

News item/letter/article/editorial published on 23/4/17 in the

Hindustan Times

Statesman

The Times of India (N.D.)

Indian Express

Tribune

Hindustan (Hindi)

Nav Bharat Times (Hindi)

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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.

Heavy rain leads to flood-like situation

Houses, land submerged in Meghalaya

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SHILLONG

Heavy rain has led to a flood-like situation in at least seven villages of South West Garo Hills district in Meghalaya. However, there has been no report of any loss of life.

The incessant rain since Friday has submerged houses, agricultural land besides damaging roads in seven low-lying areas of the district.

'Provide relief material'
Chief Minister Mukul Sangma has directed district officials to provide relief to the affected families.

At least four families of Silkona village have been given shelter at a local

school because of the flood-like situation, district Deputy Commissioner Cyril V.Diangdoh said.

Seven villages under Zikzak Community & Rural Development block, namely Silkona, Nandirchar, Bepari-para, Hridaypur, Daspara, Patelipara and New Kalaichar were the worst-hit, he said. Paddy fields in Mahendraganj area were submerged and BDOs and field staff were trying to assess the damage, he said.

The district Disaster Management Agency has deployed officials and gram sevaks on the field for conducting actual ground assessment and set up relief camps, should the need arise.

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MONSOON CHEER

Government must draw up plans, in coordination with states,
to prepare for good rains in June-July 24/18

THE INDIA METEOROLOGICAL Department has been fairly accurate in forecasting the monsoon in recent times. Its prognosis of below-normal rainfall in both 2014 and 2015, and a return to normalcy in 2016, turned out directionally correct, even if not so much in magnitude. So, there's something to cheer about the official weather agency predicting a "normal" southwest monsoon this year too, though the expected rainfall, at 96 per cent of the country's long period average, isn't the best one could ask for. The biggest source of uncertainty right now is the prospect of a fresh El Nino event, after the last one from February 2015 to May 2016 that caused India's worst drought since 1986-87. Most global models are, however, pointing to only "weak" El Nino conditions, that too developing only during the latter part of the monsoon season. Together with the summer's early onset this time — the monsoon is ultimately about moisture-laden winds blowing in from a high-pressure area (the Arabian Sea) to one of low pressure (over land) created by intense heating — it could be inferred that we are in for good rains in June-July.

That being the case, the Centre should draw up plans, in coordination with the states, to ensure adequate supply of seeds, fertiliser and credit to enable early kharif plantings by farmers. There is also a need to announce minimum support prices early enough to induce both timely sowing and also send the right signals of what crops to grow. A special campaign to push the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana — explaining the benefits of insuring one's crop by paying a premium of just 2 per cent and assuring immediate claim payments through the use of technology — can further boost farmers' confidence ahead of the sowing season. Farmers should, in general, be encouraged to grow more pulses and oilseeds — as they did last year — and cultivate rice, sugarcane or hybrid cotton only in areas where there is enough water.

A significant takeaway from the back to back moisture failures of 2014 and 2015 was that the impact was felt mostly by farmers and rural producers. This is unlike past droughts, in which consumers in cities and urban centres also bore the brunt. Given the fundamental reality today of the terms of trade shifting against "Bharat" as opposed to "India", this is also the time for the government to dispense with controls on agri-commodities, be it the imposition of stock-holding limits or export and domestic movement restrictions. With well-functioning crop insurance, efficient markets with the freedom to sell or stock agri-produce, and targeted direct benefit transfers, there will be no need for loan waivers, free power and other such sops that farmers can well do without.

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In search of lost Himalayan springs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 23 APRIL

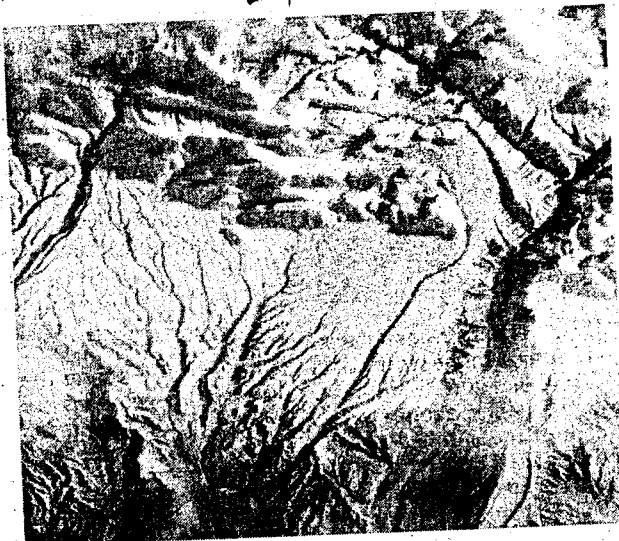
In the first such attempt, the Central government will carry out surveys to trace lost springs in deep pockets of the Himalayas, aiming to solve the water woes of local residents by reviving these aquatic resources.

The studies will be conducted in the region stretching from Jammu and Kashmir to north-eastern states along with the state governments concerned, sources in the water resources ministry said.

The Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) has already put up a proposal with the ministry to conduct pilot studies to collect baseline information in this connection in Uttarakhand and Sikkim in the project's first phase.

Rejuvenation of springs, that would be identified as potential resources of water in the first phase, will happen in the second leg of the project which is expected to take off "soon" after the ministry approves it, they said.

A spring is a point from where water flows out of aquifers (layer of rock which contains groundwater) to the earth's surface. Spring discharge varies from season-to-season. It is at the lowest level during summer and



NASA photograph showing water erosion tracks in the Himalayas. ■ FILE PHOTOGRAPH

peaks during monsoon.

During a lean span, active springs can discharge water at a rate of nearly half a litre per minute. The largest springs can discharge water at a rate of nearly 1.5 lakh litres per minute at their peak.

"People in the hills rely heavily on two resources: springs and rivers. But it has been observed that springs have dried up and disappeared at several places due to a variety of reasons like disasters such as landslides, change in climatic conditions, among others," an

official said.

"So, to deal with the problem of shortage faced particularly during summer, in the long run, the CGWB has proposed to conduct the study in the first such attempt," the official added.

The sources cited the example of a hot water resource in Gaurikund in Uttarakhand that disappeared after the 2013 floods and landslides in the northern state. The CGWB has already conducted a survey there.

The sources added that

The studies will be conducted in the entire region, stretching from Jammu and Kashmir to the north-eastern states along with the state governments concerned, the Union water resources ministry said.

Jammu and Kashmir Deputy Chief Minister Nirmal Singh has also discussed the issue of two lost springs in the state with Union Water Resources Minister Uma Bharti. "For now, we will conduct pilot studies in Uttarakhand and Sikkim with the help of the state governments there. The two states have responded positively," the sources said.

On the revival of springs, the sources said that each spring has a different character and therefore the time it takes to be restored may vary from that taken by another.

In other words, the revival of springs is dependent on how effectively groundwater recharge in the area concerned takes place and rate of water withdrawal.

"The characteristics of springs are dynamic. A spring may get rejuvenated in one monsoon, another may take more," an official said.

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Terror alert at Bhakra Dam, security up 22

ROPAR, APRIL 21

Following a terror threat, the Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB) stepped up security at the Bhakra Dam last evening.

The police of Punjab and Himachal Pradesh were asked to send more security personnel for the safety of the dam and help of the Army was also sought.

BBMB sources said intelligence agencies had sent an alert that terrorists could tar-

get the dam, following which security personnel, including Army men, were deployed in strength at the dam. Located on the Sutlej, the Bhakra Dam has an installed capacity of about 1,500 MW power and stores about 93 million cusecs of water.

A team of Army commandos, led by a colonel, sanitised the area through the night and conducted a mock drill in the lake using helicopters in morning — TNS