big or small is something that must be decided based on the region they are located,” said G.S. Jha, the Chief of the CWC, in an interview.

Being able to successfully transfer water through the interlinking of rivers will mean 35 million hectares of irrigation, raising the ultimate irrigation potential from 140 million hectare to 175 million hectare and generation of 34000 megawatt of power, apart from the incidental benefits of flood control, navigation, water supply, fisheries, salinity and pollution control, according to the Central government.

Perils of linking rivers

Yet not all are convinced of the feasibility and benefits of the proposal. Water Resources Minister Uma Bharti argues that river interlinking

will cost the government about Rs. 10 trillion and the spate of projects that involve connecting 14 for Himalayan rivers and 16 in peninsular India implies that 15,000 km of new canals will have to be added to relocate 174 BCM of water.

Apart from the massive displacement of people that such projects will bring about, says activist Himanshu Thakkar, they also threaten to obstruct the natural ecology of rivers.

Former Planning Commission member, Mihir Shah noted in a critique of India's river-interlinking projects in the Economic and Political Weekly that in the Krishna river basin water storage in major and medium reservoirs has reached total water yield with virtually no water going into the sea in low rainfall years.

Since the Ganga basin's topography is flat, building dams would not substantially add to river flows and these dams could threaten the forests of the Himalayas and impact the functioning of the monsoon system.

Climate change is another concern. In interlinking systems, it is assumed that the donor basin has surplus water that can be made available to the recipient basin.

"If in future, this basic assumption goes haywire for any system, wherein our perennial systems – mostly Himalayan – don't retain the same character of being donor basins, then the whole concept goes for a toss. This will happen if the glaciers don't sustain their glacier mass due to climate change," explained A. Gossain, Professor at IIT Delhi who researches Indian water resources.

Professor Gossain however notes that alternatives such as curbing demand by efficient utilisation of existing water resources should be prioritised before making big-ticket investments in river interlinking.

Questions of storage needn't always be seen in the light of big dams, adds Shashi Shekhar, Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources. The judicious use of canal water, growing crops that were appropriate to a region, encouraging drip irrigation and reviving traditional systems such as the use of tanks are also as important as creating new storage.

"Drought prone systems have a traditional network of tanks that were always employed for harnessing water during crises...a focus of the government is also to better use these systems across the country," he said.

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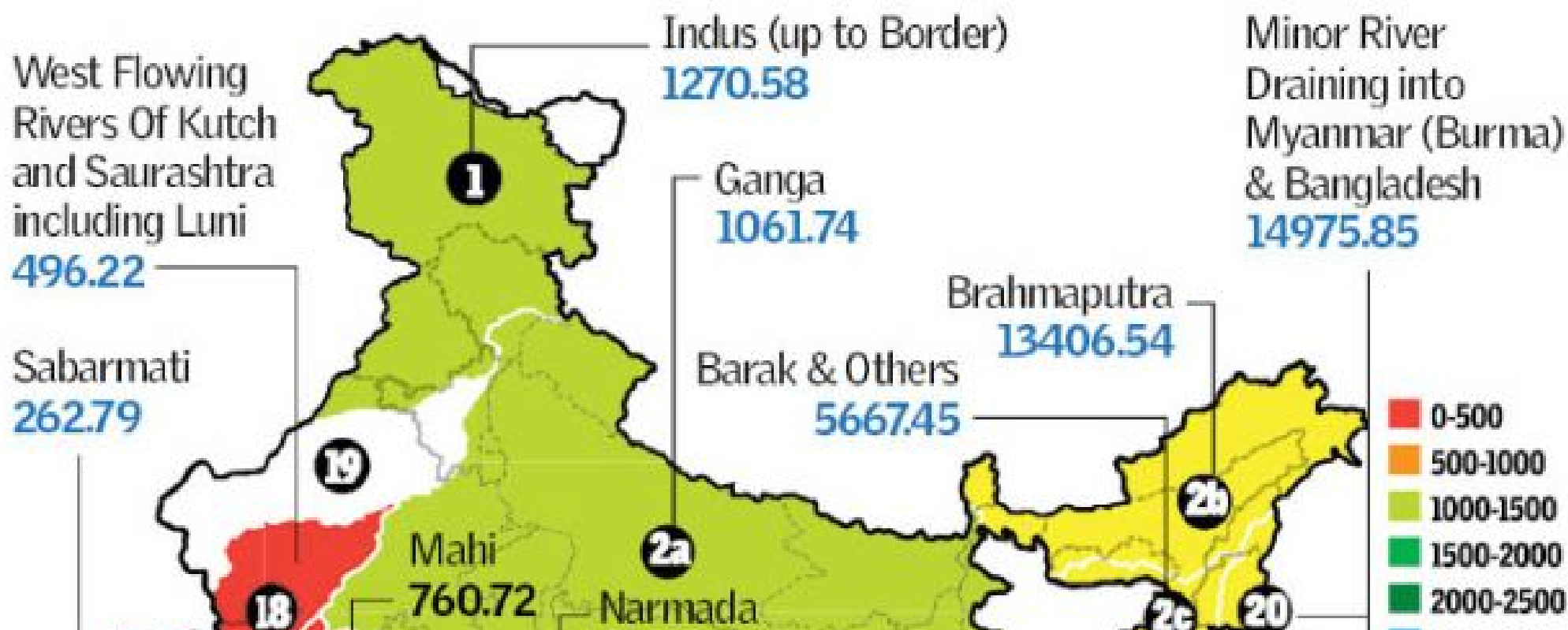
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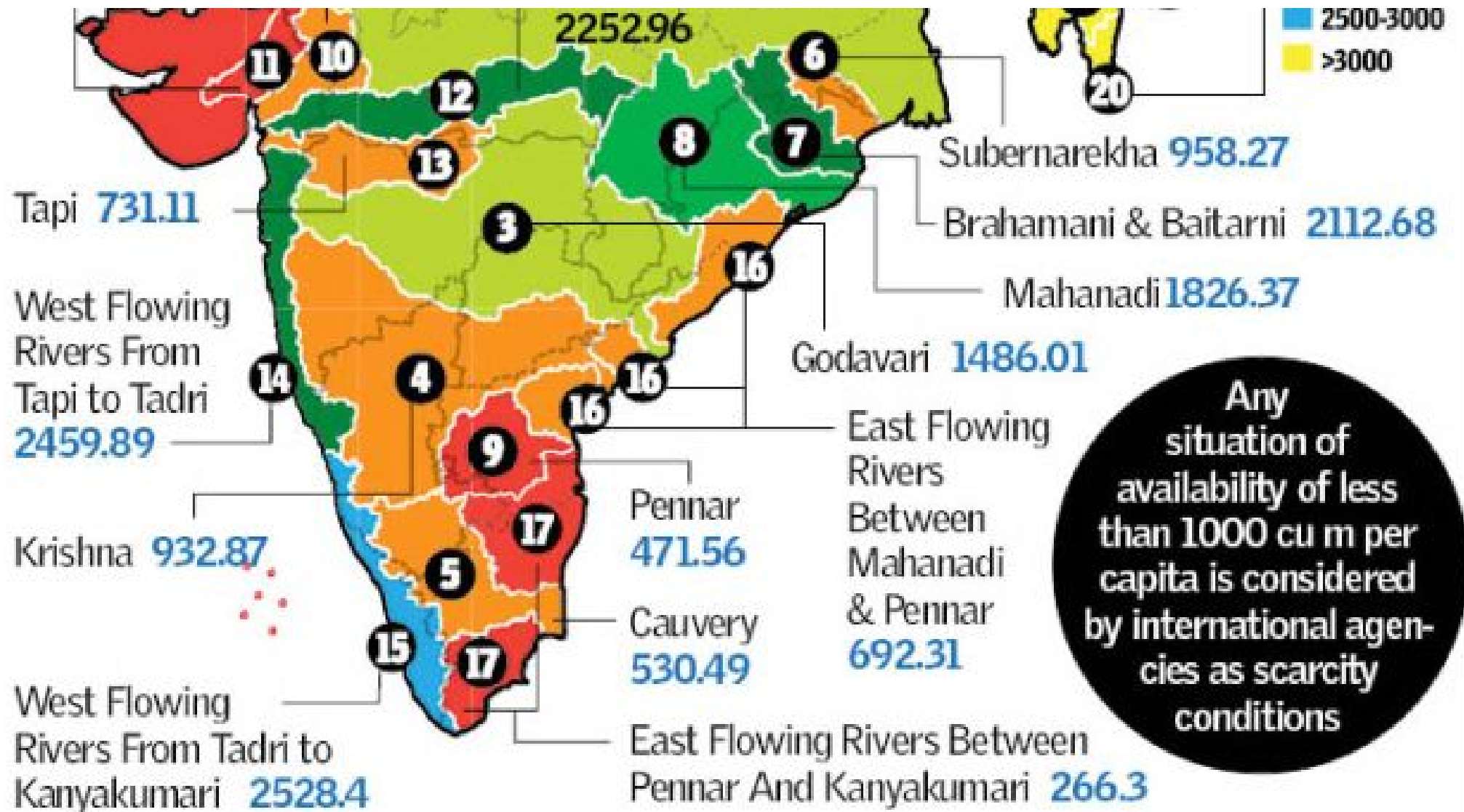
BLEAK FRESH WATER FUTURE

River basins are increasingly drying up resulting in falling per capita water availability across many parts of India pointing to a grim future ahead

ESTIMATED PER CAPITA AVERAGE ANNUAL WATER AVAILABILITY (M³)

There is wide disparity in basin-wise water availability due to uneven rainfall and varying population density in the country. The availability is as high as 14057 cu m/year per capita in Brahmaputra/ Barak Basin and as low as 307 cu m/year/person in Sabarmati basin.





PER CAPITA WATER AVAILABILITY DECLINING

National per capita annual availability of water (cu m)

2001

1,816

○ Cauvery, Pennar, Sabarmati and East Flowing rivers and West Flowing Rivers of Kutch and Saurashtra including Luni



Source: Central Water Commission | Details of State-wise per capita availability of water are not available as surface water resources are estimated basin-wise

COMPILED BY SAMARTH BANSAL

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HT-10-P-13 'Hunger, cattle deaths haunt Bundelkhand'

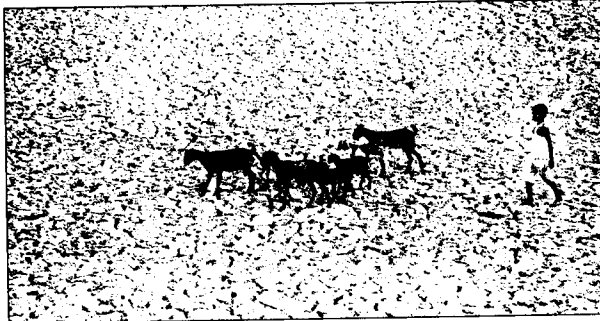
Zia Haq

■ zia.haq@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: A disaster-like situation has gripped Bundelkhand, a parched region spanning UP and Madhya Pradesh, due to drought, with households battling hunger, cattle deaths and water scarcity, not-for-profit Swaraj Abhiyaan has said, citing a survey done by it.

The organisation, led by academic-activist Yogendra Yadav, said there were signs of a humanitarian crisis in a majority of the 122 villages. Alleging insufficient drought aid and mitigation, the NGO is fighting a public-interest case in Supreme Court, following which the top court had issued notices to the Centre.

Water shortage has been alarming in four large districts—Tikamgarh, Chhatarpur, Panna and Datia—in Madhya



■ In several villages, large number of cattle deaths have pushed people into acute poverty, according to the survey.

AP FILE

Pradesh, Yadav said.

"About 59% villages in UP reported having more than 10 families who do not manage two square meals a day. The corresponding number in MP was 35%. Reports of people resorting to begging for food or using poor

quality foodgrain substitutes like 'fika' (wild grass seed), have also been received," Yadav said.

Bundelkhand is a drought-prone impoverished region of 70,000 sq km spanning 13 districts of UP and Madhya Pradesh. This is the third straight year

of drought in the area.

Several villages are facing "acute shortage" of drinking water and a large number of cattle deaths have pushed people further into further poverty, Yadav said, alleging that authorities were not acting adequately. Yadav said 40% of the 43 villages toured in Madhya Pradesh had "two or less" hand pumps.

The organization claimed both state governments weren't doing enough to ramp up the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.

Yadav said in the 79 villages in Uttar Pradesh surveyed, the situation was better compared to Madhya Pradesh.

"An abysmally low 5% villages in MP reported ongoing employment work for job holders under MNREGS while the percentage was 29 in UP villages," Yadav said.

News item/letter/article/editorial published on May-10-05-2016 in the

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The Times of India (N.D.)

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Tribune

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The Hindu

Rajasthan Patrika (Hindi)

Deccan Chronicle

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Aaj (Hindi)

Indian Nation

Nai Duniya (Hindi)

The Times of India (A)

Blitz

and documented at Bhagirath(English)& Publicity Section, CW/C.

Global warming may be leading to spike in kidney ailments, finds study TIO-10-05-14

Ekatha.Ann@timesgroup.com

Chennai: When a mystery kidney disease killed more than 20,000 people in Central America over the course of a decade, it set alarm bells ringing in several tropical countries, including India. The victims had similar profiles: they were young, their work involved hard labour and long hours in the sun.

Now, a group of doctors has come together to re-establish an inconvenient truth: the world could be witnessing its first human epidemic directly linked to global warming. And India is one of the hotspots. The researchers have identified parts of the country with suspected sites of heat stress-associated nephropathy — caused by dehydration and heat — and they include Andhra Pra-

HOT ZONE

> There has been a **10.4% decrease in annual rainfall** and a **17.6% decrease in annual rainy days** over the last century (1901-2007)

> Evaporation of sweat **lowers body temperature** when air temperature is higher than 35°C, leading to loss of water and electrolytes



> **Loss of water and sodium** leads to kidney disease

desh, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Goa and Maharashtra.

Chennai-based nephrologist Dr Georgi Abraham, who was part of the research team, said global warming was

not even in the picture when they started the study, results of which the Clinical Journal of American Society of Nephrology has published. "We just wanted to probe why certain pockets had such high kidney ailments despite people not having diabetes, high blood pressure or obesity — usual risk factors for kidney diseases," said Abraham.

After they ruled out metabolic factors and possible presence of toxins, a study in Latin America gave the team its break. Many sugarcane farmers in Nicaragua were hospitalised with chronic kidney diseases. When doctors probed, they linked the ailments to the practice of burning sugarcane during harvest.

"The high temperature caused the workers to sweat and they weren't drinking enough water," Abraham sa-

id. "The heat and dehydration took a toll on the kidney."

Closer home, a team from Jipmer, Puducherry, undertook a similar study on salt pan workers in the Union Territory. They found the same result: increased creatinine levels, signifying impaired kidney functioning or renal disease. Creatinine is a chemical waste in the blood that passes through kidneys, which filter it before the body eliminates it in urine.

"The impact isn't immediate. Every day we noticed some degree of kidney damage and muscle breakdown because of the heat," said Dr Vivekanand Jha, professor of nephrology at the George Institute for Global Health in New Delhi, who was part of the team. "That's when we decided to look at global warming as a possible cause of this mysterious ailment."

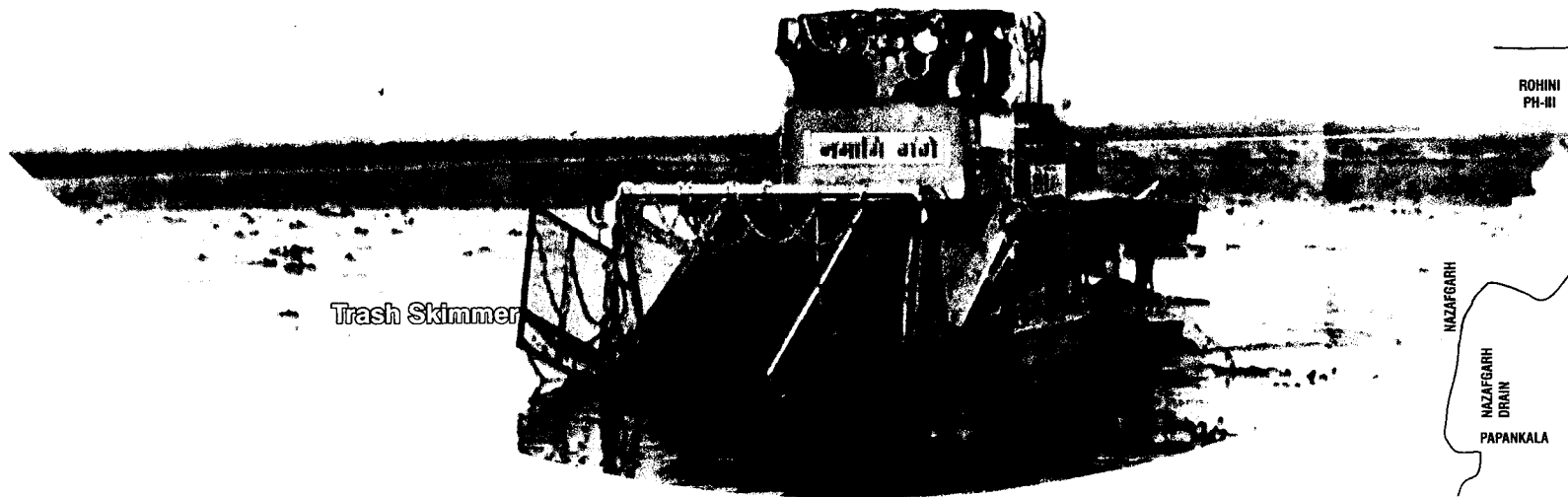


Shri Narendra Modi
Hon'ble Prime Minister

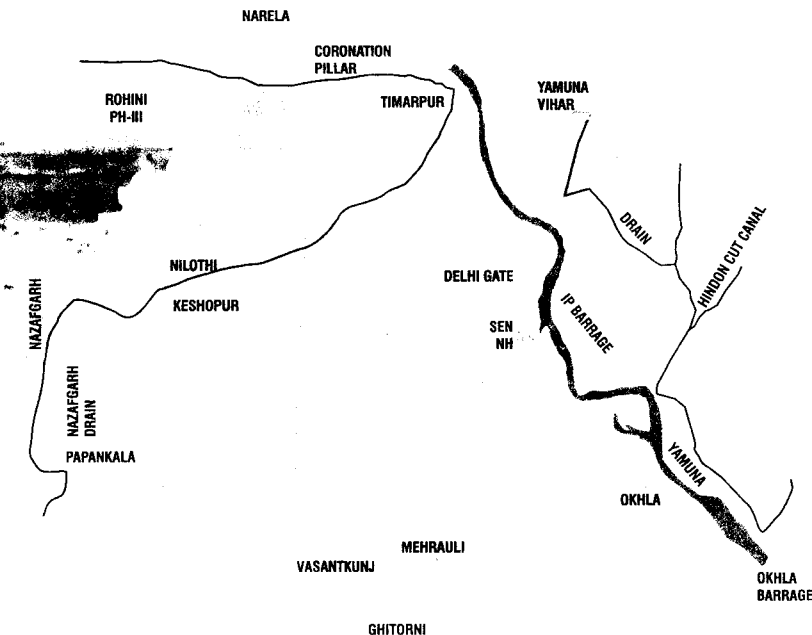
“We will not let Yamuna remain dirty”

Let clean water flow in the **Yamuna** not sewage

Today, Delhi will take the initiative to conserve and rejuvenate the Yamuna



Trash Skimmer



Inauguration by

SUSHRI UMA BHARATI

Hon'ble Minister of Water Resources, River Development
& Ganga Rejuvenation, Govt. of India

SHRI KAPIL MISHRA

Hon'ble Minister of Water, Tourism and Arts,
Culture & Languages, Govt. of Delhi

Launching of:

- Rehabilitation & upgradation of Rithala Phase-I Sewage Treatment Plant with Tertiary Treatment Plant
- Rehabilitation of sewers in Ashok Vihar and Jahangirpuri Area
- Rehabilitation of Trunk Sewer No. 4, Narwana Road, Anand Vihar, Hargovind Enclave and Vikas Marg sewers
- Rehabilitation of Trunk Sewer No.5 and Jhilmil Colony sewer
- Rejuvenation of Chhath Ghat
- River surface cleaning by Trash Skimmer

at Chhath Ghat, New Delhi on 7th May, 2016

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

Nav Bharat Times (Hindi)
Punjab Keshari (Hindi)
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A a j (Hindi)
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The Times of India (A)
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and documented at Bhagirath(English) & Publicity Section, CWC.

Centre, Delhi govt come together to clean Yamuna

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P- 2

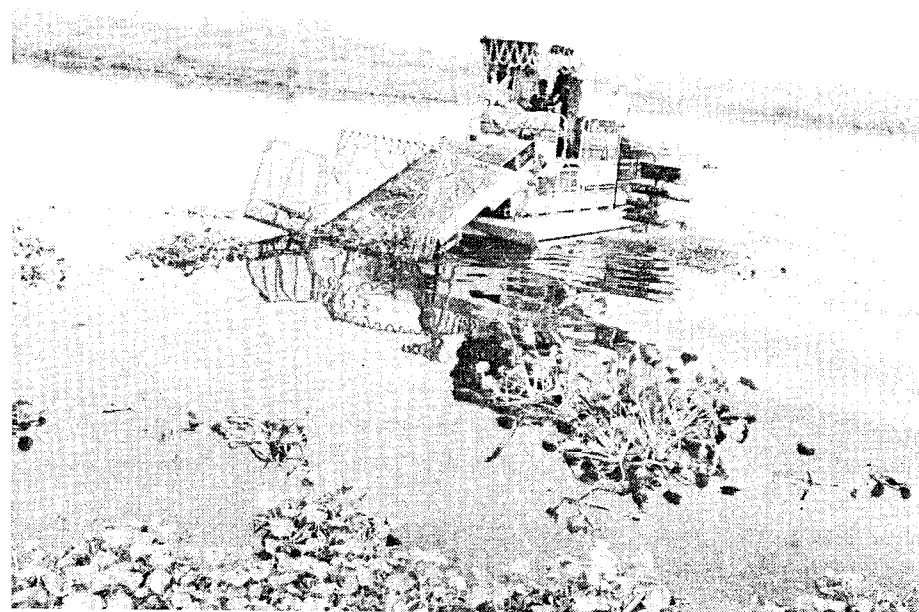
press trust of india

NEW DELHI, 7 MAY: Often at logger-heads, the BJP-led NDA Government and Arvind Kejriwal dispensation today came together to launch a fresh "wholesome" action plan worth around Rs 825 crore to rid Yamuna of its filth within two-and-half years.

Under the third Yamuna Action Plan (YAP), flagged off by Union Water Resources Minister Uma Bharti in the presence of Delhi Minister Kapil Mishra here, the two governments will carry out works such as construction of STPs along drains between Wazirabad and Okhla to treat waste water, clean the river's surface removing solid waste with trash skimmers, create river fronts and repair Chhat Ghat.

"Under this plan, we will build STPs to curb its pollution, create a new riverfront, repair Chhat Ghat spending Rs 2.5 crore. We have also deployed trash skimmer worth Rs 4.5 crore for cleaning Yamuna consistently.

"If need be, we will deploy more such skimmers. Thus, we are treating solid waste, sewage waste and if we get any proposal from state, we will treat chemical waste



Yamuna cleaning drive began in the Capital on Saturday. sns

too," Bharti said.

Thanking the Central government for its initiative, Mishra noted launch of the work is "historic" and said the authorities will ensure "not a single" drop of filthy water flows into the river after next two-and-half years.

"I thank Uma didi, her ministry and the Government. We are working like a team. And a result

of it, we have launched work on this comprehensive package of treating waste water, removing solid waste and repairing Chhat Ghat. This is an historic beginning," he said.

Mishra said the Kejriwal-led government is working on a "comprehensive" action plan which will be submitted to Centre within 30-45 days and executed after consulting

Delhi residents.

He also stated that students of US-based Virginia University will chalk out a plan to clean the river.

"We will execute the project in a time-bound manner, we intend to clean the river, in which not a drop of dirty water flows into, in two to two-and-half years. And the way things are moving, we can see that happening," he added.

Hindustan Times
Statesman ✓
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and documented at Bhagirath(English)& Publicity Section. CWC.

3 CMs meet PM to discuss drought, seek aid

statesman news service

NEW DELHI, 7 MAY: In the wake of severe drought conditions and water scarcity prevailing across the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi today held separate review meetings with the Chief Ministers of Karnataka, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh to work out measures to mitigate the problems being faced by the people of these states and find medium and long-term solutions to the yearly phenomenon.

Underling the need for joint efforts by states and the Central government to combat the situation, Mr Modi called for "healthy competition among states" to promote water conservation and



Uttar Pradesh CM Akhilesh Yadav with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the Capital on Saturday. sns

management initiatives in the manner they spoke of increasing GSDP and investment in their respective states. He also asked the

NITI Aayog to formulate an index on water management and conservation to keep a track of progress on the two fronts.

Calling the water scarcity and drought conditions across 11 affected states as "our problem", the PM told the chief ministers that steps such as desilting, setting up of farm tanks, building check dams over the coming over two months ahead of monsoon would help hold water which would in turn recharge the underground water table, a point underlined by him during his recent Mann Ki Baat address to the nation.

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah apprised the Prime Minister of various steps such as waste water management programme being implemented in his state. He drew Mr Modi's

turn to page 4

3 CMs meet PM...

continued from page 1

attention to severe water shortage in the major rivers and reservoirs of the state. He said steps were being taken to ensure supply of adequate drinking water to the people of the state. He also submitted a memorandum to the PM on the prevailing situation in the state. An additional sum of Rs 1433 crore will be provided to the state to deal with drought and water scarcity and towards various agricultural schemes during 2016-17.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis told Mr Modi that efforts were on to bring the entire sugarcane crop in his state under drip irrigation. He said

efforts were underway "to complete critical irrigation projects (in the worst hit) Marathwada and Vidarbha regions in a time-bound manner". He said an increasing number of farmers were being brought under the umbrella of institutional credit. Mr Modi suggested the state can adopt the water conservation techniques adopted by Chatrapati Shivaji.

Seeking to draw the Prime Minister's attention to the problems being faced by the water-starved people of Bundelkhand, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav said steps such as provisioning of drinking water, food to the needy, employment, water and fodder for cattle were

underway. He shared with Mr Modi the state's action plan for the revival and restoration of 78,000 water-bodies, including tanks, ponds, and farm ponds. The NITI Aayog elaborated on measures taken to release funds under the Bundelkhand package.

Assuring the drought-hit states of all Central help, the Prime Minister directed concerned central departments to release the necessary funds to the states urgently as per their respective requirements to help them come to terms with the situation. Top officials of central and state governments and concerned department heads were present during the review meeting.

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Centre to release funds for drinking water ^{ST-8}_{P-4}

press trust of india

drought condition across the state.

PATNA, 7 MAY: The Centre has decided to unconditionally release Rs 1,100 crore on May 13 as second instalment to meet water requirements in states, many of which are battling severe heat conditions, Union Minister of State for Drinking Water Ramkripal Yadav said today.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has directed us to issue the money without waiting for utility certificate of the previous allocation," Yadav told reporters here.

He said the states should dig well, borewell, install handpump as per requirements with this fund to help the people meet their water need.

As first instalment, the Centre had released Rs 819.67 crore to 35 states and Union Territories, he said.

As on 5 May, the states had Rs 2,634.36 crore total available funds with them, the minister said, adding Rs 1,814.69 crore of which remained with them unspent till 5 May.

Giving details of Rs 819.67 crore released as first instalment, he said Rajasthan received Rs 85.69 crore, Uttar Pradesh Rs 84.04 crore, Maharashtra Rs 80.26 crore, Jammu and Kashmir Rs 53.26 crore and Bihar Rs 45.93 crore.

Uttar Pradesh, which is locked in fight with the Centre over it sending water train for Bundelkhand region, was allocated a fund of Rs 416.76 crore, of which Rs 332.72 crore remained unspent balance as on May 5, he said.

Bihar has available balance of Rs 116.46 crore and Rs 115.27 crore as unspent balance as on May 5, he said.

The Union minister said out of the 13 states facing drought-like situation, Bihar and Haryana have not declared themselves facing

"The report sent by these two states (Bihar and Haryana) stating condition of water shortage does not match the ground reality," Yadav, BJP MP from Patliputra constituency in Patna district, said.

"Due to incomplete information provided by Bihar and Haryana, no central team could visit them to take stock of the situation. Besides, they could not avail special assistance from national disaster management fund," he said.

The Union minister said Bihar had declared 19 of its districts and 160 villages as hit by drinking water shortage "which seems far from true."

Bihar has total 38 districts and 40,110 villages and water condition in many of them were not satisfactory, he said.

He said implementation of 'seven resolves' of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar which includes piped drinking water to every household would take time.

The suggestion given by RJD president Lalu Prasad about digging wells to meet water needs could be beneficial in future.

"But for meeting immediate needs of drinking water, the Bihar government should go back to handpump, among others," he said.

Besides Bihar and Haryana, other states declared as drought-hit are Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat.

He said the prime minister has set a target of providing water supply connection to 90 per cent of the households across the country by 2022.

"The target is to provide 90 litres of water daily to every citizen by 2022," he added.

News item/letter/article/editorial published on May-10.05.2016 in the

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The Times of India (N.D.)

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Hindustan (Hindi)

Nav Bharat Times (Hindi)

Punjab Keshari (Hindi)

The Hindu

Rejasthan 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, CV/C.

BHARTI LAUNCHES NINE INITIATIVES TO CONSERVE THE RIVER

For Ganga's sake

BT-10
P-7

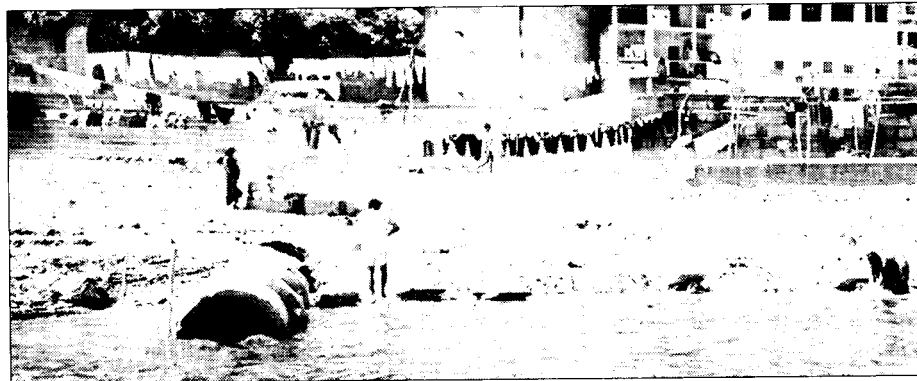
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sahibganj (Jharkhand), 9
May

In line with the Centre's efforts to conserve Ganga, Union water resources minister Uma Bharti today launched a series of initiatives to check pollution in the river and improve sanitation practices among villagers staying along its stretch in Jharkhand.

Speaking at an event here, she said nine initiatives have been taken for effective management of solid and liquid waste and participation of local governing agencies in the same.

Bharti, according to an official statement, said eight village-level



crematoriums, 32 bathing ghats and 40 community toilets will be constructed along the 83-km stretch of the river in the state.

She stated that more than 10,000 soak pits will be constructed through community participation to contain and dispose surplus waste water

emerging from households and community-managed hand pumps of the villages.

The government will undertake community-led construction of 1.52 lakh meters of open channel drains in the project villages to ensure "speedy and safe" disposal of domestic waste, she

said. The BJP leader emphasised that improving health and quality of life of 45,000 households from 78 villages located along Ganga River basin in the state, as the "main aim" of the projects.

Bharti said 78 units will be established in the hamlets for collection, storage and composting

of degradable solid waste and for setting up small enterprises for non-biodegradable material.

The minister stated that 5,460 households will be supported for adoption of composting facilities using vermin composting for productive use of animal and agro-waste and 1,860 will be supported for adoption of biogas plants to facilitate safe disposal of animal waste.

The entire project will be carried out under the Ministry's guidance with support from United National Development Programme (UNDP), community organisations and NGOs, Bharti added.

News item/letter/article/editorial published on May - 10.05.2016 in the

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

Nav 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

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Drought in 308 dists of 13 states

NEW DELHI, MAY 9 7-10-P-1

Over 300 districts in 13 states of the country, including Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka, are facing shortage of drinking water, the Rajya Sabha was told on Monday.

"...as reported by the states, 308 districts are affected due to shortage of drinking water supply in 13 states — UP, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Haryana, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Karnataka and Maharashtra," Union Minister of State for Drinking Water and Sanitation Ram Kripal Yadav said.

Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have reported the most number of districts, 50 and 46 respectively, he said. In Maharashtra and Karnataka, 33 and 27 districts are grappling with the situation, respectively. — PTI

News item/letter/article/editorial published on 24-10-05-2016 in the

Hindustan Times

Statesman

The Times of India (N.D.)

Indian Express

Tribune

Hindustan (Hindi)

Nav Bharat Times (Hindi)

Punjab Keshari (Hindi)

The Hindu

Rajasthan Patrika (Hindi)

Deccan Chronicle

Deccan Herald

M.P.Chronicle

A a j (Hindi)

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Nai Duniya (Hindi)

The Times of India (A)

Blitz

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



उदयपुर शहर में सोमवार को दिन भर उमस के बाद शाम ढले बारिश हुई। करीब 15 से 20 मिनट तक यह दौर चला। इस बीच बाजारों में दोपहिया वाहन घारी खासे परेशान हुए। बारिश से सड़कों पर फिसलन हो गई थी।

पत्रिका

10-5-16
प्रेम-6-11/का

News item/letter/article/editorial published on May 10. 05. 2016 in the

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

Nav 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.

पेच-¹⁰ कुमदावती नदी का पोत्रका नवीनीकरण 10-5-16

परियोजना पर आई
4.77 करोड़ रुपए
की लागत

पेयजल समस्या से जूझ
रहे कई गांवों को राहत

बेंगलूर. गंभीर सूखा संकट और पेयजल समस्या से जूझ रहे राज्य को बड़ी राहत पहुंचाते हुए सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की विमान निर्माता कंपनी हिंदुस्तान एयरोनॉटिक्स लिमिटेड (एचएएल) ने 4.77 करोड़ रुपए की लागत से कुमदावती नदी के नवीनीकरण का काम पूरा कराया है। एचएएल के अध्यक्ष एवं प्रबंध निदेशक टी. सुवर्ण राजू ने परियोजना के पूरा होने पर उसे थयामलगोंडुलू पंचायत को सौंप दिया। इस अवसर पर राजू ने कहा कि राज्य में पानी सबसे कीमती चीज हो गई है और सूखे जल स्रोतों को पुनः जीवित कर कंपनी ने अपने कॉर्पोरेट सामाजिक उत्तरदायित्व का निर्वाह किया है। प्रयास यह है कि प्राकृतिक को पुनः जीवित किया जाए। इसके लिए कंपनी

अपनी ओर से प्रयास जारी रखेगी। परियोजना के पूरा होने से दोड्डाबेले, कोडीगेहल्ली, थयामलगोंडुलू, हसुराहल्ली, बुदिहाल, कुलुवनाहल्ली और नेलमंगला के शिवगंगे गांव की पेयजल समस्या हल हो जाएगी। कंपनी ने पिछले दो साल में इस पर 4.77 करोड़ रुपए खर्च किए हैं। इसके लिए इंटरनेशनल एसोसिएशन ऑफ ह्यूमन वैल्यूज (आईएचवी) के साथ हाथ मिलाया है। आईएचवी आर्ट ऑफ लिविंग की अनुषंगी इकाई है। पहले इस नदी से बेंगलूर की 30 फीसदी पेयजल जरूरतें पूरी होती थीं मगर नदी का अधिक इस्तेमाल किए जाने से इसकी स्थिति खराब हो गई है। एचएएल द्वारा प्रायोजित यह काम तावरेकेरे में वर्ष 2014-15, थयामलगोंडुलू और मोंदीगेरे मिनी वाटरशेड्स में 2015-16 के दौरान पूरा किया गया। इस दौरान 202 कुओं को फिर से रिचार्ज किया गया, 202 बोल्टडरों को चेक किया गया, 27 नए बोरवेल तैयार किए गए, 35 तरण-ताल बनाए गए और लगभग 15 हजार नए पेड़ पौधे लगाए गए।

News item/letter/article/editorial published on May-10-05-2016 in the

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Indian Express

Tribune

Hindustan (Hindi)

Nav Bharat Times (Hindi)

Punjab Keshari (Hindi)

The Hindu

Rajasthan Patrika (Hindi)

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M.P.Chronicle

Aaj (Hindi)

Indian Nation

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Blitz

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

फेच-10- 10-5-16

राजस्थान पत्रिका

पत्रिका

patrika.com

सापूतारा में कश्मीर जैसा नजारा, सड़क पर बिछी ओलों की चादर



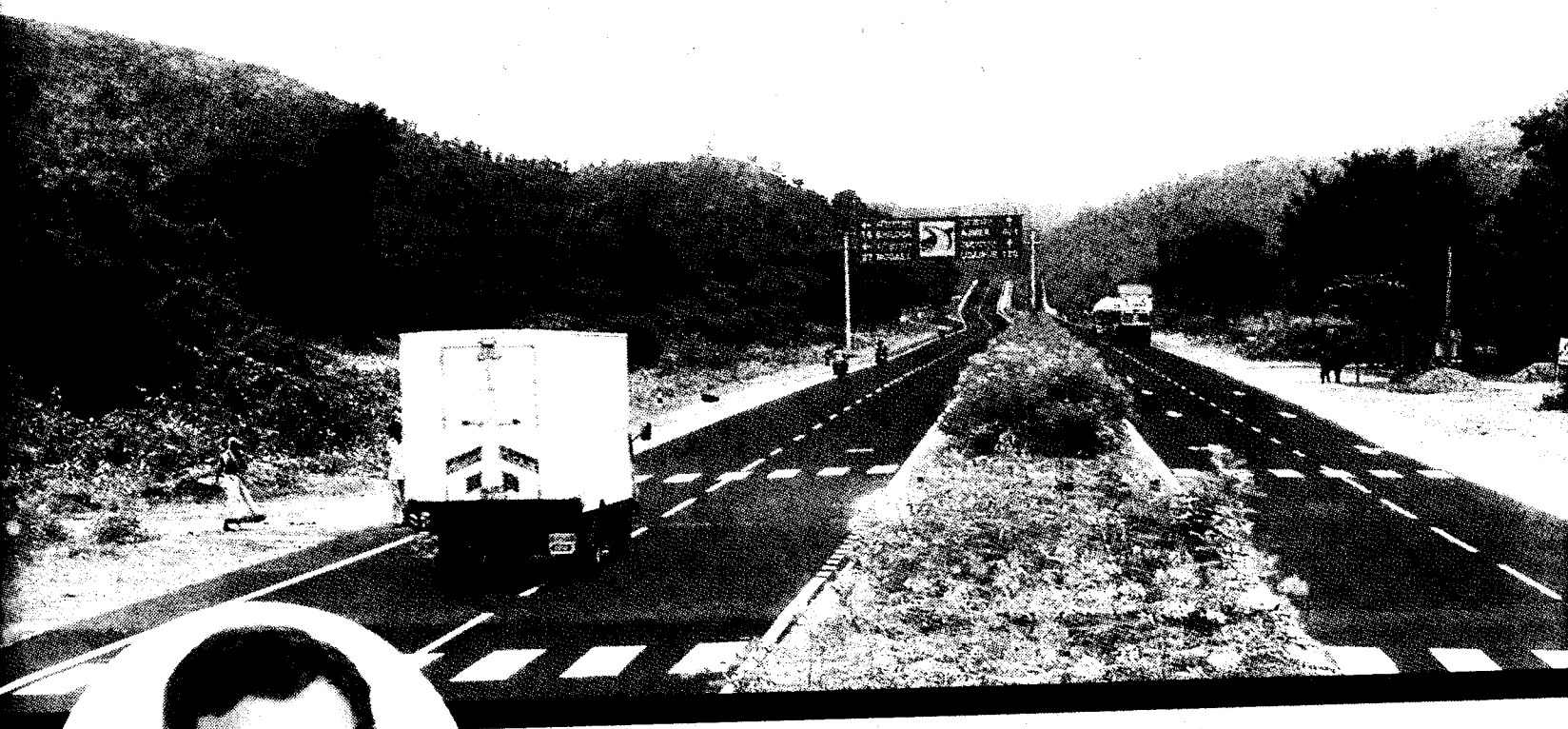
डांग जिले
में जोरदार
बारिश, रास्तों
पर दो फीट
तक पानी भरा

कांसदा. डांग जिले के सापूतारा और आहवा में सोमवार को जोरदार बारिश हुई। इस दौरान कई स्थानों पर ओले भी गिरे। छम करीब चार बजे से सापूतारा, आहवा सहित अरावली के इलाकों में करीब एक घंटे बरसता हुई। इससे कई मार्गों पर दो फीट तक पानी भर गया। बारिश के दौरान तेज हवाओं के कारण कई जगहों पर नुकसान होने की जानकारी है।

सड़क निर्माण के साथ साथ जल संरक्षण

जल संरक्षण योजना

राष्ट्रीय सड़क परिवहन एवं राजमार्ग मंत्रालय का एक अग्रणी पहल



श्री नितिन गडकरी

- सड़क निर्माण के साथ जल संचय का प्रबंधन
- स्थानीय लोग एवं किसान की सहमति से मिट्टी निकाल कर खेत तालाब, तालाब, नहर एवं नालों का पुनरोद्धार और निर्माण
- मिट्टी निकालने का खर्च सड़क बनाने वाली कंपनी उठाएगी
- इससे उस क्षेत्र में जल का व्यापक भंडार जल की समस्या को हल करेगा



सड़क परिवहन एवं राजमार्ग मंत्रालय

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Hindustan (Hindi)

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

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

and documented at Bhagirath(English)& Publicity Section, CW/C.

आसमान में आज बादल छाए रहने की संभावना

नई दिल्ली | प्रमुख संवाददाता

मौसम विभाग के अनुसार मंगलवार को आसमान में बादल छाए रहने की संभावना है। मौसम वैज्ञानिक डॉक्टर नरेश कुमार के अनुसार मंगलवार को हिमांचल प्रदेश व आसपास के पहाड़ी इलाकों में बारिश दर्ज की जाएगी।

नरेश कुमार के मुताबिक, इससे दिल्ली और आसपास के इलाकों में तेज हवाओं के साथ बृदाबांदी दर्ज की जा सकती है। 11 मई को उत्तर प्रदेश के कुछ

इलाकों में बारिश दर्ज की जा सकती है। सप्ताह के अंत तक अधिकतम तापमान 41 डिग्री व न्यूनतम तापमान 28 डिग्री सेल्सियस के करीब रहने की संभावना है। दिल्ली में अधिकतम तापमान 40 डिग्री सेल्सियस व न्यूनतम तापमान 28 डिग्री सेल्सियस के करीब रहने की संभावना है।

दिल्ली में सोमवार को अधिकतम तापमान 38.4 डिग्री सेल्सियस दर्ज किया गया। यह सामान्य तापमान है। वहीं न्यूनतम 27.3 डिग्री सेल्सियस रहा।

मेच-२-६-१०-५-१६

News item/letter/article/editorial published on May 10.05.2016 in the

Hindustan Times

Statesman

The Times of India (N.D.)

Indian Express

Tribune

Hindustan (Hindi) ✓

Nav Bharat Times (Hindi)

Punjab Keshari (Hindi)

The Hindu

Rajasthan Patrika (Hindi)

Deccan Chronicle

Deccan Herald

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Nai Duniya (Hindi)

The Times of India (A)

Blitz

and documented at Bhagirath(English)& Publicity Section, CV/C.

झारखंड में नमामि गंगे परियोजना का शुभारंभ

साहिबगंज | संवाददाता

केंद्र की महत्वाकांक्षी 'नमामि गंगे' योजना का सोमवार को झारखंड से शुभारंभ हो गया। मुख्यमंत्री रघुवर दास और केंद्रीय जल संसाधन व गंगा संरक्षण मंत्री उमा भारती ने संयुक्त रूप से साहिबगंज के जेनरल इस्टीम्यूट मैदान में 'नमामि गंगे' में करीब तीन सौ करोड़ की लागत से प्रस्तावित नौ परियोजनाओं का ऑनलाइन शिलान्यास किया।

जनसभा को संबोधित करते हुए मुख्यमंत्री ने कहा कि अगले दो-तीन साल में साहिबगंज झारखंड का

उमा भारती की तबीयत बिगड़ी, आपात लैडिंग

केन्द्रीय मंत्री उमा भारती की तबीयत अचानक खराब होने से सोमवार को उनके हेलीकॉप्टर को गोड्डा में आपात स्थिति में उतरना पड़ा। साहिबगंज से वह मुख्यमंत्री के साथ धनबाद लौट रही थीं। तभी उन्होंने सिर में चक्कर आने की शिकायत की।

विकसित व समृद्ध शहर बन जाएगा। उन्होंने कहा कि साहिबगंज में एक हजार एकड़ जमीन पर औद्योगिक केंद्र खोला जाएगा।

पेच: 14- हिं-10-5-16

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Hindustan Times

Statesman

The Times of India (N.D.)

Indian Express

Tribune

Hindustan (Hindi)

Nav 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.

महाकुंभ में फिर आंधी-बारिश का कहर

NBT

Arun.Dixit@timesgroup.com

■ **उज्जैन** : उज्जैन महाकुंभ में अक्षय तृतीया के मौके पर हुए शाही स्नान में एक बार फिर मौसम ने खलल डाला। दोपहर बाद करीब 3 बजे शुरू हुई बारिश ने साधु-संन्यासियों के पंडाल अस्त-व्यस्त कर दिए। कई पंडालों में पानी भर गया है और कुछ पंडाल फिर से गिर गए हैं। रामघाट क्षेत्र में सीवर लाइन के फूट जाने से क्षिप्र नदी में गटर का गंदा पानी पहुंच रहा है जिस पर श्रद्धालुओं ने नाराजगी जताई है।



इस आंधी तूफान की वजह से अलग-अलग दुर्घटनाओं में चार लोगों की मौत हुई है जबकि 7 लोगों के घायल होने की भी खबर है। उधर अक्षय तृतीया के मौके पर दोपहर तक करीब



30 लाख लोगों ने क्षिप्र नदी में स्नान किया। पवित्र स्नान के लिए फिल्म स्टार मनीषा कोइराला भी उज्जैन पहुंची थीं। प्रभावित क्षेत्र के पंडालों को खाली करने की अपील की गई है।

पेच: 11-मै-10-5-16

9th May 2016

Hindustan Times (Delhi)
The Tribune (Chandigarh)
The Hindu (Chennai)

The Assam Tribune (Guwahati)
The Times of India (Mumbai)
The Telegraph (Kolkata)
Deccan Herald (Benguru)

✓ The Deccan Herald (Benguru)
The Deccan Chronicle (Hyderabad)
Central Chronicle (Bhopal)

Palike to deploy more staff, Prahari vans for rain relief work

BENGALURU: The BBMP will deploy more staff and Prahari vans, to tackle rain-related problems effectively.

This was announced by Mayor B N Manjunatha Reddy during an inspection of areas affected by Friday's rain, along with BBMP commissioner N Manjunatha Prasad on Sunday.

Speaking to reporters, Prasad said, "I have directed the Palike staff to set up temporary control rooms at low-lying areas and keep in touch with the public."

With regard to the Kanteerava indoor stadium turning a cesspool, the Mayor directed the staff to clear the silt from the stormwater drain that runs through the stadium. He said that a retaining wall is being built along the drain at a cost of Rs 2.5 crore.

The Palike team visited HRBR Layout where sewage water was gushing out of a drain on 5th main road. Nagaraj, a resident, complained that the drain was full of silt and needs to be cleared immediately.

On noticing several potholes on the road during inspection and drains filled with silt, the commissioner took the Palike staff to task and asked them as to why steps have not been taken to repair them.

"Strict action will be taken

against Palike engineers if they fail to ensure cleaning of side drains and repairing of potholes," Prasad said.

On seeing more than 2,000 seized vehicles dumped by the Banaswadi police on roads and drains, the commissioner called up Additional Commissioner of Police (East) P Harishekar and requested him to get them removed as many houses are getting inundated due to this.

DH News Service



Motorists struggle to negotiate the waterlogged Mission Road on Sunday. DH PHOTO

Tree fall triggers chaos near rly station

A tree came crashing down near the city railway station, bringing traffic movement to a halt for some time in the evening. The old tree at the exit point of the station on Gubbi Thoradappa Road was uprooted due to gusty winds and heavy rain. Passengers and road users had a narrow escape as they ran to safety. Traffic movement was adversely affected for an hour, said the police.

This had a cascading effect on many roads in and around Majestic area as traffic movement slowed down. The Upperpet traffic police diverted the vehicular movement, while the BBMP staff cleared the tree from the road.

8 May, 2016

Hindustan Times (Delhi)
 The Indian Express (Delhi)
 The Tribune (Chandigarh)
 The Hindu (Chennai)

The Assam Tribune (Guwahati)
 The Times of India (Mumbai)
 The Telegraph (Kolkata)
 Dainik Bhaskar (Hyderabad)

The Deccan Herald (Bangalore)
 The Deccan Chronicle (Hyderabad)
 Central Chronicle (Bhopal)

T.O.I — 8 May This monsoon, BMC to keep its eye on 66 flooding spots

Civic Body Gets Acting To Avoid June 19 Repeat

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Mumbai: With less than a month to go before monsoon arrives in Mumbai, the BMC has been working on a war footing to ensure less or no flooding in the city, especially at the 66 spots that were badly affected on June 19 last year when the city witnessed 10% of the entire season's rainfall in one day.

The biggest concern for the civic body is the fact that out of the total flooding spots, 50% (36) are in island city. An exhaustive list of these areas (a copy of which is with TOI) and the scale of flooding has been drawn out by the BMC, with both short- and long-term measures being worked out. Some of these chronic areas are the low-lying P D'Mello Road at the south-end of the Eastern Freeway, which went up to 300mm under water on last June 19; Masjid Bunder station area, which got flooded due to choked drains; Byculla police station area; Sakhli Street; Saat Rasta; and Agripada. Out of the 36 flooding spots in south Mumbai, three are new additions while the remaining 33 have been chronic in the past too.

The chronic flooding spots that the BMC has identified in the eastern suburbs are Brahmanwadi in Kurla (west), which was flooded up to 300mm last June 19; the Deonar abattoir premises, for which the civic body has suggested additional pumping; Mankhurd Subway-1; and



File photo

THE CHRONIC AREAS

► 36 in the island city including eastern side of Masjid Bunder station, P D'Mello Road, Khetwadi area, Sakhli street, Byculla police station, Nair Road up to Saat Rasta and Agripada
 ► In eastern suburbs, there are eight spots

including Brahmanwadi in Kurla (W), Kurla railway station, Mankhurd Subway 1 and 2 and Deonar abattoir premises

► Western suburbs has 22 spots including Sunder Nagar in Santacruz (E), Khar Subway, Air India colony in Santacruz (E), SV Road in Khar and Milan Subway

38% drains in city desilted

BMC commissioner Ajoy Mehta on Saturday held a meeting with civic officials to review the nullah safai work. The civic body claims to have completed 38% of desilting work so far and has targeted completing 60% work across major and minor nullahs before monsoon hits the city. "Mehta has issued instructions to ward officials to adopt proper means to transport silt once it is removed from the drains," said a civic official

283.4mm
 rainfall received in
 24-hr period
 on June 19

WHAT HAPPENED ON JUNE 19, 2015

The Regional Meteorological Centre Mumbai's Colaba observatory recorded 208.8mm and Santacruz recorded 283.4mm of rainfall in the 24-hour period of June 18 and 19 from 8.30am to 8.30am. 10% of the season's required total rainfall was received by Mumbai in a single day

Mankhurd Subway -2. The last two are new additions.

In the western suburbs, the Khar Subway and Air India Colony in Santacruz, SV Road and Jai Bharat Society in Khar, Milan Subway and Andheri Subway are the probable flooding spots.

A senior civic official

from BMC's stormwater drains department said that the upcoming Rs 102 crore Britannia pumping station, which is to be inaugurated this month-end should help curtail flooding near Parel's Hindmata, parts of Sewri, Wadala Road and Dockyard.

"While we are drawing

out short- and long-term measures to curb the flooding, pumping stations would help in the long run. Besides Britannia pumping station, work on Gazdar Bandh pumping station is also on in full swing and would be completed by November this year," said an official.

Summer rains may take longer to come

According to the forecast, the day temperature may stay close to normal till Monday

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI: Residents may have to wait longer for summer showers as the Meteorological Department predicts only a faint possibility of thunder-showers over the coastal areas for the next two days.

According to the forecast, the day temperature may stay close to normal till Monday. On Saturday, the day temperature in Nungambakkam and Meenambakkam was 36.1 degrees Celsius and 37.2 degrees Celsius respectively.


However, the 'real feel' temperature, particularly for those outdoors, may be more by three or four degrees Celsius.

Officials of the Meteorological Department said people who were travelling might experience more of a muggy weather due to high humidity and direct radiation. The nights would continue to be warm as the cloudy sky would keep the minimum temperature around 29 degrees Celsius, they added.

S. Balachandran, director, Area Cyclone Warning Centre, Regional Meteorological Centre, Chennai, noted that interior parts like Krishnagiri and Salem had greater chances of having thunder-

WEATHER WATCH

During May and June, the mercury hovers around 36.8°C and 36.9°C respectively



• Last year, the day temperature peaked at 42.2 degrees Celsius on May 26 and the city experienced 8 mm of rainfall

Dark clouds brought some respite from the heat on Friday. — PHOTO: K.V. SRINIVASAN

(when temperature was above 40 degrees Celsius)		
<p>● 1983- strong El-Nino year</p> <p>► May and June: 6 hot days</p>	<p>● 2002-03- moderate El-Nino Year</p> <p>2003 May: 15 hot days</p> <p>2003 June: 10 hot days</p>	<p>● 2007-08- moderate La-Nina year</p> <p>2008 May: 16 hot days</p> <p>2008 June: 2 hot days</p>

showers than coastal parts, including Chennai.

Weather models show wind discontinuity line, which is a confluence of easterlies with the westerly winds, running through the interior parts of the State.

"Conditions are favourable for thunderclouds to develop. But, as of now, the southerly component in the winds is keeping the temperature from soaring beyond 40 de-

grees Celsius. While the south-westerly winds blow during the night hours, the city has mostly been experiencing south-easterly winds during the day for the past two days," he said.

Meanwhile, weather experts note that global weather phenomenon like El-Nino need not necessarily lead to a harsh summer.

While 2015 was a strong El-Nino year for Chennai, the

city is experiencing the spillover of El-Nino effect now.

Y.E.A. Raj, former deputy director general of meteorology, Chennai, noted that there had been years when the city experienced searing heat despite the impact of moderate El-nino and La-Nina factors.

For instance, in May and June 2003, the city experienced 25 hot days when max-

Fishermen, farmers wait for 'Chithra Maasa Puyal'

DEEPA H. RAMAKRISHNAN

CHENNAI: Every time the skies turn dark, fishermen who use traditional craft watch the seas intently.

They eagerly wait for the Chithra Maasa Puyal, a cyclone that comes during the Tamil months of Chithirai and Vaikasi (corresponding to April-May).

"Such a cyclone is usually short but brings in fish from the deep seas to the shore. We would get good catches of shrimp and Vanjaram fish," explained Joseph, a fisherman from

Nettukuppam.

As the 45-day ban on mechanised fishing is in force, those who fish on catamarans and 'vallam's look forward to the Kodai Mazhai as they can make a killing. However, fishermen say that after the tsunami, it hasn't rained much this time of the year. Kalaivanan, another fisherman, said that only last year it rained for about four days. "It wasn't a cyclone," he added.

For the farmers, heavy rains are good, said Ranganathan, an organic farmer of Kelambakkam.

imum temperature peaked above 40 degrees Celsius despite a moderate influence of El-Nino.

On the other hand, there were only six hot days in May and June of 1983, which was a strong El-Nino year.

"We still do not have conclusive evidence to relate scorching summers to strong El-Nino factor," Mr. Raj added.

The Times of India

Title : In dry Latur, villagers revive a dead river

Author : Syed Rizwanullah

Location :

Latur:

Article Date : 05/10/2016

AOL Followers Help Desilt It, Raise Water Level

Trimbadasji Zavar (62) remembers how much fun it used to be to visit lush green Sai village on weekends where a Kolhapur Type (KT) weir across the Manjra river held enough water for a 7km stretch.

“I could stay close to nature and see the river flow. It was a popular picnic spot and people would enjoy boat rides,” Zavar, a farmer, said.

Bad monsoon years and drought has laid to waste the only tourist centre set up in 1993 near Sai barrage, recalled S R Deshmukh, the then chief of the municipal council. “Nobody even looks at it now,” he added.

When groundwater levels fell and the river turned dry , it had a telling effect on Latur's water needs. Citizens, realising that a rejuvenated Manjra is their only hope, formed Jal Jagruti Abhiyan -Jal Yukta Latur. The idea is to have enough water for the city, a pattern other drought-hit places can emulate.

Till some years, the city was famous for its Latur pattern, a method of studies that helped students do well in state board exams. The effort to revive Manjra was steered by Mahadev Gomare and Makrand Jadhav, both followers of spiritual guru Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's Art Of Living (AOL), began in February 2013. Both convinced sarpanchs in Marathwada to attend a three-day camp in Bengaluru.

Here, experts spoke to them about tackling water crises in their villages. The meeting didn't have the desired effect -there were conflicting voices and many doubted if the results would show. “We did not give up and decided to implement Guruji's concept in at least three villages,” Gomare said. He now spends nearly 18 hours a day to ensure AOL's dream project in Latur comes true.

The project involves desilting 18km along the Sai barrage to increase its holding capacity to 18.5 million cubic metre. Latur requires 18.25 million cubic meter water per annum. Plans are to remove about 45 lakh cubic metre of silt. “In 2013, we succeeded in convincing people in three villages in Latur district to pool in money to carry out desilting work as well as construct low-cost Gabion structures to trap rain water,” Gomare said.

This helped increase the water level in borewells and wells in surrounding villages and helped maintain the greenery .Gradually , more villages joined the movement. Though AOL funded a part of it, people contributed too. Thus, 50 smaller projects were completed through people's participation.

But a poor monsoon last year and a now-dry Manjra river have highlighted Latur for several wrong reasons.

Villagers now know about AOL's initiatives and its simple methods to rejuvenate the parched region -desilting nullahs, gabion structures and arresting rain water in rivers and rivulets. They are chipping in, Jadhav said.

A meeting on April 3 discussed the situation and the negativity it was attracting. The efforts bore fruit. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar gave Rs 1 crore for the project while citizens contributed with funds and sought support for the Rs 8-crore project.

The campaigners roped in district collector Pandurang Pole to inaugurate the works on April 8. "We have already collected Rs 3 crore while hundreds of people have made a commitment of contributing Rs 5 crore for the work," said Gomare.

Employees' unions and those working in hotels as waiters have contributed too, he said. Nearly half the silt dug up has been taken away by farmers from 25 villages with an average 3,000 population each. "Farmers are taking the silt for Rs 100 to Rs 200 per truck voluntarily to strengthen soil fertility and level their fields," Prakash Suryavanshi, sarpanch of Arajkheda village, said. The village is situated close to the barrage.

Mohammad Sarfaraz Shaikh, senior geologist in Latur, countered fears that desilting may mess up the ecological balance. "Workers stop desilting as soon as the sand level shows up because sand holds the water. Silt formation may vary from place to place," he said.

Sachin Suryavanshi's village, Sai Arajkheda, is one of the 25 to benefit from the work. "Desilting will create enough space for water, and help increase the water table in our wells," he said. Gomare said they were creating three levels along the barrage where local species of trees will be planted. The first level will have cactus, the second will have bamboo trees while the third will have neem, mango, jamun and other fruit-bearing trees. Farmers from the 25 villages have agreed to provide the seeds and school children, farmers and activists will plant these trees, Gomare added. Darshak Hathi from Mumbai, who liaisons with Latur's citizens, told TOI Guruji had made an unscheduled visit to Latur's drought-hit areas. During his tour, he visited the Manjra river rejuvenation project site. "Guruji urged farmers to have faith and not commit suicide," Hathi said.

SHOWING THE WAY

At Sai barrage, workers ensure only the silt is removed. They stop work when the sand surface in the riverbed emerges

The government's estimate for the work was pegged at `87cr while the AOL-led work requires a mere `8 crore.

Activists said saving on different counts and voluntary support had reduced the cost of the project

The Poclain machine operator charges `1,450 while his rate is `2,000 to 2,200 per hour. Farmers take away the silt by paying `100 to `200

The administrative cost is zero. There are no contractors or any underhand dealings

Activists plan to double the 26 Poclain machines to speed up the desilting by May-end to clear the 18km stretch of Sai barrage



When groundwater levels fell and the Manjra river dried, it had a telling effect on Latur's needs. Citizens, realising that a rejuvenated Manjra was their only hope, formed Jal Jagruti Abhiyan: Jal Yujta Latur