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Pumping life into Sukhna

An extraordinary operation is currently under way to boost the water level in Chandigarh's beloved lake. How did things reach a stage where it was deemed necessary to pump water into it? What are the logistics of the project? KHUSHBOO SANDHU explains

SIMPLY PUT

What is happening at Sukhna Lake?

Since January 16, the Chandigarh Administration has been using a 450 m pipeline to divert 2 million gallons of water per day to the lake from 7 tubewells located near the Chandigarh Golf Club. The operation to fill the rain-fed lake will continue until March, when the demand for water in the city is likely to rise. The level of water in the lake is expected to go up by 3 feet over its current level of 1,154 feet by then.

The engineering wing of the Municipal Corporation has upgraded the machinery at the Sector 26 waterworks, situated about a kilometre from the lake. The water from the tubewells is being sent to an underground reservoir in Sector 26, from where it is being pumped to the lake, which is at a greater height. The capacity of the pumps has been boosted, and a changing valve has been installed at the waterworks, which will cut off supply to the lake when demand in the city increases.

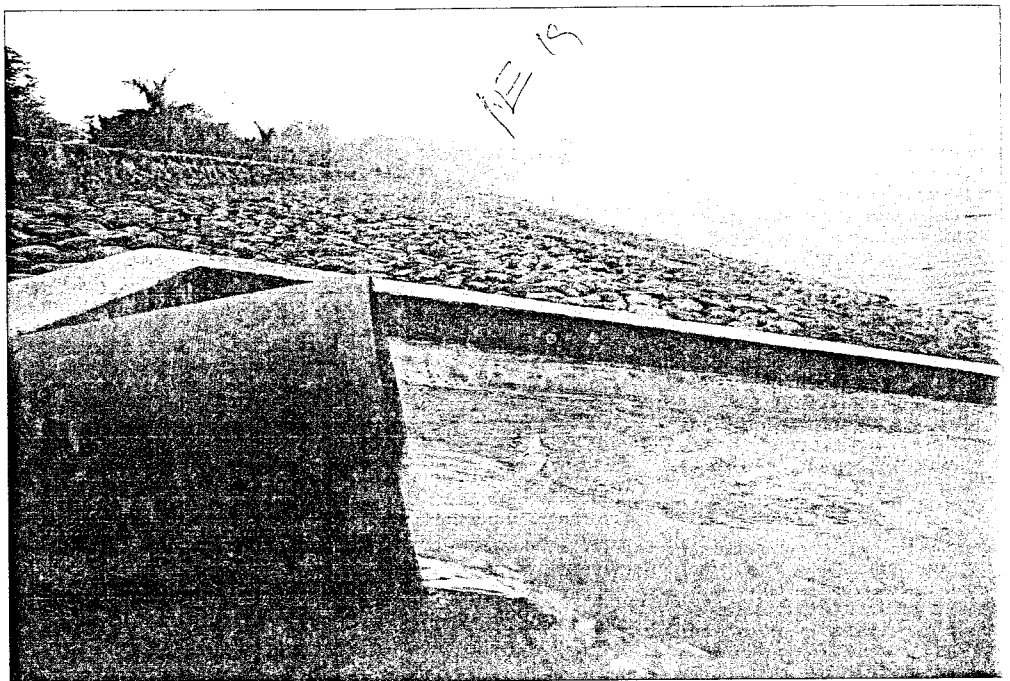
But why does the lake need to be filled artificially?

The lake has dried up on several occasions in the past, exposing parts of its bed. 1987 was a particularly bad year, when a deficient monsoon wreaked havoc. In 2009, the Punjab and Haryana High Court took *suo motu* notice of the falling level of the lake, and proceeded to issue several directions to the Administration. In 2012, the Administration submitted to the court that no water was available to fill the lake; however, as the level kept falling, the Administration proposed that treated sewage water be pumped in. But experts objected on environmental grounds, following which the court directed the Administration to seek suggestions from residents and submit a plan. This week, drinking water was diverted to the lake.

And why is Sukhna Lake so important?

The lake was designed by the creator of the city, Le Corbusier, and the plan was executed by the then Chief Engineer, P L Verma, at a cost of Rs 1 crore. The lake was constructed across Sukhna Choe by damming it along with Kansal and Nepali Choe. The dam was a 12.8 m high, rock-filled earthen structure. The attachment of the city's creators to the lake can be gauged from the fact that the ashes of Corbusier's cousin and Chandigarh's chief architect, Pierre Jeanneret, were immersed in the lake as per his wishes in 1970. Chandigarh's residents have a deep emotional connect with the lake. They go to its shores for morning and evening walks, and it is one of the top tourist attractions of the city. Residents have flocked to participate in *shramdaan* to save the lake.

The lake is home to several species of migratory birds. The Administration has con-



Pipe being laid to artificially fill Sukhna Lake in Chandigarh on January 12 (above), and water starts to flow on January 16 (top). Jaipal Singh

structed a bird watching centre at one end of the lake. In 2005, the lake had 33 species of fish, which fell to 19 after a large part of the lake dried up in 2012. After the culling of ducks following the 2014 avian flu scare, the Administration decided to no longer allow ducks at the lake.

What problems does the lake face?

Silting has been a problem ever since the lake was created. The Shivaliks are erosion-

prone, and the water that flows into the lake from the catchment area brings along silt. The storage capacity of the Lake was 10.47 million cubic metres when it was created. Between 1958 and 1962, the lake lost more than 20% of its capacity due to silting. In the 1970s, the Chandigarh Administration started taking measures to save the lake. More than 150 silt-retention dams were built over a 2,540-hectare forest catchment area of the lake. By 1988, around 2,600 hectares of

the Sukhna Lake catchment area had been converted into the Sukhna Wildlife Sanctuary, and an additional 880 hectares were classified as a reserve forest. While these measures succeeded in checking the problem of silting, they also reduced the quantity of water entering the lake.

Another problem is of excessive weeding — there are 8 types of weeds in the lake. According to experts, the major reason for the growth of weeds is excessive siltation and the flow of sewage from the Kansal and Saketri villages into the lake. The Chandigarh Administration has now started bio-treatment of sewage water.

Is it common for a lake's levels to be boosted in this manner?

There have been some examples in the West. The city of San Diego has been pumping drinking water into the Chollas Lake, a popular, 16-acre recreational fishing basin, for at least a decade, according to US media reports. In January 2016, some 10 billion gallons of pollution-laden water was pumped into Lake Okeechobee over four days to prevent flooding in South Florida following heavy rain. Closer home, in November 2016 the Forest Department pumped water into dry tanks and ponds in Karnataka's Bandipur National Park, and attempts have been made to fill the marshlands of the Keoladeo National Park in Bharatpur artificially. None of these projects are, however, comparable in scale, circumstances and methods to the efforts being put into the Sukhna Lake.

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SYL canal row: SC warns decrees can't be flouted

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi, 18 January

Issuing a warning against flouting decrees passed by courts, the Supreme Court today directed both Punjab and Haryana to strictly implement its orders in the Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) canal dispute and said the interim order of status quo will continue.

"We will not allow the decree passed by this court to be flouted and it has to be implemented.

"How the decree is being implemented is the headache of the concerned parties," said a bench of Justices P C Ghose and Amitava.

Asking the Centre and Punjab to file their replies to Haryana's plea seeking compliance of court's order, the bench said the interim order of status quo will continue.

The apex court said the reports of Union Home Sec-

retary, Chief Secretary of Punjab and Director General of Police of Punjab, who were appointed as court receivers of the land and other properties of the canal, have indicated that status quo has been maintained.

However, senior advocate Jagdeep Dhankar, appearing for Haryana, objected to a finding of the Union Home Secretary and said the report says that on site visit by the committee "no deliberate damage" has been done.

"I have a problem with the word 'deliberate' used in the report," he said.

Solicitor General Ranjit Kumar appearing for Ministry of Home Affairs said their reply was ready and can be filed in the course of a week.

He said that Haryana has not challenged the Punjab Termination of Agreement Act, 2004 and therefore it has not been set aside till

now.

"The regulations are still there. The effect of apex court's decree cannot be there unless the Act passed by legislature is nullified," Kumar said, adding that the answers to Presidential reference fell under the advisory jurisdiction and hence the court has not set aside the Act.

Senior advocate Ram Jethmalani, appearing for Punjab, said the Centre should intervene among the states involved in the dispute and sort out the issue.

"We would file the reply once the Centre has filed its reply on Haryana's plea. Centre should behave like elder arbitrator and settle the issue once and for all," Jethmalani said. The apex court directed the Centre to file its reply during the course of week and Punjab in three weeks and posted the matter for further hearing on 15 February

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20k youths for Ganga project

The Centre will train and deploy over 20,000 youths as 'Swachhta Doots' in 2,336 villages across 29 districts along the Ganga in four states — Uttarakhand, UP, Bihar and West Bengal — to spread the message of keeping the national river clean among the local population and visitors. P17

Centre to deploy 20,000 'swachh doots' for Ganga

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

TN 19

New Delhi: The Centre will train and deploy over 20,000 youths as 'swachhta doots' (messenger of cleanliness) in 2,336 villages across 29 districts along the river Ganga in four states — Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal — to spread the message of keeping the national river clean among local population as well as visitors.

The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) has approved Rs 10 crore for this purpose under the Centre's ongoing 'Namami Gange' programme. "The Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) has been entrusted to build capacities of young people from the Ganga basin states," said a water resource ministry statement.

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SYL case: SC rejects Punjab's plea for post-poll hearing ^{T-19}

R SEDHUAMAN

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 18

The Supreme Court today rejected Punjab's plea for adjourning the hearing on the Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) canal dispute till the new government assumed office in the state. While polling is slated for February 4, counting of votes will take place on March 11.

A Bench comprising Justices PC Ghose and Amitava Roy granted three weeks to Punjab for responding to Haryana's plea for executing apex court's 2004 directive for completion of the SYL canal. It asked Haryana to file its reply in one week thereafter.

Arguing for Punjab, senior counsel Ram Jeth-

Give three weeks to respond

■ The court said there was no way Punjab could shirk its responsibility as it would ensure the implementation of its orders for completing the construction of the SYL canal

■ It granted three weeks to Punjab for responding to Haryana's plea for executing apex court's 2004 directive and asked Haryana to file its reply in one week thereafter

malani said the Centre should show statesmanship and resolve the dispute over sharing the waters of Ravi and Beas rivers, instead of letting the two states fight a legal battle.

The Bench, however, clarified there was no way Punjab could shirk its responsibility as the apex court would ensure implementation of its orders for completing the construction of the SYL canal, which would

enable Haryana to draw its share of Ravi and Beas waters. Appearing for the Centre, Solicitor General Ranjit Kumar said the apex court's decrees could be executed only if the Punjab Termination of Agreements Act, 2004, was struck down by the SC. A five-member Constitution Bench held the Act invalid while answering the presidential reference on the issue on November 10, 2016, but this

ruling was only advisory in nature, he pleaded. The Bench also asked Haryana as to why it did not challenge the Punjab Government's notification returning the farmers land acquired for the SYL canal. Senior counsel Jagdeep Dhankar said the state's plea for execution of the decree automatically covered that aspect too.

Rejecting Punjab's plea for post-poll hearing, the Bench pointed out that the apex court had already ruled that change of governments was irrelevant to hearing cases pending with it. The Centre said its response to Haryana's application was ready and this would be filed later this week.

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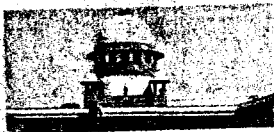
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सतलुज यमुना लिंक नहर विवाद ... फैसला हर स्थिति में लागू हो-सुप्रीम कोर्ट

पंजाब और केंद्र सरकार से
तीन हफ्ते में मांगा जवाब



नई दिल्ली. सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने कहा है कि सतलुज-यमुना लिंक नहर विवाद पर उसके फैसले को हर स्तर में लागू करना होगा। कोर्ट ने हरियाणा और पंजाब सरकार को उसके फैसले को लागू करने के लिए कड़ाई से कदम उठाने को कहा। जस्टिस पीसी घोष और जस्टिस अमिताभ राय ने कहा कि उनका फैसला कैसे लागू होगा ये संबंधित पक्षों को तय करना है। हरियाणा सरकार की ओर से दायर याचिका पर पंजाब सरकार ने सुप्रीम कोर्ट से जवाब देने के लिए और समय की मांग की। जिसके बाद सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने पंजाब और केंद्र सरकार को तीन हफ्ते में जवाब देने का निर्देश दिया है। मामले की अगली सुनवाई 15 फरवरी को होगी।

सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने कहा कि केंद्रीय गृह सचिव, पंजाब के गृह सचिव और डीजीपी की रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक यथास्थिति बहाल रखी गई है। सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने इन तीनों अधिकारियों को रिसीवर नियुक्त किया है। उल्लेखनीय है कि हरियाणा की याचिका पर सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने यथास्थिति बहाल रखने का आदेश दिया है। सुनवाई के दौरान हरियाणा के वकील जगदीप धनखड़ ने केंद्रीय गृह सचिव की इस रिपोर्ट पर आपत्ति जताई जिसमें जानबूझकर कोई नुकसान नहीं करने का जिक्र किया गया है। उन्होंने कहा कि रिपोर्ट में जानबूझकर शब्द पर आपत्ति है।

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नमामि गंगे से देश के युवा जुड़ेंगे

नई दिल्ली। नमामि गंगे कार्यक्रम के अंतर्गत गंगा नदी किनारे के हर गांव में कुछ युवाओं को स्वच्छता दूत के रूप में नियुक्त करने का निर्णय किया गया है।

इस उद्देश्य के लिए युवा मामले एवं खेलकूद मंत्रालय के अंतर्गत नेहरू युवा केंद्र संगठन और राष्ट्रीय स्वच्छ गंगा मिशन के बीच समझौता हुआ है। इसके माध्यम से नमामि गंगे में युवाओं की भागीदारी सुनिश्चित की जाएगी।

यह कार्यक्रम गंगा के किनारे के राज्यों उत्तराखंड, उत्तर प्रदेश, बिहार और पश्चिम बंगाल के 29 जिलों के 1203 ग्राम पंचायतों के अंतर्गत आने वाले लगभग 2336 गांवों में आयोजित किए जाएंगे। कार्यक्रम के लिए नेहरू युवा केंद्र संगठन को 10 करोड़ रुपये का प्रशासनिक अनुमोदन दिया गया है।

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गंगा किनारे के सीवेज संयंत्रों की रिपोर्ट दे केंद्र

नई दिल्ली | श्याम सुमन 19-1-17

गंगा सफाई पर सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने केंद्र सरकार से कहा है कि वह पवित्र गंगा के किनारों पर स्थापित किए गए सीवेज ट्रीटमेंट संयंत्रों की संख्या के बारे में स्थिति रिपोर्ट दाखिल करे।

मुख्य न्यायाधीश जस्टिस जे.एस. खेहर और डी.वाई. चंद्रचूड़ की पीठ ने आदेश देते हुए कहा कि केंद्र मंगलवार तक स्थिति रिपोर्ट दे ताकि इस पर विस्तृत आदेश पारित किया सके। पीठ ने कहा, हम मामले को लंबित नहीं रखना चाहते। यह बहुत पुराना लेकिन अहम मामला है। इसे खत्म करना ही होगा। पीठ ने यह टिप्पणी तब की जब पर्यावरणविद एम.सी. मेहता ने कहा कि मामले में पिछले 32 साल में बहुत कम काम किया गया है। जबकि यह याचिका 1985 से लंबित है। पीठ ने कहा, आज कुल

नाम बदलने से कुछ नहीं होता

अदालत में सालिसिटर जनरल रंजीत कुमार ने कहा कि जल संसाधन मंत्रालय का नाम बदलकर जल संसाधन, नदी विकास तथा गंगा पुनर्जीवीकरण कर दिया है। इस पर पीठ ने कहा, यह सब सरकारी जुमले हैं। हम शब्दों के जाल में नहीं जाना चाहते, हम इसके ऐसे नतीजे देखना चाहते हैं जिन्हें सत्यापित किया जा सके। आप बताइए कि आप क्या करने जा रहे हैं और जब हम गंगा से पानी का नमूना उठाएं तो हमें क्या मिलेगा।

नतीजा यह है कि 2000 करोड़ रुपये खर्च किए जा चुके हैं लेकिन गंगा पहले ही तरह ही प्रदूषित है। सौभाग्य से पैसे की कोई समस्या नहीं है, लेकिन हम नतीजा जानना चाहते हैं। हमें आप ऐसा परिणाम दिखाइए जिसे सत्यापित किया जा सके।