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Bhagirath(English)& Publicity Section

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Subject: Submission of News Clippings.

The News Clippings on Water Resources Development and allied subjects are enclosed for perusal of the Chairman, CWC, and Member (WP&P/D&R/RM), Central Water Commission. The soft copies of clippings have also been uploaded on the CWC website.

S. Maheshwari
14.12.17
SPA (Publicity)

Encl: As stated above.

Deputy Director (Publication)

on leave
14/12/2017

Director TD

For information of Chairman & Member (WP&P/D&R/R.M.), CWC and all concerned,
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News item/letter/article/editorial published on 14/12/12 in the

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Biting cold in tribal areas; lakes, rivulets freeze

Night temperature stays below freezing point in Keylong, Kalpa, Manali | Met predicts rain today

BHANU P LOHUMI
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, DECEMBER 13

The tribal areas and high hills groaned under biting cold wave conditions as the minimum temperature dropped by a few notches, aggravating the cold wave conditions.

The high mountain passes of Rohtang, Kunzam, Saach and Chansel and other tribal areas received fresh snow while mid and lower hills had moderate rain and all natural sources of water like lakes, springs, rivulets and tributaries of major rivers were frozen, drastically reducing the discharge of water in snowfed rivers, affecting hydropower generation.

Gondla, Rohtang Pass, Saach Pass, Keylong, Kalpa and Chitkul received 32 mm, 20 cm, 15 cm, 10 cm, Kalpa 9 cm and 8 cm of fresh snow while Shimla and surrounding areas were lashed by sleet, causing a sharp fall in mercury.

The Rohtang Pass, gateway to Lahaul and Pangi valleys, has been closed for the winter due to heavy snow while other national highways and state highways are open to traffic. The normal life has come to a halt in tribal valleys due to snowfall and extreme low temperatures and people have been forced to stay indoors.

The rain and snowfall blocked roads and affected power supply at some places in Shimla district but all roads, including the Hatkoti-Theog and Hindustan-Tibet Highway, had been opened while the power supply, which was disrupted due to falling of trees at Takleeh, Chopal, Kupvi, Jubbal and some other places, has been restored, said Shimla Deputy Commissioner Rohan Chand Thakur. All



NO TOURISTS BEYOND NEHRU KUND

MANALI: The inclement weather conditions worsened on Wednesday and the upper Manali areas received a fresh spell of snow. Due to fresh layer of snow on the road, hundreds of tourists going to the Solang valley and Kothi had to stop at Nehru Kund. After receiving the news of snow, hundreds of tourists arrived in Manali and rushed to Nehru Kund to see the snow. There was a long queue of vehicles on the road.

AVALANCHE WARNING

Avalanche threat looms large over tribal Kinnaur and Lahaul and Spiti districts following fresh snowfall in the region. The snow and Avalanche Study Establishment has warned of medium danger avalanche warning in the twin tribal districts of Himachal in the next 24 hours and issued an advisory asking people not to venture in avalanche-prone slopes or areas during the warning period.



(Clockwise from top) Tourists make a beeline to Nehru Kund in Manali to enjoy the snow; a village in Parvati valley draped in white blanket; and visitors enjoy the weather in Kufri on Wednesday.

PHOTOS: MC THAKUR, PTI & AMIT KANWAR



roads were open and electricity and water supply was normal, he added.

Moderate to heavy rain lashed mid and lower hills and Sarkaghat was the wettest in the region with 58 mm rain, followed by Pan-

doh 39 mm, Bhoranj 38 mm, Sujampur Tira 37 mm, Gaggal 35 mm, Dharamsala 34 mm Palampur 33 mm, Chamba 28 mm, Saloni 26 mm, Baijnath 25 mm, Bharari 23 mm, Kotkhai 20 mm, Mandi and Jhandutta

19 mm each, Berthin 17, Manali 15 mm and Bhuntar 9 mm and Ghumarwin and Mehre 15 mm each.

Night temperatures stayed below freezing point in the high-altitude tribal areas and Keylong, Kalpa and Manali

recorded a low of minus 4.9 degree, minus 1 degree and zero degree C. Shimla shivered at 3.4 degree under heavily overcast sky and piercing icy winds sweeping the town while Mandi and Dharamsala recorded the

minimum temperature at 5.2 degree and 5.4 degree.

The local MeT office has predicted rain or snow at many places in lower, mid and higher hills tomorrow and dry weather in the region from December 14.

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Bengal may lift building curbs in fragile wetlands

BATTLE Decision will harm the area already facing threats from encroachment, say experts

Snigdendu Bhattacharya

letters@hindustantimes.com

KOLKATA: The West Bengal government has proposed lifting building and land conversion restrictions in a section of the 12,500 hectares of East Kolkata Wetlands (EKW), angering environmentalists who say the move will kill the world's largest organic sewage management system and choke Kolkata.

A document prepared by the East Kolkata Wetlands Management Authority (EKWMA) under the department of environment wants to divide EKW into four zones, the last of which is proposed to have no special regulation. Currently, conversion of wetland is banned and people who live on the EKW — a patchwork of sewage canals, shallow fishery ponds, and agriculture land — must seek government permission even for building culverts or new farms.

"The management plan should identify areas for creation of different management zones within the wetlands such as a) no development zone, where no changes/development shall be permitted, b) regulated development zone, c) limited change zone/wise use zone, d) "No importance to wetlands" zone, where normal regulations and not special wetland regulations may be applicable," reads a paragraph under the sub-head 'scope of work' of the document titled 'Tender for selection of agencies for preparation of management plan'. HT has a copy of the document.

The draft tender document seeking 'expression of interest' will have to be approved by a six-member steering committee comprising four state government officials and two environmentalists. "The draft document is not yet final. Views of experts from different disciplines will be considered before finalising the document," said Sandipan Mukherjee, chief technical officer of EKWMA and member-secretary of the steering committee.



A fishery pond, which locals are trying to save from land grabbers, in South 24 Parganas district in Bengal.

SAMIR JANA/HT PHOTO

He said that the management plan was envisaged to reduce problems faced by the 130,000 residents of EKW who cannot even expand their existing houses.

But environmental experts say the decision will harm the wetland already facing threats from encroachment and illegal construction. "There cannot be any area of 'no importance to wetlands' in EKW. It sounds like the government aims at sacrificing them for urbanisation," said Bonani Kakkar of NGO People United for Better Living in Calcutta. It was their petition in the Calcutta high court in 1992 that resulted in the ban on land conversion and special regulations.

Dhruba Dasgupta of Society for Creative Opportunities and Participatory Ecosystems (SCOPE), an NGO, pointed out that Kolkata, which houses a population of 14 million, had run out of space to expand on its northern and southern fringes, and with the west blocked by the river Hoogly, the east was the only direction to grow.

The government denied the allegations and pointed out that the document was still not final. "The government is committed to protecting the wetlands," said Mukherjee.

Two months ago, state environment minister Sovan Chatterjee, also the housing minister and

Kolkata mayor, proposed a fly-over over the wetlands. The government approached Asian Development Bank for the project but was turned down. Repeated calls to Chatterjee over three days went unanswered.

KOLKATA'S LIVER

Kolkata generates more than 750 million litres of waste water and sewage daily but the city's core area has no sewage treatment plant. Instead, an intricate network of wetlands managed by farmers and fisher folk receives the sewage, and with help from sunshine and oxygen, breaks it down to produce food for fish, which is then sold back to the city.

This unique ecosystem also produces a third of the city's fish requirements. "EKW is Kolkata's biggest ecological asset," said environmentalist Dhrubajyoti Ghosh.

In 1992, the HC banned conversion of water bodies and agricultural land across the EKW. In 2002, a Geneva-based international convention, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, declared the EKW 'a wetland of global importance' and cited it as a model for reuse of water.

But problems began soon after. No management plan was put in place, and in the next decade, significant chunks of the area were lost to illegal construction and

encroachment, said Asesh Sen Gupta of Kolkata Commons Centre for Inter-disciplinary Research and Analytics (CIRA).

In the absence of official surveys, gauging the extent of encroachment is difficult. A 2016 survey conducted by SCOPE at Bhagwanpur, one of the 32 mouzas, the local word for settlement, revealed water cover reduced from 88% in 2002 to 19% in 2016, while an Indian Council for Social Science Research in 2014 revealed number of fishery ponds decreased from 264 in 2002 to 202 in 2014.

PEOPLE TROUBLE

Another unique feature of EKW is the sheer number of people who live on it, estimated by activists to be around 500,000. The last official survey in 2002 put the number at 130,000. There is no official figure on the construction activity but residents admit that hutments and hovels have mushroomed in recent years — anywhere between 2,000 and 5,000 units.

"There are innumerable instances of police rushing in to stop expansion or modification of existing houses," said Pulak Biswas, a resident of Diyara village.

Records show EKWMA served four notices in June 2017, asking the recipients to restore the land within a month. None of those sites were restored till December 12. Mukherjee said the agency has no infrastructure of its own to restore land to its original state.

"The restrictions imposed on the wetlands in 1992 did not consider the realistic needs of the original inhabitants... the rules need to be relaxed for them, as these local residents are an integral part of the ecosystem," said Dhrubajyoti Ghosh.

"Instead of measuring the encroachment and compensating it, if these areas are dropped from the map altogether, this will not only legitimise illegal construction and encroachments but also set a bad precedent. It will encourage the real estate lobby to be more reckless," said Sengupta.

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Landslip creates lake, poses risk to Gangotri

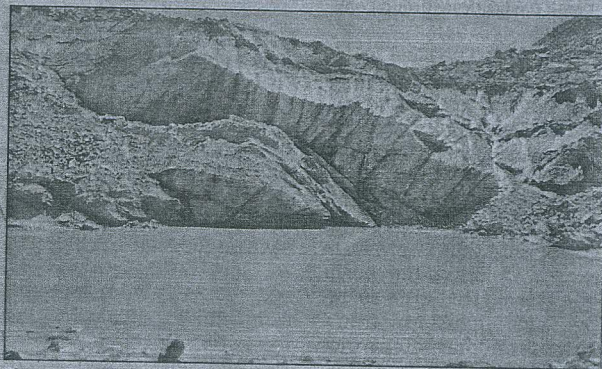
Team Sent To Study Impact On Glacier

Kautilya Singh & Abhyudaya
Kotnala | TNN

Dehradun/Uttarkashi: Suspecting the formation of a new lake in the Gangotri glacier region after a recent heavy landslide, a specialised team comprising personnel of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), Nehru Institute of Mountaineering and forest department was asked to proceed to the region on Wednesday. Another team had left for the area on Tuesday but was forced to return due to bad weather.

Sources said that the decision to send a specialised team to investigate the matter was done after satellite images showed heavy landslide at the Gangotri glacier near the India-China border. It was also suspected that a fresh water body has been formed due to the landslide which might have an impact on the glacier.

A few months ago, environmentalists had discovered that a lake-like struc-



The 4-metre-deep lake is said to be four times bigger than the Chorabari lake which had led to the 2013 Kedarnath disaster

ture had formed at Gaumukh — the snout of the Gangotri glacier — from where the main stream of the Ganga (known as Bhagirathi) is flowing. Scientists on an expedition to the glacier in October had found that because of the formation of the lake, the river is now flowing from the left side of the glacial snout instead of straight as was the case earlier. This change in flow might have disastrous consequences for Gaumukh, leading to its collapse, they had warned.

The implications of the creation of another water body in the glacier were not immediately apparent although the information created anxiety among the gov-

ernment agencies. "After satellite images showed heavy landslide in the Gangotri glacier region near the India-China border on Monday and suspected formation of a lake, it was decided to collect detailed information by sending a team to the region. A preliminary team comprising of SDRF and officials of the forest department was sent. However, they were forced to return due to bad weather," Ashish Chauhan, district magistrate, Uttarkashi, told TOI.

Sanjay Gunjyal, inspector general, SDRF, said that he can "only comment on the matter when our team gives its feedback after visiting the spot".

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China denies building tunnel to divert Brahmaputra waters

PTI

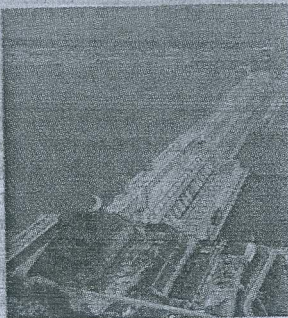
BEIJING, 13 DECEMBER

China on Wednesday denied plans to construct a tunnel to divert Brahmaputra river waters amid reports of highly polluted waters from its tributary Siang flowing into India.

"I would like to point out that China's position on the eastern part of the China-India border is consistent and clear," Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said in response to questions about the reports on blackened, muddy waters with cement and sledge of the Siang river in Arunachal Pradesh.

He refuted reports that it may due to a tunnel being constructed on Chinese side.

"I have never heard of the project mentioned by the Indian side. It is hoped that the Indian side will not



conduct unfounded speculation and reports," he said in a written response to a question in this regard.

In October, China had denied reports of plans to build 1000-km long tunnel to divert Brahmaputra waters to the arid regions of Xinjiang, saying the report is untrue and false.

There is, however, no explanation for the highly-polluted waters in Siang

river. Brahmaputra originates in Tibet where it is called Yarlung Tsangpo and is known as Siang in Arunachal Pradesh before it enters Assam and flows southwards to the sea through Bangladesh.

In 2016, China had declared that it would be building a dam on a tributary of the river, sparking concerns of its potential downstream impact in India. Arunachal Pradesh State Water Quality Testing Laboratory in a recent report said the water of the Siang river, which has turned dark and muddy, has become unfit for human consumption.

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu had drawn attention of the Centre on the river's contamination, which he said might have been caused due to activities on the Chinese side.

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प्रधानमंत्री ने विदेश और जल संसाधन मंत्रालय को निर्देश दिया, अरुणाचल प्रदेश में आ रहा है काला पानी ब्रह्मपुत्र का पानी काला पड़ने का कारण खोजें : मोदी

नई दिल्ली | एजेंसी

ब्रह्मपुत्र नदी का पानी काला होने पर प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी ने चिंता जताई है। उन्होंने विदेश मंत्रालय और जल संसाधन मंत्रालय से इसका कारण पता लगाने और इसके उपचार के लिए कदम उठाने को कहा है।

असम सरकार की ओर से जारी बयान में कहा गया है कि प्रधानमंत्री ने यह निर्देश अपनी अध्यक्षता में हुई उच्चस्तरीय बैठक में दी जिसमें केंद्रीय मंत्री सुषमा स्वराज, राजनाथ सिंह,



नितिन गडकरी, अरुण जेटली और असम के मुख्यमंत्री सर्वानंद सोनोवाल मौजूद थे। मोदी ने सोनोवाल को आश्वस्त किया कि केंद्र पहले ही ब्रह्मपुत्र नदी के जल के काला होने की घटना को गंभीरता से ले रहा है और

पानी के लिए सुरंग की योजना नहीं : चीन

चीन ने इनकार किया कि उसने ब्रह्मपुत्र नदी के पानी का रास्ता बदलने के लिए कोई सुरंग बनाने की योजना तैयार की है। पहले खबरें आई थीं कि चीन के सियांग से काफी मात्रा में प्रदूषित जल भारत की ओर प्रवाहित हो रहा है। चीनी विदेश मंत्रालय के प्रवक्ता से पूछा गया कि चीन की सियांग नदी से काला, मिट्टी और सीमेंट वाला प्रदूषित पानी अरुणाचल प्रदेश आ रहा है। उन्होंने उन खबरों को खारिज कर दिया जिसमें कहा कि यह चीन की सुरंग की वजह से हो सकता है।

केंद्रीय जल आयोग इस मामले को देख रहा है। ब्रह्मपुत्र नदी का मुद्दा कई देशों से जुड़ा होने पर विदेश मंत्रालय से भी कदम उठाने को कहा गया है।

सुषमा स्वराज ने कहा कि उनका मंत्रालय पहले ही इस विषय पर चीन के साथ मूल कारणों का पता लगाने के लिए अध्ययन किए जा रहे हैं।

दि-14-12-17

New Delhi