

Dams, Rivers & People

UPDATE ON RELATED ISSUES

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The "Public Hearing" for Allain Duhangan HEP on Jan 24 2004

ABOUT Dams, Rivers & People

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CONTACT INFORMATION: Himanshu Thakkar, Bipin Chandra, Ganesh Gaud, South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People, C/o 53B, AD Block, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi 110 088. India. Ph: 2747 9916. Email: cwaterp@vsnl.com
Web: www.narmada.org/sandrp and www.janmanch.org

The Successful *Thiyya Andolan* !

A *Thiyya Andolan* (indefinite 'Sit In') of the Pani Sangharsh Chalwal started on Jan 19 04 in front of the Maharashtra Krishna Valley Development Corp Office in Pune. About 7000 people from 13 talukas of the drought & dam affected areas of Sangli, Satara, Solapur & Kolhapur districts of W Maharashtra. The main demands of the Thiyya andolan were:

- Immediate release of funds for eradication of drought
- Change in the priority allocation of water from industry to agriculture
- Equitable distribution of water in proportion to the population
- Rehabilitation of the Dam affected

Maharashtra is reeling under a severe drought, which is worse than the one that occurred in 1972. Apart from the stray news reports on the current drought, the main reminders for the middle class have been when there was the news of artificial rains and when Pune's water quota was to be given to the drought affected Solapur. Almost 70 talukas in Maharashtra are affected by this drought. Thousands of cattle are being butchered because there is no fodder or water to keep them alive. If no serious programme is taken up to ameliorate the situation, thousands of people will be forced to leave their homes in search of livelihood - perhaps never to return home!

Amidst this fight for survival, people are forced to wage a struggle to force the govt to act. The last one-year has seen such struggles in Sangli, Satara, Solapur, Kolhapur districts where people have come on the streets in large numbers to demand water for livelihood. What a paradox this is! The toilers continue to toil for their survival and also wage a battle for the 'greater common good' - in this case measures for eradication of drought that in a few years would engulf all the cities too.

The Pani Sangharsh Chalwal According to the Pani Sangharsh Chalwal priority must be given to harvesting local water through watershed development. However the movement also argues that unless this local water is supplemented by 'exogenous' water from the dams, the drought prone areas in Maharashtra would remain deprived of water. This has to be done by taking into account, the average amount of dependable rainfall, nature of soil, terrain and population density. The movement also says, based on reliable information, that there is sufficient water in the existing dams to make this supplementary water available to all the drought-prone villages. However the main bottleneck according to the 'Pani Sangharsh' movement is the lack of a canal network. Much of the water remains unutilised today simply because of the incomplete canal work. The race to dam the Krishna waters to establish Maharashtra's

right over the quota has meant that the state coffers are emptied on damming, leaving little or no resources for completing the canal work. The movement takes a position that if priority is given to the completion of this canal work and if water is distributed in an equitable manner a long-term solution to address the drought situation would emerge.

For over a decade, in the 13 drought-prone talukas in these 4 districts, the 'Pani Sangharsh Chalwal' and the 'Dharangrast Parishad' have been struggling for rights over water for all, including the landless. Over the last few years the movement has gained some unprecedented successes and is involved in significant struggles, which however have not been significantly reported in the media. One of the significant contributions of this movement is that of joining together the interests of two groups, which are traditionally considered to be at loggerheads with each other- the dam affected and the drought affected-a situation the state exploits to its advantage.

In the last couple of months the movement waged successful struggles in Tasgaon and Mann talukas of Sangli district. Here the people launched indefinite 'sit ins' which lasted for 6 - 14 days respectively. Their main demand was for equity in distribution of water. The people withdrew their struggle only after getting written assurances from the govt.

All these struggles have been able to achieve the demands partially or fully. However the movement realises the limitations of location-specific struggles and hence decided to launch a massive struggle from the Jan 19 04 which would demand to review the current water policy and specifically the water allocations within the Krishna basin to ensure equity in the basin and eradication of drought. Their slogan is 'Water for livelihood' (Jagnyasathi Pani) and 'Eradication of drought' (Dushkal Bimod) 'Rehabilitation first, dam construction later' has been one of the major demands of the different struggles launched over the last few years. During Jan 02 and 03, over 3 000 dam-affected had launched an indefinite 'Thiyya Andolan' in Satara for 20 days. The dam-affected withdrew the agitation only after getting written acceptance of their demands by the then Chief Minister. But even these written assurances have not been fully honoured. That is why they joined the 'Thiyya Andolan' in Jan 04.

In the last few months, apart from SW Maharashtra, there have been struggles in other parts as well -- in Pavana, Malvandi, Panshet, and by people affected by the Tata dam, Narmada, Ujani, Vainganga projects. All these struggles point to the growing discontent which needs to be addressed in a holistic manner. The 'Thiyya Andolan' in Jan 04 was in a way the culmination of these various struggles. A Thiyya Andolan Sahayya Samiti has been formed in Pune.

Unquiet flows the Krishna ... 40 deprived villages in Tasgao gain rights to water

*Chal ga Hira, Chal ga Mira Chal ga Bayjabai,
Mage kahi nahi ata tatun ubhi rahi tatun ubhi rahi*
(Hira, Mira and Bayjabai let us not retreat until we have won our struggle)

The birth of a struggle Thousands of women participating in the Tasgao struggle were chanting this song on Dec 1 03. Manjarde village could hardly have imagined that it would give birth to a struggle in Tasgao taluka to demand the Krishna waters for its dry and drought prone areas. It all started with a few farmers from Manjarde who inspired by the water rights struggle led by Shetkari Shetmajoor Kashtakari Sanghatana, invited its leader Dr. Bharat Patankar to guide the farmers of the area. Their key demand was to include the deprived 40 villages of Tasgao taluka in the ongoing Tembhu and Takari lift Irrigation schemes on the Krishna. Of these 40 villages some were to benefit partially but most were to remain totally deprived. The immediate fall out of the meeting was a decision to organise an indefinite struggle to press for the inclusion of the areas of Tasgao in the Tembhu & Takari LIS.

The Dec 2003 'thiyya andolan' On Dec 1 a huge rally of 15 000 people from these 40 villages in Tasgao taluka came onto the streets of Sangli and commenced an indefinite 'sit in' (thiyya andolan) in front of the district collectorate. Every day one truckload of food had been coming from different villages to deliver food packets with a nametag of the activist written on it. A large number of women were actively involved in the struggle. Many of the villages in the taluka have declared a ban on entry of govt functionaries in their village (gavbandi). Two prominent ministers of the area, RR Patil (Rashtrawadi Congress) and Patangrao Kadam (Congress) had to express support. Several left parties and groups expressed their solidarity.

Towards a well-earned victory On Dec 5 the activists had a meeting with the Irrigation Minister. Representatives from different parts of Tasgao taluka met the Minister along with the representatives of SKSS. The whole of Tasgao taluka and town were closed on Dec 5 - with all involved people eagerly awaiting the results of the talks.

The Irrigation Minister could not argue with the well-informed group from Tasgao. The representatives armed with all the relevant information conceded no ground. The Minister had to give in writing that all the 40 villages in the taluka be included in the Tembhu and Takari schemes. Dec 6 will now be a day for celebration and to vow for eradicating drought - Dushkal Bimod Din. Fellow activists from neighbouring talukas would be joining the 8000 odd Tasgao activists in Sangli on this day. The Krishna is now no longer flowing silently...

Bharat Patankar of the Paani Sangharsha Samiti told reporters that besides completion of MKVDC projects, the demands also include payment of Rs 600 per month as water allowance to displaced people who have either not received compensation or alternative land or irrigation facility.

On the 2nd day of the Thaiyya Andolan, the Home minister and the Irrigation minister in charge of the MKVDC came in front of the *Thiyya Andolan* and announced:

- Rs 15 B would be made available and spent before end of March since the Central Govt has given the sanction to raise Rs 15 B through MKVDC bonds. Of this, Rs 11.5 B would be used for the projects in Krishna river basin, Vidarbha and the remaining areas of Marathawada. More funds will be mobilized after March 31.
- Of the 15 B, 2.3 B would be used for the rehabilitation of the dam affected.
- Equitable distribution of water has been accepted in principle but the Movement and govt will jointly try to resolve the various problems involved in equitable distribution of water.
- Priority allocation of water to industry over agriculture mentioned in the Water policy will be re-examined and discussed with the Central Govt after which a decision would be taken.

This has been a partial victory for this struggle as their demands were met half way! The *Thiyya* was suspended on the night of the second day. Further struggles will have to be launched after March 31. The first round of talks to detail out the implementation of these promises has been planned for Feb 6 04.

Seema Kulkarni

FORM IV

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I, Himanshu Thakkar, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Himanshu Thakkar
Publisher

February 29 2004

RIVER LINK NEWS**HOW OPPOSITION IS MOUNTING**

North East Students' body raps riverlinking North Eastern Students Organisation, a conglomerate of eight students unions has cautioned the Centre against its proposal for linking of Ganga and Brahmaputra as it won't benefit the people and region. "They have taken away oil, gas, coal and timber from the region. And now, they are trying to take our water," NESO adviser said. (THE PIONEER 290903)

Gangetic delta is not surplus It is only a myth that the Gangetic delta has excess water. It is a known fact that Ganga basin drains about 26 % of the Indian territory and water resource potential of the basin is 525 BCM. Average per capita water availability here is 1473 cu mts and this is less than the national average, viz. 1869 cu mts. One must be careful to see the river systems are kept alive and river regimes are not disturbed by interfering with the flow of the river especially in crucial periods. If this were to be ignored, the lower Gangetic delta could become a desert. (THE STATESMAN 170903)

Vaipar Study weakens the case for link The National Water Development Agency finding that the streams flowing in the area between the Vaipar and Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu have got total surplus surface water of 1605 MCM has in effect questioned the legitimacy of the controversial Pamba – Achankovil – Vaipar link. The PAV link was proposed to tide over the alleged deficit in Vaipar river basin, by diverting surplus waters from Pamba and Achankovil rivers. As per the NWDA study (technical study no 66), the gross water yield from the area lying between Vaipar and Kanyakumari is 3820 MCM. Out of this 353 MCM is from the streams between Vaipar and Thambrapani and 1722 MCM from the streams south of Thambrapani. The Thambrapani river, originating from the eastern slopes of the Western Ghats, near Alwarkurichi village in Tirunelveli dist of TN flows eastwards to empty out into the gulf of Mannar. The Chinnar and the Manimuthar are the left and right bank tributaries of the Thambrapani, which has got a catchment area of 5450 sq kms. (THE HINDU 190903)

Attempt to privatise the river-links The cost estimates for Inter-linking of rivers, prepared by the MoWR and the NWDA, does not include yearly inflation, inclusion of state govts in the programme of implementation and costs relating to ecology, environment, wildlife, resettlement and displaced persons. Almost nine months into its work, the task force has come to the conclusion that over half a million people will be displaced by the various inter-linking projects and about 0.35 M Ha including 0.12 M Ha of forestland will be submerged by the 32 new dams that are to be built. The chairman of Task Force has suggested a slew of measures for the funding pattern

and the manner of cost recovery. For instance, he proposes that funding can be done through a combination of private funding, public-private partnership and public funding. Projects that generate direct revenue, such as hydropower projects, could be handed over totally to the private sector, while irrigation and infrastructure, which may not generate adequate revenue, could be developed through a private-public partnership. The task force reckons that HEPs of 34000 MW capacity would constitute 25% of the total investment needed. (THE HINDU 100903, BUSINESS INDIA 150903)

Experts ask to halt RL plans River Linking project should be halted immediately and India should give up its plans, resolved South Asia Consultation on water unanimously. Over 100 experts, policy planners, academics, lawyers, engineers, journalists and activists from South Asian countries joined the meeting. WAFED Coordinator Gopal Siwakoti Chintan said that India must first review its treaties with Nepal before embarking on the RLP. An editorial in Kantipur, Nepal's largest selling Nepali newspaper, on Oct 19 said, 'The Indian Govt is not consulting its neighbours Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and the Tibetan region of China on the project'. An editorial in The Himalayan Times, a leading English newspaper wrote, on Oct 20, 'India cannot ignore the damages resulting out of dams built too close to the border with Nepal. ... Nepal cannot be said to be not affected by the River link plan'. During the workshop, representatives from the affected areas in Koshi, Gandak and Mahakali in Nepal and Farakka in Bangladesh shared the hardships that the people in the respective regions suffered. (THE DAILY STAR 191003, KATHMANDU POST 261003)

Nepal Scientists warn Scientists warn that the project by India to link its rivers could have disastrous effects on the Himalayan system. Tanka Ojha, geologist said that tampering with the natural river systems could pose danger to the region and since the Himalayan region is a seismic zone prone, the results can be disastrous. Prof J Bandhopadhyaya from IIM Kolkata, said that floods in the Himalayan foothills and adjoining plains are the result of a complex process, and much of it is not well understood. (KATHMANDU POST 311003)

ILR a Power Guzzler? Brahmaputra water after reaching Ganga has to be lifted by 60 m to reach Subernarekha and by about 48 m for further transfer to Mahanadi-Godavari link. Similarly, for transferring water for Inchampalli dam on Godavari to Krishna, it has to be lifted by about 116 m. These three lifts alone would require about 3 700 MW of power. (River Link Discussion Group quoting from the website of the Taskforce)

Opposition from Bangladesh In a seminar organised by the Press Institute of Bangladesh experts suggested initiating scientific investigation and discussions with knowledgeable people & institutions to face challenges of \$ 112 B project. (THE HINDU 260903, 300903)

Seminar on Riverlinking plans at Salem

After sitting throughout for three days in comfortable AC rooms, listening to power point presentations and enjoying rich food at the National Seminar on 'Interlinking of Indian Rivers - Problems and Perspectives' at Mahendra Engineering College, Salem from 20 - 22 Oct 03, we were left wondering as to for whom and why this show was arranged!

On the first day, the Chief engineer from NWDA Bangalore office Mr. Idikkula said among other things that "Watershed improvement will reduce the surface flow". What more new knowledge is in store that the NWDA wants to impart us, we wondered! A delegate from Environment Support Group, Bangalore asked him whether he can provide information regarding the proposals because no transparency is followed by NWDA office, Bangalore. His reply was revealing: "no project report is ready and details can't be given". The Task Force Officials and other delegates left on the first day itself immediately after their presentations even without giving room for discussions. They did not even circulate the presented papers.

Dr S Chandramouleeswaran, AC College of Engineering and Technology, Karaikudi raised serious apprehensions on the project in his paper. Has there been any competent and transparent study that has recommended such a step? Has the govt bothered to find out what impacts it is likely to have? On what basis and who determines the surplus basins and the magnitude of the surplus?

R Doraiswami, Water Resources Researcher from Pragathi, Bangalore presented his paper and analysed the extent of Peoples Participation in Interlinking of Rivers. He pointed out that the formulation of the project itself is contrary to the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution that recognizes the planning, formulation and implementation by local institutions. The problems in irrigation systems are not merely due to surplus or scarcity of water, it is mainly because of improper water management. The inability on the part of the State Departments to adhere to protective irrigation system is the major reason for the use of excess water for paddy and sugarcane cultivation, leading to deprivation at the tail end for drinking water as well as dry crops. The practice has affected soil fertility causing salinity, alkalinity and water logging. At least 25percent of Tungabhadra Command Area is already affected.

S. Unnikrishnan and C.G.Madhusoodhanan
Chalakudy Puzha Samrakshana Samithi

Mr President: Bihar also has drought prone areas

The Second Irrigation Commission of Bihar reports, on the basis of the records available during 1966-7 to 1986-7 that Khagaria suffered drought for 7 years during the period. Incidentally, Khagaria is one of the most flood-hit districts of N Bihar, often referred to as the submerged district.

Drought hit the districts of Saharsa, Begusarai, Samastipur 6 times, Madhepura and Vaishali-5 times, Katihar, Purnea, Madhubani, Darbhanga, East Champaran, Sitamarhi, Muzaffarpur, and Saran - 4 times, Siwan 3 times, Gopalganj-twice and W Champaran once. These districts are known for regular flooding. The SICB writes, 'areas suffering from drought for 5-6 years in a period of 20 years may be considered as drought prone and those suffering 7-8 years in period of 20 years may be classified as chronic drought areas' (Vol. III p-34). According to this definition, Khagaria would qualify as a chronic drought district.

In S Bihar, drought hit Munger district 8 times while Bhagalpur, Rohtas, Gaya, Jehanabad, Nawada and Aurangabad were hit 7 times during the same period. Patna, Nalanda and Godda suffered drought six times and Bhojpur suffered it four times.

In Jharkhand, the districts of Hazaribagh and Giridih suffered drought 8 times while Deoghar suffered 7 times. Drought was felt six times in Dhanbad, Palamau and Godda. Gumla and Lohardaga suffered it 5 times. Ranchi, Sahebganj, Dumka and Singhbhum faced drought 4 times during the said period.

These details show that scarcity conditions occur also in fairly flood prone districts of S and N Bihar. In fact, sometimes, these districts suffer drought and floods simultaneously because most of the floods are caused due to the rains in the upper catchment of the river basins but, at the local level, drought conditions are faced because of deficient rainfall. Because a huge component of the catchment area of the rivers is located outside the state, floods become an irritant over which the state has no control. Interlinking plans to take water out of Bihar but the question is how much water will the links be able to take out so that we are saved from floods? Will we have some share in the water that is transferred to other states to meet our drought situation? Will that not mean constructing more canals and will that not harm our already stressed drainage conditions?

Now that the gigantic projects like the Kosi, the Gandak and the Sone Canals could not alleviate the drought in the state, will somebody tell me how the interlinking of rivers will succeed in doing that?

Dinesh Kumar Mishra

The Myth of Surplus in Brahmaputra Basin

The oft-repeated statements by the proponents of river linking that there is surplus water in the Brahmaputra River for export to outside the basin is only a myth. It is no doubt correct that Chirrapunji in Assam gets 12 000 mm rainfall. Thanks to the natural reservoir system called glaciers in the heavy rainfall regions of the Himalayas, the Brahmaputra River system discharges around 63 MHam a year of water on average into the sea. Unfortunately the basin receives so much monsoon rainfall and snowmelt only during summer that the rivers experience severe floods and droughts. The intensity of flood havoc in the basin is further aggravated because of the steep slope of the land. But for the contribution of groundwater underneath the riverbeds as base flow, the rivers would have been almost dry in the winter. There is practically no exaggeration in the caution that any effort to export water from the basin would aggravate the situation.

Although Brahmaputra River ranks first among the rivers of India in discharging maximum water into the sea, the utilisable surface runoff of the river is only 2.4 mham a year (that is, less than 4% of the actual discharge). A live storage of 0.11 mham (that is 0.2% of the actual discharge) has so far been created in the basin. Except when river waters are diverted by weirs and barrages, the quantum of surface water that could be utilised will be around twice the live storage created. By taking into account the utilisable surface runoff rather than the actual surface runoff, the per capita availability of water in the basin by 2050 becomes less than 360 CM and not 9 000 CM as projected by ILR proponents as against 400 CM for the peninsular basins of Cauvery and Pennar. The replenishable groundwater of the basin is estimated by the Central Ground Water Board as 2.7 MHam, of which very little is being presently put to use.

River Basin	Available Water (BCM)	Utilisable Water (BCM)	Per Capita Available Water (CM)	Per Capita Utilisable Water (CM)
Indus	73.31	46.00	1749	1097
Ganga	525.02	250.00	1471	700
Brahmaputra & Barak	585.60	24.00	16589	680
Brahmani	28.48	18.30	2915	1873
Mahanadi	66.88	50.00	2513	1879
Godavari	110.54	76.30	2048	1414
Krishna	78.12	58.00	1285	954
Pennar	6.32	6.90	651	711
Cauvery	21.36	19.00	728	648
Tapi	14.88	14.50	1007	981
Narmada	45.64	34.50	3109	2350
Mahi	11.02	3.10	1052	296
Sabarmati	1.35	1.90	360	507
Subarnrekha	12.37	6.80	1307	718
W Flowing Kutch-Saurashtra	15.10	15.00	683	678
W Flowing Tadri-Kanyakumari	113.51	24.30	3480	745
W Flowing Tapi-Tadri	87.41	11.90	3383	461
E flowing Mahanadi-Pennar	22.52	13.10	953	554
E Flowing Pennar-Kanyakumari	16.46	16.70	366	371
Inland rivers of Rajasthan	-	-	-	-
Minor rivers draining Bangladesh-Myanmar	31.00	-	14629	-

Note: The available water as per the URL2 (see below) is 677.41 BCM for the Brahmaputra & Barak basins, 69.81 BCM for the Krishna basin and 3.81 BCM for the Sabarmati basin. The extra available water as per the URL2 for the Brahmaputra & Barak basins is due to the additional contribution of 69.81 BCM by 9 tributaries joining the Brahmaputra River. The discrepancy in the available water in the Krishna basin is because of the URL1 quoting the yield assessed by the Central Water Commission and the URL2 quoting that accepted by the Krishna Water Dispute Tribunal. The reason for the discrepancy in the available water in the Sabarmati, Pennar and some other basins is however not known.

Leave alone transferring the Brahmaputra waters to the neighbouring basins, there is actually an urgent need to tackle the water shortages of the Brahmaputra basin in the dry months. The basin-wise available & per capita available water above are from <http://www.narmada.org/sandrp/jun2003.doc>. The utilisable water is from

http://www.eapap.unep.org/reports/soe/india_water.pdf.

The per capita values get further reduced if the latest populations are considered. Irrespective of the water available in a basin, the water that could be utilised alone gives a more realistic picture.

Prof R Jagadiswara Rao

The Bedti - Varada Link

The Bedti - Varada link is proposed under the peninsular component of the National River Linking Scheme and involves the diversion of 'surplus' water from the west flowing Bedti River to the east flowing Varada River.

Bedti River The Bedti River, also known as Gangavalli, is a west flowing river originating south of Dharwad in the Western Ghats at an altitude of 700 m above MSL. The river is formed by the confluence of two streams, the Shalmalahalla and the Bedti. The two streams join at Kalghati in Dharwad district in Karnataka. The united stream, named Bedti, flows mostly in the Uttara Kannada District and opens into the Arabian Sea. The 152 kms long Bedti River has a catchment area of 3 574 sq miles.

Varada River The Varada River originates in the Western Ghats at Vardamoola situated in the NE of Shimoga district. It flows eastwards and joins the Tungabhadra River at Galaganath in Haveri taluk in Dharwad district. The Tungabhadra is a major tributary of the Krishna River.

Proposed Bedti-Varada link The Pre- feasibility study has been carried out by the NWDA in 1994-5. The proposal aims to divert 242 MCM of 'surplus' water in the Bedti basin to the Tungabhadra sub-basin. The annual irrigation proposed under the link is 60 000 Ha under the left bank canal irrigation project in Raichur District. Pre-feasibility report has been prepared from topographic sheets and other secondary data. No data from actual field surveys has been used.

Components The proposal includes two dams: one on the Pattanadahalla stream and another on the Shalmalahalla stream. These reservoirs are to be connected by a 8.5 kms long conveyance system, including a 2.2 km tunnel. From the second reservoir, another conveyance system, 15 km long, including 6.8 km tunnel, will carry the water into a stream that leads to the Varada River. The diverted water will be lifted in three stages to a height of 120 m before being let into the Varada River.

Power generation and Requirement The proposed project is to generate 3.6 MW of power. The power required for lifting water is estimated by NWDA to be 61.1 MW.

Submergence Toposheet studies by NWDA have indicated that the proposed dams will submerge over 1000 ha including 800 ha forests. The Shalmalahalla reservoir will submerge 820 ha, while the Pattanadahalla reservoir will submerge 185 ha. Land required for the canals and other infrastructural work will be additional.

Displacement NWDA estimates that due to the construction of the two dams the entire village of Hulgol having a population of 967 in Sirsi taluk will be submerged. It suggests that these people be resettled elsewhere and cultivable land given to them.

Cost The head works of Pattandahalla and Shalmalahalla dams and the interlinking system between them will cost Rs 925.1 M. The canal system is estimated to cost Rs 303.4 M. The lifting and powerhouse arrangements would cost Rs 967.6 M. The total estimated cost is Rs 2.40 B based at 1994-5 prices. The R and R costs are not even mentioned. The internal return of the project is claimed to be 15.30%.

Local Opposition Local groups and farmers have clearly indicated that they are against the linking proposal as it would submerge rich forests and asked that the water be utilized in the Bedthi valley itself.

Regional Ecology The tropical humid forests are among the most diverse, productive, and threatened biological communities. These areas are also declared as biodiversity hotspots by IUCN. About 75% of the Uttara Kannada district is under forest cover. The region receives an annual rainfall in the range of 2000 – 6000 mm, largely concentrated in the monsoon months of June-Oct. The district is a complex landscape of rich sacred groves that are species rich with plenty of streams, gorges and ridges. It harbours 1 741 species of flowering plants and 420 species of birds and other wildlife. The number of species of birds it supports exceeds that in the whole of Kerala.

Environmental Impacts The proposal will lead to alteration to the natural flow regimes of rivers and streams and their floodplains and wetlands. This is a major factor contributing to loss of biological diversity and ecological function in aquatic ecosystems, including floodplains. Some of the impacts include: Reduction of habitat due to change in area, Riparian zone degradation through altered flow patterns and Increased habitat for invasive species.

Conclusion Two of the important stated reasons for the interlinking of rivers viz. increased irrigation acreage and power generation. The Bedti -Varada link falls short on both these. Surely, by increasing irrigation efficiency in the Tungabhadra command more land could be bought under irrigation. Further the 3.6 MW power to be generated by the project can be easily generated by better alternatives. In fact the project is likely to be power guzzler and not power generator. The project is located in one of the most eco-sensitive zones. With local opposition mounting to the project and the Chairman of the task force saying that the hotspots of Biodiversity will be kept out of bounds, the proposed Bedti-Varada link is a non-starter.

Sarita Deshmukh & R Pillai, Environment Support Group

DAMS**A displaced tribal commits suicide**

Vinayak, a 70 years old farmer, whose land was acquired for an irrigation project way back in 1976 took the extreme step after waiting for 16 years for compensation. Vinayak ended his life by consuming poison in the office of SDO. (THE INDIAN EXPRESS 131003, THE HINDU 140903, SAHARA TIMES 060903)

Supreme Court order on Tehri Supreme Court gave a go ahead for construction of the Tehri HEP by a 2:1 majority judgement. The Bench, however, made it clear that tunnels one & two should not be closed, no further impounding of water should be carried out till the rehabilitation work was completed. Justice Dharmadhikari, giving the dissenting verdict, said that an expert committee should be set up to carry out all scientific tests, including a seismic study, suggesting corrective measures. (FRONTLINE 101003)

No respite for Upper Krishna affected

Two reservoirs of UKP submerged 91200 Ha of private agricultural land. Total of 131 200 Ha land was acquired for the dams, canals, roads and 158 R&R sites. In 1996 when Bagalkot city was flooded, thousands of families were shifted to Navanagar. Many of those who did not possess proper records have been denied R&R. The displaced are yet to find new livelihood. (DECCAN HERALD 171003)

Cracks on hill near Hirakud Close on the heels of a huge crack at the famous Gandhamardan Hills, another one of similar intensity has developed at Barpahar hill under the Debrigarh wildlife sanctuary in Bargarh district, causing panic in the area. The Debrigarh sanctuary is located close to the Hirakud reservoir and east of Bargarh district is famous for its scenic beauty and rare wildlife species. A fault of more than 3 km long, 30 ft wide and 30 ft deep is clearly visible close to the villages of Banjhipali and Shradhapali. Experts claimed that the particular area, where cracks had appeared comes under the earthquake zone. (BUSINESS LINE 250903)

Uncertainty over Subarnarekha The Subarnarekha Irrigation project involving Orissa, Jharkhand and W Bengal has run into rough weather due to stiff resistance from the affected people, besides the paucity of funds and heavy escalation of project cost. The cost of the project, which has already increased from the 1993 figures of Rs 7.9 B to Rs 17.55 B is likely to go up further unless pending work speeded up. The Subarnarekhs Multipurpose project would require funds to the tune of Rs 28.7 B to complete the pending work on the Jharkhand side. (DAILY EXCELSIOR 161003)

Jharkhand Submerging self to benefit others

Over the years the state has taken over about half

dozen major irrigation projects. However, beneficiaries of these projects have been the neighbouring states. The displaced people are yet to get any benefit. In Aug 03, CM inaugurated the Chandil irrigation project, but the beneficiaries are Orissa and W Bengal. Interestingly, Jharkhand will spend Rs 28.69 B on the project and Orissa will spend a meager amount of Rs 5 B. Currently, two major dams are underway in partnership with Bihar. The first one is North Koel and the second one is Betane irrigation project. In both the projects displacement lies in Jharkhand, but the benefits in Bihar. (THE PIONEER 090903)

Basohli people live in isolation Due to Dam

Surrounded by the large lake of Ranjit Sagar Dam on river Ravi, the people residing in Basohli and its surrounding areas and mountainous Bani block have been forced to live in isolation. While the HP Govt pleaded strongly their case with the Punjab Govt several times and also with the Centre to sanction sufficient funds for the construction of at least two bridges and connecting the areas between Punjab and HP, without success. (DAILY EXCELSIOR 181003)

Very High Siltation in reservoirs With the govt proposing to undertake sedimentation studies for more reservoirs; ISRO has developed a methodology to assess the storage loss in the reservoirs using data from remote sensing satellites. The satellite aided capacity evaluation of the Bhadra reservoir in Karnataka was conducted by ISRO's Regional Remote Sensing Centre at Bangalore during 1987-8, subsequently capacity evaluation of Upper Wardha, Mahi, Malprabha, Ghatprabha, Kabini, Linganamakki & Krishnarajasagar reservoirs was done. The report said the rate of siltation is generally "very high" for new reservoirs. (THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS 180903)

Annamayya Dam gates washed out One of the five crest gates of Annamayya Dam on Cheyyeru river at Badanagadda, Rajampet mandal, Kadappa dist (AP) was washed away due to negligence of the officials. This resulted in outflow of 1.794 TMCft of water stored in the reservoir, due to which 9200 Ha may be deprived of irrigation. Ironically, the project officials failed to install the stop lock elements in the spillway portion of the project *even after three years of the completion of the reservoir*. The EE has drawn flak from his higher ups for failing to open the head regulator below the project, which would have paved the way for diversion of outflows into the ayacut. (DECCAN HERALD 311003)

Balaghat Dam cracks A high alert was sounded following reported cracks in a dam near Balharpur in Balaghat dist in MP due to heavy rains. Last year, due to cracks the Jamunia Dam in the dist had caved in, leaving 1000 persons in 14 villages homeless. (BUSINESS LINE 240903)

Bhakra: Submerged temples to be shifted? The Himachal Pradesh govt has decided to shift ancient submerged temples in Gobind Sagar to higher and safer reaches. The Archeological Survey of India would be involved in this task. The Bhakra Nangal dam was constructed in Nov 1963 leading to the creation of the Gobind Sagar Reservoir over the Sutlej. However, in the process, the old town of Bilaspur housing several ancient temples and sati stones, dating as far back as the 7th century, got submerged. Among the submerged temples Lord Shiva Ranganath shrine, Hanuman temple, Gopal ka Mandir are as old as 9th century. The 7th century Shanmukheshwara mandir, which is a rare structure of Kartikeya had also got submerged. No effort was made to shift these temples, only a few pillars & images were shifted. (THE TRIBUNE 201003)

Threat to Nagarjunsagar? The Uranium Corp of India Ltd's hydro-metallurgical plant in Nalgonda district has attracted the ire of experts who say its proposed open-cast mine abuts the massive Nagarjunsagar reservoir. It is feared that radiation and heavy metal contaminated storm water run-off from the uranium mines would find its way into the reservoir. This is likely to impact the entire downstream of the Krishna river basin, which caters to over six districts. The processing of the uranium ore mined at Lambapur-peddagattu will be done 18 km away, in a mill at Mallapuram that sits 4 km from another water body, the Akkampally reservoir. The AP Govt is laying huge pipelines along a 130 km route to supply water from this reservoir to Hyderabad-Secunderabad and 600 villages most of whose inhabitants are affected by Fluorosis. Having a tailing pond- where radioactive and chemical waste from the mines and the mill will be dumped- close to the reservoir can be dangerous. Uranium mining generates massive amounts of low-level radioactive waste. The waste will be dumped in a tailings pond, 500 m from the Mallapuram village with a population of about 1500. Besides, the 400 Ha core-mining area falls under the Yellapuram Reserve Forest covered by the "buffer zone" of the notified Rajiv Gandhi Tiger Sanctuary. The latest good news is that the authorities have decided not to give permission for the UCIL proposals. (OUTLOOK 220903, other sources)

HYDRO PROJECTS

Subansiri HEP questioned Dr L M Nath, former member of the Indian Board for Wildlife has petitioned the S Court on the environmental and forest clearance granted by the MoEF to the Lower Subansiri project. The Court has issued notices to the MoEF, seeking clarifications regarding the procedures adopted in granting Stage 1 clearance to the project, which will submerge almost 4000 Ha of forestland, including part of the Tale Valley Wildlife Sanctuary. The minutes of the Standing Committee of the IBWL had been distorted and certain key decisions and recommendations

omitted. Despite repeated requests by those present to amend the minutes, MoEF refused to amend the minutes. (SANCTUARY ASIA Oct 03)

NE Zeliangrong Union calls a general strike

The Zeliangrong Union (Assam, Manipur, Nagaland) have threatened to call a general strike in Manipur on Oct 29 coinciding with PM's visit to Manipur if the state Govt pursues its agenda of laying foundation stone for the Tipaimukh Dam (by the PM while in Manipur) on that day. In a press release the ZU strongly decried the Govt's move saying the Govt has not maintained transparency. The Govt has so far neither brought out the EIA report nor the Final Survey Report of the project for public debate. (CCDD)

Koel Karo abandoned? It's full stop for the Koel Karo HEP, with Jharkhand CM announcing the winding up of the project. The decision to terminate the project came following strong protests from the locals and high project cost. The 710 MW project was awaiting implementation for over three decades now. Launched in '70, the project was handed over to NHPC in '81. The estimated cost was Rs 3.5 B then, which has risen to Rs 25 B. (THE ECONOMIC TIMES 030903)

SC ST commission criticises HEPs The National Commission for SC and ST expressed concern over the haphazard extension of HEPs in tribal areas without any environmental protection plan. They were of the view that comprehensive plans should be formulated to take care of the impact of the projects on the environment and the catchment area treatment plan should be implemented simultaneously with the execution of the project. Authorities usually neglect these aspects, they said. (THE TRIBUNE 080903)

Indo – Bhutan talks on Punatsangchhu HEP The visit of Bhutan king in Sept 03 was marked with Bhutan seeking Indian assistance for its Ninth Plan and on the preparations of Detailed Project Report for the 870 MW project, for which an MoU was signed. (THE TIMES OF INDIA 150903, HINDUSTAN 190903)

Rohru HEP in HP The Bhakra Beas Management Board is examining the project report prepared by HPSEB for the 110 MW Rohru HEP on river Pabbar at Sawra Kuddu in Rohru dist. The power generated would be shared by the BBMB partner states of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and HP in proportion to their equity participation in the Rs 4.1 B project. (THE TIMES OF INDIA 100903)

CEA clears Chamera 3 The Central Electricity Authority has cleared the 231 MW Chamera 3 HEP to be built at an estimated cost of Rs 13.64 B on river Ravi. (THE INDIAN EXPRESS 141003)

Teesta L dam III 132 MW Teesta Low dam III project has come under sharp criticism following the deliberate neglect of the report of Geological Survey of India by NHPC. GSI report has identified several active and dormant landslides in the project areas. The project may reactivate those and trigger new landslides, which would cause severe damage to the entire Teesta basin of N Bengal and Bangladesh, fear geologists. (THE ECONOMIC TIMES 040903)

NHPC asked to prepare CAT plans Himachal Minister of Forests has asked NHPC to prepare CAT plans for private lands as well from the holistic point of view in addition to CAT plans for govt land on HEPs such as Chamera 2, Kurshed, Budhil, and Holi Bajoli. He mentioned that the state was committed to put into operation a UK aided Development of Forestry and Infrastructure Project and revealed that Rs 600 M was allocated for the same. (THE TRIBUNE 180903)

Cooperative society in HEPs HP govt contemplates to involve cooperative societies in HEPs, said the Minister for Cooperatives. (DAILY EXCELSIOR 011003)

NHPC to set up 850 MW Kotali Bahal NHPC and Uttaranchal govt signed a MoU for the execution of the 850 MW Kotali Bahal HEP on river Ganga. Speaking on the occasion, the CM urged NHPC to also undertake implementation of the Lakhtar Vyasi HEP. (BUSINESS STANDARD 230903)

NHPC to pick up equity in Nepal Project NHPC is planning to pick up 85% equity in the \$450 M, 300 MW Upper Karnali HEP in Nepal. This is first time that NHPC will develop a HEP outside India as an IPP on purely commercial basis, without any equity support from the govt. The entire power from this project will be imported to India. (THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS 081003)

Rampur HEP Engineers caution against MoU HP Power Engineers Association has cautioned the state govt against signing any MoU with the Centre for the execution of 400 MW Rampur HEP without clearly specifying terms and conditions in respect of the equity participation and service conditions of the staff to be taken on deputation from the HPSEB. The association has demanded that the project be assigned to HPSEB. (THE TRIBUNE 131003)

Hydel generation declined in J&K "Although the installed capacity in the state increased from 1996-97 to 2001-2, a power generation declined by 31%", J&K Power Development Corp sources said. The capacity utilisation of HEPs decreased from 45% in 1996-7 to 30% in 2001-2. Losses during the last five-year had accumulated to Rs 19.39 B. (BUSINESS STANDARD 271003)

Central grant for Baglihar? The Centre has agreed to provide Rs 6.3 B to the J & K govt as grant for the

execution of the Baglihar HEP. The CM also said that the PFC had agreed to take the lead and was likely to contribute Rs 6 B. (BUSINESS STANDARD 021003)

Sewa contract finalised NHPC has finalised agreements for various civil works for the 120 MW Sewa 2 HEP on Sewa river, a tributary of Ravi in Basholi tehsil of Kathua dist. NHPC is executing the project, estimated to cost Rs 6.6546 B with debt-equity ratio of 70:30. (THE PIONEER 271003)

Centre sanctions 45 MW Alchi HEP Centre has given its technical sanction for setting up Rs 7.04 B Alchi HEP in Leh. Another 3 MW Igoo HEP Martselang involving Rs 340 M would be commissioned next year. Rs 230 M have already been spent on the project. The Power dept has identified various streams and rivers in Ladakh areas including river Sindh, Shayok and other rivulets like Dha, Hanu, Dhomkher, Bogdang, Sasoma and Kumdok for setting up HEPs. (DAILY EXCELSIOR 250903, KASHMIR TIMES 181003)

Chutuk The Govt has assigned execution of 30 MW Chutuk HEP at Kargil and Nima Bazago HEP in Leh dist to NHPC. NHPC has started construction of tunnel at Chutuk. (DAILY EXCELSIOR 260903)

Patharkkadavu A notification has been issued by KSEB for the proposed Patharakkadavu HEP with an installed capacity of 2x35 MW in Mannarghat taluk of Palakkad dist in Kerala. The project envisages the utilisation of water from Kunthipuzha river by constructing a dam of 64.5 m height and taking water through a tunnel of 1640 m leading to powerhouse on the right bank of Kuntipuzha near Thattangalam village. Estimated to cost Rs 2.4706 B at 1999 prices, the scheme would submerge 20 Ha of forestland and 7 Ha of private land. (THE INDIAN EXPRESS 170903)

ALLAIN DUHANGAN UPDATE Following the last issue of DRP where the story of the proposed Allain Duhangan HEP to be funded by IFC (the private sector Arm of the World Bank) featured as lead story, on January 6, 2004, a public hearing was attempted at Jagatsukh village near Manali in Kulu District in Manali without providing the full ESIA documents in Hindi to the local people. The local people strongly protested against such an attempt. Ultimately the company and the IFC had to agree to hold another public hearing a month or more after providing full Hindi translation of the ESIA documents. Reportedly now IFC has also agreed to hold the next public hearing under an independent panel acceptable to all sides. As we write this, the affected people are yet to get the copies of the full ESIA in Hindi though the company claims that copies have been kept at the Panchayats. Affected people have reiterated that this is not adequate and whoever from the affected communities requests for copies of the documents should get it. The fundamental inadequacies of the ESIA are yet to be addressed.

SMALL HYDRO

Anti-Maduba HEP stir Tirthanhalli, a small village in the Malnad taluk in Shimoga dist in Karnataka is a home to hundreds of evacuee families who lost their homes to Chakra, Savehaklu, Varahi and other power projects over the past few decades. They came to this place only to witness that the power created by drowning their land flowed to urban centres while they waited on and on. (Villagers in Sharvathi backwaters were given electricity only two years ago, while the Linganamakki reservoir was set up a decade ago). The evacuees received a fresh jolt with the govt planning to displace them yet again to construct a 6.6 MW HEP at Maduba village near the Mandagadde bird sanctuary. The project, which is to be set up by Sri Annapurneshwari Power Private Ltd., envisages constructing a 4 m high dam across the river Tunga at Maduba village. The KREDA, which conducted the feasibility test, has shown that just around 4 Ha of land will be submerged and no forestland will be affected. People however stress that going by the markings made by the company during its initial survey work, the water level will reach the flood level in Tunga in 1982, when villages in row were submerged. They emphasize that at least 100-150 Ha of fertile land will be lost and more than 60 Ha of thick forest, including parts of Shettihalli reserve forest and famous Mandagadde bird sanctuary will be submerged, apart from numerous hamlets on both the banks of river. People of the taluk have organised themselves under the banner of Anti-Maduba Hydel Project Action Committee and organised a demonstration on Sept 11. (DECCAN HERALD 120903)

Sukhnag The J&K Power Development Dept has identified Sukhnag a perennial stream flowing across the Budgam dist to construct a 20 MW hydel project. An extensive survey would be conducted to ascertain the technical feasibility. (DAILY EXCELSIOR 100903)

NEWS FROM THE NARMADA VALLEY

Five HEPs on Upper Narmada Rs 4.3 M has been approved for survey and research work on 12.725 MW Hiranpaur HEP as part of the initiative to construct five HEPs in Upper Narmada region in Madhya Pradesh. The other four projects are 35 MW Rosara, 20 MW Raghavpur, 20 MW Gopalpur and 10 MW Basania projects. (CENTRAL CHRONICLE 120903)

Snippets FROM Post SSP Gujarat

SSP Canal to be redesigned? Gujarat plans to redesign the SSP main canal to provide provision for letting water into the 17 rivers that the canal crosses on its route. Also there are plans to construct dams on these rivers so that the water is stored to recharge groundwater. There is no news as yet as to from where is the water and money going to come for this. As of now all the 9.5 MAF water allocated by the NWDT to

Gujarat is fully committed for the SSP command area of 17.92 M Ha and any such allocation for such releases can only come at the cost of cutting of some of the command area. (*Sandesh* 041103)

The non existent Command Area Development

"Though 10,000 cusecs of water, nearly one-fourth of the canal capacity, is available from the Narmada dam, just 55,000 Ha of farm land is being irrigated with Narmada waters", informed a top bureaucrat, underlining, "Most of the irrigation is being done by pumping out waters from the main canal, using diesel motors and siphons. This is because no command area has yet been developed to take waters through field channels to the agricultural farms." Though the work for branch and minor canals is on, the construction of sub-minor and field channels has not even begun. The complacent govt, which never even estimated the CAD costs as part of cost - benefit assessment and revised cost estimates, has only now started giving thought to the idea of creating a separate Narmada Command Area Development Authority. The CAD Authority and its efficiency on centrally sponsored schemes have already invited harsh comments from CAG (see DRP July – Aug 03, p 34). The new authority would develop 1.86 M Ha of command area in three phases at the cost of Rs 30 B. In the first phase, 0.445 M Ha of command areas of Vadodara, Narmada, Bharuch, Panchmahals and Kheda dists would be completed at the cost of Rs 9.55 B in five years. Thereafter, the command areas of N Gujarat, Saurashtra and Kutch would be taken up. The task is stupendous. Scheduled to be over in 2020, in all 66,000 kms long sub-minor and field channels would have to be constructed. According to the Agenda Notes of Narmada Control Authority Environment Sub Group meeting that was held on Dec 26 2003, the proposal of phase I command area is yet to be sanctioned by the Union Water Resources Ministry. That means none of the Command area is ready for irrigation. And yet the govts pressurised the meeting to give sanction for further construction upto 110.64 mts under the plea to begin benefits. (THE TIMES OF INDIA 250903)

Canal bank Tourism The 'Vibrant Gujarat – Global Investors Meet', dropped all the pretenses for SSP waters to tackle drought in drought prone Saurashtra and Kutch. An official jocularly described the long Narmada Main Canal as a long perennial river, describing the idea as canal tourism and its future as Narmada Civilisation. Narayani Group of Companies showed interest to invest Rs 13.1 B in one such project. A Kenya based industrialist said there was immense scope to promote golf tourism. He said Spain was an underdeveloped country till mid 1960s, while today it has 269 golf courses. (THE INDIAN EXPRESS 300903)

37 762 Schools have no water At least 37 762 schools in Gujarat do not have drinking water, electricity or sanitation facilities. (*Gujarat Samachar* 191103)

N Gujarat Awaits a Disaster According to a note put up by the state irrigation dept, the empty aquifers of N Gujarat could lead to disastrous consequences in terms of desertification, subsidence of land and earthquakes. This note has been put up following reports from Israel's Tahal Consultants and Dr Rustan of Birmingham University. Taiwan had faced similar fate the past. According to studies, the water level was at 3-5 m in N Gujarat districts just about 3 decades back and now they have gone down upto 150 - 250 m and some 65000 tubewell continue to pump out water. At least 80% of N Gujarat is not even in command area of Sardar Sarovar Project. Out of 3 M ha of land under cultivation in N Gujarat, 1 M has irrigation facilities, 70% of which is dependent on Groundwater. The existing dams in the region are getting filled only to the extent of 50% of their capacities and local systems are getting silted up. No financial resources are available either for maintenance of existing systems or for creating other local systems as over 80% of state water resources budget is going for SSP. (*Gujarat Samachar* 051103)

Debt ridden govt looks upto Centre Alarm bells are ringing over the jump in the public debt of the Govt – up from Rs 440.64 B last year to Rs 522.92 B this year. The state has made a desperate request to the Centre for a one-time debt relief of 20 % on total outstanding and a five-year moratorium on the payment of the principal and the interest. (THE TIMES OF INDIA 061003)

Plan funds to be cut yet again? The state govt has spent just 20.68% of the total budget of Rs 317.3261 B between April to July. The state govt has failed to spend as per the expenditure norms even on basic facilities like education, health, water supply, labour, social welfare, and nutrition according to a budget information and analysis service. The survey also highlights the state govt's poor spending in soil and water conservation (1.89%), agriculture produce (5.51%), dairy development (6.71%), fisheries development (13.33%). (THE TIMES OF INDIA 221003)

Gujarat govt slams huge water bills Govt depts "have just followed CM's instructions in putting up the huge Rs 1.02 B bill on the Ahmedabad Municipal Corp as water dues for the 120 MCM Narmada waters being supplied to the Sabarmati River", an official conceded. Top secretariat sources say, the total unpaid water dues against the local bodies come to a huge Rs 13.04 B. This includes nearly Rs 8 B to be paid as water charges to the Narmada Nigam, Rs 4.77 B to the irrigation dept, and Rs 370 M to the water supply dept. Yet, the AMC is not the only body that has been forwarded a big bill. "The Nigam has also asked for Rs 250 M from the Vadodara Municipal Corp, supplied nearly 40 MCM for two years, yet another Rs 5.95 B from the Gujarat Water Supply and Sewerage Board for the supply of water from Narmada to Bhavnagar, Rajkot, Jamnagar and Kutch, and Rs 500 M from local bodies for filling up

hundreds of ponds". Officials say, the AMC and other local bodies know that the Narmada Nigam charges at the rate Rs 6.4 per cubic m drinking water, nearly 10 times more than the irrigation and water supply depts. The latter two currently charge the rate of Rs 0.73 per cubic m whose upward revision is under active consideration. In fact, even at the old rate, say officials, the AMC has not paid a huge Rs 1.33 B for the waters it received first from Dharoi, then from the Raska Wier and the Narmada canal. "Unfortunately, since 1978, the AMC and most local bodies have been considering water as free", said an official. Add to this the Rs 870 M dues against the municipal corps of Bhavnagar, Rs 54.2 M against Vadodara, Rs 6.3 M against Surat, Rs 73.2 M against Rajkot, Rs 205.7 M against Jamnagar. (THE TIMES OF INDIA 240903)

Narmada Waters to Bhuj stop in a month Bhuj, the last town to get the much-trumpeted piped Narmada water in August has been left dry, with the 'dream supply' lasting barely a month. Said a senior water supply officer of the Bhuj municipality, 'two days back when we again enquired from the GWSSB, they told us that we should not expect it before March as the Narmada canal up to Malia - from where Kutch draws its pipeline water – needed lining work". The same is the story of other urban centres in Eastern Kutch. The plight of the port - town of Gandhidham is worse with drinking water supply once a week. The stoppage of Narmada water has also hit Bhachau and Rapar talukas hard. "What was the need to make such a hurry to inaugurate the pipeline when basic work of lining the canal was not done and filtration plants had not been installed," quipped Dist Panchayat vice president. (THE INDIAN EXPRESS 141003)

Water starved Surendranagar deprived Despite better rainfall this monsoon, the twin towns of Surendranagar and Vadhvan besides 25 villages in the dist continues to face drinking water shortage. The Twin towns get water supply once in five days and that too for half-an-hour from borewells as the two dams -- Dholidhaja and Naika – have not been able to store enough water. Political leaders, particularly of the Opposition, feel that Surendranagar is being denied drinking water from the Narmada canal even though at least 100 kms length of the canal passes through the district. Last year, residents of Surendranagar agitated to get the Narmada water but it failed to produce any result. The district administration has spent nearly Rs 400 M on drinking water supply but the situation has not improved. Nearly 0.35 M people of the twin towns continue to get brackish water from borewells installed in Raigadh, Ramparda and Kharva. While none of the towns in the dist gets Narmada water, villages located near the Narmada canal have been denied drinking water and get only brackish water.

➤ In the meanwhile, it is now planned that an offtake at Kadu village in Lakhtar taluka will be created on the

Vallabhipur branch of the Narmada Canal to take the water through a 35 km long pipe to Surendranagar and Wadhwan, but this may turn out to be late as the tenders for this were being floated in November when the water supply from Dholidhaja dam for these towns is likely to exhaust in December. (THE TIMES OF INDIA 15102003, *Gujarat Samachar* 211103)

Gujarat to form water regulatory commission The govt has decided to set up Gujarat Water Regulatory Commission, which will fix water tariff for different categories of consumers. The decision was first mooted in 1999 when the then CM put out a 3-volume 'Gujarat Infrastructure Agenda: Vision 2010', which envisaged 75 % private participation in infrastructure projects. The idea of having the Commission resurfaced in the 2002 draft water policy, which had stressed on a "rational water pricing policy". (THE TIMES OF INDIA 290903)

GUJARAT HAS OPTIONS

Groundwater recharge in Gujarat Due to groundwater recharge through check dams, the groundwater in N Gujarat districts after the monsoon have gone up by an average 5.95 m when the rise without check dams was 3.54 m. The maximum increase was 15.4 m in Idar.

➤ **Check Dams in Saurashtra** Somewhat bigger check dams are planned on 77 rivers of Saurashtra through the joint efforts of the communities, NGOs, industries and the state govt (60% expense). Of the 235 such check dams planned in three years by 2005, 49 are ready. On completion, these check dams would store 11 000 MCFt water and irrigate 36 000 Ha.

➤ **Water quality and quantity improves** Following construction of check dams, quality and level of groundwater have gone up in many villages. In Sadotar village of Jamjodhpur Taluka in Jamnagar district, 80 checkdams have been constructed and two ponds have been deepened, leading to doubling of agricultural production. Similar is story of Bhader village (Dhari taluka) and Kagdadi village (Bagasara taluka) in Amreli district. (*Gujarat Samachar* 061103, 101103, 201103)

Drought Proofing Plan for Saurashtra The voluntary agencies working on water sector in Saurashtra has submitted a plan to the Gujarat Govt, according to which if the money spent or lost by the govt (Rs 21.25 B) and farmers (Rs 38.67 B) in a drought year is spent on construction of check dams than in five years drought can be permanently eradicated. And even in a drought year full crop can be taken in all the 3.6 M ha. On an average Saurashtra faced 2.5 years of drought every five years. The plan envisages construction of 0.28 M check dams in 5600 villages at a total expense of Rs 16.8 B. It is proposed that govt spend Rs 10.02 B and the people spend Rs 6.78 B. In addition on 78 rivers of Gujarat, somewhat bigger 4000 check dams are proposed at a cost of Rs 22.8 B. The plan includes provision of drip irrigation in 2.27 M Ha costing Rs 45.555 B. (*Gujarat Samachar* 101103)

Arresting Salinity Ingress A Gujarat Ecology Commission Project implemented by 'Vikas' in Jambusar taluka in Bharuch district has shown how difficult it is to reclaim the lands that have been affected by Salinity ingress. It took the project five years to reclaim just about a third of the 430 Ha of lands the project intended to reclaim. (THE TIMES OF INDIA-A 221203)

Gujarat Seeks Aid The state govt has sought Rs 5 B aid from NABARD to construct 73 000 small check dams in a bid to arrest depletion of water table and arrest soil erosion mainly in forest areas in eastern tribal belt to harvest 50 MCM of water. The state govt has also sought financial help of 5-6 B from the "Combating Desertification Cell" of the Union Environment and Forest Ministry to check desertification in Kutch, Saurashtra and N Gujarat. (INDIAN EXPRESS 151203)

ISSUES ABOUT RIVERS

Aravari amongst five rivers felicitated River Aravari received felicitation during River Festival at Brisbane, Australia in recognition of the efforts of people in making it flow afresh. Flowing through Thana Gazi in Alwar dist the river is managed by a Parliament of 72 villages. The River Prize cites the sustainability of the river in various aspects of water management while keeping intact, and at times revitalising, the old traditions and historical practices in the community's interest. The festival also honoured the Alexandra (Middle East), the Danube (Europe), the Hung Ho (China) and the Nile (Africa). (THE HINDU 100903)

India – Bhutan river panel Foreign ministry wants the Indo-Bhutan Joint River Commission to take shape following recent flash floods in Doars. S Bhutan and N Bengal share a number of hilly rivers like Lees, Ghees and Torsha. (THE ECONOMIC TIMES 180903)

Management of Floodplains ecosystem

Delivering a lecture on "Value and need for Geological Management of river floodplains ecosystem" at Guwahati University, Dr Riachrd E Sparks of National Great River Research and Education Centre elaborated various strategies being adopted in the Upper Mississippi and other large rivers in the USA and Africa for sustainable management. Terming the flood plains as sensitive aquatic – terrestrial transition zone, he cautioned that any attempt to manage their ecology and resources needs to be systemic with respect to the whole watershed. (ASSAM TRIBUNE 010903)

Brahmaputra Master Plan The Brahmaputra Board has submitted Part 3 of its master Plan for the tributaries of the Brahmaputra, Barak and the rivers in Tripura to the MoWR. It comprises of 49 sub basin Master Plans of which 32 incorporates comments from state govts and central agencies. (THE HINDU 290903)

Free flow to no flow in 200 years

Delhi may have become a parched city today, but just a century back it was rich in water resources. The Sahibi river used to flow from the South-West through Rohini and joined Yamuna north of the ridge. Tectonic movements cut off its flow in to the Yamuna and the river ended in the Najafgarh Jheel, a lake covering an area of 220 sq km. The Sahibi is today an open sewer and is called the Najafgarh drain. A second stream flowed through Hauz Khas towards the east and met Yamuna at Nizamuddin, upstream of Barapula. The third stream flowed from the south ridge called Tilpat range and passed through Chirag Dilli. Besides these three perennial streams, there were a number of small tributaries that flowed into the river during the monsoon. (THE HINDUSTAN TIMES 080903)

SAND MINING RIVERBEDS

Plundering of Coom riverbed

Indiscriminate plundering of the Coom riverbed near Perambakkam by sand miners has pushed several villages in Turuvallur dist on the edge of disaster. Even in the wake of Madras High Court order of July '02, which bans sand mining near bridges and riverbeds, the activity is continuing. (THE INDIAN EXPRESS 090903)

Tamil Nadu HC bans sand quarrying

In an interim order, Madras High Court totally banned all sand quarrying operations, by both Govt and private licensees, at 160 out of 239 designated sites in the state. The Bench however added a conditionally, saying, "This order is confined to areas covered by regular leases or court orders". Out of the 239 sites earmarked, 160 operate on the strength of either regular lease granted by the Govt or court orders permitting quarrying of sand. According to Campaign for Protection of Water Resources – Tamil Nadu, a forum of 80 organisations, the sand mining continues flouting the court orders, including by the state Public Works Dept. (THE HINDU 091003, Down to Earth Feb 29 2004)

Illegal mining from Neugal river on rise A famous tourist resort on the right bank of Neugal river in Palampur (HP) is facing a threat because of reckless and increasing mining. The water level in the river has already gone down in the past three years because of mining despite a complete ban by the state govt on mining and quarrying. (THE TRIBUNE 061003)

Delhi Sand miners make a killing The sand mafia is active on Yamuna beds in Delhi in villages along the Delhi – UP border. Sungerpur villagers said the mining has been going on in their gram sabha land for quite some time. The villagers said they were too scared to speak out even though their fields with standing crops are getting destroyed. (THE HINDUSTAN TIMES 121003)

POLLUTED RIVERS

Decommissioning of old weir on Gomti suggested

River Gomti has been reduced to a cesspool of toxic effluents from distilleries and sugar mills, sewerage and fertilisers. The Gomti weir does not serve the purpose of irrigation and flood control as many believe. It was built with the sole intention of restricting the flow to provide the drinking water to Lucknow. Some decades ago, a barrage was built about midway between Nishatganj bridge and the weir. With the construction of barrage the weir became redundant. The weir makes the river virtually into a lake and results in increased eutrophication and unhealthy conditions of degrading organic material with increased sedimentation. Attempts to revitalise Gomti without removal of the old weir and opening of the gates of the Gomti barrage is going to be a futile exercise. (SAHARA TIMES 060903)

Alarming pollution levels in Ganga In spite of Rs 15 B plan launched in the '80s to clean up the Ganga, the pollution level continues to be high and is contributing to 9-12 % of total disease burden in UP, put at Rs 9.6 B, says a team of experts from the Netherlands, the UK and India. While the quality index set by National Science Federation was 50 for any kind of use of water, the quality index did not touch even 45 at most places along the course of Ganga. (THE HINDU 150903)

Record rain can't cleanse the Yamuna A lot of water may have flowed down the Yamuna but the river remains as foul as ever. Much of the rainwater that enters the river isn't half as clean as you'd expect, says CPCB officials. The bulk of the water added to the Yamuna has flowed in through Delhi's storm water drains, and is loaded heavily with silt and muck. CPCB officials do not believe MCD claims that the drains were desilted. "Had the drains been cleaned, the Bio-Oxygen Demand in Yamuna during the monsoon would have gone down drastically. But this has not happened," the official said. (THE HINDUSTAN TIMES 170903)

Hindan Following heavy disposal of sewerage, the river Hindan in Ghaziabad has become increasingly polluted. The level of Dissolved Oxygen has touched the minimum limit of 4 mg/l and the BOD level has increased from 2 to 7 mg/l. (AMAR UJALA 030903)

Tawi Increasing level of pollution in river Tawi is a matter of concern. Despite J & K High Court directions and several notices by the JKSPCB, Jammu Municipal Corp has failed to take necessary measures and stop direct flowing of old city drain waters and garbage to the river. (DAILY EXCELSIOR 080903)

US team to review Musi project The American environmental engineering major, Camp Dresser and

Mckee International Inc will undertake a US \$ 465 000 feasibility study for the proposed Rs 4.33 B Musi river waste water treatment project. The study will evaluate the possibility of further refining the output of Musi wastewater recycling project, which has already been sanctioned under the National River Conservation Project. The study will also look into the quality of treated water from the existing wastewater treatment facilities in Hyderabad. (THE TIMES OF INDIA 241003)

No funds for Brahmani conservation People living on the banks of Brahmani River have approached MoEF to save the river. CPCB has declared the river water unfit for drinking purposes. MoEF has allocated Rs 67.6 M for the Brahmani conservation project, but funds have not been released so far following errors in DPR. (AMAR UJALA 011003)

LAKES, GLACIERS, WATERFALLS, WETLANDS

Community brings a lake to life in MP Jhaknaud, a village in Shivpuri dist of Chambal region of Madhya Pradesh decided to reclaim a decade old lake, spread over 8 Ha. After a series of representations yielding no result, except irrigation dept engineers concluding that "the lake couldn't be revived because of obstructions in the catchment area", an 82 year old villager, came forward. He mapped out the channels of the lake. Villagers formed a SHG, collected money from community and received Rs 130 000 from DPAP. A new catchment area of around 3 sq kms was developed by the lake's side and obstructions in the way of rainwater flowing into lake bed from other sides were removed. Mud boundaries of fields were relaid to provide a channel for the water. A 100 mts long retaining wall and a 200 mts long canal were built. In Aug and Sept water flowed into the lake steadily and now it is full to the brim. (OUTLOOK 131003)

Punjab Villages wake up to reclaim ponds

In Punjab's heartland, Doaba, a movement to reclaim ponds has gained momentum. The number of villages that are trying to save ponds or create new ones has crossed 100. It started with Sanghol village in Kapurthala dist taking a lead. As per an estimate, over 12500 Punjab villages have nearly 40000 ponds. Thousands have vanished, but the new movement may spell hope. (THE INDIAN EXPRESS 290903)

Punjab UNDP project on wetlands To create public awareness on issues relating to wetlands, the UNDP has sanctioned a Rs 1.4 M project to the Punjab State Council for Science & Technology. The council will develop resource material comprising training manual and multi media CDs. Studies undertaken by the council reveal that wetlands are facing problems of siltation, excessive overgrowth of hyacinth, increasing

pollution levels, deforestation in catchment areas, excessive grazing & soil erosion. (THE TRIBUNE 150903)

Ropar Pollution damaging wetland ecology The breach in coal ash dykes of the Guru Gobind Singh Super Thermal Plant on Oct 7 has caused concern regarding pollution in the international wetland. Following the breach in the 12 feet deep dyke, spread over an area of about 80 Ha, thousands of tonnes fly ash was flowing into the Sutlej River through Ghauli drain. It was reducing the oxygen content in water, threatening fish species. The Dist Fisheries Officer said that due to persistent pollution from fly ash dykes, the number of fish species had reduced from 35 to 17. The waters of the Sutlej have turned acidic due to the flow of the thermal plant fly ash into it. Since this was the second major breach in the thermal plant dyke, we need to ask what follow up actions has the authorities taken after the breach in the Stage 2 dyke on Jan 22, 2002. (THE TRIBUNE 091003, 101003, 121003)

Gangotri: Lack of coherent research Despite looking the picture of tranquility while metamorphosing, glaciers are today on thin ice. Just observe the lip service given to research on the Gangotri glacier. Scientists who are scrutinising the glacier admit that it has been retreating at a much faster rate during the past few years as compared to the last century. As per GSI, it retreated by a total of 2000 m. But, the retreat was 870 mts between 1971 and 2001, with the annual average totaling a whopping 30 mts. Two institutions - SOI and GSI - maintain and periodically update records of the basic physical characteristics of the glacier. But their data is incoherent. For instance, while an inventory prepared by SOI in 2000 indicates that the area of Gangotri is 75 sq kms, corresponding GSI figure is 143.58 sq kms. Although GSI scientists do not expect much danger in the levels of recession, Syed Iqbal Hasnain and his colleagues at the Glacier Research Group of the JNU fear that the glacier might recede at a rate of 100 mts per year by the turn of the century if the current global temperature anomaly and the Asian haze persist. GSI computes that the glacier has vacated an area of 0.58 sq km between '35-96, but a study by GRG claims it has vacated 10 sq kms area between 85-'02. Calculations show that for the period between '85-96, it has vacated an area of 0.21 sq kms as per GSI data, while the figure is 6.35 sq kms according to GRG. According to the Geology dept of H N Bahuguna Garhwal University, Gangotri has number of ice-dammed lakes. The bursting of such lakes can spell disaster for people living downstream. In 2003, the GRG researchers had identified six such lakes through satellite images. (DOWN TO EARTH 300903)

Ecological disaster awaits Vembnaad The Vembnaad backwater system in Kerala may soon turn out to be an ecological disaster due to the large scale pollution of its waters, indiscriminate exploitation of its

resources and human intervention in the form of reclamation of land and other encroachments. While the lake has shrunk to 37 % of its original area because of human intervention, the pollution levels have increased several-fold. There is an abnormal rise in faecal coliform count and high toxic level of water in certain areas. The uncontrolled mining of shells from the lake is also posing a threat to the eco system. According to studies, the fish fauna and reptile wealth and molluscs are facing a threat. According to CWRDM, the total solid content of the water in the Kochi region has been recorded as a high 53,750 mg/litre during summer. (THE HINDU 090903)

Bangalore lakes Revival works started last year on some popular lakes are likely to be completed in 34 months. Some 12 lakes are involved in the first phase of the overall plan. When complete, these lakes will have restored area of some 600 Ha. CEO of Lake Dev Authority noted that the major cost in restoration was sewerage diversion. (DECCAN HERALD 021003)

Thangal Lake Reservoir of sullage The Thangal lake at Ambattur O. T. is growing from a makeshift drainage pit, formed 10 years ago, to a reservoir of sullage, thanks to the delay in commencement of an underground drainage project for the area. The lake is partly covered by hyacinth and choked with debris, including domestic waste and non-biodegradable plastic waste. The lake, which was once used for irrigation, has shrunk in size due to the dumping of refuse. Those living nearby have been forced to suffer the foul stench and contaminated groundwater. To add to their woes, a canal was blocked and this disrupted the flow of water from the lake. A resident of Vinobaji Street said that ever since 1995 welfare associations have been pressing for desiltation of the lake and stop the discharge of sewage into it. (THE HINDU 231003)

J & K Proposing wetlands for Ramsar status The wetlands of Hokersar, Haygam, Shallbugh, Surinsar, Mansar, Pangong, Tso-Morari and Chhanthang had been proposed by the govt to be identified as Ramsar sites. (THE TRIBUNE 051003)

Spill damaged Marine National Park eco system Aquatic life and the fragile eco-system at the Marine National Park in Mithapur suffered a serious blow as solid chemical waste from adjacent Tata plant spilled into the park on Oct 23. "The spill spread over 62 Ha, causing death of numerous marine animals and micro organisms," says GPCB chairman. "Preliminary reports suggest the spill has also affected over 1,500 mangrove plants and several aquatic animals including sea-turtles. The effluent has formed a thick layer of 1 m at several places. Later, this will harden, converting the area into a desert-like place," confirms Forest Officer. This is not the first time that such an incident has occurred here. Three major spills have been reported in 1987, 1999 and 2001. (THE INDIAN EXPRESS 291003)

WATER SECTOR

Talks soon to form RBOs The Union Govt will soon hold a dialogue with all the States for establishment of river basin organisations. "We are going to have an intense discussion shortly with all the state Water Resources Secretaries and Chief Irrigation Engineers," a senior official of the Union MoWR said. In July, the National Water Academy, a body under the CWC providing training for water sector professionals and the Indian Water Resources Society organised a seminar on this issue, which was attended by top officials of irrigation dept from nine States. (THE HINDU 250903)

Kerala Water conservation bill gets assent Kerala governor has given assent to the Kerala Irrigation and Water Conservation Bill passed by the Assembly on Aug 14. The minister described it as a historical legislation and said that the govt will soon initiate follow up actions. The first would be constitution of Dam Safety Authority for evaluating of safety of various dams across the state. This would have a bearing on the Mulla Periyar Dam. (THE HINDU 180903)

HP Plans Himachal Pradesh has formulated two major projects involving an expenditure of Rs 3.39 B to provide drinking water to 3754 remaining habitations and bring 10 000 Ha of additional land under use. The Irrigation and Public Health minister said a Rs 1.4 B irrigation project had been submitted to the Centre for funding by the German Govt. It would also help development in 20 000 Ha along with forestry, horticulture and animal husbandry. A Rs 1.99 B drinking water project had also been presented to the German Govt for funding. (THE TRIBUNE 211003)

WATER PRIVATISATION

Privatising water across India Even as the business of privatisation of water goes on in over 19 cities, the Union Govt continues to swear in Parliament that it is not making any such move. The Union Minister of State for Water Resources said in Parliament, "I want to say that there is no move to privatise the Ganga in any way. This is my categorical statement." Meanwhile, Suez continues with its twin projects – a water treatment plant at Sonia Vihar and sewage treatment plant at Rithala in Delhi. In Sonia Vihar, Degromont has been awarded a Rs 2 B contract for the design, building and operation (for 10 years) of a plant that will yield 635 MLD drinking water. Degrimont has been permitted to take water from the Tehri Dam project through the Upper Ganga Canal of, near Muradnagar, Uttar Pradesh, and supply to S and E Delhi. The water will be weaned away from irrigation in the villages. Officially 19 water privatisation projects are in different stages of implementation in India at present but unofficial accounts put the figure at 40. The 19 projects under implementation are in Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, HP, Manipur, Rajasthan, West Bengal, AP and Sikkim. While eight of

them are being run by French Corps, the others are by Japanese and Australian concerns. The Indian Market is estimated to be worth over \$ 2 B. The top three global water giants Suez and Vivendi of the France and RWE-AG of Germany, have shown interest in the Indian market. These three corps control over 70% of the water systems in Europe and N America. Vivendi has operations in 90 countries around the world and Suez in 120. Together these corps are targeting four areas within the water sector: water and wastewater services, water treatment, water related construction and engineering and innovative technologies. Much of the privatisation spree has been facilitated by the urban development ministry, which released a set of guidelines for the State govts encouraging them to move towards "private partnership". These guidelines are in tune with half a dozen reports produced by state govts and the World Bank that outline the blueprint for privatising the water. (FRONTLINE 120903)

INTER STATE DISPUTES

Jhanjhavati Expressing displeasure over poor response from the Orissa govt on clearance to the Jhanjhavati project in Vizianagaram district, the AP minister for irrigation said the state would put in relentless efforts to persuade Orissa. The project has remained incomplete, as the Orissa govt did not give its consent since 1976. The govt did not confirm till date the extent of submergence. (NEWSTIME 100903)

Second Tribunal on Krishna The CJI is expected to recommend the names of sitting judges for the second Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal any time, a MoWR release stated. The second tribunal will essentially go into the issue of sharing surplus water among Karnataka, AP, and Maharashtra, which was left unresolved by the first one. (DECCAN HERALD 240903)

IRRIGATION

AP Seeking Krishna water from Karnataka AP CM decided to write to his Karnataka counterpart to immediately release 50 TMCft water into Krishna River from Almatti to save standing crops in the Krishna basin. He observed that Karnataka had filled up Almatti and Narayanpur reservoirs to their full capacity, though no canal systems were developed under the projects yet. As on Sept 01, at Almatti water level stood at 1704.54 ft and 27 758 cusecs water was being released, while at Narayanpur, it was 1614.15 ft and 26 376 cusecs water was being released. On the same day, the water level at Nargujanasagar was only 495.50 ft, while at Srisailam it was just 82 ft. They met on Sept 20, and following the discussion Karnataka said that it would not hesitate to release sufficient water from Almatti Dam to provide drinking water to AP on humanitarian grounds. Release of water for irrigation was, however, another matter and hinged on the Northeast monsoon. (DECCAN CHRONICLE 020903)

Debt Market collapse? After raising massive amounts through private placement debt market in last 3.5 years (Rs 524.56 B in 2000-1, Rs 454.27 B in 2001-2 and Rs 484.24 B in 2002-3 and Rs 232.75 in the first six months of 2003-4) this dubious way of speed money raising option could help raise only about Rs 1.7 B during Oct-Nov 03 following stricter SEBI guidelines. This option was being exercised in a major way by the state water and power depts and corps like the Sardar Sarovar Nigam of Gujarat. Even during Oct-Nov 03, major issues included Andhra Water Resources (Rs 3.5 B) and Kerala Power Finance (Rs 3 B). (INDIAN EXPRESS 101203)

N Karnataka lift irrigation schemes In the 1960s, the govt initiated a programme to establish Lift Irrigation Schemes in N Karnataka. However, unlike the neighbouring Maharashtra, where such schemes were organised mainly under co-operative sector, these schemes were built, operated and maintained by the Minor Irrigation Dept. There have been more than 300 LIS in the 2 dists. Unfortunately more than half the schemes are defunct and the remaining are functioning poorly. Of the 195 schemes, only 98 schemes were functional in 1998-9 but the most discouraging fact was that only 10 721 Ha of the planned command of 58 672 Ha was being irrigated. The situation has worsened since the completion of the study done by two NGOs in 2001. The performance of the schemes has district wise variations. In Bellari the proportion of working schemes is higher than other dists (87%) and the proportion of actual command is 40%. The schemes were not designed for perennial irrigation and water intensive commercial crops were not envisaged. However, except Bellari, in all other dists there was preponderance of paddy over other cereal crops like jowar, bajra and wheat. The intensive cultivation of paddy has had a number of consequences including shrinkage of command, increased salinity and degradation of soil quality. (ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL WEEKLY 200903)

Rs 160 M schemes for 4 Himachal districts Five schemes involving an expenditure of Rs 160 M had been sanctioned by the Centre under the Command Area Development in Una, Kangra, Mandi and Solan dists, said the Irrigation Minister. Presiding over the second meeting of the standing committee for improvement of capacity utilisation of Lift Irrigation Schemes, he said other irrigation schemes for tubewells, flow and hydram should be brought in to the ambit of the standing committee. He stressed the need for constructing field channels under CAD to ensure even distribution of water. He informed that till March 03, the dept had spent Rs 7.3778 B on creating irrigation potential, Rs 17.1447 B on water supply, Rs 1.2422 B on hand pumps, Rs 1.8262 on sewerage and Rs 274.2 M on flood protection. (THE TRIBUNE 160903)

AP micro irrigation project The AP Govt will cover 0.25 M Ha under the micro irrigation. The project would cost Rs 11.57 B and it would have drip irrigation, sprinkler irrigation, rain gush and gravity-fed drip system for farmers. All 901 water stressed mandals in the state would be covered. While the NABARD would assist with 50% of loan, i.e. Rs 5.79 B, the rest would come as credit to the farmers from banks. The state would give subsidy of 50% to each farmer, and all farmers irrespective of land holdings or source of water are eligible to opt for it. (NEWSTIME 021003)

Krishna waters dispute in AP The AP govt held an all party meet to arrive at consensus on sharing Krishna waters by the three regions: Telangana, Andhra and Rayalseema. There was very poor inflow into the Krishna projects following scanty rains in the catchment areas in Maharashtra and Karnataka, and impounding of water by Karnataka at Almatti. While Telangana Rashtra Samiti has been demanding that the water be released to farmers of Nalgonda, all political parties led by Congress in the Krishna delta area want the water to be given to the Krishna delta. Following the all-party meeting the AP govt decided to increase the water releases to Krishna delta "to save standing crop in over 120 000 Ha" from 2000 cusecs to 4000 cusecs and if necessary 5000 cusecs. (THE ECONOMIC TIMES 010903, THE HINDU 120903)

Kerala seeking water from TN The CM has assured the farmers that a two member ministerial delegation would soon be sent to Tamil Nadu to seek the release of water from the inter state Parambikulam Aliyar project to save paddy cultivation in this dist. The CM's assurance came in the wake of demands raised by leading farmers' organisations to take immediate measures to save the paddy cultivation which was facing the worst ever crisis due to lack of water. They said as per the agreement with TN, Kerala should get 7.25 TMCft of water annually from the Chitturpuzha scheme. But, in the last two years, TN had not supplied Kerala its due share. (BUSINESS LINE 290903)

Karnataka To Hike irrigation tariff The Karnataka govt Medium Term Fiscal Policy for 2004-7 has indicated progressive increase in user charges in irrigation. The state recovers barely 15 % of the irrigation costs, since the charges do not cover either the fixed or the variable costs or even the maintenance costs. However, the MTFP indicates that cost recoveries from irrigation would go up to 80 % by 2006-7. However, officials indicated that the cost recovery on some of the projects such as Krishna Bhagya Jala Nigam Ltd are to be in a position to repay some of the loans. (BUSINESS LINE 300903)

Mettur water release The Cabinet discussed the possibility of releasing water from Mettur to save samba crop in the Cauvery delta region though the storage is only 24.56 TMCft against its total capacity of 93.47

TMCft. However, Cauvery Delta Farmers Association General Secretary has suggested that instead of opening the dam the govt could advise the farmers to go for dry sowing. The dam was opened on Sept 20, and 300 cusecs was released to meet the drinking water needs of the wayside dists. This was likely to sustain for 15 days. On Oct 7, the sluices were opened to release water for samba crop. (THE INDIAN EXPRESS 170903, 220903 THE HINDU 081003)

Gohana Canal water eludes tail end The persistent shortage of canal water and erratic supply has adversely affected the paddy crop in the villages falling under the jurisdiction of the Gohana Water Service Division in Haryana. Farmers alleged that theft of irrigation water was the main cause. The maintenance of canals, distributaries and minors continue to remain a major problem despite heavy expenditure incurred on them in Gohana subdivision. The farmers alleged that the embankments of various canals and distributaries were facing the problem of silt resulting in waterlogging in large areas. (THE TRIBUNE 060903)

Tungbhadra Canal eludes Anantpur Suspecting that farmers in Karnataka were causing breaches to the Tungbhadra High Level Canal and thus robbing irrigation waters meant for Anantpur dist farmers, AP CM asked the officials to undertake a joint patrolling of the canal with Karnataka officials to prevent water pilferage. (THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS 060903)

Nangal Lift irrigation scheme nonfunctional Farmers of 20 villages of the Nangal area are without water for irrigation though residing on the bank of Nangal hydel canal that irrigates areas up to Rajasthan. This is due to the non-functional lift irrigation scheme of Punjab govt. The scheme has been non-functional for want of repairs. Presently even the five persons deputed at the scheme have not been paid salaries for six months. Power arrears have risen to Rs 2.3 M. Even the pipes laid for carrying water to fields have become non-functional due to disuse. (THE TRIBUNE 190903)

Rs 760 M sanctioned for irrigation works Nine irrigation projects worth Rs 766.3 M, with irrigation command of 4 000 Ha have been sanctioned. In this connection, 12 Kolhapuri type reservoirs have been proposed on river Painganga in Maharashtra. In addition, work on 24 schemes is in progress to irrigate 14 340 Ha. The area irrigated by minor and medium projects in the district increased to 48 395 Ha in June 03 from 41 190 Ha of Dec 99 (THE HITVADA 301003)

Task force on micro irrigation Ministry of Agriculture has set up a task force on micro irrigation headed by AP CM and a Minister of Agriculture from another state. The terms of reference of the task force are to suggest strategies to expand area under micro irrigation; to suggest institutional mechanism including quality

assurance and technologies. The area suitable for micro irrigation is 27 M Ha. (BUSINESS LINE 100903)

ICICI, Netafim ties up for Drip Irrigation finance An Israeli firm with pioneering expertise in drip irrigation has tied up with ICICI Bank to facilitate loans for drip irrigation projects. Other banks, including the State Bank of India too have evinced interest. The Israeli firm plans to introduce a technology called Family drip system, which can be used even in one-acre electricity less farms. 36 000 Ha are already irrigated in India by Netafim Systems. (THE INDIAN EXPRESS 190903)

Rs 35 B Austrian loan for Godavari projects An implementation agreement for Rs 35 B (US \$ 700 M) loan was signed on Oct 9. The major projects to be covered under the agreements are Godavari (Devdula) lift irrigation scheme, Inchampalli, Yellampalli and Polavaram. (THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS 101003)

WATER OPTIONS

Rajasthan Water University A Water University is proposed to be set up by Tarun Bharat Sangh in Alwar dist of Rajasthan, to be funded by SIDA. The institution would train youth from the country in conservation, rainwater harvesting and on ways to involve local communities in water management. (THE HINDU 270903)

Rs 91.2 M Japanese aid for Rajasthan Rajasthan will receive a grant of Rs 91.2 M from the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction for RWH schemes and slum improvement. The grant would be utilised in the cities of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Bikaner. (THE HINDU 110903)

Centre to take up Rs 10 B project Union MoRD declared that the Centre would soon undertake a Rs 10 B Pradhan Mantri Jal Samvardhan Yojna will primarily target rainwater harvesting in the drought prone areas. The scheme is to be implemented in 17 states including Gujarat, Rajasthan, AP, Karnataka, J and K, MP, UP and W Bengal. In the first phase, 570 blocks will be covered, while 647 blocks will be covered in the second phase. (BUSINESS LINE 070903, THE HINDU 100903)

Delhi RWH improves ground water Rain water harvesting in the national capital has not only replenished groundwater but also improved its quality besides solving the problems of water logging, CSE has found out. Test samples taken from different geographical and geological areas revealed that the acidity of ground water and quantity of harmful dissolved solvents declined after taking up RWH. The magnesium content showed decrease in 55 % of samples, chromium content declined in all the samples and calcium content went down in 64 % samples.

➤ The water table increase by 2-4 m is quite substantial given the fact that the city has an estimated 0.36 M unauthorised bore wells. CGWB data shows that the water table in S Delhi is still very low and in

some areas like Kalkaji, it has gone down by 2 m. The CGWB said that the water table would have risen higher but for the fact that only 2 % buildings in Delhi have recharge structures. (CENTRAL CHRONICLE 010903, THE HINDUSTAN TIMES 060903)

“Protected baoli” collapses in Delhi A 400 year old Baoli at Mehrauli in S Delhi collapsed during the rains. One of the few remaining structures from Itutmish's reign, Gandha ki Baoli might soon be lost forever due to ASI's neglect. ASI had desilted it without strengthening it, which is a recipe for disaster, say experts. The ASI plastered the walls of the Baoli, claiming that the same would “preserve” the monument and achieved exactly the opposite. “With the free passage of water blocked, the Baoli was bound to collapse due to pressure created by the water” opined an expert. Instead of learning from their mistakes in the past, ASI is now busy repairing the Baoli without again adhering to the traditional method of construction. (THE HINDU 090903, THE HINDUSTAN TIMES 180903)

Shivalik foothills The Shivalik Development Board has come up with a Rs 320 M plan to construct over 45 dams at various places in Shivalik foothills for soil and water conservation in Panchkula, Ambala and Yamunanagar districts. While Rs 290 M has been sanctioned for 22 earthen dams, Rs 312 M has been earmarked for construction of 26 sub-surface dams. In the first phase, the dams will be constructed in Panchkula dist because the irrigated area here is just 26 % of the total area. During a survey on the existing dams constructed in the past by the Forest Dept and by SDB in Panchkula dist it was found that 34 dams out of 64 are defunct. 12 of these defunct dams could be revived after desilting. (THE TRIBUNE 150903)

Sukhomajri An extensive network of check dams built by the Haryana govt in the foothills of Shivalik range has enabled rainwater harvesting and over 200 dams constructed by forest dept in the Shivalik foothills are full to the brim. RWH has also helped revive Sukhna lake in Chandigarh. (SAHARA TIMES 060903)

Betul A campaign to revitalise *talabs* was launched here from March 22. Till date, almost 680 villages have revitalised the traditional RWH structures in this dist. The Dist collector has played a significant role of motivating *panchayats*. (HINDUSTAN 081003)

Thane Thanks to the Zilla Parishad's Agriculture dept Shiv Nagar village in Bhiwandi taluka has found an innovative method to harvest rainwater. A checkdam has been built with cement bags to harness a stream for irrigation. Villages in 16 talukas of the dist have been provided with 800 000 cement bags for the construction of 4000 check dams. Dy Sarpanch of Chawe village is confident that their 55 m long checkdam across Chormoli river will ensure that the village will have sufficient water till June 04. (INDIAN EXPRESS 241003)

WATER POLLUTION

PIL against submergence of idols Mumbai High Court has admitted a PIL, which prayed for a direction to centre and Maharashtra govt to ban immersion of idols of gods and goddesses in natural streams during religious festivals. Due to poisonous non-biodegradable objects used in the idols and other puja offerings, the fish stock starts dying 3-4 days after the immersion and continue to die for a fortnight. (THE HITVADA 160903)

TNPCB: Clean up coffee curing TNPCB wants the state's coffee planters to tackle water pollution on a war footing. The board has told coffee growers in Ootacamund, Yerkad and Kodaikanal to apply for and seek clearance from it for the installation of Effluent Treatment Plants before the curing season commences this year. Coffee curing not only involves extremely high water consumption, but also leads to the release of effluents – with high level of BOD, COD, total suspended solids and phenolic compounds – into waterbodies. (DOWN TO EARTH 151003)

Faridabad Due to the disposal of sewerage and untreated water by the industrial and residential areas, the Gurgaon canal in the dist, constructed mainly for irrigation has become highly polluted. The canal, which starts from the Okhla barrage in Delhi stretches upto the border areas in the South, receives polluted water from 18 - 20 drains in Delhi. Under the YAP, the state govt had set up three treatment plants at Bhadshahpur, Mirzapur and at Gonchhi, but these plants had not been functioning to their optimum. (THE TRIBUNE 090303)

Jalandhar Taking up a petition filed by the Punjab Leather Federation and other petitioners regarding the setting up of Common Effluent Treatment Plants, the High court has asked Jalandhar's dist judge to carry out an inspection and submit a factual report. Earlier the counsel for the petitioners submitted that two CETPs were to be set up, and one had already been established. Contracts for construction of second plant were yet to be awarded because there was a dispute as to who will pay the contractor, the state or PSIECL. (THE TRIBUNE 240903)

Sahibabad Hundreds of residents of Rajiv Colony, Mohan Nagar demonstrated at factory of Sarla Fabrics protesting against the effluents drained by the factory and against the waterlogging. For four days the residents were struggling with the polluted water that was drained in the colony, but when it started entering houses following the water logging, they took to streets and sat on dharna in front of the factory. Many of the students have got blisters in their feet due to toxic effluents. (SAHARA 110903)

Dandeli protest enters West Coast Paper Mill In a dramatic move, Kali Bachao Andolan including villagers from Kariampalli, worst affected by pollution, along with

representatives of ESG, Parisara Samrakshana Kendra, Alternative Law Forum and Samvada, rallied through the Dandeli town and entered the West Coast Paper Mill campus in time for the Annual General Meeting on Sept 30 and met with the shareholders. The day was also significant, as it marked the closure of the deadline of the KSPCB for WCPM to install a secondary effluent treatment plant. When senior managers were pressed to show the plant, they deterred only to admit that it was unlikely that it would be ready any time soon. Protesters have demanded that the KSPCB should immediately take cognizance of the non-compliance of the deadline. (KBA PR 061003)

Gujarat Scores of people living on two sides of the Kharicut canal are faced with using poisonous, foul smelling and coloured groundwater, depleted productivity of lands and ill health of humans and cattle due to the untreated polluted water being released by the industries in Vatva, Naroda and Odhav Industrial estates near Ahmedabad.

➤ **ADB Funds?** ADB has offered to help Gujarat Pollution Board by way of technical and financial help on the lines of similar funding provided for MP and W Bengal. (Indian Express 011103, *Gujarat Samachar* 171103)

BOTTLED WATER

Mumbai Bisleri plant sealed The Food and Drug Administration in Maharashtra ordered the sealing of a Bisleri bottling plant at Andheri after recovery of a 5-litre jar of mineral water infested with insects. Three days later, the plant resumed production and chairman of Bisleri told the media that the matter was "minor" and that it had been "sorted out". Bisleri had run into similar trouble in April 02, when the company was issued a show cause notice by the BIS over the sale of bottles that did not bear the mandatory ISI mark. Then the BIS had canceled the licence of Bisleri's water bottling plant in Delhi for about two months. (BUSINESS LINE 160903)

Noida Taking the advantage of loopholes in BIS rules, at least seven companies sell the bottled water without ISI marks. A water analyst revealed that BIS rules allow an ISI certified company to market four brands. He alleged that some ISI certified companies were bailing out non – ISI certified companies in clear violation of BIS standards. The BIS raided a Delhi unit, which was picking up jars of reputed brands, filling them with water and selling them under a fake ISI mark. Cases of misuse of ISI mark had surfaced earlier in Kanpur and Pune. (HINDUSTAN 030903, THE TIMES OF INDIA 060903)

W Bengal WBPCB official say that most of the packaged water bottling plants operate without statutory clearance and evade paying water cess. Further, some units are located in arsenic prone area. "Of the 35 units in WB, 26 have not produced consent to operate. Of the nine units having valid documents, only two pay the water cess," said officials. (THE TIME OF INDIA 221003)

GROUND WATER

Madurai Struggle against groundwater mining A "people's conference" held by a Sivaganga dist based organisation, has asked the Tamil Nadu govt to reject all applications seeking permission for pumping ground water for commercial use, asking for joint parliamentary team to visit Padamathur village to study the likely impact on the groundwater table and the agricultural operations. It also wanted the govt not to permit multinational soft drinks Company to draw water meant for a sugar mill for its bottling unit at Padamathur in Sivaganga. The govt had received 70 proposals for groundwater exploitation for commercial use. The rampant sand mining on the Vaigai riverbed was detrimental to the over 70 infiltration wells that supplied drinking water to hundreds of villages in Sivaganga and Ramanathapuram dists. A resolution adopted at the meeting asked the state to act tough against illegal sand mining. (THE TIMES OF INDIA 220903)

Delhi Eyeing UP groundwater The city is now eyeing the groundwater of neighbouring states. At a recent meeting a CGWB official said that there is so much groundwater in UP that if Delhi digs tube wells there it can get at least 100 MGD extra. "Near the Ganga canal in UP, sweet water reserves exist 450 m below ground. If a canal can be laid to bring water from Tehri dam to feed 140 MGD Sonia Vihar plant at an enormous cost, this is comparatively low cost method for augmenting the supply," he suggested. (THE TIMES OF INDIA 010903)

Gurgaon Illegal tubewells sealed Residents of private colonies in New Gurgaon wait their turn even as the dist administration has sealed 30 pumps run commercially, on charges of drawing and selling water illegally. The recent drive came in the wake of a ban on drawing groundwater imposed by Central Ground Water Authority under section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act. There are 9131 registered pumps in Gurgaon town and adjoining 65 villages. The dist administration has drawn up a list of 81 villages around Gurgaon where tube wells are yet to be registered and are running illegally. (THE INDIAN EXPRESS 210903)

UP The declining trend of water level is gripping almost half of the state and majority of groundwater aquifers are under 'high stress'. Experts agree that shrinking resources of prime land, deforestation, deterioration of soil coupled with increasing waterlogging and poor management of rainwater had aggravated the problem. Declaring Lucknow and Ghaziabad as 'over exploited' regions, hydro geologists insist on launching immediate water conservation steps. (THE TIMES OF INDIA 211003)

Himachal Villagers stop work on crusher Scores of villagers of Masyana (Hamirpur) stopped the construction at a crusher near the Kunah Khad as the crusher is harming their crops. The water table in the area has gone down since the start of crusher a decade

ago. Villagers were happy with a recent HP High Court order stopping crushing work all over the state and hoped that this crusher would now be closed forever. They were taken a back when the owner resumed construction. (THE TRIBUNE 051003)

Marwad's Depleting ground water With ground water depleting at an alarming rate, many villages in Marwad tehsil (Rajasthan) are forced to drink fluoride-contaminated water. (RAJASTHAN PATRIKA 171003)

GROUND WATER CONTAMINATION

Excessive Nitrate in Nagpur The data from Groundwater Survey and Development Agency from 2001-3 shows a large degree of some chemical pollutants, the most common pollutants being either nitrates or chemicals that increase the hardness of water. Ironically, though the GSDA is supposed to monitor water quality in Bhandara, Gadchiroli, Gondia, Wardha, Chandrapur and Nagpur dists, the office has only one chemist. An official admitted that villages in Bhandara, Gondia and Chandrapur dists had severe fluoride and nitrate problems. (THE HITVADA 240903)

Excessive toxicity in Baroda At a public hearing for expansion of M/s Banyan Chemicals Ltd the panel reprimanded the company for contamination of ground water by illegal discharge of toxics. (PSS PR 031003)

UP Ground water in 36 dists isn't fit for drinking said a recent survey. Improper disposal of industrial and municipal waste has led to the contamination, which is high in towns said a researcher at Industrial Toxicology Research Center. (ENV. NEWS NETWORK 150903)

Mercury contamination in Delhi According to a recent study conducted by the Guru Gobind Indraprastha University's Dept of Env. Science, the contaminants such as mercury, arsenic and nitrates in Delhi's groundwater exceeds permissible limits. "Most alarmingly the concentration of mercury in certain samples has been found to be as high as 4.6 micrograms/litre, which is 460 % above permissible limits stipulated by the Bureau of Indian Standards," informs a researcher. The study entailed 50 random samples of groundwater from spots along a 22 kms stretch between Palla and Okhla. The mercury can be traced to the discharge of sewage and industrial effluents into Yamuna. (THE TIMES OF INDIA 031003)

AP A preliminary survey conducted by the CGWB revealed that groundwater in the Hyderabad city has a new problem in terms of contamination by nitrates due to improper sanitation. In the industrial area of Jeedimetla organic contaminants dominate the groundwater. In Guntur the pesticides content in groundwater is 510 to 3330 times the prescribed limit. The CGWB warned that the problem could worsen in the coming years. (THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS 241003)

URBAN WATER SUPPLY

AUDWS Schemes for 901 towns The ministry of Urban Development and Poverty Elimination has sanctioned schemes for 901 towns by July 2003 under the Accelerated Urban Drinking Water Supply programme. The estimated cost of the schemes would be 11.74 B. The Centre has released its part of Rs 5.24 B, which has started from 1994. The scheme has been completed in 321 towns. (*HINDUSTAN 040903*)

Rs 2.25 B Punjab water plan The govt has launched a Rs 2.25 B programme to provide water supply and sewerage facilities in all cities and towns. During the first phase Rs 1.45 B has been released to the 43 municipal councils. (*THE INDIAN EXPRESS 080903*)

Alandur getting short shrift from Metrowater After years of regular Palar water supply, residents of Alandur Municipality are faced with unsafe and irregular water after the Chennai Metrowater took over water supply. Locals allege that whenever there is a disruption in supply in any of the localities of Chennai, the water supply promised for Alandur is diverted. In response to the decision of Metrowater to hike the water charges from Rs 3.5 to Rs 7 per 1000 KL, the municipality council had responded that they would agree to pay the same only if there is an assured 5 MLD supply. However, that would mean average 25.5 litres a day per capita, which is much lower than WHO recommendations. Multiplying the worries of the residents is the fact that the water supply realised at Alandur is a trickle 2.8-3 MLD. Residents also say that water is supplied only every sixth day. (*THE INDIAN EXPRESS 030903*)

Chennai: Bhawani water only for drinking purpose While passing interim orders on a batch of public interest writ petitions about the of farmers craving for irrigation water, the Madras High Court has ruled that the entire water stored in Bhavani Sagar Dam should be used only for drinking purpose and not for irrigation.

➤ Metrowater has cut down on piped supply and resorted to tanker supply. Only 423.9 MCFt water remains in the city's reservoirs, which can suffice for supply only till Oct 15. "We'll augment water supply by tapping private wells though the cost is very high," an official said. (*THE INDIAN EXPRESS 240903, 260903*)

Bhopal Water Dept incurs loss Water Dept in Bhopal has incurred a loss of Rs 45 M due to non-recovery of irrigation cess. (*CENTRAL CHRONICLE 291003*)

Surat Water Scam A scam of Rs 680 M going on since 1998 has been detected in water supply to Pandesara Industrial Estate near Surat (Gujarat). Six employees of Surat Municipal Corp were suspended and notices were issued to 3 others. Just for seven months from April to Oct 2003, while SMC should have been paid Rs 230 B by the industries, due to billing irregularities, they were

billed only for Rs 63.5 B. The privatisation proposal for water distribution submitted by five industrial associations of Pandesara Estate has been put on hold. (*INDIAN EXPRESS 161203*)

RURAL WATER SUPPLY

Metering in Gujarat? Gujarat govt plans to meter the water supply at village level to begin with from Kutch area. Gradually the scheme is to be implemented in Saurashtra and other areas. (*Gujarat Samachar 171103*)

Sonepat: 8-year-old scheme caught in red tape The Rs 12.4 M World Bank aided canal based water supply scheme was sanctioned for village Purkhas in 1995, since the sub-soil water was found to be brackish, but the villagers are yet to receive even a drop of water. The scheme has been shuffling between files and its face keeps changing from Canal based to Tubewell based and vice versa. The superintending Engineer claimed that the pipelines have been laid, tubewells installed, motors replaced and the supply would soon become functional. (*THE TRIBUNE 180903*)

Haryana The state has decided to augment the supply in 470 villages at a cost of Rs 1.09 B during the current financial year. (*THE INDIAN EXPRESS 140903*)

Tamil Nadu: Hogenakkal The counter affidavit filed by the Tamil Nadu Water and Drainage Board in response to a PIL filed by the PMK president has revived hopes in Hogenakkal Integrated Drinking water Project which is to provide respite to the 2.7 M odd population of Dharampuri dist from the nagging drinking water crisis. Estimated at Rs 10.08 B, the HIDWP has built in aspects like flood protection and rural sanitation. The region has poor groundwater availability and severe fluoride contamination. (*THE INDIAN EXPRESS 180903*)

Tankers illegally lifting water from Ambegaon lake The Jambhulwadi-Ambegaon Village Lake, the main source of water for the villages located off the Katraj-Dehu Road bypass is in danger of getting dried up due to illegal lifting of water from the lake by private water tanker operators. Operators had been lifting 34 lakh litres water every day. (*THE TIMES OF INDIA 071003*)

World Bank loan for Maharashtra The World Bank has given \$ 181 M loan for rural water supply and sanitation project. With a total cost of \$ 268.6 M, it is claimed it would benefit 7 M people in 2800 panchayats in rural Maharashtra. (*THE HINDU 011003*)

Punjab The state has announced a Rs 1.19 B plan during 2003-4 to provide drinking water in 11 849 'problem villages' out of 12 402 villages in the state. To check the spread of Fluorosis and to augment supply in 100 Canal based water supply schemes at the tail end of the canals with tubewell water, it had proposed 'de-fluoridation plants'. (*BUSINESS STANDARD 211003*)

FLOODS

Chhatisgarh The situation turned grave, with almost 48 villages going under water and rivers Mahanadi, Peiri, Shivrath and Jhonk flowing above danger level, stated the flood control cell on Aug 31. The floodwaters entered Raigad, Sarguja, Raipur, Bastar, Kanker, Mahasamund, Rajnandgaon and Dhamatari dists. About 13 854 Ha standing crop has been affected and around 50 houses have collapsed. (SAHARA 010903)

MP Floods caused substantial devastation in Mahakaushal, Bundelkhand and Vindhya regions where most rivers were still flowing about three feet above the danger mark. Worst affected were Rewa and Satna dists. (THE HINDUSTAN TIMES 120903)

Orissa Hundreds of villages have been inundated in five coastal dists of Orissa following breaches in embankments at 23 places. Mahanadi was flowing above danger level at several places on Aug 31. Thousands of farmers spread over five blocks in Malkagiri lost standing paddy crops to caterpillars during three weeks of deluge. The losses over 16 000 Ha are estimated at Rs 100 M. Over 1.23 M cusecs was till passing through Naraj Delta head on Sept 1. The level at Hirakud came down to 627.45 ft. Relief operations were hampered in Cuttack, Puri, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapada and Jajpur dists due to heavy rains on Sept 2. Floods rendered over 220,000 people in 3926 villages homeless. It also caused 621 breaches in embankments and cut off 557 roads. The toll of marooned villages reached 1081, around 40 535 houses had been damaged and 0.35 M Ha of crop area had been affected, said the CS on Sept 3. The inflow and outflow of water of Hirakud was around 0.606 M cusecs on Sept 4. Out of the 5 376 affected villages, 1 344 villages remained marooned with no link with the mainland. The worst affected was Puri where 586 villages were marooned. 103 356 houses were damaged and 0.418 M Ha of crop area got affected. The water level in Hirakud reservoir was 628.85 feet on the evening of Sept 7. Heavy rains in S Orissa has triggered floods in several rivers affecting 70 villages in Ganjam dist. (SAHARA 010903, THE INDIAN EXPRESS 010903, THE HINDU 030903, THE TRIBUNE 181003)

UP Following the rise in levels of rivers and dams in Uttar Pradesh, hundreds of villages were flooded in Ballia. 50 villages in Sonbhadra got inundated when Bhilahi dam washed away on Sept 6, affecting 100,000 people and submerging 160 Ha land.

➤ Over 1.7 M people from 2000 villages – out of which 500 villages got submerged – of 46 blocks in 24 dists were affected by the floods in UP rivers, said the CS on Sept 8. Over 21 000 people were rendered homeless. Rs 4.4 M have been distributed as govt assistance to affected persons.

➤ The flood situation in eastern UP turned critical as the overflowing Ganga and Ghagra rivers inundated

hundreds of villages in Ballia and nearby dists of Ghazipur, Siddharthnagar, Deoria and Varanasi on Sept 10. The flood situation in the Bundelkhand dists of Chitrakoot and Banda and in Sonabhadra dist was also grave since the previous day. River Ganga and Ghagra were flowing above danger level all through the course in eastern UP. A report from Ballia said the situation had worsened after the Tulsipur Srinagar barrage developed cracks leading to inundation of over 100 villages. Heavy rains and opening of the gates of Obra and Rihand had increased the risk of flood in Banda, Chitrakoot, Varanasi and Sonbhadra dists. Reports from Banda said over 68 villages were flooded due to an increase in water level on the river Ken.

➤ The army was pressed into service at Ballia on Sept 12 night for the protection of embankments of Ghagra and Srinagar, which were threatened by rising Ganga. Floodwaters had submerged about 422 villages in the dist, of which around 104 had been marooned completely. Relief officials said around 3000 villages in the state had been inundated by swollen waters of Ganga, Gandak, Gomti and Sharda affecting a population of over 2.8 M.

➤ While army was busy repairing the breach in Ganga embankment in Ballia dist, several new areas were inundated by the floodwaters on Sept 19.

➤ On Sept 26, the official figures were: Dists affected 53, villages affected 15 950, population affected 13.4 M, loss of life 802, houses damaged 290 000. Estimated crop loss Rs 380 M, houses loss Rs 70 M and loss of property Rs 100 M. (AJ 070903, SAHARA 090903, THE HINDU 110903, THE HINDUSTAN TIMES 171003)

Bihar The flood situation worsened on Sept 11, with more than 1 M people marooned on the islands of rising Ganga and its tributaries, forcing the state to seek army help. The situation was particularly grim in Champaran, Samastipur, Lakhisarai and Vaishali dists. Heavy discharge of water in the river's main tributaries, the Sone and Gandak was wreaking havoc all through its 500 kms course. The discharge from the Indrapuri barrage into the Sone was 0.46 M cusecs, while 0.15 M cusecs was being released from the Balmiki barrage into the Gandak on Sept 11. The floods have destroyed crops on about 23 000 Ha. (THE HINDU, THE HINDUSTAN TIMES 120903)

W Bengal The Ganga maintained its rising trend flowing 60 cms above danger level in Malda dist of N Bengal on Sept 13. Sakullapur and Jatkasturi villages under Kaliachak 2 block were submerged as water was gushing into protected areas through the damaged portion of the 'Ring bundh'. Nearly 15 000 people were affected as 14 villages under Panchanandapur and Bangitola under Kaliachak 2 were inundated.

➤ The govt admitted that due to heavy soil erosion Farakka barrage and a NTPC unit are in the danger.

➤ Heavy rains, tidal waves in coastal areas and release of water from barrages in Jharkhand marooned

parts of six dists. The worst affected dists are E & W Midnapore, S & N 24 Parganas and Hoogly in s Bengal.

➤ **Erosion** People threatened by erosion of the Ganga bank in the Panchanandapur area of Malda started leaving their villages in the first week of Sept. Nearly 100 houses were in danger. Families in Palpara and Piarpur areas of the dist were also in trouble as their houses faced the threat of being washed away. On the night of Sept 5, Ganga Bhavan, the most important building of the Irrigation Dept in the dist was engulfed by the river. On Sept 9, the river struck again, claiming 4.5 Ha of land and affecting several villages in Panchanandapur. On the night of Sept 9, the water level was quite high, and the velocity of the flow was more than 4 mts per second when the river attacked its left bank. The Sakullapur area was also threatened by erosion. The Dist Magistrate said, "Of the five blocks that have been affected by erosion and subsequent inundation this year, the worst hit are Panchanandapur, Kalyachak 2, Ratua 1 and Manikchak." With nearly 67.65 sq kms of land being lost owing to erosion and inundation, more than 3500 families have been affected. The BSF fears that the character of the international border may change as these river systems constitute a part of the border in Malda. On an average, nearly 300 to 350 Ha of land are eroded with the floodwater receding, he adds. The Ganga, which has a total catchment area of 969 339 sq kms upstream of the Farakka Barrage, carries a normal flood discharge of 29 452 cumecs and it carries an average silt load of 3.3 MT annually. Recent records show that from 1980 to the present, around 4900 Ha of land has been lost to the Ganga. The Pritam Singh and Keshkar Committees, constituted in 1980 and 1996 respectively to identify the causes of the recurring erosion and floods, suggested certain long term and short-term policy measures. However, owing to the lack of funds at that time, the W Bengal govt could not implement all the suggested measures. (THE TIMES OF INDIA 080903, 101003, 111003, THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS 140903, RAJASTHAN PATRIKA 170903, FRONTLINE 101003, DTE 311003)

Assam Flash floods originating from the neighbouring states and countries are creating havoc in different parts of Assam and the MoWR or the Union MoEF must evolve a strategy towards watershed management in the hilly terrain, said a report of the State Water Resources Dept. All major rivers crisscrossing Assam originate in the neighbouring states and countries and the southern hilly terrain of Bhutan comprises fragile rock formation. Large-scale boulder extraction and indiscriminate felling of trees has completely damaged the watershed of the rivers, causing flash floods in the lower Assam dists. The issue of watershed

management in the territory of Bhutan must be taken up by the Govt of India at the appropriate level to protect the lower Assam dists from the fury of flash floods. (ASAM TRIBUNE 121003)

Haryana Thousands of Ha under agriculture were inundated, which also washed away standing kharif crop worth millions in Jhajjar dist. Kharif crops over 1200 Ha has been damaged. 20 villages in Beri and Bahadurgarh blocks had been heavily affected. (THE TRIBUNE 160903)

"Prior to 1972, when the Farakka Barrage was constructed, there were floods and erosions, but the rate of it has increased to incredible proportions owing to the presence of the dam," Pundarika Roy, Executive Engineer, Irrigation Dept Malda admits.

FLOOD RELIEF

Orissa CM requested Deputy PM to sanction an interim assistance of Rs 2.5 B in view of the damages

due to the floods in the state.

➤ The govt sought Rs 7.7003 B flood relief from the Centre in the first phase on the basis of preliminary estimates of damages. The highest loss of Rs 2.8128 B was sustained by the Water Resources Dept.

➤ On Sept 10, Centre released an advance of Rs 2.904 B to tackle the floods. Of this, Rs 2.3035 B is towards share in Central taxes and Rs 600.5 M is normal central assistance. The Centre also released additional Rs 472.5 M as an advance installment of the Calamity Relief Fund. (THE HINDUSTAN TIMES 020903)

Bihar The centre had earlier agreed to give Rs 1.12 B on the assumption that the state govt had no money in the Calamity Relief Fund. But, when it came to know that a sum of Rs 1.05 B from the Calamity Relief Fund still remained unspent, it decided to withhold the payment of Rs 1.12 B. Under the norms, the Centre provides a sum of Rs 0.58 B to the state Calamity Relief Fund every year. However, for the current fiscal, the Centre's share of Rs 0.58 B was awaited as on Sept 1. (THE ECONOMIC TIMES 020903)

Chhatisgarh The state has assessed losses to the tune of Rs 2.2 B and has rushed a report to the Centre, asking for immediate relief. (THE INDIAN EXPRESS 030903, THE HITVADA 190903)

DROUGHT RELIEF

Karnataka The state sought Rs 18.8 B central assistance and 0.99 MT of foodgrains, said the home minister. Of the ad hoc demand of 0.1 MT of foodgrains, the Union govt had released 0.08 MT. On Oct 06, it was decided at a high level committee meeting that the state would get drought relief assistance of Rs 1.6781 B. The committee also approved the allocation of 0.165 MT of rice for taking up employment generation programmes in the affected areas. (THE HINDU 230903, 181003)

Corruption in MP Adivasi Mukti Sangathan, a group working among the tribals in W MP has alleged massive corruption in drought relief works in Badwani dist and sought immediate transfer of the dist collector in view of the probe, which is to be conducted under the Supreme Court guidelines. An activist of AMS cited a Supreme Court order of May 8 03 regarding the implementation of the Sampoorna Gramin Rojgar Yojna which says that the gram sabhas are entitled to conduct a social audit into all food/ employment schemes and report all instances of misuse of funds to the implementing authorities. He added that commissioners of the Supreme Court have written to the MP govt asking it to set up a joint inquiry committee comprising of those representing civil society along with those from the administration. (THE HINDU 210903)

Maharashtra In view of the severe drought like situation prevailing in parts of the state, the govt invited a team from the Centre to assess the situation and sought a central assistance of Rs 21.5 B and 0.2 MT foodgrains. A cursory glance at the drought prone regions reveal grim situation in 73 talukas in ten dists. Worst hit are the five western dists Pune, Satara, Sangli, Solapur and Kolhapur. Maharashtra state has the biggest number of large dams in India. (BUSINESS STANDARD 230903, THE TIMES OF INDIA 210903)

AP Projecting a grim picture of drought CM sought Rs 9.9612 B central assistance and 1.7 MT of rice under Sampoorna Grameena Rozgaar Yojna. He pointed out that the state had declared 305 mandals as drought affected. Only 7.156 M Ha was covered under various crops as against the normal 8.141 M Ha during the kharif season. (THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS 061003)

FISHERIES

North East Endangered species Environmental degradation and unmonitored fishing has endangered many exotic fish species of the North East, that is home to 260 out of about 600 fish species of the country. The fish in danger are the Garua or giant catfish, Prabhda and ten other species. Researchers say pesticides and other toxics used in killing fish have led to the present situation. (THE INDIAN EXPRESS 070903)

Ganges River Dolphin Gasping for life The first ever survey of the Ganges River Dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*), carried out by WWF India has estimated their population at 1800 - 2000 in seven states. Once found in thousands along the stretch of Brahmaputra – Meghna river, their number came down abysmally during the last century owing to habitat fragmentation by dams and barrages, indiscriminate fishing and pollution. Though dolphins enjoy protection nationally and internationally, their numbers continue to decline in absence of coordinated conservation planning, lack of awareness, continuing development pressures and almost no protected areas. (THE HINDU 060903)

Punjab Fish farming in trouble There was a time when farmers found enough incentive to devote 7320 Ha of land to fish farming in 2003, up from 300 Ha in 1980. But over the past few years receding groundwater levels and increasing salinity have pushed fish farming in troubled waters. In SW Punjab, where water-logging seems to have created a favourable fish farming situation, increasing salinity has baffled the farmers. While this problem persists, PAU experts now advise a paradigm shift to water based farming, or running water aquaculture. HS Sehgal currently working on World bank aided project, now eyes reservoirs like Harike and Nangal and checkdams in the Kandi area as hugely potential areas to contract out to fish farmers and use as hatcheries. "Reservoir fish farming can yield upto 200 kg/Ha," says Sehgal. Would the displaced families, whose lands have been lost due to these dams, get the rights over fish resources? (THE INDIAN EXPRESS 180903)

Uttaranchal Court bans fish auction by UP In a major relief to Uttaranchal govt the Nainital High Court has rejected the UP govt's claim to auction fish from six ponds in the hill state. However, in the case of Sharda Sagar, which is divided between the two states, the Court has recognized both states as entitled to auction fish. (BUSINESS STANDARD 170903)

Bilaspur The state govt is making all out efforts of breeding "gold fish" in the 2.2 Ha breeding farm in Bilaspur dist. (THE TRIBUNE 290903)

FORESTS

Rise in diversion of forestland Proposals from state govts to divert forestland for non-forest use are being cleared expeditiously now than ever before. According to MoEF sources, against an average annual clearance of 350 cases of diversion of forestland for non-forestry use a few years ago, the number has increased to 920 cases a year now. Of the 1512 proposals sent by Uttaranchal or previous UP govt for the diversion of 2768.26 ha of forestland between 1980 and 2003, 752 cases were cleared between 1999 and 2003. (THE TRIBUNE 010903)

HP: Details of 'diverted' forest land sought Following the HP govt withdrawing the notification which excluded certain categories of wasteland from the notified forest areas in contravention of the Forest Conservation Act, the Centre has asked for details of forest land which had already been diverted for other uses. The state govt has admitted that 310 Ha of forestland had been allotted by the previous govt. (THE TRIBUNE 150903)

Delhi Forests A recent report brought out by the Forest Survey of India states that the green cover in Delhi has increased by 2310 Ha in '01 from 8810 Ha in '99. But the final report of the Supreme Court appointed

Environmental Protection and Control Authority report, submitted in July '03, notes "Most of the city is devoid of any forest cover" since area under forests "is not on a uniform basis". (THE INDIAN EXPRESS 210903)

J & K flora and fauna Of the 15 prominent wildlife species found in Kashmir, at least five have been declared "critically endangered species". The endangered species include Hangul (stag), Musk Deer, Markhor, Snow Leopard and Brown Bear. The forest minister said the number of Hangul or the Kashmiri Stag had dwindled from over 5000 to below 200 and that was restricted to the Dachigam National Park only. (THE TRIBUNE 051003)

FARMERS' SUICIDES/ STARVATION DEATHS

Karnataka Unable to bear the humiliation from the banks, cooperatives and private financiers, Putta Tayamma hanged herself on Aug 25. She was the sole breadwinner for the family after her 24-year-old son Mahesh, committed suicide on June 2 this year when he failed to repay the loans. On the same day, a few kms away, Jayram Gowda, a rich farmer hanged himself from the same tree he had nurtured right from his childhood. The sixth bore well he dug with the loan financed through private moneylenders did not see water. Five cases of farmers committing suicide – two each in Bellary and Hassan dists and one in Shimoga dist – have been reported on Sept 2. Three farmers committed suicide on Mandya dist on Aug 30. Elsewhere, in Channagiri taluk of Davangere dist, three farmers ended their lives on Aug 31. Indebtedness took a further toll of seven lives of farmers in various parts of Karnataka on Sept 3. Seven more farmers committed suicide on Sept 5. Three more farmers committed suicide – two in Chitradurga dist and one in Bijapur dist – on Sept 7, taking the toll since Aug 1 to 95. The reports of suicides have been reported in Mysore, Mandya, Tumkur, Chitradurga, Shimoga, Dharwad and Koppal dists. While Davangere dist has reported the highest number of suicides, 30 since April. *Madya dist, state's sugar bowl and the heartland of Cauvery irrigation network* comes next with 22 suicide deaths. There were 14 suicides by farmers in Haveri dist, which comes *under a belt of assured rainfall*. *Madya dist – having the highest net area irrigated to net area sown (43.8%) in the state*, is marked with an undercurrent of spate of suicides under the deceptive layer of lush green paddy nurseries and standing sugarcane. The number of such cases has gone up alarmingly despite the govt announcing Rs 8.56 B package as assistance to farmers in distress. The Home Minister said, "a study of suicides in the past seven years had shown that 600 - 680 such cases were reported in the State each year".

➤ On Sept 29, NHRC asked its Special Rapporteur, K R Venugopal to conduct an on the spot inquiry into the suicides by a family of six members in Koppal dist. and send a report within four weeks. (THE HINDU 020903,

030903, 040903, 070903, 140903, 220903, 260903, 300903 THE INDIAN EXPRESS 050903, SAHARA TIMES 060903)

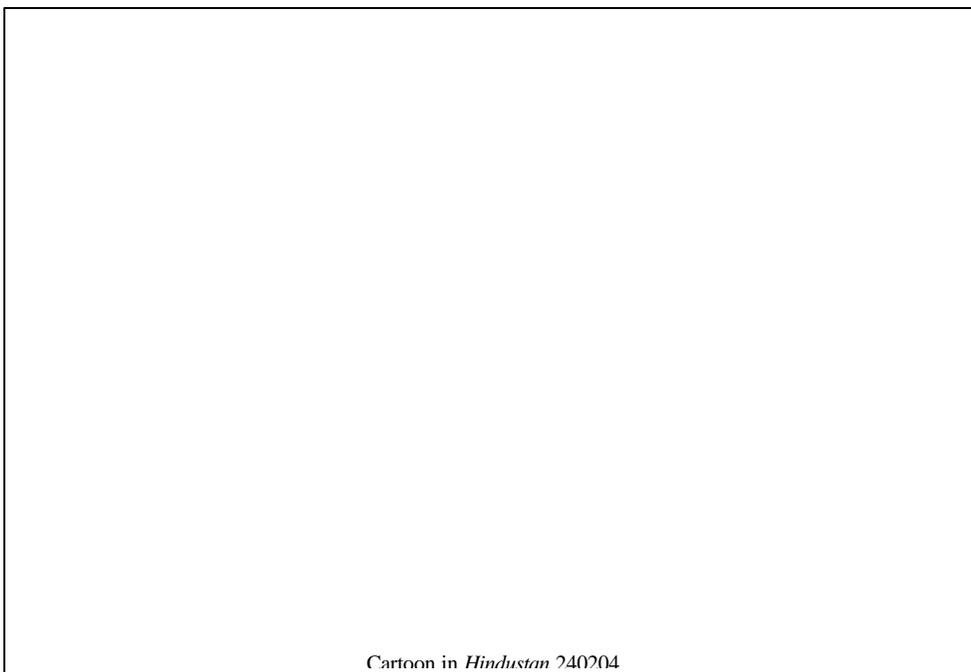
Rupgaon, UP Govt may not accept starvation deaths, but a report submitted in July by the deputy chief medical superintendent of Sonebhadra dist says that 14 children died in Naibasti hamlet of Rupgaon village because they were regularly eating the leaves of chakwadi (a local poisonous grass) and wild, poisonous mushroom. The families of children did not have anything to eat. The report further states that another 18 malnourished children were starving and on the verge of death. This village just 8 kms away from Robertsganj dist headquarter is largely inhabited by Ghasia tribe. Around 50 Ghasia families landed up in this village after being displaced from their villages in the forests five years ago. (THE TIMES OF INDIA 211003)

AGRICULTURE

Salinity killing Haryana lands Rohtak, Hisar, Sirsa, Gurgaon, Jind and parts of Bhiwani, Sonapat districts of Haryana are facing water-logging and salinisation due to rise in the level of underground brackish water as a result of excessive use of canal water. The magnitude of the problem can be gauged from the fact that in 1995, 1996 and 1997, as much as 9.4%, 8.7% and 6%, respectively, of the total area in Haryana was critically waterlogged (water level at 0-1.5 m). The waterlogged area in different years fluctuates by about 8%. However, the potentially waterlogged area between 1.5 m and 3 m depth from October 1995 to 1997 was around 15%. Water logging and salinisation owe their origin to the introduction of canal irrigation in arid and semi arid irrigated areas. Till the inter-basin water transfer of Sutlej water to Haryana the water table was in equilibrium as the requirement was met by rainwater, even though partially. The green revolution made both farmers and the govt complacent and the dangers of water logging and soil salinisation were overlooked for years together. Measures suggested to solve the problem includes reduction in canal water provision in Kharif and Rabi season, keeping the water courses in good condition and providing surface drainage right through the districts to the Rann of Kutch with a lift of 100 m passing through several states.

➤ On the other hand, Kurukshetra, Karnal, Yamunanagar & parts of Kaithal that have good quality of groundwater, are witnessing sharp fall in the water table due to excessive use. (THE TRIBUNE 201003)

Private sector role in wheat procurement? The Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public distribution has suggested the participation of private trade in the procurement of wheat to instil a spirit of competitiveness in the system. He claimed that this would eventually result in a reduction of the economic cost of wheat and a consequent decline in the food subsidy bill, besides ensuring better availability of the cereal for the milling industry. (BUSINESS LINE 240903)

Cartoon in *Hindustan* 740704

Indo-Israeli panel It has been decided to set up a joint committee of officials for greater cooperation in horticulture, floriculture and aquaculture. (BUSINESS LINE 100903, BUSINESS STANDARD 260903)

Rajasthan Task force for grazing land The Centre has constituted a task force for grazing land development in 10 desert dists of Rajasthan including Badmer, Pali, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Nagour, Bikaner, Churu, Jhunjhunu, Sikar and Jhalore with an initial programme of Rs 1 B. (SAHARA 010903)

Farm production The Center for Monitoring of Indian Economy has predicted agricultural production to rise in the current fiscal owing to the normal monsoon. Kharif sowing was almost complete by the end of August and the earlier set back due to a week long delay in rains had been off set. Paddy is planted in 79 % of normal area and coarse cereals have covered 95 % of the normal sown area. Pulses are sown over 11.8 M ha as against the normal sown area of 10.4 M ha. Area under Oil seeds sowing stood at 14.07 M Ha, higher than last year's figure. Sugarcane covered its normal area of 4.3 M ha while area under cotton is 7.4 M ha, which is 84 % of the normal area. Nine sub divisions received excess rainfall and 25 sub divisions received normal rainfall, only two sub divisions – Kerala and N interior Karnataka – were rain deficit till August. (THE HINDU 090903)

Questions over Bt cotton In the second year of Bt cotton, Gene Campaign has said that the performance of Bt Cotton has been way below the indigenous varieties. According to the official report of the AP govt, in N Telangana, net income from Monsanto's Bt cotton crop was five times less than the yield from the indigenous varieties and in S Telangana the difference

was seven times. Questioning the regulatory mechanism, it demanded that the varieties cleared for AP be withdrawn. (THE INDIAN EXPRESS 090903)

Haryana: Soil fertility on the decline Haryana Agricultural University has urged the farmers to focus attention on the stabilization of soil fertility and soil health. According to a study, due to intensive farming and cultivation of High Yielding Varieties over a long period, the soils have started showing signs of fatigue. This is due to over mining of soil nutrients notwithstanding the increase in the consumption of chemical fertilisers from 2.9 kg per Ha in 1966-7 to 154 kg per Ha in 2000-1. The study said 91.5 % of the soils in the state were low

and 7.9 % medium in organic carbon content, which is an index of nitrogen availability. Similarly, 70.3 % soils were low and 25.4 % medium in availability of Phosphorus. The availability of Potassium had also declined with 5.3, 33.2 and 61.5 % soils in low, medium and high categories. Deficiency of Zinc, Iron Manganese and Copper was found to exist in 54, 21, 4.4 and 2.6 % soils. (THE TRIBUNE 100903)

CONTRACT FARMING

Land share firms proposed for farmers Union Agriculture Secretary has mooted a proposal for setting up land share companies with farmers as the holders of shares in proportion to the size of their holdings. Besides, he has suggested liberalisation of land leasing to facilitate quicker farm and non-farm development in rural areas. He revealed that the ministry had drafted a model law on agricultural marketing to provide legal support to contract farming agreements. (BUSINESS STANDARD 020903)

SUGAR

Sugar export to cross 2 MT India's over all sugar export is pegged to cross 2 MT next season. India Sugar Exim Corp has bagged orders from Bangladesh to export 0.10 MT sugar at US \$ 216 - 218 a T free on board for Sept Oct delivery. (THE ECONOMIC TIMES 060903)

Sugar output up Sugar production was up at 19.955 MT during the first ten months of this season ended July 31 against 18.313 MT during the same period last season. (BUSINESS LINE 110903)

States can raise funds from market In a clear move to appease the powerful sugar lobbies, the Centre has agreed to permit the state govts to raise additional market borrowings. State govts would be extended support from the SDF to meet the interest liability to the extent of difference between the Coupon Rate on the Bonds raised through additional market borrowings and 4 %, the rate at which loan is being extended to the sugar mills. On Oct 6, Centre decided to provide Rs 25.63 B assistance package to state govts to clear sugarcane price arrears for 02-03. This includes additional market borrowings of about Rs 18.85 B by state govts and Rs 6.7806 B as one time grant. (THE ECONOMIC TIMES 021003, 071003)

Maharashtra Notwithstanding falling credit profile with defaulting irrigation corps, the state govt decided to raise Rs 9.47 B from the market to bail out the sick sugar industry. However, the help may come with some riders. The Centre wants to clamp a complete ban on recruitment in all the sugar cooperatives along with 20% cut across the board in the wages of all employed in the sector. (THE ECONOMIC TIMES 091003, 121003)

POWER OPTIONS

Haryana energy project The Union Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources and the Ministry of Environment & Forest have approved a Rs 1.64 B project for the Haryana Energy Development Agency to increase market acceptability of solar thermal technologies. The 6-year project assisted by the UNDP-GEF, would meet low and medium energy needs of the industry. (BUSINESS LINE 090903)

Punjab The Punjab Energy Development Agency has decided to set up micro hydel projects of 1 MW to 25 MW at 152 identified sites. (THE TRIBUNE 010903)

Ocean thermal power on hand The National Institute of Ocean Technology is committed to establish the world's first ever floating Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion power plant, on the SE coast of Tamil Nadu. When the 1 MW "demonstration plant" is finally commissioned, probably in the middle of 2004, India would become the first country in the world to have developed a technology to harness power, using the temperature difference between warm surface sea water and the cold sea water, available at a depth of 1100 m. (BUSINESS LINE 080903)

Power from ocean's wave According to an estimate, the sea waves contain as much energy as the world is consuming today. There are mainly two types of wave power devices, first is land-based systems and second is Offshore devices. The basic principle of all the devices is same that include variety of fixed oscillating water column devices. The total operating cost of wave power station is far below that the other power stations. The buoys like structures are small and relatively

inexpensive to build an install. The maintenance cost for a lifetime of 40 years, is also low. Higher capacity power stations (100 MW+) are possible and the power is fed instantly to the power grid. The countries like UK, Norway and Japan have already developed the sea wave power stations. India has a long coastline of about 6000 km. The coastlines are hit by sea waves round the clock and can be exploited for electricity generation. (THE TRIBUNE 021003)

POWER SECTOR

States get more Powers The Planning Commission has decided to dissociate itself from the process of granting approvals to power projects at the state level. These projects will now only require environmental clearance from the Centre. Under the Electricity Act 2003, the states will not have to approach the Centre for any other clearance. However, Central Power Projects and HEPs involving inter-state issues will still have to come to the Plan body for clearance. Previously, all state level projects involving inter-state level projects over 100 MW capacity had to be cleared by the plan panel. (BUSINESS STANDARD 050903)

Punjab: Uninterrupted power for 12500 villages The Punjab Govt has embarked upon a Rs 1 B scheme to provide uninterrupted power supply to 12500 villages. Around 6500 villages had already been provided with the round the clock power supply, it is claimed. (THE TRIBUNE 010903)

Jharkhand The state is planning to enter into a fresh PPA with NTPC, following which it hopes to receive about 300 MW additional power supply from different power stations in the NE. At present JSEB spends Rs 1.05 B per month in order to purchase power from NTPC and DVC. While the rate it pays to DVC is Rs 2.60 per unit, NTPC charges 2.15 per unit. DVC is supplying only 60% of the sanctioned load of 335 MW to the state due to non-clearance of dues by JSEB. Accumulated dues have gone up to Rs 3.85 B. (THE ECONOMIC TIMES 170903)

NE The Energy Research Institute has prescribed opening up of new markets to develop hydropower and hydrocarbon sectors in the NE region so that potential investors are attracted to invest in the power sector in the region. The TERI expert said that if gas from Tripura can meet market demands in other parts of the country through a transit arrangement via Bangladesh, it may trigger further investment in exploration and development in the hydro-carbon sector in Tripura and other areas in the North East. (ASSAM TRIBUNE 081003)

PSI calls for moratorium on privatisation The Public Services International has called for a moratorium on energy privatisation and deregulation and the creation of a global review commission: "A number of global commissions have used stakeholder reviews of policies

in specific sectors, most notably the World Commission on Dams and now in the water sector. Such a review process is urgently needed to review energy policies to balance the needs of the workers, customers, govts, banks and corps." (PSI PR 021003)

Delhi CAG questions on power reforms The CAG has raised questions about privatisation of power in Delhi. The first query was on the appointment of SBI Caps as consultants for the privatisation process at fees of Rs 7 M even though other reasonable consultancies also were on offer. There is also an alleged difference of Rs 3.107 B between the amounts assessed for debt recovery by the govt and the amount recovered by the Discoms. (THE TIMES OF INDIA 260903)

J & K HEPs for private investment Following the announcement of a policy to involve private sector in execution of mini and small HEPs, the J & K govt has notified 12 HEPs for the same. (THE TRIBUNE 301003)

Korba Generation drops by 1750 MW The plentiful monsoon showers also had a problem tinge. The sudden release of waters from Hasdeo barrage caused increased water flow to NTPC's Korba thermal plant, which choked the cooling water inlet of Korba station on Sept 8. This had cut the generation by 1750 MW. (THE ECONOMIC TIMES 090903)

Kota mishap At least four workers were feared trapped in the debris after the bunkers of the coal handling plant at the newly synchronised sixth unit of Kota Super TPS came crashing down on Sept 25. The 195 MW sixth unit of the plant readied in record time of 24 months was dedicated to the nation on Sept 4. The power generation would only start after six months. (THE HINDU 260903, SAHARA 290903)

Irrigation controls hydel generation The Irrigation dept gained control over management of water releases from the Srisaillam and Nagarjunasagar reservoirs in the Krishna basin with CM saying to APGenco that they should not undertake any power generation without prior permission from the irrigation dept in view of poor water levels. (DECCAN CHRONICLE 311003)

States not consulted on power tariff policy Tamil Nadu and other southern states have expressed their opposition to the Centre over the methodology of preparation of the discussion paper on the national power tariff policy as also some aspects of the document. The states had a fundamental objection to the discussion paper, "It should have been prepared in consultation with the states, as per section 3 of the electricity Act 2003". The states were asked to give their comments on the discussion paper after it had been prepared. The document should have given a broad outline of how the tariff should be fixed. Instead, it deals in detail with every aspect, living virtually no work to regulatory bodies. (THE HINDU 100903)

J & K hikes power tariff Discontent is brewing among the people in the valley over the 'arbitrary' hike in the electricity tariff. An ordinary citizen, who till the previous month used to pay Rs 290 per month, is now being forced to pay Rs 1410 - 1800 per month. The metered fee has also been increased by 200 - 300 %. (THE HINDUSTAN TIMES 250903)

Gujarat Farmers boycott power bills One major reason why the CM was forced to lower the power tariff for agriculture was the GEB's poor collection of bill amounts. "The GEB received just 2 % of the Rs 1.2 B of electricity dues that it would have got if there was no boycott by the farmers," said a top bureaucrat. (THE TIMES OF INDIA 231003)

MP Two prominent people's organisations Nimad Malwa Kisan Mazdoor Sangathan and Jan Sangharsh Morcha have described the MP govt's decision to waive the electricity bills of farmers using irrigation pumps upto 5 HP as grossly inadequate. They want the electricity tariff for farmers, poor and the common urban people be rolled back to last year's level. (THE HINDU 141003)

POWER SCAM

J&K Canal Power House scam J & K's state vigilance commission has registered a case of corruption and criminal conspiracy against former Chief Secretary Ashok Jaitly. Holding him responsible for "abusing official position", the SVO FIR says "by misrepresenting and concealing facts, he bulldozed his way and ensured handing over of the power house to M/s Trehan Industries in fulfillment of the object of the conspiracy", at the fag end of his service. The firm took up the project without entering into any formal contract, agreement or MoU. The decision was taken in such haste that neither the board of directors of JKSPDC nor the state cabinet approved it. An expert committee appointed by JKSPDC to evaluate DPR of M/s Trehan Industries had recommended that in view of CEA report, capital subsidy would be available if the project would be taken up by JKSPDC itself that would bring down the cost of production. It was reported that cost of production of electricity per unit could not exceed Rs 1.74 per unit against Rs 3 per unit offered by M/s Trehan Industries. (THE ECONOMIC TIMES 151003)

Idmalyar case The Kerala H Court has set aside the Idmalyar Special Court's verdict sentencing the Transport minister, R Balakrishnan Pillai and two other accused in the graft case to five year rigorous imprisonment. The prosecution charge was that Mr Pillai, who was Electricity minister in the UDF govt during 1980-7, had caused a huge loss to the KSEB by awarding contracts for the construction of a power tunnel and surge shaft of Idmalyar HEP to KP Poulsoe at "extraordinarily high rates". It is important to note

here that earlier Supreme Court had turned down a petition seeking the transfer of the case from Kerala High Court. The reasons cited in that petition referred to Pillai's position in the state govt and opined that his being a minister might affect the verdict. Eight (of 11) the accused were acquitted by the Special Court. (THE HINDU 011103)

Vigilance Bureau questions PSEB officials The Punjab Vigilance Bureau has summoned officials of the PSEB hydel wing for questioning in a case of alleged poor construction of stage-2 dyke of Guru Govind Singh Super Thermal Plant, Ropar. The Vigilance Bureau has started an inquiry into the case on a complaint of the contractor. The contractor was allotted the work to construct the escape channel from the thermal plant along the stage-2 dyke of the thermal plant. He, however, left the job with a complaint that the construction of the escape channel could not be carried out due to the seepage of water from the stage -2 dyke due to the poor construction material used in the dyke. (THE TRIBUNE 120903)

ENRON IMBROGLIO

Arbitration An independent arbitration tribunal in Washington has ordered the Overseas Private Investment Corp, the US govt agency to pay claims of \$ 28.57 M each to Bechtel Power Corp and GE as political risk cover for the two parties' investments in the DPC. The tribunal has also unanimously ruled that "total expropriation has taken place in violation of international law" by the Indian govt. The award is binding and has to be acted on within 30 days. Sources in the DPC's lenders consortium said this award will be a precedent for other international arbitration as well. There are at least six ongoing international arbitration cases against the Govt of India, MSEB as well as Govt of Maharashtra relating to the PPA and the counter-guarantees given for DPC.

➤ OPIC met Indian lenders and investment banker Rothschild on Sept 12 and indicated that it will soon make a claim on the central govt, exercising its subrogation rights. The development has also put Indian lenders on alert, which are also preparing for fresh legal action. They also met the MoF to discuss the matter on Sept 12.

➤ Emboldened by the arbitration verdict, Bechtel and GE initiated another arbitration action against the Indian govt. The two companies said that the total value of their claim might touch \$ 600 M each. On Sept 22, Union MoF sought the Attorney General's views on the arbitration notices. Union MoP has sought the comments of the MSEB.

➤ On Sept 26, Mumbai High Court restrained GE and Bechtel from pursuing arbitration under the New York Court against the MSEB subsidiary MPDCL.

➤ A final proposal on how to restart work on the DPC is to be worked out and submitted by the Indian lenders

to OPIC by Oct 13. (BUSINESS STANDARD 100903, BUSINESS LINE 230903)

Dabhol plea against MERC admitted Supreme Court has allowed the Centre to intervene in the dispute between the DPC and the MSEB to prevent the bankrupt company from invoking counter guarantee for the payment of dues by MSEB. The court also admitted the DPC's appeal against the Bombay High Court ruling that the MERC had exclusive jurisdiction to deal with the disputes between DPC and MSEB. (BUSINESS STANDARD 020903)

POWER FINANCE

Maheshwar State govt has decided to extend guarantees to SKumars for optionally convertible debentures worth up to Rs 4 B. Meanwhile, Common Cause, an NGO headed by H. D. Shouri has moved the Supreme Court saying that the Union govt had directed LIC to advance a loan of Rs 1 B to Shree Maheshwar Hydro Power Corp in MP, despite the fact that the corp had "defaulted" in paying loans advanced by other banks and financial institutions. (THE ECONOMIC TIMES 060903, THE TIMES OF INDIA 030903)

MoP's mega projects policy opposed The Power Ministry has recommended a comprehensive change in the mega power policy. The ministry has suggested the minimum threshold level to be 250 MW and sought complete exemption of custom duty for such projects. It has also called for deleting the price preference provided to domestic bidders. The note urged that price preference given to the domestic bidder has resulted in not only a higher project cost but also lack of sufficient competition in the power projects leading in turn to higher project costs and hence higher power price. The new proposal also includes a comprehensive concession for associated transmission systems. A project may be required to sell at least 25% of its generation outside the state in order to be declared as inter-state to qualify for mega status. With regards to projects with a capacity from 250 MW to 500 MW, the mandatory condition of inter-state sale of power may be deleted. This draft note has been issued for cabinet approval. The Union ministries of power and finance were at loggerheads over the proposals. The current policy envisages such status only for thermal projects with generation capacity over 1000 MW and hydro projects over 500 MW. The Planning Commission had also raised eyebrows on the MoP proposals (THE INDIAN EXPRESS 080903, HINDUSTAN TIMES 131103)

States misusing power reforms funds The ambitious APDP and APDRP have run into trouble. The Planning Commission has pointed out that Maharashtra diverted funds meant for the programme and used the part of the funds it received to pay its coal dues. (BUSINESS STANDARD 041003)

SOUTH ASIA

Afghanistan India's Water and Power Consultancy Services Ltd has bagged several projects in the reconstruction of Afghanistan including preparation of project reports for rehabilitation of the Quargha reservoir, the Amir Ghazi dam, the Khanabad irrigation project and six small hydel power schemes. WAPCOS is also engaged in preparing a project report for the 40 MW Salma dam in Hert province. The company is also undertaking drilling of nearly 75 deep tube wells to meet drinking water requirements in the Hert province. (BUSINESS LINE 250903)

Bangladesh ADB has suspended its loan and two associated technical assistance grants for a conservation project in the Sundarbans. It had approved US \$ 37M in loan for the Sundarbans Biodiversity Conservation Project in Nov '98. The loan became effective in Aug '99 and originally it was to continue till Dec 31, '06. Till June '03, less than 25 % of the project was implemented and 23 % of the funds disbursed. The decision of the suspension came on Sept 8, at a meeting between MoEF and ADB, where the latter informed the govt of their decision to discontinue the funding due to 'inefficiencies in project implementation and inconsistencies in the project's expenditure accounts'. Sources in the Forest Dept dismissed allegations of inefficiency and corruption; in turn alleging that 30 % of the money has been spent to cover 'astronomical fees' charged by foreign

consultants. The SBCP Watchgroup, a coalition of over 35 local NGOs has concurred with the forest dept. (THE DAILY STAR 110903)

Karnali HEP Nepal and India reached an agreement on Sept 16 to develop 300 MW Karnali HEP. In response, it is learnt that the Nepalese team has asked for 15 % of the electricity free of cost. In addition, the Nepalese side has requested NHPC to involve the NEA in the project and prepare the DPR of the 600 MW Budhi Gandaki HEP. (KATHMANDU POST 170903)

EDF interested in Upper Modi project The French energy giant Electricité De France has shown interest in the 42 MW Upper Modi 'A' HEP in Kaski dist, according to the NEA. According to preliminary estimates, the cost of the projects is US\$ 80 M. (KATHMANDU POST 081003)

Bhote Koshi shut down The 36 MW Bhote Koshi HEP shut down on Oct 12, apparently due to threats from the Maoists. The US\$ 100M HEP is the first privately sponsored power project to be undertaken by a US company in Nepal. The US-based Panda Energy, has a major stake in the project. (KATHMANDU POST 141003)

Munda Dam Sources in the Ministry of Water and Power said that Pakistan Private Power Infrastructure Board has accepted an offer made by M/s AMZO Corp of Maryland USA for development of US \$ 1 B Munda Dam located on Swat River in NWFP. (PAKISTAN NEWS SERVICE 131003)

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE WITH SANDRP

1. *Say no to profit over water*: A Dossier on Water Privatisation, SANDRP, 2003, pp 84, Rs 50/-
2. *Vishwa Bandh Ayog per Nagarik Margadarshika* (HINDI), SANDRP, 2002, pp 63, Rs 30/-
3. *Power Finance, Financial Institutions in India's Hydropower Sector*, By Peter Bosshard, Published in India by SANDRP, March 2002, pp 132, Rs. 100/-
4. *Bade Bandh, Bharat ka Anubhav* Hindi Translation of WCD India Country study, By R Rangachari, Nirmal Sengupta, Ramaswamy Iyer, Pranab Banerji & Shekhar Singh, SANDRP, 2001, pp 268, Rs. 100/-.
5. *The Drought, the State and the People: An Experience in Gujarat* SANDRP Dossier on Gujarat Drought 2000, Edited by Sanjay Sangvai, pp 90, Rs. 75/-.
6. *Report of the Daud Committee on Sardar Sarovar Displaced, Govt. of Maharashtra*, SANDRP a co-publisher, pp 54, Rs. 30/-.
7. *Tehri Environment and Rehabilitation: Towards Failure and Devastation*, Published by MATU, pp44, Rs 25/-
8. *Bharat mein Bade Bandh ka Lekha jokha* (Hindi) summary of WCD India Country Study, Manthan, pp18, Rs 5/-
9. *Water: Private, Limited* by Shripad Dharmadhikary, Manthan, pp 54, Rs 20/-
10. ECOLOGIST ASIA SPECIAL ISSUE ON DAMS IN NORTH EAST INDIA, Jan-Mar 2003, pp. 96, Rs 50/-
11. *Seminar Special issue on Floods*, June 1999, pp. 90 Rs 15/-
12. *Conserving Raindrops a Much Better Option than Linking Rivers* by Bharat Dogra, pp 8, Rs 4/-
13. *Nadi Nahin Jodnaa, Bund Bund sanjonaa* by Bharat Dogra, pp. 16, Rs 8/-
14. *Kasbe Ka Paani* By Rehmat/ Mukesh Jat, Published by Manthan, pp 32, Rs 20/-
15. *Rahiman Paani Bik Raha Saudagar Ke Haath* (Hindi) By Sripad Dharmadhikari, Published by Manthan, pp 55, Rs 10/-.
16. *Citizens' Guide to the World Commission on Dams* By A Imhof, S Wong & P Bosshard, Published by IRN, pp 59, Rs 30/-.
17. *River Linking: A Millennium Folly?* Edited by Medha Patkar, Published by NAPM & Initiative, pp 131, Rs 100/-.

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7.5 M Dudhaura irrigation project fails

Dudhaura Irrigation Project implemented six years ago with the investment of the ADB, HMG and the local resources to irrigate 320 Ha in the NE part of Saptari dist has become unsuccessful. It has now been proved that the place for the construction of the canal for the project by the technicians and experts of the dist irrigation office was wrong. (KATHMANDU POST 131003)

Anti Kalabagh Dam rallies in NWFP

The Awami Nationalist Party observed Sept 26 as Anti-Kalabagh Day and arranged protest rallies across the province to force the govt to abandon the project. The speakers termed the proposed plan against the interest of Pushtun community. They alleged that the construction of Kalabagh Dam was merely a mischievous act on part of the ruling party to divert the attention of public from the current national issues. They said the Dam would displace over 100,000 Pushtuns. (HI PAKISTAN 260903)

Thal canal withheld Planning Commission withheld approval for the Rs 30.6 B for the greater Thal canal project due to the opposition by the Sindh govt. Despite WAPDA authorities' insistence that the Thal canal project should be given an early approval as the authority had already spent Rs 300 M on it, the Planning Commission maintained that it would be better if the project was taken up after all the objections raised by the Sindh govt as well as independent experts had been removed. (HI PAKISTAN 081003)

INDO BANGLA JOINT RIVERS COMMISSION

As the water resources ministers of both countries met after nearly three years, Bangladesh was apparently adamant that its concerns on the riverlinking plan be reflected in some fashion in the statement the two sides had been working on during talks. India initially resisted any mention of plan, saying "its just at conceptual stage", however, the agreed minutes did mention it only in a "watered down" fashion, with a telling phrase, "there was nothing to discuss in the matter". The Indian side said "even the pre-feasibility studies are not complete, neither have the DPR been made". Bangladesh minister said that they accepted the assurance from the Indian side that the project was at a conceptual stage. The second point was the only agreement between the two sides on water sharing – the Ganges Treaty. India believed it works well and wanted this to be reflected in the statement. Asked if Bangladesh had sought a review of the treaty, Bangladesh minister said the meeting reviewed the implications of the treaty and Bangladesh did seek a review of the treaty. The other issues discussed were the review of the progress of the joint committee of experts on the Teesta. It was decided that the committee will submit its report by end of 2003. On India's Tipaimukh dam project and a barrage on Fulertal

for irrigation in Assam and Tripura, Bangladesh stated its concerns, to which India said any such project would be implemented after discussions with Bangladesh. On the issue of India wanting repairment along both the banks of the Mahuri, Bangladesh said it would take up the issue with the relevant authorities to obtain an early decision preferably by 2004 as the boundary issue was involved. (THE HINDU 011003, 021003)

BAGLIHAR HEP

Oct 19 – 23 visit was significant, as the Pakistan Commissioner had indicated intent during Commission's last meeting to invoke the "neutral expert" provision under the Indus Waters treaty of 1960. India maintains that the run of the river project on the Chenab in Doda dist is well within the provision of the treaty. Besides the Dam site, a 3-member team visited three major construction sites and assessed the water flow at the Chanderkote project site. At the end of the visit, the two countries stuck to their respective positions. According to a report in the Pakistani newspaper *Dawn*, Pakistan team is convinced that India had breached the 1960 Treaty by building an "unauthorised" dam. While India insisted that there was no violation, Pakistan has raised objections about its water storage capacity. (THE TRIBUNE 241003)

AROUND THE WORLD

IN A BUSTLING BAMBOO VILLAGE BUILT BY THAILAND'S RASI SALIA DAM, SOME 300 DAM-AFFECTED COMMUNITY LEADERS AND THEIR ALLIES GATHERED BY THE SHORES OF THE MUN RIVER AT THE END OF 2003 TO SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES ON LARGE DAM PROJECTS AND TO DISCUSS LESS DESTRUCTIVE WAYS TO MEET WATER AND ENERGY NEEDS. RIVERS FOR LIFE, THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL MEETING OF DAM AFFECTED AND THEIR ALLIES, TOOK PLACE IN RASI SALAI OVER FIVE DAYS. (For details visit www.irn.org/riversforlife)

Mexico The heavily populated state ringing Mexico City has asked for US \$ 2.5 B in compensation for water delivered to the country's capital, sparking a confrontation involving govt entities. Mexico State Governor said that there is no political motive behind a complaint his state filed with the Supreme Court. The state hopes to collect a water debt stretching back to 1970 from Mexico City and from the federal govt; or from both entities. (ENVIRONMNET NEWS NETWORK 050903)

Vietnam A leaked ADB report warns Vietnam that major operational changes are needed to ensure public safety downstream of the country's second largest hydro dam. The report by *Worley*, an Australian engineering consulting firm, confirmed that the filling of the Yali dam reservoir and the commissioning of its

turbines had "inflicted unacceptable levels of impact on downstream societies and habitats," and that its operating regime was "dangerous in the short term." Large spills from the dam killed and injured dozens of people in 1999 and 2000, and swept away property, livestock, and crops in dozens of communities downstream in Vietnam and Cambodia. The *Worley* report criticizes EVN for its "management recklessness" and makes detailed recommendations "to ensure that [Yali] is operated safely & responsibly, meeting international standards." (PROBE International PR 230903)

Brazil drops 1087 MW Santa Isabel HEP A consortium of aluminum producers plans to relinquish a concession to build and operate 1087 MW Santa Isabel HEP due to problems obtaining a Brazil environmental license. Govt environmental agency *Ibama* demanded that Santa Isabel leave completely intact the Araguaia River that runs through a national park. (HRW SEPT 03)

Chile Aluminium project finds few friends In the remote corner of Patagonia beneath snowy peaks that drop into icy fields, the Canadian mining company Noranda found the ideal site to invest nearly \$3 B in an aluminum smelter and three HEPs. More than a decade later, the project is nearly dead after environmentalists, salmon farmers, politicians and citizens banded together to let the Canadian company know that they were not welcome in the region of Aysen.

➤ Recently, Lagos' govt had backed the completion of the \$ 570 M Ralco dam project by Spanish-controlled electric utility Endesa despite protests from indigenous groups that it flooded sacred land. (PLANET ARK 141003)

German Minister presents draft Flood Control Act Almost a year to the day after the devastating flood disaster along the river Elbe, Federal Environment Minister presented a draft for an Act to improve preventive flood control. "We will give our rivers more room again; otherwise they will take it themselves", he said. The draft Act is based on the Five - Point Programme to improve preventive flood protection, adopted by the Federal Govt on Sept 15 2002. The concept is to adapt by means of an Article Law the various legal provisions relevant to flood protection at federal level. In future, there will be a nationwide requirement for the designation of flood zones on the basis of so-called "100-year flood levels". The Länder will be given a period of five years to designate these zones. A second category of "flood-prone zones" will be introduced and placed under protection. "The large number of dam failures along the rivers Elbe and Mulde have shown that dams and walls do not provide

absolute protection", the minister said. The Act requires all agricultural activity to be stopped in flood zones by the end of 2012. "Agriculture in flood zones increases especially the risk of erosion and thus of pollutant inputs during flood events", minister pointed out, adding that grassland farming was the first priority in flood zones. (<http://www.bmu.de> 080803)

China earthquake affects reservoirs The twin quakes, with magnitudes of 6.1 and 5.8, rumbled through the NW China. The govt said preliminary figures show a potential economic loss of \$ 37.4 M, which includes damage to over 46 000 households in 175 villages. Xinhua news agency said 14 322 houses were flattened and over 16 000 heads of livestock were killed or injured. The govt discharged water late Oct 25 and 26 to "guarantee the safety of local people and property" below the two reservoirs. Several farmers' fields were flooded by the discharge. The water reduction from the Shuangshusi and Zhaizhaizi reservoirs began after cracks were spotted in the two dams. Nearly 200 MCFt of water was released. Another reservoir in Quzhaizi in Minle country also developed a crack 1 cm wide and 410 mts long. The three affected counties are located in an earthquake-prone region called the Qilian seismic zone. Seismologists say a rupture there may be making the area more seismically active. (AZ central.com 271003)

Kazakh Dam condemns shrunken Aral Sea A seven mile Dam is being built across a small Northern section of shrunken Aral Sea. The saline inland sea has been drying out for 25 years, since the USSR began a vast irrigation scheme drawing water from two rivers. Rescue schemes tried in the past decade have failed and one of the two rivers has ceased to flow. Kazakhstan says its river, the Syr-Daria, cannot by itself keep the whole sea alive. The water is in effect being wasted in the southern "dead zone". Sirodjidin Aslow, chairman of International Fund for Saving Aral Sea, said that they are trying to solve problem. (THE GUARDIAN 291003)

Salutes to Sarita and Mahesh Our salutes to the life, work and struggle of brave Sarita and Mahesh who in their work for the poorest and weakest in Gaya district in Bihar laid down their lives on January 24 2004. We hope to carry more detailed report of their work in one of the next issues of DRP. In the meantime we would only like to say that we need to create some more *Sabdos*.

QUOTES

Sir George Campbell who became Member of the Parliament after retiring from Bengal, had once commented on Sir Arthur Cotton saying that, 'there was some truth in the saying regarding him, that he had water on his brain.'

DK Mishra, on riverlink discussion group, 311203

NEWS ABOUT BOOKS, REPORTS, MEETINGS ETC

The Nowhere People: Responses to Internally Displaced Persons, Thakran, Siby (ed), Published by Books for Change, Bangalore. Pp 156. Rs 180

"It just might be that people are too busy coping with the terrible fact of displacement. The fact that most societies and most communities in our times have had to either migrate or accept migrants on a massive scale, and go through other unsettling trajectories that throw every participant off the balance. This perhaps makes it impossible for the people to think of (re-) settlements. Suppose this reading of our general predicament of having become refugees of some sort, of most nations having stretched themselves to give some importance to their diasporic contingent and our fellow citizens facing traumatic terror as borders are drawn and redrawn and having been subjected to process that leave them distanced, mentally if not always physically – is on the right track. It then follows that we, linguists image ourselves not as working with settled speech communities, but with speech dislocations that have to heal."

This plea made by Prof Probal Dasgupta in his essay, *Towards Green Linguistics* comes to my mind as I sat down to review the book, *Nowhere People*. Fashioning a critique of dominance, or let's say, Development Induced Displacement, Dasgupta urges fellow language workers to un-knot new forms of oppression and violence, physically and mentally displacing and uprooting populations, whose well beings, whose cultural self definition needs to form part of maps linguists draw. The book under review makes an inspiring reading towards articulating similar concerns.

The Nowhere People brings together nine papers presented at a national consultation organized by the Ecumenical Christian Centre, Bangalore in Sept 2000, with an introduction from the editor Siby Thakran. The book opens with Antony Dias' paper, *Development Induced Displacement and its Impacts*. Dias details the displacement in pre and post independence India, attending to resultant pauperization and marginalisation of Displaced/ Project Affected Persons. He opines that "near absent or largely underestimated database of DPs/ PAPs is an indication of the decision makers' lack of commitment to rehabilitation". He also revisits the role played by Indian judiciary in relation to rehabilitation policies and laws. I had a chance to meet Dias during his fieldwork amongst those displaced by Sardar Sarovar Colony. I hope to see his work in print, even as Kevadiya Colony people face renewed threats of displacement from SSNN's proposal to develop the colony as 'eco-tourism site' at a cost of Rs 1.7 B.

The second chapter by D C Sah engages more with presenting displacement more or less as one of the design features of development process. He tries to

present some second-generation problems of R & R using experience of SSP. Sah points out, "about 20% of relocated households feel that their land quality is poor and needs mechanical or chemical treatment; in about 5% of PAPs this problem is intense. About 9% of the households had their land coming under canals or roads. About 4% reported that their agricultural land remained waterlogged during rainy season".

One theme that has recurrent presence in the book is displacement induced by Big Dams and poor track record of project authorities in rehabilitating oustees. The international dam industry has displaced 40-80 M people during the last 50 years as per WCD report. After its independence India has constructed 3600 large dams, most of which have forcefully evicted 25 to 56 M people as per various figures. About 50% of such displaced people are tribals or dalits. There are three papers here that deal directly with the adverse impacts of Big Dams. D. Sunder Raj takes up the question, *Big Dams: Boon or Burden* and probes the relevance of Big Dams in India. Sunder Raj's paper engages with the issues of Costs & benefits of Big Dams, R and R, Technical Failure of Dams, Dams and Disease and questions the economic interests of funding agencies.

The paper by Dr Bipin K Jojo fashions a political-economic critique of the Upper Kolab project in Koraput district, Orissa. Jojo stresses that in the whole process of development the powerful groups benefits at the cost of the powerless group while making the latter more vulnerable. After revisiting the historical context in which Multi Purpose Projects emerged in Orissa's development paradigm, Jojo discusses briefly the topography of the region and steers the discussion to political economy of the project reviewing the displacement and rehabilitation process in the backdrop of Rehabilitation costs and overall cost-benefit analysis. One would have appreciated had the editor given the list of references cited by Jojo.

The paper by Dr S N Pawar and Dr B R Patil highlights the major findings from the study of problems of people displaced due to Koyna Dam in Maharashtra with reference to economic, socio-cultural problems, civic facilities and impact of rehabilitation. Deriving their arguments from the survey of 6150 resettled families, and in-depth interviews with 625 resettled families, they note that two out of every three respondent families did not receive any land from the govt. They have also noted the grim reality of the lack of health facilities in Koyna at R&R sites and in the catchment area.

Papers by D Jeevan Kumar and by Golak Bihari Nath deal with the issue from legal/ rights perspectives. While Jeevan Kumar details the rights of IDPs in human rights framework, referring to *Guiding Principles on*

Internal Displacement (UNCHR 1998); Nath critiques, with special reference to Orissa that the Land Acquisition Act, 1894, amended in 1984, is full of anomalies and contradictions. Stressing the urgent need to have rights oriented approach to displacement and R&R; Nath laments, "the Land Acquisition has got a legal standing, whereas there is no constitutional or legal rights for rehabilitation". Discussing individual and social consequences of Internal Displacement, Dr Umrao Singh Chaudhari stresses on the need to generate data and evidence, to counter the fossilized concept and attitude of inevitability of displacement and preaching to the poor, innocent and ignorant to make sacrifice for development.

In sum, *The Nowhere People* tries to weave concerns discussing Development and Conflict Induced Displacement and responses to IDPs in terms of R & R. In doing so, it poses challenge to dominance of development and tries to retrieve voices of people, who have often been silenced by the State. Lets hope that it becomes instrument in opening the dialogue where communication seems to have broken down due to silencing acts of state, society and judiciary.

Himanshu Upadhyaya (The Reviewer is an independent researcher on public finance, public accountability issues)

Jan 17-8 Mah Sinchan Parishad Maharashtra Sinchan Sahyog had organised the fifth Maharashtra Sinchan Parishad with theme of "Towards multiple cropping pattern". Despite water rich Vainganga and thousands of traditional water tanks constructed 300 - 400 years ago, Gondia and Bhandara dists have lagged behind in the developmental process, due to under utilisation of water resources and single crop pattern. The earlier four conferences held at Parbhari, Akola, Dapoli and Rahuri had brought the issues pertaining to irrigation to people's platform.

Sustainable management of wetlands: Biodiversity and beyond edited by Jyoti Parikh and Hemant Datye, Sage Publications, New Delhi. Pp. 444. Rs 650

The book is an outcome of the Capacity-21 project sponsored by the UNDP and conducted by the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research in collaboration with MoEF. It aims at translating environmental economics into economic decision-making. Eminent contributors from diverse backgrounds of zoology, botany, avian and marine biology, ornithology, economics and remote sensing worked as a team in this project and studied management of wetlands through diverse perspectives. Four sections include ecological approaches, managerial and economic approaches, a case study approach and the larger picture that deal with the network of protected area and wetlands. (THE TRIBUNE 140903)

Environmental Laws: Implementation Problems and Perspectives by Benimadhab Chatterjee, Deep and Deep Publications, New Delhi, Pp. 283. Rs 580

The book gives a detailed account of various environmental legislation, their implementation in W Bengal, the working of bodies created under these legislations, successes achieved in the efforts, the present situation and some concrete suggestions about what should be done to realise the objectives of these legislation. The introductory part emphasises the fact that a sound legal mechanism is a *sine qua non* for protecting the environment. The author then goes on to explain various environmental laws and their present framework, implementation of these laws and the role of the courts, people and NGOs in implementing these laws. The author has concentrated more on the implementation of these laws and to explain various points, he has discussed the working and structure of the WBPCB. (THE TRIBUNE 070903)

Herders at Home A brochure by Sudhirendar Sharma

By March 2005, when it will close, the Integrated Watershed Development Project (Hills) would have treated some 74 656 Ha of ecologically degraded region of *Kandi* in the Shivalik foothills in Haryana. The hope however is founded on the light of what the project interventions have achieved in terms of controlling migration. There has been significant reduction in migration, bringing herders back to farming subject to per capita access to land resources. For instance, in the village Shergujara only 4 households out of the 14 are engaged in migratory activities today. In terms of number of migrated cattle only 120 cattleheads were engaged in migratory movements against previous 280.

Impact of HEPs, Pollution on fish population A report by NEERI and CIFRI

While it has long been established that the big HEPs affect aquatic life, particularly fish; the recent study carried out by NEERI and CIFRI has revealed that the construction of Beas – Sutlej link has seriously affected fisheries. Fish population is depleting. Habitat of trout fish has suffered most because of the ecological degradation caused by various river valley projects. Once teeming with Mahseer, snow trout, cobitids and other fish, the streams like Suketi, Kansa and stretch from Pandoh to Kunka Tal have hardly any fish now. Traditional fishermen who earned their livelihood from these streams have been rendered jobless. The impounding of the river and diversion of its water had restricted the movement of migratory fish species like Trout and Mahseer. Besides, it also led to the extermination of their feeding and breeding grounds. The changes were not merely environmental in nature, it also triggered obstruction and pollution. The situation has become worse in recent years due to dumping of silt in khads, forming a thick matrix of muck all along the riverbed rendering it impossible for fish to lay eggs and feed on natural insect fauna. (THE TRIBUNE 241003)

I am getting the DRP issues regularly. They contain very useful information. I just want to say I am with you in this work.

Recently when asked by *The Times of India* had said one sentence about the River Linking Proposals: "This is the role of *Prabhu* (God), Suresh Prabhu has no role here." Nature joins the rivers as they meet at confluence and nature also breaks the rivers into thousands of parts at Delta. We need to understand all these processes.

Anupam Mishra, Gandhi Peace Foundation, Delhi

I am extremely thankful to you for regularly sending me the issues of DRP. These issues contain very useful information about water and I am used some of these in my articles on River Linking Projects published in *Nai Duniya*.

Dr Ram Prtap Gupta, Rampura, Neemach, MP

Many Thanks for providing the information about Allain Duhangan Project. You are doing very important work, but till the main stream media gives up its prejudices and does not give attention to these very important issues, it will be difficult to raise wide spread awareness and movement. We do not know how big a threat these projects are for us.

Rajeev Lochan, Nainital Samachar, Uttaranchal

Prachi Pathagar is involved in experimenting a model of livelihood system in waterlogged areas close to Bay of Bengal and Chilika Lagoon in Puri District in Orissa. We found DRP very useful in our efforts.

Somesh Mahapatra, Prachi Pathagara, Puri, Orissa

I have read DRP (Nov-Dec 2003). Your effort is too much valuable and remarkable. The matter published is boon for us. We now know more about the Ken Betwa Link proposal. This is a great national problem directly connected to the people of India. I am attaching an article I recently wrote on this subject.

Dr Krishna Mohan Saxena, Banda, UP

Maya Ram Surjan Foundation, Raipur
VII All India Journal Competition – 2002
Category: NGO
Overall Excellence
DAMS, RIVERS & PEOPLE
SANDRP, New Delhi

We are grateful to the Maya Ram Surjan Foundation, Raipur and Shri Lalit Surjan, their Managing Trustee for giving *Dams, Rivers & People* the above award of 7th All India Journal Competition 2002 for Overall Excellence. The award was received by Bipin Chandra on behalf of SANDRP from the Chief Minister of Chhatisgarh at a public function in Raipur on Jan 16, 2004.

PUBLIC NOTICE: CED Outreach Scholarship:

CED is happy to announce its Outreach Scholarship. The Outreach Scholarship is aimed at linking the documentation effort at CED, to concerned activists and student, who are debating the development and change scenario and looking to study and contribute new ideas.

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1. Social workers/ NGO activists in organisations: who want to take sometime out for studying reading.
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For details, see: www.doccentre.org/announcements/outreach1.html. Interested persons may write to CED at scholars@doccentre.org or CED, No 7, 8th Main, III phase, Domlur, Bangalore

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