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Technical Documentation Directorate
Bhagirath(English)& Publicity Section

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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 will be uploaded on the CWC website.

P. Maheshwari
15.1.2019
SPA (Publicity)

Encl: As stated above.

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Deputy Director, WSE Dte.

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15/01/2019

Director, WSE Dte.

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15/01/19

For information to

Chairman CWC, New Delhi

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

News item/letter/article/editorial Published on ... 15/1/2019 ... 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

Focus News, delhi

9th International Conference on Micro Irrigation to be held at Aurngabad

New Delhi, Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Government of India is organizing the 9th International Micro Irrigation Conference on Modern Agriculture at Aurangabad in Maharashtra from January 16-18, 2019, in association with International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID), Indian National Committee on Surface Water (INCSW) and WAPCOS Limited, a CPSE under the Union Ministry of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation. Shri Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Shipping and Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation will be the Chief Guest of the event and Shri Devendra Fadnis, Chief Minister of Maharashtra will preside over the conference. Shri Radha Mohan Singh, Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare and Dr. Mahendra Reddy, Minister for Agriculture, Rural & Maritime Development and Waterways & Environment, Government of Fiji will be the Special Invitees. Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal, MoS Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation and Parliamentary Affairs and Ministers from several state government will be Guests of Honour

News item/letter/article/editorial Published on 15/1/2019 in the

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Tribune, Delhi ✓

Pak team to inspect Chenab projects

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU, JANUARY 14

A high-level Pakistani delegation will visit the state for two days to inspect various power projects being built on the Chenab basin under the provisions of the Indus Water Treaty (IWT).

The two-day visit will begin from January 28. The delegation is expected to visit some of the operational as well as upcoming power projects in the Chenab region, including Kishtwan, Doda and Ramban districts.

"This is the standard visit of Pakistani delegation to various power projects either under operation or being planned in the Chenab basin under the provisions of the IWT. The team will visit the state on January 28 and 29," Hirdesh Kumar, Commissioner Secretary, Power Development Department, told *The Tribune*.

He, however, described the visit as "routine" and said "there is nothing special in it as the team will inspect the power projects to ensure that there is no violation of the IWT provisions".

Hindustan Times
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Business Line, Delhi ✓

It's time to tax groundwater use

With groundwater touching alarmingly low levels, the proposed Water Conservation Fee should help curb over-extraction

ANARAYANAMOORTHY/PALLI

In an attempt to discourage overexploitation of groundwater and ensure a more robust groundwater regulatory mechanism in the country, the Centre has proposed to slap for the first time a Water Conservation Fee (WCF) on groundwater extraction by all users of groundwater in the country, barring the armed forces, farmers and individual households.

As per the draft guidelines prepared by the Ministry of Water Resources, apart from the industrial units, all business establishments and infrastructure projects, such as residential complexes, office buildings, hotels and hospitals, have to pay WCF, which could vary from ₹1 to ₹100 per cubic metre of water extracted.

The enforcement of WCF comes close on the heels of the report of the Parliamentary Committee on Restructuring the Central Water Commission and the Central Ground Water Authority (2016) which highlighted the unsustainable over-extraction of groundwater. At a time when close to 32 per cent of the blocks have been classified as semi-critical or over-exploited by the Central Groundwater Board (CGWB), WCF is definitely a watershed moment in the groundwater sector.

Considering the pivotal role of groundwater in the country's food security and in alleviating poverty, WCF is definitely the much-awaited reform. Over the past three decades, groundwater has become the main source of irrigation and now accounts for over 65 per cent of the irrigated area in India.

The World Bank's report on Deep Wells and Prudence: Towards Prag-

matic Water Exploitation in India (2010) underlined that groundwater-irrigated farms have twice the crop productivity than that of surface water-irrigated farms.

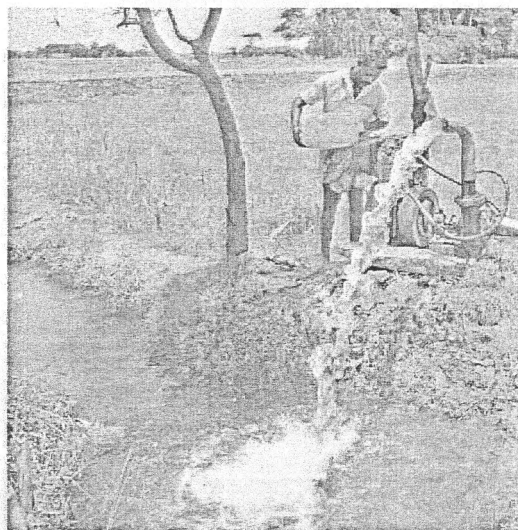
Who draws and how much

India is the world's largest user of groundwater, withdrawing about 250 cubic kilometres per year, more than twice that of the US. As per the latest assessment of the Central Ground Water Board, out of 447 billion cubic metre (BCM) of total replenishable groundwater available annually, 228 BCM is currently being used for irrigation, while 25 BCM is being used for domestic, drinking and industrial purposes.

The 5th Census of Minor Irrigation (2017) has underlined that in 661 districts of the country about 13 million dugwells and shallow tubewells and five million medium tubewells and deep tubewells irrigate about 38 million hectares (mha) and 23 mha of land, respectively.

Besides, the Standing Committee of Water Resources in its 23rd report on *Socio-Economic Impact of Commercial Exploitation of Water by Industries* (2017-18) has highlighted that about 85 per cent of rural drinking water schemes in about 17.14 lakh habitations in the country are based on groundwater as source; nearly 7,426 licences have been given to packaged drinking water plants in the water-stressed States of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.

Not only this, many multinational beverages and packaged drinking water companies in various States reportedly draw about 6.5-15 lakh litres of groundwater per day against the permissible limit of 2-4 lakh litres. It is estimated that as



Sucking dry Groundwater depletion is a major concern (B. VELANKANNI RAJ)

ter is extracted illegally on a daily basis by tanker mafia in most metropolitan cities.

The rate of groundwater extraction is so severe that NASA's findings suggest that India's watertable is declining alarmingly at a rate of about 0.3 metres per year. According to a latest survey by the Central Groundwater Board (CGWB), Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka are in a worse state as far as groundwater decline is concerned.

The Standing Committee of Water Resources in its 23rd report (2017-18) underlined that by 2020, 21 major cities, including Delhi, Bengaluru and Hyderabad are expected to reach Zero Ground Water levels affecting access for 100 million people. The NITI Aayog in its Report on Composite Water Manage-

ment is extracted illegally on a daily basis by tanker mafia in most metropolitan cities. The rate of groundwater extraction is so severe that NASA's findings suggest that India's watertable is declining alarmingly at a rate of about 0.3 metres per year. According to a latest survey by the Central Groundwater Board (CGWB), Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka are in a worse state as far as groundwater decline is concerned.

about 54 per cent of the country's groundwater wells have declined and most of the States have achieved less than 50 per cent of the total score in the augmentation of groundwater resources. Given such an alarming situation, what could be the possible consequence of over-extraction of groundwater?

If the present rate of groundwater depletion persists, India will only have 22 per cent of the present daily per capita water available in 2050, possibly forcing the country to import its water. The NITI Aayog's water report has warned that if the situation persists, there will be a six per cent loss in the country's GDP by 2050.

Falling groundwater tables will result in escalation of irrigation costs and, thereby, a rise in cost of cultivation. Up to a quarter of In-

Way forward

There is an urgent need to change the status quo with tough regulations. Besides appropriate pricing of groundwater, we require policies that promote judicious use of groundwater in agriculture as well. One of the ways to reduce groundwater extraction is by encouraging the adoption micro-irrigation techniques (drip and sprinklers). Drip and sprinkler irrigation can save about 50 per cent of water compared to conventional method of irrigation in water-intensive crops.

The Swaminathan Committee report, *More Crop and Income Per Drop of Water* (2006), has also recommended this option. Efforts also needed to institutionalise and strengthen community-based groundwater management. Generating awareness about the status of local groundwater resources, education and social mobilisation should form the core elements of community-based groundwater management. State governments need to take policy action to facilitate formation of Groundwater Users' Associations which possess the power to manage, maintain and distribute water resources efficiently. A groundwater literacy movement should be launched to highlight the irreparable consequences of its over-exploitation.

These proposed interventions have to be implemented diligently within the current framework along with WCF, as groundwater is too critical a resource to continue to be left unmanaged.

The writers are Member (Official), Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices, New Delhi, and Senior Assistant Professor, Department of Social Sciences, Vellore Institute of Technology, respectively. The views are

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Telegraph, Kolkata

Ganga in Bengal has little of Gomukh

JAYANTA BASU

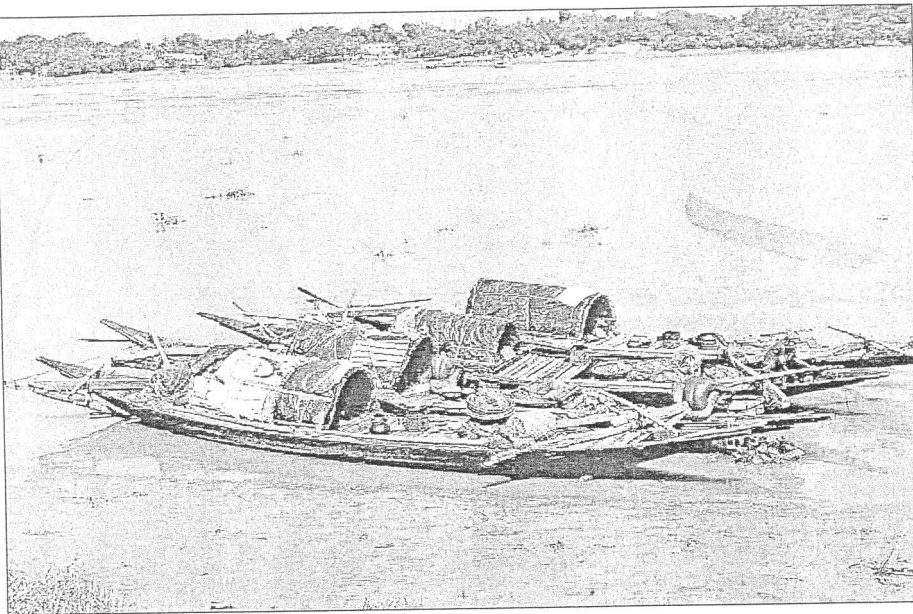
Calcutta: The Ganga that flows through Bengal hardly retains a trace of the pristine waters originating in the Gomukh glacier that is counted among the primary head-streams of the holy river, according to river activist Rajendra Singh.

"You are not getting Ganga Jal from Gomukh here. What you are predominantly getting in Calcutta or in Ganga Sagar is a combination of treated and untreated sewage and industrial effluents. The Ganga gets increasingly polluted as it makes its way into Bengal," Singh, who completed his 72-day-long Ganga Sadhabana Yatra at Ganga Sagar last Friday, told Metro on his way back.

Singh, a Magsaysay winner and erstwhile member of the Prime Minister-led Ganga Basin Authority, mentioned this in his white paper at the conclusion of a two-day convention at Sagar Island.

The Waterman of India isn't the only one to point out that the Ganga in Bengal is a pollution nightmare.

"During summer, the Ganga completely dries up near Allahabad. What Bengal gets is water from other rivers along with effluents from various sources. During the monsoon, we receive 40,000 cusecs of water from Bangladesh through the feeder channel before the Farakka barrage. This is what we know as Ganga in Calcutta," said Kalyan Rudra, chairman of the West Bengal Pollution Control Board.



The Ganga in Serampore

"Given the fact that about 20 lakh cusecs is the Ganga's monsoon water volume, Calcutta hardly gets 2 per cent or so of the so-called holy Ganga water."

Nilanjan Ghosh, director of the Observer Research Foundation in Calcutta, said a series of hydroelectric dams in the upper reaches of the Ganga had almost killed the river and further minimised

the flow of water from Gomukh towards Bengal.

"In any case, this gets diluted with the water added to the mainstream from several tributaries, mainly from Nepal," he pointed out.

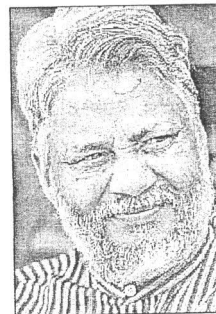
A recent study by a research team from Jadavpur University showed that close to 60 major drains regularly release polluted water into the Ganga in Bengal. The level of

pollution is the highest along the stretch of the river flowing through Calcutta and its nearby areas.

Singh's white paper recommends an "immediate survey, identification and notification

of Ganga land" to avoid encroachment.

"We saw how the original Ganga channel, called Adi Ganga, got completely hijacked near Calcutta... There are also encroachments



River activist
Rajendra Singh

throughout its 2,500km stretch. Unless we immediately survey, identify and notify the Ganga stretch and its river plains, the encroachment will continue to increase," it states.

The white paper demands a ban on building more dams and barrages over the river and suspension of four proposed hydropower projects in the upper reaches.

"Bengal should demand *obirol* and *nirmal dhara* if it wants to have holy water coming from Gomukh. Experts of the National Environment Engineering Institute have said that the continuous flow of a pollution-free Ganga is mandatory for its survival," Singh said.

News item/letter/article/editorial Published on 15/11/2019 in the

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Desalination plants harm environment: UN

REUTERS
OSLO

Almost 16,000 desalination plants worldwide produce bigger-than-expected flows of highly salty waste water and toxic chemicals that are damaging the environment, a U.N.-backed study said on Monday.

Desalination plants pump out 142 million cubic metres of salty brine every day, 50% more than previous estimates, to produce 95 million cubic metres of fresh water, the study said.

About 55% of the brine is produced in desalination plants processing seawater in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, according to the study by the U.N. University's Canadian-based Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH).

The hyper-salty water is mostly pumped into the sea and, over a year, would be enough to cover the U.S. state of Florida with 1 foot of brine, it said of the fast-growing and energy-intensive

technology that benefits many arid regions.

Brine, water comprising about 5% salt, often includes toxins such as chlorine and copper used in desalination, it said. By contrast, global sea water is about 3.5% salt.

Waste chemicals "accumulate in the environment and can have toxic effects in fish", said Edward Jones, the lead author.

Brine can cut levels of oxygen in seawater near desalination plants with "profound impacts" on shellfish,

crabs and other creatures on the seabed, leading to "ecological effects observable throughout the food chain", he said.

Vladimir Smakhtin, director of UNU-INWEH, said the study was part of research into how best to secure fresh water for a rising population without harming the environment.

"There are all sorts of under-appreciated sources of water," he said, ranging from fog harvesting to aquifers below the seabed.