

भारत सरकार  
Government of India  
केन्द्रीय जल आयोग  
Central Water Commission  
बाढ़ पूर्वानुमान प्रबोधन निदेशालय  
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विषय : दिनांक 18.09.2018 की समाचार की कतरन ( News Clippings ) प्रस्तुत करने के सम्बन्ध में ।

मानसून/ बाढ़ सम्बन्धी समाचारों की कतरन ( News Clippings ) अवलोकन हेतु प्रस्तुत हैं :

संलग्न : उपरोक्तानुसार

18/9/18  
DD  
(सहायक निदेशक)

18/09/18  
उपनिदेशक

निदेशक (वा.पू.प्र.)  
210-28-5  
18/09/2018

कृपया केन्द्रीय जल आयोग की वेब साईट पर अपलोड करने की व्यवस्था करें।

निदेशक (तकनीकी प्रलेखन )  
5/9



Hindustan Times ( Delhi )  
नवभारत टाइम्स ( दिल्ली )  
The Tribune ( Chandigarh )  
The Hindu ( Chennai )

✓ The Assam Tribune ( Guwahati )  
The Times of India ( Mumbai )  
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हिन्दुस्तान ( पटना )

The Deccan Herald ( Bengluru )  
The Deccan Chronical ( Hyderabad )  
Central Chronical ( Bhopal )

## State records deficit rainfall this monsoon

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, Sept 15: Till September 12, the State recorded 20 per cent deficit rainfall during this monsoon season with an actual rainfall amount of 1082.3mm, against the normal of 1358.3mm.

According to the information provided by the India Meteorology Department (IMD), during this period, Arunachal recorded a deficit rainfall of 31 per cent, while Meghalaya recorded a deficit rainfall of 38 per cent. Nagaland recorded a deficit rainfall

(See page 12)

# Fresh wave of flood in State; 1.4 lakh people affected

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, Sept 15: Nearly 1.4 lakh people in 337 villages under 12 revenue circles of the State's six districts are now affected by the new wave of flood caused by the rain-fed rivers of the State following intense rainfall activities in the northeastern region during the past about one week.

The Brahmaputra river is flowing above danger level at Neamatighat in Jorhat district, while the Dhansiri (South) is flowing above danger level at

Numaligarh in Golaghat district. The Jia Bharali is flowing above danger level at NT Road Crossing in Sonitpur district, while the Beki is flowing above danger level at Road Bridge in Barpeta district, said the official flood bulletin of the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) here this evening.

According to the ASDMA flood bulletin, Dhemaji with 221 villages affected by flood has emerged as the worst hit district in this new wave of flood.

Majuli district has 75 of its

villages reeling under flood.

In all, 585 flood-affected people in Jonai subdivision of Dhemaji district are taking shelter in three relief camps set up by the local authorities, the bulletin stated.

The six districts which have been affected by the current wave of flood are Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Biswanath, Barpeta, Majuli and Dibrugarh.

Floodwaters have so far affected a total crop area of 11,243.11 hectares of cropland in the five districts of Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Biswanath, Majuli and Dibrugarh.

## 24 villages submerged in Majuli

Floodwaters from Brahmaputra and tributaries flowed into the island following heavy rainfall in Arunachal Pradesh

CORRESPONDENT

JORHAT, Sept 15: Twenty-four revenue villages were submerged in Majuli after water from the Brahmaputra and its tributaries entered the villages located along the riverine areas outside the embankment.

A district administration official told *The Assam Tribune* that water level in the rivers rose since September 13 following heavy rains in Arunachal Pradesh in the past few days, and from yesterday afternoon water started flowing into the villages.

The official said that floodwaters severely affected five villages, while in the rest 19 villages, the situation was comparatively better with the villages less inundated.



A flood-affected area at Halmora in Majuli, as seen on Saturday. — UB Photos

Over 6,000 people have been hit by this wave of floods. The district administration has sounded an alert, with Majuli Deputy Commis-

sioner Deba Prasad Misra, who is the Chairman of the District Disaster Management Authority, keeping a close watch on the situation.

The DC has said that the administration was fully prepared to meet any kind of situation arising out of the floods, the official added.



दिनांक 18.09.2018 को निम्नलिखित समाचार पत्र में प्रकाशित मानसून/ बाढ़ सम्बन्धी समाचार

✓ Hindustan Times ( Delhi )  
नवभारत टाइम्स ( दिल्ली )  
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# Monsoon not over yet, rain expected over the weekend

HT Correspondent

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**NEW DELHI:** If the present dry spell has given you an impression that monsoon is over, then you are mistaken. The India Meteorological Department has said monsoon is far from over and Delhi is likely to witness another wet spell over the weekend.

"We are expecting another spell of rain between October 21 and 25. A low pressure that has developed over the Bay of Bengal is likely to move westwards and reach northwest India during that period. It is likely to trigger some rain in Delhi and other parts of NCR," said BP Yadav, deputy director of IMD.

Delhi had last received rain on October 9. The Safdarjung station, considered to be a representative of Delhi's weather, registered 5.8 mm rain on that day.

But since then, over the past eight days, the city hasn't

## Monsoon withdrawal dates

Year	Delhi	Rajasthan
2017	October 10	September 27
2016	October 11	October 7
2015	Sep 30	September 28
2014	October 4	September 23
2013	October 18	September 9

received a single drop because of which the mercury level is rising.

While the maximum temperature was recorded at 31.5 degrees Celsius on October 9, it has risen to 34 degrees on Monday.

Meteorologists said the rising heat index is adding to the discomfort level and making the weather muggy. Heat index or 'humiture' is a measure of how hot it really feels when relative humidity is factored in with the actual air temperature.

"The maximum temperature on Monday was recorded at 34.1 degrees Celsius, which is normal.

The maximum relative humidity was 89%. The combination of heat and humidity is making matters worse," said the official.

"But once the rain hits Delhi, the mercury level is expected to drop again," said an IMD official.

Officials said the rain expected to hit Delhi over the next few days is a part of the monsoon, which usually starts retreating from Rajasthan by the third or last week of September. It withdraws from Delhi around the first week of October. "We have not spotted any withdrawal symptoms of the monsoon yet," said Yadav.



दिनांक 17.09.2018... को निम्नलिखित समाचार पत्र में प्रकाशित मानसून/ बाढ़ सम्बन्धी समाचार

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The Deccan Chronical ( Hyderabad )

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## Pleasant weather likely to continue in city

Some areas may have rain, say officials



**Respite from heat:** Several areas in the city witnessed rains on Sunday. A scene from Anna Nagar East in Chennai. ■ M. VEDHAN

### STAFF REPORTER

CHENNAI

After days of humid weather, the city received thunder-showers on Sunday. Residents can look forward to enjoying the pleasant weather on Monday too, as rain is likely to continue.

The sky will be cloudy and some areas in the city may get rain or thunder-showers, officials in the Meteorological Centre said.

On Sunday afternoon, several areas in the city like Anna Salai, Arumbakkam, T.



**Nungambakkam recorded 0.8 cm of rain, while Meenambakkam registered 3 cm**

MET DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS

Nagar, Thoraipakkam, Royapettah and Kodambakkam received sharp spells of rain. Many areas had heavy winds and rain with thunder and lightning.

While Nungambakkam recorded 0.8 cm of rain, Meenambakkam received 3 cm.

The rainfall occurred due to convective activity, officials said.

Nungambakkam recorded a maximum temperature of 37.3 degrees Celsius and a minimum of 25 degrees Celsius. In Meenambakkam, it was 36.3 degrees Celsius and 24.3 degrees Celsius respectively.

Some areas of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry may receive heavy rainfall. On Sunday, Tiruttani, Puducherry and Vellore got the maximum rainfall of 3 cm.



Central Water Commission  
Technical Documentation Directorate  
Bhagirath(English)& Publicity Section

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West Block II, Wing No-5  
R K Puram, New Delhi – 66.

Dated 18.9.2018.

*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.

*[Signature]*  
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SFA (Publicity)

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Deputy Director TD Dte. & Publication Division

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18/9

Director TD Dte

*[Signature]*  
18/9

For information of Chairman & Member (WP&P/D&R/R.M.), CWC and all concerned,  
uploaded at [www.cwc.nic.in](http://www.cwc.nic.in)

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Business standard

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ECONOMIC TIMES

## TARIFF TRAJECTORY

# Solar Project Developers Seek Reversal of Cap in Tariffs

Say capping tariffs at ₹2.50/unit will make projects unviable as bids are determined by changes in module prices, currency risks and varied solar radiation across states

Nishtha.Saluja@timesgroup.com

**New Delhi:** Solar project developers have cautioned the government that the decision to cap tariffs in future auctions at ₹2.50 per unit needs to be reversed because it will make projects unviable as their bids are determined by changes in module prices, currency risks and varied solar radiation across states.

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) recently said tariffs for all future solar bids should be capped at ₹2.50 per unit, while an additional margin of 18 paise per unit would be allowed in case the safeguard duty is being factored in.

In fixing the maximum permissible limit for solar bids, MNRE cited results of a recent 2,000 MW NTPC tender, the final bids for which were received post the implementation of safeguard duty. The winning tariff in the tender stood at ₹2.59-2.60 per unit.

Developers, however, argue that the entire 2,000 MW capacity auctioned by NTPC is expected to be developed in Rajasthan, which supports economical land prices and is exposed to highest radiation levels among states in India.

"Fixing the maximum permissible tariffs at INR 2.5 per unit for all future bids limits the possibilities for developing viable solar projects (ISTS connected) anywhere in India or within the demanding states as Rajasthan state will always have the advantage of higher generation over other parts of India," the Solar Power Developers Association (SPDA) said in a letter to power minister RK Singh. ET has seen a copy of the letter.

## Solar Tariffs Fall to Record Low of ₹2.44/Unit Yet Again

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**Bengaluru:** Solar tariffs have fallen to a record low of ₹2.44 per unit yet again on Monday in a 500 MW auction held by the Gujarat Urja Vikas Nigam Ltd (GUVNL), indicating that the impact of safeguard duty is not yet being passed on by developers.

Ahmedabad-headquartered Giriraj Renewables, part of Avaada Energy, emerged as the biggest winner getting 300 MW at ₹2.44 per unit. Aditya Birla Renewables won 100 MW at the same tariff, while Azure Power got 100 MW at ₹2.45 per unit.

"The duty has not been taken into account, or else this would be considered an aggressive tariff," said a banker who finances renewable energy projects. "This being a state-level auction, developers would not go for aggressive tariffs."

The finance ministry last week had reinstated safeguard duty on solar panels and modules imported from China and Malaysia. The Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) had initially im-

posed safeguard duty of 25% for a year from July 30, followed by 20% for the next six months and 15% for another six. This was challenged in the Orissa High Court and successfully stayed pending a verdict, but last week the Supreme Court vacated the stay.



**Giriraj Renewables emerged as the biggest winner getting 300 MW at ₹2.44 per unit**

In its order, the DGTR had maintained safeguard duty was necessary to protect the local solar manufacturing industry, which had suffered "serious injury" due to imports. More than 90% of solar panels and modules used in Indian projects are imported since domestic manufacturers cannot match Chinese and Malaysian prices.

The record tariff of ₹2.44 per unit has been reached twice before, both in auctions conducted by the Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI), the first time in a 500 MW auction in May 2017 and the next in a 2400 MW auction in July this year.

SPDA added that achieving the best possible tariffs and development of economically viable solar projects should not be limited to one or two

states given the varied quantum of technical losses and transmission charges in diffe-

rent states.

The industry body argued that solar power generation in states like Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Uttar Pradesh is 7-16% lower than Rajasthan, mainly due to change in radiation levels.

"If all capacity comes up in one state, GST revenue will go to only one state. Given that power will be wheeled and consumed in other states, it is effectively revenue loss for other states," SPDA added.



Hindustan Times

Statesman

The Times of India (N.D.)

Indian Express

Tribune

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Nai Duniya (Hindi)

The Times of India (A)

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## ✓ Horticulture challenge

Govt needs to play a more proactive role BS-18

**T**he agriculture ministry's latest crop estimates for 2017-18, which indicate that the output of horticulture has outstripped that of foodgrains for the sixth year in a row, also unfold some significant emerging trends in agriculture that call for pertinent policy responses. A notable point in this data is that while the foodgrain harvest has been oscillating, dipping markedly during the back-to-back drought years of 2014 and 2015, horticulture has maintained a steady uptrend, regardless of the monsoon's performance. The area under vegetables, fruit and other horticultural products, such as spices, herbs, flowers and plantation crops, has also been expanding. Clearly, agriculture has begun to diversify with farmers and farm land shifting gradually to relatively lucrative and quick cash-yielding fruit and vegetable farming. This is a desirable drift that needs to be sustained. Horticulture, together with livestock husbandry and fisheries, comprises the high-value segment of agriculture, which, if prompted to grow to its potential, can mitigate farm distress.

This trend assumes significance also because it has come about without much official backing. Had the same kind of attention been paid to horticulture as has been the case with foodgrains, India could have become the world leader in this field. At present, India's share in the global bazaar of fresh and processed fruit and vegetables is meagre though even today the country is the world's second-largest producer of these items. Horticulture needs to be promoted for another reason as well. Thanks to gradual rise in income levels, the consumption of and, hence, demand for fruit and vegetables are growing while those for cereals are on the slide. Admittedly, priority to foodgrains was justified in the past to combat widespread hunger. This goal has, more or less, been achieved. So emphasis should now shift to augmenting the availability of relatively nutritious fruit and vegetables to alleviate malnutrition, which still persists.

This can be done by providing assured marketing at remunerative prices for horticultural produce the way it is proposed for many other crops. Equally important is to facilitate the development of post-harvest value chain of cold stores, refrigerated transportation and processing of perishable horticultural products. Promoting organised retail with backward linkages with growers can also help provide assured marketing at reasonable prices. Unfortunately, none of the fruit or vegetables figures in the present list of over 20 farm commodities for which the minimum support prices are routinely announced by the government. It is imperative to include in this list some key fruit and vegetables, notably the three main mass-consumed kitchen staples — tomato, onion and potato (dubbed quite aptly as TOP). These are the crops whose production and prices fluctuate the most. In 2017-18, too, the output of these commodities registered a decline, bucking the overall uptrend in horticulture production. The absence of stable import-export policies concerning these rapidly decaying products is partly to blame for their price volatility. Though a price stabilisation fund for perishable farm produce exists for years, it serves little purpose because of its meagre corpus and shoddy administration. It is time the government realised the need to create a prudent and longer-lasting policy environment to let the output of key vegetables and fruit move in tandem with their demand in the domestic and export markets. Otherwise, the welcome trend of farm diversification may not endure.



News item/letter/article/editorial published on 18.09.2018 in the

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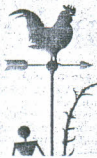
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The Times of India (A)  
Business standard

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**ECONOMIC TIMES** ✓

## Monsoon Watch



**Countrywide rainfall since June 1 remained 9% below normal**

Deficient rains recorded over 31% area of the country since June 1.



Overall rainfall recorded on Monday morning remained 50% below normal. Most of eastern & northeastern states, Gujarat & Haryana have recorded deficient rains so far.



**Northwest & Central India have recorded 6% below normal rainfall since June 1**



**CURRENT WEATHER & FORECAST**

**Rainfall activity over northern plains likely to increase Friday onwards**

Increased rainfall activity likely over Central & adjoining peninsular India between September 21 and 25



Highest max temperature recorded at 38.5° Celsius in coastal Andhra on Sunday



**NW India, barring Uttarakhand, to remain dry over next 2 days**



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THE ECONOMIC TIMES ✓

# Spot Power Prices Hit Record High of ₹14.08 per Unit

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**New Delhi:** Spot electricity prices in the country soared to a record ₹14.08 per unit on Monday, and are likely to remain high due to rising demand in the festival season with states striving to supply 24x7 electricity even as generation has reduced.

Warmer weather with monsoon weakening has also added to power demand, which is expected to rise further in a few weeks as farmers start harvesting the kharif crop.

The market is squeezed further because generation of hydroelectricity and wind power has fallen, while many coal-based units are struggling.

Hydropower generation dropped 19% since between September 1 and September 16, while wind energy generation dropped 33%.

At the same time, peak electricity demand in the last 15 days has risen by 7%.

On India Energy Exchange (IEX), there were total buy bids for 298 million units (MU)

against sell bids of 192 MU in Monday's trading. Spot market prices in the peak hours rose to ₹9.61 per unit while the average was high at ₹6.53.

During peak hour duration of about 3.5-4 hours, the gap between buy and sell bids widened to about 4,000 MW – with buy bids of 11,000 MW against sell bids of 7,000 MW.

**On IEX, there were total buy bids for 298 million units (MU) against sell bids of 192 MU in Monday's trading**

purchase bids from Telangana, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Bihar, which have implemented 24x7 electricity supply starting this year.

Also, a lot of coal-based merchant plants are shut due to cash crunch. The stressed plants are not able to import or purchase coal from spot markets.

With several states trying to reduce blackouts, distribution companies have been demanding more electricity.

Officials said there have been frantic pur-



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# Rains retreat to be delayed further

BS-15  
SANJEEB MUKHERJEE  
New Delhi, 17 September

A new low pressure over the Bay of Bengal and a western disturbance are likely to further delay the withdrawal of the southwest monsoon this year and cause rainfall over north India over the weekend. The rains were supposed to retreat from September 1.

The revised forecast said the monsoon withdrawal would start from September 10-12. Now, it seems this will take longer.

"The withdrawal will not start this week," India Meteorological Department (IMD) Director General K J Jamshaid said.

The rains usually start



Heavy rainfall is expected over northern India, including in New Delhi, during the weekend

withdrawing from early September from western Rajasthan. The process is usually complete by end-October, signaling the end of the four-month season that starts in June. For the past few years,

withdrawal has been delayed. The delay might aid planting of rabi crops, but if the showers are more than expected they might cause damage to the standing kharif harvest, particularly crops sown late.

A likely western disturbance over north India during the weekend might cause heavy to very heavy showers in a few places, including New Delhi.

"Heavy to very heavy rain is likely over north India from 23 September... All states must be warned for flooding," Jatin Singh, chief executive officer of private weather forecasting agency Skymet, tweeted.

Till September 17, the southwest monsoon has been 9 per cent below normal with rains deficient in 12 of the 36 meteorological sub-divisions. These include west Rajasthan, Saurashtra, Gujarat, north interior Karnataka, Rayalseema, Bihar, Jharkhand, and the entire Northeast India.

In many parts, the deficit is largely on account of low rain-

fall in the first half of the monsoon, but in others the conditions are staring at a drought.

The data also showed that out of the 662 districts, the monsoon was normal in 62 per cent of them between June 1 and September 16. In the rest, it was deficient.

Encouraged by the late withdrawal of monsoon, sowing of kharif crops has also picked up pace and crossed last year's level — almost 1 per cent more than the area sown in 2017.

Water levels in the 91 major reservoirs across the country were also at a comfortable 131 per cent more than last year and 114 per cent of its 10-year average. This should also augur well for the rabi sowing season.



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## ON THE JOB

# Why lack of jobs does not lead to social strife



MAHESH VYAS

**I**n a discussion around employment organised by IC Centre for Governance in Delhi last Friday, former cabinet secretary Prabhat Kumar made an important observation. He said that if unemployment is a big problem then why is there no social demonstration of its angst?

Upon reflection, I feel the answer to Prabhat's question is in the gender of unemployment.

My presentation at the discussion showed that demonetisation had led to a loss of jobs estimated between 12.7 million and 3.5 million. Possibly, the initial hit was closer to the higher end of the range and over about four months, the loss had narrowed down closer to 3.5 million.

This is not a new finding. I had presented these results first in December 2017. The paper can be accessed at <https://unemploymentinindia.cmie.com/kommon/bin/sr.php?kall=wtab-nav&tab=4090>

What was new in the presentation was the break-up of the impact of demonetisation on male and female members. There are two important findings here.

First, men did not display much fall in their overall labour participation after demonetisation. There was a small fall in labour participation of young and old men, but this was offset by an increase in labour participation among middle-aged men.

Second, and this is important, demonetisation reversed an increase

in labour participation that was seen among women before demonetisation. Between the first and second wave of CMIE's CPHS we had seen an increase in labour participation in all age-groups of women. After demonetisation, all the gain was lost and in due course of time, women saw a big fall in labour participation rates.

Why did women leave the labour markets in big numbers when men did not? This is the important question.

There are two leads to answering that question. First, women find it a



**The drop in female labour participation rates is a reflection of women suffering quietly**

lot more difficult to get jobs than men do. Male labour participation rate is much higher than women participation rate even under normal conditions. And, in spite of a low labour participation rate, women face a higher unemployment rate. Meaning that even the fewer women who attempt to get a job, find it much more difficult to obtain one compared to men. This is the bias that society has against hiring women compared to men.

Now, when the going gets tough — as it did after demonetisation — women move out of the way to make it easier for men to get the few jobs that were available. Households took the perfectly rational decision to move men (and more experienced men) into the labour markets rather than have the women, and particularly young women, compete in the difficult labour markets of

the post demonetisation period.

This point is strengthened by the second and related lead provided by the data to answer the question. Post demonetisation, there was a drop in households that had two or more persons employed.

Between January and October 2016 (the pre-demonetisation period), the share of households where two or more persons were employed was 34.8 per cent. This dropped to 31.8 per cent in the period after demonetisation. So, in the case of three per cent of the households, the number of working persons declined from more than one to just one. In a modern day and age, why should the number of working persons of a household decline? Obviously, women moved out to make way for men in a difficult situation.

Possibly, women moved out of the labour force because of the difficult labour markets after demonetisation; possibly because households have become more conservative in response to fringe religious elements; or they became more aware of women's safety in the face of regular news of gender violence and harassment.

The drop we see in female labour participation rates is a reflection of women suffering quietly. Women do not indulge in violence or arson — that is a male preserve. But, since men did not suffer like women did, they did not find it necessary to indulge in jobs-related violence. That is the answer to Prabhat Kumar's question of why the lack of jobs is not translating into any overt social strife. But, I hope we are not waiting for that to happen.

The slideshow I presented at the IC Centre for Governance last week is available on the website. I welcome you to download this and take a look at a measure of a different crime against women.

*The author is managing director and CEO, Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy P Ltd*



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## PTC to roll out second round of power purchase

JYOTI MUKUL & SHREYA JAI  
New Delhi, 17 September

At a time when demand concerns have dogged the power sector, Power Trading Corporation (PTC) is playing the role of an aggregator and has successfully completed bidding for 1,900 Mw of short-term power contracts. Simultaneously, it is looking for a second tranche of power procurement and is planning to go the whole hog into trading through power exchange in tie-up with ICICI and BSE.

TN, Telangana, Haryana, Punjab, Jharkhand and Bihar are likely to sign the power sales agreement (PSA) for the first tranche of 1,900 Mw, for which PTC has aggregated bids. "Through the use of scheduling, we will be able to cater to the demand of the state without the power plant suffering. Within a month, the final PSA should be signed," PTC Chairman and MD Deepak Amitabh said in an interview with *Business Standard*. The pact would be for three years with a composite charge and just 1 paise fixed charge in the tariff. At 55 per cent plant load factor (PLF), states would be buying power at ₹4.24 a kilowatt an hour (unit), said Amitabh.

Further, every 5 per cent increase in PLF would get a 1 per cent discount in tariff under the agreement. In case PLF goes below 55 per cent, the differential power would be sold

in the open market and any under-recovery would be charged to the distribution company. If power is sold at a premium, the profit would be divided equally between discom and the generating firm. The arrangement would be different from the normal power purchase pact under which a discom pays fixed charge even if it does not draw the contracted power.

Power under this mechanism would be mostly from stressed power assets belonging to RKM PowerGen, Jaiprakash Associates, IL&FS and MB Power. With the fate of these assets hanging and there being high chances of them landing in insolvency tribunal, there is a question mark on signing of contracts.

Amitabh, however, said sale of plants under insolvency should not be an issue. "I don't see any difficulty in signing. If an exemption is required, we will ask the government," he said. According to him, the fact was that no financial closure for coal-based power plant has taken place in the last three-four years though coal continued to be important as base load. "Over a period of time, as new refineries and other industry come up, demand will grow." For the volume of second tranche, he said 2,000-3,000 Mw is the sweet spot where there is always a demand.

*More on business-standard.com*



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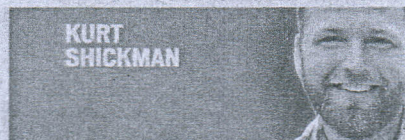
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# India can, and must, tackle the problem of hot cities

South Asia has a unique opportunity to show the rest of the world the way to providing cooling access for all

KURT  
SHICKMAN



The intense heatwave that has struck South Asia in the last few months has proved to be particularly challenging for those living in cities. While global temperatures are rising, urban temperatures are climbing at even faster rates.

The problem is only likely to get worse as South Asian cities grow more crowded, while heat waves are expected to become more extreme, last longer and happen more frequently. One study predicts that cities can expect the average high temperature to increase by 3 to 5 degrees Celsius and their lowest temperatures to increase by 3 to 7 degrees Celsius by 2050. Extreme heat, already the deadliest natural disaster in an average year, will become even deadlier.

Addressing urban heat is much more than "avoiding a negative". It is an investment that would boost urban economies around the world—from Phoenix and New York City to New Delhi, Karachi and Dhaka. A growing body of research finds that the broad benefits of cooling down cities—such as improved energy efficiency, worker productivity, air quality, health and equity—are potentially worth billions of dollars to a single city. This represents an economic benefit for vulnerable low-income urban populations.

One example to emulate is Almeria, Spain, which has a unique tradition of whitewashing its greenhouses. Remarkably, based on a 20-year study comparing weather station data, researchers found that Almeria cooled down by 0.4°C compared to a 0.3°C rise in temperatures in surrounding regions lacking whitewashed greenhouses. An alternative strategy is the introduction of "green roofs," which involves the planting of vegetation on roofs, which also reduces urban temperatures. Fortunately, some South Asian cities, including Ahmedabad and Dhaka, are recognising the importance of cool and green roofs to combat high urban temperatures and are implementing programmes to encourage their use.

Adopting these strategies is important in another way. The growing middle class in South Asia is likely to buy more air conditioners to beat the heat. But many devices will be low-cost and inefficient models that will only consume more energy powered by the fossil fuels that contribute to global warming. We face the prospect of a vicious cycle where a warming planet creates the need for more cooling that could result in more damaging emissions.

South Asia already has at hand simple, affordable and efficient solutions at the local level to deal with the problems of rising urban heat. This provides a unique opportunity for the region to show the rest of the world the way to providing cooling access for all.

Kurt Shickman is executive director of the Global Cool Cities Alliance, Washington, DC  
The views expressed are personal



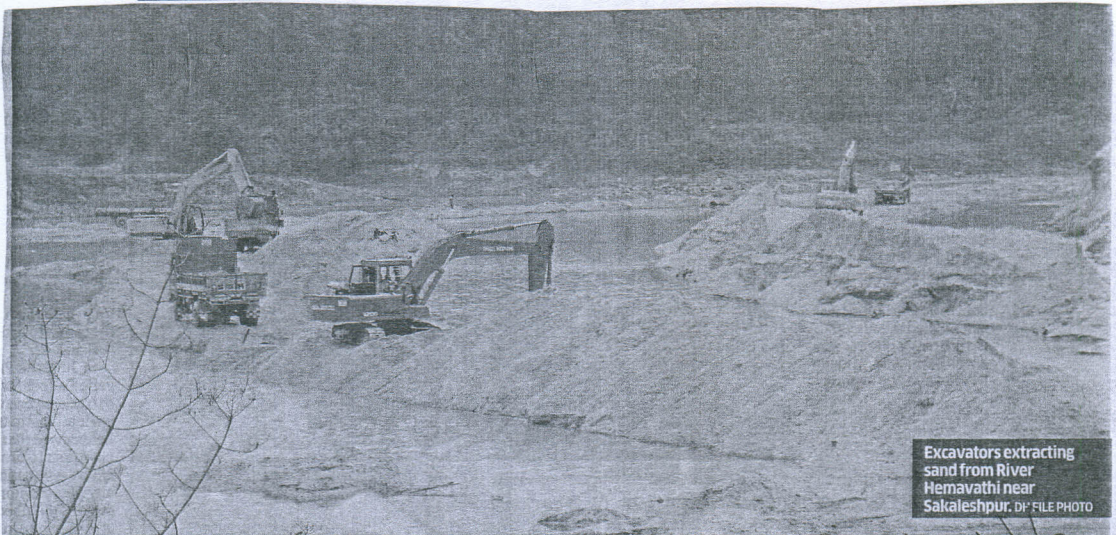
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I ↓



Excavators extracting sand from River Hemavathi near Sakaleshpur. DP FILE PHOTO

# Illegal sand mining is wrecking rivers & lives

Unabated illegal sand mining in the state has posed a threat to local ecosystems and people's livelihoods

Ambarish B

**H**anumantha Bhang, a social activist in Raichur, who has been fighting against the illegal sand mining relentlessly for years, saw the bloody face of the mafia just four months ago.

On May 31, 2018, he had visited Krishna riverbed at Kolooru village in Shahapur taluk, in Raichur district, on receiving information about illegal extraction and transportation of sand. A known activist in the district, Hanumantha was soon identified and the perpetrators pounced on him. They kicked him and attempted to drown him in the river. When he tried to film the illegal loading of sand, the perpetrators snatched his mobile phone and money.

"I somehow survived the attack. A few in the mob got to know that I have been actively petitioning various departments against illegal sand mining. They threatened me with dire consequences and let me go. I had to run from pillar to post to register an FIR. Instead, several false cases were filed against me and I was included in the list of 'rowdy-sheeter'. Right

from the constable to the higher-ups in the police department, the administration is involved in the sand mining business," Hanumantha told *DH*. On the same day, Devadurga police station registered the FIR, but did not take any action citing jurisdictional issues. It took two months for the police to find out that the crime spot fell under the Shahapur police station limits. On July 21, 2018, the case was transferred to Shahapur police station. The police arrested three persons and are still looking for the other accused.

There are reasons why Hanumantha is targeted in and around Raichur district. He has filed a public interest litigation before the Karnataka High Court and the court has directed the officials to submit a detailed report on illegal sand mining in the district. The relentless fight against illegal sand mining has earned him the title of a 'rowdy-sheeter'.

Hanumantha's experience is not an isolated one in the state. Revenue officials such as tahsildars, assistant com-

missioners, Forest Department officials and even IAS officers have been attacked by the sand mafia. In April 2017, two women bureaucrats, including an IAS officer, were attacked by a group of sand miners in Udupi district. The Deputy Commissioner of Udupi district, Priyanka Mary Francis, and Assistant Commissioner, Shilpa Nag, conducted a raid on an illegal sand mining block in Halnad and took six persons into custody. They later raided another block in Kandlur village in Udupi district, but were attacked by the sand mafia. The police arrested 14 persons for the attack on the officials.

Karnataka is one of the leading states, after Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh, to witness the devastating effects of rampant sand mining. Between 2015 and 2018, the state has officially registered 20,779 cases of illegal sand mining, and 9,599 FIRs. No doubt, the Department of Mines and Geology has been taking action against

the sand mafia. But then, why does illicit sand mining continue unabated in the state at the cost of people and natural resources?

Social activists and experts who have been watching the trade closely since long attribute it to the continuous unaccounted cash flow. A huge profit margin with no control over the price by any government agency is one of the main reasons why illegal mining of river sand continues unabated in the state. The sand mafia in the state is largely controlled by politicians and their close inner circles and thus, it dares to take on the law.

"There is a direct connection between big infrastructure, irrigation projects and illegal sand mining. The construction boom has resulted in a sharp increase of this illegal trade," an official told *DH*. According to the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change guidelines, sand is a minor mineral and the mining of sand comes under the state jurisdiction. Hence, illegal sand mining is rampant in states that are seeing huge infrastructure and irrigation projects.

» Sand mining, Page 4





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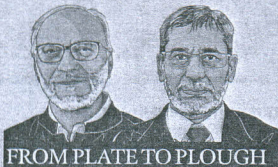
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# Drowning in sweetness

The sugar industry faces a crisis of plenty. Unless bold steps are taken quickly, it can prove costly to the Modi government



FROM PLATE TO PLOUGH  
BY ASHOK GULATI AND  
SIRAJ HUSSAIN

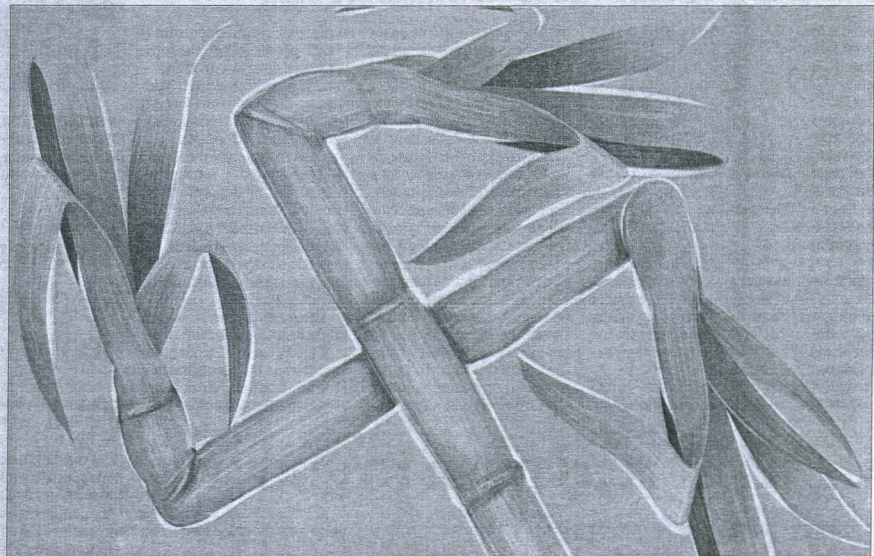
THE SUGAR SECTOR is heading for a major crisis of plenty. India will begin the sugar season (October to September) with a sugar stock of about 10 million metric tonnes (MMT). The industry's production estimate for 2018-19 is 35.5 MMT, up from 32.3 MMT in 2017-18, against an annual consumption of about 26 MMT. Contrast this with the production of just 20.3 MMT in 2016-17, and one can imagine the enormity of over-flowing stocks. But the real problem is of rising arrears to cane farmers, which stood at Rs 21,675 crore on April 15, up from Rs 8,784 crore a year earlier (see graph). And it won't be a surprise if these arrears spike further by 50 to 100 per cent by April 2019, if no bold corrective action is taken quickly by the government. More than half of these cane arrears will be in Uttar Pradesh. And this may hit the Narendra Modi government hard, politically, as it heads for parliamentary elections, presumably in March-April, 2019.

Before we think of possible solutions, we must get the diagnosis right. The root cause of the mounting cane arrears is that in 2016-17, domestic sugar production was as low as 20.3 MMT, necessitating imports, and domestic sugar prices (ex-mill) crossed Rs 36/kg (see graph). Global sugar prices were also high (\$490/tonne in October 2016). This led to an expansion of the area under the crop, and with a good monsoon, improved yield and recovery ratio, lead to dramatic increase in sugar production from 20.3 MMT in 2016-17 to 32.3 MMT in 2017-18, a historic increase of 59 per cent. This production boost substituted imports and replenished stocks, but it became a problem when the world prices of sugar dropped by almost 50 per cent to \$244/tonne by August 2018 (see graph), making Indian sugar non-competitive in global markets.

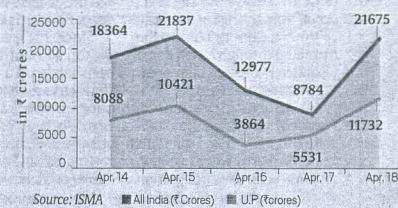
What are the policy options when the sugar sector is jolted by such volatility? The first option is trade policy. In June 2016, India had imposed an export duty of 20 per cent to discourage exports as domestic production was low and sugar prices high. In 2017-18, when production jumped, export duty was removed, though belatedly, in March 2018, and import duty raised from 50 to 100 per cent in February 2018. Although the import duty of 100 per cent seems very high, yet the direction of trade policy is broadly right.

The second option is exporting 5-7 MMT of sugar. But at prevailing world prices, this is not feasible. Unless the rupee falls further and global prices improve, the export situation may remain grim. Exporting sugar through heavy subsidisation has its limits, as exporting countries like Brazil, Thailand, and Australia may drag India to the WTO.

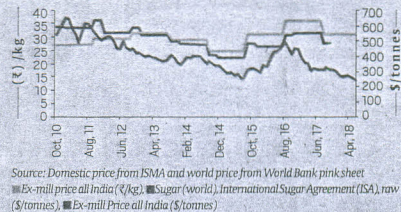
The third policy option is to create a larger buffer stock (of say 5 MMT). This may help India stabilise prices in lean years. But it will cost quite a bit and, given the surplus supplies and low domestic prices, the sugar industry cannot bear this burden without the government underwriting a part of the



## CANE ARREARS ON APRIL 15



## DOMESTIC AND GLOBAL SUGAR PRICES



stocking costs.

The fourth option is to divert cane to ethanol. The government has already taken a bold step by allowing ethanol from sugarcane juice or B-molasses and deserves compliments for this decision. It will help the industry diversify and reduce risk. Just to cite an example, in 2017-18, Brazil put almost 60 per cent of its cane to produce ethanol as global sugar prices were depressed. The Government of India (GoI) has also announced soft loans to the sugar industry for capacity expansion to produce ethanol. This is a proven technology and much better than the idea of producing ethanol from agri-waste, an idea that some oil companies are toying with, with capital investments of Rs 8,000-10,000 crore. However, one critical point in ethanol business is its pricing. Since ethanol is a substitute for petrol from imported crude, its pricing should be linked to the import parity price of petrol (IMPP). At a crude price of about \$75-80/barrel, IMPP works to around Rs 47/litre, after accounting for its refining and other costs. But the sugar industry is asking for ethanol price of Rs 52/litre based on its cost of production, where pricing of cane remains a key factor.

That brings us to the core of this problem — the pricing of sugarcane. The GoI announces Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP), but the UP government tops it with the State Advised Price (SAP). In UP, the SAP was about 39 per cent higher than what its adjusted FRP would have been during 2010-11 to 2017-18. No wonder, sugarcane remains one of the most profitable crops.

For the 2018-19 season, while the GoI is trying to ensure 50 per cent margin over cost A2+FL for kharif crops, in case of sugarcane this is already 87 per cent at all India level and 97 per cent in UP. The problem is that the SAP is quite divorced from prevailing sugar prices. Ideally, cane price should be a contract price between cane farmers and sugar mills, with the government acting as a referee. The Rangarajan Committee on the pricing of sugarcane had recommended 75 per cent of the sugar price to be given to farmers as cane price.

For the 2018-19 season, while the GoI is trying to ensure 50 per cent margin over cost A2+FL for kharif crops, in case of sugarcane this is already 87 per cent at all India level and 97 per cent in UP. The problem is that the SAP is quite divorced from prevailing sugar prices. Ideally, cane price should be a contract price between cane farmers and sugar mills, with the government acting as a referee. The Rangarajan Committee on the pricing of sugarcane had recommended 75 per cent of the sugar price to be given to farmers as cane price. Karnataka and Maharashtra had agreed to this formula but UP did not. Anything above this 75 per cent threshold speaks of a political component to cane pricing.

If the UP govt wants to give a higher price for sugarcane than 75 per cent of sugar price, the best way would be to give it as bonus directly to farmers, as Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh did for paddy (Rs 300/quintal) and wheat (Rs 265/quintal), respectively this year. A similar principle should apply to sugarcane. Else, if we force the sugar industry to pay irrationally high prices of cane, it will be pushed towards sickness, large NPAs, and an even bigger mess.

Can the Narendra Modi government convert this crisis into an opportunity to reform sugar policies? If it does, it will be good economics and good politics, ensuring sizeable votes from UP in the parliamentary elections.

Gulati is Infosys Chair Professor for Agriculture and Hussain is former Secretary, Agriculture (GoI) and currently Visiting Senior Fellow at ICRIR



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# राजस्थान में बढ़ा भूजल का लेवल

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■ राजस्थान में पानी की किल्लत एक बड़ी समस्या रही है, लेकिन पिछले कुछ वर्षों से राज्य में पानी का स्तर काफी बढ़ गया है। भूमिगत जलस्तर में औसतन 5 फीट की बढ़ोतरी हुई है। साथ ही ग्रामीण इलाकों के कई कुओं में 5 से 8 मीटर जल स्तर का भी इजाफा हुआ है। जहां एक तरफ घटते भूजल पर भी रोक लगी है। वहीं प्रदेश के करीब 20 जिलों में हजारों ऐकड़ जमीन में वर्षा जल संचय हुआ है। ग्राउंड वाटर में लगातार बढ़ोतरी से पीने के पानी की समस्या में भी कमी आई है। डेढ़ करोड़ पौधे लगाकर पांच साल तक सुरक्षा की व्यवस्था की गई है। राज्य में मुख्यमंत्री जल स्वावलंबन अभियान



चलाया जा रहा है। राजस्थान नदी बेसिन और जल संसाधन आयोजन प्राधिकरण के अध्यक्ष श्रीराम वेदिरे ने बताया कि इस अभियान को सफल बनाने के लिए

## 2019 का लक्ष्य

एक अभियान के तहत ऐसे गांवों पर विशेष जोर दिया जा रहा है जहां पीने योग्य पानी की भारी किल्लत है। सरकार की संशा है कि 2019 तक पेयजल आपूर्ति और जल भंडार के लक्ष्य को पूरा किया जाए। इसके लिए नए जलसंग्रहण ढांचों का निर्माण किया जाएगा।

जल से संबंधित 9 विभागों, जन स्वास्थ्य अभियांत्रिकी विभाग, कृषि विभाग, वन विभाग और बागवानी विभाग सहित कई विभागों ने काम किया है।



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## 641 में से 254 जिलों में सामान्य से कम बारिश

नई दिल्ली, (भाषा): इस साल अगस्त और सितंबर के तीसरे सप्ताह तक दक्षिण पश्चिम मानसून की झमाझम बारिश के बावजूद देश के लगभग 40 प्रतिशत जिलों में सूखे जैसी स्थिति हैं। मौसम विभाग के आंकड़ों के मुताबिक इसकी स्पष्ट वजह मानसून का संघनित नहीं होने के कारण बारिश का असमान वितरण है। मौसम विभाग के मानसून संबंधी आंकड़ों के अनुसार अगस्त के अंतिम दो सप्ताह और सितंबर के पहले सप्ताह में बिहार, उत्तर प्रदेश, मध्य प्रदेश, केरल, असम और गुजरात के कुछ इलाकों में भारी बारिश के कारण एक तरफ बाढ़ की स्थिति उत्पन्न हो गयी वहीं इसी अवधि में बारिश की कमी के कारण देश के 641 जिलों में से 254 जिलों में (39.6 प्रतिशत) सामान्य से काफी कम बारिश हुई। ये जिले झारखंड, अरुणाचल प्रदेश, असम, मेघालय, बिहार, पश्चिमी राजस्थान, गुजरात, आंध्र प्रदेश, तमिलनाडु और कर्नाटक के हैं। कृषि मंत्रालय के मानकों के मुताबिक अगर यह आंकड़ा 40 प्रतिशत के स्तर को पार कर जाता है तो इसे 'कम बारिश' वाला साल करार दिया जायेगा। उल्लेखीय है कि राष्ट्रीय पैमाने पर बारिश की कमी का स्तर जून में पांच प्रतिशत से बढ़कर 16 सितंबर को नौ प्रतिशत पर पहुंच गया है। गत एक जून से 16 सितंबर तक की अवधि में पूरे देश में बारिश के सामान्य स्तर (819.7 मिमी) की तुलना में 743.8 मिली दर्ज किया गया। हालांकि मौसम विभाग ने अभी मानसून की वापसी शुरू होने में एक सप्ताह से अधिक समय लगने की संभावना जताते हुये बारिश की कमी के स्तर में सुधार की उम्मीद जतायी है। विभाग के एक अधिकारी ने बताया कि 19 से 24 सितंबर तक पूर्वोत्तर राज्यों, पश्चिम बंगाल, ओडिशा, मध्य प्रदेश, उत्तर प्रदेश और राजस्थान में बारिश का एक और दौर देखने को मिलेगा। उन्होंने बताया कि दक्षिण पश्चिम मानसून की अवधि में इजाफे के कारण होने वाली संभावित बारिश से राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर बारिश की कमी के आंकड़ों में सुधार की उम्मीद है।



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# Many Odisha schoolchildren hit by fluoride contamination

## Water sources in 54 schools and anganwadis show high fluoride presence

**SATYASUNDAR BARIK**  
BHUBANESWAR

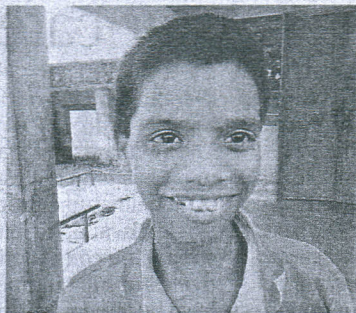
The spectre of fluoride contamination has come to haunt schoolchildren in Odisha's Nuapada district with potable water sources in as many as 54 schools and anganwadi premises testing for fluoride presence beyond permissible limits.

Prolonged consumption of fluoride-contaminated water leads to dental and skeletal fluorosis. Commonly, mottled teeth and crippled backbone and limbs are manifestation of the disease.

### Health hazard

Consumption of water having fluoride content above 1.5 mg per litre is considered dangerous to health.

An alarming level of fluoride presence has been found in Bharuamunda High School in Sinapali block of Nuapada. Laboratory tests certified by the National Rural



Prolonged consumption of fluoride-contaminated water leads to dental fluorosis. \*SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Drinking Water Programme under the Union Drinking Water and Sanitation Ministry found 5.25 mg per litre fluoride content in water sourced from a tube well in the school. Water of another tube well dug recently on the school premises has not been tested.

As many as 232 students, includ-

ing 65 hostel boarders, of the school have little option for safe drinking water as water samples from 15 sources in Bharuamunda village sent for laboratory tests confirmed fluoride contamination in 2018-19.

"It is very important to make immediate alternative arrangement for safe drinking water for students. Adverse impact of fluoride contamination is very high on children. Bones in children are in formation stage while fluoride tends to damage bones," said Bimal Pandia, an expert on water.

Mr. Pandia said the State government should make fresh health assessment of all students consuming fluoride-laced water and try to find out if they have developed dental fluorosis. "Once their backbone and limbs are affected subsequent to dental fluorosis, it will be difficult to cure the disease," he pointed out.



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# Monsoon not over yet, rain expected over the weekend

HT Correspondent

■ htreporters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** If the present dry spell has given you an impression that monsoon is over, then you are mistaken. The India Meteorological Department has said monsoon is far from over and Delhi is likely to witness another wet spell over the weekend.

"We are expecting another spell of rain between October 21 and 25. A low pressure that has developed over the Bay of Bengal is likely to move westwards and reach northwest India during that period. It is likely to trigger some rain in Delhi and other parts of NCR," said BP Yadav, deputy director of IMD.

Delhi had last received rain on October 9. The Safdarjung station, considered to be a representative of Delhi's weather, registered 5.8 mm rain on that day.

But since then, over the past eight days, the city hasn't

## Monsoon withdrawal dates

Year	Delhi	Rajasthan
2017	October 10	September 27
2016	October 11	October 7
2015	Sep 30	September 28
2014	October 4	September 23
2013	October 18	September 9

received a single drop because of which the mercury level is rising.

While the maximum temperature was recorded at 31.5 degrees Celsius on October 9, it has risen to 34 degrees on Monday.

Meteorologists said the rising heat index is adding to the discomfort level and making the weather muggy. Heat index or 'humiture' is a measure of how hot it really feels when relative humidity is factored in with the actual air temperature.

"The maximum temperature on Monday was recorded at 34.1 degrees Celsius, which is normal.

The maximum relative humidity was 89%. The combination of heat and humidity is making matters worse," said the official.

"But once the rain hits Delhi, the mercury level is expected to drop again," said an IMD official.

Officials said the rain expected to hit Delhi over the next few days is a part of the monsoon, which usually starts retreating from Rajasthan by the third or last week of September. It withdraws from Delhi around the first week of October. "We have not spotted any withdrawal symptoms of the monsoon yet," said Yadav.



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## Weakening monsoon may be due to El Nino

**ANJALI MARAR**

PUNE, SEPTEMBER 17

THE ONSET of El Nino, with some warming trends observed over the Pacific Ocean since July and August, may be responsible for weakening the Indian monsoon in the latter half of the season. The country-wide rainfall for August was 94 per cent of the Long Period Average (LPA).

Meteorologists at India Meteorological Department (IMD) have suggested a strong of a possibility of El Nino developing soon after the monsoon.

El Nino is an abnormal warming of the Pacific Ocean, noted for a few months, and known to influence weather around the world. El Nino has a direct influence on the Indian monsoon, and rainfall recorded during El Nino years has remained below normal. In recent times, the strongest El Nino was experienced during 2014 and 2015.

D S Pai, head, climate prediction at climate research division at IMD, said, "Some warming of the oceans (Pacific) has begun. Many weather systems, that would have brought rain over India during August and early September, were instead pulled over these eastern Pacific ocean regions, off China coast. Heavy precipitation was recorded over oceans during the recent weeks."

According to the El Nino up-

date issued by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) dated September 10, there is a 70 per cent chance of development of a weak El Nino by November.

"A majority of weather models forecast that sea surface temperatures will rise anywhere between 0.6 to 1.2 degrees during November 2018 - January 2019. An event of strong El Nino appears unlikely," read the statement.

Though Sea Surface Temperatures since April have remained in their neutral condition, other influential weather parameters have begun to show variations, WMO stated. "During the last few weeks, low-level winds in the west tropical Pacific Ocean have remained anomalously westwards, indicating a possible onset of El Nino," it said.

WMO has ruled out the development of La Nina, the atmospherically opposite phenomenon to El Nino, over the Northern Hemisphere in winter.

The monsoon, which is in its final leg this year, has some last rainfall spells in store for central India. This, with the formation of a fresh cyclonic circulation from the Bay of Bengal, is likely to concentrate into a depression by Tuesday. "This system is likely to move westwards over to central India, resulting in increased rainfall over Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh during mid-week," the IMD forecast of Monday stated.



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# NITI Aayog for clear policy on 'jhum' cultivation

Proposes that land for shifting cultivation be recognised as agricultural land under agro-forestry

SHIV SAHAY SINGH  
KOLKATA

A recent NITI Aayog publication on shifting cultivation which is particularly practised in the northeastern States, has recommended that the Ministry of Agriculture should take up a "mission on shifting cultivation" to ensure inter-ministerial convergence between ministries.

"Central as well as State government departments of forests and environment, agriculture and allied departments often have divergent approaches towards shifting cultivation. This creates confusion among



**At the grass roots:** Tiwa women harvesting paddy in a 'jhum' field in Karbi Anglong district of Assam. ■ FILE PHOTO

grass-roots level workers and jhum farmer," said the report titled, "Mission on Shifting

Cultivation: Towards a Transformational Approach". The document that

calls for policy coherence, said land for shifting cultivation should be recognised as "agricultural land" where farmers practise agro-forestry for the production of food rather than as forestland.

## Falling area

Locally referred to as jhum cultivation, this practice is considered as an important mainstay of food production for a considerable population in northeast India in States like Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Tripura and Manipur.

The publication notes that

between 2000 and 2010, the land under shifting cultivation dropped by 70 %.

The publication also addresses the issue of food and nutritional security of communities involved in jhum cultivation during transition and transformation by broadening the public distribution system (PDS) to ensure widespread access to cereals and other basic food items.

The publication also suggested that shifting cultivation fallows must be legally perceived and categorised as 'regenerating fallows' and that credit facilities be extended to those who practise shifting cultivation.



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## 'Declare Kodagu floods global disaster'

**BENGALURU:** The Kodava National Council on Saturday urged the government to declare the damage caused by landslides in Kodagu an international disaster.

N U Nachappa, the president of the council, also asked the government to rehabilitate the affected in their places of origin. Describing the Harangi reservoir as a threat to the livelihood of Kodavas, he said the shoddy work on the structure threatens Mysuru as well. "It is because of the backwaters of this reservoir that floods and landslides took place," he told reporters. He said the Centre and state must provide Rs 30,000 crore for the rehabilitation, adding that funds should be sought from the United Nations for the relief.



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## Saving rivers

As a first step, the capacity of treatment plants along all rivers must be urgently expanded

*HS*  
The finding of the Central Pollution Control Board that the number of critically polluted segments of India's rivers has risen to 351 from 302 two years ago is a strong indictment of the departments responsible for environmental protection. The data show that the plethora of laws enacted to regulate waste management and protect water quality are simply not working. The study also underscores the failure of many national programmes run by the Centre for river conservation, preservation of wetlands, and water quality monitoring. Tests of Ganga water indicate it has fared better in Uttar Pradesh; but then, the clean-up plan for the river has received dedicated Central funding of ₹3,696 crore over three and a half years, compared to ₹351 crore given to 14 States to conserve 32 rivers. The failed efforts to control pollution are all too evident in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Assam, which account for a third of the degraded river segments. Their problems are worsened by the poor infrastructure available in a large number of cities and towns located near rivers. It is notable that these results come from a CPCB audit that was carried out at the instance of the National Green Tribunal. Ideally, the Board should be reporting more frequently on pollution, and carrying out intensive measures through State Pollution Control Boards to eliminate pollutants, starting with sewage and industrial effluents.

Managing sewage requires steady funding of treatment plants for all urban agglomerations that discharge their waste into rivers, and also reliable power supply. The deficit between sewerage available and the volume generated along the polluted stretches was estimated by the CPCB last year at 13,196 million litres a day. Rapid urbanisation is widening the gap, since infrastructure planning is not keeping pace with growth in housing. Moreover, with low priority accorded to enforcement of laws by the SPCBs and Pollution Control Committees – something that is unlikely to change quickly – the immediate plan should be to expand the supply of treatment plants. Sustained civil society pressure on governments is vital to ensure that this is done in a time-bound manner. On the industrial side, the plan to bring all liquid effluent discharge from textile units and tanneries to zero has to be pursued vigorously, giving industries the assistance to help them choose the best technologies for the recovery of waste water for reuse. These measures are urgently needed to revive India's many dying rivers, protect its agriculture, and prevent serious harm to public health from contaminated water. A 2013 World Bank study estimated that environmental degradation is costing India at least \$80 billion a year, of which losses to rivers form a significant part. This is indeed a problem of catastrophic dimensions.



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# Canal irrigation system in tatters, overhaul overdue

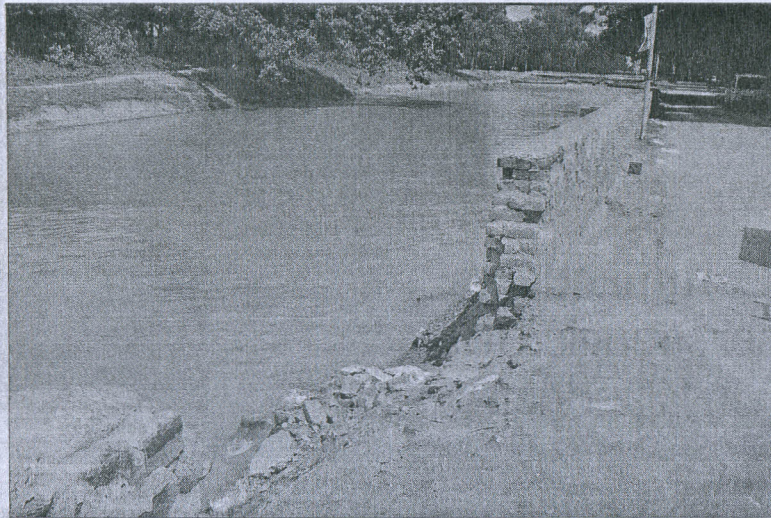
Parts of Malwa affected by waterlogging, while others are parched; water table depleting at an alarming rate

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

BATHINDA, SEPTEMBER 17

With the canal-based irrigation system in a bad shape and the water table depleting at an alarming pace, the farmers are at the receiving end in Malwa. Some areas are facing waterlogging, while others are crying for water.

Continuous seepage of water from the damaged brick-lining of the Rajasthan Feeder (RF) and Sirhind Feeder (SF) canals has left 11 villages of Faridkot waterlogged. The Hydrological Investigation Division of the Agriculture Department has found that 11 villages, situated near the banks of the RF and SF canals in Faridkot district, are reeling under waterlogging and salinisation problems due to excessive seepage of water from the damaged side and bed lining of these canals.



Seepage from damaged brick lining of the Sirhind Feeder leaves many Faridkot villages waterlogged. TRIBUNE PHOTO: PAWAN SHARMA

## Seepage woes

Sources in the Agriculture Department revealed that after the construction of these two parallel twin canals in 1960s, the groundwater table had risen from 140 ft in 1960 to the present level of about 3 ft due to continuous seepage of water from the deep cracks and damaged side lining of both canals.

Besides causing an extensive loss of water, these cracks and damaged side

lining is seriously affecting crop production in an area of 3.5 lakh acres in Punjab due to waterlogging. Due to high loss of water in seepage, the farmers at the tail end of these canals are the ultimate sufferers, as they get little or no water. As per the estimates of the Directorate of Irrigation and Power Research Institute, Punjab, there is seepage of about 1,800 cusecs of water from the RF and SF canals due to damaged side and bed lining of the canals.

## Repairs awaited

Seven years ago, the state government had mooted a proposal of relining of 97 km of the RF and 100 km of the SF canals and it was approved by the Central government to be completed in four years. However, the project could not take off so far. The RF and SF are two parallel channels starting upstream of the Harike Headworks.

Earlier this month, Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh also met Union Minister

for Water Resources Nitin Gadkari and discussed with him the relining of the Rajasthan and Sirhind feeder canals.

## Tail-end misery

Fazilka is perhaps the only subdivision where non-perennial canal system exists for irrigating the crops. Farmers have been bearing the brunt of canal water crunch ever since the commencement of the sowing season. Official sources said seven distributaries, namely Fazilka, Jandwala,

Southern, Roranwali, Hauzkhass, Chackpakhi and Khuranj, offer water to Fazilka subdivision villages, and most of them fall at the tail-end of these canals. Canal Department sources said 1,050 cusecs of water was required to irrigate the fields these days, but only about 500 cusecs was released in these canals and that, too, on rotation basis. The subsoil brackish water is unfit for irrigation purposes. The theft of water by affluent farmers had

worsened the situation.

In Ferozepur, the main problem is in the Ladhuka and Mamdot distributaries as both these channels run along the international border due to which the approach is not easy. In the Mamdot distributary, adequate water is not reaching the tail-end and same is the case with Ladhuka where the villages situated at tail-end, including Chakk Khiva, Ladhuka, Behak Haste, Lakho Ke Uthar, Lakho Ke Hithar Behak Vattu are facing

scarcity of canal water. Sources in the Canal Department said the scheduled maintenance, including repairs and cleanliness, of the canal system had not been done for the last five years.

In Abohar, there has hardly been any improvement in the canal water-based irrigation system. Various instances of breach in the sub-canals were reported due to discharge of excess water from waterlogged villages of the Lambi segment. No efforts were made to repair the breached

## IN FIGURES

97 km

LENGTH OF RAJASTHAN FEEDER CANAL

(Within Punjab)

100 km

SIRHIND FEEDER

(Within Punjab)

18,500 cusecs

Discharge at head in Rajasthan Feeder canal

5,272 cusecs

Discharge at head in Sirhind Feeder canal

1,800 cusecs

Water loss due to seepage (of both canals)

3.5 LAKH ACRES

Seepage affecting crop area

## 'WILL BE REVAMPED ON PRIORITY'

“We are aware of the condition of the canal water irrigation system and it will be revamped across the state on priority. As far as poor maintenance of canals is concerned, the budgetary allocation to the Irrigation Department was less last fiscal year due to which the work suffered. However, we will address all the issues concerning canal water supply to farmers soon.

Sukhbinder Singh Sarkaria, IRRIGATION MINISTER

“Most of the areas in the Malwa region are largely dependent on tubewells for irrigation as the groundwater is unfit for the purpose and there is an acute shortage of canal water. The government has failed to provide the required quantity of canal water to the farm sector. There is a need to revamp the irrigation infrastructure and also boost the capacity of canals to address the irrigation woes of farmers.

Joginder Singh Ugrahan, STATE PRESIDENT, BKU (EX-CTA UGRAHAN)

walls, which were plugged using sand bags and that, too, with the help of affected farmers. In the last couple of months, many farmers, most of them in tail-end villages, had to block traffic on highways when their crops were deprived of sufficient water reportedly due to rotation system that was enforced citing low-level of water in dams.

## Ill-timed cleaning, de-silting

The shortage of canal water has also hit farmers in Muktsar district. At the time of sowing of cotton crop, a majority of canals were dry as the Irrigation Department had shut them for routine cleaning and de-silting purposes. The water supply was resumed after almost a month of the start of crop-sowing season. Incidentally, the farmers are still not getting adequate canal water supply to their fields as the canals are being closed on rotation basis.

Mukhtiar Singh, Executive Engineer, Irrigation Department, said, “If we release water in all canals and minors, the water level will remain low because of the shortage of water in the dams and headworks. The canals and distributaries are being run on the rotational basis so that adequate water reaches the villages located at the tail-end of canals.”

(With inputs from Balwant Garg, Archit Watts, Anurudh Gupta, Pratul Nagpal and Raj Sadoshi)



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# How to reform UP's troubled power sector

**TRANSFORMATION** The state must first provide power supply to all and tell users to accept regular tariff hikes and timely bill payment

Jonathan Balls

letters@hindustantimes.com

A rare window is open for power sector reform in Uttar Pradesh. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), in office in both Lucknow and New Delhi, has a sweeping mandate to transform Uttar Pradesh's troubled electricity situation. The party has made two important commitments on this front. First, they have promised to ensure every household in the state has an electricity connection and access to twenty-four-hour reliable supply. Second, they have pledged to turn around the state's five loss-making public distribution companies (discoms).

Progress in both areas is sorely needed. In 2017, more than 17 million rural households did not have a formal

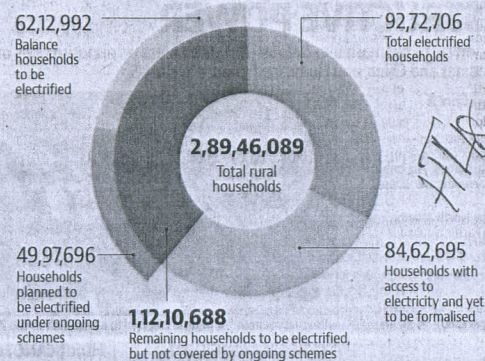
electricity connection. Supply remains unreliable in urban and rural areas, hampering economic growth. Since the 1980s, the state's public discoms have been accruing annual

losses, the result of a large gap between the cost of supplying electricity and the revenue they recover from customers coupled with under-funded subsidised tariffs for domestic and agricultural users. The former Samajwadi Party (SP) government signed the state up to the central government's UDAY power sector reform scheme in 2016. This allowed 75 percent of discom debts to be cleared, and various initiatives to reform their financial performance were started. But discoms are continuing to report sizeable losses.

Crucially, universal electricity access and discom performance are closely inter-twined challenges in Uttar Pradesh. Increasing access and reliability of supply will ultimately be dependent upon success in transforming the performance of discoms. In particular,

## UP's 24x7 electrification plan

Status of rural household power in Uttar Pradesh



Source: Gol and GoUP, 2017. 24x7 Power for All Uttar Pradesh

reducing the large losses discoms accrue in supplying power to domestic and agricultural consumers. Put simply, it will not be possible to provide reliable electricity to millions of additional rural households, as long as discoms face high losses supplying rural and agricultural users.

Successive governments since the 1990s have in practice focussed on access, without coupling this with serious action on improving the performance of discoms. Politics explains this. Decisive programmes on household electrification and the need to increase the hours of supply are politically popular in the short-term. Tackling the state's loss-making discoms, in contrast, requires political parties in office to

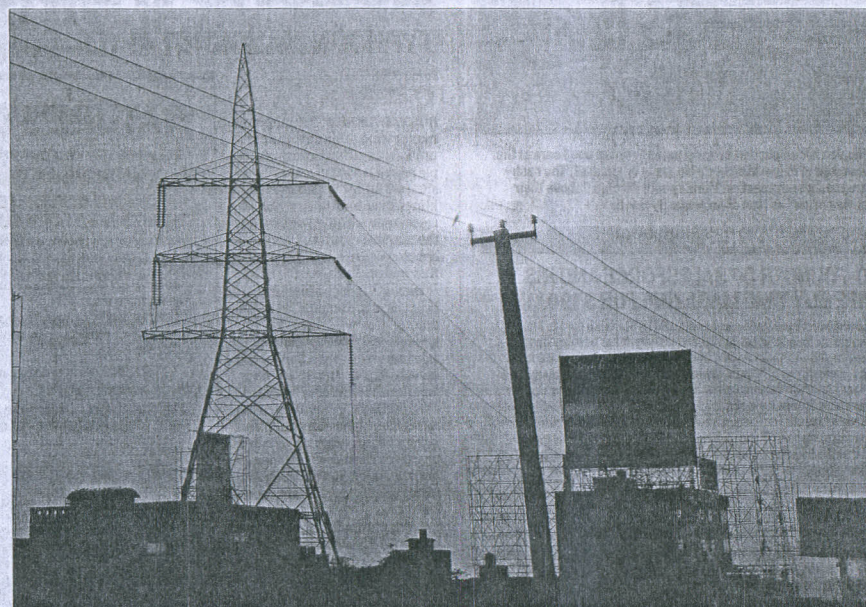
**TACKLING THE STATE'S LOSS-MAKING DISCOMS REQUIRE POLITICAL PARTIES IN OFFICE TO ALLOW ELECTRICITY TARIFFS FOR CONSUMERS TO RISE REGULARLY**

allow electricity tariffs for domestic and agricultural consumers to rise regularly. They also need to take stringent action on revenue collection and theft. In a politically-competitive, multi-party state, no party has been willing to make the bargain of jointly tackling both areas, for fear of electoral repercussions.

There are challenges beyond highly subsidised tariffs, high theft levels, and poor revenue recovery for Uttar Pradesh's discom situation.

While many states can rely upon industry consumers to pay high tariffs that cross-subsidise low tariffs for other users, UP only has a small base of industry consumers. Additionally, the cost at which discoms receive power from generators is high.

On household electrification and reliability of supply, the BJP has moved fast. Progress is already evident. By way of the central government's Saubhagya scheme, millions of households have been provided with a regularised electricity connection and millions more will be connected in the coming two years. While the BJP's target of full household electrification by 2019 looks



More than 17 million rural households in Uttar Pradesh did not have a formal electricity connection in 2017.

HT PHOTO

difficult, the goal may be reached soon thereafter. The BJP has drawn up a '24x7 Power For All' plan for Uttar Pradesh, which promises twenty-four hours electricity supply to all rural and urban domestic and industry consumers from late 2018. Currently, rural areas receive around 18 hours supply. This in itself represents a notable improvement above the supply situation of recent years. Towards reforming the financial performance of the state's discom, the BJP is also acting on various fronts. They have built upon programmes started by the previous SP government to extend metering, improve billing and revenue collection, and to cut down on theft. The BJP has expended significant political capital by pushing through substantial increases in electricity tariffs for domestic and agricultural users, helping

to bring down the gap between cost of supply and revenue collected. However, losses at the state's discoms remain high. With elections due in 2019, the BJP may find it politically unpalatable to take further steps to raise tariffs and cut down on losses in the coming year.

Electoral support has, for decades, been mobilised on the promise of cheap or free electricity in UP. In the 1970s and 1980s, cheap electricity was promised to farmers. In the 2000s, it was the weavers who were wooed with subsidised power. Losses are typically significantly higher in VIP districts.

A window of opportunity to change the status quo is open in Uttar Pradesh. If the BJP can deliver on reliable access for all—and link success on this front to public acceptance of regular tariff increases and timely bill payment—then the seeds

of transformation in the power sector may be sown.

When the BJP last ruled in both Lucknow and New Delhi, between 1997 and 2002, they pushed through extensive structural reforms of the power sector, against significant opposition. However, shortly after doing so, they back-tracked on tariff increases, required by the state's discoms to support a financial turn-around, fearing upcoming electoral defeat. It remains to be seen whether a story of bold ambitions from the BJP giving way to electoral pressures is repeated this time around.

(Balls is a New Generation Network (NGN) Post-Doctoral Scholar at the Australia India Institute, University of Melbourne, Australia. This research is based on work presented in full in the book Mapping Power, edited by Dubash, Kale and Bhaskar.)



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4 DECCAN HERALD

Sunday, September 16, 2018

## Insight

# 'Sand is a profitable business'

Sand mining, from Page 1

Almost all the major rivers in the state, such as Cauvery, Hemavathi, Tungabhadra, Krishna, Ghataprabha, Bhima, Vedavathi and Netravathi, are bearing the brunt of illegal sand mining. Numerous streams and tanks are also exploited indiscriminately.

According to social activists, the sand mining mafia is growing stronger despite the state having a separate sand mining policy.

"Karnataka state introduced a sand mining policy in 2016. The concept is good, however, there is a huge gap between the policy and its implementation. The rules framed in 2016 mandate setting up of taluk level and district level committees for sand mining. The taluk committees identify the blocks for sand mining and the district committee grants permit through tender or auction. Every block needs to be cleared by a committee for environmental clearance," a senior official said.

Any violation of the permit condition attracts the provision of the Mines and Minerals Act (Development and Regulation). While the Department of Mines and Geology is short-staffed, police consider illegal sand mining as a non-cognisable offence.

Mallikarjun Bhatrahalhi, a social activist from Chikkanayakanahalli in Tumakuru district, explains: "We used to complain about illegal sand mining to officials. Now we have stopped complaining because it is turning out to be valuable information for the officials to make more money. Just last week, we filed a complaint with electronic evidence. The police registered a non-cognisable offence and sent us back. How can the theft of natural resource be passed off as a non-cognisable offence?"

Mallikarjun says the sand monitoring committees are an eyewash and remain only on the paper. "Every elected public representative will have his or her own associates to continue the illegal mining business to ensure the flow of illicit money. After causing irreversible damage to major rivers, the illegal sand mafia has now



Trucks unload sand at a makeshift stock yard in Bengaluru.

ventured into small rivers, streams and even village tanks. The Jayamangali river in Madhugiri, Undinanglu river near Sira and Ankasandra river near Chikkanayakanahalli have been damaged beyond restoration," he reveals.

### Farmers at stake

Mallikarjun says thousands of acres of coconut groves and numerous water sources in Sira, Chikkanayakanahalli and Madhugiri taluks have been badly affected by sand mining. As a result, once self-sustaining agriculturists, the farmers here have quit farming and are heading to Bengaluru in search of jobs. Illegal sand mining is rampant in around 60 km area of Krishna and Tungabhadra riverbeds, covering Manvi, Devadurga, Shahapur and Surpur taluks. In 2016, the permits were given to 20 blocks. Instead of mining up to 3 feet deep as permitted, the contractors go 10 to 15 feet deep.

The contractors are all backed by politicians and the government servants are hand in glove with them. In a recent raid, 47,000 cubic metres of sand was seized and in a court auction, the same was sold at Rs 3.80 crore.

River Sharavati, which flows through the Western Ghats, is the major source of sand for miners in the region. Hosanagar taluk in Shivamogga district and Honnavar taluk in Uttara Kannada district are the main areas of sand mining.

"For illegal operators, one legal permit is what is required to carry out large-scale illegal activities. There are no Weighbridges, no CCTV surveillance and loaded trucks ply right in front of police stations and check posts. Permit conditions stipulate that heavy machinery, including JCB and Hitachi machines, should not be used in this

region. However, machines are used to abstract sand and to load it to the trucks." Girish Achar, an activist from Hosanagar taluk, said.

Former Upalakayukta Justice Subhash B Adi had conducted several raids and reported to the government on the shortcomings in regulating sand mining. "Sand is a profitable business. Till 2015, extraction of filter sand was rampant in Chikkamagaluru, Kolar and Bengaluru rural. We had conducted raids and made surprise visits to many illegal river sand mining spots. What I have found is that there is no coordination among the officials of the departments of Revenue, Mines and Geology, and the Police. Department of Mines and Geology must be provided with additional staff and the power to prosecute. There is one more way to end this menace. All the sand mined should be deposited to the state government. The government

depots should sell sand, and not the contractors or transporters," Justice Adi says.

Retired IFS officer Dr U V Singh, who was part of various committees and commissions constituted to enquire into the illegal mining, including sand mining, suggests certain modifications in the permit and regulations.

"Usually, sand mining permits are given for a period of five years. Once the monsoon sets in, the trenches dug to mine sand get washed off and it is difficult to gauge the quantity of illegal sand abstracted. We had suggested earlier to issue permits for 6-7 months, instead of five years. If the permit is granted for a period from October to May, illegal sand mining could be regulated to a large extent. Besides, the environmental clearance should also be for this specific period and then the blocks susceptible to exploitation can be monitored regularly," he said.

DH News Service

### 40m MT of sand goes unaccounted

The state government is receiving approximately Rs 150 crore as royalty from legitimate sand mining blocks every year. As per estimates, the state government is losing around Rs 200 crore per year due to illegal sand mining.

Here is a ballpark estimation to find out the consumption of sand in the state. According to cement manufacturing companies' data, around 18 million metric tonnes of cement is sold in the state every year. The cement-sand mix ratio is either 1:4 or 1:6 (four or six bags of sand per cement bag). Even if 1:4 ratio is taken, a whopping 70 million metric tonnes

**Blocks allocated by the Department of Mines and Geology**

**172 blocks** on government land for various private permit holders

**42 blocks** on Patta land (500 mts away from the river)

**38 blocks** for government projects

of sand is approximately used in the state every year. The official data from the Department of Mines and Geology shows that from the blocks permitted by it, a total quantity 30 million metric tonnes of sand (from all types of blocks - river sand, patta land, blocks allocated to government departments, and manufactured sand) is produced in the state. As per this, there is a difference of around 40 million metric tonnes of sand in comparison to the cement sold in the state.



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and documented at Bhagirath(English)& Publicity Section, CWC. **ECONOMIC TIMES** ✓

COS OFFERING FLEXI TIMING TO ATTRACT & RETAIN NEW TALENT

# In New World Order, Output Counts, Not Attendance

Rica Bhattacharyya  
& Sreerada D Basu

**Mumbai | Kolkata:** Tyremaker Ceat did away with the policy of attendance recording system three months ago, allowing employees to enter and leave at a flexible time. The traditional manufacturing firm, a part of industrial conglomerate RPG Enterprises, has introduced work from home, a cafe or a mall or anywhere—in an initiative to give more flexibility and create an environment in sync with the new world around.

The new flexible system, led by its young MD and RPG scion Anant Goenka, assesses employees purely on deliverables—a rare thing for an Indian company and that too a manufacturing company.

While Ceat has gone aggressive with its flexibility policies more in tune with global MNCs, an increasing number of mature Indian companies are opening up to the idea of flexibility as well as working from remote locations in a bid to attract and retain new generation employees in the workforce.

Companies like Mahindra, Tata Motors, Cipla and Godrej are creating a system that allows more

flexibility and freedom to the employees.

"Indian firms are progressively getting more flexible with workplace practices, responding to the preferences of the new talent demographics," said Prabir Jha, global chief people officer, Cipla.

"At Ceat, we go with trust and empowerment. Our office opens at 7am and shuts at 9pm. Employees can choose their time," said Milind Apte, head human resources, Ceat, which has done away with the policy of the 8-9 hours man day and made attendance recording system defunct. "There is no minimum work hour a day. Employees are purely judged by delivery," said Apte.

Tata Motors, the country's leading vehicle maker, has made work-from-home applicable at all its offices where employees can avail the option for continuous two days every week. If needed, in certain cases, it can be extended in consultation with the line manager. Meetings can be over phones or recently introduced business Skype and people can log in from anywhere.

"It is found to be very helpful for new parents or to take care of someone at home when one can save a lot of time travelling," said Gajend

## In & Out

### NEW FLEXI WORK OPTIONS AT INDIAN GROUPS

Ceat has made attendance recording system defunct as employees can work from any location

Pidilite allows employees to complete work hours on a weekly basis instead of a day count

Tata Motors allows work-from-home; employees can avail the option for continuous two days/week

Cipla offers employees flexibility to walk in anytime within a two-hour window in the morning in Mumbai



**The technology landscape could fill the gap (in distance) and with teams across geographies, virtual connect has become a reality and face time therefore is more technology enabled.**

**PRINCE AUGUSTIN**, Executive Vice President, Group Human Capital And Leadership, Mahindra & Mahindra

ra Chandel, chief human resources officer, Tata Motors. "We do not have strict punch in and punch out time. We assess employees on the basis of deliverables," he said, adding this has a lot of trust element. "You don't know what the individual might be doing (working remotely). We have found some misuses too, when the individual is cal-

led up and counselled. But overall the flexibility has been helpful," he added.

ICIIC Bank has an iWork@home policy that involves a facial recognition technology to ensure that no one can impersonate the employee and get access to applications. The policy, which initially allowed women employees to work from home

**Our aim is to create an environment which is symbolic with the new generation and the policies are aimed at giving more freedom and flexibility that enhances employee productivity.**

**MILIND APTE**, Head Human Resources, Ceat

for longer periods of time, up to a year and beyond, has now been extended for all employees.

Drugmaker Cipla offers employees flexibility to walk in anytime within a two-hour window in the morning in Mumbai. This helps employees choose the eight-hour window they wish to be in office.

"This has only enabled productivity as employees get to choose the hours each day based on his/her priorities both professionally and personally," said Jha.

FMCG major Godrej has a six-hour a day in office policy while rest of the time is flexible with an option to work from home two days a month. Adhesives maker Pidilite has flexi in and out timings. The most recent change was to give employees the flexibility to complete their work hours on a weekly basis instead of a day count.

"The bulk of our employees avail the facility," said Rahul Sinha, president, HR, Pidilite Industries.

Technology is the biggest enabler in this transformation, where one can work remotely using smart phones, telepresence and Skype that enable connectivity anytime and from any location.

HR heads agree that a personal meeting is still not out of fashion, but advancement in technology is

fast filling the gap where teams across locations and geographies can connect virtually.

"Face time is important, as without the human touch and team work, getting work could be difficult," said Prince Augustin, executive vice president, group human capital and leadership, Mahindra & Mahindra. However, he added: "The technology landscape could fill this gap and with teams across geographies, virtual connect has become a reality and face time therefore is more technology enabled."

There is need for a shift in mind sets too, particularly in large Indian organisations that are used to a hierarchical operating structure, HR heads said.

At Godrej for instance, the senior management is leading the way to break the stereotypes.

"Many of our senior leaders use the work-from-home option and share their experiences on Workplace (formerly known as Facebook for Business). This has helped break stereotypes and has encouraged all our team members to consider the option guilt-free, without the fear of being criticised or judged," said Sumit Mitra, head-Gro- up HR and corporate services, Godrej Industries Limited and Associate Companies.