

Central Water Commission
Water Systems Engineering Directorate

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The News Clippings on Water Resources Development and allied subjects are enclosed for perusal of the Chairman, CWC, and Member (WP&P/D&R/RM), Central Water Commission; the soft copies of clippings have also been uploaded on the CWC website.

Encl: As above.

S. Mahudran
14.11.2018

SPA (Publicity)

o/c

Deputy Director, WSE Dte.

[Signature]
14/11/18

Director, WSE Dte.

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For information to:

Chairman, CWC, New Delhi

Member (WP&P/D&R/R.M.), CWC and all concerned, uploaded at www.cwc.gov.in

News item/letter/article/editorial Published on 14/11/2018 in the

Hindustan Times
Statesman
The Time of India (New Delhi)
Indian Express
Tribune

Hindustan (Hindi)
Nav Bharat Times (Hindi)
Punjab Keshari (Hindi)
The Hindu (New Delhi)
Rajasthan Patrika (Hindi)

Deccan Chronicle
Deccan Herald
The Times of India (A)
Business standard
The Economic Times

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

NGT suggests farmers to use treated water for agriculture, use less water consuming crops

PTI

NEW DELHI, 13 NOVEMBER

ST-14

Expressing concern over extraction of groundwater, the National Green Tribunal has suggested use of treated sewage water by farmers for agricultural purposes instead of potable water.

A bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said at a time when there is serious depletion of the water table there was a need to switch over to less water consuming crops. "We do appreciate the difficulties of the agriculturists but the option of providing alternative of use of treated sewage water etc or switching over to less water consuming crops needs to be considered," the bench, also comprising Justice S P Wangdi, said. "Equally significant is the need for checking contamination of underground water by who are dis-

charging untreated effluents in the earth or in water bodies. Comprehensive planning and execution thereof on the subject with utmost priority is necessary and absence thereof has led to emergency situation in certain areas," it said. The tribunal was hearing petitions filed by the NGT Bar Association and Raj Hans Bansal opposing the illegal use of groundwater by industries in Delhi. The NGT said the submission that industries are allowed to extract underground water in over exploited, critical and semi-critical areas after payment of charges is ridiculous and beyond comprehension. It said in several orders, it noted the apathy of authorities in the last six years and it has no information about steps taken in compliance of earlier directions, except a statement that the Central Ground Water Authority is ill equipped.

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A clean, green, economic option

If executed well, waterways can change inland transportation

On Monday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the country's first inland waterways terminal in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. The terminal is a part of the first phase of the National Waterway 1 project to ferry cargo from the eastern seaport of Haldia in West

Bengal to Varanasi, around 1,360 km inland. Until about a hundred years ago, the Ganga was a busy waterway that was used for the movement of commodities. But with the coming of the railways, this watercourse fell into disuse. At present, according to the World Bank, India's freight movement traverses mainly on roads (65%). Railways come next (27%); waterways account for just 0.5% of the movement.

overtake

There are many reasons why the Centre is so enthusiastic about the project. First, transporting freight via river systems is much cheaper than using road and rail. According to the World Bank, the cost to transport one tonne of freight over one km for highways is ₹2.28. It is ₹1.41 for railways, and ₹1.19 for waterways. Second, it's greener. As per RITES Report of 2014 on the 'Integrated National Waterways Transportation Grid', one litre of fuel moves 24 tonnes km by road, 95 tonnes km on rail and 215 tonnes km on Inland Water Transport. Third, ferrying goods via waterways is faster than on congested road and rail networks, which slows the movement of cargo, adding to uncertainties, and increasing the costs of trade. Fourth is the pollution cost of traffic bottlenecks.

While there are several positives of the waterways project, any infrastructure development will have environmental costs, and those must be taken into account while evaluating the benefits of the project. One important requirement of this project is regular dredging to maintain water depth. Environment activists allege that movement of ships and dredging will severely impact biodiversity in critical but legally non protected stretches of the river. These are genuine concerns. The ecosystem services that the river provides must be quantified for a wholesome evaluation of the mega project's actual economic worth.

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Red warning in coastal TN as Cyclone Gaja closes in

7 DISTRICTS IMD says heavy rain expected but storm may weaken before it makes landfall

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NEW DELHI: With heavy to very heavy rain predicted in some Tamil Nadu districts when Cyclone Gaja makes landfall on Thursday, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a "red warning" recommending that local authorities should take action and move coastal dwellers to safe places.

According to the warning, Cuddalore, Nagapattinam, Tiruvarur, Thanjavur, Pudukottai, Tuticorin and Ramanathapuram districts are likely to receive "extremely heavy rainfall" (in excess of 20 cm) on November 15.

A statement by the ministry of earth sciences, under which the IMD works, has clarified that a "red warning" has been issued, not a "red alert".

A red warning, which recommends to state governments that all possible action should be taken to keep people safe, is different from a "red alert" that is issued by a state government to warn the local people about impending weather conditions.

"The red warning for some districts means that local authorities should take action for extremely heavy rain. The severe cyclonic storm will weaken

TYPES OF WARNINGS (IMD)

Take action

Be prepared

Be updated

No warning



CATEGORIES OF RAIN (IMD)

64.5-115.5 mm/day	115.6-204.4 mm/day	Over 204.4 mm/day
Heavy rain	Very heavy rain	Extremely heavy rain

before landfall. But when the storm is severe, ships and fishermen in the deep sea are likely to be impacted," said M Mohapatra, IMD's meteorology director.

The IMD had issued a red warning for several Kerala districts on August 9, following which the state witnessed flooding unprecedented in at least 80 years. In the case of Tamil Nadu, the action suggested by the MoES statement is "total suspension of fishing operations" along and off the coasts of Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and adjoining south Andhra Pradesh till Thursday.

"The fishermen are advised not to venture into central parts of south and central Bay of Bengal on November 13 and into

southwest and adjoining west-central Bay of Bengal till November 15," the statement said.

Fishermen who are in the deep sea have been advised to return while coastal hutment dwellers will be moved to safer places.

On Tuesday, the cyclonic storm lay centred about 690 km east-northeast of Chennai and 790 km east-northeast of Nagapattinam, having moved west-northwestwards at a speed of 12 kmph from its earlier position over west-central and adjoining east-central and south Bay of Bengal.

"It is likely to move west-southwestwards and intensify further into a severe cyclonic storm during the next 24 hours. While moving west-southwest-

wards further, it is likely to weaken gradually on November 15 and cross Tamil Nadu coast between Pamban and Cuddalore as a cyclonic storm," said the MoES statement.

On Wednesday, when Gaja develops into a severe cyclonic storm, wind speeds are likely to touch 90-100 kmph and gust to 115 kmph. A storm surge with a height of about one metre above the astronomical tide is likely to inundate low-lying areas of Nagapattinam, Thanjavur, Pudukottai and Ramanathapuram districts of Tamil Nadu and Karaikal district of Puducherry at the time of landfall, it added.

The MoES has also issued a "yellow warning", recommending that people "be updated" on the weather situation over north and south coastal Tamil Nadu and south coastal Andhra Pradesh from Wednesday evening.

On Thursday, there is a yellow warning for Kerala. Heavy rainfall is also likely in parts of Tamil Nadu and Kerala on Friday.

Tamil Nadu revenue minister RB Udhayakumar told the media that eight National Disaster Response Force teams and seven squads of the state disaster response force had been sent to vulnerable districts. A control room had been set up in Chennai.

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SE Asian nations in tussle with China



SUPALAK GANJANAKHUNDEE

Countries in the Mekong basin, notably those located in the lower part of the river - Asia's seventh longest - are in need of a collective strategy to secure their future, given China's control of the upstream and ongoing changes in global geo-politics.

The 4,909-km long river runs from Tibet in China through Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. But only its lower portion is regulated by an international agreement and an organisation.

The lower part is popularly known as Mekong while the upper part in China is called Lancang.

While all six countries in the basin increasingly utilise resources from the Mekong, such as for the construction of dams in its mainstream and major tributaries, navigation and fishery - there remain no clear procedures for all countries to ensure proper management of the environment and fair resource distribution.

Differences and sometimes disputes over water resource utilisation and management have occurred occasionally over the past decade, when some of these activities led to cross boundary impacts in the sub-region.

Hydro-power construction and operation in the Mekong mainstream in China and Laos's territories have also caused severe impact to the downstream countries.

Dams can create fluctuation of water flows, block navigation routes and prevent natural migration of fish up and down the river.

Four countries in the lower Mekong comprising Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam signed an agreement in 1995 to establish regula-



tions for river utilisation and set up the Mekong River Commission (MRC) to coordinate and enforce the agreement.

As an inter-governmental organisation, the MRC is struggling to influence the decision of the individual sovereign nations over water utilisation with Laos, a member, deciding to push ahead with the construction of Xayaburi and Don Sahong dams in the Mekong mainstream. More dams, including those in Pak Beng and Pak Lay, are in the pipeline.

MRC's major mechanism under the 1995 agreement known as the Procedures for Notification, Prior Consultation and Agreement (PNPCA) is not so effective in influencing its members' decisions.

The creditability of the PNPCA as a mechanism to consult stakeholders is less, as seen in the move by civic groups to boycott the latest public hearing on the planned Pak Lay dam recently. The Pak Lay dam is the second biggest dam on the Mekong, being built by China.

The MRC and its four members now face another big challenge in

terms of being able to manage the Mekong basin affairs, as China has sponsored the establishment of the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) in 2016, that will include all six Mekong countries into one framework.

While jurisdictions of the MRC and the LMC are different, there are some overlapping areas particularly the water resource management.

There have been calls over the past few years for the expansion of the MRC to cover the upper part of the Mekong basin, by inviting China and Myanmar to become full members.

Yet both have maintained their status as "dialogue partners", since 1996.

With this status, MRC has been able to get a certain degree of cooperation on water resource management, with China agreeing to share hydrology information with the organisation.

But other matters remain illusive. The LMC's institutions and mechanisms show trends of eclipsing MRC in the near future as Beijing has plenty of resources and funds to forge bilateral cooperation with countries down-

stream.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who oversees the LMC, has rejected the idea that the MRC is being overshadowed and has suggested that the two would support and complement each other.

MRC also tries to have closer relations with the LMC's Water Resource Cooperation Center.

MRC's Chief Executive Officer Pham Tuan Phan met with senior Chinese officials in Kunming on the sidelines of the First Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation Forum last week to discuss further cooperation between the two organisations.

"China has welcomed our call to strengthen cooperation between the Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation Center and MRC for the benefit of the whole Mekong River basin," CEO Pham said.

"We will be working on further identifying key areas of cooperation that are vital to our work for sustainable development of the Mekong River and the basin's people."

According to Pham, the Head of Chinese Joint Working Group for the

center Yu Xingjun also said that the LMC was trying to find possible ways to work with the MRC.

One of the key areas where cooperation is needed is the sharing of flood forecast data from the Jing Hong hydropower station.

Sharing of the hydrological data during the dry season will benefit development planning and drought management in the Mekong, said Pham.

China and MRC have renewed the 2002-agreement in 2013, on the provision of hydrological information on the Mekong River.

Under the agreement, China now provides water-level data during the flood season for five months from June to October twice daily from two stations located on the Mekong in China.

This information is fed into the MRC's flood forecasting system.

China contributes 13.5 per cent of the flow of the Mekong River, according to a MRC statement.

The MRC said it needs more cooperation from China and LMC to update its strategic plans on sustainable hydropower and basin development strategy.

"There is no better time than now for China to cooperate with the MRC if it is for the interest of the whole basin population of over 70 million people," said Pham.

Indeed, the proposal to have closer cooperation between MRC and LMC was stressed clearly during a MRC summit in Cambodia's Siem Reap in April this year.

But the leaders of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam did not spell out the term 'cooperation' clearly, given the fact that many countries mostly rely on China under many other sub-regional cooperation schemes.

Cooperation in this sense is not based on equality and reciprocity, but China in many aspects plays the role of a "donor" country.

The writer is Editor of The Nation, Thailand. The Asian Writers' Circle is a series of columns on global affairs written by top editors and writers from members of the Asia News Network and published in newspapers, websites and social media platforms across the region.