

News item/letter/article/editorial published on March-20-3-2017 in the

Hindustan Times ✓
Statesman
The Times of India (N.D.)
Indian Express
Tribune
Hindustan (Hindi)

Nav Bharat Times (Hindi)
Punjab Keshari (Hindi)
The Hindu
Rajasthan Patrika (Hindi)
Deccan Chronicle
Deccan Herald

M.P.Chronicle
A a j (Hindi)
Indian Nation
Nai Duniya (Hindi)
The Times of India (A)
Blitz

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

Hopeful of solving Indus water dispute, team leaves for Pak

Press Trust of India
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: A 10-member Indian delegation on Sunday left for Pakistan to take part in the meeting of Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) beginning on Monday in Islamabad.

The delegation comprises India's Indus Water Commissioner PK Saxena, MEA officials and technical experts.

Speaking to PTI, a government source said India is "always open" to discuss and resolve concerns Pakistan have over its projects under Indus Water Treaty (IWT) bilaterally. The source, however, reiterated that there will be "no compromise" on India exploiting its due rights under the 57-year-old pact.

However, the agenda for the meeting, taking place nearly six months after India decided to suspend talks on the pact in the wake of the Uri terror attack by Pakistan-based outfits, is yet to be finalised.

Asked whether the delay in reaching consensus over agenda for the meeting will leave little time to resolve issues, the source replied in negative.

"We always go into such meetings with optimistic mindset. In the past too, there had been delays in finalising agenda for the meeting, yet solutions were achieved," the source added.

To drive the point, the source recalled how Pakistan's concern over India's Uri-II and Chutak hydroelectric projects were resolved seven years ago through discussions.

Pakistan had raised objections over designs of 240 MW Uri-II and 44 MW Chutak projects, built in Baramulla and Kargil districts of Jammu and Kashmir respectively, saying these will deprive it of its water share under the pact.

However, at a meeting held here in May 2010, the neighbouring country withdrew objections after Indian side provided details of these. Similarly, Pakistan has been flagging concern over designs of India's five other hydroelectricity projects — Pakal Dul (1000 MW), Ratle (850 MW), Kishanganga (330 MW), Miyar (120 MW) and Lower Kalnai (48 MW) — being planned in the Indus river basin, contending these violate the treaty.

It had approached the World Bank, the mediator between the two countries of the 57-year-old water distribution treaty, in August last year raising issues over Kishanganga and Ratle projects in Jammu and Kashmir.

While there is no clarity yet whether issues relating to these two projects will figure during the meet as they are before the Bank, the source said Pakal Dul, Miyar and Lower Kalnai may be discussed.

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Shed The Indus Albatross March 20 -TD

Indus Waters Treaty offers one-sided benefits to Pakistan, World Bank too is partisan

Brahma Chellaney

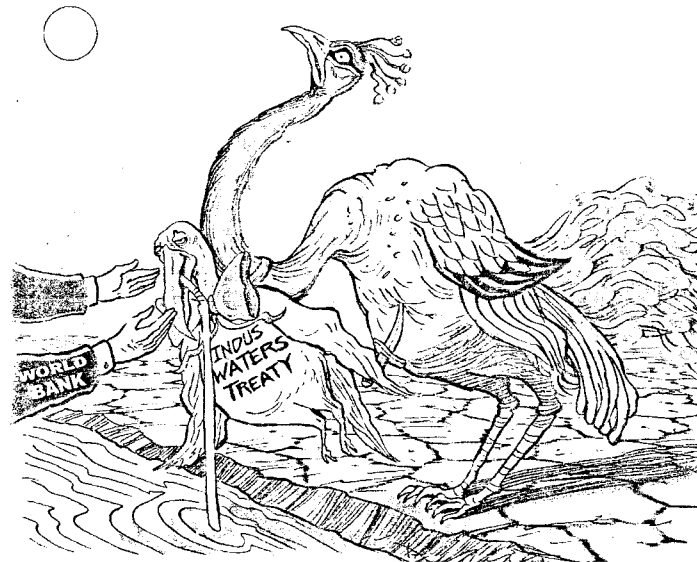


At a time when India is haunted by a deepening water crisis, the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) hangs like the proverbial albatross from its neck. In 1960, in the naïve hope that water largesse would yield peace, India entered into a treaty that gave away the Indus system's largest rivers as gifts to Pakistan. Since then that congenitally hostile neighbour, while drawing the full benefits from the treaty, has waged overt or covert aggression almost continuously and is now using the IWT itself as a stick to beat India with, including by contriving water disputes and internationalising them.

A partisan World Bank, meanwhile, has compounded matters further. Breaching IWT's terms under which an arbitral tribunal cannot be established while the parties' disagreement "is being dealt with by a neutral expert", the Bank proceeded in November to appoint both a court of arbitration (as demanded by Pakistan) and a neutral expert (as suggested by India). It did so while admitting that the two concurrent processes could make the treaty "unworkable over time".

World Bank partisanship, however, is not new: IWT was the product of the Bank's activism, with US government support, in making India embrace an unparalleled treaty that parcelled out the largest three of the six rivers to Pakistan and made the Bank effectively a guarantor in the treaty's initial phase. With much of its meat in its voluminous annexes this is an exhaustive, book-length treaty with a patently neo-colonial structure that limits India's sovereignty to the basin of the three smaller rivers.

The Bank's recent decision was made more bizarre by the fact that while the treaty explicitly permits either party to seek a neutral expert's appointment, it specifies no such unilateral right for a court of arbitration. In 2010, such an arbitral tribunal was appointed with



both parties' consent. The neutral expert, however, is empowered to refer the parties' disagreement, if need be, to a court of arbitration.

The uproar that followed the World Bank's initiation of the dual processes forced it to "pause", but not terminate, its legally untenable decision. Stuck with a mess of its own making, it is now prodding India to bail it out by compromising with Pakistan over the two moderate-sized Indian hydropower projects. But what Pakistan wants are design changes of the type it enforced years ago in the Salal project, resulting in that plant silting up. It is threatening to target other Indian projects as well.

Yet Indian policy appears adrift. Indeed, India is backsliding even on its tentative moves to deter Pakistani terrorism. For example, after last September's Uri attack, it suspended the Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) with Pakistan. Now the suspension has

India is reluctant to hold Pakistan to account by linking IWT's future to that renegade state's cessation of its unconventional war. It is past time India shed its reticence

been lifted, allowing the PIC to meet in the aftermath of the state elections.

In truth the suspension was just a charade, with the PIC missing no meeting. Prime Minister Narendra Modi reversed course in time for PIC, which meets at least once every financial year, to meet before the current year ended on March 31 in order to prepare its annual report by the treaty-stipulated June 1 deadline. But while the suspension was widely publicised for political ends, the reversal happened quietly.

Much of the media also fell for

another charade that Modi sought to play to the hilt in Punjab elections: He promised to end Punjab's water stress by utilising India's full IWT-allocated share of the waters. His government, however, has initiated not a single new project to correct India's abysmal failure to tap its meagre 19.48% share of the Indus waters.

Instead, Modi has engaged in little more than eyewash: He has appointed a committee of secretaries, not to find ways to fashion the Indus card to reform Pakistan's conduct, but farcically to examine India's own rights under IWT over 56 years after it was signed. The answer to India's serious under-utilisation of its share, which has resulted in Pakistan getting more than 10 billion cubic metres (BCM) yearly in bonus waters on top of its staggering 167.2 BCM allocation, is not a bureaucratic rignarole but political direction to speedily build storage and other structures.

Despite Modi's declaration that "blood and water cannot flow together", India is reluctant to hold Pakistan to account by linking IWT's future to that renegade state's cessation of its unconventional war. It is past time India shed its reticence.

Pakistan's interest lies in sustaining a unique treaty that incorporates water generosity to the lower riparian on a scale unmatched by any other pact in the world. Yet it is undermining its own interest by dredging up disputes with India and running down IWT as ineffective for resolving them. By insisting that India must not ask what it is getting in return but bear only IWT's burdens, even as it suffers Pakistan's proxy war, Islamabad itself highlights the treaty's one-sided character.

In effect, Pakistan is offering India a significant opening to remake the terms of the Indus engagement. This is an opportunity that India should not let go. The Indus potentially represents the most potent instrument in India's arsenal – more powerful than the nuclear option, which essentially is for deterrence.

The writer is a geostrategist and author

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INDUS WATERS TREATY: TALKS TO BE HELD IN LAHORE TODAY

INDO-PAK DELEGATIONS LED BY COMMISSIONERS TO ATTEND MEET

ST-20-

ASHOK TUTEJA

ashoktuteja@gmail.com
New Delhi, 19 March

India and Pakistan are set to resume the stalled water-sharing talks on Monday in Lahore under a 1960 treaty that may bring down the temperature between the two nations.

The two-day talks on the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) are being held after a lull of two years although the treaty makes it mandatory for the two countries to hold talks at least once a year.

Delegations from India and Pakistan, led by their re-

The two-day talks on the IWT are being held after a lull of two years although the treaty makes it mandatory for the two countries to hold talks at least once a year

spective Indus water commissioners, would attend the meeting, which was earlier to be held in September last year but India pulled out following the Uri terror attack.

The two sides are expected to talk at length on their dif-

ferences over the Kishenganga and Ratle hydro power projects. The talks on IWT are being held days after the visit of a three-member delegation of Indian MPs to Pakistan to attend a regional Parliamentary conference held at Murree, near Islamabad. The visit of the delegation, comprising Shashi Tharoor of the Congress, Meenakshi Lekhi of the BJP and Nominated member Swapna Dasgupta, to the neighbouring country had raised hopes that India was willing to open the channels of communication with Pakistan.

However, New Delhi has made it clear that the meeting between Indus Waters commissioners does not mean the resumption of dialogue at official level between the two sides since the Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) is a bipartisan body entrusted with everyday implementation of the World Bank-brokered IWT which was signed in 1960. New Delhi sees the meeting as just another interaction between the commissioners on the two sides to deal with technical matters concerned with the implementation of the treaty.

Indian officials say a formal dialogue between the two countries can only be held in an atmosphere free of terror and violence. And for that to happen, Pakistan must stop sponsoring terrorism against India from its soil. The treaty had come close to being jeopardised following the Uri attack when Prime Minister Narendra Modi threatened to scrap it, saying blood and water could not flow together. India had blamed Pakistan-based JeM for the Uri attack, forcing it to launch surgical strikes on terrorist launch pads in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

News item/article/editorial published on March 19, 2017 in the

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Statesman
The Times of India (N.D.)
Indian Express
Tribune
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Nav Eharat Times (Hindi)
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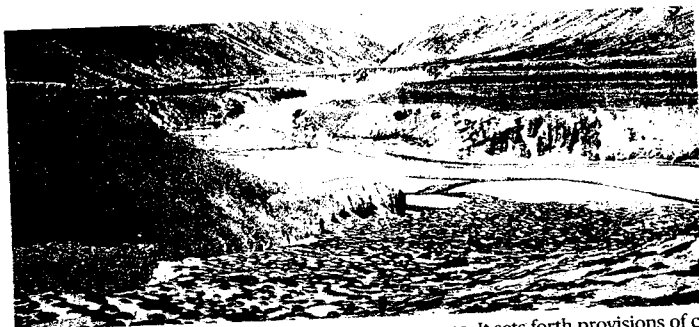
and documented at Bhagirathi(English) & Publicity Section, CWC.

the World Bank is keen on resolving Indus divide

After her recent visit to India and Pakistan, World Bank Chief Executive Officer Kristalina Georgieva reiterated that the Bank was keen on resolving the disagreements between the two nations over the interpretation of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) following the construction by India of two hydroelectric power plants. Though the two nations have had no fresh conflict over the sharing of river waters for more than five decades, differences cropped up after Pakistan opposed the construction of the Kishenganga (330 MW) and Ratle (850 MW) power plants by India on the Jhelum and Chenab in Jammu and Kashmir, over which Pakistan has unrestricted rights under the treaty.

Why did the Bank intervene?

■ Even before Partition, the Indus had created problems among the states of British India. The problems became international after the creation of two nations as the political boundary was drawn right across the Indus basin. The World Bank (then IBRD), under the



presidency of Eugene Black, helped in 1952 to settle the dispute between the two nations on the sharing of the Indus river basin waters. He had said the escalation of the dispute would damage the economic development of the Indian subcontinent. After eight years of hard negotiations, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and President Ayub Khan signed the IWT on September 19, 1960. The Bank is also a signatory to the treaty. The IWT is a complex instrument, comprising 12 articles and eight

annexures. It sets forth provisions of co operation between the two countries in their use of the rivers, known as the Permanent Indus Commission (PIC).

Has there been any violation?

■ According to the IWT, India has control over three eastern rivers of the Indus basin – the Beas, the Ravi and the Sutlej – and Pakistan has control over the three western rivers – the Indus, the Chenab and the Jhelum. All six rivers flow from India to Pakistan. Among

other uses, India is permitted to construct power facilities on these rivers subject to regulations laid down in the treaty. India had asked the bank for appointment of a neutral expert following Pakistan's objections to two projects, while Pakistan demanded the formation of a court of arbitration, alleging that India had violated the treaty. In December 2016, the Bank announced a 'pause' and asked both parties to resolve the issue amicably by the end of January 2017.

What stand did the Bank take?

■ India welcomed the Bank's neutral stand, while Pakistan sought intervention of the Bank after being unable to find an amicable solution to the dispute through the commission. Given that India has remained the Bank's single largest borrower since its inception with cumulative borrowings from IBRD and IDA touching \$103 billion, the bank did not perhaps want to upset it.

With buoyancy in foreign exchange reserves, the Bank needs India more than the other way round and this has

created some anxiety in the Bank circles about the future direction of their relationship.

Why is the Bank playing a role again?

■ This is because India and Pakistan are important partners and clients of the Bank. In South Asia, Pakistan (\$2,280 million) received the highest lending from the Bank after India (\$3,845 million) during the fiscal 2016. Moreover, there are not too many borrowers with a credible record like India.

The Bank maintained its aid could be effectively used if both nations kept the peace and ensured better management of the waters, on which lakhs of farmers depend. As both nations have failed to resolve the dispute amicably, the Bank CEO has initiated a dialogue. Changing its stance, India has agreed to attend a meeting of the commission in Lahore next week. Like in the 1950s, Bank officials are again playing the role of mediator.

NAGESH PRABHU

News item/letter/article/editorial published on March 19, 3, 2017 in the

Hindustan Times

Statesman

The Times of India (N.D.)

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Tribune

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Blitz

and documented at Bhagirathi(English)& Publicity Section. CWC.

With Teesta in limbo, govt weighs options to

March-1

Vishwa.Mohan
timesgroup.com

elhi: Though progress
ter sharing deal on Te-
er looks uncertain, in-
e approaches towards
ing transport and po-
ilities and managing
cally fragile Sundar-
an help India navigate
West Bengal CM Ma-

mata Banerjee's concerns and make Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina's upcoming visit a success. She is scheduled to visit India in early April.

Banerjee's opposition has held up a pact since 2011 on the ground that committing a share of Teesta waters to Bangladesh disadvantages West Bengal's farmers, leading to a search for options that include

adopting a "basin management" approach to joint initiatives in the Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna basin. This envisages a multi-sectoral approach towards developing river transport and hydropower with Bangladesh.

Experts also believe activation of the existing joint rivers commission (JRC) and conservation of Sundarban as a com-

The hopes of signing a water-sharing deal on the Teesta were revived when PM Modi visited Dhaka in 2015, but Mamata-led WB govt's stand against it had made it quite uncertain

mon project under existing MoU are the other key points that can boost ties beyond a Teesta pact. "Smart diplomacy demands that we should not stick to Teesta (deal) when it looks quite difficult. India can explore other options. The basin management approach could definitely be an effective way to deal with common concerns," said Uttam Kumar

make Hasina visit success

9- TID

Sinha of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses.

The Ganga-Brahmaputra-Meghna Basin has the potential to drive change in the region by not only providing water for irrigation to support large populations, but also facilitating river navigation and electricity needs through joint development of hydropower projects.

"Once you accept the rea-

lities of a linked future, it would be easier to arrive at an agreement on the more difficult sharing principle. There is also a need to activate JRC which provides a very good platform to discuss water sharing," said Sinha. JRC was established in 1972 with a view to maintain liaison to ensure effective joint efforts in maximising benefits from

common river system

Asked about fate of the proposed Teesta deal, former water resources secretary Shashi Shekhar said since water was a state subject, India would have to keep the WB government's views in mind. "The Centre should, in the meantime, concentrate on developing a robust mechanism to collect hydrological data."

News item/letter/article/editorial published on March - 17-3-2017 in the

Hindustan Times

Statesman

The Times of India (N.D.)

Indian Express

Tribune

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States to be ranked on their water mgmt

28 Indicators
To Decide
Performance

Vishwa Mohan &
Mahendra Singh | TNN

New Delhi: The Niti Aayog will soon start a process to sensitise states towards preparing a Water Management Index (WMI) which will ultimately lead the Centre's thinktank to rank them on the basis of their efforts in efficient management of water resources.

The states' performance will be judged on the basis of 28 key indicators covering water use efficiency, irrigation status, groundwater recharge, availability of drinking water for both rural and urban areas, watershed development and other sustainable practices in water-related sectors.

WATER MANAGEMENT INDEX

States to be ranked
on the basis of water
management index (WMI)

WMI to be prepared
on the basis of 28 key
performance indicators

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS BROADLY COVER

- Restoration of water bodies
- Groundwater recharge (source augmentation)
- Irrigation status
- Sustainable on-farm

- water use practices (water use efficiency)
- Rural drinking water
- Urban water supply and sanitation
- Watershed development

The Niti Aayog has, in fact, developed a composite WMI as a tool to assess and further improve the performance in efficient management of water resources. Different weightage is allocated to identified performance indicators to arrive at the composite index. The final scorecard of a particular state will carry both quantitative and qualitative aspects of indicators during 2016-17.

The chief executive officer

of the Aayog, Amitabh Kant, has written to states' chief secretaries, informing them about a plan to hold different workshops to sensitise and support states in preparing the index. The workshop may be held during March-April.

The WMI is one of the six indices which the Niti Aayog has introduced for ranking states. The others include health, education, energy efficiency, agricultural reforms and digital transaction.

News item/letter/article/editorial published on March-20-3-2017 in the

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Construct SYL via HP, says forum

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

T-20

NEW DELHI, MARCH 19

A voluntary group has suggested Prime Minister Narendra Modi an alternative route for speedy construction of the Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) canal.

The group called "Forum for SYL Canal Through Himachal Pradesh" has

Hooda to meet Modi on canal issue

SONEPAT: Addressing a meeting of Congress workers at Gannaur in Sonapat on Sunday, Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda said he would meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi to seek completion of the SYL canal.

suggested the construction of the project directly from Himachal Pradesh to Haryana instead of passing through Punjab.

Forum's president Jeetendra Nath, who is a native of Haryana, said, "The canal may be initiated from the Bhakra Dam,

which comes in Himachal Pradesh. The dam is about 67 km from the territory of Haryana, whereas through Punjab, it is 125 km."

The forum has flagged the suggestion to the PM, Union Water Resources Ministry, Governors of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh and Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar.

News item/letter/article/editorial published on March-18-3-2017 in the

Hindustan Times

Statesman

The Times of India (N.D.)

Indian Express

Tribune

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Nav Bharat Times (Hindi)

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Punjab to plan new strategy on SYL canal issue: Minister

State to adopt consumer-friendly power tariff policy, says Rana Gurjit Singh

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHANDIGARH

Punjab Irrigation Minister Rana Gurjit Singh on Friday said the previous Akali-BJP government had 'failed to fight' a strong legal battle on the Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) canal but the Congress government would now come out with a well-planned strategy to safeguard the rights of the State.

"The SAD-BJP government failed to fight a strong legal battle on SYL... I have called Mr. Atul Nanda, Advocate General Punjab to discuss this issue and frame a well-planned strategy to present Punjab's case during the



Rana Gurjit Singh

next hearing in the Supreme Court on March 28", Mr. Singh, told reporters here after taking charge.

He said his top priority would be to fulfil the promises made by the Congress in its manifesto and accordingly he would focus on developing a strategy on SYL to safeguard the water rights of

Punjab, besides adopting a consumer-friendly power tariff policy.

Mr. Singh said a number of industrial units from Punjab have shifted to others parts of the country during the last 10 years because of the mismanaged power tariff policy of the SAD-BJP government.

"We have promised to reform power tariffs for domestic, industrial and commercial consumers. I have called a meeting with Secretary, Power and chairman-cum-managing director of the Punjab State Power Corporation Limited to discuss the issue," he said, adding

the government was committed to putting Punjab back on the fast track of economic growth and prosperity.

White paper

PTI adds: Punjab Finance Minister Manpreet Singh Badalon Friday said the government will come out with a white paper on the State's finances and alleged that there was "systematic loot" of resources during the SAD-BJP rule.

The Amarinder Singh-led government will take some important decisions in its first cabinet meeting on Saturday, he said.

News item/letter/article/editorial published on March-19.3.2017 in the

Hindustan Times

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नदियों को जोड़ने की परियोजना पर चल रहा है काम

पत्रिका न्यूज नेटवर्क

rajasthanpatrika.com

चण्डीगढ़ . केन्द्र सरकार ने असिंचित भूमि को सिंचित बनाने के लिए पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी की देश की नदियों को जोड़ने की महत्वाकांक्षी परियोजना के क्रियान्वयन के लिए कदम उठाए हैं। केन्द्रीय गृह मंत्री राजनाथ सिंह शनिवार को सूरजकुण्ड में कृषि नेतृत्व शिखर सम्मेलन-2017



के उद्घाटन के बाद प्रदेशभर से आए

किसानों को संबोधित कर रहे थे। देश में किसानों के लिए सिंचाई की व्यवस्था करने के संबंध में गृह मंत्री ने कहा कि सिंचाई के लिए नाबार्ड के तहत 20 हजार करोड़ रुपए का एक फंड बनाया गया है। उन्होंने कहा, प्रधानमंत्री नरेन्द्र मोदी ने वर्ष 2022 तक किसानों की आय को दोगुणा करने का एक संकल्प लिया है और हम इस आशा को विश्वास में बदलेंगे।