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BJD raising Mahanadi issue for political reasons: Raman

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 15 APRIL

While union water resources minister Uma Bharti refused to comment on the Mahanadi water dispute between Chhattisgarh and Odisha, Chhattisgarh chief minister Raman Singh said it is a non-issue being raised for political purpose by the BJD government in Odisha.

Uma Bharti, however, responded to another question and said Mahanadi will be recharged by bringing water from Teesta River and Sankosh River and that water will be used for irrigation and drinking in the drought-hit areas on banks of Mahanadi. Later the rivers will be interlinked by releasing the surplus water from Mahanadi to Godavari.

In his reaction to the Mahanadi water dispute Chhattisgarh chief minister Raman Singh said even people of Odisha knew it is a political issue raised during panchayat elections by the BJD.

Singh said he was ready for talks with his Odisha counterpart. Both Uma Bharti and Singh are here for the national executive of the BJP.

Countering the remarks of Singh, Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik said, "He is making incorrect statements. Discussions had been held at Delhi and it was the Chhattisgarh



government which did not cooperate," he charged. The Odisha CM went on to note that he was neither worried nor disturbed at the BJP hype for its national executive meeting here.

Asked whether he would meet PM Narendra Modi who will be staying in Bhubaneswar till 16 April, the CM said he is not scheduled to meet the PM this time since he is here for a programme of the BJP.

It may be recalled that Odisha government has opposed construction of barrages upstream of Mahanadi by the Chhattisgarh government and has asked the centre to constitute a tribunal to resolve the dispute.

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Bid by land lobby to divert water from Chinnar river

Effort to link it with T.N. stream has come to light, says Kerala

RADHAKRISHNAN KUTTOOR
PATHANAMTHITTA

A bid by a land lobby to divert water from Chinnar, an inter-State river, is posing a serious threat to its very existence.

The lobby is trying to divert water from the east-flowing river to the Mangayaar stream – a dead stream in Tamil Nadu – via a 700-metre trench. Land grabbers based in Tamil Nadu have constructed a four-metre deep, three-metre wide trench along 80 metres.

The Kerala Forest Department has reported the matter to Forest Minister K. Raju and Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

The Forest Minister told *The Hindu* that he had directed Munnar Wildlife Warden G. Prasad to stop the trench construction. Reports received from Tamil Nadu showed that the construc-



Illegal move: A view of the trench under construction to link the Chinnar with the Mangayaar stream.

tion had been taken up by a land lobby without the knowledge of officials, he said.

Adverse impact

Mr. Raju said the matter would be taken up with the Tamil Nadu government. He said the Wildlife Warden in Munnar had reported that

the unscientific interlinking of Chinnar and Mangayaar would adversely affect the Muthuvan tribal settlement of Thayannankudy in the Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary, not to speak of the drought situation in the downstream reaches due to the drying up of Chinnar along the 13-km stretch up to Koottar.

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Indus river irrigation projects miss deadline

ST-17

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 16 APRIL

Three irrigation projects in the Indus river basin in Jammu and Kashmir, which were supposed to be completed by March this year, have missed their deadline, a top government official has said. These projects are part of the 23 irrigation works the government had prioritised to complete by the end of the previous fiscal under two central schemes.

While the remaining ones are nearing completion, sources said the Tral irrigation project in Pulwama, Prakachik Khows canal project in Kargil, and the modernisation of Ravi Canal in Jammu have failed to meet the deadline.

According to the official, the Tral project got delayed after the Jammu and Kashmir government decided to review it. The official, how-

ever, did not elaborate on why the review was being done.

"The work on Prakachik Khows canal also could not progress as expected due to hostile weather conditions. The area is still snow-bound. Same is the case with Ravi canal," the official added.

The modernisation of the main Ravi canal is expected to be completed by December this year. The other two projects are likely to be completed by next year, the official said.

Last year, the government had decided to fast-track four projects, including these three, under the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayi Yojana (PMKYS) and Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP), aiming to increase irrigated land in the state by nearly 2.05 lakh acres. The three projects will help cover 1.45 lakh acres of the total area planned to be irrigated.

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चिकमंगलूर में भीषण गर्मी के कारण सूख चुकी झील के बाद से अपने पशुओं को लेकर
गुजरता एक किसान। (छाया : प्रैट.)

4/17-17-4-17

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Ganga patrol team planned to check pollution

Govt To Recruit Retired Army, IPS Personnel

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New Delhi: The government is planning to recruit IPS officers, personnel of the Army, paramilitary forces and state police who have retired from service for raising an exclusive Ganga Volunteer Force.

Tasked with assisting local authorities implement ongoing Ganga rejuvenation programmes and enforce relevant laws, it is expected to prevent wanton pollution and desecration of the holy river.

The proposed central force will police the entire stretch of the Ganga

VOLUNTEER FORCE

► It'll be a central force
► Rules for appointment, tenure and powers will be drawn from new proposed law

► Members of the force will primarily be drawn from retired personnel of Army, police and paramilitary



■ 60% of the total strength of the force -- Retired personnel of Army and paramilitary

■ 20% Retired personnel of state security forces or Home Guards of the Ganga Basin states

■ 10% Retired IPS officers or retired senior officers of the state police services

■ 10% Volunteers of National Service Scheme (NSS), Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) or other social service organisation

(2,525km) in five states — Uttarakhnad, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar and West Bengal — which are on the main stem of the river.

"The justice (retired) Girdhar Malviya committee has suggested setting up such a

force under central government and made provisions for its recruitment, tenure, powers and composition in the proposed draft law on Ganga. The government is favourably inclined to set up the force," said a senior official of the Union

water resources ministry.

He said, "We will soon start the process of consulting the states for setting up this force which will draw its functional powers from the proposed law on the river Ganga".

Justice (retired) Malviya had submitted the proposed draft law, National River Ganga (Rejuvenation, Protection and Management) Bill, 2017, to the Union water resources and Ganga rejuvenation minister Uma Bharti on Wednesday.

The draft legislation fixes five-year term for members of the force which will be headed in a district or group of contiguous districts (zone along the river) by a serving magistrate-level officers at zonal directorate. The magistrate-level officer will be on deputation to the GVF from the respective states.

According to the proposal,

every zonal directorate will be assigned a team of the force with adequate number as deemed fit by the National River Ganga Basin Management Corporation — a new proposed body with its head office in Delhi — which will be the custodian of the river Ganga for its "protection, management and rejuvenation".

Once the corporation is set up, the existing National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) will be dissolved. At present, the NMCG is the key implementing agency of the entire Ganga rejuvenation programme of the Centre under 'Namami Gange'.

The corporation will be headed by a director general of the rank of additional secretary and above. The DG, having tenure of five years, will be appointed by the central government under the new proposed architecture.

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पानी नहीं पूजा सामग्री से भरी नहर



दिल्ली में एनजीटी व अन्य संस्थाओं द्वारा चलाए जा रहे अभियानों के बावजूद लोग यमुना व नहरों में पूजा सामग्री डालने से बाज नहीं आ रहे, हैरानी की बात तो यह है कि ज्यादातर स्थानों पर पूजा सामग्री डाल दी जाती है जहां पर पानी नहीं होता, प्रेमबाड़ी अंडरपास के बराबर से गुजरने वाली नहर में भी गंदगी का कुछ ऐसा ही आलम देखने को मिला। (फोटो : दयाशंकर)

डाल रहे हैं जिसके चलते पूरी नहर इन दिनों इसी सामग्री से भर चुकी है। आसपास के कलस्टर इलाकों में रहने वाले बच्चे सुबह से ही इन सामग्री को खोलने में लग जाते हैं जैसे इनमें कोई कीमती सामान छिपा हो लेकिन अपने मतलब का कुछ न मिलने पर वो इसे और भी

ज्यादा फैला देते हैं। शायद इस ओर अब तक प्रशासन का ध्यान नहीं गया तभी पिछले कई दिनों से इस नहर का हाल ज्यों का त्यों ही है। नहर में सामग्री को फेंकने आने वालों से जब उनकी आस्था जाननी चाही तो कहीं न कहीं आस्था के नाम पर वो भी कुछ कह नहीं बता

पाए और प्रशासन को कोसने लगे। लोगों का सिर्फ इतना ही कहना है कि अगर इसे जल में प्रवाह न करें तो क्या करें। शायद प्रशासन को इसके लिए कुछ सख्त कदम उठाने चाहिए। क्या प्रशासन हर इलाके में ऐसे स्थान नहीं बना सकता जहां इन्हें एकत्रित कर इनके प्रयोग की

कुछ वस्तु, खाद आदि बनाई जा सके। बता दें कि राजधानी में ऐसा हाल सिर्फ इसी नहर का नहीं है बल्कि लगभग सभी नहरों में व आसपास की सड़कों पर ऐसे ही इन पूजा सामग्री के ढेर देखने को मिलते हैं इससे तो यमुना भी नहीं बच पाई।

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किसानों ने जताया विरोध बरेली निकालते क्षतिग्रस्त हो रहा गंगनहर का बेड

श्रीगंगानगर गंगनहर फीडर से एक्सक्वेटर मशीनों की मदद से बरेली निकालते हुए नहर का बेड क्षतिग्रस्त हो रहा है। इसे लेकर शनिवार को किसानों ने विरोध भी जताया। बरेली निकालते हुए नहर का बेड क्षतिग्रस्त होता है तो इससे भविष्य में पानी का रिसाव शुरू हो जाएगा। क्षतिग्रस्त बेड को अगर दुरुस्त नहीं किया गया तो पानी के प्रवाह से क्षतिग्रस्त बेड का आकार बढ़ता जाएगा।

नहर बंदी के दौरान गंगनहर फीडर की आरडी-2 से आरडी-10 तक बरेली निकालने का काम चल रहा है। जल संसाधन विभाग ने इसका ठेका साढ़े सोलह लाख में

छोड़ा है। आमतौर पर बंदी के दौरान विभाग बरेली निकालने का ठेका नहीं देता। इसका फायदा बरेली के काम से जुड़ा माफिया उठाता है। नहर के बेड से बरेली का खनन कर माफिया लाखों रुपए कमाता है। किसानों ने बताया कि आरडी-2 से आरडी-10 तक बरेली निकालने के लिए ठेकेदार ने एक्सक्वेटर मशीनें लगाई हैं। इनके पंजे से नहर का बेड क्षतिग्रस्त हो रहा है। किसानों ने बताया कि अभी तक बरेली निकालने का काम पूरा नहीं हुआ है। एक्सक्वेटर मशीन की मदद से बेड में जमा जो बरेली उठाई गई है, उसके ढेर बेड में ही लगा दिए गए हैं।

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Challenge of reviving India's great rivers



ARMIN ROSENCRAZ AND AMAN GUPTA

India is experiencing an acute water crisis. Over the last two decades, this crisis has caused widespread agrarian distress, disrupted the rural economy, and rendered countless farmers distraught, leading a number into suicide. The water crisis has its roots in extensive deforestation, proliferation of bore wells, rampant urbanisation, and unplanned development, which has wreaked havoc with the hydrological cycle, leading to the deterioration of many rivers. As per the World Resources Institute, 54 per cent of India faces extremely high water stress. India's groundwater depletion is

reveres its water bodies and holds the virtue of sustenance in the highest regard. Various water bodies across India, especially in the states of Maharashtra and Karnataka, have dried up owing to the disturbed hydrological cycle, the release of untreated effluents and unsustainable water use patterns.

The holy river Ganga, which many in India refer to as 'Ganga Maa' or 'Mother Ganga', has been among the top priorities of Prime Minister Narendra Modi since his election in 2014. The Ministry of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation is responsible for overseeing the clean-up of the river.

Namami Gange was

was to accomplish effective abatement of pollution, conservation and rejuvenation of the river Ganga. Despite the major steps and a strong government focus on cleaning up the Ganga, we are yet to see results. As per a recent report of the Central Pollution Control Board, Ganga receives 3,048 million litres of waste water per day. Disposal of industrial and domestic sewage effluent, directly by drains or indirectly through tributaries, has been the chief cause for the high levels of pollution.

The newly appointed Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath, recently met the Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Uma

necessary action to speed up the work, saying that since the largest stretch of the river passes through Uttar Pradesh, it is the responsibility of the state to clean up the river.

A recent ruling by the Uttarakhand high court recognised rivers Ganga and Yamuna as living legal entities. Although the ruling may encounter operational challenges, it is being hailed as a much required precedent in India. Environmentalists believe that since the ruling resonates with the civilisational ethos of the land, it will lay the foundation of responsible environmental reforms and engage the community.

The coming to power of

ies. However, before grand projects are completed and big promises are fulfilled, small steps need to be undertaken immediately.

River rejuvenation offers a sustainable solution to many of India's water problems but requires technical planning, community engagement, grass-roots leadership, efficient project management and responsible social audit for feedback.

The current government structures lack the required integration to address the problem of 'dying rivers' as each department works in isolation, necessitating a nodal agency through which all schemes can be implemented

nodal agencies and providing services that make it possible for the government to undertake river rejuvenation projects.

Dr. Lingaraju Yale (a renowned geologist and member of the National Committee on Integrated Mission for Sustainable Development, Indian Space Research Organization) has developed a scientific methodology that is being used in some of the ongoing river rejuvenation projects with active involvement of civil society organisations. These projects are based on a river basin framework. Remote sensing and geographic information systems (GIS) are used to analyse information relating to geology, geomorphology, lithology, lineaments, soil type and drainage network, and detailed action plans are accordingly designed. Various civil society agencies and government departments come together to conduct capacity building and training programs for various stakeholders, and to ensure proper implementation.

These projects are unique on the social front as well. They create community leaders and 'barefoot technicians' who act as trustworthy channels for last-mile delivery. One such project has been selected for a national award by the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Govt. of India, and has been recommended as a national model. This project was implemented under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (MGNREGA), in partnership with the central government, state government and civil society organizations.

The project spans 5,500 square kilometres of watershed, covering three districts and 1097 villages. In a span of just two years, 6.8 lakh+ man days have been generated, 28,000+ people have benefited by employment under MGNREGA, 4,500+ have been trained on water conservation, and 10,000+ farmers have been enrolled as members of the Farmer Producers Organisation.

Representatives from a civil society organization say that the core belief is to transform individuals and communities into 'agents of change', and effectively work with all key stakeholders, including the government, to catalyse a silent