

News item/letter/article/editorial published on 11/2/17 in the

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Hindustan (Hindi)

Nav Bharat Times (Hindi)

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Deccan Chronicle

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M.P. Chronicle

Aaj (Hindi)

Indian Nation

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The Times of India (A)

Blitz

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

El Nino rears its head again, but confirmation only in April

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78-66-11

Pune: The India Meteorological Department's latest El Niño/La Niña update has indicated a gradual transition to an El Niño-like condition around September — the last month of monsoon. Met officials, however, stressed that a lot of uncertainty prevailed on the possibility of another El Niño during the latter part of 2017. A clearer picture would emerge only in April.

Though uncertainty prevails on the likely impact of the upcoming El Niño-like situation on monsoon, experts reminded that 2014 had witnessed an El Niño-like situation, but it had affected the monsoon that year.

El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is an irregularly periodical variation in winds and sea surface temperatures over the tropical eastern Pacific Ocean. The warming phase, which is thought to impact India's southwest monsoon, is known as El Niño and the cooling phase is called La Niña.

A K Sahai, head, climate research and services, IMD, Pune, told TOI that the forecast indicated that the present weak La Niña conditions were likely to weaken further and "cool ENSO neutral" conditions were likely to establish during the early part of monsoon, followed by "warm ENSO neutral" conditions during the latter part of the season. The warm 'ENSO neutral conditions', in layman's terms, translate to El Niño-like conditions.

D S Pai from the IMD, Pune, said preliminary observations did not indicate any likely impact of these conditions on this year's monsoon. "El Niño-like conditions may be witnessed somewhere around September this year, but we do not expect any impact on this year's monsoon. Future forecasts will give a clearer picture of what will actually happen.

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Didi-Modi war keeps Teesta pact on hold

^{T.O 72}
Will Hasina Visit Break Deadlock?

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New Delhi: India-Bangladesh relations run through West Bengal at the best of times. These are not the best of times, as West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee is on the warpath with the central government, particularly PM Narendra Modi. As in the past, it has had an impact on bilateral ties with Dhaka.

Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh PM, is scheduled to visit India in March, a visit that was originally scheduled for December 2016. Mamata, who had accompanied PM Modi during his trip in June 2015, had reportedly agreed to complete negotiations on two big projects — Teesta water sharing agreement and Ganges barrage project. On the ground, neither of these projects appear to be anywhere close to reality. Officials in both New Delhi and Dhaka said the WB government is holding back on the negotiations.



Officials say the Bengal govt is holding back on negotiations

While Mamata's belief that the Teesta pact could hurt her politically has ensured it hasn't gone anywhere in the past five years, the Bengal government's obduracy on the Ganges barrage is less understandable. The barrage would benefit West Bengal, helping irrigation and water storage in the state.

In 2011, Mamata rained on Manmohan Singh's grand visit to Bangladesh, by refusing to agree on Teesta water sharing pact almost at the last minute. Having drawn lessons from that, when Modi visited Dhaka in 2015 after getting parliamentary approval for the land boundary agreement, he insisted on Banerjee coming along, who was accorded virtually head-of-government treatment by Sheikh Hasina. Mamata had then promised to work on both Te-

esta and the Ganges barrage.

West Bengal has another dark reality to its credit — it has become a sanctuary for hardline Islamist militants, many of whom cross over from Bangladesh. Hasina's crackdowns on terror and on fake Indian currency networks have had an impact, but there are questions about how the West Bengal government has allowed these militants to get sanctuary on this side of the border. Communal incidents in Bengal have increased in the past couple of years.

Despite the wrinkles, Bangladesh in the past year has become the largest source of tourists into India, as declared by Indian envoy to Dhaka, Harsh Vardhan Shringla recently. It had led to Bangladesh appointing a deputy high commissioner in Guwahati and India streamlining its visa processes in Bangladesh to enable greater travel opportunities.

One of the ideas being tossed around in both governments is for a work permit for Bangladeshis who want to come to India to work. This would help address the economic migration issue, bring these people under official scanner and build some transparency in the exercise.

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Mahanadi row stunt to divert public attention: Raman

statesman news service

BHUBANESWAR, 11 FEBRUARY: Chhattisgarh chief Minister Raman Singh dismissed the Mahanadi river water dispute raised by his Odisha counterpart as "a political stunt" to deflect public attention from the failures and misrule of the BJD government.

Addressing a series of campaign meetings for the panchayat elections in Sundergarh and Nuapada districts of Odisha, the Chhattisgarh chief minister quoted figures of the Central Water Commission to assert that Chhattisgarh which has 87 per cent of the catchment area utilises barely four per cent of the water while Odisha uses 14 per cent and the rest 82 per cent flows to the sea.

What prevents the Naveen Patnaik government in Odisha

from building barrages or dams downstream to utilise water for irrigation and other purposes, he questioned.

The Naveen Patnaik government failed to do so over 16 years and just before elections it suddenly raised the Mahanadi water dispute accusing Chhattisgarh of impeding flow of water, Dr Singh said.

Instead of taking a dip in Mahanadi (referring to the BJD workers' *jala satyagraha* protests), the BJD here should have worked to conserve water for farmers of the state, he remarked.

The BJD in Odisha is heavily politicising the issue with the hope to play on the sentiments and emotion of the people and gain electorally. Mahanadi is like a mother to Odisha as well as Chhattisgarh, there can be no dispute at all, the senior BJP



Chhattisgarh chief Minister Raman Singh. a file photo

leader said. 12.97

He asked people to ponder as to why chief minister Naveen Patnaik had remained silent for 15 years over the issue. If there had been any real problem, Patnaik ought to have objected at least a decade ago. Instead,

he has done so just before the panchayat elections only to deflect public attention from largescale migration, corruption, poverty and hunger deaths, failure to provide roads to villages, electricity to rural area and so on under his rule, Dr Singh charged.

The Chhattisgarh chief minister went on to note that there is no dispute at all. It will take just a few minutes to resolve the problem if both of us (CMs) sit and discuss, he said. But Odisha CM wants to drag the issue and keep it alive for political gains, he alleged.

Vote for the BJP in the panchayat elections and usher in development, he said before reeling out figures to claim how Chhattisgarh had progressed over the years.

"We procure 68 lakh mt of paddy from farmers, provide

farm loan with zero per cent interest, provide solar pumps, skill 2 lakh youths every year, give smart card for health coverage of Rs 50,000 to the poor, deposit Rs 5000 per year from the day a girl child is born etc."

"Why cant Odisha do the same or even better with all its resources," he questioned.

It may be noted here that a couple of days ago the ruling BJD had organised '*jala satyagraha*' and *jala aarati* to protest against Singh's campaign in Odisha. It is pertinent to note that Odisha government has written to the Centre seeking establishment of a tribunal to resolve the river water dispute.

Odisha has alleged that Chhattisgarh has unilaterally constructed barrages and dams upstream of the river which will impede flow of Mahanadi water to Hirakud dam.

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Govt chooses big projects over wildlife

SPECIAL

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NEW DELHI: Religion, quenching animal thirst and public interests are some of the reasons cited by an environment ministry panel to recommend big ticket projects in and around India's critical tiger and wildlife habitats.

About 50 such projects got the nod at a meeting of the standing committee of the national board for wildlife (SC-NBWL) headed by environment minister Anil Madhav Dave, the minutes of the meeting released this week revealed.

Religion was invoked to allow widening of a road through Nagarjunasagar Srisailem Tiger Reserve in Andhra Pradesh. It is dubbed "public utility for devotees" as it will provide better connectivity between Atmakur and Kolanu Bharathi Temple.

The minutes of the meeting held on January 3 said the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) recommended

THE ONES THAT GOT THE NOD

■ Religion was invoked to allow widening of a road through Nagarjunasagar Srisailem Tiger Reserve in Andhra. The project is dubbed "public utility for devotees" as it will provide better connectivity between Atmakur and Kolanu Bharathi Temple

■ A check dam was allowed on Balam Ambji sanctuary in Gujarat as the standing com-

mittee of the national board for wildlife maintained that the water stored in the dam will help wildlife quench their thirst during dry season

■ The committee recommended an approach canal through Shoolpaneshwar Wildlife Sanctuary in Narmada district of Gujarat, stating it will provide irrigation facilities to farmers of 10 villages.

the project after due feasibility assessment carried out by a team of officers and scientists.

While allowing a check dam at Balam Ambji sanctuary in Gujarat, the committee maintained that the water stored there will help wildlife quench their thirst during dry season. A large area of the sanctuary will be utilised for building the dam.

The committee recommended an approach canal through Shoolpaneshwar Wildlife Sanctuary in Gujarat, stating it will

provide irrigation facilities to farmers of 10 villages.

The panel also allowed conversion of meter gauge line to broad gauge through Melghat Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra as Railways claimed that an alternate route would result in "felling of thousand of trees". The minutes showed that the Railways' claim has not been vetted by any expert agency and the concerns of the NTCA on impact of the faster train line through the reserve on tiger dispersal, habitat connec-

tivity for genetic exchange and protection failed to find much consideration.

Minister Dave overruled the concerns and allowed the project, saying the mitigation measures by the NTCA would be enforced through an MoU with Railways.

Pushp Jain of non-government EIA Resource Centre, however, said the government has failed to provide any assessment of the habitat loss because of the alternate route that could have benefited people in districts of Akola, Amravati and Bhandara.

Ravi Singh, chief executive officer of World Wide Fund (WWF) for nature said the standing committee was within its rights to take these decisions as they did not violate any law.

An analysis of approvals by the highest advisory body of the environment ministry by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) showed that close to 400 projects have been approved by the NDA government in two-and-a-half years as compared to 260 by the UPA government in five years.

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Ken-Betwa river project gets investment clearance

GREEN SIGNAL The ₹18,000-crore scheme covers parts of Madhya Pradesh, UP and aims to bring water to the parched Bundelkhand

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NEW DELHI: The investment clearance committee, comprising officials from NITI Aayog and Union water resources ministry, for Ken-Betwa river linking on Friday gave the nod for the ₹18,000-crore national project envisaged to address drinking water and irrigation requirements of the parched Bundelkhand region.

Union water resources secretary Amarjeet Singh, who heads the committee, confirmed the investment clearance given to the project. "The investment clearance committee has recommended the investment clearance for the project after detailed deliberations and discussions," he said.

The first-of-its-kind project covers parts of Madhya Pradesh and poll-bound Uttar Pradesh. Phase I of the project has received clearances from the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL), tribal affairs ministry and lately from the environment ministry's EAC.

However, the environment ministry's final nod to the project is still awaited as it would make a decision after taking into account the recommendations of its expert appraisal committee (EAC).

Also, the EAC's nod comes even as the project is being

PROJECT INVOLVES CONSTRUCTION OF A DAM ACROSS RIVER KEN TO IRRIGATE 6.35 LAKH HECTARES OF LAND AND GENERATE 78 MW OF HYDROPOWER

examined by Supreme Court-appointed Central Empowered Committee (CEC) for adequacy of mitigative measures against its adverse impact on the Panna tiger reserve in Madhya Pradesh.

The first phase of the project will cost about ₹9,393 crore and is likely to be completed in nine years.

The project comes under Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP) in which the Centre contributes 60% funds and the rest is by the state. But the water resources ministry has asked NITI Aayog to change the funding pattern to 90:10 ratio given it is a national project.

Sources in the water resources ministry said the NITI Aayog is convinced of the ministry's proposal but the final call on the funds would be taken by the finance ministry.

"We will follow whatever is the government's decision in this regard meanwhile (until the funding pattern is finalised),"

sources in the ministry said.

The project envisages construction of a dam across river Ken in Chhatarpur district in Madhya Pradesh to irrigate 6.35 lakh hectares of land, serve drinking water purposes in Bundelkhand region and generation of 78 MW hydropower.

Of this, 3.69 lakh hectares will be covered in Madhya Pradesh's Chhatarpur, Tikamgarh and Panna districts. The remaining 2.65 lakh hectares of area falls in poll-bound Uttar Pradesh's Mahoba, Banda and Jhansi districts.

A total of 10 villages consisting of 1,585 families are likely to be affected by this project. About 9,000 hectares area would be submerged, out of which 4,141 hectares is forestland in Panna Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh.

The project comprises two powerhouses of 2x30 MW and 3x6 MW each, two tunnels of 1.9 km long at upper level, 1.1 km long tunnel at lower level and a 221 km long Ken-Betwa link canal, proposed on the left bank of the river.

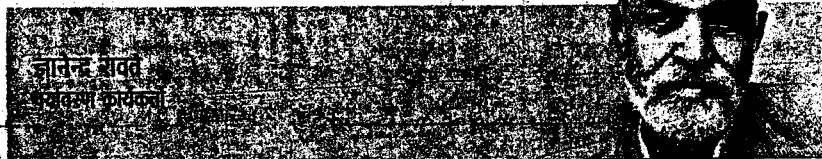
The project was first mooted in the early 1980s but was actively taken up by the previous NDA government under the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. It was then challenged in the Supreme Court, which finally gave the nod in 2013.

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

अधूरा ही रह जाएगा गंगा की शुद्धि का सपना

दि-11-2-17

तमाम बड़े दावों और योजनाओं के बावजूद अब तक इस पवित्र नदी की एक बूंद तक साफ नहीं हो सकी है।



मोदी सरकार लाख दावा करे, सच यही है कि 'गंगा की शुद्धि' का उसका सपना, शायद सपना ही रह जाएगा। वर्तमान हालात और राष्ट्रीय हरित अधिकरण की टिप्पणी इसका सबूत है। राष्ट्रीय हरित अधिकरण की मानें, तो नमामि गंगे मिशन की कामयाबी तभी संभव है, जब गंगा की शुद्धि के लिए किए जाने वाले प्रयास सफल होंगे। यह नमामि गंगे मिशन से जुड़ी सभी सरकारी एजेंसियों की नाकामी उजागर करने के लिए पर्याप्त है। सच यह है कि इसके लिए मिली राशि का अब तक कारगर इस्तेमाल तो नहीं ही हुआ है, दुरुपयोग जरूर हुआ है।

आलम यह है कि 2014 से अब तक गंगा की एक बूंद तक साफ नहीं हो पाई है। इससे साफ है कि मोदी सरकार की महत्वाकांक्षी नमामि गंगे योजना 2018 तक तो किसी भी स्तर में पूरी नहीं होने वाली। केंद्र सरकार के सात बड़े मंत्रालय इसके लिए भले ही जी-जान से जुटे हों, लेकिन परिणाम ढाक के तीन पात वाला ही आया है। गंगा मैली ही है और उसमें आज भी गंदे नालों, सहायक नदियों से प्रदूषणयुक्त कचरा, औद्योगिक इकाइयों द्वारा विषैला गंदा पानी और रसायनयुक्त प्रदूषित अवशेष गिर रहा है। दावों के विपरीत, रोजाना 12,051 मिलियन लीटर सीवेज बिना शोधन के गंगा में जा रहा है। गंगा में ऑक्सीजन की मात्रा कम होने की यह अहम वजह है।

राष्ट्रीय हरित अधिकरण ने नमामि गंगे मिशन से जुड़ी एजेंसियों की भूमिका पर असंतोष जताया है और पूछा है कि वे नमामि गंगे मिशन को कैसे संचालित कर रही हैं? अधिकरण ने केंद्रीय प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड सहित अन्य एजेंसियों की कार्यप्रणाली पर भी नाराजगी जताई है। इसके बावजूद ये एजेंसियां गंगा सफाई के दावे करते नहीं थकती। बीते दिनों अधिकरण ने आदेश के बावजूद औद्योगिक प्रतिष्ठानों के कचरे पर रोक न लगने पर उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार को चेतावनी दी और जवाब तलब किया है। औद्योगिक रसायनयुक्त अवशेष, शहरी सीवेज, ठोस विषैला कचरा, रेत व पत्थर की चुनाई और बांधों के कारण गंगा तिल-तिलकर मर रही है। अधिकरण की सख्ती का भी कोई असर नहीं दिखा है।

प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड भी मानता है कि हरिद्वार में गंगा में ऑक्सीजन की मात्रा घट रही है। ऋषिकेश तक गंगा का पानी नहाने लायक जरूर है, लेकिन हरिद्वार के बाद यदि कोई इसे पी ले, तो उल्टी-दस्त के साथ जानलेवा

बीमारियों की गिरफ्त में आने का खतरा है। कन्नौज, कानपुर, इलाहाबाद, वाराणसी, पटना सहित कई जगहों पर तो यह आचमन लायक भी नहीं है। हरिद्वार से नरौरा तक कुछेक जगहों पर गंगाजल काला दिखता है। जलीय जीव शायब हैं। नरौरा से बलिया तक गंगा सबसे ज्यादा प्रदूषित है। उत्तर प्रदेश के बाद बिहार और फिर पश्चिम बंगाल का नंबर आता है। इन राज्यों में भी रोजाना गंगा में दो करोड़ 90 लाख लीटर प्रदूषित कचरा गिरता है। असल में, गंगा किनारे बसे गांवों के लोग गंगा को अपना कूड़ा ठिकाने लगाने का साधन मान बैठे हैं। सीवर ट्रीटमेंट प्लांट कुछ ही जगह हैं। कहीं-कहीं तो होने के बावजूद वे काम नहीं करते। नमामि गंगे मिशन की शुरुआत के बाद अब एसटीपी बनने शुरू हुए हैं। मगर कहीं 2010 से वे बन ही रहे हैं, तो कहीं एसटीपी के कुएं ही सूख गए हैं। उत्तर प्रदेश में इसके प्रदूषण के बड़े कारक कानपुर की टेनरियों

गंगा की सतही सफाई, उसे नालों से मुक्त करने का काम अगर युद्धस्तर पर हो, तब भी कम से कम दो साल तो लग ही जाएंगे।

के अन्यत्र ले जाने के सवाल पर राज्य सरकार जगह की कमी का हवाला देकर हाथ खड़े कर चुकी है।

ऐसे हालात में गंगा के किनारे बसे शहरों में सीवेज शोधन की व्यवस्था 2018 तक पूरा होने की उम्मीद कम ही है। गंगा की सतही सफाई, उसे नालों से मुक्त करने और उनकी सफाई में अगर युद्धस्तर पर काम हो, तब भी कम से कम दो साल तो लग ही जाएंगे। विभागीय मंत्री नमामि गंगे मिशन के लिए आवंटित 20 हजार करोड़ की राशि को अपर्याप्त मानती हैं। यानी आज भी वही सब हो रहा है, जो पिछले 30 वर्षों से होता आया है। जबाबदेही तय करने के लिए किसी व्यवस्थित तंत्र का अभाव है। यही नहीं, गंगा की सफाई की चुनौती के सामने जनजागरण और प्रदूषण रोकथाम के सारे उपाय नाकाम साबित हो रहे हैं। देश की विभिन्न आईआईटी के गंगा नदी बेसिन प्राधिकरण के साथ मिलकर काम करने के बावजूद भी अपेक्षित सफलता कोसों दूर है।

(ये लेखक के अपने विचार हैं)

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ਪੰਜਾਬ ਕੈਸਰੀ

DELHI

18 हजार करोड़ की केन-बेतवा नदी जोड़ो परियोजना को मंजूरी

नई दिल्ली, (भाषा): केन बेतवा नदी जोड़ो परियोजना के लिए नीति आयोग और केंद्रीय जल संसाधन मंत्रालय के अधिकारियों वाली निवेश मंजूरी समिति ने आज अपनी स्वीकृति दे दी।

18 हजार करोड़ की इस परियोजना का उद्देश्य सूखा प्रभावित बुंदेलखंड इलाके में पीने के पानी और सिंचाई के लिए पानी की उपलब्ध कराना है। समिति की अध्यक्षता कर रहे

केंद्रीय जल संसाधन सचिव अमरजीत सिंह ने परियोजना को निवेश मंजूरी मिलने की पुष्टि की। उन्होंने कहा- निवेश मंजूरी समिति ने विस्तृत बातचीत और चर्चा के बाद परियोजना के लिए निवेश मंजूरी की अनुशंसा

की थी। अपनी तरह की इस पहली परियोजना में मध्य प्रदेश और उत्तर प्रदेश के कुछ हिस्सा शामिल हैं। परियोजना के पहले चरण को

राष्ट्रीय वन्य जीव बोर्ड, आदिवासी मामलों के मंत्रालय और पर्यावरण

मंत्रालय की विशेषज्ञ मूल्यांकन समिति से मंजूरी मिल चुकी है।

पर्यावरण मंत्रालय की इस परियोजना को अंतिम मंजूरी मिलनी अभी बाकी है क्योंकि

मंत्रालय ने अपनी विशेषज्ञ मूल्यांकन समिति की अनुशंसाओं पर अभी विचार का फैसला किया है। परियोजना के पहले चरण में नौ हजार 393 करोड़ की लागत आएगी और इसे पूरा होने में नौ साल का वक्त लगने की उम्मीद है।

सूखा
प्रभावित बुंदेलखंड
क्षेत्र में मिलेगा पेयजल
और सिंचाई का पानी