

Perspective

The State
NEW DELHI, THURSDAY 28

Distress from drought can be avoided

Bharat Dogra

A total of 330 million people in 255,000 villages of 254 districts located in 10 states - these are the official estimates of drought-affected people in India and even this may be underestimated as some drought-affected areas have been left out.

No less disturbing than the number of affected people are reports about the extent of distress suffered as a huge number of them are unable to meet their most basic need of water in a satisfactory way. They have to walk long distances in search of water and then wait for long to get their turn at a water source. Even then they are not assured of getting adequate water or even a small supply of clean water. When there is such acute shortage of water for human beings, the extent of water denial to farm animals can be well imagined. In many villages and hamlets, the entire day revolves around arranging supplies of water even though hunger and malnutrition are also serious problems.

If one looks at all the claims for various years or various plan periods about the number of problem villages whose drinking water problems have been sorted out no village should be affected by drinking water problems today. Clearly the official data was only about the installation of pipelines or digging of tube-wells while what is most crucial is the protection of surface water sources and conserving the groundwater as well.

While there have also been weaknesses in implementation of drinking water schemes due to corruption and neglect of weakest sections, the biggest problem arises due to the fact that surface water sources which were supposed to provide the water for these schemes have



been drying up fast. The groundwater level too has been declining rapidly so that many drinking water systems in the form of tubewells, hand pumps and pipelines are no longer functional. For too long the government went on measuring its success merely in terms of numbers while the base of the drinking water supply chain was depleting at an ever increasing pace.

If instead the government had concentrated on an ecology-centered approach of protecting all surface water sources (while also creating new tanks, water ponds and related structures with proper catchments where needed) and conserving groundwater then drought would never have caused such massive dis-

tress as it is today.

It is still not too late to make amends and implement a massive programme of small-scale water harvesting and water conservation works to be integrated with well-planned and comprehensive watershed projects. Such works taken up with enthusiastic and well-organized involvement of rural communities with special emphasis on women and weaker sections can still provide significant relief in the near future and large-scale employment immediately.

Funds need to be released from highly wasteful and ecologically disruptive large dam and river-link projects and diverted to such small scale and short-gestation projects which can be

guided by communities with their understanding of local conditions. We need to be clear about our priorities instead of locking up billions of rupees in dubious schemes while saving only measly millions for more useful ones.

The implementation of watershed schemes can also be improved substantially with more inputs from experienced and skilled people about specific needs of people and conditions. Sometimes implementing agencies are so star-struck by a few models that they insist only on their replication without allowing adequate room for local needs and conditions. A more genuinely decentralized approach is needed.

In addition it is important to take up the protection of all water sources including rivers, lakes, tanks and springs from being ravaged by many ecologically destructive practices. At a time when the drought situation in Bundelkhand was aggravating badly, large-scale illegal sand mining was leading to the further depletion of rivers. Many tanks and other water sources continue to be endangered by ever-increasing encroachments despite the existence of strong legal directives against such encroachments. Clearly many more efforts need to be made for the protection of our surface water sources. In many places the aggravation of drought-related distress has been caused by the shift to excessively water-intensive crops.

Such cropping patterns are often promoted by strong agribusiness interests and sometimes by powerful politicians who also have their vested interests. For example in Maharashtra politicians owning or having important stakes in sugar factories have been only too happy to support the more prosperous sugarcane farmers in their areas of influence while this has led to a serious water shortage for all other villagers and the escalating water crisis may ultimately seal the fate of overall sustainable development of the region. So rural communities supported by the government should reach broad-based agreements that cropping patterns should be in tune with the needs of sustainable development with special emphasis on water and food security. This can be guided by traditional wisdom regarding mixed farming systems which provided a diversity of nutritious food crops without placing excessive burden on water sources.

Clearly these are matters of very urgent priority. If we ignore these changes then in these times of climate change drought-related distress will become intolerable. The signs of this are already visible and we should not waste any more time in taking adequate remedial actions.

THE WRITER IS A FREELANCE JOURNALIST ASSOCIATED WITH SEVERAL SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND INITIATIVES.



भुवनेश्वर, उड़ीसा के बाहरी इलाके में लगभग सूख चुके तालाब से बाल्टी में पानी ले जाता व्यक्ति

फाइल फोटो



सूखे ने देश के कुछ हिस्सों का समाजशास्त्र ही बदल दिया है, फिर भी धरती की प्यास बुझ नहीं रही। वहीं पानी का दुरुपयोग भी जारी है।

135

लीटर प्रति व्यक्ति प्रतिदिन है शहरी हिस्सों में पानी की मांग। गांवों में 40 लीटर प्रतिदिन है।

2011

में भारत में 30 प्रतिशत लोग नल के माध्यम से पानी का उपयोग कर रहे थे।

91

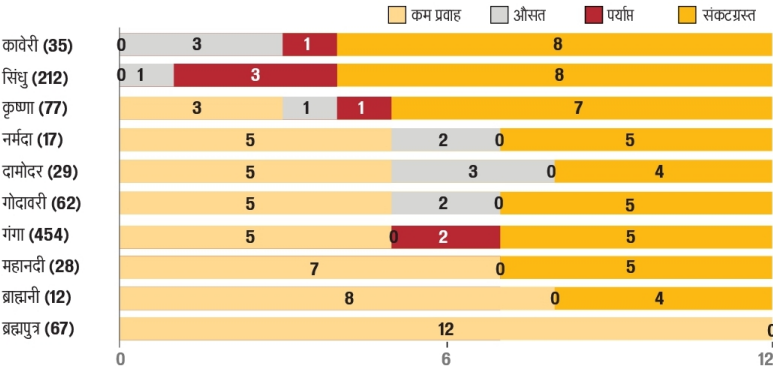
बड़ी झीलें और तालाब हैं हमारे पास, जो बिजली, पेयजल और सिंचाई के मकसद से तैयार हैं।

2030

तक भारत दुनिया के उन देशों में होगा, जिसके कृषि क्षेत्र की पानी की मांग सबसे अधिक होगी।

भारत की नदियों में भी रहती है पानी की कमी

साल के कुछ महीनों में देश की प्रमुख नदियों में पानी की कमी रहती है। यह आंकड़े 1996-2005 के बीच के हैं।



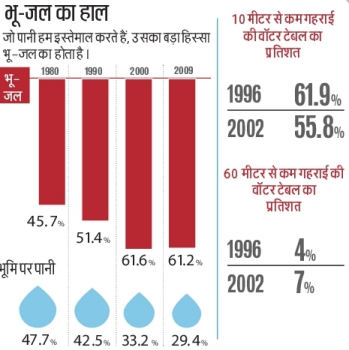
स्रोत: होकेस्टा, ए.आई.एंड.मेकोनेन, एम.एम. (2011) आदि।

में पानी का स्तर बेहद कम हो गया था, जिसके कारण उसे कुछ समय के लिए रोक देना पड़ा था। लातूर तक रेल डिब्बों की मदद से पानी पहुंचाया जा रहा है। बुंदेलखंड (जिसमें 13 जिले हैं, जो उत्तर प्रदेश और मध्य प्रदेश तक फैला है) में तो जिला न्यायधीशों को आदेश दिए गए हैं कि वे इसे सुनिश्चित करें कि कोई भी पानी का इस्तेमाल पीने के अलावा किसी और काम के लिए ना करें। हमारे पास राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर 91 बड़ी झीलें और तालाब हैं, जो बिजली, पीने के पानी और सिंचाई के मकसद से तैयार हैं, इसके बावजूद भी बड़े स्तर पर पानी की कमी हुई है।

हालांकि पानी की कमी का कारण खराब मानसून को ही माना जाता है, पर इस बार कारण और भी हैं। काफी कुछ इस बात पर भी निर्भर करता है कि हम उपलब्ध पानी का इस्तेमाल किस तरह से करते हैं। हमारे देश में विश्व की आबादी की 16 प्रतिशत जनसंख्या है, जबकि विश्व के कुल पानी का चार प्रतिशत ही हमारे पास है। हमारे देश का सार्वजनिक पानी आपूर्ति सिस्टम चरमराया हुआ है। बड़े शहरों में ज्यादातर आपूर्ति अमीरों को दी जा रही है। एक के बाद दूसरे खराब मानसून के कारण ग्रामीण क्षेत्र की आमदनी तेजी से गिर गई, सामाजिक सुरक्षा कार्यक्रम मनरगा भी लड़खड़ा

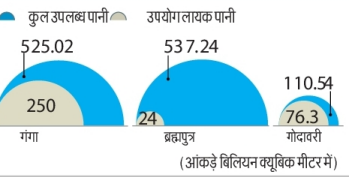
गया। धन की कमी की वजह से काम के ज्यादा अवसर पैदा करना या सुखाग्रस्त किसानों को वक्त पर भुगतान करना मुश्किल हो गया। ऐसे में धीरे-धीरे देश दशक के सबसे बुरे ग्रामीण संकट में फंसता चला गया। महाराष्ट्र के बीड में यह संकट बाल-विवाह की शक्ल ले रहा है। सिर्फ चीनी मिलों के पास काम है और अगर आप जोड़े में काम करते हैं तो ये कारखाने ज्यादा पैसे देते हैं। नतीजतन, महज 13 साल की बच्चियों की शादियां उनसे एक-दो साल बड़े लड़कों के साथ की जा रही हैं। बाल अधिकार कार्यकर्ता तत्वशिल कांबले के मुताबिक, 'पिछले तीन साल के दौरान बाल-

विवाह में हमने 20 प्रतिशत की बढ़ोतरी देखी है।' जब कभी सूखा पड़ता है, देश में सिंचाई की मांग जोर पकड़ने लगती है। हालांकि अपर्याप्त सिंचाई तंत्र के बावजूद भारत की कुल जल खपत का करीब 80 प्रतिशत कृषि कार्य में ही होता है। जल स्तर के गिरने की अकेली बड़ी वजह धान व गन्ने की खेती है। बहरहाल अनियमित जलापूर्ति, बढ़ता जल-प्रदूषण और उपयोग लायक जल स्रोतों में गिरावट के मुकाबले बढ़ती मांग असली समस्या है। और जब मानसून लगातार धोखा दे तो ये सब मानवीय संकट में तब्दील हो सकते हैं। केंद्रीय जल आयोग के अध्यक्ष घनश्याम झा कहते हैं, 'हमारे कृषि क्षेत्र की जल संबंधी मांग काफी बड़ी है। पेयजल के लिए तो दस फीसदी से भी कम खपत है। कृषि क्षेत्र की यह मांग चिंताजनक है।' झा की चिंता बेवजह नहीं है। मैकिन्से कन्सल्टिंग के वॉटर रिसोर्सेज ग्रुप के मुताबिक, साल 2030 तक भारत दुनिया के उन देशों में से एक होगा, जहां कृषि क्षेत्र में पानी की मांग सबसे अधिक होगी। अनुमान के मुताबिक, साल 2030 में यह 1,195 अरब क्यूबिक मीटर जल का दोहन करेगा और इसके लिए उसे अपने मौजूदा उपयोग लायक जल की मात्रा को दोगुना करना होगा। सूकून की बात है कि इस बार मानसून के सामान्य रहने की भविष्यवाणी की गई है। मौजूदा सूखे की स्थिति तो मानसून आने के साथ शायद खत्म हो जाए, लेकिन लंबी अवधि की तस्वीर बहुत खुशहाली वाली नहीं है। विश्व बैंक व डब्ल्यूएचओ में कंसल्टेंट वसुधा देशमुख का कहना है, 'हालात की बेहतरी के लिए खेती के तरीके में बदलाव लाने, अमीरों से अधिक शुल्क वसूलने, बिजली उत्पादन के लिए अधिकाधिक रीन्यूएबल स्रोतों का इस्तेमाल करने और कृषि कार्य में पानी के इस्तेमाल को कम से कम करने वाले उपकरणों को अपनाने की जरूरत है।'



सूख रही नदियां

भारत भौगोलिक रुकावटों के कारण अपनी नदियों के कुल उपलब्ध पानी में से एक तिहाई का ही उपयोग कर पाता है।



स्रोत: सेसेज डाटा, सेंट्रल वॉटर कमीशन, नेशनल सैपल सर्वे ऑर्गनाइजेशन, मैकिन्से 2030 वॉटर रिसोर्सेज ग्रुप



सूखाग्रस्त मराठवाड़ा के बीड जिले में लगभग सूख चुके डोंमरी तालाब से, बैलगाड़ी में पानी की टकी भर कर ले जाता एक स्थानीय नागरिक

फाइल फोटो

DROUGHT: GOVT FAILS TO CONVINCE OPP

OPP SAYS CENTRE NOT DOING ENOUGH, WALKS OUT OF RAJYA SABHA

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
New Delhi, 27 April

The Rajya Sabha today heard stories of drought from nearly 12 states as Elders narrated how nearly half the country's population in rural India was facing conditions of water famine and loss of crops, and migrating in search of food and livelihood.

The Agriculture Minister, Mr Radha Mohan Singh, and the Water Resources Minister, Ms Uma Bharati, tried to convince the members that the Centre had arranged water trains to provide drinking water, and liberal disaster relief to state governments for disbursal among the farmers but the Congress led by the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Ghulam Nabi Azad, and the Janata Dal (U) led by Mr Sharad Yadav staged a walk-out, expressing dissatisfaction with the assurances.

Mr Azad said the Prime Minister should have con-



The situation is such that people gherao the tankers and Section 144 is imposed to prohibit assembly of more people. People's efforts are just to collect and store water

SHARAD PAWAR

vened a meeting of the

Chief Ministers or an all-party meeting to consider what strategies could be adopted to face the grave drought that was continuing for the last couple of years. Several members demanded that a separate Ministry of Disaster Management be created at the Centre to take care of recurring droughts, floods and earthquakes, and the impact of global warming.

The Elders from quite a few parties suggested that it was time that the subject of water was shifted from the Concurrent List in the Constitution and transferred fully to

the Central List. They maintained that the States were not in a position to respond to the challenges created by the worsening water situation, and there could be an internal strife on the issue. The suggestion had a positive response from the Water Resources Minister who said she would soon initiate the move which she herself wanted to make, but was not sure how it would be taken.

The Upper House discussed the drought situation as a short duration discussion which lasted about five and a half hours after lunch break. There were horror stories

how people managed with water supply received by them after intervals ranging from a week to two month period. Bundelkhand, Vidarbha, Orissa, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Jharkhand and Rajasthan were among the worst affected regions cited by the members.

Ms Bharati said parts of Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Telangana always

suffered drought but their Governments had taken keen interest to resolve the problems with success. She said the Ken-Betwa river linking project would take off soon and solve Bundelkhand's problem effectively. After that the Godavari-Mahanadi river link project would be taken up to solve the water problem of the Kalahandi Balangir Koraput Region (KKBK) of Orissa.

The Agriculture Minister said despite the drought, the food production this year was expected to be higher by 1.14 million tonnes. He said con-

tingency plans were prepared for 600 districts and disbursal of money under various schemes was more than previous years. Several States had failed to spend the money given to them. Money was provided for fodder, hand pumps and boring of wells, he said.

Initiating the discussion, Mr A U Singh Deo (Biju Janata Dal) said a separate Ministry of Disaster Management be created. Usually relief was given for drought but there was no proper compensation, he said. Relief was given for just two hectares of land, whatever might be the size of a farmer's holding, he added.

Former Agriculture Minister and NCP leader Mr Sharad Pawar said media should accurately project the situation. Things were bad in Latur. In Uttar Pradesh alone, 9.80 crore population of 50 of the 75 districts was affected by drought, he said. "We have to rise above politics to deal with the situation," he said. Mr Pawar's senti-

ment was echoed by several members.

Mrs Rajani Patil (Congress) said the Supreme Court had to pull up the Centre on the drought situation. She said every time she spoke in the House, it was about drought and water scarcity. Marathwada, she said, was now called Tanker-wada, going by the number of tankers seen in the region to meet people's water requirement. She said people were committing suicide and were dying collecting water from deep wells. The present government should stop blaming the previous UPA Governments for all the woes as it was in power for two years now, she said.

Mr Naresh Agarwal (Samajwadi Party), Mr Rajpal Singh Saini (Bahujan Samaj Party), Mr Tapan Sen (CPI-M), Mr Basawaraj Patil (BJP), Mr D.

Raja (CPI) and Mr Sanjiv Kumar (Jharkhand Mukti Morcha) were among the other speakers.

RAJYA SABHA

Govt faces heat from Opposition over drought relief

Agriculture Minister puts the onus on states, says Centre is doing its bit; Oppn stages walkout

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, APRIL 26

RAJYA SABHA members on Wednesday expressed grave concern over the drought situation in 11 states and the resulting drinking water crisis during a short duration discussion. The Opposition blamed the government for releasing less than half the funds asked for by these states and failing to anticipate the seriousness of the situation.

The members also asked the government to complete 312 irrigation projects that are pending for the past 25 years, and to formulate both an immediate plan and a long-term plan to tackle drought and provide water for drinking and agriculture. A separate ministry should be created to deal with droughts, floods and other natural calamities, some members demanded.

In his reply, Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh placed the onus of addressing the situation on states, while insisting that the Centre was doing its bit to provide relief. "We should not fight between Centre and the state. The roles of the Centre and the state are different. It is clearly defined in the Rules. We can't change it. The Centre's role is to monitor and the state's role is to provide assistance and help the affected people at the ground level," Singh said. "The central government does its bit, but every state governments should also do their best."

Expressing dissatisfaction with the minister's reply, members of the Congress, JD(U), SP and BSP staged a walkout.

Insisting that farmers are a priority for the central government, Singh earlier said, "I don't know if we are facing the consequences because of the previous government, but we know the prevailing situation and are taking adequate measures."

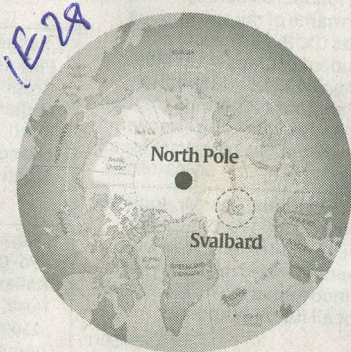
"We come from different states. We are all concerned about farmers... We should also try to see what we can do in our own states to tide over the situation," he said.

On steps taken by the Centre, Singh said the norms for providing relief had been eased and allocation for State Disaster Response Fund had been raised. He said the Met department had forecast above normal monsoon this year, and expressed hope that there would be better agriculture production in 2016-17.

In her reply, Water Resources Minister Uma Bharti said almost 30 crore people are facing drinking water shortage. The problem has aggravated due to consecutive droughts in the past two years, which brought down the water level in 91 reservoirs, she said.

According to data from the Central Water

TO STUDY CLIMATE CHANGE, INDIA GOES TO NORTH POLE



India will monitor one of the major fjords at Ny-Alesund, some 1,200 KM to the south of the North Pole, on the Svalbard archipelago in the Arctic region to understand how it may respond to climate change. The team will study the effect of interaction between the warm Atlantic water and the cold glacial-melt fresh water on the biological productivity and phytoplankton species within the fjord. The government has allocated Rs 21 crore for the project.

YS Chowdary, MoS Earth Sciences in the Lok Sabha, Wednesday

Commission, availability of water in 91 major reservoirs in the country is less by 11 million cubic metre at present, Bharti said. She stressed on interlinking of rivers while stating that Rs 80,000 crore would be spent on water resources.

She welcomed a demand from JD(U) member Sharad Yadav that the government remove the subject of water from the Concurrent List and place it in the Union List. "We discussed it in our ministry, but I did not form any committee on this as it is a sensitive issue. But now since Sharad Yadav has raised it, my ministry will start work on it," she said.

Earlier, raising the issue of the pending irrigation projects, former agriculture minister and NCP chief Sharad Pawar said 240 of these 312 projects were in five states including Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh. "Right now, 11 states are facing drought-like conditions. We must rise above political lines and face the situation together," Pawar said. "In 2015-16, the states made their demand for relief package. Was it met?" Pawar asked. "The actual release was less than 50 per cent. I think there should be some improvement," he said.

Include water in central list, suggest RS members

TACKLING DROUGHT Minister Uma Bharti said the issue, which could resolve water-sharing disputes between states, was informally discussed

HT Correspondent

■ letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The government will consider a suggestion to bring water from the concurrent list to the central list to resolve disputes arising from water-sharing between states, Union minister for water resources, Uma Bharti, told Rajya Sabha on Wednesday.

Responding to the suggestion by JD(U)'s Sharad Yadav, Bharti said the Centre will start work on the issue that has been informally discussed but not publicised as it is sensitive. She was speaking at a short discussion on the situation arising from the prevailing drought and heat wave conditions and the resultant water crisis in the country, and the government's remedial measures. Members urged long-term steps, such as bringing water to central list and giving impetus to irrigation projects.

Referring to the water crisis, Yadav said moving water to the central list would help conserve it and effectively resolve disputes related to rivers between states. He also sought a ban on dam construction in the Himalayas. Members underlined farmers' suicides and migration as consequences of the crisis and stressed the need for immediate redress from the Centre, including expediting release of funds to affected states.

Initiating the short-duration discussion on the issue, BJD's AU Singh Deo said data consolidated by Centre showed that around 33 crore people in 254 districts of 10 states were affected by the drought. "The number will possibly increase. Perhaps Bihar and Haryana have not yet detected drought despite shortage of rainfall," he said. Deo He added that the government should consider creating a new ministry to address problems of climate change. NCP's Sharad Pawar criticised agriculture minister Radha Mohan Singh's comments that water was being provided to sugar mills in Maharashtra, one of the worst affected states. "We must rise above political lines and face the situation together," he said.

Rajni Patil of the Congress said that Marathwada was now called "tankerwada" as water only came through tankers.



■ Villagers in Jammu's Samba district try to collect water from an almost dried-up well on Wednesday.

NITIN KANOTRA/HT PHOTO

Kerala's Malampuzha sizzles at 41.6 degrees C

Press Trust of India

■ letters@hindustantimes.com

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Kerala continued to sizzle with the temperature touching 41.6 degrees Celsius at Malampuzha in Palakkad district on Wednesday, the highest in the state for the second day.

On Tuesday, Malampuzha had recorded the highest temperature of 41.9 degrees Celsius in 29 years.

Kannur recorded 39.2 degrees Celsius and Kozhikode 38.2 degrees Celsius, sources of the India Meteorological Department (IMD)'s regional centre said here.

Some places in the state received summer showers, bringing some respite to people.

Seventy cases of sun burn and one death has been reported from the district so far, said Dr Reetha, Palakkad district medical officer.

A farmer was provided treatment at the outpatient ward on Wednesday after he suffered sun burns following exposure to the sun for over two hours.

"Most cases being reported are burns in the back of the neck and shoulders," she said.

heatison

MAN KILLS SELF AFTER BOREWELL FAILS TO HIT WATER

RANCHI: A 25-year-old man took his own life by jumping into a well in Jharkhand's Giridih district after a borewell he was sinking with a loan failed to hit water. Dilip Yadav's family of dairy farmers has been reeling from water shortage for two years. He took a loan and invested ₹70,000 in a borewell but failed to hit water even at 700 feet. Under financial stress, Yadav killed himself on Monday. His family only realised what happened after an iron hook dropped into the well to hoist a bucket instead pulled out Yadav's body.

50 slums gutted in forest fire in Nainital

DEHRADUN: A woman and her six-year-old son were charred to death and around 50 slums gutted in a forest fire in Nainital district, police said on Wednesday. At least 15 incidents of forest fires were reported from different parts of Nainital on Tuesday.

NGT asks Centre, UP about groundwater in Ghaziabad

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN

NEW DELHI: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has sought a response from the Centre and Uttar Pradesh government about the incessant and rampant extraction of groundwater by industries and households in Ghaziabad and Hapur districts, which has led to depletion of the water table.

On Tuesday, a Bench headed by Justice U. D. Salvi issued notices to the Ministry of En-

vironment and Forests, the Central Ground Water Authority Uttar Pradesh government, the State Pollution Control Board, and others while seeking a reply in two weeks.

The directions came on a plea filed by Ghaziabad resident Sushil Raghav and NGO Society for Protection of Environment and Biodiversity (SPEnBIO) seeking closure of all industrial units that illegally extract groundwater in the notified area of Ghaziabad and Hapur.

No Water For The Living,

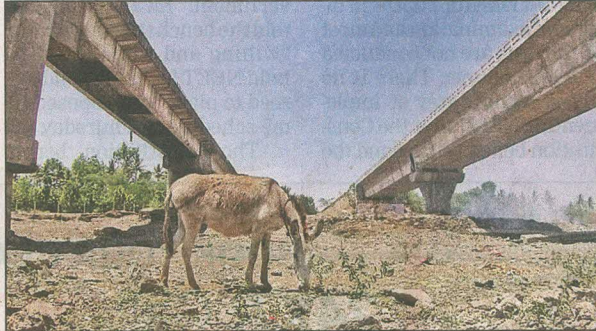
'Moksha' At Stake As River Dries Up

Radheshyam.Jadhav
@timesgroup.com

Kolhar (Ahmednagar): In a land where there is no water for the living, it would be too optimistic to expect some for a final send-off to the dead. The stretch of the Pravara river that passes through Kolhar village in drought-hit Maharashtra's Ahmednagar district, has dried up, leaving not as much as a puddle for people to immerse the ashes of departed kin.

Residents of villages across the district are facing a similar predicament, and, in their desperation to secure moksha for the deceased, have found a last resort in an unlikely place. Locals have been leasing water tankers to immerse the ashes.

"Water tankers for *dash-kriya vidhi* are available here," states an advertisement painted on the wall of a bridge across the Pravara river, whose bed is dotted with



NO RIGHT TO LAST RITES: The stretch of the Pravara river that runs through Kolhar village in Ahmednagar district has dried up, leaving residents with no place to immerse the ashes of their departed kin

carcasses of cattle and birds.

"What could be a bigger punishment than this? One cannot get a drop of river water even after death," said Dada Suryawanshi, a septuagenarian local. "Many people throw the *asthis* of their kin into the dry riverbed. Others bury them. Some are lucky to get water from tankers, while those who have



the money take the ashes to a place that still has water in its river." "For most of us, however," he added, "the dry Pravara is the final destination." Dada digs the riverbed every day with a shovel, hoping to find some water.

Water tanker supplier Shivaji Londhe caters solely to bereaved families. "In the days after the cremation, wa-

ter is required for almost every ritual," he said. Londhe's business is thriving. "...Except for the monsoon," he added, "the Pravara river hardly has any water. This is why I started my business." Radhabai, who sells earthen pots close to the river, recalled a time about 60 years ago when "the Pravara flowed throughout the year". "We used to drink the river's water. But see what has happened now," she said, and blamed residents for destroying the river. "They have extracted water, dug borewells and, most importantly, taken out all the sand from the riverbed," she added.

Villagers, who get tap water every 10 days for 15-20 minutes, blame the sand mafia and sugarcane farmers "for sucking every drop." "We are forced to hire water tankers," said a villager as small trucks of the gram panchayat unloaded garbage into the riverbed and set it on fire.

65 farmer suicides in 21 days in Maha

Syed.Rizwanullah
@timesgroup.com

Aurangabad: Drought and debt continue to claim lives in Marathwada, with as many as 65 farmers committing suicide in the first three weeks of April alone. With this, the total number of farmer suicides in the drought-hit region has risen to 338 this year.

The highest number of farmer suicides was reported from Beed district — 60. Aurangabad (57) and Nanded (50) follow close on its heels.

Latur and Osmanabad, both severely drought-affected districts, have reported 44 and 43 farmer suicides, respectively, while 37 cases have been reported from Jalna, 27 from Parbhani and 20 from Hingoli.

Punjab farmer & mother kill themselves, moneylender held for bid to grab land

A farmer and his mother have reportedly committed suicide in Punjab's Barnala district following a moneylender's attempt to forcibly seize their two-acre plot. Officials said the agent, Teja, arrived at Baljit Singh's plot after he failed to repay a Rs 4.5-lakh loan he had taken from him. Barnala SP Swarn Khanna said Teja was arrested along with two others on Wednesday for pushing Baljit and his mother Balbir Kaur to suicide, adding that efforts were underway to arrest Teja's two sons. Authorities also announced a compensation of Rs 6 lakh for the family of the deceased, while also offering a government job to one of them and a waiver of any loan in their name.

Neel Kamal | TNN

Officials said 146 cases had been declared eligible for compensation, with investigation pending in 117 others. The administration has rejected 75 claims.

The administration is continuing to undertake efforts to reach out to farmers

and offer counsel on health problems, as well as boost their morale.

A senior official said the administration was trying to get them jobs under MGNREGS as well as assure medical assistance. "Divisional commissioner Umakant

Dangat has urged doctors in both the private and government sectors to extend every possible assistance to farmers in distress, and ensure they do not miss out on proper treatment for want of money," he said.

The official said the district administration had roped in health department officials in Osmanabad to boost the morale of farmers, particularly those in the district's drought-affected pockets. "Accredited social health activists (Ashas) are counselling the farmers. One Asha worker is expected to reach out to 1,500 people. The administration has thus surveyed 2.21 lakh houses in the district where families have been counselled to fight the drought conditions," he said.

TDO-28. Page-4

Water trains bring scant relief here

Ground report from Marathwada region of Maharashtra, parched by back-to-back drought years

LATUR, APRIL 27

Haribhau Kamble, an unemployed labourer in India's richest state of Maharashtra, is forced to queue for hours in scorching heat to fetch water even as the government puts on trains to ship water to the region parched by back-to-back drought years.

MAHARASHTRA



MARATHWADA

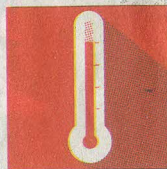
Latur, Aurangabad, Nanded, Parbhani, Jalna, Beed, Hingoli and Osmanabad districts in Marathwada are the worst hit

Like Kamble, millions of Indians have been hung out to dry in the state with the worst drought in four decades ravaging crops, killing livestock, emptying reservoirs and slowing hydroelectric power output. Mismanagement of water resources, with powerful politicians pushing for bigger supplies to industries, have made the situation worse, experts say.

"The government says it is bringing water by train every day, but we are getting water once a week," Kamble said, after standing in line for three hours to fill two pitchers at a tap in Latur district, 500 km southeast of Mumbai in drought-stricken Marathwada region. Locals had been hoping a 50-wagon daily water train would ease



PIPE DREAM Residents hold plastic hoses as they fetch water from a government-run water tanker in Masurdi village of Latur. REUTERS



46.3°

Sonepur
(ODISHA)

44.1°

Jamshedpur
(JHARKHAND)

43.3°

Churu
(RAJASTHAN)

42.2°

Hisar
(HARYANA)

40.2°

Amritsar
(PUNJAB)

appointed as the 25 lakh litres carried by the train and ferried by tankers to villages was not enough to meet the needs of Latur's five lakh people and Marathwada's 1.9 crore.

Marathwada, home to many sugar mills in Maharashtra, is one of the several regions in India that received

below-average June-September rains in 2015. New Delhi estimates that overall 33 crore, a quarter of the country's population, are currently affected by drought.

Water is set to get scarcer over the next two months as temperatures soar above 40 degrees Celsius, drying up Marathwada reservoirs that

are now just 3 per cent full.

"That Maharashtra would face a water crisis was clear when monsoons failed, yet the state took no action to curb supplies to water-guzzling industries like beer and sugar," said Parineeta Dandekar, associate coordinator at the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People.

"There are limits on how much water the government can supply by train. Had it reserved water sources for drinking last year, the situation would have been much better now." The need of the hour is cost-effective steps such as enforcing restrictions on water use and ensuring canals do not leak — Reuters

HEATWAVE TOLL SURGES PAST 4,000 IN 4 YEARS

4,204 people

have died due to heatwave since 2013 till March 2016, Union Minister YS Chowdary said in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday

87 people

died till March this year, Chowdary said in a written response to a question in Parliament

56 deaths

have been seen in Telangana, followed by 19 in Odisha. Andhra Pradesh has recorded eight deaths, while Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala have one casualty each due to heatwave

1,433 people

died in 2013, of whom 1,393 were from undivided Andhra Pradesh

549 died

in 2014, but the toll again rose to 2,135 in 2015

1,422 deaths

in 2015 were recorded in Andhra Pradesh, followed by 584 in Telangana

Centre puts onus on states for drought

New Delhi: Under attack over dealing with the drought in the country, the Centre on Wednesday put the responsibility for addressing the situation on states. Insisting that the government was doing its bit to provide relief to those affected, Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh said: "The role of Centre and state is different. It is clearly defined in the manual for drought management and we cannot change it overnight. The Centre's role is to monitor and the state's role is to provide assistance and help the affected people at ground level." — TNS

Cong. depllores politics over drought

Government urges Opposition to support its projects

VIKAS VASUDEVA

NEW DELHI: Dissatisfied with the government's reply on the debate over the situation arising out of drought, the Congress staged a walkout in the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday, even as Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh said the Centre was monitoring the drought situation and many States had been sanctioned money to face it.

"The Modi government has provided the required funds to Uttar Pradesh and Telangana and others. The government has also started schemes like Soil Health Cards, National Agri-Market, PM Fasal Beema Yojana, PM Krishi Sinchai Yojana," said Mr. Radha Mohan, replying to the debate on the drought situation in the country.

The Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Ghulam Nabi Azad, said just by repeating the Prime Minister's name, the country's drought or water problem could not be solved. "We aren't satisfied with the Minister's reply on drought. The Prime Minister could have called for an all-party meeting on this crisis. Politics should not be done over drought. The Opposition is willing to work with the Centre to address the issue," said Mr. Azad before staging a walkout.

The short duration discussion on the debate over the situation arising out of drought and heat wave conditions, and the consequent water crisis, was started after the Leader of the Opposition, along with other MPs, had given a notice under Rule 177 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business on the issue of drought, which was admitted by Rajya Sabha Chairman Hamid Ansari.

Replying to the debate, the



HEATED EXCHANGE: Members protest in the well of the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday. — PHOTO: PTI/ TV GRAB

Union Water Resources and River development and Ganga Rejuvenation Minister Uma Bharti said people of the country would not suffer from drought crises in future as the government was working towards inter-linking of rivers and launching numerous schemes to save ground water. "I request members to support the government efforts on two things. First, support us on projects of inter-linking of rivers and, secondly, be with us to start a public

movement to save groundwater," she said.

She said it was Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar's dream to make India drought-free and the NDA government was working towards achieving it. Participating in the debate, MPs expressed concern over the drinking water crisis and rising number of farmer suicides across the country. The Opposition accused the government of not releasing adequate funds to the States that are facing drought crises.

A.U. Singh Deo of the Biju Janata Dal (BJD), who initiated the discussion, said that drought has become a routine affair in the country, and there was an urgent need to have a dedicated department or Ministry to deal with situations arising out of climate change, flood and drought.

No shortage of foodgrains'

NCP leader Sharad Pawar said the Centre and the State governments must come together and address the drought and drinking water crises, which were not limited to a few States, but had spread to 11 States.

"There is no shortage of foodgrains this year, however, the drinking water crisis is serious," he said. "Focus on water conservation. Rainwater harvesting to boost groundwater level is an important area where the government should focus," he suggested.

Sharad Yadav (JD-U) urged that disputes pertaining to rivers should be resolved.

Centre may shift water to Union list

VIBHA SHARMA

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, APRIL 27

Amid the ongoing slugfest between Punjab and Haryana over the Sutlej-Yamuna Link canal, the Centre today indicated that it favoured reviving the "highly emotive issue" of bringing water from the State List to the Union or Concurrent list.

Enthused by suggestions on the issue by several Opposition leaders in the Rajya Sabha during a debate on drought and heatwave and the result-

"I was not constituting a committee on the issue (water on the Union list) fearing a row. But his (JD-U's Sharad Yadav's) views have given me strength. We will soon begin work on the issue **"**

Uma Bharti, WATER RESOURCES MINISTER

ing water crisis, Water Resources Minister Uma Bharti said their views had given her "strength" that perhaps time was ripe to discuss the issue. Many states, particularly Punjab, are opposed to the idea. Whenever

the issue was raised in the past, Punjab was the first to trash the proposal. During the UPA regime, Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal had written to the then Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, asking him to "shelve" the proposal.

With water being a State subject, the Centre often finds it difficult to have a say in river interlinking projects and inter-state water sharing disputes. Such disputes are referred to a tribunal and take years to reach a resolution.



A worker stands in front of a wagon carrying water at a railway station in Latur. REUTERS

News item/letter/article/editorial published on 28/4/16. 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

Aaj (Hindi)

Indian Nation

Nai Duniya (Hindi)

The Times of India (A)

Blitz

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

As jobs dry up, migration on the rise in Marathwada

SHARAD VYAS

MUMBAI: Even while reports of migration from drought-hit areas of Maharashtra continue to pour in, the latest data of preparatory works under the rural job guarantee scheme shows that, on paper, the government has many jobs to offer to its distressed population.

Labour activists have rebuked the numbers put out by the government at the end of March as 'fake', claiming that lakhs of people are migrating from the State in the absence of farm jobs. The Maharashtra government claims it has 4,14,624 'shelf' jobs, as of now, to be handed out in distressed areas, with drought-hit Marathwada alone accounting for 1,10,634 available jobs — the highest — under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

While those on the ground claim no work is reaching them in the villages, officials



A girl carries a pitcher of water through a field in Latur, Maharashtra.

say jobs under the employment guarantee scheme is demand driven, and people are possibly not coming forward to claim work. Activists, however, say gram sevaks are not able to reach priority areas, while tehsildars are delaying sanctioning of work. Under the EGS, the gram sabha is assigned the task of recommending works with priorities to the gram panchayat to prepare an annual shelf of works. It makes agencies re-

sponsible for approving work in a time-bound manner.

"The statistics are clearly fake, these (shelf works) are just useless works that do not serve any purpose and have been kept aside by marking just the survey numbers. This past year alone, nearly 50,00,000 people have migrated from the State but this government has not reached out to provide any jobs," said Rajan Kshirsagar of the Bhartiya Khet Majdoor Union.

According to the data available, of the 4,14,624 works available, the highest are in Marathwada, and the lowest (53,249) in the Konkan region. While senior officials admitted that the government's outreach programme may be falling short, there was no way to record migration.

Local activists blame the tehsildars who are refusing to sanction work. "Villagers are desperate for work. But the tehsildar is just not sanctioning it," said Jayaji Suryawanshi, activist from Aurangabad.

Drought dries fields, India likely to be net importer of sugar

T-28
P-18

Prices likely to shoot up

- Sugar output in Maharashtra, the country's biggest sugar producing state, is expected to decline over 40%
- India would be a net importer of the sweetener for the first time in four years
- This would lead to increase in global prices of sugar
- It would also give rival producers such as Pakistan, Thailand and Brazil the chance to boost shipments from their ports

“Drought has severely affected cane plantations in Maharashtra. The government should stop exports now to reduce import requirements in the next season”

— Ashok Jain, PRESIDENT, BOMBAY SUGAR MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION



Labourers push a handcart loaded with sacks of sugar at a wholesale market in Kolkata on Wednesday. REUTERS

MUMBAI/LONDON, APRIL 27

India is likely to become a net importer of sugar in 2016/17 as back-to-back drought years dry irrigation channels and ravage cane fields, with output in the country's

biggest producing state seen dropping over 40%.

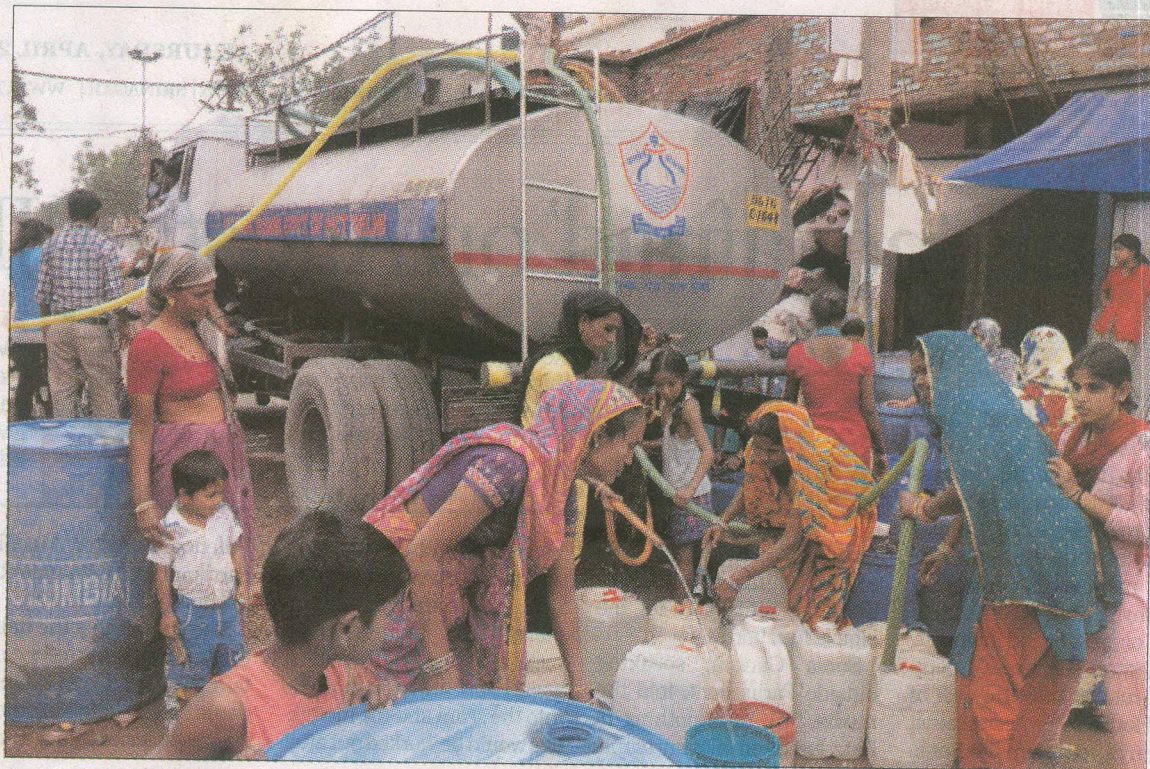
That would mark the first time the nation has been a net importer of the sweetener in four years, with the switch likely to support glob-

al prices that have already been rising this year.

It would also give rival producers such as Pakistan, Thailand and Brazil the chance to boost shipments from their ports. REUTERS

Struggle for water

9-2-7-28



Residents of Sanjay Colony, Okhla, fill water in cans and containers from a Delhi Jal Board (DJB) tanker in south-west Delhi on Wednesday. TRIBUNE PHOTO: MANAS RANJAN BHUI

News item/letter/article/editorial published on April 28.4.2016 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

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Deccan Chronicle

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

अनदेखी

पीडब्ल्यूडी ने भी अपनी जिम्मेदारी से पूरी तरह मुंह मोड़ लिया है

PK-28 P4

पानी की कमी से दम तोड़ते लाखों पौधे

नई दिल्ली, (अनुराग जैन): केजरीवाल सरकार जहां दिल्ली में प्रदूषण कम करने की बात कहकर ऑड-ईवन पर करोड़ों रुपए पानी की तरह बहा रही है, वहीं प्रदूषण कम करने में सबसे ज्यादा सहायक लाखों पौधे बिना पानी के दम तोड़ रहे हैं। लेकिन इन पौधों की सुध लेने वाला कोई नहीं है। हरियाली का सबसे बड़ा श्रोत कहे जाने वाले पौधे, दिल्ली की सड़कों पर खुलेआम गर्मी से हलाक होकर दम तोड़ रहे हैं, लेकिन इन्हें पानी देने वाला कोई नहीं है।

राजधानी की आबो हवा को शुद्ध करने में योगदान देने वाले हजारों पेड़-पौधे दम तोड़ने को मजबूर हैं। आम आदमी पार्टी की सरकार लाखों नए पौधे लगाने में तो दिलचस्पी दिखा नहीं रही, उल्टे पहले से ही लगाए गए पौधों की देखभाल से भी मुंह मोड़ रही है।

पूर्वी दिल्ली में विकास मार्ग चुंगी के पास स्थित अंडरपास पौधों की यह दुर्दशा आसानी से देखने को मिल रही है। विकास मार्ग पर बने लूप पुल और मेट्रो के नीचे लगे हजारों पौधे पानी की कमी के कारण मुरझा गए हैं। राष्ट्रमंडल खेलों के दौरान कांग्रेस सरकार ने इस पूरे इलाके में लाखों रुपए की लागत से लाखों पौधे लगाए थे। लेकिन आज इन पौधों की देखभाल करने वाला कोई नहीं है। इन पौधों को पानी देने का काम पीडब्ल्यूडी करता है। लेकिन इस विभाग ने अपनी जिम्मेदारी से पूरी तरह से मुंह मोड़ लिया है।

ज्ञात हो कि एक कार्यक्रम के दौरान सीएम ने घोषणा की थी कि दिल्ली की आबोहवा को बेहतर बनाने के लिए दिल्ली में 14 लाख पौधे



दिल्ली की सड़कों के किनारे लगे पौधे जो पानी के बिना मुरझा गए हैं।

अनदेखी

राष्ट्रमंडल के दौरान लगाए गए पौधों को देखने वाला कोई नहीं

लगाए जाएंगे। इस संबंध में पर्यावरण और वन मंत्री आसिम अहमद खान ने दिल्ली जल बोर्ड लोक निर्माण विभाग सीपीडब्ल्यूडीए तीनों नगर निगम एएनडीएमसी तथा पार्क समिति सहित अन्य विभागों के पदाधिकारियों के साथ बैठक कर उन्हें इस योजना पर तुरन्त कार्य करने के निर्देश दिए थे। बैठक में फैसला लिया गया कि दिल्ली को प्रदूषण मुक्त बनाने के लिए राजधानी में पेड़-पौधों की संख्या बढ़ाई जायेगी। जबकि इनकी संख्या बनाए रखने के लिए भी पर्याप्त प्रयास किया जायेगा। बात की जाए वर्ष 2010 में कॉमनवेल्थ गेम के दौरान लगाए गए पाम के वृक्ष की तो

आज पाम के वृक्ष की हालात सरकारी उदासीनता की वजह से ऐसी है कि वृक्ष पानी की कमी के कारण दम तोड़ चुके हैं।

इस बात को लेकर क्षेत्रीय आरडब्ल्यूए उपाध्याय ब्लाक रेजिडेंट वेलफेयर एसोसिएशन के महासचिव अशोक शर्मा ने बताया कि जहां पिछले कुछ वर्ष पूर्व यह उल्लेखित क्षेत्र हरा-भरा दिखाई देता था सरकारी उदासीनता की वजह से अब राजस्थान के रेगिस्तान क्षेत्र जैसा प्रतीत होता है। पौधों की जड़ों में भराव के नाम पर इलाके का मलबा लाकर डाला जा रहा है।

इसके अलावा सुबह और शाम इस पूरे क्षेत्र में लोगों को शौच जाते हुए भी आसानी से देखा जा सकता है। यह इसलिए हो रहा है कि इन पौधों की देखभाल के लिए यहां कोई माली भी तैनात नहीं है, अगर होगा भी तो वह यहां नाम के लिए ही तैनात होगा, उससे काम कहीं और लिया जा रहा होगा।

पानी की समस्या को दूर नहीं कर पाई दिल्ली सरकार : विजेन्द्र गुप्ता

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PK-28

नई दिल्ली, (ब्यूरो): विपक्ष के नेता विजेन्द्र गुप्ता ने पानी की समस्या को लेकर दिल्ली सरकार पर नाकामी का आरोप लगाया है। गुप्ता ने कहा कि आप सरकार आने के बाद दिल्ली के सभी इलाकों में पानी की सप्लाई पहले से भी कम हो गयी है। वाटर समर एक्शन प्लान में जल बोर्ड के अध्यक्ष ने स्वयं स्वीकार किया है कि दिल्ली की 70 विधानसभा क्षेत्रों में से 40 में पानी की किल्लत है। इससे सिद्ध हो गया है कि जलबोर्ड 70 प्रतिशत दिल्लीवासियों को पानी उपलब्ध कराने में

सवाल

सरकार के पास इस समय
6045 पानी के टैंकर हैं

पूरी तरह नाकाम हो गया है।

प्रतिपक्ष नेता ने यह भी बताया कि जल बोर्ड के अध्यक्ष ने 900 एमजीडी पानी की रोजाना सप्लाई की बात प्लान में कही है। जबकि सच्चाई इसके बिल्कुल विपरित है। जल शोधन संयंत्रों की मशीनें

पुरानी होने के कारण कोई भी संयंत्र पूरी क्षमता से कार्य नहीं करता। दिल्ली में जल बोर्ड द्वारा 650 से 700 एमजीडी पानी सप्लाई की जाती है। इसमें से 50 प्रतिशत हिस्सा लीकेज दर्शाया जाता है। यह लीकेज न होकर सरकार और जलमाफिया की मिलीभगत से पानी चोरी की जाती है और इसे लीकेज का नाम दिया जाता है। गुप्ता ने बताया कि राजधानी के 40 प्रतिशत लोग पानी के लिए निजी साधनों पर निर्भर हैं। सरकार के पास इस समय 6045 पानी के टैंकर हैं।

‘सोने से भी कीमती है पानी, बर्बादी रोके’

रांची | हिन्दुस्तान ब्यूरो

हर आदमी को पानी मिलना चाहिए और पानी की बर्बादी नहीं होनी चाहिए। पानी की बर्बादी रोकनी होगी। पानी आज सोने से कीमती हो गया है।

हाईकोर्ट ने काफी पहले सरकार को पानी की उपलब्धता को लेकर आगाह किया था। इसके लिए दीर्घकालीन योजना बनाने को कहा था, लेकिन सरकार ने इसे गंभीरता से नहीं लिया और आज लोग बूंद-बूंद के लिए परेशान हैं। यदि रांची नगर निगम गंभीर होता, तो जो टैंकर आज

कोर्ट की टिप्पणी

- हर नागरिक को पीने का पानी मिलना ही चाहिए
- दीर्घकालीन योजना बनाने पर गंभीर नहीं सरकार

खरीद रहा है, वह फरवरी-मार्च में ही आ जाता। तब लोगों को परेशान नहीं होना पड़ता।

जल संकट को लेकर दायर जनहित याचिका पर सुनवाई में चीफ जस्टिस वीरेंद्र सिंह और जस्टिस एस चंद्रशेखर

14-11-28 की अदालत ने बुधवार को यह टिप्पणी की।

अदालत ने राज्य के सभी नगर निगमों और नगरपालिकाओं को अपने-अपने इलाके में लोगों तक पानी की आपूर्ति सुनिश्चित करने का निर्देश दिया। पाइप लाइन या टैंकर, जो भी साधन हो, उससे जलापूर्ति करने को कहा।

ग्रामीण इलाकों में पानी की स्थिति और योजना पर सरकार से विस्तृत रिपोर्ट दो सप्ताह में पेश करने का निर्देश दिया। मामले की अगली सुनवाई 12 मई को होगी।