

January 2016

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD JANUARY 25TH TO JANUARY 31ST, 2016

CHRONIC SHORTAGES: BHC GIVES GOVT 11 DAYS TO FIX GWADAR WATER CRISIS

The Express Tribune, January 25th, 2016.

Mohammad Zafar

QUETTA: The Balochistan High Court has given the provincial government 11 days to address the shortage of potable water in the port city of Gwadar while seeking reports from authorities on various issues, including gas load-shedding and transfer of land for a fly-over.

Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhel gave the direction after hearing three different cases over the past week.

On a petition regarding shortage of potable water in Gwadar, Commissioner, DC, Collector Gwadar, Balochistan Development Authority and Secretary PHE presented their reports to the court.

Reviewing the reports, Justice Mandokhel expressed his discontent and directed the provincial government to make the desalination plant in Gwadar operational by February 4.

The court also ordered the chief minister to lay pipelines in Swar and Shaadi Kor Dam. He was further directed to have PC-1 of Shanlak, Barikor, Sajji Kor and Saman Kor Dams prepared.

Gas load-shedding for Industries, CNG pumps?

Gas companies in Balochistan have asked the BHC whether they can regulate supplies to industries and CNG pumps in the province in order to boost supply for homes.

As the court heard a petition on gas supply, counsels for the Sui Southern Gas Company and Mari Gas offered to prepare a schedule for gas load-shedding. They explained that new gas meters would help cut theft and boost pressure, but many consumers were resisting the move.

A counsel for Mari Gas said production from the Zarghoon gas field had been increased to 11.40 mmcft while efforts were underway to double it to 25 mmcft.

Justice Mandokhel inquired about Balochistan's quota of gas and whether it was getting its due share.

Before adjourning the hearing till February 16, he asked Mari Gas to explain why gas production had not been increased from Zarghoon field.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1033597/chronic-shortages-bhc-gives-govt-11-days-to-fix-gwadar-water-crisis/>

REDIRECTING FLOODWATER: WAPDA REBUFFS SINDH'S CALL TO RAISE CREST LEVEL

The Express Tribune, January 31st, 2016

Hasnaat Malik

ISLAMABAD: The Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) has rejected the Sindh government's call to raise the sill level of the Rainy Canal Project, saying the request was 'unacceptable' because the canal was ready to operate.

Wapda placed a report on the project before the top court in a matter related to implementation of the recommendations made by the Commission on Flood Inquiry 2010.

The Rainy Canal Project is one of the mega projects of the water sector that was launched by the then president of Pakistan in October 2002. It will utilise the surplus floodwater of the Indus River when the discharge exceeds 250,000 cusecs.

Rainy canal is proposed as a flood canal off-taking from the left side of the Indus River upstream of the Guddu Barrage.

The existing Ghotki Feeder is the perennial canal which is also off-taking from the left side of the Guddu Barrage adjacent to the rainy canal.

According to the report, the irrigation department believes that since the crest level of the head regulator of the rainy canal is 244 feet — which is the same as the Ghotki Feeder — irrigation supplies to the feeder would be reduced during normal operation, resulting in problems for the farm owners depending on the feeder.

Moreover, the provincial department would be unable to fulfil the requisite supplies, especially during shortage of water in the Indus River.

Wapda, however, argues that the demand for raising the crest level of the project is unacceptable when the canal is ready for operation.

The rainy canal is providing the facility to supply water for defence purposes, and there is official correspondence from the Pakistan Army to the Sindh Irrigation Department as well as Wapda, demanding that there would be water requirement for defence purposes from time to time, says the water authority.

Therefore, it adds, Wapda and the defence authorities do not agree to raising the sill level. “If the irrigation department still wants to raise the level, however, it can do so on its own after taking over the project.”

The report says the first phase of the project was finalised in June 2014, but the second phase has yet to be completed. Meanwhile, a three-judge bench of the Supreme Court, headed by Justice Mian Saqib Nisar, disposed of the case.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1037264/redirecting-floodwater-wapda-rebuffs-sindhs-call-to-raise-crest-level/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD JANUARY 18TH TO JANUARY 24TH, 2016

NEELUM JHELUM: FIRST UNIT TO BE COMMISSIONED IN JUNE 2017

The Express Tribune, January 22nd, 2016.

LAHORE: The first unit of the 969 MW Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower project will be commissioned in June 2017, while the other three – one at a time – will also come online by December 2017, said Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) Chairman Zafar Mahmood.

During his visit, the chairman observed that progress on most of the components was ahead of the revised schedule.

He appreciated project authorities, consultants and contractors for their efforts in expediting the construction work and directed them to continue working at the same pace to complete the strategically important project on time.

The chairman visited the dam site at Nauseri, river crossing at Majohi to attend the break-through ceremony of the right tunnel and power house at Chattar Klas.

It is pertinent to mention that the two sections of the right tunnel – one excavated from the dam site and the other from the power house – were connected on January 9 against the target date of January 15.

“The Neelum Jhelum project is a monument of the Pak-China friendship towards the development of hydropower in Pakistan,” said the chairman while performing the connecting ceremony of the two sections. He was also briefed that the overall progress of the project currently stood at 76%; out of the 68km long tunnel, so far 59km have been excavated while 74% of the dam construction is complete.

The power house and the switchyard of the project are scheduled to be completed in November this year

Upon completion, the Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project will contribute 5.15 billion units of electricity every year to the national grid.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1031983/neelum-jhelum-first-unit-to-be-commissioned-in-june-2017/>

EVERY DROP COUNTS: EXPERT STRESSES NEED FOR POLICY TO ENSURE SUSTAINED WATER SUPPLY

The Express Tribune, January 23rd, 2016.

Ammar Sheikh

LAHORE: “The global demand for water by 2030 will increase by more than 40 per cent of the supply today,” Khalid Mohtadullah, an expert in water resources policy, said on Friday, describing the growing population and climate change as the major factors behind the high demand.

Mohtadullah was speaking at the inaugural session of Centre for Water Informatics and Technology at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS).

The session titled Smart Water Management: Challenges and Opportunities for Pakistan was attended by Massachusetts Institute of Technology's (MIT) James Wescoat, Stanford University's Sally Benson, Mehran University of Engineering and Technology's Bakshal Lashari, Abubakr Muhammad from the LUMS and former irrigation secretary Arif Nadeem.

Mohtadullah gave a presentation on the global water demand and the things to come. He stressed the need for creating a policy to ensure a sustained supply for all. He said the world had made significant progress with regard to achieving millennium development goals (MDGs) in water sustainability.

Mohtadullah said agriculture was the sector using most of the fresh water. "It accounts for 70 per cent of water use worldwide. In Pakistan, the ratio is around 95 per cent." "We must realise the need for addressing the issue of depleting water resources."

He said that reduced and polluted water resources coupled with climate change had forced people to migrate all over the world. A similar trend could soon be seen in Pakistan, Mohtadullah said. He said that for Pakistan water was closely linked to the country's economy. "Realising the connection between water and economy should be a reason for the stakeholders to act," he said.

Mohtadullah also discussed the impact of the Indus Waters Treaty on Pakistan with regard to a decline in water availability in the country. He said Pakistan must invest in water-storage initiatives to avoid a drought.

"Pakistan has only 30 days of water reserves, lower than India and many other countries whose economies largely depend on agriculture."

Speaking to The Express Tribune, LUMS Vice Chancellor Sohail Naqvi said the Centre for Water Informatics and Technology could greatly impact the country's water policies. He said the centre had brought together people from various academic background... to propose a solution to water scarcity.

Later, James Wescoat moderated a panel discussion in which Arif Nadeem stressed the need for Pakistan to address the issue of water pollution. He said River Ravi was the most polluted in the country because of the waste from industries that was dumped in it.

Sally Benson said that California had faced similar problems and that Pakistan could benefit from the solutions the US state had come up with to address the issue.

"California had faced four years of drought devastating its agriculture sector. However, the state resorted to innovative solutions... lowering its dependence on water."

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1032614/every-drop-counts-expert-stresses-need-for-policy-to-ensure-sustained-water-supply/>

PAKISTAN NAVY STARTS WATER SUPPLY TO GWADAR

The News, January 23, 2016

ISLAMABAD: Cognizant of the gravity of shortage of water, Chief of the Naval Staff has directed PN authorities to provide all possible relief to residents of Balochistan's coastal city, Gwadar.

The spokesman of Pakistan Navy on Friday said the PN utilising its resources promptly dispatched its Coastal Tanker PNS KALMAT to Gwadar with 385 tons of fresh drinking water on board. "The Ship has reached today at Gwadar Port and distribution of water to area residents in coordination and consultation with local district administration is in progress," he said.

Commander West Navy, Commodore Muhammad Waris supervised the said relief efforts on behalf of Pakistan Navy. The provision of water to Gwadar City through Pakistan Navy Coastal Tankers will continue during next few weeks till the situation gets normal.

Pakistan Navy has always been forthcoming in service of nation through its relief and rehabilitation support, whether be it an earthquake, flood or any natural calamity.

The prevalent scarcity of water in Balochistan due to scanty water resources and marginal rains has adversely affected the common man and the situation has now risen to the alarming limits.

Pakistan Navy, having its operational bases and adequate presence at coastal belt, is actively pursuing various development projects especially in Gwadar and Ormara. Pakistan Navy would continue to provide all out assistance to government of Balochistan with its available resources to ease out miseries of the populace of Gwadar.

The News, January 23, 2016

Dr Anwar Hussain

There are many factors that influence water resources both at the global and at the national levels. Climate change is one of these factors. Countries that have more water storage capacity are less affected by climatic shocks as compared to those that have less water storage capacity. This is the major reason that keeps Pakistan in the list of most vulnerable countries.

According to the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), Pakistan can barely store 30 days of water in the Indus Basin Irrigation System (IBIS). The Indus basin covers 65 percent of the territory, comprising the provinces of Punjab, Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the eastern part of Balochistan. The Indus basin has a large groundwater aquifer covering a gross command area of 16.2 million hectare.

Pakistan is one of those water scarce countries that have low storage capacity. Consequently, the flood water brought massive destruction almost each year. According to recent statistics, Pakistan is included in the list of water stressed countries where the threat is 'extremely high', placed at number 32, and will only have 104 million acre feet in the year 2025 as against its requirements of 135 million acre feet (including drinking water) in the same year. The country will have a shortfall of 31 million acre feet in the year 2025.

At present, the water indicators are not encouraging. The total internal renewable water resources are 55 (in km³/year) which is low when compared to India 1446, Iran 128.5, China 2 813, Nepal 198.2 and Bhutan 78 (in km³/year). The total external renewable water resources of Pakistan are 191.8 (in km³/year) which are lower compared to India (464.9). The total surface water of Pakistan is 239.2 km³/year, which is lower compared to China with 2739 km³/year. Similarly, the long-term average annual precipitation for Pakistan is 494 mm, which is 1170 mm per year in India.

In the year 2014, the total renewable water resources per capita of Pakistan were 1333 m³/inhab per year; this is low when compared with India at 1508, Iran with 1746 and China at 1993 m³/inhab per year. Furthermore, in 2014, Pakistan had the highest dependency ratio (77.71 percent) as compared to India with 30.52 percent, China 0.96 percent and Iran 6.77 percent. This ratio shows the percent of total renewable water resources that originate outside the country.

According to an FAO report generated on January 14, 2016, in the year 2008, agricultural water withdrawal – which is the annual quantity of self-supplied water withdrawn for irrigation, livestock and aquaculture purposes – was 172.4 10⁹ m³/year showing that agriculture is the major consumer of our water resources; more than 90 percent of water is used for irrigation purposes.

The total agricultural water managed area was 21240 thousand hectares in which the total area equipped for irrigation was 19990 thousand hectares and non-equipped flood recession cropping area was 1250 thousand hectares.

Similarly, full control harvested irrigated area was 21452 thousand hectares in which the area under temporary crops was 20657 thousand hectares and area under permanent crops was 795 thousand hectares. The cropping intensity was also noted as 111.3 percent. The cropping intensity is low as compared to India (which stands at 140.1 percent). Under the Indus Waters Treaty (1960) between India and Pakistan, it is estimated that 170.27 km³/year is reserved for inflow from India into Pakistan. However, additional steps need to be taken such as increasing water storage capacity through constructing mega dams, revising the cropping pattern to lessen the burden on water resources etc. It is also necessary to devise and implement both short- and long-term water policies which will help us going out from the water crisis.

The writer is assistant professor at the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Islamabad.

<http://www.thenews.com.pk/print/93102-Water-under-threat>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD JANUARY 4TH TO JANUARY 10TH, 2016

KP GOVT TO SPEND 10PC OF ADP FUNDS ON DRINKING WATER

Manzoor Ali, Dawn, January 5th, 2016

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government's Drinking Water Policy 2015 plans to ensure the access of the province's entire population to adequate supply of potable water at affordable cost through efficient and sustainable services by 2025.

The policy was approved by the provincial cabinet in Oct last year.

The document, a copy of which is available with Dawn, laid down that during the next fiscal, at least 10 percent of the province's Annual Development Programme (ADP) funds would be allocated for the drinking water sector.

"Priority will be given to unserved areas inhabited by poor and marginalised communities while planning new water supply projects," it said.

According to the policy, 82 per cent of the province's population has access to improved sources of drinking water, while 41 per cent of those having access to water are served with piped drinking water.

It however points out disparities in terms of water supply coverage between urban and rural areas.

"Urban areas are mostly covered with 98 percent of people having access to clean drinking water, while 21 percent of rural population estimated to be around one-fifth of the total rural population lacks access to the improved sources of water."

The policy also said the predominant source of water in the province was groundwater but due to the persistent withdrawal and dwindling re-charge processes, the groundwater was fast depleting at many places.

"The surface water sources are mostly available in northern districts of the province. However, unrestrained contamination and increasing use for irrigation pose major threats to safety and availability of surface water for drinking purposes."

The policy said the provincial government would be responsible for policy formulation, and funds allocation and regulation, while the district government would be responsible for scheme identification, funds allocation, planning, implementation, operation and maintenance of local water supply schemes implemented by the public health engineering department from the district government funds.

It added that the necessary legislation would be made to establish a water and sanitation service regulator with the legal cover, and administrative and financial autonomy.

According to it, the public health engineering and local government departments will be the lead government agencies for the development of the drinking water supply sector in rural and urban areas.

In urban areas, the independent water utilities on the pattern of the Water and Sanitation Service Peshawar will be formed, while in small and medium sized towns and cities, tehsil municipal administrations or municipal committees will be responsible for the supply of drinking water.

Under the policy, environmental impact assessment will be mandatory for all major water sector projects. It will be the KP Environmental Protection Agency's responsibility to ensure that such projects do not adversely affect the environment.

A long list of villages not having access to water supply will be prepared in each district based on need and demand basis in consultation with the district government and elected representatives.

"This list will be prioritised in view of technical, social and financial feasibilities. Each year, schemes will be included in ADP from prioritised list," it said, adding that the legislations including Drinking Water Act, Water and Sanitation Regulatory Authority Act and Water and Sanitation Companies Act will be made to achieve goals and objectives of the policy.

According to the policy, the water quality monitoring and surveillance framework will be established to ensure that equality of all public and private water supplies conform to the required standards.

A committee consisting of the local government and public health engineering secretaries, four MPAs nominated by the speaker of the provincial Assembly, technical professionals, academics, civil society and development partners will coordinate the implementation and monitoring of the policy.

It will also develop a comprehensive strategy and action plan immediately upon the approval of this policy.

When contacted, public health engineering department secretary Nizamuddin said it was the first-ever drinking water policy of the province.

He said the policy approved by the provincial cabinet provided a strategic framework for the supply of drinking water across the province.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1230899>

BASIC health facilities failure major reason behind recurring newborn deaths in Thar
Mohammad Hussain Khan, Dawn, January 7th, 2016

HYDERABAD: One of the major reasons behind recurrence of newborn deaths in Tharparkar is the failure of dispensaries and basic health units to provide adequate treatment to the ailing mothers and their babies, compelling them to rush to Mithi civil hospital, and thereby stretching its already scarce resources to the limit. According to official statistics, about 70 per cent government dispensaries in the desert region are either partly functional or without having an 'approved schedule of new establishments (SNEs)'.

In bureaucratic jargon, a government establishment or infrastructure without an SNE will have no budget, no staff, no furniture and other facilities necessary for running it, thus seriously crippling its capacity to function.

Such establishments are run often on ad hoc basis by sending there some staff posted somewhere else and arranging material enough to make it run.

In Tharparkar, 26 posts of doctors, 25 of them BS-19, are still lying vacant, inquiries by Dawn showed on Wednesday.

The arid region is again in the eyes of media because of newborns' death which have risen to 13 to date, according to Tharparkar's District Health Officer (DHO) Dr Arjun Kumar who attributed the deaths to birth asphyxia, underweight, premature labour, diarrhoea and pneumonia.

Sources in health department said that Tharparkar health facilities were under dual management of the People's Primary Healthcare Initiative (PPHI) and the provincial health department.

The PPHI caters to needs of 21 per cent of Thar area through 49 facilities, 31 basic health units (BHUs) and 18 dispensaries, whose budgets are with PPHI, while the health department manages six rural health centres (RHCs), four taluka hospitals and Mithi civil hospital.

Thus, out of total 256 health facilities, 49 are under PPHI and 30 under the health department which makes 79 in all with approved SNEs. But, a staggering 177 facilities or 69 per cent of the total are yet to have SNEs for which health authorities offer various explanations.

According to break-up shared by DHO, Tharparkar has, in all, 207 dispensaries and 30 of them have approved SNEs for medicines, equipment and human resource.

"Besides, 31 BHUs and 18 dispensaries are with PPHI with approved SNEs. Of the 177, 85 were established last year whose staff has been appointed but their budget for medicine is yet to be allocated," he said.

He claimed that 92 of the facilities under the health department were being run with medicines received in aid. "I seriously doubt if these facilities are fully functional," said a source in the health department.

If the six RHCs, dispensaries and taluka hospitals been working satisfactorily, the entire burden of newborns would not have landed at Mithi civil hospital, he said.

Secretary Health Saeed Ahmed Mangnejo gives a different explanation. He said that furniture of 85 dispensaries had been made available and staff — appointed last year — would draw their first salary now whereas tenders for medicines supply would be floated soon.

"It will take some time. I don't have exact numbers but there are also some dispensaries which health department has opened on experimental basis," he said.

He said that these dispensaries were opened in all districts including Thar over community's demand, hence by the time they received their infrastructure they would keep working experimentally.

Except for 85 new ones, he admitted, there could be a large number of such experimental dispensaries in Tharparkar. "The dispensaries and BHUs that the health department has handed over to PPHI are fully functional," he said.

Most deaths of newborns, as confirmed by authorities right from health secretary to director general of health services and down to the DHO of Tharparkar, are reported at Mithi civil hospital.

In view of these figures, a safe assumption can be made that since dispensaries are not functional, the parents eventually rush to Mithi as a last resort.

Tharparkar has been a victim of official neglect for decades. Figures about doctors' availability indicate that 64 doctors were appointed on contract basis in 2014 for two years in BS-17/18, who included chest specialists, paediatricians, anaesthetists, gynaecologists.

“Unfortunately, doctors are unwilling to work in Thar because they cannot earn much from private practice there,” said Senator Taj Hyder. “That’s why we appointed 60 Thar-domiciled doctors on contract basis with comparatively lucrative salary package equivalent to their counterparts in BS-18,” he said.

Hyder, Sindh PPP general secretary, has been looking after relief operation in the desert for two years. “Now their contracts are nearing an end and we are pondering over whether to renew them or regularise their services. If we regularise them then they will have a cut in their salary to be equal to a BS-17 doctor,” he said.

He disclosed that the government had ensured that the 60 doctors had Thar address in their identity cards and submitted a bond in this regard as well.

About 350 deaths of newborns because of malnutrition were reported in Mithi hospital last year.

Perhaps, the PPHI has not taken the trouble to analyse whether the malnourished newborns were from the areas falling under the BHUs and dispensaries it managed as Mirpurkhas regional director Riaz Rahujo insisted that no death was reported last year or this year at any of PPHI’s facility.

DG of Sindh health services, Dr Hassan Murad Shah, said: “The situation is not that alarming. Sporadic cases of diarrhoea are reported. There is in fact no outbreak of diarrhoea. Infant mortality rate in Thar is lesser than other areas and mostly one day to three day old babies have died”.

Mr Rahujo conceded that PPHI must see whether last year’s or latest deaths among newborns were from the areas under its cover.

“There is a possibility that in some cases parents might have directly reported the district hospital but no such case had been referred from our facility,” he said.

He considered trend of early marriages amid lacking birth spacing as main culprit behind newborns’ deaths. “We deal with cases in which an underage woman is at lactating stage while having a two month pregnancy at the same time,” he said.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1231219>

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February 2016

***NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM FEBRUARY 22nd TO FEBRUARY 28th 2016
EXPLOITING ABASIN KOHISTAN’S ENORMOUS HYDROPOWER POTENTIAL***

Dawn, Business & Finance weekly, February 22nd, 2016

DR HABIB GUL

ABASIN Kohistan comprising the Lower Kohistan and the Upper Kohistan has enormous hydropower resources and potential which remain unexploited.

If its hydropower sites are tapped, not only will it make Kohistan one of the country’s richest areas but help meet a significant part of the country’s energy demand.. Different categories of micro, mini, small, medium, large and very large size hydropower plants can be set up in the area.

The feasible sites have not yet been tapped due to non—availability of funds, trained technical staff and physical infrastructure.

Nevertheless, the potential for micro hydropower plants (MHP) in Abasin Kohistan (AK) is roughly estimated at 8MW for micro hydropower, 2,061MW for mini and small hydropower and 11,172MW for large size and very large sizes stations. Except MHP and in some cases, mini plants, all other capacities will have to be connected with the national grid network.

The MHP and mini hydropower plants so far identified have run of river sites while large and very large capacity plants, both categories, have multi purpose or run of river sites. Run of river plants do not need construction of dam and are meant for generating only hydroelectricity, such as the site of Dasu hydropower.

All the federating units have also agreed to the construction of hydroelectricity plants in AK

Pakistan Council of Renewable Energy Technologies has identified 166 feasible MHP sites and installed a 50 MHP plant in AK. The Pakhtunkhwa Electricity Development Organisation (PEDO) has also identified a number of mini, small and medium size feasible sites.

These sites' potential ranges from 660 KW (0.660 MW) to 3,600KW (3.6MW). The small and medium size sites identified so far includes Moze 10MW, Tokyae 32MW, Pattan 112MW, Chor Nullah 265, Karang 460MW, Kaigan 567MW and Spat Gah 580MW. The organisation is also operating three mini plants transferred by the defunct Kohistan Development Board.

Wapda has also identified a few sites for construction of very large capacity plants. These include Basha—Diamer (formerly Basha) 3,500MW and Dasu 2,712MW. These plants' final capacity will be increased to 4,500MW and 5,500MW respectively with additional cost. The Pattan site is identified for 1,172MW. Work on Basha and Dasu is moving at a very slow pace. NGOs are also working in the area, mostly in MHP technology.

The thermal power stations are not the best option for Pakistan when a huge environmental — friendly hydropower potential is available. Hydroelectricity share must be increased from current 31.47pc to at least 75pc in the near future if Pakistan wants to pursue sustainable development.

The National Power Policy 2013 emphasised on the use of indigenous resources such as coal (Thar coal) and hydel for the generation of inexpensive and affordable electricity for domestic, commercial and industrial use. Under the Vision 2025, the government is committed to generate 45,000MW with provision of uninterrupted, affordable and clean 'energy for all'. These goals cannot be achieved unless work on the planned hydropower plants in Abasin Kohistan is accelerated.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1241136>

FRESH MOVE TO STOP WATER THEFT IN PUNJAB

Dawn, Business & Finance weekly, February 22nd, 2016

AHMAD FRAZ KHAN

THE Punjab government moves, yet again, to deal with the perennial problem of irrigation water theft and improve its income from the water sale. It has amended Canal and Drainage Act in second week of February to exclude defaulting farmers from canal supplies.

A sub-committee for suggesting ways and means to deal with the festering problem and improve the overall system, has been formed. It comprises former departmental secretaries, technocrats and public representatives.

Punjab has regularly been taking such steps for the last three decades, only to lose to the farmers lobby mid-way. During this period the collection of water service charges has stayed within the vicinity of 30pc of the target and water theft cases have only multiplied.

In current season alone, over 40,000 theft cases were reported, the unreported numbers being much higher owing to a combination of local social influence, corruption and weak administration. The current loss of the department (the difference between its operational cost and income) stands at a staggering Rs7.7bn a year.

No one can report the theft without risking social consequences. Local departmental officials, in most cases, are involved. The Revenue Department, which collects water service charge, is perfunctory most of the time because the

income goes to another department. What makes the matter worse is non-recovery of fines imposed on water thieves; it hardly crosses 2-3pc of total fines imposed every year.

There is hardly any deterrent — administrative or legal — to stop stealing water. These factors provide the context of problem that the Punjab is planning to deal with, once again.

The remedies suggested by the government have traditionally been faulty and it seems to be operating from the same groove this time as well. Every time it plans to deal with the issues, a committee — consisting of bureaucrats, politicians and technocrats — is formed, as done this time as well.

As soon as the stage for recommendation arrives, the division in such committees become deeper and steeper; on the one hand are bureaucrats and technocrats suggesting harsher measures and an increase in the rate of abayana and, on the other hand, are politicians pressuring the government to go slow and soft. Probably, the fate of current sub-committee would not be any different because terms of reference are almost the same as was in the case of previously gatherings.

The problem with irrigation water cannot be dealt with as a standalone issue. The farmers can only be asked to pay more if two basic conditions are met: fully recovery of current charges and fair price for farmers' produce.

There is a case of rates revision if this water cost is compared with alternative sources — diesel driven tubewells or pumping out with electricity. The current rate is dirt cheap; it costs only Rs2.5 per acre per week.

But the government should also realise that its problems lie in the effective recovery, not the rates. If the department starts recovering the full amount, it can increase its income three times, according to experts.

Another issue is that under pressure from foreign lenders, the successive governments have loaded all other farm inputs with taxes, even when cost of outputs slumped in local and world markets, squeezing life earnings of the growers.

The only area where the governments have resisted lenders' pressure was water, where it has kept the rate of Rs135 per acre, per year for the last 13 years. This rate is now under pressure. The government would only invite more trouble if it goes to increase water rates without taking care of the marketing side of the agricultural produce.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1241070>

KORANGI PIPED WATER CONTAMINATED WITH FAECAL MATTER: STUDY

Dawn, February 23rd, 2016

KARACHI: A recent study has found most piped water samples collected from three different areas of Korangi town contaminated with faecal matter.

In addition, the level of residual chlorine in these samples was below the World Health Organisation guidelines.

Titled 'Prevalence of faecal contamination within a public drinking water supply system in district Korangi', the study was conducted by Karachi University's Institute of Environmental Studies. It was published in the Bulletin of Environment, Pharmacology and Life Sciences, an online journal of the Academy for Environment and Life Sciences, India.

The study was conducted by Aamir Alamgir, Sadia Hashmi, Omm-i-Hany, Khalid Mahmood and Syed Shahid Shaukat under the supervision of Dr Moazzam Ali Khan.

Under the study, a total of 35 drinking water samples were collected from district Korangi comprising Korangi, Landhi and Shah Faisal Colony. The results showed that only 11 per cent of the samples were fit for human consumption whereas 89pc samples were unfit as they were heavily loaded with microbial growth with low chlorine levels.

According to the study, 48.57pc samples were positive for E.coli (Escherichia coli), a large and diverse group of bacteria found in the environment, foods and intestines of people and animals.

Although most strains of E.coli are harmless, others can cause illness.

“The existence of E.coli apparently indicated that water is unfit for human consumption and these microbes led to different diseases. E.coli presence clearly points to faecal contamination and illustrates a possible contamination of enteric pathogens,” the study says.

The mean total coliform count was found to be 1,300/100 ml (Korangi), 1,800/100ml (Landhi) and 1,400/100ml (Shah Faisal Colony). The mean faecal coliform count was found 500/100ml (Korangi), 1,500/100ml (Landhi) and 600/100ml (Shah Faisal Colony).

The mean residual chlorine: 0.02mg/l (Korangi), 0.06mg/l (Landhi) and 0.09mg/l (Shah Faisal Colony).

The mean total faecal streptococci: 4/100ml (Korangi), 3.5/100ml Landhi and 4.8/100ml (Shah Faisal).

In accordance with the WHO guidelines, there should be no coliform in treated water.

The study suggests that water supplies should be examined regularly to confirm that they were free from the pathogenic microbes. Moreover, emphasis should be on monitoring chlorine in water supplies up to the consumer level.

“It is believed that the filtration plant and reservoirs are chlorinating water adequately and, while chlorine levels are, in most cases, adequate throughout the distribution network, they fall during storage in the underground and overhead tanks at the consumer end.

“This may be simply due to excessive storage time or an excess of organic material in the tanks, which are seldom, if at all cleaned by consumers. Besides, rusty and rusty sewerage pipelines are also a major source of the growth of microbes,” the study says.

According to the study, though chlorine is a well-established means of disinfection, some organisms are resistant to chlorine.

“The public health threat comes from sewage contamination which contains the highest concentration of E.coli (108-109 per 100ml). Drinking water contamination with pathogenic microbes has been responsible for causing serious water-borne diseases such as diarrhoea, typhoid, nausea and dysentery,” it says.

It was observed that during the study in a few cases the level of chlorine exceeded the maximum permissible limit which, according to the study, changed water properties.

Earlier, studies conducted by the KU institute in Orangi and Malir towns have also shown faecal matter contamination in water samples.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1241246>

EVERY DROP COUNTS: EXPO RAISES AWARENESS ON WATER SCARCITY

The Express Tribune, February 24th, 2016.

Water scarcity is becoming one of the leading concerns across the country. To prevent the impending crises, Pak Water Expo 2016 seeks to spread awareness and offers creative solutions.

The supply of 100 million gallons of water from Hub Dam still remains disconnected, causing water shortage in the metropolis, said Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) managing-director Misbahuddin Fareed. Due to this, many areas continue to experience acute water shortage, he added.

He was speaking at the inauguration ceremony of the three-day event held at Karachi Expo Centre on Tuesday.

Several international organisations have predicted that glaciers are melting at fast pace in Pakistan and if this continues, water crises in the country will become worse, he claimed.

Last year, about 2,200 people died during the heat wave and shortage of water was one of the reasons behind it, he said. This year too, heat waves are predicted and if it happens, the situation will be much worse than last year, he pointed out.

The government should take steps such as construction of dams and water reservoirs to solve the crises, he said. He added that many major companies are selling water board's water in bottles branding it as mineral water.

The expo is exhibiting water distribution, treatment and conservation equipment which can be used in households and industries, said the organiser of the expo, Kamran Abbasi. The equipment includes water pumps, pipes, water filter plants, geo-membranes (water-proofing membranes) and water treatment chemicals.

More than 24 companies are participating in the event and over 30 stalls have been established. "The equipment will be on display from 10am to 7pm till February 25," he informed.

"Although the subject matter is dry and technical but, it's a hot topic nowadays," remarked Fareed while speaking about the expo. "My KWSB team and I are here to understand water related issues and learn the ways to conserve water by using new technologies," he said.

"The exhibition has informed me regarding the water crises and helped me understand water-related technology," said a visitor, Dr Samiuz Zaman. The event has been organised by Prime Event Management with the support of KWSB and Pakistan Standards Quality Control Authority.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1052959/every-drop-counts-expo-raises-awareness-on-water-scarcity/>

NEELUM JHELUM HYDRO PROJECT: PIAF EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER DELAY IN COMPLETION
Business Recorder, February 26, 2016

The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Association Front (PIAF) has voiced concern over delay in completing the Neelum Jhelum Hydro Project that has pushed its cost by Rs 320 billion. Front Chairman Irfan Iqbal Sheikh in a statement on Thursday stressed the need for its early completion of this project scheduled to be done with this year. It is understood that the government's cavalier attitude and preference to coal-based electricity generation has caused the delay.

<http://www.brecorder.com/business-and-economy/189:pakistan/20106:neelum-jhelum-hydro-project-piaf-expresses-concern-over-delay-in-completion/?date=2016-02-26>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM FEBRUARY 15th TO FEBRUARY 21st 2016
HUB DAM: ENCROACHMENTS CAUSING SERIOUS PROBLEMS
Business Recorder, February 15, 2016

The Managing Director of Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB), Misbahuddin Farid, has called for cleansing the Hub Dam reservoir of encroachments. In this regard he has addressed a letter to the Home Secretary Sindh, a KWSB statement said on Sunday.

The Managing Director of the KWSB pointed out that the Hub Dam reservoir is an important installation and the encroachments may harm the water supply system. Therefore, it was stressed, concrete measures be ensured for the removal of encroachments.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172/16716/>

GOVT URGED TO FORMULATE NATIONAL WATER POLICY
The Express Tribune, February 16th, 2016.

KARACHI: The government needs to develop and implement a national water policy immediately and also declare 2016 to 2025 as the decade of water development and water sharing for all.

These were the demands at the International Water Conference on 'Securing Sustainable Water for All' arranged by the Hisaar Foundation last December.

While highlighting key points of the conference's declaration at the Karachi Press Club on Monday, Chairperson of the Hisaar Foundation, Zohair Ashir, said that in Pakistan the water crisis was grave.

Due to political disharmony on the issue of water, he said that it was very difficult to gather all the political stakeholders on one platform. He pointed out that Pakistan has no national policy on water.

Chair of the Hisaar Foundation's academic committee, Simi Kamal said that the population was increasing rapidly, while water distribution was decreasing. "We need to maintain proper water supply in urban, rural and agricultural areas," she explained.

She pointed out that all provinces have different stances on water issues. Politicians, according to her, are very reluctant to touch on the issue of water accords. She said that until you debate on such issues, things cannot be improved.

"We need to take the politics out of water issues," she said, highlighting that if we want to bring more area under cultivation, water needs to be utilised properly. She explained that melting glaciers had formed rivers that contained 150 million acre-feet of water and Pakistan has 50 million acre-feet of ground water stored, which is mostly brackish in Sindh, but in Punjab the quality of that water was quite good. Two-third of the water in the country's canals is wasted, according to her, which could be effectively saved and utilised.

Referring to Balochistan's groundwater extraction law, she said that it was such a great law that whole world quoted it. However, in Pakistan, the law was being violated on a large scale, she said.

She said that the population of Karachi was increasing rapidly but the water supply was not increasing. "We need to know the exact population of the city," she insisted, adding that citizens also need to know how much water is available for the city and where the remaining quantity needed can be obtained.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1047496/govt-urged-to-formulate-national-water-policy/>

IRSA INCREASES WATER OUTFLOW FROM TARBELA DAM

Business Recorder, February 17, 2016

M RAFIQUE GORAYA

The Indus River System Authority increased outflow from Tarbela Dam on the mighty Indus by 10,000 cusecs to make more water available for hydel power generation and irrigation of winter crops across the country. According to 16th February report of Wapda regarding the position of the river inflows and outflows at Tarbela, Mangla and Chashma, the Indus Water Regulatory Body increased water discharge from the Tarbela Dam from 30,000 cusecs to 40,000 cusecs on Tuesday.

It is already discharging 60,000 cusecs downstream the Mangla Dam on the River Jhelum besides the run of the river water of the Kabul and Chanab rivers (about 20,000 cusecs) in the sprawling irrigation canal network to meet all water requirements of the four provinces. According to the water report the availability of water in the reservoirs this year is much better than the previous years in the months of February and March.

<http://www.brecorder.com/agriculture-a-allied/183/17139/>

WATER SHORTAGE: HUB DAM REACHES 'DEAD' LEVEL

The Express Tribune, February 18th, 2016.

KARACHI: Water supply from Hub Dam to the city has been stopped as the water level in the reservoir has reached 'dead' level.

The level became so low as the catchment area did not receive sufficient rain since August. The Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) is now supplying from an alternative source. Hub Dam, located in the western part of the city, supplies 100MGD to the city. Its major beneficiaries are parts of District West, such as Baldia Town, SITE, and Orangi.

The last time the dam filled its entire capacity of 339 feet was in 2013, said KWSB's superintendent engineer of bulk water supply Zafar Palijo, hoping it will rain soon to resolve the crisis. An alternative supply line of 80MGD, which receives water from Pipri pumping station, has been made functional for western parts of the city, said KWSB spokesperson Nazir Mateen. However, District West superintendent engineer Owais Malik felt this will not be sufficient. The requirement of these areas is 110MGD, he said.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1049194/water-shortage-hub-dam-reaches-dead-level/>

NEELUM-JHELUM POWER PROJECT NEARS RS404BN FINANCIAL CLOSE

Dawn, February 19th, 2016

KHALEEQ KIANI

GARHI DUPATTA (Muzaffarabad): With a Rs404 billion funding for a strategic 969-megawatt Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project (NJHP) in sight and physical progress in advance stages, the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) wants the federal government to charge mark-up on foreign loans at par with provinces to ensure economic and commercial viability of cheaper sources of power generation.

“Financial constraints of the project are over now. Financing is no more an issue. All arrangements are now in place,” said Chairman Wapda Zafar Mahmood at the completion ceremony of two headrace tunnels. The ceremony was held 200 feet under the Jhelum riverbed where the tunnel was connected from two sides with amazing engineering precision.

He said it was perhaps the first project in the world which was close to 80 per cent off physical progress without a financial close.

Under the existing arrangements, foreign loans secured for Wapda projects at 2-5pc interest rate were generally re-lent to Wapda at 15pc as compared to provinces which get them re-lent at actual rate charged by the foreign lenders, he said.

Wapda has requested the government to re-lend foreign loans on mark-ups like those of the provinces because all costs have ultimately become part of the tariff.

Member finance of Wapda, Anwarul Haq, explained that the National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) was mandated only a week ago to arrange Rs100bn through financial institutions and 40pc of commitments from banks had already been achieved. “We need around Rs30bn until March for necessary payments and these funds are already available,” he said.

Mr Mahmood said the project had achieved 78pc progress as of Feb 17, with an expenditure of Rs250bn. Besides the NBP financing, China Exim Bank, Islamic Development Bank and Kuwait Fund loans were also lined up. It is expected to start power generation tests in December 2017 and contribute its energy to the national grid by the following high-flow season, he said.

An engineering marvel, the project involves 68 kilometres of underground tunnels to divert Neelum river waters underneath the Jhelum riverbed. Project CEO Muhammad Zubair said 90pc of the project would be underground, hence any “indecent haste can cause an irreparable loss”.

The project involved three river diversions at different times and maximum overburden of the project was around 1.7km, meaning that the highest mountain peak over the project was 1.7km. Apart from over 200 local staff, around 1,443 Chinese workers were currently working on the site and a few other experts from the UK, US and other nationalities.

A total of 22 people have lost their lives and 178 injured during the project implementation so far because of repeated rock bursts and sandstone falls.

The project will produce 5.15bn units of electricity. The 68km tunnel system involved 19.6km stretch of headrace twin tunnels and ten access tunnels. The intake of the project is Nauseri, 41km east of Muzaffarabad and power house located near Chattar Kalas, around 22km south of downstream Muzaffarabad.

Responding to a question, the Wapda chairman explained that the verdict of international arbitrators on Kishenganga Hydropower allowing India to divert Neelum waters to Wullar Barrage would impact only 5pc of project output.

He explained that about 77pc of water to Neelum at Nauseri (the dam site) was contributed by local tributaries and only 23pc came from across the line of control. India would have to release at least 9 cumecs downstream under the arbitration award.

Praising the commitment and professional expertise of the project authorities, the contractor and the consultants, the Wapda chief expressed satisfaction over the pace of construction work. He said the authority was confident to complete first generating unit of the project in mid-2017 and the rest of the three units in a phased manner by December 2017.

Mr Zubair, the project CEO, said the redesigned composite dam and the spillway were 74pc and 100pc complete, respectively. About 60.5km of the 68km-long tunnels (88pc) had been excavated. The power house and the switchyard were expected to be completed in November this year, he added

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1240451/neelum-jhelum-power-project-nears-rs404bn-financial-close>

HEAD OF HUB DAM ROYALTY: BALOCHISTAN SEEKS RS 30 BILLION DUES FROM SINDH GOVERNMENT

Business Recorder, February 19, 2016

The lawmakers in the session of Balochistan Assembly (BA), unanimously passed a resolution seeking due share in water. According to the resolution, Sindh government should pay Rs 30 billion outstanding dues to Balochistan on head of royalty of Hub dam. The assembly session was started with Speaker Raheela Hameed Khan Durrani in the chair, on Thursday evening.

Pashtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP) Member Provincial Assembly (MPA), Syed Liaquat Ali Agha moved the resolution which reads that in accordance with the record of IRSA, Balochistan was not given due share of water while it had to pay outstanding dues against it while some of its share was got by other province.

It said that Sindh province should pay dues to Balochistan against royalty of Hub dam. The resolution urged the government to approach the concerned quarters to ensure provision of due share of water to Balochistan and Sindh province should pay royalty to Balochistan on head of Hub dam. The House unanimously passed the resolution.

<http://www.brecorder.com/agriculture-a-allied/183:pakistan/17750:head-of-hub-dam-royalty-balochistan-seeks-rs-30-billion-dues-from-sindh-government/?date=2016-02-19>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM FEBRUARY 8TH TO FEBRUARY 14TH 2016 EXPERTS FOR UNCHANGED STATUS OF INDUS WATER TREATY

Dawn, February 11th, 2016

LAHORE: The Indus Water Treaty should remain in perpetuity and unchanged, say experts at a panel discussion at the annual workshop of the International Water Management Institute (IWMI)-Pakistan at a local hotel on Wednesday.

Indus Water Commissioner Asif Baig said that under the treaty India got more water as three eastern rivers were given to it. The treaty did not fully comprehend the environmental impact of drying up of Ravi and Sutlej rivers besides groundwater or the value of energy embodied in water. "It is still a valid and relevant treaty," said Mr Baig.

Indus River System Authority chairman Rao Irshad Ali Khan said there existed a mechanism within the treaty to resolve issues. Matters pertaining to environment should be taken up while remaining in the ambit of the treaty. "There is likelihood that we will be losers if we seek re-opening or revision of the treaty," he said.

Columnist and Pakistan editor for The Third Pole, Zofeen T Ebrahim was of the view that since environmental aspects had not been touched while finalising the treaty, the need of the hour was to review it.

Wapda's Izharul Haq said it took 12 years or so to finalise the treaty. "Work on it started in 1948 and the treaty could be signed in 1960 and that too with the involvement of some superpowers. India wouldn't be giving us water for the eastern rivers even for environment purposes," he said.

Another expert, Abdul Khalid, said India would be more than happy if the treaty was re-opened. "It will be suicidal. The Indians would focus on the water which we are letting go into the sea without any utilisation. We should build reservoirs first, initiate research by conducting a thorough study of the decreasing groundwater level and other environment impacts of the areas around the three eastern rivers," he said.

Earlier, Hydrology and Water Management researcher Dr M Tousif Bhatti and IWMI-Pakistan head and irrigation principal researcher Dr Arif Anwar presented paper on 'Canal operations planner I & II.' They also shared with the

participants findings of recent research developments and innovations at the IWMI in the context of large-scale irrigation system.

IWMI Water Governance Researcher Dr Azeem Ali Shah presented paper on 'Equity in a tertiary canal of the Indus Basin Irrigation System', and Dr Arif Anwar on 'The potential of precision surface irrigation in the Indus Basin Irrigation System.'

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1238802>

\$5M APPROVED FOR JALALPUR IRRIGATION PROJECT

Dawn, February 11th, 2016

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved an initial financing of \$5 million for the development of design and irrigation management structure of Jalalpur Irrigation Project which will make available summer flood water to 65,000 hectares to increase agricultural production of rain-fed areas in Jhelum and Khushab districts.

According to the ADB, the project design advance (PDA) and ensuing project are already listed in the country business plan for 2016-18.

The Punjab government will contribute \$1.5m towards project design advance while the ADB will provide financing of \$150m from its ordinary capital resources for the irrigation project which will cost \$190m.

The project follows the priorities set in the ADB's country partnership strategy for 2015-2019. The Punjab Irrigation Department will be executing the project.

The project will construct over 200km of new irrigation canals; introduce a farmers-based irrigation management; and train farmers in good farming practices. The project will directly benefit over 200,000 rural people, mostly poor, through creation of new jobs and improving livelihood, food security and economic growth.

"These interventions will boost crop production and increase the demand for farm labour. It will also create jobs during project implementation. Majority of the farmers in the project area have smallholdings and poor. Overall the interventions are pro-poor and will greatly benefit to the poor," the ADB said.

Before the assistance was sought from the ADB, the Punjab government had carried out a preliminary feasibility study in 2008 which lacked an appropriate assessment of social and environmental safeguards, biodiversity, groundwater, drainage, institutional development, on-farm water and agriculture and climate change related issues.

ADB says the project's preparatory technical assistance was necessary to undertake due diligence in technical, safeguards, economic and financial, and poverty and social areas.

An international organisation has been recruited, which will conduct farmers' consultation and will explain the project objectives, major outputs and outcome to the farmers.

The consultation will help in designing on-farm and institutional components of the project and developing strategy for the formation of water users groups.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1238684/5m-approved-for-jalalpur-irrigation-project>

INCONVENIENCED: GOWALMANDI RESIDENTS PROTEST SUSPENSION OF WATER SUPPLY

The Express Tribune, February 14th, 2016.

LAHORE: Scores of residents of Gowalmandi staged a demonstration and blocked Mcleod Road for traffic for several hours on Saturday to protest suspension of water supply in the area on account of work for the Orange Line Metro Train (OLMT) project.

The protesters said water supply to their homes had been suspended earlier in the day without any warning. They said the Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) officials working near the OLMT project site had told them that pipelines serving the area were being shifted to make way for the construction of the metro train's track.

Speaking to The Express Tribune, Muhammad Shahzad and Kashif Munir condemned the WASA for suspending water supply to their homes without informing them in advance. “Water is a basic need. It is unbelievable that the WASA can suspend supply in such a manner,” Munir said.

“What kind of development work deprives a community of basic needs?” Shahzad said. He said the WASA should have given the residents some time to make alternative arrangements.

Other protesters said the WASA was also repairing sewage pipes in some areas. They also complained about excessive dust and mud and traffic jams caused by construction work and said that it seemed that the government had started the project without appropriate planning for fixing these problems.

WASA Deputy Managing Director Chaudhry Aftab Ahmad said water supply to some areas along the OLMT route had been suspended to shift the supply pipes. “I realise that people are facing a difficulty but they should understand that it’s [OLMT] a mega project that requires a lot of facilities to be relaid,” he said.

He said work was on schedule in most areas. He said in some areas they were waiting for the project team to demolish buildings on land marked for acquisition to start shifting water and sewage pipes.

Ahmad said residents of neighbourhoods along the OLMT track would face problems for around three to four months. He said shifting of infrastructure for electricity, Sui Gas and telephone landlines would also be required over the course of construction work for the OLMT project.

Ahmed said the scope of the WASA’s work along the OLMT route was limited to shifting of water and sewer lines. The authority was not improving sewer design or capacity in any of these areas, he said.

Ahmed said sewage pipes removed during the shifting had been laid in 1937. The sewerage system in the area had become ineffective due to corrosion, he said.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1046475/inconvenienced-gowalmandi-residents-protest-suspension-of-water-supply/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM FEBRUARY 1ST TO FEBRUARY 7TH 2016

TARIFF FOR SMALL HYDROPOWER PROJECTS DELAYED

Published in Dawn, February 2nd, 2016

KHALEEQ KIANI

ISLAMABAD: Amid much focus on developing power projects on imported liquefied natural gas (LNG) for quick results, the government is delaying a notification on upfront tariff for small hydropower projects.

The tariff was announced by the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) on Oct 14, 2015, after more than three years of talks with the provincial authorities and local and international financial institutions at 12.78 cents per unit (around Rs13 per unit) for 30 years.

Informed sources told Dawn that the sponsors of a number of small hydropower projects, mostly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Azad Kashmir, had been engaged with respective governments for development of small projects of up to 25MW generation capacity, being a provincial subject under various energy policies of the government.

The determinations were issued on the request of sponsors of Riali Hydropower Company and Kathai Hydropower but was then joined during public hearings by the governments of AJK and KP for projects, like Blue Star Energy, Ranolia, Machai, Jabori, Karora etc. Most of these projects ranged between 10MW and 25MW.

A Nepra official said the government was bound under section 31(4) of the Nepra Act 1997 to notify tariff determined by the regulator within 15 days or submit a request for reconsideration within 15 days. The Nepra was also bound after receipt of the review petition to decide the matter in another 15 days.

He said the five-member Nepra had unanimously approved the upfront tariff on Oct 13 and conveyed it to the ministry of water and power the very next day ie Oct 14, 2015, but the ministry sat on the notification which should have been issued within 15 days after a determination is made by the Nepra.

The government neither notified the upfront tariff nor filed any review petition within the stipulated time. Nepra spokesperson Ayesha Tassduq declined to comment.

“We are considering to file a review petition because we feel the determination needs to be revised in the interest of the consumers,” said Water and Power Secretary Mohammad Younas Dagha, hinting the upfront tariff for such projects was on the higher side.

“Tariff should be in such a way which gives premium for higher efficiency and better machinery and site,” he said.

He said the government would also file a request to the regulator to condone the requirement for review after the 15-day deadline.

Another official said the Nepra had given 28 different tariffs for small hydropower projects in a single determination for various plant factors, low and high flow heads, machineries and project sites instead of designing the tariff regime in a manner that may compel investors to go for quality, efficiency and economy. This was despite the fact that all risks were being shifted to the government.

Unless notified by the ministry of water and power in the Gazette of Pakistan, the financial institutions despite having signed term sheets for extending loans to the developers were not ready to formally sign off loan agreements.

A project sponsor said that initially there was no clear policy for small hydropower projects and given the importance of domestic fuel with no escalation, the Nepra intervened and heard all the stakeholders and then developed rules for transmission lines and evacuation of the electricity.

It took about four years as earlier the National Transmission and Dispatch Company (NTDC) and the Central Power Purchase Agency were reluctant to negotiate small plants on less than 132KV transmission lines. The Nepra, instead of the water and power ministry, resolved this issue.

This was despite the fact that various power policies announced by the respective governments and approved by the Council of Common Interest (CCI) acknowledged that the provincial governments would be free to set up themselves or through the private sector projects of less than 50MW.

It was in this background that the upfront tariffs for solar and LNG-based projects were immediately approved and moved for gazette notification even though LNG or coal-based tariffs were based on foreign fuels.

The upfront tariff based on 50 per cent plant factor involved a maximum of Rs12.06Kwh which would gradually come down in case of higher plant factor.

The Nepra determined that maximum tariff for projects based on foreign loans would have 13.4 cents per unit tariff for first 10 years and then 6.7 cents per unit for next 20 years with a 30-year average of 10.88 cents per unit.

The upfront tariff for locally funded projects was set at Rs16 per unit for first 10 years and then Rs7 per unit for next 20 years with 30-year levelised tariff of 12.78 cents per unit.

The proven potential of small hydropower projects that could be developed in less than three years was estimated at 1800MW but was much higher involving longer development period.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1236877/tariff-for-small-hydropower-projects-delayed>

NAVY SHIP BRINGS 1,000 TONS OF DRINKING WATER TO GWADAR

Dawn, February 6th, 2016

GWADAR: Provision of water to Gwadar through Pakistan Navy tankers continued as another tanker, PNS Nasr, arrived at the port here on Friday with 1,000 tons of fresh drinking water.

Gwadar is facing an acute shortage of drinking water and Akra Dam, the main source of water supply to the town and adjoining areas, has dried up because of lack of rains in the catchments areas for a long time.

The ongoing efforts for transporting freshwater from Karachi to Gwadar through the navy's tankers and its distribution in residential areas in coordination with the district administration are helping mitigate the alarming situation by ensuring persistent supply.

Commander, West, Commodore Muhammad Waris is supervising the relief efforts on behalf of Pakistan Navy.

A spokesman for the navy said the force had been making all possible efforts to address the crisis in the coastal area of Makran caused by low rainfall and scant water resources.

“The navy will continue its efforts in coming weeks, till the situation gets normal,” he said.

He said the 1,000 tons of drinking water had been supplied to the residents of Gwadar and adjoining areas on Friday.

Officials of Gwadar administration were present on the occasion.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1237783>

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March 2016

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MARCH 28th TO APRIL 3rd 2016

WATER RESOURCE INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR BALOCHISTAN

Dawn, Business & Finance weekly, March 28th, 2016

THE Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency has agreed to provide technical leadership and free access to its data to help water-scarce Balochistan develop a water resource information system using remote sensing and geographical information system.

The Asian Development Bank, in collaboration with the Japanese government, is supporting water resource assessment and management of two rivers basin. A technical assistance of \$1.1 million, financed by Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction, will assist the Balochistan government to assess basin's water resources and develop priority projects within the two selected basins.

Akhtar Ali, Principal Water Resource Specialist at the ADB while explaining the project, said that the technical assistance will screen and rank four rivers basins, and help select two rivers basins by the provincial government. The basins will be selected on the basis of rapid assessment studies to be conducted this year.

On the other hand, the Balochistan government has prepared the pre-feasibility study of the projects where WRIS would be required.

Under the proposed project, in the start a freely available satellite-based water resources information such as rainfall, soil moisture, land surface temperature will be collected and shared by the WRIS in collaboration with JAXA. The WRIS will have a user interface using GIS for sharing the collected data among stakeholders.

The system will integrate the satellite-based remote sensing data, the ground observation data and other dataset into the same system, and visualise the data with base maps for geographic information management and data analysis.

On success the WRIS would be extended covering other provinces and the entire country. The technical assistance will also help processing ensuing ADB loan up to \$100m for sustained water management actions.

ADB Country Director Werner Liepach says water situation in Balochistan is getting worse and holistic water management is crucial and so is the water resource information for efficient uses.

An ADB document related to the project says satellite-based remote sensing technology has large potential to improve methods of surveying and monitoring in a system-based water management approach that will strengthen an integrated water resource management specifically in the area where ground observation data is limited like Balochistan. Remote sensing is a technology to observe the earth's surface or the atmosphere with cameras or sensors mounted on satellites.

Balochistan spreads over an area of 347,190 sq. km with a total population of 13 million. Around 70pc of its population lives in rural areas and depends on agriculture. Agriculture accounts about two-thirds of the provincial domestic product, 60pc of the labour force, and supports several industries by providing raw materials.

However, the agricultural sector suffers from water shortages, frequent drought, and poor agricultural practices, which expose the rural communities to high vulnerability especially women and children who suffer from inadequate domestic water supply. Quetta valley now faces a high water deficit. About 57 per cent of the Balochistan's water resources comprise floodwater, which is highly unpredictable and significant part of which flows down to the sea.

Pakistan has to increase food production by 40 to 50pc to meet the needs of a projected population of 221m by 2025. However, the country's annual water availability per capita is less than water scarcity threshold of 1,000 cubic metres per capita in 2015 whereas water variability further intensifies the water scarcity, statistics reveal.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1248422>

BUMPER CROPS LIKELY AS IRSA SEES 'ZERO WATER SHORTAGE' IN KHARIF

Dawn, March 29th, 2016

ISLAMABAD: There will be no water shortage during Kharif starting April 1, raising hopes of a bumper agriculture output, according to official estimates.

An official of the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) told Dawn on Monday that its technical committee had estimated "zero shortage" of water against provincial shares in the upcoming season.

He said a meeting of the advisory committee of the authority had been convened on March 31 to approve these estimates with the consent of the representatives of the provincial governments and respective institutions.

The meeting to be presided over by Irsa Chairman Rao Irshad Ali Khan would also finalise provincial shares for the season and firm up water distribution plan based on provincial irrigation requirements.

He said that given the fact that all stakeholders seemed unanimous over zero water shortage in Kharif, there was strong likelihood that water distribution among the provinces would be done under Para-2 of the 1991 water apportionment accord and provide water to provinces on the basis of their demand.

Informed sources said the recent timely rains had helped build reasonable carry-over stocks that currently stood at about 3.38 million acre feet (MAF). On Sunday, total storage at Tarbela dam was reported at 1.876 MAF, followed by 1.364 MAF at Mangla dam and 0.149 MAF at Chashma barrage.

Because of repeated water shortages, Irsa had over the years adopted an ad-hoc three-tier distribution plan that worked out provincial shares in three stages — early, middle and late watering — through a formula based on a combination of historic uses and shortage sharing.

It was estimated that about 67-68 MAF would be available for distribution after allocating reasonable water releases downstream Kotri as required under the accord for environmental reasons.

As such, Punjab's Kharif share was estimated at about 33.5 MAF, followed by Sindh at around 30.4 MAF. Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would get a share of 2.56 and 0.82 MAF, respectively.

Kharif cropping season starts from April-June and lasts until October-December in different parts of the country. Rice, sugarcane, cotton, maize and mash are some of the key crops of the season.

Irsa is also expected, said these sources, to request the federal government follow up with a recent demand in the Flood Protection Programme to move quickly towards easier dams on an urgent basis to avoid billions of rupees worth of economic loss every year.

According to Irsa estimates, a loss of one MAF of water was estimated to cause Rs60 billion in economic loss a year.

On average, about 20 MAF water was going down into the sea every year, which meant that Pakistan was losing more than Rs1.2 trillion because of shortage of storage capacity in addition to damage caused by floods. Interestingly, the 20 MAF water is almost equal of the storage capacity of three large dams like Tarbela and Mangla.

Under the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty, Pakistan was expected to build a large dam in every decade but the nation could not build one in almost half a century after completion of Mangla and Tarbela dams in the 1960s and 1970s.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1248536/bumper-crops-likely-as-irsa-sees-zero-water-shortage-in-kharif>

FUNDS APPROVED FOR WATER TREATMENT PLANTS

Dawn, March 31st, 2016

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Nawab Sanaullah Zehri has approved funds for early restoration of 13 cusecs capacity of two water treatment plants in Quetta.

The projects will be reconstructed on Sabzal Road and Samungli Road.

“Implementation of both the projects should be started without any delay,” Nawab Zehri told the authorities concerned at a meeting held here on Wednesday.

Various development projects and other issues of the city were discussed at the meeting which was attended by Chief Secretary Saifullah Chhattah and other officials.

The chief minister said all available resources should be utilised for the beautification of the city.

After the installation of the treatment plants, clean water would be available for agriculture and people would get healthy vegetables and other commodities, he said. “It will also help increase plantation and greenery,” he said.

The chief secretary briefed the meeting about restoration of the treatment plant on Sabzal Road and installation of plants on Samungli Road and at the University of Balochistan.

The chief minister approved issuance of funds for the plants on Sabzal Road and Samungli Road.

He asked the officials to include installation of the plant at the university in the next year’s Public Sector Development Programme. He said utilising sewerage water after recycling would also help curb pollution.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1249051>

NEELUM-JHELUM SPILLWAY GATES INSTALLED

Dawn, March 31st, 2016

LAHORE: The Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) has installed the third and last radial gate on the spillway of the 969MW Neelum-Jhelum hydroelectric project.

Addressing a ceremony held at the site on Wednesday to mark the achievement, Wapda Chairman Zafar Mahmood lauded the project authorities for their “commitment, devotion and hard work in implementing this extremely difficult project”.

He expressed hope that the project would be completed in accordance with the revised schedule as most of the critical targets, such as river crossing connectivity of left and right headrace tunnels, had been achieved.

The Wapda chief expressed satisfaction over the working of both tunnel boring machines.

The chief executive officer of the project said the construction work on all sites was going at a good pace. He said that 80 per cent work on the dam and its allied structures had been completed, 90pc progress had been made on the headrace tunnel and 87pc on the power house.

He said Rs249 billion had been spent on the project.

The first electricity generating unit is expected to be completed by July next year and the remaining three units by the end of 2017.

The project will contribute 5.15bn units of low-cost, environment-friendly electricity to the national grid.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1249045>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MARCH 21st TO MARCH 27th 2016

WATER FILTRATION PLANTS NOT WORKING SINCE 2013

Dawn, March 21st, 2016

Waseem Ashraf Butt

GUJRAT: As many as eight water filtration plants in Lalamusa city have been lying dysfunctional since their installation there in 2013.

The plants were installed with the funds provided by the then federal government of the PPP. The plants were later on handed over to the Kharian Tehsil Municipal Administration (TMA) for their “smooth functioning”.

The town residents blame Lalamusa municipal administration for failing to keep the plants running.

On the other hand, the TMA officials have been deploring lack of the staff and resources required for running the filtration plants.

The TMA had got installed steel fences around these filtration plants about a year ago and locked them to avoid theft of water taps which were earlier stolen due to the poor arrangements and lack of ownership.

Kharian TMA administrator and Assistant Commissioner Iqbal Mazhar expressed his ignorance about the issue and said the concerned TMA official would give the official version.

Lalamusa Municipal Committee Chief Officer Akhtar Islam claimed that all the plants, except the one at Bihari Colony, were functional and their filters were being regularly replaced.

Later, area residents told Dawn that some TMA employees were seen installing water taps at the plants but these were still dysfunctional.

The residents have urged the authorities concerned to take notice of the slackness of TMA officials who deprived some 100,000 people of Lalamusa of free of cost clean drinking water.

TMA administrator on being informed of the situation pledged action against the officials “who kept him in the dark” about the issue.

These filtration plants were installed by the federal government in 2013 on the recommendation of PPP stalwart and then information minister Qamar Zaman Kaira for his native town Lalamusa.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1247020/water-filtration-plants-not-working-since-2013>

KARACHI FACES 50PC WATER SHORTFALL, MOOT TOLD

Dawn, March 23rd, 2016

Faiza Ilyas

KARACHI: Home to more than 22 million people, Karachi faces a 50 per cent water shortfall that may increase in the coming years particularly in extreme hot weather conditions, it emerged during a seminar on Tuesday.

Titled ‘The heatwave and water shortage’, the seminar allowed officials of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board and the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation, environmentalists and others to express their views on the issue.

It was pointed out at the event that the Hub dam, which earlier supplied 100 million gallons a day water to the city, had dried up while there was no indication that political wrangling between the federal and provincial governments over water allocation for the next two phases of Greater Karachi Bulk Water Supply Scheme (K-4) would end any time soon.

The seminar, which was jointly organised by the Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) and Ferozan Forum at PMA House, was informed that the water project was being launched after a delay of 10 years, though international studies suggested the city should receive an additional supply of 100MGD water every three years given its growing population.

Giving a presentation on the heatwave that hit the city last year, Dr Waqar Ahmed of Karachi University's Institute of Environmental Studies said factors such as the urban heat island effect, absence of an efficient public transport system, deforestation and lack of green spaces in the city contributed to making weather conditions unbearable.

“Mangrove forests are climate moderators. Massive deforestation of mangroves is being observed all over the city. This is being done by big organisations such as Karachi Port Trust, the Defence Housing Authority and Port Qasim,” he said.

Due to rapid and haphazard urbanization, fruit gardens around Malir, Lalukhet, Gadap, Golimar, Haji Murad Goth, Shah Faisal, Alfalah, Korangi and Landhi had been lost in the recent past, Dr Ahmed said.

KWSB official Ayub Sheikh spoke about the water woes the city had been facing for a long time. He said the current water demand was 1,080MGD, while the city received between 500MGD and 550MGD.

“No water project has been carried out in the city since 2006 following the completion of K-III project. Multiple issues delayed the implementation of K-IV which will supply 260MGD after the completion of its phase one in two years,” he said.

Mr Sheikh claimed that the KWSB had rehabilitated its system and would ensure uninterrupted water supply to Karachi to combat heatwave.

About weather conditions, meteorologist Mohammad Tauseef Alam said that temperature recorded in other parts of the country (Larkana 49 degrees Celsius, Turbat 49 degrees Celsius and Sibi 49 degrees Celsius) was higher than what was in Karachi (45 degrees Celsius) during last year's heatwave, deaths didn't occur in those areas.

“Low air pressure, high humidity and absence of wind make the weather conditions worse and played a key role in making the heat unbearable.”

Karachi Metropolitan Corporation administrator Roshan Ali Sheikh was of the opinion that civil society needed to build up pressure on the government to perform its duties.

“Our state of affairs have come to a point that unless the civil society builds a pressure, the government doesn't respond. Hence, I urge people to speak their minds and do not demonstrate tolerance towards corruption and malpractices.”

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1247318>

WORLD WATER DAY: 'COUNTRY'S PROSPERITY LINKED TO WATER RESOURCES'

The Express Tribune, March 23rd, 2016.

LAHORE: The growth of the country's agriculture sector depends on how we manage our water resources, Environment Protection Minister Begum Zakia Shahnawaz said on Tuesday.

She was addressing a seminar held to mark the World Water Day, organised by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

“Water is vitally important for the socio-economic sustenance and development of an agriculture-based country like Pakistan. Water resources of the country are subject to all kinds of quantitative and qualitative issues, which need to be addressed on a priority basis,” she said.

Dr Kausar Jamal Cheema, Lahore College for Women University (LCWU) Faculty of Natural Sciences dean, said that people must not waste water. “Our country faces an acute shortage of water but we continue to waste water on unproductive practices. We should use recycled water for most purposes other than drinking,” she said.

She said that water pricing could be introduced to reduce wastage of water. “The government must build small dams to store water,” she said.

Punjab Saaf Pani Company Chief Technical Officer Dr Zaheer said that water conservation and management were very important.

EPA Punjab Director General Dr Javed Iqbal, and Environment Protection Department Secretary Dr Iqbal Muhammad Chohan also addressed the seminar.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1070870/world-water-day-countrys-prosperity-linked-to-water-resources-minister-a/>

A LOOK AT JACOBABAD'S WATER PURIFICATION SCHEMES SINCE 1847

The Express Tribune, March 22nd, 2016.

Hafeez Tunio

JACOBABAD: Mohammad Nawaz Khoso, 59, had not met John Jacob, a brigadier of the British East India Company who developed Jacobabad. Nonetheless, he narrates the memories of his elders how the city was developed with wide roads and provision of proper sanitation and potable water under him. According to Khoso, the then modern city has now turned into 'open gutters'.

Scottish author Alexander Innes Shand, in his book 'General John Jacob', said that when Jacob came to Jacobabad in 1847, the area was known as Khangruh, littered with marauders who would loot people to make a living. His first priority was to resolve the drinking water issue because underground water was not fit for human consumption.

Khoso, who teaches English Literature at the Jacobabad Degree College, Jacob excavated reservoir tanks and brought water from Indus River through a canal. "Now, all the water reservoirs have been encroached and residents are again compelled to drink poisonous water," he said.

After Jacob, every successive government has given water and sanitation schemes. According to residents, these schemes have only benefited either politicians in power or bureaucrats who lay down the same merely in papers.

"John Jacob's scheme ran successful till 1950s," said Gul Hasan Talani, a social welfare worker of the area. "After that, General Ayub Khan in 1960 gave us a scheme that became non-functional after a few years. Zulfikar [Ali] Bhutto, soon after taking over [the] Prime Minister's charge, visited the area and promised to revive John Jacob's drinking water scheme, but all in vain.

"According to Talani, a multi-million scheme was inaugurated by General Pervez Musharraf in 2005, but unfortunately, this scheme, the 'Urban Water Supply Scheme Jacobabad', came down within three years.

"This scheme was handed over to [the] town municipal committee, but they had no technical staff and resources to run it," said an elderly man, Hakim Ali Abro. "The only water purification plant is lying non-functional and all motors that supply water to the city are out of order."

In the acute water shortage, people of Jacobabad get potable water from donkey cart vendors who fetch the water from nearby areas and sell water cans for Rs15 each. An average two cans are used by a family, bearing a cost of Rs30 every day.

After the 9/11 incident, Pakistan handed over the Jacobabad Airport to the Americans for their war against terrorism. Realising the water scarcity, the American government under the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) started the 'Municipal Services Programme' worth Rs3.5 billion. But it has been made mandatory to engage the community in participatory development rather than leaving this project at the mercy of politicians and bureaucrats.

For the first time in the history of Jacobabad, the community is now engaged in the development of the city, where citizens have formed a 'Citizen Forum' to mobilise the community about water and sanitation consumption. Each muhalla has equal representation in the committees.

"We have started the baseline survey of the town to review what kind of facilities people are enjoying," said Imran Memon, the project coordinator of Health and Nutrition Development Society (HANDS)— the organisation that has been given a project to mobilise the community about water and sanitation rights.

According to Memon, they have formed separate committees of women and men into 128 muhallas that will monitor the water distribution in their areas and teach the people how to shun bad behaviour such as water theft and open defecation. "Not only muhallas, but we have selected around 26 government and eight private schools to give education to children about water and sanitation," said Memon.

All this work is being done under the supervision of Techno Consulting Pakistan that provides consultancy. A senior official of the consultancy firm said that they would also revive the old project inaugurated by Musharraf and complete the scheme by June 2017.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1070156/a-look-at-jacobabads-water-purification-schemes-since-1847/>

THE FUEL OF ECONOMIC GROWTH

Dawn, March 22nd, 2016

WATER has become Pakistan's number one development and governance issue. While water availability in our river systems has remained fairly stable, per capita water availability has diminished from about 1,500 to nearly 1,000 cubic metres, owing to a fast-growing population.

On World Water Day, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has an opportunity to set the direction for Pakistan's water economy. We will need to lay foundations for the blue economy. We will need water to fuel our economy, create water jobs, invest in water efficient technologies, create water markets for water savings and systems.

It is critical for Pakistan to make water the central plank of our development agenda, if we are to meet our SDGs targets. Action on five issues to set the direction is needed.

Water policy: Pakistan has no water policy. The ministries of planning & reforms and water & power circulated two different drafts. Both have been withdrawn quietly. The Council of Common Interests is perceived as a spoiler and not an enabler. Hence there is visibly weak resolve to convene the CCI meeting and present the draft policy for approval. Meanwhile, some provinces have started working on their own provincial policies. The best of provincial policies cannot be a substitute for a comprehensive national water policy.

Groundwater: The country's groundwater reserves are not regulated. Pakistan's agriculture meets about 40pc of its water needs by extracting groundwater. But the water table is fast depleting and getting contaminated both in agricultural and urban areas. Our cities will not be habitable, nor will our agriculture be tenable if the present rate of groundwater depletion and contamination continues.

It is a poorly governed area that has seen no meaningful legislation in decades. In fact, the subsidy for solar energy-run tube wells will accelerate depletion unless clubbed with drip irrigation. Groundwater reserves should be seen as strategic assets. Significant investment must be made in mapping, recharging, pricing and regulating individual and commercial use. It has serious implications for our ecosystems, cropping patterns, terms of trade, and transboundary aquifers.

Transboundary water institutions: Water resources are shared with three of our four neighbours in very significant ways. Any upstream developments can have adverse implications for us. Our neighbours have elaborate plans for infrastructure development. While it is sometimes suggested we seek their concurrence on our plans, we do not engage with them about theirs. We have failed to engage proactively or to explore benefit-sharing on shared basins. Afghanistan and China still offer opportunities for collaborative approaches.

Focus on India or the Indus Waters Treaty is important, but should not be at the cost of other neighbours. In fact, the IWT has provisions for collaboration but a zero-sum approach, pursued both by India and Pakistan, spoils the atmosphere for additional instruments of collaboration. As the lower riparian we cannot afford this and must generate additional policy options for better collaboration.

The Pakistan Commission for Indus Waters (PCIW) has failed us more than once in negotiations and court cases; we must reconstitute it by converting it into an independent constitutional authority, with a strong capacity for technical and legal studies and with partnerships with universities and think tanks in such areas as hydrology, meteorology, climatology, early warning, etc. The Commission's mandate needs to be expanded to cover all transboundary water issues with all neighbours.

Interprovincial trust: All provinces are entangled in subtle water wars. KP aspires to construct more dams than it will need. Punjab feels it is surrendering its due share to the lower-riparian, smaller provinces that led by Sindh accuse Punjab of non-transparent transaction. The seeds of mistrust are also sown by early varieties of water-intensive crops in the pre-monsoon months when canals run empty and dams are at low levels.

Even a rational conversation on constructing uncontested reservoirs has become hostage to political bickering. The institutions have failed to generate trust. Telemetry or other instruments at locations where water shareholders change hands have remained an elusive dream despite availability of technologies and funds.

Irsa has shrunk to a small club of well-regarded but retired officials who, among other things, lack the sense of urgency to translate Irsa's mandate into action to manage water as a shared national resource. As part of the Ministry of Water & Power, it has failed to get the same attention that energy issues get. Water deserves a separate ministry, or at least an independent commission with constitutional status.

Climate change: Climate change poses a more serious threat to Pakistan's water supply than India's. India cannot stop Pakistan's water beyond a certain number of days even if it wanted to. At the risk of international isolation it can suddenly release water in some of our rivers and cause damage, or deny water to some crops by exploiting timing. These issues can be handled by our water diplomats.

But climate change poses more existential challenges. The changing monsoon pattern is making water supply erratic. It has started reaching the upper reaches of our Himalayan ranges and parts of Balochistan not traditionally covered by monsoon rains. Karachi and other coastal areas have begun to receive more frequent warnings about cyclones.

Changes in rain patterns raise questions about food security and the need to invest in climate-smart agriculture. While we have a greater incidence of hydro-metrological droughts in parts of Balochistan, Punjab and Sindh, urban and rural flooding is becoming a recurrent phenomenon.

In fact, torrential rains in the Jammu region and the upper reaches of the Kabul river basin have flooded Sialkot in Punjab and Nowshera in KP, drawing attention to emerging transboundary risks. As the glaciers recede, we face the threat of permanent reduction in our water lifeline.

Economic growth: The prime minister should take a fresh look at Pakistan's institutional landscape. The mandates and governance of water-related institutions such as PCIW, Irsa etc should be revisited. He may want to constitute a national commission to look at water as a source of national cohesion and trust between the provinces. Water should also be an essential component of regional foreign and economic policy.

We need to base our energy, food, and disaster risk reduction policies on climate change projections. We must address the issues of water access, water equity, and water as a hazard to our development as a national priority. Our vision for Pakistan as a middle-income country can only be fuelled with water.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1247163>

ZEHRI APPROVES PROJECT TO END WATER SHORTAGE IN QUETTA

Dawn, March 26th, 2016

QUETTA: Chief Minister Nawab Sanaullah Khan Zehri has approved a project that would bring water from the Pat Feeder Canal to the provincial capital and directed authorities concerned to furnish the feasibility report along with the PC-1 and allocate funds for the project in the next budget.

Presiding over a meeting here, he ordered completion of the project in two to three years.

He also asked the authorities to start work on the already approved project of Mangi Dam besides preparing the feasibility report and PC-1 of Burj Aziz Dam.

Chief Secretary Saifullah Chattah, additional secretary of planning and development, secretary of irrigation, secretary of public health engineering, secretary of finance and other officials concerned attended the meeting.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1248039>

NOT A DROP TO DRINK

Dawn, Sunday Magazine, March 27th, 2016

Rizwana Naqvi

One of the most frequent sights — as one drives around Thar — are groups of children and women, clad in vibrant and colourful dresses, carrying pitchers on their heads and in their arms. Spotting such a group, our photographer draws closer to them and as he does so, a teenage girl tries to hide behind the bushes and the older ones draw the veil on their faces. Conversation with them is difficult as they hardly understand or speak Urdu.

Their woes, however, are known to all. They're Thari women who leave their homes at the crack of dawn to fetch water, sometimes from wells miles away. Only a few villages are lucky to have sweet water — otherwise mostly the water is brackish and unfit for human consumption.

Even where the water is sweet, it is a tedious task to draw it from the well as the water level is quite low. And in the absence of rain — which feeds the wells dug at a depth of 100-200 feet — the water level has dropped further.

Either the women draw the water manually or they take the help of camels and donkeys for this purpose — in either case they spend an astounding four to six hours every day to fetch four to five pots that they'll need.

Rains have always been important for Thar's water supply, but for the past 30 years — due to climate change — the pattern of rainfall is changing and becoming more erratic, Bharumal Amerani, an environmentalist working in Thar explains.

“Either the rainfall isn't sufficient or the monsoons start late. For the past four years the drought is persistent. Previously the drought would take place after two to three years and even then it wasn't that it wouldn't rain at all — it would rain but lesser than needed,” he says.

Amerani points out that the best pattern of rain for water collection and agriculture in Thar is when it rains between July and September. “If there is no rain till August 14, it is considered drought. If in a month it rains about 500mm and doesn't rain again, it's not sufficient; the normal pattern is that it rains 300-500mm between July and September with intervals,” Amerani said.

Last year even when it did rain — two months after the monsoon ended — no grass grew. The villagers had prepared the ground in anticipation of rain and had planted the seeds; but according to the locals, the downpour was so heavy that it washed away the grass and crop seeds.

But even when Tharis are able to find water, it's often not of very good quality. The region's groundwater is saline to brackish and has a high concentration of various salts and minerals, which are dangerous to human health.

According to the US Geological Survey, many experts consider water to be brackish if the concentration of salt is between 1,000-10,000 mg/L; at the extreme end of this would be seawater, which is anything above 35,000 mg/L.

In most parts of Thar, the total soluble salts of ground water is far above the 1,000 ppm (one milligram of salt per litre of water) recommended by WHO; in some places it is around 3,000ppm.

For instance, a 2010 joint study by Dow University of Health Sciences, the Pakistan Council for Scientific and Industrial Research and a local NGO, Association for Water, Applied Education & Renewable Energy (Aware) found that over 80pc of groundwater in the district is unfit for human consumption.

Another study conducted by Aware, titled Underground Water Quality of Thar: A Detailed Analysis 2003-08, found that more than 50pc of the population use water with total dissolved solvents of over 5,000 mg/L.

Use of brackish water, which at many places has higher levels of fluoride as well, affects the health of Tharis — drinking salt water can lead to several diseases like tooth decay, vomiting, diarrhoea, headache, kidney diseases, etc. Young children are especially vulnerable as they are more likely to suffer from diarrhoea — this leaves them malnourished, and at risk of further diseases.

In the wake of the water crisis, the Sindh government announced the installation of Reverse Osmosis (RO) plants. The RO is a process which removes impurities from water by filtration, using membrane technology in various parts of Thar. The process started about a decade ago when 30 RO plants were installed during 2004-2007 when Arabab Ghulam Rahim was Sindh's chief minister.

The present government's plans are big — about 700 RO plants at a cost of Rs7 billion are to be installed out of which 350 have been installed in various villages. In January 2015, the hybrid solar desalination plant was set up at a cost of Rs 934million in Mithi.

It is supposed to process two million gallons of water per day which will be supplied to the Mithi and Islamkot talukas and nearly 150 villages around them. Claimed to be the largest in Asia, at present it is only supplying 50,000 gallons per day.

Dr Sono Khangharani, chief executive officer of Hisaar Foundation, says that “there is a conflict in supply and demand; there is enough solar power available to run the plant eight hours a day but the plant does not have enough capacity”.

He adds that maintaining the plant requires a lot of meticulous care: “The membrane has to be changed frequently but one can't be sure whether it is being done regularly or not”.

Ali Akbar, a social activist working for Aware which runs projects in districts Tharparkar and Umerkot, revealed that plants both in Chachro and Diplo face problems such as erratic fuel supply and technical issues due to which the plants are often not operational.

“The problem is that people operating the plants aren't trained; they may not properly use the chemicals that are needed for water treatment. This affects the taste and odour of water and results in people, especially children, suffering from diarrhoea, though there are no major health issues,” Akbar says.

But for Tharis who have to walk long distances to fetch water, it is a case of something being better than nothing. When they get piped water through a motor they tend to use it for all purposes.

However, Nisar Ahmed Memon, deputy commissioner, Mithi, denies the allegations that the RO plants aren't working efficiently. “The RO plants are expensive, their maintenance is also expensive and it takes time to repair in case of any faults,” he says in an informal discussion with Dawn.

Akbar also points out the negative environmental impact of the RO plants: “The amount of water that's pulled from underground — almost 40pc of it is rejected and wasted. These impurities and contaminates are flushed down the drain. Though these ought to be disposed of in a manner that they are evaporated, they are absorbed in the soil and mix with the sub-soil water.”

Tharis may also be paying more than they should for the filtered water. Dr Khangharani alleges that water tankers pipe away the water filtered by the RO plants and sell it onwards for Rs3, 500 a tanker — small fortune for many Thari residents.

“Mithi is supplied by piped water only twice or thrice a month; people store this water to last as long as they can but the tanker mafia is becoming active in cities; they take water from the reservoirs or the RO plant and supply it in the city,” Dr Khangharani points out.

Sustainability and long-term viability is another concern for the experts. “The whole project is contracted out. The company is responsible for running and maintaining the plant. A major problem can arise if the company one day decides to pack up and leave [since] they haven't transferred the technology,” Akbar says.

Akbar feels one way to ensure longevity of RO plants and promote the local economy would be to involve the community. “No local department is taking responsibility for the company; the provincial government is dealing with it directly. It would have been better if Thar's youth were trained and given responsibility,” he says.

When asked about the involvement of the Thari communities, Memon says that while the RO plants are currently run by the government, the locals can be more involved: “By and large communities do not share the responsibility of maintaining the plants, and expect the government to do everything though they should also share the responsibility,” he says.

Many villages now use solar-powered motors to draw water from wells — often a more feasible and cheaper alternative to RO plants according to NGO workers on the ground.

For instance, the Hisaar Foundation has installed solar-powered motors in some villages where they have trained the locals to run the motors (See A tale of two villages for more details).

As to who bears the cost of maintenance, Dr Khangharani explains that “the motors come with one year warranty; if it causes trouble during this time, the company repairs it. Usually if the motors runs trouble-free for one year, it works for six to seven years. The local people are ready to bear the cost which is usually not more than Rs5,000-7,000 as water is very important for them.”

But Memon, disagrees and says that installing wells is not feasible as they provide brackish water which is unfit for human consumption. “The RO plants are the need of the hour as they purify and treat the water. As fuel is expensive, we are now installing new plants that run on solar energy. Besides that, diesel-operated plants are difficult to maintain and repair.”

His argument may have some weight but when the RO plants are not providing sufficient water and are proving to be expensive, alternatives have to be explored (See Going against the grain for more details). Till then Tharis may still be running from pillar to post in search of water that isn't too saline or brackish.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1247511/thar-dry-as-dust>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MARCH 14th TO MARCH 20th 2016

WIDESPREAD RAINS: WATER INFLOWS ABNORMALLY INCREASE IN RIVERS

Business Recorder, March 14, 2016

Water inflows in rivers – Indus, Jhelum, Chanab and Kabul – have abnormally increased after widespread rains up country during the past 24 hours.

In a special weather advisory, the Meteorological department said on Sunday that heavy fall may generate urban/flash flooding in upper KP (Malakand, Hazara, Peshawar, Mardan and Kohat divisions), FATA, Gujranwala, Rawalpindi divisions and Kashmir during next 24 hours. Land sliding may occur in vulnerable areas of Hazara division and Kashmir during the period.

Water regulatory bodies told Business Recorder that water inflow in river Chenab shot up from 8,300 cusecs to 46,000 cusecs at Headworks Marala, near Sialkot, in river Jhelum from 20,841 to 252,792 cusecs at Mangla dam, in the Mighty Indus from 24,700 to 41,000 cusecs at Tarbela dam, and in river Kabul from 11,000 cusecs to 20,000 cusecs.

IRSA has reduced water outflow downstream the Mangla dam from 35,000 cusecs to 25,000 cusecs on Sunday following heavy rains in the command area of the Mangla zone rivers.

Met Office said that widespread rain-thundershower accompanied by strong gusty winds occurred in Punjab, KP, Kashmir, while at isolated places in Mirpurkhas division and Gilgit Baltistan and Islamabad during past 24 hours.

<http://www.brecorder.com/agriculture-a-allied/183/25347/>

WATER SUPPLY PROJECT: MINISTER INAUGURATES TEST COMMISSIONING SERVICE

Business Recorder, March 15, 2016

FAISALABAD: Punjab Law Minister Rana Sanaullah on Monday inaugurated a test commissioning service of the water supply project, which has been completed at a cost of Rs 6 billion.

The project was launched with the assistance of France, which provided Rs 4 million as a soft grant. Under the project, 15 million gallons of clean water will be provided to the citizens.

Speaking on the occasion, Sanaullah said that the water supply project was a gift of Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif for the citizens of Faisalabad, which would ensure provision of clean drinking water to the major population of the city.

He said that the CM Punjab would inaugurate the project very soon and announce the second phase of the project, which would be completed within two years at a cost of Rs 16 billion. “The entire population of the city will get clean drinking water after completion of the second phase,” he added.

He congratulated the entire team of Wasa for successful completion of the important mega project.

Vice-Chairman, Wasa, Mian Irfan Mannan, thanked the Law Minister for extending all out support for smooth completion of the project. He said that Wasa Faisalabad was committed to providing best service to the people.

He also thanked the French government for providing soft grant for this project and said that the elected representatives of Faisalabad were jointly making efforts towards development of the city.

Chairman, FDA, Sh Ejaz Ahmad, Vice-Chairman, Wasa, Mian Irfan Mannan, MNA Mian Abdul Mannan, MPA Ch Faqir Hussain Dogar, acting DCO Ejaz Khaliq, DG FDA Yawar Hussain, MD Wasa Syed Zahid Aziz, Project Director Ch Rafiq Muhammad, representatives of French Company Garry Hall, other officers and notables of the area were present on the occasion.

Earlier, the Law Minister inspected Filter Pads and other sections of the water project.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2016/03/15/12-page/741115-news.html>

PRESSING PROBLEM: WATER SCARCITY WREAKS HAVOC ON FORESTS, SAYS DFO

The Express Tribune, March 17th, 2016

Paucity of water is adversely affecting forests in the Multan Range, DFO Liaquat Gulzar said on Wednesday.

Gulzar said the Irrigation Department had to provide water for 180 days annually but the supply of water had declined to 100 days. He said the paucity of water had particularly hit sheesham trees badly as the die-back disease had attacked the trees and stunted their growth. Gulzar said the Pirowal Jungle was one of the worst-affected forests in the region.

The DFO said adequate supply of water could prevent losses to the tune of millions of rupees. He said the Forest Department had been informed by Irrigation Department that it had been grappling with an acute water crisis and could not accommodate its needs.

The DFO said the Forest Department had planted 32,000 trees across Multan and Shujabad. He also revealed that a special committee had been constituted to commence a campaign against the timber mafia.

Bahawalpur Irrigation Circle SE Masood Chughtai said on Wednesday that citizens ought to play their role to eradicate water pollution.

He made the remarks while speaking to Cholistan Development Council Executive Director Farooq Khan at his office. Khan said the Irrigation Department had a pivotal role to play with regard to protecting the Bahawalpur District Canal from getting polluted.

He said the Bahawalpur Waste Management Company should collect garbage accumulating along the canal. Khan said the Bahawalpur TMA should strive to revamp the sewage system. Khan said it was also imperative to initiate a public awareness campaign in the pertinent areas.

He said the Cholistan Development Council would effectively discharge its duties in this regard.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1067077/pressing-problem-water-scarcity-wreaks-havoc-on-forests-says-dfo/>

PARCHED PROVINCE: EVERY INDIVIDUAL URGED TO SAVE WATER

The Express Tribune, March 17th, 2016.

QUETTA: Balochistan Governor Muhammad Khan Achakzai has said that every individual should exhibit care in using water in view of rapidly depleting underground water resources in Balochistan.

Addressing a seminar titled, "The issue of water and future strategy in Quetta and Balochistan," Achakzai said that urgent steps are required for preserving rainwater to improve the water shortage situation.

Currently the underground water level has fallen to 1,500 feet in Quetta and its suburbs which is alarming and this issue requires urgent attention. He said that water shortage can even affect the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and other development projects.

He stressed upon all the individuals to play their role for lessening the intensity of the issues.

Speaking on the occasion, Balochistan Minister for Irrigation Nawab Ayaz Jomezai said that water shortage should be taken seriously otherwise people would have to face serious consequences.

He warned if the current situation continued, Quetta city would turn into a desert in a matter of few years. He said the provincial government will launch an awareness week to sensitise the people about the importance of preserving water.

German Consul General Rainer Scheidchen, during a meeting with Achakzai at the Governor House, expressed interest of German companies in Balochistan, particularly the Gwadar port.

Scheidchen said that a number of German firms were willing to invest in private and public sector projects in the province.

Achakzai said that the provincial government would extend full cooperation if German investors were interested in visiting Gwadar. Balochistan government would provide complete security to the foreign investors in the province, he said.

Achakzai said that Balochistan was blessed with rich mineral resources. "Foreign funding can prove instrumental in tapping the mineral potential of Balochistan," he said.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1067380/parched-province-every-individual-urged-to-save-water/>

'TOUGH DECISIONS' NEEDED TO RESOLVE WATER CRISIS: ZEHRI
Dawn, March 18th, 2016

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Nawab Sanaullah Zehri has said the government will not hesitate in taking tough decisions to establish its writ and improve the performance of its departments.

"In order to ease the water crisis, all available resources will be utilised and tough decisions will be taken," he said.

The chief minister was speaking at the concluding session of a two-day seminar entitled "Water crisis in Quetta/Balochistan and the way forward", which was organised by the provincial Public Health Engineering department, in collaboration with the Southern Command, Balochistan Rural Support Programme and Unicef here on Thursday.

Chief Secretary Saifullah Chattah, Wapda Chairman Zafar Mehmood, General Officer Commanding, 33 Div, Maj Gen Azhar Hayat, Quetta Mayor Dr Kaleemullah, provincial ministers and legislators were among those who attended the seminar.

Chief Minister Zehri said he was aware of the water crisis in Balochistan, particularly in Quetta. "We had plenty of water reservoirs, fountains and water channels but the incessant pumping of groundwater has made the water table go down drastically," he said.

Mr Zehri said the water crisis had gripped the entire province, adding that without water, no civilisation could prosper. "It is now our responsibility to recharge the water reservoirs."

The chief minister assailed the government officials who were not discharging their duties properly and preferred to live in Quetta instead of serving people in the remote areas.

"We will take tough decisions to ensure the smooth running of government departments so that the issues of the masses may be resolved on a priority basis," he said.

Nawab Zehri said that in Punjab it took months to get an NOC to dig a tube well but in Balochistan there were countless tube wells. "We need to legislate on this matter," he said.

The chief minister said if Murree could be provided water from Jhelum river, Quetta could also be provided water from the Indus. He added, however, that there were other options as well, such as constructing dams in Bolan.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1246413>

FIRM HIRED TO SURVEY WATER CONSUMERS

Dawn, March 20th, 2016

Aamir Yasin

RAWALPINDI: In order to get funds from donor agencies to launch new water projects and expand its tax net, the Water and Sanitation Agency (Wasa) will start a consumer survey in the 61 union councils of the city from April 1.

On March 18, the agency awarded the contract to a private company to carry out the survey at a cost of Rs80 million. The company will complete the process of gathering details of domestic and commercial units within six months.

A senior official of Wasa told Dawn that the survey was necessary for future planning as the agency had no reliable data on the consumers. He said donor agencies contacted the agency for funding new water projects but they did not rely on the consumer data collected by the agency.

Out of the total 61 union councils, 15 were given under the Wasa jurisdiction from Potohar Town last year.

Wasa already had data on the consumers in the 46 UCs collected by its own officials.

When contacted, Wasa Managing Director Raja Shaukat Mehmood told Dawn that the private company was engaged for the survey after floating tenders as per international practices.

He said the company officials would be visiting door-to-door to get photographs of houses and their water connections. The practice would help the agency differentiate between commercial and domestic consumers.

The firm would gather information about the use of water by consumers residing in each building. He said this would help check illegal water connections.

For the commercial consumers, the agency would get the details of hotels, petrol filling stations, service stations, beauty parlours, restaurants and commercial plazas.

At present, he said, a total of 120,000 consumers were using water provided by Wasa, including 90,000 domestic consumers. "As many as 80pc of the consumers are paying their water bills regularly but after the new survey the agency will also be able to bring the remaining 20pc consumers in the tax net."

He said there was a need to collect accurate data on the consumers and water usage for the future planning. It would not only improve the water supply system but would also stop leakages, he added.

Another official said three years ago the Punjab government directed Wasa not to increase water charges and in return provided Rs200 million to the agency every year.

But Wasa says electricity tariffs of tubewells and water pumps have gone up significantly during the period, putting a further burden on its resources.

Through the survey, the agency would also be able to get data on the consumers in the rural union councils which were brought under its jurisdiction recently.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1246812>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MARCH 7th TO MARCH 13th 2016

HALEJI LAKE'S REVIVAL UNDER WAY TO IMPROVE KARACHI'S WATER SUPPLY

The Express Tribune, March 7th, 2016.

Mudaser Kazi

In order to improve the city's water supply, the Sindh government has decided to revive one of the obsolete water reservoirs of the province – Haleji Lake in Thatta district.

The revival project includes the lake's rehabilitation, including strengthening of its embankments and constructing an 18-kilometre new canal for water supply.

The feasibility report for the revival project, which is estimated to cost Rs6 billion, was approved in October 2015. The revival will take two years to complete and the entire cost will be paid for by the Sindh government.

“The revival of the lake will fetch 65 million gallons per day (MGD) of additional water supply from the abandoned water reservoir to Pipri and finally to the grid that supplies water to Karachi,” explained the project director, Sikander Ali Zardari.

Haleji, an earth-filled artificial lake spread over six square-miles, was formed in 1940 during World War II, when the then British government of Sindh decided to increase the capacity of the lake by introducing a feeder canal from River Indus. Haleji Lake became the first water supply source for thousands of American and British troops stationed in Karachi.

The increased demand of water was fulfilled with the supply of 28MGD to Karachi through Pipri in 1942, the year it was commissioned.

Located 70 kilometres outside Karachi, Haleji Lake is also considered Asia's largest bird sanctuary. Since it attracts thousands of migratory birds between November and February, it can be termed a paradise for bird lovers.

In 1994, the irrigation department cut off the lake's feeding canal from its original source, Keenjhar Lake, when it built the Left Bank Outfall Drain (LBOD). The lake was reduced to a stagnant reservoir for saline water.

According to a Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) official, the need to revive the disowned water source was never felt since the water board had enough water to fulfil the needs of the metropolis. However, over time, the need to revive one of KWSB's oldest assets was felt given that the water board is failing to meet the city's demand. Karachi needs 1,100MGD when it is only being supplied 550MGD.

According to the project director, the ratio of total dissolved solvent in the water of Haleji Lake is very high due to salinity and stagnation. It is above the international standards and is not fit for human consumption, said Zardari.

“To bring the solvent back to the allowable limit, we have been washing the lake for the past six months,” he said, adding that this process includes maintaining the water inflow and outflow levels in the reservoir. “The washing will continue for a year until the infrastructural work is completed.”

One of the reasons behind the revival is to sustain the migration of birds which has ceased due to saline water, said Zardari. Once sweet water is fed in the lake, it will attract more migratory birds to it since the birds seek fresh water, he said, adding that fresh water fish and crocodiles will also come to life again once the restoration is completed.

Zardari told The Express Tribune that the tender for consultancy will be issued in a newspaper in a week or two for the detailed designing of the project. “Though, this project is minor in terms of the amount of water that it will provide to Karachi, but at the same time it will revitalise the ecosystem in a short span of two years,” he added.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1060619/recovering-reservoir-haleji-lakes-revival-under-way-to-improve-karachis-water-supply/>

SENATE ASKS GOVT TO REVISIT INDUS WATERS TREATY

Dawn, March 8th, 2016

Amir Wasim

ISLAMABAD: The Senate passed on Monday a resolution asking the government to “revisit” the 56-year-old Indus Waters Treaty on water sharing with India.

The house adopted the resolution moved by PPP's Dr Karim Ahmed Khawaja through a voice vote after Minister of State for Water and Power Abid Sher Ali opposed the move, terming it "impossible".

The minister's response angered some opposition members who accused the government of lacking will for resolving the issues which could even lead to a war between the two countries.

"Everything is possible if you have faith and will to do it," said Tahir Mashhadi of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement. He stressed the need for revisiting the treaty as the country's economy and agriculture had been suffering because of climate change and water scarcity.

Supporting the resolution, Farhatullah Babar and Sherry Rehman of PPP called for making the issue of Indus Waters Treaty a part of the "composite dialogue" with India. Ms Rehman said Pakistan was among top 10 water stressed countries of the world.

Newly appointed parliamentary leader of the ruling PML-N Mushahidullah Khan reminded the PPP leaders that former prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had also played a role in the signing and implementation of the treaty which was signed by then military dictator Ayub Khan and Indian Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru in 1960.

"The PPP assumed power four times since the signing of this treaty. Why did the party not include it in the agenda of the comprehensive dialogue with India?" Mr Khan asked.

The PPP senators said the situation and conditions had changed over the past 46 years and that the government should keep the future threat to the country in mind instead of reopening settled issues. Veteran PPP leader Taj Haider said Mr Bhutto had joined the Ayub Khan cabinet in 1962, two years after the treaty and that the former prime minister had once told them that there were some "secret clauses" in the treaty as well.

"This House recommends that (the) government should revisit Indus Waters Treaty 1960 in order to make new provisions in the treaty so that Pakistan may get more water for its rivers," says the resolution read out by mover Mr Khawaja.

He said there were certain flaws in the treaty under which Pakistan had been given control of three western rivers and India over three eastern rivers.

Abid Sher Ali said the treaty could not be revisited without the consent of the two countries, adding that legal opinion should be sought on the issue and all clauses of the treaty reviewed before making any such demand.

Acting Chairman Abdul Ghafoor Haideri, however, put the resolution for a voice vote, ignoring the minister's proposal.

The Senate also unanimously passed a resolution asking the government to purchase electronic voting machines to ensure holding of elections in a free, fair and transparent manner. The resolution was moved by Azam Swati of the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1244274>

THE INDUS WATER TREATY

Business Recorder, March 11. 2016

The upper house of parliament passed a resolution through a voice vote on a motion moved by Pakistan People's Party's Dr Karim Khawaja, requesting the government to "revisit the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) 1960 in order to make new provisions so that Pakistan may get more water for its rivers." Unfortunately, saner and more educated voices within the PPP notably Farhatullah Babar and Sherry Rehman supported the move and called for the treaty to be made part of the composite dialogue, which has been renamed comprehensive dialogue by the Modi government that remains stalled subsequent to the Pathankot attack.

A recap of the merits of the water-distribution treaty for Pakistan as a lower riparian country is in order. The IWT was brokered by the World Bank on 19th September 1960 and is perhaps the only treaty between the two countries that has not only withstood the test of time but which has also survived the three wars that India and Pakistan engaged in as well as numerous skirmishes across the borders.

The treaty allows control of the three western rivers namely Chenab, Jhelum and Indus to Pakistan but given that the rivers flow from India or areas administered by India it allowed India the use of the waters for irrigation, transport and power generation but, at the same time, placed restrictions on the building of dams by India that would have the capacity to create drought and famine in years of a bad monsoon year and during floods inundating large parts of Pakistan. Thus without the treaty India as the upper riparian country would have been able to build dams with impunity thereby controlling the water use by Pakistan.

The treaty also identified a dispute resolution mechanism through establishing a commission that was empowered to adjudicate on all water-sharing disputes. Pakistan has invoked this mechanism with respect to the construction of Baglihar and Kishanganga dams, however, through inordinate delays in filing the complaint the verdicts did not support a rollback in construction but in the case of Baglihar merely reduced pondage from 32,580,000 cubic metres against India's demand for 37,500,000 cubic metres and reduced the height of freeboard from 4.5m to 3.0m.

The Senate in its defence may point out two legitimate concerns. First, a reference can be made to a confidential cable sent by the then US Ambassador to New Delhi David Mulford dated February 25, 2005, released by WikiLeaks, which noted that the then "politically charged impasse" between India and Pakistan may spiral into "Islamabad's worst case scenario, that India's dams in Jammu and Kashmir have the potential to destroy the peace process or even to lead to war".

And, second, Pakistan is now regarded as a water-scarce country with its annual per capita water availability declining from 5,000 cubic metres to as low as 800 cubic metres during the past 55 years. However, a revisit of the IWT may well lead to India scrapping the treaty entirely, a distinct possibility given the fact that it would be in India's interest to do so.

The Minister of State for Water and Power Abid Sher Ali rightly opposed the move in the Senate which angered parliamentarians leading to a voice vote. Abid Sher Ali has a history of using language that many in the opposition regard as un-parliamentarian and one would have hoped that the government had employed a dove as opposed to a hawk to convince parliamentarians of the rightness of its arguments; yet at the same time one would have hoped that better sense had prevailed within the PPP senators who surely are cognizant of the merits of the IWT and the advisability of not opening it for renegotiations.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2016/03/11/20-page/740032-news.html>

78PC WORK ON NEELUM-JHELUM PROJECT COMPLETE

Dawn, March 12th, 2016

LAHORE: The progress on Neelum-Jhelum Hydro Project stands at 78.5 per cent, and the tunnel boring machines (TBM), which suffered rock burst on May 31 last year, were restored in the second week of January.

Chief Executive Officer Engineer Muhammad Zubair told the Wapda chairman during a visit to the site on Friday. Chairman Zafar Mahmood asked the project authorities to further expedite their efforts to meet the revised schedule.

As per revised schedule, first generating unit of the project is expected to be completed in July 2017, whereas the remaining three units will come on line by the end of 2017 in different phases.

Speaking on the occasion, the chairman appreciated the commitment and devotion of the project authorities in implementing this extremely precarious project. He said that most of the critical targets relating to construction of the project had been successfully achieved, therefore, Wapda was confident to complete it as per the timelines.

During the visit, the chairman also witnessed excavation of tunnel through the TBM at rock burst site. The chief executive officer apprised the chairman that both TBMs deployed at the project had been functioning satisfactorily. He further informed the chairman that installation of three hydraulic gates at the dam site (Nauseri, Neelum Valley) shall be completed by 15 March 2016..

The Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Company is constructing a world class underground power generation facility. The project envisages 90 per cent construction work under high mountainous overburden and only 10 per cent above the surface.

The project, on its completion, will contribute 5.15 billion units of low-cost and environment friendly electricity to the national grid.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1245168>

SINDH CANALS REHABILITATED UNDER RS30BN WATER PROJECT

Dawn, March 13th, 2016

MUZAFFAR QURESHI

KARACHI: The Rs30.353 billion Sindh Water Sector Improvement Project (WSIP), with Rs28.840bn World Bank financing, has streamlined the irrigation system in the province after rehabilitation of canals and distributaries.

According to the details provided by the provincial Planning and Development (P&D) Department, the project would be completed in 2018. It aims to modernise irrigation and drainage system in a systematic way to deal with floods and drainage issues of the province.

The project areas includes jurisdiction of Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (SIDA) and three area water boards of Ghotki Feeder, Nara Canal and Left Bank Canal which form 30 per cent of the total irrigated area of the province.

The project also involves preparation of detailed feasibility studies for Guddu and Sukkur Barrages for their safe operation.

Major works completed within the closing period of Feb 28, 2015, with quality and satisfaction of the farmers' communities, has received the British Construction Industry Award.

The World Bank has rated the project as one of the good and model projects in South Asia.

Chief Economist of Sindh, Dr Fateh Maree claimed it was the first time in the history of development projects that the process of procurement of civil works and goods as well as recruitment of project staff was entrusted to a professional team of the UN agency, the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

In addition, Transparency International Pakistan has been involved in the process of procurement to ensure transparency in all stages of procurement, he added.

Talking about the results of the project, Dr Fateh said the conveyance efficiency of irrigation system in the project area increased from 66pc to 71pc due to rehabilitation of canals and distributaries which roughly equals to 0.80 MAF of water saving from the irrigation system losses.

Reliability of water supply has increased from 42pc to 53pc as per the indent indicating substantial increase of 11pc.

Out of 612,300 water courses the project has benefitted 390,000 water users stretched in an area of 1.17m hectares.

He further said the increase in cropping intensities has benefitted medium and large size farmers in raising their income level than small size farmers having land holding of 5 acres.

He admitted though the income level of rural household has not improved, there was however improvement in some welfare indicators. In project area, pacca houses have increased from 40pc to 50pc.

There was significant impact on employment opportunities in the project area with the deployment of temporary workers during the implementation period with an estimated monetary value of Rs1,145,196m.

In addition, the construction of washing ghats (places) has had a positive impact on village women who now get cleaner clothes in a safe and convenient manner.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1245307/sindh-canals-rehabilitated-under-rs30bn-water-project>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM FEBRUARY 29th TO March 6th 2016
SAFE TO DRINK: 'SAAF PANI PROJECT VITAL FOR PUBLIC HEALTH'
The Express Tribune, February 29th, 2016.

Chief Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif said on Sunday that the government had set itself a target to supply safe drinking water to 40 million people in rural areas of the province for the next two-and-a-half years.

He was addressing a meeting through video link on Sunday. The Saaf Pani Project was reviewed at the meeting. Sharif said the Saaf Pani project was directly linked to public health.

“We must utilise all resources available for its implementation,” he said. The Saaf Pani Company chief executive officer gave a briefing to the chief minister about the project. Minister for Housing Tanvir Aslam Malik, MPA Kashif Padhyar, MPA Qamarul Islam Raja and the chief secretary also participated in the meeting.

“In order to ensure good governance, a government must set the right targets. This requires collective wisdom and efforts,” the chief minister said.

He was talking to MNA Syed Iftikharul Hassan. PML-N Saudi Arabia chapter president Mirza Altaf Hussain was also present.

The chief minister said the country was facing some grave problems. “The people of Pakistan have placed their trust in the prime minister. Under his leadership, the government will steer the country out of this crisis,” he said.

Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif paid glowing tributes to four soldiers including Captain Umair were killed in Shawal.

He said the people of Pakistan were proud of the sacrifices of its soldiers. He said the courage and valour displayed by Captain Umair Shaheed, Havaldar Hakim, Sepoy Rashid and Sepoy Hameed were highly commendable.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1056154/safe-to-drink-saaf-pani-project-vital-for-public-health/>

COOPERATION IN WATER SECTOR PUNJAB GOVERNMENT, CHINESE CO SIGN MOU

March 01, 2016 Business Recorder,

A memorandum of understanding was signed between Punjab government and Chinese company Sino Hydro Corporation for cooperation in water sector, here on Monday. Punjab Chief Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif was the chief guest on the occasion. MD WASA Chaudhry Naseer Ahmed signed the MoU on behalf of Punjab government and Vice President Sino Hydro Corporation Lyu Liushan on behalf of the Corporation. Under the agreement, the Chinese company will provide cooperation and technical assistance for the improvement of water sector.

The Chief Minister said deep-rooted friendship between Pakistan and China is turning into strong economic cooperation, due to increasing collaboration between Punjab government and a number of Chinese companies, bilateral economic cooperation is promoting.

He said the Punjab government is implementing a mega project for the supply of potable water to the people and 40 million rural populations will benefit from this project. The government is spending billions of rupees for the provision of potable water to the people of the province under Saaf Pani Project. He said the Chinese company can extend cooperation in implementation of Saaf Pani Project and the technology and expertise of China will be fully utilised; the work is being carried out on the splendid Saaf Pani Project with speed, transparency and high standard. He said the cooperation of Sino Hydro Corporation will also be welcomed for the mega project of provision of potable water to the people as provision of clean drinking water is a big challenge for protecting them from diseases and providing healthy environment.

He said the Chinese company can also cooperate for the improvement of sewerage system and provision of clean drinking water. Earlier a high level delegation of Sino Hydro Corporation led by Vice President Lyu Liushan met Punjab Chief Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif and showed interest in investment in construction of water and waste water project infrastructure. He said his company wants to work with Punjab government for the development of water sector. Provincial Housing Minister Tanveer Aslam Malik, Chinese Consul General Yu Boren, Kh. Ahmed Hasaan, Chairman Planning & Development, concerned secretaries and other officials of Chinese company were also present on the occasion.

<http://www.brecorder.com/agriculture-a-allied/183/21159/>

PM WANTS RESOLUTION OF SINDH-BALOCHISTAN WATER DISPUTE: ZEHRI

Dawn, March 2nd, 2016

Saleem Shahid

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Sanaullah Zehri said on Tuesday that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has ordered formation of a committee to resolve his province's water dispute with Sindh.

Mr Zehri, who attended a meeting of the Council of Common Interests in Islamabad on Monday, said the prime minister also asked distribution companies to curtail unannounced and prolonged power loadshedding in Balochistan.

"I informed the CCI meeting that the agriculture sector in Balochistan has been facing devastation because of shortage of water caused by unannounced and prolonged loadshedding by the Quetta Electric Supply Company and Wapda," he said.

During a meeting with the secretary for planning and development, the chief minister emphasised the need for timely release of funds under the federal Public Sector Development Programme to Balochistan in order to complete ongoing development projects and start more uplift schemes in the province.

He also called for immediate release of federal funds for construction of a new airport in Gwadar and for resolving the problem of water shortage in the port city.

The federal secretary briefed Mr Zehri on development schemes for Balochistan.

Meanwhile, Minister for States and Frontier Regions retired Lt Gen Abdul Qadir Baloch and former prime minister Zafarullah Jamali praised the chief minister and his team for presenting the case of Balochistan at the CCI meeting.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1243052>

POTABLE WATER: PUNJAB GOVERNMENT TO SET UP FILTRATION PLANTS: SHAHBAZ

Business Recorder, March 02, 2016

Punjab Chief Minister, Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif has said that availability of potable water is the basic right of every citizen and keeping in view this fact, Punjab government is implementing a big programme under which water filtration plants will be set up throughout the province.

He said that besides supply of drinking water, improvement of sewerage system, capacity-building of WASA and use of modern technology for waste water treatment is the need of the hour. He said that Punjab government wants to benefit from the experience and skill of a prominent Chinese company associated with water sector so that better facilities could become available to the masses.

He expressed these views while addressing a meeting through video link at Civil Secretariat. Senior officials of the Chinese company linked with water sector also participated in the meeting through video link. The officials of Chinese company expressed willingness in promoting cooperation with Punjab government for waste water treatment, supply of potable water, improvement of sewerage system and capacity-building of WASA. The Chinese company also assured to work speedily on various ongoing programmes of Provincial Irrigation Department.

Addressing the meeting, Shahbaz said that there is a need to benefit from modern technology for improvement in water supply and sewerage system, capacity-building of WASA and benefiting from modern technology for waste water treatment. He said that supply of clean drinking water can help to save the people from diseases caused by contaminated water. He said that a basis responsibility can be discharged through resolving this issue by the use of modern technology, therefore, the departments concerned should play an active role in this regard.

He said that supply of potable water to the citizens is a collective responsibility. Shahbaz further said that capacity-building of WASA and other concerned institutions in big cities is essential so that best facilities could be made available to the masses. He said that departments concerned will have to move forward in a professional manner.

The CM said that china is sincere and trusted friend of Pakistan and experience and expertise of China will be fully availed for the supply of drinking water, waste water treatment, improvement of sewerage system and capacity-

building of WASA. He directed that a framework should be evolved in this regard and steps should be taken immediately.

Provincial Minister for Housing Tanvir Aslam Malik, MPA Chaudhry Shehbaz Ahmed, Chairman Planning & Development, concerned secretaries, Commissioner Lahore Division and other senior officials participated in the meeting through video link while Kh Ahmed Hasan and DCO Lahore were present at Model Town.

<http://www.brecorder.com/agriculture-a-allied/183/21440/>

COMPLETION OF TWO HYDEL PROJECTS BY JUNE '17 ORDERED

Dawn, March 5th, 2016

Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has ordered quick completion of two major hydropower projects that will add about 2,380 megawatts of electricity to the national grid before June next year. Through two letters, the federal government has asked Wapda and the management of Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project (NJHP) to ensure effective monitoring of the Tarbela-IV Extension Project and the NJHP for their completion before the deadline.

Informed sources said the chief executive officer of the 969MW NJHP, Muhammad Zubair, was directed to shift the project's headquarters from Islamabad to its site at Muzaffarabad for on-site monitoring of the work.

The project management was asked not to leave Muzaffarabad for Islamabad unless called by the federal government or without prior approval of the ministry of water and power in case of pressing requirement. The water and power secretary was told to submit fortnightly reports about the two projects to the Prime Minister Secretariat.

Wapda Chairman Zafar Mahmood was asked to visit the sites of NJHP and the 1,410MW Tarbela-IV on a weekly basis and report updates to the prime minister.

"The objective is to complete before June 2017 the two projects considered crucial to Prime Minister Sharif's target to end loadshedding before next general elections," said an insider.

The sources said these decisions were taken at a meeting presided over by the prime minister earlier this week and attended by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar and the prime minister's principal secretary, Fawad Hassan. Secretary water and power Muhammad Younas Dagha was also called ahead of the meeting held in the absence of Wapda chairman and NJHP's chief executive officer.

According to the sources, Mr Sharif desired he be regularly updated on the two projects and that he would like to personally monitor the progress. The prime minister was informed that about 9,100MW of power generation capacity would be added to the system by the winter of 2017.

It was reported that the Neelum-Jhelum project had faced delays in the past because of shortage of funds. With outstanding dues of Rs15-20bn, the contractor could not have been expected to ensure smooth implementation. However, now that financing has been lined up, the project is already reported to have achieved about 80 per cent progress.

The project will produce 5.15bn units of electricity.

Wapda was confident to get the first generating unit of the project ready by mid-2017, with rest of the three units expected to be completed in phases by Dec 2017.

The Tarbela extension (T4) project has also been targeted to be completed by June 2017. Originally, it was estimated to cost \$928 million, but the estimate has been revised downwards to \$651m.

The existing power house at Tarbela, completed in 1974, has a total generation capacity of 3,478MW. This is expected to go up to 4,888MW on completion of T4 in June 2017 and further to about 6,200MW by June 2018.

The project is being constructed at Tunnel 4 of the dam, which was originally intended for irrigation, but was later taken up for power generation as the demand for electricity increased. The country would get 3,840GWh every year from T4 and it would be available for power supply during peak demand months.

FOOTPRINTS: GWADAR'S LONG WAIT FOR WATER

Dawn, March 6th, 2016

THIS port town is touted as the next modern city full of opportunities for developers and residents alike. Yet, at the moment, the residents of Gwadar wish for nothing more than a continuous flow of water.

Officials say that the future “economic hub of Balochistan” will need 12 million gallons of water by 2020, failure to provide which will put at risk the ambitious plans.

All along the coastal highway leading from Gwadar to the Belar dam, 85km in the south-west, empty water cans are placed by the side of the road by residents from nearby and far-off villages to be filled up by private tankers on their way to Gwadar. Near one such line, a man named Din Mohammad is busy getting water from a recently filled can. He's putting it into smaller containers tied to his camel. In broken Urdu, he says that this is the only way his family of 10 gets water that is free of cost. There are other such men on the way to Belar, some of them on foot, going to get water.

There has been a severe water crisis in Gwadar district after the only dam providing water, the Akra dam, dried up at the beginning of this year. The \$24m rain-fed project was constructed in the early 1990s to provide water to the villages but ended up becoming the sole provider to Gwadar city instead, explains the sub-divisional officer at the Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), Mohammad Shaban.

Sitting in his office, which is one kilometre away from Bakhshi Colony near the arterial road of Gwadar, he says that the Akra dam last received rainfall in 2010. Then the dam dried up in 2012, when not enough rain was recorded. “The meteorological department predicts rainfall in the coming two days,” he says. “It'd be good if it rains well, which would be enough for the Akra dam to provide water for the coming five years. Otherwise, we'll have to look for alternative ways.”

In the wake of the water shortage and the Akra dam drying up, the Belar dam — a catchment area getting water from the Daramb mountain facing the Iranian border on its west — became a junction for private tankers coming from Gwadar. Mohammad Ali and other owners of 120 water tankers in Belar have set up 15 water pumps on the left bank of the dam.

These tankers make 27 trips a month, barring Fridays, to provide water to the residents of Surbandar, Peshukan, Gwadar and Jiwani. At present, residents in Gwadar pay Rs15,000 to avail a private tanker which helps for a week. Mohammad Surabh, a resident of Bakhshi Colony, says tiredly that he pays Rs15,000 for a tanker, “and then we wait for the electricity so that it can be utilised at home. We face a power shortage of eight hours a day due to the maintenance work around the area.”

The alternative source of water, which according to Shaban is a solution to the city's persisting water issues, is the Mirani dam which is located 43 kilometres west of Turbat city, a five-hour drive from Gwadar city.

“When the dam was being constructed in 2003, there was a clear statement in the PC-1 of the project that Gwadar city will get 20 million gallons of water from the Mirani dam,” adds Shaban. But in the revised PC-1, after retired General Pervez Musharraf's government, the clause was removed by the incoming government, he explains. This, though a viable solution, he says, will cause conflict in the coming days as both cities need water.

At present, Gwadar city needs 4.6 million gallons of water; the Akra dam was supplying 2.5 million gallons. So the city was already short of some two million gallons of water, says the director-general of the Gwadar Development Authority (GDA), Dr Sajjad Hussain Baloch.

“We witness a dry spell every two to three years. As a temporary step, the chief secretary of the province has made the desalination plant in Karwat, located in Gwadar, partially functional which is providing 500,000 gallons of water to the city,” he claims, adding that the Balochistan Development Authority (BDA) wants the plant to be fully functional by the end of the month.

However, sources within the PHED say that the plant, which was initiated in 2006, faced delays in its functioning and was “forcibly made functional” after a push from the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) last November.

NAB found that the water pipelines needed to supply water to the city were missing. The source further adds that Karwat is providing 200,000 gallons of water rather than the amount claimed by the GDA DG.

The construction of two other dams — the Sawwar dam undertaken by the provincial government and Shaadi Kaur by the federal government in 2012, both located in and around Pasni, Gwadar district — is yet to be completed, which authorities say is at the root of the problem.

SDO Shaban says: “If these dams had been completed in time, we wouldn’t have had to rely on other sources of acquiring water. Embezzlement and a lack of funds is another issue which needs to be sorted before the water shortage snowballs into a bigger conflict between the towns.”

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1243899/footprints-gwadars-long-wait-for-water>

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April 2016

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM APRIL 25th TO MAY 1st 2016

WATER — PAKISTAN’S MOST CRITICAL CHALLENGE

Dawn, Business & Finance weekly, April 25th, 2016

Dr Manzoor Ahmad

Of all the challenges Pakistan is facing, water is the most critical. The country is among the leading five that face extremely high water stress and low access to safe drinking water and sanitation, according to the World Resources Institute.

Similarly, the United Nations categorises Pakistan amongst those few unfortunate countries where water shortages could destabilise and jeopardise its existence in the next 10 years.

Today a quarter to a third of Pakistan’s population lacks access to safe drinking water. Both urban and rural populations suffer from water contamination and waterborne diseases. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals require us to ensure access to water and sanitation for all.

Few realise that the fresh water we receive through our rivers, fed by glaciers and rain, is no longer enough to meet our needs. With the increase in population and urbanisation, now more than 60pc of Pakistan’s water is pumped from underground reservoirs. Some areas, such as in Baluchistan, access to the water below ground has fallen to 1,000 ft.

In Lahore, groundwater tables have fallen in some parts by up to 65 feet in just the last five years. But of all the cities, Karachi faces the acutest water. The poor have to queue for hours to get drinking water. In the coming hot summers, water shortages could lead to violence.

Our mega dams at Tarbela and Mangla are 40-50 years old and their storage capacities have been falling because of silting and sedimentation. They store only 30 days of average water demand, compared to 1,000 days for Egypt and 220 days for India. After a hiatus of almost four decades, since Tarbela Dam was built, it was decided in 2006 to build another major multipurpose dam at Diamer-Bhasha. It’s been 10 years since then but construction has not yet started and it could take another decade to complete.

But adding only one major water reservoir would not be enough. In fact, it would only restore the storage capacity that Pakistan had three decades ago. It is high time that the government focuses on construction of other major dams. Kalabagh Dam would be the most doable.

Since 1963, every aspect of this dam has been explored by top national and international experts and they have all been unanimous that this was the best option for providing cheap hydroelectricity and water storage. Unfortunately it has been highly politicised.

According to Shamsul Mulk, the acclaimed water and dams expert, the cost of delay has been Rs132bn per year only on account of cheaper electricity. Unlike other more expensive and remotely located dams, Kalabagh could be constructed in just four years.

So far the government has been high on words but low on action. It has been deliberating on a National Water Policy but more than half way through its tenure it has failed to produce one.

In September 2015, while reiterating the importance of water issues, the federal minister for planning and reforms promised to announce the long-delayed National Water Policy within three months. He had added that the coming generations would not forgive us if we do not take appropriate steps immediately to address water needs of growing urbanisation.

Considering the enormity of the challenge and high cost of doing nothing, it is time government accorded its highest priority to water issues. There is a need to have a full time water czar. The current federal minister for water is overburdened with several portfolios including managing energy and looking after defence. What is needed is a full-time highly qualified technocrat to handle this assignment.

There needs to be a two-pronged approach addressing supply side as well as demand side issues. Over 95pc of Pakistan's water is used for agriculture. Due to poor farming practices and almost free availability, most of the water is wasted. Even before water reaches the farms, almost 50pc is wasted through the crumbling canal infrastructure. The Governments' policy of subsidising water-intensive crops is another major factor, exacerbating the situation.

At this time of the year when budgetary allocations are being debated, it should be realised that the biggest challenge facing the country is the water crisis. Accordingly it should receive more allocations than any other sector be it defence or roads.

In 1991, it was due to efforts of the then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif that the Indus Water Apportionment Accord was signed by all the provinces and has worked successfully for over 25 years. If Mr Sharif wants to leave another legacy, it should be a forward-looking national water policy, which has clearly defined goals for improving water-use, efficiency in agriculture and creating new water storage capacity that could at least provide enough resource for 220 days as is the case with India.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1254171>

UPCOMING BUDGET : LCCI STRESSES ON FUNDS FOR ENERGY, WATER PROJECTS

The Express Tribune, April 27th, 2016.

LAHORE: Highlighting the country's dire need to improve energy supply and water scarcity, the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) has voiced its concerns and hopes that the upcoming budget can target these areas.

In a statement, LCCI President Sheikh Muhammad Arshad, Senior Vice President Almas Hyder and Vice President Nasir Saeed said that keeping in view the growing energy demand and water scarcity, there is an urgent requirement to allocate maximum funds for energy and water projects.

"Energy is the engine of growth and being an agrarian country the availability of sufficient water is a must, therefore, these two particular areas should be the top priority of the government in the forthcoming budget", the LCCI office-bearers added.

They said that sufficient energy would not only result in expansion of the industrial sector and generate new jobs but would also double exports.

The LCCI office-bearers said the government should allocate adequate funds for the Kalabagh Dam and the Thar coal project. They said that the country's reliance on costly thermal power is jacking up the cost of production and the import bill as well. "The country needs an urgent transfer in its energy-mix in favour of hydel power and alternate energy resources."

They suggested that the use of biogas should be promoted in rural areas both for electricity generation and gas for cooking besides producing bio fertiliser. They said that over 175 billion tons of Thar coal reserves are enough to provide 100,000 megawatts of electricity for 100 years.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1092288/upcoming-budget-lcci-stresses-on-funds-for-energy-water-projects/>

WATER CONSUMERS : HDA TO CUT SUPPLY, IGNORE COMPLAINTS OF DEFAULTER

The Express Tribune, April 27th, 2016.

HYDERABAD: For the last several years, the Water and Sanitation Agency (Wasa), which supplies water to Hyderabad, has been unsuccessfully grappling with financial woes. Frequent disruption of water supply and drainage disposal by protesting staff demanding salaries has become a routine occurrence, taking place every three to four months.

Marred by alleged official corruption and low recovery of utility bills, Wasa, which supplies around 70 million gallons per day to the district, is surviving on bailouts by the provincial government, with a sum of Rs300 million expected to be doled out in the next few days. Finding a permanent solution to the predicament has proved to be next to impossible for the agency's high-ups.

Nevertheless, the chief of the Hyderabad Development Authority (HDA), the parent organisation of Wasa, has come up with a new, and arguably implausible, plan for enhancing revenue. The plan involves punishing consumers for defaulting on payment of utility bills in a bid to lure them to pay their dues.

“A high-level meeting [chaired by HDA Director General Noor Muhammad Laghari] has decided that from next month water supply will be curtailed to areas with less than 60% recovery. Moreover, the drainage complaints coming from these areas will also not be given a priority,” said a press statement issued on Monday after the meeting. Furthermore it was decided that Wasa's complaint centre will make it conditional for a complainant to clear all the dues before the complaint can be addressed.

Questioning the implementation procedure, officials have termed the agency's plan impractical.

“We are not an electric supply utility which can shut down a particular feeder or remove a transformer from a specific locality to punish defaulting consumers,” commented an official, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

According to him, Latifabad taluka is supplied from two main water sources, and disconnecting either will create a water scarcity for the whole area instead of a particular locality or consumer. Similarly, he added, Qasimabad taluka is supplied from three different sources and halting any one of them will force the entire lot to suffer.

“The main roads across the city have been recently revamped and expanded. We can't expect that the district administration will allow us to dig up roads here and there to shut off supply and reconnect it after the recovery,” the official contended.

Another official, who also requested anonymity, claimed the highest percentage of recovery from any area is hardly around 40%.

“If the localities with less than 60% recovery are to be punished, then water supply to the whole city will have to be cut...which is not possible.”

Sharing recovery details of January, 2016, the official said Rs39 million, around 32% of the total utility bills, could hardly be recovered.

Interestingly, Wasa managing director Saleemuddin Qureshi told The Express Tribune the warning has been given to compel consumers to pay bills.

“We are not going to implement it knowing that it's going to be a hot summer season up ahead.”

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1092192/water-consumers-hda-to-cut-supply-ignore-complaints-of-defaulter/>

WAYS TO COPE WITH WATER CRISIS HIGHLIGHTED

Dawn, April 30th, 2016

KHAIRPUR: Speakers at a national workshop on 'Water crisis in Pakistan' held at the Shah Abdul Latif University (Salu) stressed the need for conservation and sensible use of sweetwater to cope with a crisis looming large on the country.

The workshop was organised by Salu's geography department and presided by faculty of physical sciences dean Prof Dr Mumtaz Hussain Mahar.

Prof Mahar presented the current data of saline and sweetwater around the world, saying that 97.5 per cent of water on earth is saline and out of the remaining 2.5 per cent sweetwater, 68.9 per cent is frozen, 29.9 per cent is underground and 0.9 per cent is in the shape of fog, humidity and soil moisture. Only 0.3 per cent flows in rivers and fills reservoirs.

“In Pakistan more than 60 per cent of sweetwater available to it is lost in conveyance through poorly maintained canals and watercourses as well as unwise usage in farms,” he observed.

He stressed that all water channels must be properly lined and awareness of sweetwater conservation be created to prepare for the looming water crisis, which was bound to create food insecurity as well.

Naseer Memon of the Strengthening Participatory Organisation (SPO) also shared sweetwater availability data with the audience and quoted a World Bank report that suggested that “40-60 per cent water used by utilities is lost to leakage, theft and poor accounting; almost half of the water used for irrigation is lost to seepage and evaporation”.

He said that global water demand for manufacturing industry was estimated to increase by 400 per cent from the year 2000 to 2050.

Fazlullah Qureshi in his paper on ‘Irrigation water management in Sindh — issues and options’ said that the present water accord between Sindh-Balochistan and Punjab envisages a water share at a ratio of 46:49 but the actual withdrawal showed the annual withdrawal by Punjab to be above 50 per cent and in certain year even 56-57 per cent.

“Sindh-Balochistan got the decided share only twice so far,” he said.

Mohammad Idrees called for storing rainwater in dams to meet the challenge.

“We can store surplus water in small and large dams. He referred to diminishing capacities of Tarbela and Mangla dams and unavailability of any water for early Kharif.

He said the surplus water during floods could be stored to avoid such a situation.

He identified various water conservation measures including sinking of more tubewells, use of sprinkling and drip-type gadgets in irrigation, adopting modern cropping patterns, developing skimming wells, rainwater harvesting, recycling and desalination of sewage/saline water etc.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1255296/ways-to-cope-with-water-crisis-highlighted>

SAAF PANI: ACCESS TO POTABLE WATER A BASIC RIGHT, SAYS SHAHBAZ

The Express Tribune, November 16th, 2014.

LAHORE: Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif said on Saturday that public health was inextricably linked with the provision of potable water.

He was chairing a meeting convened to review progress on the Saaf Pani Project.

Sharif said providing the people with clean drinking water was a primary responsibility of the state. The chief minister said the government was committed to effectively discharging its responsibility in this regard.

Sharif said access to clean drinking water was a basic right of every citizen. He said the government was spending billions of rupees on the project and would ensure that everyone had access to potable water. The chief minister said the project would be quickly completed.

Sharif said filtration plants would be set up across the Punjab under the project. He said access to clean drinking water was inextricably linked with public health and the government was committed to providing the people with quality medical facilities. Sharif said the project would cover 18 districts of the Punjab in its initial stage. He said scope of the project would be extended to cover the entire province in phases.

He said Saaf Paani Sahulat Centres would also be set-up under the project. The chief minister said local youth would be provided with jobs at these centres. The Saaf Paani Company chief executive officer (CEO) briefed those present on the project’s features.

Housing Minister Tanvir Aslam Malik and Provincial Assembly Member (MPA) Ayesha Ghaus Pasha were also present in the meeting.

Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif on Saturday called on Afghan President Ashraf Ghani in Islamabad.

Various topics of mutual interest were discussed in the meeting. Sharif said there was great potential in increasing bilateral trade between the two countries. He stressed the need for enhancing bilateral trade and economic cooperation. The chief minister said it was crucial for Pakistan and Afghanistan to cooperate to eradicate religious extremism and terrorism.

He said the two states would have to overcome the security challenges confronting them in concert to promote trade and commerce in the region. Sharif said this was imperative to ensure that the benefit of these developments could reach the people.

He said the commercial, education, health and services was brimming with opportunities that should be jointly harnessed by the Punjab and Kabul. The chief minister said President Ghani's visit marked a watershed in Pakistan-Afghanistan relations and bode well for increased bilateral cooperation.

President Ghani said he was pleased to visit Pakistan. He said peace in either of the countries was a prerequisite for stability in the other country. Ghani said Lahore and Kabul should be declared twin cities. He also invited the chief minister to visit Kabul. Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif accepted the invitation saying that he would be leading a trade delegation to the city in the near future.

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Tariq Fatmi and Law Minister Shuja Khanzada were also present on the occasion.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/791856/saaf-pani-access-to-potable-water-a-basic-right-says-shahbaz/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM APRIL 18th TO APRIL 24th 2016
GOVERNMENT DECIDES AGAINST DE-SEDIMENTATION OF TARBELA DAM
Dawn, April 18th, 2016

ISLAMABAD: With Tarbela Dam having lost over 35 per cent of its storage capacity, the government has decided against de-sedimentation of the reservoir, fearing an irreparable loss to downstream river, irrigation and engineering systems.

The decision has been taken on the basis of latest hydrographic survey and sedimentation study, according to Water and Power Minister Khwaja Mohammad Asif.

In a written report submitted to the Senate, the minister confirmed that the dam had lost over 35pc of water storage capacity since its inception due to silting.

“Hydrographic survey 2015 reveals that the gross and live storage capacities of Tarbela reservoir since its impounding have reduced from 11.616 million acre feet (MAF) to 7.271 MAF (37 per cent) and 9.692 MAF to 6.328 MAF (35pc), respectively,” he said.

Khwaja Asif said the water and power authorities had in the past considered de-sedimentation of the dam through excavation of silt to reclaim lost storage capacity, but it was not worth the effort.

The sedimentation study was conducted in 2013 to examine the techno-economic viability of evacuation of sediments deposited in Tarbela reservoir since its construction. “The study concluded that sediment flushing is technically difficult and uneconomical with a negative rate of return,” the minister wrote.

The study also held that flushing would impact on the downstream river system, increase sediment load entering canals, changing bed levels in the river channel and necessitating additional sluicing to clear canal head regulator pockets.

At Chashma, the study warned, there might be head loss into the power station and increased sediment load would pass through turbines and potentially damage the structure. This could also lead to loss of electricity at Tarbela and Ghazi Barotha project and loss of water storage for irrigation at Chasma barrage.

The minister said the inflow of soil or sediments was a natural phenomenon and could not be prevented. However, the construction of upstream storage and watershed management can reduce the sediment inflows. In principle, sediment inflows can be reduced either by catchment management or by construction of check dams.

In this specific case, the minister explained that in 94pc of total areas in the upper catchment of Indus, the run-off was dominated by snow melt from Himalayan and Karakoram ranges and hence it was considered impractical to implement catchment management measures over such an inaccessible and extensive area.

In the lower catchment, which forms only 6pc of the total area, various measures have already been undertaken. To be effective over a considerable period, check dams will require a storage volume approaching Tarbela itself to contain the average sediment inflow of 150,000,000 cubic meters.

The only dam impounding such a volume that has been identified is Diamer-Basha Dam (DBD). The effect of Basha on sedimentation of Tarbela has been investigated and it has been estimated that life of Tarbela Dam will increase by 35 years on the construction of DBD.

However, it was not yet certain when the construction of DBD could be taken in hand.

The minister said DBD would require land acquisition of about 37,419 acres, including 35,991 acres in Gilgit-Baltistan and 1,428 acres in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The land acquisition process in KP is moving at a snail's pace, while GB is at an advanced stage of completing the land acquisition process.

Khwaja Asif said the KP government was required to acquire 989 acres of government and 439 acres of private land for the multi-billion dollar project, but it had so far acquired only 162 acres (37pc) from private citizens, while the acquisition of the government land was outstanding.

On the other hand, 10,093 acres (more than 56pc) of the 17,918 acres private land and 17,214 acres (more than 95pc) of the 18,073 acres government land have so far been acquired for the DBD.

The total project cost, according to its papers approved in 2009 by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council, was Rs895 billion, including land acquisition and resettlement through the Public Sector Development Programme.

The minister said major construction work – main dam construction – had not been yet started because of absence of commitment of funds by international lending agencies for which the government was consistently pursuing them. Whenever the financial commitments are available, he said, the revised cost estimates would be approved and the construction would take nine years to complete.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1252785>

NEELUM JHELUM PROJECT ON TRACK AS 80% WORK DONE
The Express Tribune, April 20th, 2016.

LAHORE: The 969-megawatt Neelum Jhelum Hydropower project is progressing timely as the civil works of the both the underground powerhouse and transformers hall are 95.5% and 99% complete, respectively, and are expected to finish in October this year.

This was briefed to Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) Chairman Zafar Mahmood during his weekly visit to the project site.

The chairman visited the powerhouse, transformers hall, manifold area and switchyard of the project to review progress of construction work. Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project Chief Executive Officer Engineer Muhammad Zubair, Project Director Nayyar Alauddin and representatives of the consultants and contractors were present on the occasion.

During the on-site briefing, the chairman was apprised that subsequent to the completion of civil works of unit No3 and 4 of the powerhouse, both units had already been handed over to the electro-mechanical contractor.

It was further informed that civil works of the switchyard are substantially complete, while electrical and mechanical works will also be completed by October 2016. Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project Chief Executive Officer said that October 2016 is going to be an important month as the tunnel boring machine, deployed on the left tunnel will break through after completing the excavation work on the left tunnel. Overall progress on the project stands at 80%. The progress on C1 is 78%, on C2 is 80%, while on C3 is 83%. Out of total 68.6 kilometer, 62 kilometers long tunnels have so far been excavated.

The Wapda chief expressed satisfaction over the progress achieved so far on the project. Appreciating devotion and hard work of the project authorities, he said that Wapda is confident of completing the project according to the revised schedule.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1087925/neelum-jhelum-project-on-track-as-80-work-done/>

BARBS FLY IN PA OVER SUKKUR WATER CRISIS

Dawn, April 23rd, 2016

Habib Khan Ghori

KARACHI: The issue of water shortage in Sukkur created a pandemonium in the Sindh Assembly on Friday when Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah responding to the repeated demand of a Muttahida Qaumi Movement lawmaker said they (the MQM) did nothing for Sukkur when they were at the helm of affairs.

In response to the slogan raised by MQM lawmaker Deewan Chand Chaowla "Give water to Sukkur", the chief minister said the Sindh government was executing a mega project of Rs900 million with Asian Development Bank cooperation to bring overall improvement in Sukkur.

The remarks irritated the MQM lawmaker who through his call attention notice drew the attention of the house to the issue of water shortage in Sukkur city and said the government did not ensure supply of even drinking water in the area.

Local Government Minister Jam Khan Shoro said this was the job of Northern Sindh Urban Services Corporation (NSUSC) that he said worked under the planning and development department. Senior Minister for Finance, Planning and Development Syed Murad Ali Shah, however, said the NSUSC was not a Sindh government department but a private institution.

The statements irritated the MQM legislator who asked if the local government and planning and development department were not answerable to the assembly as to who exactly was responsible to answer his question about water supply to Sukkur.

Without naming the party, the chief minister, however, said when they (the MQM) were at the helm of affairs they did nothing for Sukkur and asked the speaker not to allow the lawmaker to do acting in the house. On these remarks, other MQM lawmakers also rose from their seats and joined in the protest.

While the chief minister regretted over this attitude of the opposition lawmakers, the speaker advised the opposition not to set bad example of interrupting leader of the house.

Senior minister Nisar Ahmad Khuhro said they would not behave in this manner and requested others to let the leader of the house speak. Mr Chowla continued to speak without a pause though the speaker expunged all remarks from the record.

In response to another call attention notice of Syed Amir Haider Shah Sheerazi about non-functioning of cardio ward of the Civil Hospital Thatta, Mr Khuhro said it was operational after a heart specialist, Dr Nazeer Memon, had been appointed there.

MQM lawmaker Saifuddin Khalid drew attention of the house to shortage of lecturers at Govt Girls College at Baba Wilayat Ali Shah, Orangi Town. The education minister informed the house that there were only 32 students enrolled in the college where three professors and one lecturer were appointed.

In response to the call attention notice of leader of opposition Khwaja Izharul Hassan local government minister Jam Khan Shoro informed the house that the heirs of deceased KMC employees were paid dues and during the current year payment was made in 23 cases. In response to the notice of Muhammad Yusuf Shawani, the minister informed the house that Karachi-West district was badly suffering from water shortage where water from Karachi-Central district was diverted for three days a week. The government was also considering to install a pump in Hub to supply water to the district.

The house, which was called to order at 11.15am, was adjourned at 1.40pm to meet on Monday at 10am. Before the chair called it a day, it was decided by all the parliamentary parties that there would be no business except budget discussion from Monday till Wednesday.

Earlier, the assembly carried two bills unanimously. One of them — The Benazir Bhutto Shaheed University of Technology and Skills Development at Khirpur Mirs Bill — was related to setting up a university. The bill, which was introduced through supplementary agenda after the relaxation of relevant rules, was taken up for consideration soon after its introduction. The assembly also adopted The Sindh Companies Profits (Workers' participation) Bill as amended by the standing committee on labour and human resources.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1253812/barbs-fly-in-pa-over-sukkur-water-crisis>

INTEGRATED RESOURCE MANAGEMENT OF WATER IN CHITRAL HIGHLIGHTED Business Recorder, April 23, 2016

Governments alone cannot manage the preservation and distribution of water sources in today's world, because it requires funding, skilled manpower, know-how and participation of community to deal with the challenges. In Pakistan, Inter-Cooperation with the financial assistance of Swiss Development Corporation (SDC) is actively engaged in the integrated resource management of water in Chitral, which is a large district with mountainous topography and challenging landscape.

The district is endowed with water resources, which is a treasure for the district but also a management challenge as the residents witnessed this in 2015 floods. This area is sensitive to climate change dynamics and therefore a sound long term planning for water resources is a must to safeguard communities from negative effects of this change.

The SDC is funding Inter-Cooperation, Pakistan for its second phase of Water for Livelihoods (W4L) project since January 2014. The project is being implemented in four districts ie Chitral, Karak, Dera Ismael Khan and Tank in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The project is designed to introduce integrated water resource management (IWRM) approach and implement it with effective participation of all stakeholders to build a common understanding on use of water as a public good. To this end, the project has developed Water Use Management Plan (WUMP) in two union councils of Chitral namely Arandu and Shishikoh. These plans are based on the inventory of all water sources available in the area and communities' priorities regarding water use.

A plan for future interventions has been prepared for both the Union Councils to enable an effective, equitable and efficient use of water resources at local level fulfilling community needs. These plans were prepared in close co-ordination with district administration, government departments working on water sector, civil society organisations and water user groups/ associations organised by communities.

Preparing a WUMP required special skills and capacities of stakeholders involved in the process. Therefore prior to preparation of the document the project provided orientation on the process to all stakeholders including district authorities (administration), government departments in the districts, local NGOs, water user associations and W4L representatives. The project also invested in capacity development of the Water Users Associations since they are the main actors on water sector for their union council.

They learnt how to develop linkages with concerned actors and negotiate with the authorities for provision of required finances for implementation of their respective plans.

The whole process was initiated under the direct supervision of District Co-ordination Committee (DCC) chaired by Deputy Commissioner, where all water sectors related government line departments were core members. It took nearly eight months preparing two WUMPs, sharing and vetting by DCC and making final adjustments. A full members

DCC meeting approved WUMPs of Union Councils Shishikoh and Arandu water Use management Plans. The Deputy Commissioner chaired this meeting.

On the occasion the representatives of Water user Association of Arandu and Shishikoh were also present. The Water for Livelihoods took responsibility for implementing top 11 priorities on drinking and irrigation facilities in UC Arandu and Shishikoh in 2015. Soil conservation and on farm Water management departments immediately took four schemes, which is a big achievement in a short time. All these activities were completed well in time. During 2015, project prepared one more WUMP of Birir valley of Chitral. In 2016, project will take 19 more topmost priorities on drinking and irrigation facilities in Arandu, Shishikoh and Birir.

<http://www.brecorder.com/agriculture-a-allied/1:/39196:integrated-resource-management-of-water-in-chitral-highlighted/?date=2016-04-23>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM APRIL 11th TO APRIL 17th 2016

HUB CITY, GADANI TOWN: GOVT URGED TO INCREASE WATER SUPPLY FROM HUB DAM

Business Recorder April 13, 2016

KARACHI: Lasbela Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Maqsood Ismail has urged the Balochistan government to ensure adequate water supply to Hub City and Gadani Town from Hub Dam.

He said that in order to meet the increasing water demand of Hub City and Gaddani Town and the industries located in the areas, the ratio of water supply from Hub Dam should be increased.

He was of the view that Karachi had many other sources of water and it did not depend on the water supply from Hub Dam. On the other hand, he said that the people of Hub City and Gaddani Town of Lasbela District solely depended on the Hub Dam water.

He was of the opinion that the distribution formula agreed upon decades ago had now become unworkable due to an increase in the population of Lasbela District.

He urged the Council of Common Interests (CCI) to revise the distribution formula keeping in view the ground realities, so that a major portion of water from Hub Dam was made available to the people of Hub city and Gaddani Town.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2016/04/13/9-page/750185-news.html>

POTABLE WATER IN RURAL AREAS: 'PUNJAB GOVT TAKING SPECIAL MEASURES'

Business Recorder, April 16, 2016

FAISALABAD: Punjab government is taking special measures on war footings to provide potable water in the rural areas of the province under Punjab Saaf Pani Project, however, installation of water filtration plants by overseas Pakistanis in educational institutions and public places by expatriates is a laudable service to the humanity.

Mr. Muhammad Afzaal Bhatti Commissioner Overseas Pakistanis Commission said this while inaugurating a water filtration plant donated by a London based Pakistani Shahid Farooq in Bangla Chowk Mamumkanjan in Tehsile Summundri near here today.

Azad Ali Tabassum MPA/chairperson District Overseas Committee, Chaudhary Muhammad Ashraf, Chaudhary Abdul Ghafar and Rana Naeem Haider were also present during this function in addition to the local elders and elite.

Two water filtration plants provided by overseas Pakistanis with an estimated cost of Rs.2 million have been installed in Government High School Chak No.550-GB and Bangla Chowk Mamumkanjan to provide clean and drinking water to the residents of this area.

Mr. Muhammad Afzaal Bhatti said that overseas Pakistanis are serving their motherland by sacrificing their comfort and relatives. "We cannot ignore their role to provide basic amenities of life to their countrymen", he added.

He said that recognizing the services of expatriates, the Chief Minister Muhammad Shabaz Shrif has established overseas commission at the provincial level to resolve the problems confronted by their families. “The commission has close liaison with overseas committees constituted at the district level to settle their complaints expeditiously”, he added.

Commissioner Overseas Pakistanis also assured to bring into the notice of Chief Minister the problems of potable water for the residents of Mamumkanjan. He also appreciated the free eye camp organized by the overseas Pakistanis Mr. Shahid Farooq and said that government will extend full support to the philanthropists who has devoted their lives for the noble cause of humanity.

Azad Ali Tabassum MPA said that philanthropists are actually sharing the burden of the government by installing water filtration plants for the general public. He said that government fully recognizes their contributions and was also indebted to them.

Mr. Shahid Farooq thanked Muhammad Afzaal Bhatti Commissioner Overseas Pakistanis, Azad Ali Tabassum MPA and other guests and said that water filtration plants are being installed in various localities of the area. He told that arrangements have also been made to keep these filtration plants operational during load shedding of electricity by providing generators.

He also appreciated the Saaf Pani Project of the Punjab Government and said that potable water must be provided to the entire population of Mamumkanjan.

He told that 2-week long eye camp has also been started in Bangla chowk to provide free treatment to the poor and deprived segments of the society.

He said that renowned ophthalmologist Dr. Zahid Sittar from Toba Tek Singh is checking the patients while eye operations are also being conducted with provision of free lenses.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2016/04/16/19-page/751762-news.html>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM APRIL 4th TO APRIL 10th 2016

‘MORE THAN 100 BRANDS OF BOTTLED WATER UNSAFE’

Dawn, April 7th, 2016

ISLAMABAD: More than a 100 brands of bottled water have been identified as unsafe for human consumption in the Pakistan Council for Research in Water Resources’ (PCRWR) quarterly report.

PCRWR has been tasked by the government through the Ministry of Science and Technology to monitor the quality of bottled water and publish its results in an attempt to improve the quality of bottled drinking water.

Samples of 111 bottled water brands were collected from across the country, including the federal capital, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Karachi and Peshawar.

In a statement, the water quality monitoring body of the Ministry of Science and Technology said that the poor quality of drinking water is the reason many people are buying bottled water for drinking.

Due to more demand, there has been an increase in the number of bottled water companies over the last few years.

“However, many of the mineral water companies were found selling contaminated water,” the PCRWR statement said.

According to the report for January to March 2016, 22 brands are unsafe for drinking due to chemical and microbiological contamination.

These include ECO, Coral Water, HI-Fresh, New Nation, Pak Aqua, HFC, Total, NG Fresh Water, Al-Habib, Silver, ORION, Aqua Arabia, Well Care, Desert Dew, New Deep, Lite Aqua,

The report says that from these, 12 brands had high levels of arsenic ranging from 12 to 85 parts per billion when the Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority standard for arsenic is 10 parts per billion.

These brands include New Nation, HFC, Total, Well Care, Desert Dew, New Deep, Lite Aqua, Aqua Smart, New Smart Aqua, Mazan Pure, Royal Blue and Aqua National among others.

In their statement, PCRWR warns that excessive levels of arsenic can cause various types of skin diseases, diabetes, kidney diseases, hypertension, heart diseases, birth defects, black foot disease and multiple types of cancers. Aqua Smart, Avalon Pure Water, New Smart Aqua, Mazan Pure, Royal Blue and Aqua National.

The water testing lab has said that three brands, including ECO, Coral Water and Hi Fresh were found to be unsafe due to microbiological contamination which can lead to cholera, diarrhoea, dysentery, hepatitis and typhoid. Other brands were found to be unsafe due to the presence of high levels of sodium and potassium.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1250456>

PA ASSURED OF STEPS TO MITIGATE WATER CRISIS IN SUMMER

Dawn, April 7th, 2016

Habib Khan Ghori

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah has approved a special grant of Rs200 million to repair the old machinery of the Dhabeji water pumping station and arrange new and standby machinery for the Pipri water pumping station, as the Sindh government is striving to improve the supply to meet water needs of Karachiites during the summer.

Also, work on two water projects with the capacity of 100 and 65 million gallons a day will be launched this month. These projects will be in addition to the K-IV project whose contract has been awarded to the Frontier Works Organisation to ensure additional supply of 260MGD (million gallon per day) water to the metropolis after two years.

This assurance was given to the Sindh Assembly on Wednesday by Local Government Minister Jam Khan Shoro while responding to a privilege motion tabled by Khurram Sher Zaman of the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf.

In his motion, the PTI lawmaker recalled that the assembly had passed a resolution seeking early implementation of the two water supply schemes of 165MGD, but unfortunately nothing had been done by the department concerned and requested the house to send this matter to the privilege committee for consideration.

Briefing the lawmakers on the measures being taken by the government, the minister said tenders had been invited for the implementation of the two water projects, which would be opened on April 21 and 29 before the formal start of the work on the two projects.

He also explained that the contract of Karachi bulk water supply project (K-IV) was given to the FWO which would complete it within the next two years. On completion, he added, this project would supply 260MGD water daily to the city.

The local government minister said the chief minister approved the special grant Rs200 million for repairing the machineries installed many years back at the Dhabeji pumping station and arrange new and standby machinery at the Pipri pumping station.

Mr Shoro said he himself on Tuesday visited the Dhabeji and Pipri pumping stations and took briefing in detail about the condition of the machinery and other equipment.

He expressed the hope that water supply would improve during the summer after the necessary repairs and change of equipment at the pumping stations. He said there was almost 50 per cent difference in the water requirement and its supply to the city, which could be overcome to an extent after the completion of 165MGD and K-4 projects.

Earlier, when the house reassembled here on Wednesday at 11.10am after an 11-day break, Speaker Agha Siraj Durrani administered the oath to Ismail Rahu of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and Ziaul Hasan Lanjar of the Pakistan Peoples Party, who won the Badin PS-59 and Naushahro Feroze PS-23 seats in the by-polls respectively. They were elected after unseating of Mohammad Nawaz Chandio of the PPP and Masroor Khan Jatoti of the National Peoples Party.

After reaffirmation of oath by the members, their respective supporters sitting in the public gallery raised slogans of Jiye Bhutto and Jiye Nawaz Sharif. A couple of members across the house greeted the newly elected members and hoped that they would play their role in mitigating the problems of people and strengthening the democratic institutions.

Meanwhile, the speaker informed the house that the governor gave assent to the Sindh Sales Tax on Services (Amendment) Bill, 2015 and the Sindh Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education (Amendment) Bill, 2015. The replies received about the action taken by the departments concerned on the resolutions adopted by the house during 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 were also laid on behalf of the minister for parliamentary affairs by Minister for Environment and Coastal Development Dr Sikandar Mandhro.

Muttahida Qaumi Movement lawmaker Mohammad Hussain Khan who wanted to speak on the replies of the departments as were laid in the house pointing out that on his privilege motions the speaker had instructed the assembly secretariat to lay the replies in the house but the chair did not allow him saying that the reports were not for discussion as the rules only allowed to lay the replies in the house.

A similar situation was witnessed when Dr Mandhro, in the absence of the chairman of the committee on the rules, procedure and the privileges Nisar Ahmad Khuhro, presented a report for adoption on the privilege motion of Shahid Abdul Salam Thaheem. MPA Thaheem through the privilege motion mentioned that Dr Abdul Majeed Chhutto, project director, establishment of medical colleges/ vice chairman, Shahdadpur Institute of Medical Sciences, misbehaved with him when the lawmaker had inquired an issue related to the Shahdadpur Institute of Medical Sciences.

In its report the committee on rules, procedure and privileges held with consensus Dr Chhutto guilty of the breach of privilege of MPA Thaheem and announced one week's symbolic imprisonment with fine of Rs5,000. The committee also recommended to the chief secretary that the mentioned officer was not fit for government service or hold any public office due to his arrogant attitude towards public representatives, and therefore no further posting be allowed to him.

Criticising the report, MQM lawmaker Syed Sardar Ahmad said what privilege had been breached when everyone always opposed the VIP culture and this matter related to the privilege of a VIP.

Opposing the report, PML-F legislator Nand Kumar said Dr Abdul Majeed was being victimised for personal reason.

Dr Mandhro opposed expression of views on the report citing that if the discussion was allowed, it would amount to have no confidence in the privilege committee. Speaker Durrani informed the house that as the report was presented for adoption, discussion would not be appropriate and adjourned the session till Friday at 10am. By Our Staff Reporter

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1250406/pa-assured-of-steps-to-mitigate-water-crisis-in-summer>

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE: CONSUMPTION OF ARSENIC-LACED WATER WORRIES EXPERTS

The Express Tribune, April 7th, 2016.

KARACHI: It is alarming that arsenic-laced water is being consumed in the city, which is one of the major causes of cancer, said Dr Zafar Fatmi, an environmental health expert and associate professor at Aga Khan University.

Dr Fatmi was speaking at a seminar, organised by the Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science and Technology (Fuuast) on Wednesday to mark World Water Day, which was celebrated around the world on March 22. He explained how arsenic contamination has greatly affected human health and said failure to provide clean water to the people of South Asia can lead to increased child mortality.

According to him, diseases such as hepatitis, polio, dengue, malaria and diarrhoea are spread through the consumption of contaminated or arsenic-laced water.

Dr Fatmi also said that the contaminated water could also lead to cognitive impairments, cardiovascular diseases and cancer. We need to emphasise on cleaning the internal environment of the house, as well as our bodies so that we do not carry germs, he told the participants of the seminar.

Misbahuddin Farid, managing director of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board and chief guest, showed a short documentary to the students on how water is supplied and how their system works. He explained that Karachi is the second city in the world to receive its water from 200 kilometres away and said it is not an easy task to manage and distribute the water in such a big city.

He said the structure of water pipelines in the city had been laid without any plan, since the people of Karachi settled in areas, which had not been planned, adding that the city's master plan was completed in 2006.

Farid also listed the reasons for the water crisis in the city, explaining that there is a major difference in the supply and demand, as the population of the city keeps on increasing, whereas the water supply remains the same.

One major cause of the water crisis is illegal hydrants, he said. Farid linked most of the city's problems, such as electricity supply and the solid waste management system, with the ever-increasing population.

Sulaiman D Muhammad, FUUAST's vice-chancellor, said that Pakistan is not the only country facing a water crisis but due to our incompetency we have failed to cope with it.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1080174/environmental-issue-consumption-of-arsenic-laced-water-worries-experts/>

GOVT PLANS TO OVERCOME WATER SHORTAGE IN KARACHI: SHORO

Business Recorder April 9, 2016

KARACHI: Sindh Minister for Local Government Jam Khan Shoro has said that the government has planned to install desalination and RO plants to overcome water shortage in the city.

Speaking to the members of Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (Kati) on Friday, he said that the contract for building K-IV Greater Karachi Water Supply Scheme had been awarded to Frontier Works Organization and it would be completed in two years.

Shoro said that the K-IV project and two other water supply schemes would help bridge the city's water supply-demand gap. "The chief minister and the provincial cabinet have approved awarding of the contract to FWO," he added.

He said that a scheme for the revival of Dhabeji Station had also been approved.

Shoro said that the chief minister had released Rs 200 million for repair of the old machinery of the Dhabeji pumping station.

Replying to a question, the minister assured that the rules for adopting roundabouts and green belts would be amended and all issues in this regard would be resolved.

Shoro directed the concerned DCO to ensure removal of encroachments from the green belts.

Speaking on the occasion, Kati President Zahid Saeed said that the seven industrial zones of Karachi provided employment to more than five million people but the infrastructure of these areas was deteriorated.

Chairman, Standing Committee on Local Government, Zubari Chaya, briefed the minister about the issues being faced by the industrialist.

He said that industrialists had adopted the roundabouts and greenbelts and renovated them at their own expenses, whereas the KMC was demanding advertisement tax and parking fees.

Chaya said the industrialists had rejected these demands and clarified that they would not pay any kind of fee or tax.

He also pointed out that SBCA was not approving building plans, due to which the construction of new industries had come to a halt.

Advisor to Sindh Chief Minister Barrister Murtaza Wahab, Administrator Karachi Laeeq Ahmed, Senator Abdul Haseeb Khan, Senior Vice-President of Kati Saleem Uzzaman, Senior President Syed Wajid Hussain and others attended the meeting.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2016/04/09/8-page/748396-news.html>

May 2016

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MAY 23rd TO MAY 29th 2016

PTI PROTESTS AGAINST WATER SCARCITY

The Express Tribune, May 28th, 2016.

Danish Hussain

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) staged a protest outside the capital's civic agency against the acute water shortage in the city, especially for people living in the I-Series sectors, have been facing.

Islamabad MNA Asad Umar led the Friday protest, which saw participation from PTI activists and city residents.

Addressing the protesters, Umar accused the Capital Development Authority (CDA) of discriminating among citizens, as there is no water shortage in posh sectors, while sectors where middle-income families live have no water in the summer.

"It's very unfortunate that residents have been forced to protest on streets to get the very basic necessity of life," Umar said, adding that he brought up the issue in Parliament, but the government did not pay attention, leaving him with no option but to protest on the streets.

He also deplored the state of affairs at the CDA water supply directorate, saying that a number of water tankers were out-of-order and parked in the civic agency's parking lots, while no efforts had been made to install generators at tube wells to ensure water availability during load shedding hours.

At present, the actual demand for Islamabad's, estimated 2.2 million, residents is 211.22 million gallons per day (MGD).

In urban areas, managed by CDA, the current demand is 125 MGD, according to a recent study conducted by consultancy firm MM Pakistan. CDA Engineering Member Shahid Sohail said that the authority was supplying 74 MGD to these areas, leaving a shortfall of 49 MGD, or 39 per cent of demand.

Demand in rural areas is 86.2 MGD. Almost 60 schemes are being operated by the ICT's Local Government and Rural Development (LG&RD) through committees established at the union council-level to meet this demand.

The study estimates that by 2020, the city's water needs will rise to 246.79 MGD.

It says distribution losses in the next five years will increase from the current 27.55 MGD to 32.19 MGD, thus putting actual demand at almost 279 MGD. This figure includes 155.15 MGD of domestic demand and 59.45 MGD of non-domestic demand.

Supply issues are aggravated in the peak summer months as the CDA opts for water rationing.

The study by MM Pakistan further suggests that at present, 27.6 MGD, is being wasted due to antiquated water supply infrastructure.

In urban areas, the CDA supplies water from Khanpur Dam, Simly Dam, and tubewells.

"Supply from Khanpur and Simly dams is sufficient and currently there is no water shortage in areas where water comes from the dams," Sohail said.

He explained that shortage of water is reported in the I-Series of sectors because they are almost exclusively fed by tube wells, mostly in the national park areas.

Sohail said excessive load shedding and the receding underground water table have affected supply in I-Series sectors. "To overcome load shedding issues, a decision was taken to install generators at tube wells," Shahid said.

As a stopgap arrangement, Shahid said water would be supplied to affected areas through tankers. He further informed that 18 "off-road" water tankers would be made operational within a week after necessary repair and maintenance. He said finance wing had also released the funds required for repair and maintenance.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1111636/taking-streets-pti-protests-water-scarcity/>

WATER SUPPLY TO THARPARKAR: NA PANEL FOR PURSUING PATTERN OF SUPPLY TO TWIN CITIES
Business Recorder, May 28, 2016

The National Assembly Standing Committee on Human Rights Friday recommended supplying water to Tharparkar through a pipeline on the lines of water being supplied to twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi from Khanpur dam, to cope with growing water shortage in the area.

The committee which met with MNA Babar Nawaz Khan in the chair suggested both the federal government and Sindh government to make joint efforts for permanent solution of water crisis in Tharparkar and clean drinking water should be supplied through canal or pipes, on the pattern of water supply system launched from Khanpur dam to twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

Khan said that installation of solar tube well and setting up rainy dam was not a permanent solution of the issue and is also wastage of money. "Both federal and provincial government of Sindh should allocate funds to provide water to Thar from nearest possible area," he added. Secretary Irrigation Sindh informed the committee that the government has planned to construct 23 rain dams out of which so far construction of 10 has been completed.

The Sindh government also planned to set up 100 solar tube wells in Thar for provision of drinking water to the residents of the area, he added. Home secretary Sindh said that Sindh government is also working over a project to inculcate awareness among the residents of Thar to discourage early child marriages.

The committee decided to visit the affected areas of Thar in the upcoming month of July 2016 and expressed its hope that the MNAs, MPAs and relevant District Officers of the area will join the committee during the visit. The committee also discussed the issue of remaining payable salaries of the Lady Health Workers working in Thar and recommended the federal government to pay their salaries. Kamran Michael Minister for Human Rights said that he will also pay a visit to Thar.

The committee members also directed the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to devise a strategy to eradicate mice in the Parliament Lodges and submit their report in the next meeting of the committee along with satisfactory confirmation comments on letter head of all parliamentarians residing in the Parliament Lodges. Dr Khurram Rashid DPO Abbottabad while briefing the committee members about action taken regarding burning of an innocent girl at Abbottabad said that the police has arrested majority of culprits involved in the heinous crime and only a single person is still at large.

"Police would soon get hold of the absconder person," he said, adding that two police personnel have been deputed at the residence of the innocent girl family. The parliamentary body directed Abbottabad police to arrest the remaining culprits as soon as possible. MNAs Sahibzada Muhammad Yaqub, Sayed Essa Nori, Begum Tahira Bukhari, Farhana Qamar, Phyllis Azeem, Surriya Asghar, Kiran Haider, Asiya Naz Tanoli, Zahra Wadood Fatemi, Amra Khan, Dr Shazia Sobia, Musarrat Rafique Mahesar, Munaza Hassan, Kanwar Naveed Jameel, Kishwer Zehra, Aliya Kamran Murtaza and senior official also attended the meeting.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172/50459/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MAY 16TH TO MAY 22 ND 2016
CHINESE COMPANY WANTS TO SET UP TWO WATER TREATMENT PLANTS
Dawn, May 16th, 2016

Khalid Hasnain

LAHORE: A feasibility report has recommended installation of seven wastewater treatment plants in various parts of the city, enabling the state-run civic agencies to use the "treated wastewater" for irrigation and other purposes.

Following the recommendation, a Chinese firm has also expressed its interest in two of the seven proposed plants by submitting the unsolicited technical and financial proposal to the government under public-private partnership. The company's technical proposal is currently being evaluated by the Strategic Policy Unit (SPU) of the Lahore Development Authority these days, Dawn has learnt.

The report compiled by the LDA and Wasa through a private consultancy firm, proposes installation of seven plants near Ring Road-North East-1 and 2 (Mehmood Booti Disposal Station, Shalimar Escape Channel (Khokhar Road and Shadbagh), Shahdara-North West-1 (near Jahangir Tomb), Outside Tarragarh Settlement-North West-2 (Farkahabad), Lower Chota Ravi Drain/Bhati gate/Main Outfall-Central-1 (near Saggian Bypass over Ravi), Gulshan-i-Ravi-Central-2 (outside Gulshan-i-Ravi, near Motorway, Bund Road exit) and Main Road Cantonment Drain-South East (outside Shadiwal).

The design capacity of these seven plants (North East -1 to South East) has been recommended from 125 to 165 cusecs, 165 to 215 cusecs, 15 to 20 cusecs, 85 to 110 cusecs, 200 to 260 cusecs, 85 to 115 cusecs and 325 to 425 cusecs to meet the requirement till 2045, the report recommends.

While sharing information related to introduction, data collection, wastewater treatment options, number and capacity of the plants etc, the report says that the objective of the project feasibility (one of the components of the Ravi riverfront project) is to understand the existing wastewater discharge conditions in Lahore, and to propose a feasible and long-term technical solution for an adequate treatment of domestic wastewater and industrial discharges into the Ravi within the project area.

Considering the proposed urban development alongside the Ravi, this approach should facilitate the development of the Ravi riverfront area by creating a sustainable perennial fresh water body.

“Detailed field-based data collection were carried out to collect all the relevant information, such as wastewater quality testing, operation of the existing disposal stations and measurements of actual combined sewer flow at disposal stations, and all that was required in order to consider and identify a suitable wastewater treatment option for the Wasa and non-Wasa service area, and ultimately to prepare basic design of the necessary wastewater treatment plants.

“Comments from the LDA officials, received from the progress meetings and presentations, have also been addressed and included in the pre-feasibility report,” the report reads.

It recommends three wastewater treatment technologies for further evaluation during the feasibility stage: (a) activated sludge process for plants locations without land area constraint; (b) moving bed bio reactor for plants locations with land area constraints; (c) sequencing batch reactor for plants locations when the plant capacity/size/layout is relatively small.

Out of these three wastewater treatment technologies, the conventional activated sludge process has been identified and selected as the most suitable treatment option, due to its reliability, dependability, suitability, economic viability and operational control that would enable achieving the necessary, contemporary treated effluent standards. The decision is based on the comparison of financial and technical aspects of these technologies.

The report says that the hydraulic design capacity of the proposed plants varies from 15 cusec to 425 cusec (as an average daily flow).

“The two concrete channels are proposed on both sides of the Ravi to collect the wet weather wastewater flow from the existing disposal stations and existing drains that currently flow to the river. These channels would be also used to receive the treated dry weather wastewater flows during the dry weather periods,” it explains.

Talking to Dawn, LDA/SPU water engineering specialist Riaz Husain said since the feasibility of the project was already completed, a Chinese firm expressed its interest in first two plants in North East-1 and 2.

“The SPU experts are currently studying the company’s unsolicited technical proposal. And if the experts find it fit, it will be sent to government for further action,” he added.

He said the wastewater treatment would be on secondary level. And the treated water could be used for irrigation, swimming, boating and other purposes (except drinking).

SPU Project Manager Chaudhry Akram termed the project a need of the hour in Lahore keeping in view the wastewater disposal in the Ravi.

He said: “The government can get rid of various environmental problems if the project is executed and completed quickly.”

HYDROPOWER BACK IN THE LIMELIGHT

Dawn, Business & Finance weekly, May 16th, 2016

Syed Mustafa Amjed

THE Indus basin is a strength that Pakistan is fortunate to have. However, unfortunately it failed to play to its strengths post 1985. In this context this article looks at hydroelectricity and critiques certain aspects of the latest policy for mega hydropower projects that is under various stages of approval.

Hydel power is the most commonly used resource for generating renewable energy worldwide. Considering that worldwide technical potential for hydroelectricity is estimated at 16,000TWh/year, hydro potential is still underutilised though gaining traction due to renewed push towards green energy. Worldwide hydro generation capacity has increased by 20pc over 2010 to 2014 and now stands at 1,061GW.

In the not too distant past, Pakistan was producing more than 60pc of its electricity through hydel power as opposed to only 31pc currently. Apparently our previous economic managers failed to appreciate the benefits of hydroelectricity as they allowed its share to decline in the overall electricity mix. The cost of generation is less than Rs2/kWh for hydroelectricity on average, as compared to approximately Rs12/kWh for Gencos and Rs16/kWh for IPPs.

Given the unique Indus basin, Pakistan's identified hydro potential is 40,000MW between Shyok project and Kalabagh, whereas the installed nameplate capacity is only 7,116MW as of 2014. Nepra in its 'State of Industry Report 2014' states: "It is a drawback of the country that its power production is dominated by thermal power plants running on oil and gas." The costs of generation provided above clearly state the case for further hydel power generation capacity.

However, acute power shortages have made us look at all avenues of power generation including the cost-effective hydroelectricity and quite a number of mega projects are in the pipeline including extension and refurbishment of existing units. Considering that the hydro projects are the largest power generation units in the world, it makes sense to utilise the economies available in the Indus basin to plug the capacity shortages along with improving the transmission system.

In a scenario where developments such as Tarbela IV and V, Mangla dam raising, Dasu and Daimer Basha are taking place, a positive step is that a new government policy for mega hydropower projects is being introduced to initially develop 24,200MW hydropower projects through collaboration with the private sector and has potentially identified seven projects initially. The policy has been in the works for more than a year and still has a few more hurdles to negotiate.

At a higher level, the policy seems to be aimed at offering hydel projects to the private sector, mainly Chinese investors on attractive terms.

Interestingly, the criterion for bidder selection is based on an early completion timeframe for projects which already have detailed engineering designs. Projects that do not have detailed engineering designs will be offered on the basis of completion timeframe and maximum energy generation as per proposed engineering design.

The policy also offers the regular tax incentives however as per information available, it totally ignores the cost component for project award. This begs some serious questions:

Are we developing a policy that will not take the cost of the project into consideration, especially since Wapda, an organisation run on taxpayers' money, will be a shareholder along with the private bidder in the project? Could this lead to sub-optimal utilisation of resources in a financially stretched economy?

The apparent reason given for the above timeframe-based criterion is that during cost-based bidding, companies tend to undercut each other aggressively creating cost escalation and project delays later on which hamper project development.

On the other hand, the same argument can also be applied to companies underbidding each other in terms of project completion timeframe which can lead to project delays and consequent cost over-runs later on. For instance, one could

argue that companies will undercut each other by 20pc on timeframe as compared to engineering estimates and then run into project delays leading to cost escalation.

It has been established by numerous international studies that majority of mega infrastructural projects tend to suffer from cost escalations and time delays, however, nowhere in the world have project initiators stopped taking cost perspectives in offer decisions. It is a fallacy on part of our economic managers to assume that issues of cost escalation and time delays will simply vanish by ignoring them in the decision-making matrix.

Nassim Taleb argues that delivery of any large project is a high risk, stochastic activity exposed to black swans. On the contrary, we think of this world in Newtonian, deterministic terms where things are under our control and can go as per plan. They do not. Latest management science proposes solutions to such problems while acknowledging the associated risks and uncertainty.

On a positive note, we could incorporate the following recommendations in the mega hydropower project policy to improve its effectiveness and chances of success:

Acknowledge cost escalation and time delays in mega projects and look towards best practices being developed internationally to manage mega infrastructural projects.

Incorporate a holistic decision making matrix for partner selection based on cost competitiveness, timeframe, risk allocation and energy output

*Introduce latest management tools available for dealing with uncertainty such as Bayesian/ Monte Carlo techniques and probabilistic modelling to ensure proper bidder selection, cost estimation and project management

Ensure regular and consistent performance monitoring, reporting and information sharing

Follow an equivalent criteria for distribution of net hydel profits

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1258555/hydropower-back-in-the-limelight>

WATER WOES: A TALE OF TWO ISLANDS

The Express Tribune, May 16th, 2016.

Mudasar Kazi

KARACHI: The Baba and Bhit twin islands, located near Keamari, do not have a sweet water source. The sole lifeline of residents of the two masses of land is a water hydrant under the Native Jetty Bridge.

The hydrant, which runs parallel to the old, rusty railway line, was established in the second tenure of slain prime minister Benazir Bhutto to facilitate the population of Baba and Bhit daily except for on Mondays. It has two separate lines for the two islands.

The islanders, who have taken upon themselves to fetch sweet water and sell it to their neighbours, leave at 4am every day to make their way to the hydrant on their small motorboats, locally called 'dhoondas'. Water supply from the hydrant begins at around 5am and continues till 1pm. Those who get the first turn usually manage to make another trip to the hydrant and earn double that day.

Fifty-five-year-old Muhammad Qasim, a resident of Bhit Island, speaks to The Express Tribune as he waits for his turn at the hydrant. He owns a dhoonda with the smallest tank that has a capacity of 30 drums of water.

He explains that after filling his tank, in 15 to 20 minutes, he heads back to the island where the water is transferred into drums with the help of a pump. Each drum, according to him, has a capacity of 210 litres, and is sold for Rs70 each. "At times, it depends to whom we are selling the water," says Qasim. "But if a widow or an unemployed person is buying water from us, we can fill their entire drum for Rs30 and sometimes for free."

According to Qasim, the total number of dhoondas for both the islands that fetch sweet water from the mainland to Baba and Bhit is more or less 40. Talking about the system of taking turns, he says that a draw takes place each night for the next day. He recalls that he got the first turn some three months back and that proved to be a lucky day as he visited the hydrant twice and earned double the amount he usually gets on a single turn.

Qasim also remembers the day when his turn was 18th and by the time he came to fill his tank, the water had stopped coming from the hydrant. He says that it takes half an hour to reach the hydrant from Bhit Island, another hour to wait

for one's turn and then 15 to 20 minutes to get the tank filled with water. Then, it takes another half an hour to return to the island and yet an hour more to empty the water from the tank.

Abdul Shakoor, another islander who supplies water to the residents of Bhit and to the fishing boats, believes that the cost to fetch water is getting higher each day. He complains how, at times, they have to return without any water if there is a power breakdown or if there is some issue with the pipeline. "If we don't supply potable water for a few days, the residents of the islands will be unable to cook their food or drink water," he says.

Shakoor said there is a pipeline that was provided by former mayor Mustafa Kamal to cater to the islanders' sweet water needs. However, the pipeline, which runs through the tail-end areas such as Mauripur, is not enough even for the residents of Karachi, let alone providing any respite to the islanders.

According to him, a new water hydrant will be the permanent solution for the sweet water requirement of the 17,000 and 14,000 respective populations of Baba and Bhit islands.

Muhammad Farooq, a resident of Baba Island, says there is no draw system for getting turns for the dhoondas of Baba Island.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1103911/water-woes-a-tale-of-two-islands/>

RESOURCE ALLOCATION: WAPDA CHIEF PUSHES FOR BETTER WATER MANAGEMENT

The Express Tribune, May 21st, 2016.

HYDERABAD: The need for a detailed research on water resources and its preservation for future generations of the country was highlighted by Zafar Mahmood, the chairman of Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda).

"There is the need to realise the future impact of increasing population and prepare strategies with open minds and mutual consensus," he made these remarks while speaking at a ceremony held for signing a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Wapda and the Sindh Agriculture University Tando Jam at the university's auditorium on Friday.

In the future, he said, increasing population could create numerous issues in different sectors of life including irrigation, agriculture, environment and health and it was high time that think tanks should prepare comprehensive plans to meet the future challenges.

Water is vital for the survival of future generations and in recognition of the challenges, Wapda has decided to carry out research with higher learning institutions.

The Sindh Agriculture University is the third higher learning institution with which Wapda has signed the MoU, he said and informed that such MoUs had been signed with Mehran University of Engineering and Technology Jamshoro and Agriculture University Faisalabad.

Sindh Agriculture University Tando Jam Vice Chancellor Dr Mujeebuddin Memon said 50% of available water was wasted because of improper management.

Highlighting one of the oft-overlooked aspects, he said Pakistan was one of the unique countries which had all seasons but there was a need to take advantage of these seasons in order to meet the challenges of climate change as done by other countries.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1107218/resource-allocation-wapda-chief-pushes-better-water-management/>

RS 80 BILLION BEING SPENT ON PROVISION OF CLEAN DRINKING WATER: MD

Business Recorder, May 22, 2016

Punjab Government is spending funds of Rs 80 billion for the provision of clean drinking water in 35 tehsils of 14 selected districts of the province which would help to raise the standard of health of the citizens. This was told by Managing Director Punjab Saaf Pani Company Waseem Ajmal while giving the briefing to Members Parliament about the administrative structure, working and scope of Punjab Saaf Pani Company.

Mian Muhammad Farooq, Rajab Ali Baloch, Rai Haider Ali Kharal, Chaudhry Muhammad Afzal Sahi, Arif Mehmood Gill, Haji Khalid Saeed, Jaffar Ali Hocha, Rai Usman Kharal and other Members Parliament were present

while MD WASA Syed Zahid Aziz, Additional Commissioner Co-ordination Khadim Hussain Jilani, officers of Public Health Engineering Department and Punjab Saaf Pani Company also attended the meeting.

Managing Director Saaf Pani Company told the meeting that after conducting the comprehensive survey of the concerned districts and this project would be completed in 8 packages and Sadar, Jaranwala, Tandlianwala, Chak Jhumra and Samundri tehsils are in the 1st package and Saaf Pani project would be completed in these tehsils by the end of 2017 with the cost of Rs 1.8 billion. He said no effort would be spared in speedy completion of this important project and there should be an effective mechanism of monitoring for the project.

Members of Parliament said that Punjab govt. was giving full attention on provision of basic amenities to the public on their door steps and the Saaf Pani programme was an excellent vision of CM Punjab for the rural population. They said that a comprehensive strategy should be evolved for launching water supply projects in true spirit. They said provision of potable water to the citizens was of utmost significance which would be completed through co-ordinated efforts.

They said every citizen has a right over clean drinking water and the Punjab Government would give this right to the citizens. Members of Parliament said Saaf Pani Project was a public welfare project and its 100 % quality should be ensured.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172/48120/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MAY 9TH TO MAY 15TH 2016

SERVICE DELIVERY: ACCESS TO POTABLE WATER IS EVERYONE'S RIGHT, SAYS CM

The Express Tribune, May 9th, 2016.

LAHORE: All citizens have a right to potable water. The provincial government will ensure that this right is provided to them, Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif said on Sunday. He was addressing a meeting to review arrangements for the Saaf Pani Project in the province.

The chief minister formed a committee to oversee all important matters regarding the project. The housing minister and the chief secretary were put in charge of the committee.

Sharif said provision of clean drinking water across the southern districts of the province was a priority of the government during the first phase of the project. He said preference should be given to areas where there was an urgent need for potable water.

The chief minister said that best companies from around the world would be selected for implementation of the project. He said transparency in selection of companies would be ensured. He said applications should be sought from companies by publishing advertisements in foreign publications. He also asked officials concerned to hold road shows in United Arab Emirates (UAE). He said experts from countries in Western Europe, China and United States should be invited to these shows.

Sharif said Saaf Pani was a public welfare project so mechanisms should be evolved for effective monitoring of the project's progress. He said the project would be completed in phases and no effort would be spared for timely completion of project-related work. He said under the project the government would be spending millions of rupees for provision of potable water to the masses.

The chief minister said provision of potable water to all citizens was a priority of the government and should be completed through coordinated efforts. He said potable water was a basic need and its provision should be ensured for good health of the citizens. He said provision of funds should be ensured for the purpose.

Later, the Saaf Pani Company chief executive officer briefed the meeting about the project implementation status. Minister for Housing Tanvir Aslam Malik, the Punjab Saaf Pani Company chairman, MPAs Kashif Padhyar and Mian Shehbaz and officials from the Planning and Development and Housing Departments also attended the meeting.

Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif on Sunday expressed annoyance over increase in the cost of construction of a 60-bed tehsil headquarters (THQ) hospital in Raiwind. He directed authorities concerned to hold an investigation into the matter and submit a report to him about the causes of the increase in construction cost.

He issued the directive during a surprise visit to the hospital on Sunday. He also inspected construction work in various wards, operation theaters, laboratories and kitchen and directed the officials concerned to ensure timely completion of construction. He said the construction of the hospital should be completed by June.

He said a third party audit should be held to ensure compliance with construction status.

Sharif also asked the authorities concerned to construct a park at the facility.

Addressing a gathering after his visit to the hospital, the chief minister said those responsible for delaying construction of the hospital would be taken to task. He said an inquiry was already underway to fix responsibility for the delay. He said the hospital would be a state-of-the-art facility where quality health services would be available for the residents of Raiwind.

He said a water filtration plant had been installed at the Government Girls School in Raiwind. He said a flyover would be constructed over the Raiwind Railway Crossing. The foundation stone of the flyover would be laid very soon and the project would be completed in the next year.

He said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, the government was making round the clock efforts for facilitating the general public. He said he had never tolerated corruption and indiscriminate action would be taken against those found involved corrupt practices. He said economic resources were a trust of the nation and were being used with honesty.

The chief minister was accompanied by MNA Afzal Khokhar, MPA Gulzar Gujjar, the Lahore Division commissioner, the health secretary and the Lahore DCO.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1099592/service-delivery-access-to-potable-water-is-everyones-right-says-cm/>

PAKISTAN'S WATER WORRIES

The Express Tribune, May 9th, 2016.

Shahid Javed Burki

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has been quoted in the press saying that by 2018, Pakistan would have enough electricity generating capacity to dispense with power outages. He is probably right. This would be the consequence of the attention his government has given to increase the supply of electric power. All sources of producing electricity are being tapped. There are schemes under implementation to make use of the country's significant hydropower potential. Coal-based power plants are under construction mostly with Chinese help. Pakistan has the potential to use wind and the sun to produce electricity.

The government has lived up to the promise it made when it assumed power in June 2013 that it would address the three crises the country faced at that time. They were severe energy shortage, an underperforming economy, and the rise of religious extremism. They were dubbed the "3-Es."

Three years into its current term, the administration has made progress on all three fronts. It should have, but it did not, identified another crisis: water shortage. Now that the government seems headed towards solving the energy crisis, it needs to turn its attention to the availability of water.

Pakistan shares this crisis with a number of other countries. For several of them, including Pakistan, the changing climate is affecting water availability. A new report from the World Bank, High and Dry: Climate Change, Water, and Economy, suggests that by 2050, "an inadequate supply of water could knock down economic growth in some parts of the world by as much as six per cent of gross domestic product, sending them into sustained negative growth."

China, India, Pakistan, the Middle East and much of Africa will be seriously affected. The African nations may enter the negative growth territory. "When we look at any of the major impacts of climate change, they one or way or another come through water," Richard Domania, the lead author of the report, told the press while releasing the document.

There are a number of ways in which climate change affects water supply. All of them are relevant for Pakistan.

It has been established that the Earth is warming more rapidly than scientists thought would occur because of the build-up of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Warmer temperatures can cause more evaporation from land which comes back to the ground in the form of rain. Global warming is also altering the flow of air which may result in severe droughts.

The World Bank report says that 1.6 billion people already live in nations that are subject to water scarcity. This group of countries includes Pakistan. Depending on the precise definition of the concept, other research has put that number even higher, up to four billion people who could be affected by water scarcity during at least some part of the year.

Using its own definition, the World Bank fears that the number of people living with potential water threats will double over the next two decades. South Asia, Africa and the Middle East will contribute to this likely increase in the number of people likely to be hurt. "Growing populations, rising incomes, and expanding cities will converge upon a world where the demand for water rises exponentially, while supply becomes more erratic and uncertain," writes the World Bank.

The Bank believes that in the next 30 years, "the global food system will require between 40 to 50 per cent more water, municipal and industrial demand will increase by 50 to 70 per cent, the energy sector will see water demand increase by 85 per cent, and the environment, already the residual claimant," may need more. Given these projections, what should be the policy response in Pakistan?

These challenges are not insurmountable, however, and smart policies that induce water use efficiency, align incentives across regional and trading partners, and invest in adaptive technologies can go a long way toward reducing or eliminating these negative effects. Since much of the water Pakistan uses comes down in the Indus River system, the country has to work with India, the upper riparian, to ensure steady flow.

This is one area where the two countries were able to work together and agree on a water-sharing agreement. The 1960 Indus Water Treaty signed by President Ayub Khan and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru has survived two wars between the two nations.

There are both differences and similarities in the power and water crises. Both are hurting the economy, both should be tackled by strategies that focus on the long term, and both are hurting the poor more than the well-to-do. Once the government does turn its attention to managing the water crisis, it will have to adopt an approach different from the one used for tackling the power shortage.

The focus in that case was on the supply side. But there is a major difference between the two sectors. Potentially, the supply of power is unlimited. That is not the case with water. There has to be greater focus on managing more efficiently the available supply.

It is well known in Pakistan that much of the available water is wasted. Most of the water is used in agriculture where those who use it pay very little. The cropping pattern favours water-intensive crops. For instance, sugar cane cultivation uses a great amount of water but notwithstanding that, public policy favours its production.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1099453/pakistans-water-worries/>

EFFORTS NEEDED TO MAP, PROTECT WATER RESOURCES, SEMINAR TOLD
Business Recorder, May 11, 2016

Aamir Saeed

Pakistan, along with other countries in the region, should initiate an integrated effort to map all its groundwater resources and monitor the glaciers to protect the precious water resources for future generations. Dr Patrick Shea, Research Professor of Biology, University of Utah, USA, said this on Tuesday while speaking at an event, "Relevance of Environmental Laws to Coping Climate Change," organised by Sustainable Development Policy Institute(SDPI).

He said that Pakistan should mainly focus on three things: 1. water access and affordability, 2. water quality and 3. Water predictability to secure its water resources. Shea said that some potential conflicts have spurred in many regions due to lack of proper mapping of their water's resources. The glaciers are melting fast in the Himalayas and this should be worrisome not only for Pakistan but also for the countries like China, Nepal, India, Thailand etc, he said. "The glaciers should be studied properly as all these countries depend on them for their water supply," he said.

He also urged Pakistan to categorise all its water resources on an emergency basis; so that it could plan accordingly for the future. Shafqat Kakakhel, a member of the SDPI Board of Governors, said Pakistan's per capita water availability has gone down from 5,000 cubic metres in 1947 to 1,000 cubic metres now.

"Decaying water infrastructure and poor water management have led to the disaster and this all should be improved on priority basis," he said. Kakakhel said the monsoon and the glaciers are both fresh water resources for Pakistan, but they both are susceptible to climate change. "Over one million water tube-wells have been functioning across Pakistan, but there is zero regulatory system for the underground water resources," he said.

Pakistan's water management should figure out prominently in the policy-making; otherwise the situation cannot be improved, he said. "Our water policy has been doing rounds of different departments for the last one decade and unfortunately it is yet to be finalised," he said.

Syed Abu Ahmad Akif, Secretary Ministry of Climate Change, informed the participants of the event that his ministry has been facing difficulties in dealing with many environmental challenges as some major powers and departments of his ministry have been devolved to provinces following the 18th amendment. "We are now trying to create a Climate Change Council with cooperation of the provinces to address the important issues like water scarcity," he said. A draft bill for the council has been circulated among all the provinces to get them on board, he said, adding that all four chief ministers would be members of the council.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172/44744/>

SANGHAR RESIDENTS DYING A SLOW DEATH

The Express Tribune, May 11th, 2016.

Hafeez Tunio

SANGHAR: In other areas people are being killed by bullets, but here water kills us.

The remark by Pakistan Muslim League-Functional leader Nand Kumar depicts the severity of the water crises faced by people in district Sanghar.

Around four dozens water supply schemes launched during the tenure of Prime Minister Muhammad Khan Junejo have been lying non-functional since their inception in 1986.

"Since my childhood, I have seen this water supply scheme which was supposed to provide water but it has dried out," said Azmat Shah, a local landlord and resident of Chak No 2. "Stray dogs and donkeys have now made permanent abode here."

The employees recruited for the schemes continue to receive their salaries without ever coming to work. Since the schemes are laying idle, thieves have stolen motors, electric poles, wires and transformers, inform locals.

"I was 19-years-old when I got this job in 1986," said Qais Khan, who is the machine operator of the water scheme at Gujri Town. He remarked that he has yet to run the motor to supply water to the village. The 49-year-old comes to work every day to kill time.

"I can't turn on the motor because some unidentified people have stolen the electric motor and taken away the transformer. I informed the authorities but nothing came of it," he lamented. "I have heard that a few other employees are also posted here but, I have never even seen them."

The schemes fall within the domain of public health engineering department of Sindh government. An official of the department, requesting anonymity, remarked that Sanghar is not unique as a similar situation prevails across Sindh. "There are no proper funds for maintenance of these schemes. Instead of launching new schemes, the government should restore the old ones," he added.

The department will prepare a feasibility report to restore all the non-functional water supply schemes across Sindh, said public health engineering minister Fayaz Butt while speaking to The Express Tribune.

"I will personally visit Sanghar in order to review the situation," he said, adding that the area has always been under the control of PML-F representatives who have paid no heed to this problem.

The schemes were launched by the then government because underground water of the entire area was diminishing. The water schemes were supposed to supply sweet water of Nara Canal (which passes through the area). However, successive governments took no initiative to make them operational.

Each water supply scheme was to provide water to one or two villages. “There are around 80 chaks in our district. After every ten kilometres you will find a water supply scheme that was launched with a lot of investment, but not a single one is functional,” pointed out Shah.

The condition of the local reservoir is no better as contaminated water is supplied to the residents without proper treatment.

“Once a dog carcass was found in this reservoir; we informed the municipal officials who took the corpse out and continued the water supply,” said Sindhi writer Ustad Nizamani, a resident. “No one cares and this water is being supplied without treatment.”

The government is supplying people with poison rather than water, said lawmaker Kumar. Even the water tanks are in a pathetic condition. “They have not been cleaned for the last several years,” he said, adding that water and sewerage lines have been mixed up and residents are consuming contaminated water.

He added that he took up the issue in the Sindh Assembly, but no one cares about it. “Public health engineering department and the provincial government have looted the entire funds of the district,” he claimed.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1100748/death-by-water-sanghar-residents-dying-a-slow-death/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MAY 2nd TO MAY 8th 2016

RIGHT TO WATER

Dawn, May 2nd, 2016

Sikander Ahmed Shah

THE taxonomy of water is a hotly debated subject in international policy circles; it has been classified as an economic good, a commodity, a subject of environmental protection, and even right and commodity at the same time. Its provision, however, is most effectively accomplished through the human rights framework — an established legal order under which state duties and violations are directly ascertainable.

Major disagreements in domestic and international human rights circles, however, exist over whether water should be categorised as a civil-political or a socioeconomic right.

Civil-political rights are ‘negative liberties’; they protect the individual’s autonomy and freedom only from unwarranted state interference. Water provision, however, is in essence a ‘positive freedom’; the state is under an affirmative obligation to provide healthy water, rather than merely abstain from directly polluting water sources or depriving citizens of access to clean water.

Both Indian and Pakistani courts have found their states’ inability to provide healthy water to citizens a violation of the constitutional right to life; Pakistan’s courts have found this failure also violates the dignity of man. In both countries, however, the mistaken characterisation of the right to water as a civil-political right has directly contributed to its inadequate realisation, especially when private actors are often responsible for causing these violations.

The two countries’ approach to water rights is inferior because it makes inherent socioeconomic rights (including water) non-justiciable and aspirational, in turn depriving the polity of judicial remedies for the state’s failure to ‘positively’ provide water; it forces the courts to falsely classify water as a negative freedom, which does not lead to an actual fulfilment of water needs, and it leads to judgements which cannot be practically implemented at the grass-roots level.

In contrast, South Africa has been successful in realising the right to water by categorising it as a socioeconomic right in the operative bill of rights section of their constitution. The South African constitution obliges the state in unequivocal terms to provide sufficient food and water to everyone, with the proviso that it must take reasonable legislative (and other) measures to achieve the progressive realisation of these rights.

This approach is preferable to the one adopted by Pakistan and India. It creates a positive right to water; enables those most affected by its deprivation to enforce it through the courts; allows courts to monitor implementation of this right on the basis of law and not policy; promotes the development of clear and consistent case law on positive and negative rights; creates a political environment where judicial decisions are respected by the executive and facilitates the legislature to allocate specific funds for the provision of water.

It also clearly delimits the roles and responsibilities of the legislature, executive, and judiciary with regard to water, drastically improving the government's performance in fulfilling positive rights.

Under this approach, the legislature is obliged to devise laws and concrete national and regional policies on water. A budget is also allocated to administrative bodies with enforcement authority that are subject to detailed reporting obligations.

The judiciary, besides clarifying laws and policies concerning water, properly assesses the performance of water regulatory bodies and their deliverables, and determines violations by officials in discharging their duties.

Judicial oversight can also create the necessary political pressure on the legislature to improve laws and policies. Once the executive realises that it is being assessed on goals which are measurable and practically attainable, it becomes less defensive towards the judiciary, and shows little propensity to disregard court rulings.

At present there exist only a handful of provisions within the Pakistani legal system which relate to water; these are dispersed and deal mostly with water pollution, public springs, or reservoir management. Similarly, generalised national water and sanitation policies and guidelines are of little practical benefit when implementing the legal right to water.

Internationally, the UN has cautioned Pakistan that it is one of the few states where, in the coming decade, water shortages could seriously threaten its political existence. Constitutional reform is one very significant way to better protect water rights and guard against such a dangerous outcome.

The state should thus seriously consider amending its Constitution through the insertion of a provision in 'Chapter I: Fundamental Rights' on water that (in clear terms) recognises a justiciable and a legally enforceable human right to water for all persons, along with a separate clause that requires the state to take reasonable legislative (and other) measures subject to available resources for the progressive realisation of all positive rights enumerated in the Constitution.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1255703>

NEELUM JHELUM PROJECT: PROGRESS REVIEWED

Business Recorder, May 5, 2016

China Gezhouba Group Company (CGGC) Vice President Chen Xiaohua called on the Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) Chairman Zafar Mahmood on Wednesday. The CGGC is the contractor for the 969 MW-Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project (NJHP). During the meeting, progress on the project was reviewed. NJHP Chief Executive Officer Engineer Muhammad Zubair was also present on the occasion.

Underlining the significance of NJHP for overcoming power shortages in the country through least-cost hydel generation, WAPDA Chairman emphasised upon completion of the project in accordance with the revised schedule, which requires concerted efforts on part of the contractor and the project authorities.

He said that construction work on the project is progressing at a good pace on all three sites of the project. Expressing satisfaction over the progress achieved so far on the project, he said that CGGC is a reputed construction firm, adding that he is confident that the firm will fully utilise its expertise and resources for on-time completion of the project. CGGC Vice President thanked WAPDA Chairman for his keen interest in resolving the matters relating to construction of the project.

He assured WAPDA Chairman that CGGC will complete the project as per the revised schedule. It is pertinent to mention that first generating unit of the project is expected to be completed in July 2017, whereas the remaining three units will come on line by the end of 2017 in various phases. Overall progress on the project stands at 80 percent. The progress on all three sites namely C1, C2 and C3 is 78 percent, 80 percent, and 83 per cent respectively. Out of total 68.6 kilometers, 62 kilometers long tunnels have so far been excavated.

<http://www.brecorder.com/fuel-a-energy/193:pakistan/43083:neelum-jhelum-project-progress-reviewed/?date=2016-05-05>

WATER FOR LIVELIHOOD: WORK PLAN FINALISED FOR CHITRAL, KARAK DISTRICTS

Business Recorder, May 06, 2016

A meeting on water for livelihood in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was held at Planning & Development department in Civil Secretariat Peshawar on Thursday. Head of Swiss Development Corporation while briefing the meeting on this occasion revealed that work plan for the year 2016-17 was being made for Chitral and Karak districts, after successfully completing in some other districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He said that 23 irrigation schemes have been completed, benefiting 16,000 households. The meeting was informed that the government has issued directives to the concerned quarter to expedite the process and make periodic sessions with P&D to smoothly run the said process. Water Use Management Plan (WUMP) is trying to achieve, equitable, effective and efficient use of water resources on a local level based on integrated water resource management.

Head of the SDC said these projects were not the end adding that it was a means to improve water governance in the province. He said that provision of clean (safe) drinking water and establishment of community based irrigation schemes, capacity building, development of local institutions, ensure participation of district authorities, good governance, and better service provision in water sector were the main purposes. Focus on women and poor segments of the society would be ensured by the project.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172/43433/>

WIND-POWERED WATER SUPPLY SCHEME IN MOHMAND

Dawn, May 8th, 2016

GHALANAI: The Fata Development Authority (FDA) has installed a windmill to run a water supply scheme in Sam Ghakhi area of Mohmand Agency.

FDA agency coordination officer Tariq Khan told Dawn the windmill would provide an alternative source of energy, which would operate round the clock. He added that a tank had been built to store water. He said the FDA had initiated several alternative energy programmes in the agency to address power crisis.

Tariq Khan said the solar energy programme was initiated in August 2005 to electrify 450 villages as well as 250 water supply schemes in the region. He said the FDA launched several projects, electrifying villages with 3,723 houses with solar energy, while 119 solar pumps, 178 solar streetlights and 505 solar geysers were installed at community places in all tribal agencies. "There are several sites in Fata, where wind is sufficient to produce power for local communities," he said.

The FDA official said the authority had launched a pilot project of wind energy in Mohmand. "We'll use wind energy to supply water to the border areas, which have no electricity," he said.

Tariq Khan said in the border areas, wind speed was five meters per second, while the windmill needed minimum wind speed of three meters per second. He said a windmill would be installed in Yousaf Baba area for irrigation purpose. "We'll examine the performance of windmill and will use the lessons learnt in the next schemes," he said.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1257064/wind-powered-water-supply-scheme-in-mohmand>

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June 2016

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JUNE 27TH TO JULY 2 ND 2016

250 MINI HYDRO POWER PROJECTS TO BE FUNCTIONAL IN KP BY END 2016

Dawn, June 27th, 2016

Ali Hazrat Bacha

PESHAWAR: About 250 mini and micro hydropower projects (MHPs) will become fully operational and functional to provide electricity to around 245,000 people in hilly areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through community-based local institutional mechanisms by the end of 2016.

This was announced by heads of various NGOs/firms working on the construction of MHPs while speaking at a joint press conference at Peshawar Press Club on Sunday. The contractors headed by chief executive officer of Hydrolink Engineering and Equipment Company (pvt) limited Fazal Rabbi included Fatma Welfare Foundation CEO Farhad Khan and Dir Area Development Organisation's Mohammad Khaliq.

Speaking about his work experience with communities, Mr Rabbi said that people living in the remote localities in Chitral, Dir and Battagram districts had welcomed launching of the MHPs as they did not have power supply since inception of the country. He said that though power supply lines passed through different localities, some villages in these districts were not given electricity for unknown reasons.

Appreciating the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, Mr Rabbi said that the hydropower projects would help tap the water potential and enable people to get electricity on low cost to increase their income. Besides the people's dependence on fuel (kerosene) would be reduced and they would be encouraged to protect their forests.

He said that the hydropower projects were useful for the local people as these would provide low cost electricity from Rs2 to Rs4 per unit to the local community.

“We, being the implementer, are confident that by the end of 2016 about 250 MHPs will become fully operational and functional to provide electricity to some 245,000 mountain people through community-based local institutional mechanisms,” he said.

Mr Rabbi said that the NGOs/construction firms were working with the Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organisation (Pedo) under close supervision of the Energy and Power (E&P) Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa since 2014. He said that the 356 MHPs were purely government-funded community empowerment and participatory projects working successfully.

“We have so far found Pedo's new management and E&P Department committed to reforming and transforming the organisation into a self-sustainable institution that will not only fulfil the provincial energy demands, but also contribute to the national energy security,” he claimed.

Farhad Khan claimed that Pedo was being run transparently and license was given during two weeks of application and feasibility submitted within six months. He said that progress on 356 MHPs had suffered due to some initial challenges, but now the overall progress and quality of work had no precedent. The projects are regularly monitored by Pedo, E&P Department and provincial monitoring and evaluation directorate.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1267550>

DRINKING WATER & SANITATION PROJECTS: ALLOCATION INCREASED BY 100 PERCENT IN KP: MINISTER

Business Recorder, June 27, 2016

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Public Health, Shah Farman has said that the present provincial government has increased allocations by 100 per cent to provide drinking water and to improve sanitation system during the last three years, which will have a positive impact on health and environment of the people.

He was talking to a delegation of people hailing from the outskirts of Peshawar on Sunday. Almost 60 per cent of the KP population was having access to clean drinking water and its enhancement to 100 per cent would require Rs 52 billion, he added.

Shah Farman said a number of projects have been initiated to provide clean drinking water and rehabilitate existing/old schemes including replacement of old/rusted pipelines. The minister said that an amount of Rs 5361 million was allocated to 93 projects including 16 ongoing and 77 new schemes during the current year.

Disclosing details, Shah Farman said 60 existing water supply schemes have been rehabilitated including replacement of old/rusted pipes while 40 water supply schemes have been completed. Besides work on solarization of 200 existing/new pumping WSS would be completed in next year.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172/60690/>

WATER SHORTAGE HITS SHAHDAD KOT GROWERS

Dawn, June 30th, 2016

LARKANA: Growers in Shahdadkot face an acute shortage of irrigation water in Saifullah Magsi branch, an offshoot of Khairthar Canal, that has 1,56,000 acres cultivable area.

The Magsi branch starting from Grang regulator enters the Shahdadt area at Noorpur regulator. Non-availability of irrigation water at the time of need would not only affects the paddy crop, but also drastically hit human and domestic animals' survival.

Confirming the plight of growers and the population connected with the only paddy crop of Kharif season, Sindh Abadgars Board (SAB) Qambar-Shahdadt president Ishaque Mughiri told Dawn on Tuesday that despite an assurance of the chief engineer of the right bank of River Indus, Nazeer Mahar, in a meeting with growers about a couple of days ago at Ruk regulator, growers were anxiously waiting for the current to come.

Saifullah Magsi branch was dug during Z.A. Bhutto's days as a token of his relations with the Magsis, who still wield political power and tribal influence in the area.

This main irrigation artery had to feed 12 minors and tributaries and it also served as the only source of drinking water for both the majority of human and animal population, said Mr Mughiri.

He said severe shortage of water could be gauged from the fact that still beds of branches, arteries and distributaries are dried up, including those of Qubo distributary, Shahbaig distributary, Dhro Shakh, Patooja Shakh, Imdad Minor, Choki Minor and others.

The water level at Noorpur regulator currently was gauged at 4.4 feet, which should actually, according the set rules, be at 9 feet, said Mr Mughiri. Under so lowered water level, how could the land be prepared for cultivating paddy crop, he asked.

The growers and small land lords who prepared paddy nurseries for transplantation were quite worried about what Mr Mughiri said drying and dying seedlings at these nurseries. Growers did not have enough water to save them, he said.

The future of growers and labourers linked with this crop seemed to be bleak under the conditions as late arrival of water would force them to transplant late sowing paddy varieties, which currently were neither available in market nor it would provide them space to prepare new nurseries. If cultivated, these varieties would be prone to pest attacks and other diseases, he said.

The SAB has called upon Sindh Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah and irrigation minister to come for their rescue by ensuring timely availability of irrigation water to save growers' colossal economic losses.

Meanwhile, SAB central vice president Gada Hussain Mahisar said canals, minors and irrigation distributaries might not take irrigation water, according to their specification for the cultivation of paddy crop, as their beds were silted up and paths not strengthened. He feared that without silt clearance if water was released to its full capacity, it would onset vast damages.

Rice an important food and cash crop is the second staple food in Sindh after wheat and a major source of earning. It is cultivated on over 2.5 million acres in Sindh and Balochistan and its production is 2.8 million tonnes. Annually 1.9 million tonnes rice of \$8 million was exported, he said.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1268040>

ESSENTIAL RESOURCE: TRIPPING OF FEEDERS DENTS CITY'S WATER SUPPLY
The Express Tribune, June 30th, 2016.

KARACHI: The suspension of electricity attributed to the ongoing rains has caused a water shortfall of over 250 million gallons per day (MGD) in the metropolis, according to Karachi Water and Sewerage Board's (KWSB) Zafar Paliyo.

Paliyo, who heads KWSB's water trunk main, told The Express Tribunethat Tuesday's power breakdown resulted in a 200 MGD shortfall, whereas the unavailability of power on Wednesday for around three hours resulted in further scarcity of water in Karachi.

The water supply to the metropolis from Dhabeji pumping station was completely suspended between 2:40pm to 5:30pm on Wednesday owing to another electricity breakdown in the area, he explained. Talking about damages to the system, he informed that a 72-inch-diameter pipeline at the Dhabeji pumping station burst on Tuesday evening due to tripping of K-Electric's feeders, adding that it has now been repaired.

Explaining the reason behind the pipe's bursting, he said, "The water from the pumping stations is pumped to a 200-foot-high hillock so it comes down with the aid of gravity. When the pumping machines suddenly stop [due to electricity failure], the water pressure bursts the pipes at weak points."

KWSB's technical services deputy managing director Fahim Zaidi denied any reports of sewerage lines overflowing in the metropolis.

"It is rainwater that has accumulated on the streets and the district municipal corporations are working on clearing it," he said, adding that he has yet to receive any reports regarding any sewage line being burst or overflowing.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1133039/essential-resource-tripping-feeders-dents-citys-water-supply/>

ADULTERATED FERTILISER BAGS CONFISCATED

Business Recorder. June 30, 2016

Over 200 adulterated fertiliser bags and over 500 empty ones have been confiscated in Faisalabad during an ongoing campaign against fake pesticides and adulterated fertilisers. Up to 225 diammonium hydrogen phosphate fertiliser bags and another 550 empty ones were confiscated on Wednesday after a Punjab Agriculture Department team, headed by the deputy district officer of agriculture (extension), the executive district officer and his agriculture (extension) counterpart, raided a factory at Chak Number 64-JB in Faisalabad following a tip-off.

The team also arrested a man and launched case against five others and sent samples to laboratory for chemical examination. The action comes as part of attempts by Agriculture Secretary Muhammad Mahmood who has told pesticide inspectors and fertiliser controllers to tighten the noose on wrongdoers.

<http://www.brecorder.com/agriculture-a-allied/183:pakistan/61794:adulterated-fertiliser-bags-confiscated/?date=2016-06-30>

BALUCHISTAN PROTESTS OVER 42PC WATER SHORTFALL, THREATENS TO STAY AWAY FROM IRSA

Dawn, July 2nd, 2016

ISLAMABAD: Protesting over 42 per cent water shortfall allegedly caused by Sindh irrigation authorities, the Balochistan government has threatened to stay away from the country's water regulation and the Indus River System Authority (Irsa).

A senior official said that the Balochistan government has repeatedly taken up the matter with the Sindh political leadership, the Council of Common Interests (CCI) and the federal government but its water shortage issue had not been resolved, resulting in colossal loss to its crops.

As a first step, Balochistan's member in Irsa, Naseem Khan Bazai, will regret his concurrence to any authorisation placed for the release of water from Tarbela or Mangla dams in future.

Mr Bazai confirmed that he would abstain from any regulation "until Sindh province is extended the proportionate reduction in their authorised share". He said he had written to the federal government to take notice of the state of affairs. He said he had also asked the Balochistan government to seek an urgent meeting of the CCI.

A couple of letters seen by Dawn suggest Balochistan protesting over diversion of its water shares to Sindh's seasonal canals. "The province of Sindh, by virtue of control over regulation, and being the upper riparian of the Indus system, has been exploiting the share of Balochistan in the Pat Feeder, Khirthar, Uch and Monuthi canals since their commissioning," said one of the communications.

Since the start of the Kharif season in 2014, water aggression has "assumed alarming proportions, and, on the average shortfall of 42 per cent in its rightful share was extended round the season, resulting in damage to the crops over hundreds of thousands of acres, causing great financial loss and hardship to the poor populace of Jaffarabad, Nasirabad and Jhal Magsi districts," reported Mr Bazai.

He said that during the entire Kharif season the irrigation department of Balochistan and Irsa vigorously pursued the issue of provision of the province's rightful share of water at higher levels with the Sindh authorities but they turned deaf ears to it. "The chief minister of Balochistan and the speaker of the Balochistan Assembly wrote strongly worded letters to the chief minister of Sindh on the state of affairs but to no avail," he said.

He said Balochistan had also filed a comprehensive case on the shortage of water with the CCI which was approved on March 18, 2015, pending formal hearing by the council. He said Sindh was getting, at the time, 50,000-60,000 cusec of water in excess of the allocated share and it was releasing more than 30,000 cusec below the Kotri barrage in the Arabian Sea.

The acute shortfall of 42 per cent water in the canals is causing serious damage to the crops, since the start of the Kharif season, resulted in strong agitations and road blockades by the farmers, culminating into the law and order situation in the area.

Mr Bazai said the Sindh irrigation department should have been sensitive to the tense situation between the two provinces, after filing of the case in the CCI, but strangely it continued with its practice of depriving Balochistan of its rightful water share.

“The Canal Irrigation System in Balochistan received acute shortage of water during the Kharif season of 2015 which during the present Kharif season of 2016 has again assumed the alarming situation”, he said.

“As of July 1, 2016, Sindh province is getting 200,000 cusec of water against its original allocation of 141,600 cusec with the excess flow of 58,400 cusec, out of which 20,100 cusec is drained below the Kotri barrage into the Arabian Sea,” he said.

Meanwhile, the situation due to short supplies in Balochistan canals is aggravating. “As of July 1, 2016, heavy shortfall of 42, 29 and 20 per cent in the Khirthar canal, Uch canal and Monuthi canal, have respectively been reported,” Mr Bazai said.

The cumulative shortage in these canals works out to 2,073 cusec out of which 500 cusec of the Khirthar canal is diverted into the Wara canal (operated for the Rabi season only) of Sindh at Ruk X-Regulator (RD. 83 of N.W.Canal) for unauthorised irrigation of its command area whereas 1,573 cusec is passed on to drain in the Arabian Sea, resulting in damage to the crops over hundreds of thousands of acres in the command area of the Canal Irrigation System of Balochistan province in Jaffarabad, Nasirabad and Jhal Magsi districts.

“The state of affairs shows that, given the apathy of the Irrigation Department of Sindh to the demand and requirement in Canal Irrigation System, Balochistan, the paddy crop, particularly in the Khirthar canal, the seedlings will wilt, causing to the damage of Kharif crops sown over hundreds of thousands of areas, adding to the miseries of the poor populace who ultimately, as in the past, would start migrating to other areas of the country,” he said.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1268567>

WATER SCARCITY WORSENS AS MERE 2-FOOT RISE RECORDED AT HUB DAM

The Express Tribune, July 2nd, 2016.

KARACHI / KARACHI: The drought condition of the Hub Dam has worsened the water situation in District West in general and Baldia Town in particular.

A mere two-foot rise has been recorded at the dam and the shortfall of water in District West is being met by cutting the water supply to District Central, where North Karachi area is badly affected.

Fawad Siddiqui, a resident of North Karachi's sector 11A, told The Express Tribune that they get water twice a month for a mere 12 to 15 hours. “It's very hard to rely on such a small amount of water for an entire month,” he lamented. We have to get water tankers every week, which cost us between Rs1,200 and Rs1,500, he said.

A similar tale was told by Sofia Irtiza, a resident of North Karachi. According to her, the last time they had water in their pipelines was two weeks ago. “Most of the time, when the supply of water starts, there is no electricity so we have to start the generators and keep an eye on the water supply,” she explained. She added that they are forced to store water in cans in order to use it later.

According to Saleem Shahzad, a resident of New Karachi Town, he does not know where District Central's water is being channeled. Whatever little water supply they are getting is full of silt with a pungent smell, he claimed.

Shahzad said a number of pipelines have leakages and the water supply cannot reach the tail-end. “When we reach out to water board officials they give excuses of shortage of funds and ask us to pay for the repair of leakages on our

own,” he claimed. He requested that the duration of the supply should be raised so that people can store an ample amount for later use.

Karachi Water and Sewerage Board’s chief of the water tank main and bulk water supply circle, Zafar Palijo, said Karachi is currently getting 500 million gallons per day (MGD) of water, which is half of its actual demand. He explained that the drought condition of the Hub Dam has further deteriorated the crisis.

He admitted the water meant for District Central is being channeled to the worst affected area of Baldia Town. “The condition can improve if the water level in the Hub Dam reservoir increases to a sufficient amount,” he said.

A two-foot rise has been recorded at the Hub Dam during the first phase of the pre-monsoon downpour, according to Azam Khan, head of the special project in which KWSB was trying to pump water from the dead level of the dam.

He added that the catchment area of the dam has received a good amount of rain but not enough to raise even two feet of water. “The water in the dam has crossed the dead level, which is 276.20 feet below sea level,” he explained.

According to Khan, the water level of the Hub Dam before the rain had reached below its dead level to 274.90 feet below sea level, whereas the current level is slightly above its dead level at 276.75 feet recorded at 8am on Friday. “However, we are hopeful that the catchment area of the dam will receive more rain in July so that the water level can rise.”

According to Palijo, the level of water in the dam since the first shower was increasing by one inch every four hours. “We are in a position to pump around 30 MGD of water from the dam for District West for a few months now,” he said.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1134255/unfortunate-circumstances-water-scarcity-worsens-mere-2-foot-rise-recorded-hub-dam/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JUNE 20TH TO JUNE 26TH 2016
PAKISTANI PEACEKEEPERS BUILD WATER STATION IN SUDAN
Dawn, June 20th, 2016

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistani peacekeepers serving the United Nations’ African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) have constructed a water station in Ardamata area of West Darfur, a water-scarce region of Sudan.

The project, which was recently inaugurated, consists of three boreholes and six water storage facilities.

The station will provide potable water to the mission, the local community and the internally displaced persons in the area, according to message received here on Sunday.

In addition, the Pakistani peacekeepers have constructed a fence for the boreholes and water storage facilities as well as a road to the water station.

Mohammad Islam, a UNAMID official, stated that the mission would continue to share the available water resources with the local communities to help alleviate their sufferings.

“The project will not only help rationalise the mission’s spending on buying water from outsources, it will also provide the opportunity to assist the local community.”

Mohamed Ismael, a Sheikh at the Ardamata Camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs), emphasised that the newly drilled boreholes would ease the suffering of the population in the camp. “We have been struggling to obtain clean water, using water-hand pumps that went out of order recently.”

During the inauguration, UNAMID personnel and the Sheiks of IDPs planted trees to contribute to creating a green and healthy atmosphere in the area. The occasion coincided with World Environment Day.

During the implementation of the project, the Pakistani contingent organised a makeshift clinic and provided medical aid to the local community.

Over 2,000 Pakistani military and police personnel are currently serving with UNAMID.

CENTRE PUTS NATIONAL WATER POLICY ON HOLD

Dawn, June 21st, 2016

Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has put the national water policy on hold because of some constitutional questions and would instead let Punjab take the lead and bring out its provincial integrated water initiative first.

Originally prepared in 2005, the draft National Water Policy (NWP) has been moving in circles at the federal and provincial corridors of power but could not be announced. A lot has since changed on the ground in terms of legal, political and constitutional situation.

For one, the Ministry of Water and Power is no more a relevant forum to coordinate water policy issues between the centre and provinces and among the provinces as one of the fallouts of the 18th Amendment to the Constitution. The role could be performed occasionally by the Inter Provincial Coordination Division.

Second, many critical elements of countrywide water sector issues stand transferred to or taken over by the provinces like irrigation, drainage, on-farm water management, water productivity and salinity, etc.

Third, the provinces have now asked the centre that the NWP should focus on trans-boundary and interprovincial water issues and major hydropower and storage dams on major rivers, etc.

It was in this background that Minister for Water and Power Khwaja Mohammad Asif has reported to parliament that the national policy has been put on hold on the request of the government of Punjab (Irrigation Department Punjab) which is preparing an Integrated Water Use Policy to improve upon the water management issues at the provincial level. "The draft of the (provincial) policy would be finalised by the end of June 2016," the minister reported.

Consequently, the water and power ministry, in the light of deliberations of brainstorming session, is "reviewing the overall structure of the NWP and it is targeted that by the end of August this year — after finalisation of Punjab's Integrated Water Use Policy — the revised draft of the NWP would be finalised and re-circulated to the stakeholders for confirmation," he said, adding that the finalised NWP document would be processed for approval through the Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination.

At present, there is no approved National Water Policy. A draft NWP was prepared in 2005 by the Ministry of Water and Power after a detailed policy study by the World Bank-funded consultants and intensive consultation with stakeholders through 19 meetings and workshops. However, the policy documents could not be processed or approved by the cabinet.

In 2010, the decision to update the draft NWP was taken by taking stock of the latest developments in the water sector, especially the climate change and its impact on water resources. Subsequently, a joint committee headed by the adviser for the water and power ministry, with members from Wapda, Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) and Water Sector Capacity Building and Advisory Services Project (WCAP), was constituted to finalise the draft NWP document.

The committee, after detailed consultations and deliberations, finalised the draft NWP document. In addition, the recommendations of the Report of Water Sector Task Force of Friends of Democratic Pakistan completed in October, 2012, were also taken into consideration while finalising the policy document.

When sent for vetting, the Ministry of Law and Justice held that "Legislative List of the Constitution, 1973, (4th Schedule), does not possess any such provision with regard to water policy, etc. As such it is evident that it is a provincial subject and federal ministry, if considers necessary, may issue this policy, in consultation with provinces through IPC".

Subsequently, the draft NWP document was circulated by Ministry of Water and Power to provincial governments, all concerned stakeholders and eminent water experts for their views and comments. The crux of this exercise that all stakeholders wanted policy should explicitly describe the role of federal and provincial governments to spell out prime, lead and shared or subordinate role of provinces in the light of the Constitution.

The stakeholders also agreed that policy should not include irrigation, drainage, on-farm water management, irrigation practices, land reclamation, water productivity, salinity and water logging control, etc. as these areas have been the provincial responsibility even before the 18th Amendment.

There was a general consensus that the NWP should focus on trans-boundary water, inter-provincial water conflicts, hydropower dams on Indus Main and major tributaries, management of glaciers and snow in higher altitude and glaciated zone, river management and river health, mega infrastructure-inter-provincial irrigation, drainage and large dams outside Indus basin, and the environmental flows.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1266254>

WOES OF BALDIA PEOPLE WHO GET WATER SUPPLY FOUR TIMES A YEAR

Dawn, June 21th, 2016

Shazia Hasan

KARACHI: Baldia Town No 3 must be the most severely hit by the water crisis faced by the entire city. Residents say that water is supplied there only four times in a year, usually from half an hour to 50 minutes. So it was a time to rejoice when they received this year's second water supply in the early hours of Monday morning.

But the residents complained that the water was not fit for consumption. "For the first 10 minutes, the water coming from the pipes into our tanks was extremely dirty and stinking. Then it cleared up somewhat and after 20 minutes it stopped. Now we'll wait for another three to four months before getting our next supply," said Musa Jamal Haji of Ghanchi Mohalla in Baldia No 3.

"It was not so bad earlier when we got water in our lines after every 10 to 12 days. That was four years ago. But four times in one year now is unacceptable. We have complained about this everywhere but to no avail. Then we decided to protest. We came out of our homes and blocked the main Lasbela Road," said Mohsin Hussain of Anjam Colony, also located in Baldia No 3.

Qasim Bhai, who hails from Jan Nagar there said that during the sit-in, they were also fired at by the police. "Their bullets injured two of our neighbours but we remained out there fighting for a basic right, the right to clean drinking water, not available to us in this day and age," he said. "We only wrapped up our protest when the local governments minister promised to set things right in one-and-a-half months. It has been over two weeks since and there seems to be no improvement so far. Let's see what transpires."

Mohammad Ismail of Gujrat Mohalla, another neighbourhood in the same area, said that the Pakistan Rangers had brought them some relief. "Ten days ago, we started getting a supply of 21 tankers a day, thanks to help from the Rangers. But they fill this underground water supply tank of our area, or awami tanki as it is called, from where we come to fill water to take back home in our containers," he said.

There were endless lines of blue plastic drums, cannisters, buckets and bottles outside the water supply tank. Some had been marked by their owners to prevent getting mixed up with other containers. Others had their owners standing guard beside them. An elderly man loaded his water cans on a trolley to take back home. Women and young girls and boys, too, stood in queue for water coming out from three narrow pipes passed through the walls.

"It's good that we have our school holidays now. It allows us to come here to fetch water for home. Otherwise, our fathers are away at work and we are in school and our mothers or sisters have to come here for this," said Mohammad Zaheer, a teenager, who was there with some other neighbourhood boys from Dehli Mohalla. "Standing in queue in the evenings here is even worse because of the mosquitoes," he added.

Meanwhile, his friend Bilal Hamza wondered why they could not get water the normal way through a line. "After all, this 21 tankers a day supply is also coming from somewhere, is it not? Why can't that water come directly into our underground tanks? Why stand and wait here for hours? Why carry heavy loads on our shoulders or borrow trolleys for Rs20 to Rs50 an hour for this basic necessity? We are not millionaires to be able to buy tankers worth thousands of rupees so we are made to suffer like this," he said.

"It is my fourth round to this place today with my water cannisters. I have witnessed fights breaking out between frustrated people here who may realise that one or two of their containers are missing or have been stolen. Yesterday, I

even brought my iftari here with me because I knew that by the time I get my fill it will be after Maghrib,” said Zainab Bano, also of Ghanchi Mohallah.

Throwing light on the issue, Karachi Water and Sewerage Board managing director Misbahuddin Farid said he was aware of the suffering of people in Baldia No 3 and that was why he had arranged for the water to reach them through tankers with the Rangers’ cooperation. “I am supplying around 100,000 gallons per day to them through tankers,” he said.

“All in all I am supplying some 400,000 gallons of water daily to different localities in Baldia and Orangi Town daily. But, of course, it being hot and Ramazan, too, have increased people’s requirements leading to lesser water being pumped from the Shershah junction.”

He explained that one of the problems for the grave water shortage in these areas was due to their not receiving their share of water of 100 million gallons per day (MGD) from the Hub Dam now. “So we are getting water for these areas from the Indus river, which amounts to around 80 to 85 MGD. And that, too, we can supply after four-day gaps as the rest of the days the same water goes to North Karachi,” the MD said.

“Another problem for us, which is a huge nuisance, is water being stolen from Nazimabad. I have requested the law enforcement authorities to look into that matter as well. If that is controlled, we can expect some improvement in the situation.”

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1266148>

IRSA STORES 8.3 MAF OF WATER IN MANGLA, TARBELA RESERVOIRS

Business Recorder, June 22, 2016

M Rafique Goraya

Though the Indus River System Authority is discharging 3,60,000 cusecs water in the sprawling canal irrigation network across the country for sowing and maturing of strategic Kharif crops , yet it has stored 8.3 MAF water in the Mangla and Tarbela dams 8.3 MAF water against their total capacity of 13.8 MAF water.

The water regulatory body has stored 5.177 MAF in the Mangla dam on the river Jhelum against its full capacity of 7.40 MAF water. The water level in the dam is just 30 ft below of its maximum height of 1242 ft, above sea. The water managers have filled 50 percent Tarbela dam on the mighty Indus, against its capacity of 6.43 MAF water ahead of the Monsoon season.

Meanwhile IRSA is meeting all irrigation water requirements of the four provinces for the purpose of sowing, growing and maturing the Kharif crops including cotton, rice, sugarcane, maize, vegetables, fodder for live stock and fruit orchards. According to 21st June water report of WAPDA, IRSA is releasing 1,93,600 cusecs water downstream the Tarbela dam against the inflow of 249100 cusecs in the river Indus, 80,100 cusecs water of river Kabul, 15,000 cusecs downstream the Mangla Dam on the river Jhelum against the Inflow of 57200 cusecs and 77,900 cusecs running water in the river Chenab

Meanwhile the Flood Warning Centre has said that River Indus is in low flood at Tarbela, Kalabagh, Chashma and Taunsa barrage. River Kabul is in medium flood at Nowshera with the flow of 80,100 cusecs of water.

<http://www.brecorder.com/agriculture-a-allied/183/59183/>

NEELUM-JHELUM POWER PROJECT GETS RECORD RS100BN FINANCING

Dawn, June 23rd, 2016

Shahid Iqbal

KARACHI: A consortium of 16 banks has arranged Rs100 billion sukuk for the Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project in what is the country’s biggest ever funds mobilisation for a public sector entity.

The National Bank of Pakistan (NBP), which leads the consortium, has the largest share (of around Rs35bn) in the funds being raised under Shariah-compliant tool.

Mufti Ahsan Waqar, chairman of NBP’s Shariah board, told Dawn that financial closure for the sukuk has been achieved and the bonds would be ready to trade on the stock market after completion of other formalities.

A signing ceremony for the financing agreement was attended by President and CEO of NBP Syed Iqbal Ashraf, Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) Chairman Zafar Mahmood, Wapda's Member Finance Anwaarul Haq and Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Company (NJHPC) CEO Muhammad Zubair, among others.

The NJHPC, which is managing the 969-megawatt project located in Muzaffarabad (Azad Jammu and Kashmir), has assigned the NBP the role of 'mandated lead arranger' for the arrangement through issuance of rated, secured and privately placed sukuk to partially finance the construction.

Pakistan has struggled to attract foreign investment in the power sector, particularly for the hydroelectric projects which have vast scope for investment and profitability. However, the response was not positive except China which has agreed to invest in Pakistan's power sector under long-term loans for power generation.

Addressing the signing ceremony, Mr Ashraf said the sukuk was structured with a tenor of 10 years and was backed by the sovereign guarantee by the Government of Pakistan (GoP).

He said the bonds issue has received a preliminary rating of 'AAA' from JCR-VIS and is expected to have a wider impact on the financial market of Pakistan, helping augment a funding format that has been predominantly constrained to smaller deals with shorter tenors.

This sukuk is also expected also provide avenues for Islamic banks and mutual funds to invest their liquid funds in a tradable GoP-guaranteed Islamic instrument.

Apart from the NBP, other banks in the consortium are HBL, Allied Bank, United Bank, Bank Alfalah, Meezan Bank, Faysal Bank, the Bank of Punjab, BankIslami Pakistan, Askari Bank, Bank Al Habib, the Bank of Khyber, Dubai Islamic Bank, Pak-Brunei Investment Company and Pak-China Investment Company.

The Neelum-Jhelum project envisages diverting Neelum River water through tunnels which falls into Jhelum River after producing power. On completion, the project will be capable of producing 5.15bn units of electricity each year. This mega hydropower project has been undertaken long after completion of Mangla and Tarbela dam projects.

This 'green energy' project will fetch a total revenue of up to Rs50bn annually for Wapda as per existing tariff. The first turbine will start to operate by the end of June 2017.

Addressing the ceremony, the Wapda chairman said this was the biggest ever funds mobilisation for a public sector entity in the history of Pakistan. "Achieving this milestone reflects not only investors' confidence in the federal government and Wapda, but also indicates the potential of investment that hydropower sector offers," he said. "This issuance... will go a long way in arranging funds for other hydropower projects as well to be initiated in the near future," he added.

"The project envisages 90 per cent construction work under high mountainous overburden and only 10pc above the surface. He said the construction work on the project is progressing at a fast pace and overall progress of the project is around 82pc so far."

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1266623/neelum-jhelum-power-project-gets-record-rs100bn-financing>

HYDROPOWER PROJECTS SET TO BE DELAYED

Dawn, June 25th, 2016

Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: The construction work on two key water projects — 1,410MW Tarbela 4th Extension (T4) and Mangla protection dyke — has come to a halt, jeopardising completion of the hydropower projects by the deadline of 2017 and causing fears of problems in the looming flood season.

While the key stakeholders — the ministry of water and power, the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) and the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) — are engaged in meetings to grapple with the unforeseen situation to avoid a crisis, the contractors at both the critical projects have demobilised men and machinery.

According to an official, both the ministry and Wapda were caught off guard as unpreparedness coupled with natural events changed the situation.

Tarbela extension was one of the key projects the government was banking on to reduce power shortage with its schedule of generating electricity by June next year.

On the request of Wapda authorities, the Irsa advisory committee decided in March not to fill the dam beyond 1,490 feet till July 15 against its maximum capacity of 1,550 feet to enable construction of the T4 tunnel.

Wapda was required under the decision to ensure a 1,514-foot coffer bund to facilitate the tunnel's construction. It was noted that the coffer dam's strength to the level of 1.485 feet was up to the mark but was below standard beyond that level.

Meanwhile, temperatures rose in the Skardu catchments above 34 degree Celsius and river flows increased beyond estimates by about 22 per cent. Therefore, Wapda authorities at Tarbela Dam requested that filling be kept below 1,482 feet instead of 1,490 feet approved by Irsa to avoid damage to the tunnel.

Mangla Dam: According to sources, the Wapda authorities had also reported to the government that it had constructed a coffer dam to ensure construction of protection dam at Khaliqabad that was drowned last year. However, it later transpired that the coffer dam level was not in line with the project specifications.

The contractor who supplies stone for the protection bund pitching, has also suspended work following a Supreme Court order banning stone crushing and excavation from Margalla Hills.

The power ministry has reported that the contractor will now start supplying stone from a new place near Rawat but that will take a few days to pick up pace.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1267137>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JUNE 13TH TO JUNE 19TH 2016
WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANTS: CHINESE FIRM TO GO FOR 'FRONT-LOADED TARIFF'
Dawn, June 13th, 2016

Khalid Hasnain

LAHORE: A leading Chinese company, which has recently expressed its interest in the installation of two out of total seven proposed wastewater treatment plants in Lahore, will charge per unit wastewater treatment cost from the government.

The company has formally submitted its technical and financial proposals to the Lahore Development Authority's Strategic Policy Unit a couple of days back, Dawn learnt on Sunday.

According to a document, Kunming Dianchi Water Treatment Co, Ltd, has roughly made its estimation plan, stating that it will charge per unit treated wastewater/sewage cost from the government under a year-wise plan.

The company plans to receive Rs22.53 to Rs32.86 (\$0.2154 to 0.3142) per unit wastewater treatment cost from the government.

By investing \$272.6 million on the construction of two plants—Northeast-1 and 2 in a phased manner—the company in first year of the operation will charge Rs32.86 (\$0.3142). In the first year, the firm plans to invest \$123m and treat 68 per cent (204,000 m³/d –cubic meter per day) of the total 270,000 m³/d.

“In the second year, the firm plans to invest \$92.3m and increase wastewater treatment capacity by 80 per cent (240,000 m³/d). During the second year, the government will be charged Rs27.94 (\$ 0.2672) per unit wastewater cost.

During the third year, another amount of \$57.3m will be invested to enhance the plants' wastewater treatment capacity by 100 per cent (270,000 m³/d) and charge Rs22.53 (\$ 0.2154). From the fourth year onward, the unit price will be same,” the document reads.

The document says the per unit cost has been estimated keeping in view the direct treatment cost (labour, power consumption, medicament, sludge treatment), capital cost (amortization, bank interest) and cost of taxes (various taxes including business tax, income tax and VAT).

The final investment to be incurred on the plants shall be determined by wastewater treatment process. According to quality of the wastewater expected from Mahmood Booti sewage site, current designed process won't be able to meet the practical needs.

Therefore, the company will assign expert to collect water sample from site as soon as possible and deliver them to relevant institution in Pakistan for analysis, refine the process of the plant according to the analysis and then finish feasibility study and plant design to acquire budget.

“According to a rough budget we can only estimate the unit price of sewage treatment from water quantity. The final investment amount will be known from feasibility study and design, determined by final audit after the construction completed. And sewage treatment service fee will be adjusted according to the relevant terms and formula in BOT (build, operate and transfer) contract,” the documents reads.

According to sources, the company, a couple of days back, formally submitted its technical and financial proposals to the LDA. Following this, the LDA has also sought input from the Water and Sanitation Agency (Wasa) by sending a copy of the proposal.

“The financial proposal will be evaluated by the planning and development and finance departments,” a senior official told Dawn.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1264441>

ENORMOUS WASTE OF WATER

Dawn, Business & Finance weekly, June 13th, 2016

Mahmood Hasan Khan

PAKISTAN is one of the most water-stressed countries; agriculture uses nearly 70pc of all water; rapid urbanisation and growth of industries are competing with agriculture in the demand for water.

About 80pc of the crop area is irrigated by canals and wells and only 15pc of the water used for crops is from rains. An estimated 35-40pc of the water for irrigation is wasted from the canal head to the farm and flooding of fields at the farm level adds to this loss.

The supply of irrigation water to farms is unfairly distributed in favour of the large landholders and those with lands at the top-end of the watercourse; rent-seeking and subsidies in various forms contribute to inefficient water use at the farm level; water storage capacity — only 30 days compared with 120 days in India — has not expanded in the last at least 25 years.

The water disputes between provinces and with India are based essentially on deep mistrust; and climate change is making water supply more unreliable with frequent episodes of severe flood and droughts.

These assertions are based on reasonably reliable evidence about the state of water and agriculture in Pakistan. Water is not scarce; it is used inefficiently: output per unit of water is only one-third of what California farmers get. There are reasons for this, and all of them point to poor policies and bad management of water at all levels. In addition, at the farm level, poor farm practices and crop combinations are reflected in wasted water and low yield levels.

The surface water delivered to farms, through canals, distributaries and watercourses, does not take into account the demand for water: every farm is entitled to a certain quota of water regulated by a warabandi system, taking into account the type of crop and its area.

The water rate (abiana) is set to cover the cost of maintaining the irrigation infrastructure. Until recently the provincial irrigation departments were responsible for the supply of water and collecting the abiana from users. Given the inefficiencies—at least 30 per cent of the water was lost on the way—and the pervasive rent-seeking by the irrigation officials, a decentralised system of management, involving water users in making decisions from the canal-head to the watercourse level, was introduced gradually in the last decade.

The performance of the area water boards and water users associations have reportedly not been as good as was expected. When measured by the amount of collected water revenue, maintenance of the watercourses and fairness in the distribution of water along watercourses. However, it seems that the experience of the new system in Punjab has been better than in Sindh.

More importantly, this so-called decentralised irrigation system has not put enough pressure on farmers to save water by shifting from flooding the fields to drip irrigation and to crops that demand less water.

Why have the governments not persuaded the provincial irrigation and drainage authorities to move to a water pricing regime that takes into account the demand side as well? That will allow the maintenance of infrastructure at the desired level and encourage farmers to save water. It may even develop a market for water exchange between farmers.

The supply of groundwater by private tube wells has been a boon to farmers in many areas of Punjab but not in Sindh. But it has come at a heavy cost to the society: it has depleted the aquifer, in some areas quite severely; it has cost billions of rupees to meet the demand for subsidised fuel (diesel and electricity); it has contributed to inequalities between farmers and regions.

The economic return to the tube well owner has far exceeded the return to society. We don't know how much if any impact these tube wells have had in reducing the incidence of waterlogging and salinity—the twin menace has decommissioned over 2m hectares of farm land.

One of the critical problems of water supply is the shortage of storage capacity. The increased silting of the existing storage dams along with no new capacity built in the last two to three decades pose a serious challenge to mitigate the effects of the increasingly unreliable flow of water due to climate change. Public policy on this issue has been a victim of internal divisions due to distrust between the provinces.

The periodic disputes on actual water flows and about the provincial shares in the Indus water system are good indicators. The dispute between India and Pakistan about diversion of water of the Indus distributaries is likewise based on deep-seated distrust. Why have the parties to these disputes not found ways to resolve them? Are they waiting for divine intervention or a catastrophic shock?

Public policy for saving water and getting more out of each unit of water has failed in another important area as well: promoting new water-saving irrigation methods and efficient crop practices at the farm level.

Why can't the government redirect its subsidy and small loan policy to promote new technologies such as drip irrigation? Similarly, the agriculture research and extension programmes have made little if any progress in persuading farmers to adopt profitable practices of zero-tillage, precision land levelling, and intercropping with genetically modified high-yielding crops that are salt-tolerant and drought-resistant.

A vigorous and efficient public support system should be in place along with the right signals on prices. All of this would also require governments to focus on millions of small landowners and cultivators.

Agriculture is again in the headlines for all the bad reasons. I see the government is promising things that have not worked before.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1264520>

FORGOTTEN WATER POLICY INITIATIVES

Dawn, Business & Finance weekly, June 13th, 2016

Ashfak Bokhari

WHILE Pakistan has been planning for long to initiate a development project on the Kabul river, India is helping Afghanistan prepare the feasibility studies of 12 hydro-electric power projects with a capacity of 1,177MW.

Since there is no formal agreement between Pakistan and Afghanistan on sharing of waters of the river, the two countries currently share water of nine rivers with annual flows of about 18.3 million acres feet (MAF) of which the river Kabul accounts for 16.5MAF.

It is unfortunate that Pakistan has failed to develop water uses of the river Kabul. However, a senior official of the ministry of water and power says the water uses of river Kabul are 100pc committed in Pakistan. Under the international convention and as a lower riparian country, it has the right to utilise 17MAF water from river Kabul.

So far, Pakistan has been accusing India of ‘illegal’ construction of numerous hydro-power projects on western rivers in the occupied Kashmir. Now Afghanistan may also face similar accusations if its projects are poised to reduce the flow in the river reaching Pakistan.

While the country’s bureaucracy and political elite is plagued with inefficiency in addition to internal squabbles among provinces, the water crisis continues unabated with no action being taken to mitigate misery of the under-privileged population. Pakistan is among the leading five countries that face extremely high water stress and low access to safe drinking water and sanitation.

A new report of the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) says that the country will approach absolute water scarcity by 2025. At present it is a water-stressed country. Pakistan, it warns, touched the ‘water stress line’ in 1990 and crossed the ‘water scarcity line’ in 2005.

If this situation continues, then chances are high the country will face acute water shortage or drought-like situation in the near future. To deal with the developing situation, there is a need to carry out research at various levels to find out the best possible solutions. Unfortunately, the officials say, the PCRWR has no funds at present to ensure sustainable research.

The council is an apex body of the science and technology ministry responsible for carrying out research in water resources. Now it wants creation on an endowment fund within PCRWR to avoid its dependence on the annual Public Sector Development Programme. The council has no funds to ensure sustainable research and has sought Rs50m from the government. The fund also aims to focus on water scarcity for agriculture.

It is interesting to note that the ministers responsible for action have often preferred to issue doomsday warnings if no action was taken. In fact, it is they who should be taking action in minimising people’s deprivations.

The federal minister for water and power Khawaja Asif said in August last year that Pakistan was currently water stressed and it is feared that in 10-15 years it will become a water-starved country, if it fails to develop water reservoirs on time. Then, in another statement, he said the government is in the process of framing the first-ever water management policy and at present the parliament is holding discussions on various aspects. There has been no follow-up of the policy.

In September 2015, federal minister for planning, development and reform Ahsan Iqbal advised the ministry of water and power to finalise the National Water Policy in three months to save the country from water crisis. He often alarms the people by saying that if no appropriate action was taken now, the country will land itself in Thar-like situation.

The national water policy draft prepared by Wapda advocates an ‘integrated water resources management regime’ for full exploitation of the country’s water resources. One of several initiatives of the water policy that may be unwelcome to certain sections includes introduction of a mechanism for charging all types of water use to ensure, through an act of parliament, recovery of the cost of repair and maintenance of water infrastructure.

However, the drinking water sector will be protected as a fundamental right of citizens. For the purpose a National Drinking Water Policy was approved on September 28, 2009 by the federal cabinet. The policy was formulated by the ministry of environment in collaboration with UNICEF. The draft does not explain how ordinary folk will be able to obtain safe water on a regular basis, nor much has been heard of its follow-up and implementation.

Although, it is claimed that the draft water policy is a national one and that it has consent of all the provinces, some experts feel that the federal government may be overreaching its mandate. Abid Qayyum Suleri, executive director of the Sustainable Development and Policy Institute (SDPI), argues that since water is a provincial subject, the centre cannot formulate a national water policy on its own. He suggested that the centre should invite all the federating units to the Council of Common Interest to create consensus on a broad-based water policy.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1264521>

RUNNING DRY: KARACHI RESIDENTS SUFFER AS WATER SHORTAGE RE-EMERGES
The Express Tribune, June 14th, 2016

Mudaser Kazi

KARACHI: The water shortage has once more resurfaced in all the districts of Karachi leaving residents of the metropolis without water for more than a week now.

The residents of District West, including Baldia, Orangi, Manghopir, and a number of areas in other districts of Karachi, including New Karachi, North Karachi, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Gulistan-e-Jauhar and Korangi, are facing a serious water crisis since the start of Ramazan.

A resident of Baldia Town, Kamran Ghafar, told The Express Tribune that he and other residents really want to see water coming in the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) supply lines. He added that they have been in contact with KWSB officials for a while but all they hear is that the Hub Dam has no water. "Isn't the water board supposed to provide water to the residents of Baldia town from alternative water sources?" he questioned.

"Shah Faisal Colony has also been facing water scarcity for a week before Ramazan," said Muhammad Sami Shahzad, a resident of district Korangi. He added that the area used to get water in their supply lines every three days but currently there is not even a single drop of water.

He said they have to rely on water tankers, which cost between Rs2,500 and Rs3,000. Shahzad said a permanent solution to the water shortage is water-boring, which costs more than Rs35,000. The residents are dividing the cost to get boring done of 150-feet to get water.

Water was last supplied in our area last week, claimed Sibte Hayyan, a resident of North Karachi's sector 11. He added that no one, neither KWSB nor the government, is interested in resolving the water crisis in Karachi.

According to the chief of KWSB's water trunk main, Zafar Palijo, the constant problem of water shortage in District West is due to the unavailability of water in the Hub Dam. He added that the majority of the district is directly fed from the Hub Dam and since the dam is currently at dead low-level, the water needs of the residents living in District West cannot be met. Palijo added that the water from the other areas has been channeled to District West, which has worsened the water supply in the rest of Karachi.

"The catchment area of the dam is expected to be hit with heavy showers this June and then the dam will be filled to a desired level," he said. The required capacity of water in the dam is 339-feet above sea level, which is sufficient to supply District West for three years, Palijo added.

He explained that when the Hub Dam is completely filled, KWSB can draw its share of 100 million gallons per day (MGD) to supply it to the residents of the entire district, which is 67% of the total water of the dam. Of the water in the dam, 60 MGD is meant to be supplied to the areas in Balochistan and 2 MGD is allocated for irrigation purposes.

He added that District Central is facing a partial shortage of water and the area which is affected the most in Central is North Karachi.

According to him, the current supply of water in Karachi is 550 MGD, which is entirely through the Indus river system, while the demand is 1,080 MGD.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1121970/running-dry-karachi-residents-suffer-water-shortage-re-emerges/>

DELAYED REPAIRS: CLOSURE OF ROHRI CANAL AFFECTS DRINKING WATER SUPPLY, CROPS IN LOWER SINDH

The Express Tribune, June 15th, 2016.

HYDERABAD: Continued closure of the Rohri canal, due to collapse of some portion of a fall regulator, continues to create irrigation and drinking water shortage in many districts of Sindh.

Around two dozen crops, including major ones such as cotton and sugarcane, are either being damaged or face the risk of loss as the irrigation officials fail to meet the repair deadline.

Rohri canal flows from Sukkur Barrage and supplies drinking water and irrigates around 2.9 million acres in Khairpur, Naushero Feroz, Shaheed Benazirabad, Sanghar and Hyderabad districts. At the time of the damage, the canal was flowing at over 14,000 cusecs.

The regulator of Rohri Canal, located on Naushero-Phul link road, was damaged around 10 days ago. Given the urgency, the irrigation officials announced June 17 as the deadline for resuming water discharge after repairing the damage.

However, representatives of farmers' organisations, such as Sindh Abadgar Board and Sindh Abadgar Ittehad who have visited the project site, complained of slow pace and substandard material.

"They [the irrigation officials] will take at least 12 to 15 days [to complete the works]. But now our other concern is the poor quality of cement, bricks and iron bars being used in the construction," said advocate Ali Palh, who visited the site on Tuesday with the delegation of Sindh Abadgar Ittehad.

Briefing the delegation, Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority's managing director Babur Effendi assured, but to their utter disbelief, that the canal will be opened by June 17. "They are dodging us to fend off farmers from gearing up the protests," said Palh. Ittehad put the losses sustained so far at tens of billions of rupees.

A delegation of Sindh Abadgar Board, led by its president Abdul Majeed Nizamani, also visited the regulator on Sunday and expressed their dissatisfaction. "If the water supply is not restored in less than a week, we will block roads and highways in protest," warned Nizamani, requesting the Chief of Army Staff General Raheel Sharif to deploy the army's engineering corps to fast-track the repairs.

Sindh Chamber of Agriculture president Dr Syed Nadeem Qamar accused the irrigation department for its incapacity to notice weakness in the structure during its annual closure in January. Although the canal is closed every year for two to three weeks for de-silting, this year the closure lasted for 44 days from January 5 to February 17, creating severe irrigation water shortage.

Dr Qamar demanded that the negligent officers should be taken to the task because they have caused hundreds of billions loss to agricultural economy this year alone.

The three farmers' organisations have also called for investigation into the damages as the local people kept informing the irrigation officials about cracks in the flank walls and regulator for two years.

For his part, irrigation secretary Zaheer Hyder Shah, who visited the site on Monday, told the local media that an inquiry into the matter will be notified in a few days.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1122643/delayed-repairs-closure-rohri-canal-affects-drinking-water-supply-crops-lower-sindh/>

'SAAF PANI' FOR ALL

Business Recorder, 15 June 2016

The Punjab government in its budget for 2016-17 has allocated Rs550 billion for its Annual Development Plan (ADP). A standing out feature in this year's ADP is the increased allocation for the water and sanitation sector at Rs45 billion, marking an increase of 88 percent over last year's allocation of Rs24 billion.

The majority of the expenditure is targeted towards the Punjab Saaf Pani Company, the brain child of Punjab's chief minister Shahbaz Sharif. The company has a mandate to develop, plan and execute projects for providing safe drinking-water solutions that focus on prioritising underserved areas, especially in rural and peri-urban areas of the province.

Rs30 billion has been allocated for Saaf Pani Initiatives under ADP for Financial Year 2016-17, which are almost two-thirds of the total expenditure on water and sanitation. The allocation seeks to rectify the previous neglect of the south Punjab area, with 73 percent of the Rs30 billion earmarked for safe drinking water in Southern Punjab, whereas 27 percent has been allocated to Northern Punjab.

This comes in the wake of a World Bank report recently claiming that the financial allocation for the water sector is "very low," with approximately 4 to 5 percent of total Annual Development Plan of the Punjab government. The

report argues the sector has not been awarded much in comparison to the health and education budget allocations of 23 percent and 29 percent, respectively, in 2015-16 budget.

It goes on to assert that the Punjab Health Engineering Department (PHED) is catering to the water needs of nearly 32 percent of the province's 60 million rural inhabitants, but the allocation of funds for PHED in the provincial budget remains around 5 percent.

The breakdown provided in the ADP 2016-17 lists 1,244 water supply and sanitation schemes, out of which 562 schemes (208 water supply and 351 sanitation) are targeted to be completed by the end of 2016-17, with an allocation of Rs4.3 billion.

For the previous year, the number of schemes to be completed by the end of June 2016 was 466, with 211 pertaining to water supply and 255 for sanitation with an estimated cost of Rs7.87 billion

The World Bank has carried out an assessment of 4,258 rural water supply schemes and identified that 33 percent of the total number of schemes were dysfunctional. The report highlights that 49 percent of the dysfunctional schemes are not operating due to technical faults, 26 percent have gone out of operation due to weak financial capacity in maintenance, and 25 percent have stopped operating due to managerial or social reasons amongst the beneficiary communities.

Even as the allocations for the sector are increased, it seems more needs to be done on proper utilisation of resources with a lower failure rate of proposed schemes. The Punjab government is seeking the World Bank's technical assistance on the issue, and time will tell whether sustainable delivery of rural water services in the province becomes a reality or not.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2016/06/15/2-page/769412-news.html>

TARBELA EXTENSION PROJECT: 'HIGH INFLOWS' MAY THROW A SPANNER IN THE WORKS
Dawn, June 18th, 2016

LAHORE: The construction work at 1,410MW Tarbela Extension 4th could stop from Sunday (tomorrow), affecting its already doubtful completion deadline and the government plan to deal with loadshedding in the remaining two years in office. Healthy inflow takes the lake level beyond 1,483 feet.

The Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) and the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) had been trying to restrict the lake level to below 1,483 feet so that water does not overlap the coffer dam and allow the contractor to maximise work before glaciers start melting.

Both Wapda and Irsa had decided to keep the lake level below 1,483 feet level till mid-July and Irsa had released almost 1.3 million acre feet additional water from the lake in April and May to keep it down to the decided level.

However, with water inflow overrunning the water releasing capacity, the lake is fast approaching 1,483 feet level. The pre-monsoon rains and exceptional increase in temperatures in the catchment areas of the Indus River have increased average inflows by 27,000 cusec and 53,000 cusec which are higher than the last five-year average during May and June respectively.

It is now calculated that the lake level would reach 1,483 feet by June 19 (Sunday), overlapping the coffer dam, and forcing suspension of work at the site. The current inflow in the dam has crossed 250,000 cusec whereas only 190,000 cusec could be released through the tunnels.

The spillway of the lake can only be operated once the dam level reaches 1,505 feet. Prior to it, water can only be released through tunnels which have combined capacity of 190,000 cusec only.

The original deadline for the completion of Tarbela Extension project, which would add 1,410MW electricity to the national grid and has been a very vital component of the PML-N government to end loadshedding, was February 2018. However, Wapda conceived a \$50 million (over Rs5 billion) acceleration plan to pull back deadline by eight months, and complete the project by June 2017.

According to Wapda's own calculations, the earlier completion could have allowed it benefit of \$300 million because of usage of additional water of 2017 monsoon. The plan, however, seems to be hitting snags.

The civil contractor has already shown his inability to meet the deadline of June 2017 for all four generators to be installed on tunnel four. The electro-mechanical contractor is also asking for additional money to meet the deadline. With the contractor unable, or unwilling, to meet the deadline, the inflow of water could further complicate things for Wapda.

Wapda on Friday decided to dispatch a high-level technical team to the site to coordinate with the contractor for expediting the work on tunnel four. It has also decided to inform the World Bank – financier of the project – as it has approved and monitored the acceleration plan and the contractor will be asked to carry out work round-the-clock for the remaining days.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1265646>

SAAF PANI PROJECT: ALL PUNJAB AREAS TO GET SAFE DRINKING WATER, SAYS SHAHBAZ
The Express Tribune, June 19th, 2016.

LAHORE: More than 80 water filtration plants have been installed in five South Punjab tehsils under the Saaf Pani Project, Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif said on Saturday.

He was chairing a meeting to review the implementation of the Saaf Pani Project.

“People of Lodhran, Khanpur, Hasilpur, Duniyapur and Minchanabad are getting clean drinking water through the water filtration plants now. The government has allocated Rs30 billion for the project in 2016-17 financial year. The project is directly related to health of hundreds of thousands of people. People have a right to access clean drinking water,” he said.

He said the project would be extended to six more districts of south Punjab soon. He said that international companies would be selected through a transparent process for the project.

The CM said that all steps would be taken to ensure that millions of people living in rural areas had access to clean drinking water. He said steps should also be taken to increase the capacity of Saaf Pani Company.

Minister for Housing Tanveer Aslam Malik and the Saaf Pani Company chairman also attended the meeting.

The chief minister visited the Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif Hospital on Bedian Road, and the Bedian Ramazan Bazaar on Saturday.

The CM inspected the pharmacy, blood bank and gynecology ward of the hospital. He asked patients about the medical facilities being provided to them. The patients told CM that they were being provided treatment and medicines free of cost. They thanked the chief minister for establishing the hospital in that area.

Speaking to doctors and the nursing staff, Shahbaz Sharif said he was happy to see that patients were getting good medical treatment.

The CM praised the staff on duty at the blood bank. The CM said another refrigerator would be provided to the hospital to store blood.

At the Ramazan Bazaar, the CM asked the customers about the quality of the products. “The government is spending a large amount of funds on providing subsidy on essential commodities in Ramazan Bazaars,” he said.

The chief minister inspected the stalls of sugar and flour and inquired from the people about their quality.

The shoppers informed the CM about the quality and prices of essential commodities in the bazaars. They thanked the CM for setting up the bazaars.

“The entire government machinery is working to ensure that all essential items are available at Ramazan Bazaars,” he said.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1125446/saaf-pani-project-punjab-areas-get-safe-drinking-water-says-shahbaz/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JUNE 6TH TO JUNE 12TH 2016

WATER CRISIS LOOMING LARGE: MINISTER

Business Recorder, June 7th, 2016

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Water and Power Khawaja Muhammad Asif has said that water crisis is looming over Pakistan if solid steps are not taken to tap the existing water resources of the country. He said that since the water is underpriced and its value is not known to ordinary people, the wastage of this precious resource is rampant leading towards fast deteriorating the situation.

The minister was addressing a progress review meeting with international Development partners in Islamabad.

The meeting was attended by Masroor Ahmed, World Bank, William Bill Young, World Bank, Ehtsham, ADB, Ms Michino Yamaguchi, Senior Representative of JICA, JICA, Kenji Ogasahara, Representative of JICA, Amir Bukhari Senior Pregame Officer of JICA, Nauman Bhutta, AFD, Arbab Shakar, Swiss Embassy, SDC, Inam Ullah Khan, Country Representative, ISDB, Dr Parvaiz Naeem, Senior Program Coordinator, KFW, Nadeem Siddiqi, KFW, Sebastian ERNST, Embassy of Germany, Mr.

Bongsu Park, Embassy of Korea, Tore Nadrebo, Embassy of Norway, Rick Slettenhaar, Head of the Economic Department, Embassy of Netherlands, Sadik Babur Girgin, Ambassador, Turkish Embassy, Tokhir Mirzoev, IMF, Anwar Ul-Haq, Member Finance, WAPDA, Izhar ul Haq, Advisor, Wapda, Syed Mehr Ali Shah, Joint Secretary (Water), M/O Water & Power, Hiba Zaidi, IMF, Maqsood Ahmed, NTDC, Asjad Imtiaz, CEA/CFFC, Zaho, Chinese Embassy and Hamza Khalid, the Australian High Commission.

The minister was of the view that water is a gift of nature and vital for survival of human race. He said that Pakistan has not made any significant water storage capacity after building of Tarbela and Mangla in the 60s. He said that Pakistan storage capacity has indeed reduced due to silting.

The minister said that the present government paid focused attention towards water sector management and drafted water policy in consultation with all stakeholders in the country. The water policy is a comprehensive policy document for tapping the water resources in the country.

Highlighting the long way the Ministry of Water and Power has come since coming into government three years back in 2013, the minister said that a lot has been achieved in the sectoral reforms. He said that a number of milestone has been achieved, including stability of the sector, reliability in liquidity, addition of generation, improvement of transmission system etc.

He said the government came up with long-term strategy ensuring macro economic stability. The government also came up with an ambitious strategy for power sector. Simultaneously, it not only addressed the key challenges of the power sector but also introduced energy market for being a investment heaven for the international and local entrepreneurs.

Briefing the participants, Secretary Ministry of Water and Power Mohammad Younus Dagha said power sector has taken turn around in the year 2015 as a major milestone has been achieved.

He said that confidence of the investors has greatly been restored and this can be easily gauged from the fact that in the last 20 years investment were made in 10000MW projects while in the last three years investment has been made in 12000MW projects by the private sector.

The Secretary while paying gratitude towards development partners like USAID, World Bank, AEDB, JAICA etc for providing assistance to the Ministry of Water and Power in up-gradation of its system said that a lot has been achieved and the results have now started coming.

The overall T&D losses of the system have been reduced from 19.1 percent to 18 percent resulting in saving of Rs 10 billions. He said that effective monitoring of the generation and merit order has further improved the situation and the recoveries have come to 93.4 percent as against the 88 percent, registering a significant increase and betterment of liquidity of the power sector.

The Secretary further highlighted the regional connectivity initiatives by the present government. He said that Pakistan has all potential to become regional energy hub in the shape of regional inter-transmission of energy. He said that CASA-1000 has now entered into implementation stage making the regional connection a reality.

World Bank representative apprised the meeting about the water sector partnership with Government of Pakistan, especially the development of flood protection plan and various underground and surface water feasibilities studies conducted by the Bank.

He also suggested that water availability need to be improved along with strengthening provincial capacity to tap the water resources. He said that financial allocation for the water sector is also a key area. He stressed for water sector management training for the officials and those associated with water sector at the provincial level.

The meeting was briefed about the status of different water sector projects by Chairman Wapda Zafar Mehamood. He told the meeting that the present government has initiated a large number of projects in the water sector and after a gap of nearly 50 years large dams like Dasu and Diamer Basha are being pursued. He also apprised the meeting about the Kuram Tangi, Satpara, Khan Khawar, Khyal Khawar, Dubir Khawar and other hydro electric projects.—PR

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2016/06/07/14-page/766311-news.html>

FUNDS FOR WATER SECTOR IN PUNJAB NOT ADEQUATE, SAYS WB REPORT

Dawn, June 8th, 2016

ISLAMABAD: Punjab is the most populous province of the country with a population of 100 million; however, the financial allocation for the water sector is around 5 per cent of total annual development plan of the provincial government.

The World Bank says in a report that this allocation is very low as compared to the health and education budget allocations of 23 and 29 per cent, respectively, in the 2015-16 budget.

Of the Rs250 million budget allocated by the finance department in 2014-15, only Rs61 million was released with the rest of the funds lapsing in the government system.

To improve the situation, the Punjab government sought technical assistance from the World Bank to strengthen the accountability of service provision by communities to ensure improved access to rural water supply, particularly for the marginalised and poor.

The technical assistance report recommended that Punjab should continue to support and build on the approach of providing rural water through a community-based organisation (CBO) managed system. Service quality, access and sustainability can be improved if the CBO management model is deepened further.

Providing CBOs with a greater role in the rural water supply project combined with a mix of training, networking and backstopping will generate the capacity required to deliver better service.

The Punjab Health Engineering Department (PHED) is catering to the water needs of nearly 32 per cent of the province's 60 million rural inhabitants. Allocation of funds for PHED in the provincial budget remains around 5 per cent.

In the province, 33 per cent of the total numbers of schemes were dysfunctional.

Analysis of the data showed that 49 per cent of the dysfunctional schemes are not operating due to technical faults, 26 per cent have gone out of operation due to weak financial capacity in maintenance and 25 per cent have stopped operating due to managerial or social reasons amongst the beneficiary communities.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1263513>

WATER SUPPLY SITUATION IMPROVES AMID HOT SPELL

Dawn, June 9th, 2016

Ahmad Fraz Khan

LAHORE: With rising temperatures, the water supplies in the country have also gone up by around 44 per cent in comparison to the last year's river flows, with the Indus and Kabul registering main improvements of 30pc and 11pc, respectively.

Though the River Jhelum's flow has fallen by 21pc and the Chenab by 5pc, the combined improvement of 41pc in the Indus and Kabul rivers has given a huge boost to overall supplies — raising them from 241,000 cusecs last year to 348,000 cusecs this year — an increase of 31pc, or 107,000 cusecs.

According to the data of the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda), the last five-year cumulative average supplies for June 8 have been 274,400 cusecs and 10-year average stood at 268,400 cusecs.

According to the data of the Indus River System Authority (Irsa), the country now holds six million acre-feet of water in its three reservoirs — 1.6maf in Tarbela, 4.22maf in Mangla and 0.2maf in Chashma. This storage was 7.9maf on the corresponding day last year. Irsa says this year's drop in storage has been caused by the Tarbela Dam extension project which has restricted water levels to 1,482 feet till July 15.

That is why Irsa had to release additional water from the Tarbela Lake to keep it within the permissible limit, otherwise the storage situation could have been much better. During April 1 to June 7, some 1.04maf water was sent downstream Kotri for irrigation and drinking purposes, which normally is not sent at this point of time.

According to an Irsa official, the drop in the Jhelum and Chenab has been caused by thin snow in their catchments areas, leaving them totally dependent on monsoon rains. Since there has been no heavy shower this season so far, the flows in both of them have dropped. However, the largely glacier-fed Indus arm is now responding to high temperatures in the upper region.

Skardu on Tuesday had a hot day with the maximum temperature of 30 degrees Celsius and minimum 23 degrees. Last year, its temperatures ranged between 12.8 and 16.7 degrees. This rise in temperature has pushed the Indus to 172,600 cusecs and the Kabul to 66,900 cusecs. Last year, the Indus was flowing at 86,600 cusecs and the Kabul at 61,600 cusecs.

Because of these additional supplies and the constraint of keeping Tarbela Lake at 1482 feet, Irsa has been supplying extra water to the provinces. Against a demand of 129,000 cusecs, Punjab is getting 145,000 cusecs. Sindh is getting 170,000 cusecs against its demand of 144,000 cusecs. Irsa is also operating the Chashma-Jhelum and Taunsa-Panjnad link canals.

“With massive water availability on the Indus arm, Irsa has started squeezing releases from the Mangla Lake,” says the authority's spokesman Rana Khalid. The releases from Mangla were kept at 25,000 cusecs only and on Tuesday even those were cut to 22,000 cusecs so that more water could be conserved there.

About the impact on Tarbela filling, he said Wapda had promised to fill the lake by 18 inches a day instead of 12 inches after July 15 and make up for the time loss. Thus it should not hurt the chances of dam filling, he claimed.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1263676>

SAVE THE CROPS: REPAIR WORK OF REGULATOR STARTS AT SLOW PACE

The Express Tribune, June 10th, 2016.

SUKKUR: After water discharge to Rohri canal declined to a dangerous 1,500 cusecs, the irrigation authorities have finally started repair work of the Phull Fall regulator near Naushero Feroz.

The trouble began following the collapse of some portion of the right and left flank walls of Phull Fall Regulator, situated on Naushero-Phull Link Road. When water started flowing out of the canal, the villagers rushed to plug the breaches themselves. They alerted the irrigation authorities but failed to get any response. By June 7, water discharge to Rohri canal was reduced from 14,000 cusecs to 4,000 cusecs to avoid further damage.

Rohri canal is one of the seven off-taking canals of Sukkur Barrage, which originates from barrage's left pocket and passes through Khairpur, Naushero Feroz, Shaheed Benazirabad and Hyderabad, and ends in Sanghar.

The regulator itself has also developed cracks and strong current of water can prove to be the last straw on the camel's back, claimed an irrigation official, who requested anonymity.

According to him, 29 of Sindh's agriculture crops depend on the water from Rohri canal. Most people also get drinking water from this canal, he said, adding that prolonged closure will affect them.

Work begins

All arrangements have been made to start the repair work, said superintendent engineer of Khairpur circle, Imtiaz Memon, who has been deputed to oversee the repair work of Phull regulator.

First of all, a coffer dam is being constructed in the upstream of the regulator to stop water from flowing downstream, said an irrigation official, who requested anonymity. Sheet piles from Sukkur Barrage have been shifted to the Phull regulator to construct the coffer dam. He added that this process alone may take one week, after which the repair work will start, which will take another three weeks to complete. The officer believed that no inspection was done during the annual closure of canals in January otherwise this wouldn't have happened.

However, Memon denied his claim. Every year, the inspection of all structures is carried out thoroughly during the annual closure and it is not possible to overlook such things, he said. He estimated that Rohri canal will be closed for 15 days during which the repairs will be carried out.

Meanwhile, former irrigation secretary Idrees Rajput told The Express Tribune that it is not possible for the irrigation officials to ignore such a big fault in any structure. If the problem was persisting for the last couple of months, then how is it possible that the flank walls remained intact till now, he asked.

Last month, irrigation employees were on a tool-down strike and, during that period, they stopped monitoring different regulators to maintain proper gauges, he pointed out. It seems that, during that period, mismanagement — such as abrupt raising or lowering of regulator gates — might have caused damage to the flank walls, he added. Rajput was of the view that it may take up to one month to put the regulator back into operation.

Talking about losses to the agriculture sector, Rajput said the closure of Rohri canal will cause extensive damage to the Kharif crops, such as cotton, sugarcane, paddy and others in Khairpur, Naushero Feroz, Shaheed Benazirabad, Hyderabad, Sanghar and Badin districts.

Following the incident, Sukkur Barrage chief engineer Wali Mohammad Naich was neither available at his office nor was he in touch with the subordinate staff. He was unavailable for comments via telephone as well. Phull Fall regulator's executive engineer Abid Naich is also unavailable for comments.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1119593/save-crops-repair-work-regulator-starts-slow-pace/>

THREE-YEAR PERIOD: ALLOCATIONS FOR WATER SCHEMES CUT BY HALF

The Express Tribune, June 11th, 2016.

Zafar Bhutta

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government has cut by half allocations for water projects during its three-year tenure, which appears to be hitting the agriculture sector hard as growth of this vital segment of economy has turned negative.

The government has focused more on road infrastructure and metro bus projects, but pushed water schemes among less priority areas.

For the conservation and augmentation of water resources, it earmarked Rs59 billion for different projects in the budget for 2013-14 – its first after coming to power in June 2013. Of that amount, only Rs35 billion could be utilised due to delay in release of funds.

In 2015-16, the allocation was slashed by around 50% to Rs30.12 billion. So far, only Rs23 billion has been released, but the government hopes it will be able to utilise Rs25 billion by the end of the year on June 30.

According to the Pakistan Economic Survey 2015-16, the agriculture sector registered a negative growth of 0.19% against a rise of 2.53% in the previous year.

Despite the negative growth and fears of food security issues, the government has failed to substantially increase fund allocation for water projects.

In the 2016-17 budget, an amount of Rs31.06 billion has been set aside for water schemes, which is almost the same as the allocation in the outgoing financial year.

According to officials, Pakistan is becoming a water-stressed country due to lack of storages and India's plan to build more dams on the rivers coming to Pakistan. However, no water management policy has been put in place and farmers are forced to use groundwater with the help of tube wells to irrigate their crops, which leads to higher electricity bills.

They said the farmers were disappointed as the government had focused on fertiliser manufacturers who were getting billions of rupees in cross-subsidy on gas, but the benefit was not being passed on to the growers.

“Pakistan will be facing energy and food security challenges in the future due to lack of government's interest in the water sector,” an official warned and said agricultural production was directly related to the supply and effective consumption of water as a major input.

Pointing to the government's lack of attention, the officials said when Pakistan lost the Kishanganga dam case against India in the International Court of Arbitration, the government could not challenge the verdict before the neutral expert of the World Bank even after two years.

The country has been facing flood devastation for the last few years, but no heed has been paid to calls for building water reservoirs. At present, water storage capacity of the country is 14 million acre feet (maf) whereas its annual consumption stands at 117 maf.

“The consumption of one million acre feet has an impact of \$1 billion on the economy, this way Pakistan has been facing a loss of \$14 billion every year due to wastage as reservoirs are not too many,” the official said.

There are only two major dams – Tarbela and Mangla. The former was built in 1977 and its storage capacity has dropped to 6.4 maf against the earlier 9.4 maf. However, Mangla Dam's capacity has been enhanced by 3 maf to 7.4 maf following a structure raising project.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1120350/three-year-period-allocations-water-schemes-cut-half/>

‘INDIA, PAKISTAN SHOULD TAKE TRUST-BUILDING MEASURES TO ADDRESS WATER ISSUES’
Dawn, June 12th, 2016

ISLAMABAD: A report launched on Saturday recommended that India and Pakistan take trust building measures to address the water issue, and take maximum benefit from available water resources. It said public and private stakeholders in water governance could also be involved to develop trust.

The report was prepared by the Leadership for Environment and Development (Lead) think tank.

Climate change has emerged as a great menace to this region. The Indus basin ranks in the top 10 of the world's most vulnerable basins, with inflows predicted to fall by 27pc by 2050. Trans-boundary water conflicts can be averted, and benefits and efficiency maximised, through trust building, cooperation and the adoption of a benefit-sharing approach.

The report recommends the formation of an Indus Commission and joint bodies to perform information, coordination and advisory roles. It also suggests allocating sufficient research funds and involving all stakeholders in research, data sharing and knowledge management.

Joint projects should be implemented to fill in the policy, knowledge and implementation gaps by involving government and nongovernment organisations.

The report also argues that agreements need to be signed on missing dimensions such as environmental flows and groundwater. It recommends the promotion of the water market, and joint programmes to decrease water losses.

Agreements and the signing of new agreements on missing areas like groundwater could provide a legal basis for ongoing efforts for mutual cooperation.

The development of a knowledge base, and collective management, sharing and utilization of existing knowledge can significantly contribute to the success of trans-boundary negotiations by bridging knowledge gaps and ensuring its validity and reliability. It also says that the lack of trust in generated knowledge has become an area of concern.

The report suggests that there is a need to build and strengthen regional knowledge networks and develop standardised guidelines and skills to conduct studies on critical trans-boundary issues.

It also suggests that parties should focus on cooperation to share the benefits of water instead of focusing on water sharing.

The Indus River System Authority (Irsa) is responsible for the distribution of water among provinces. It also assists provinces in sharing water shortages in a given year according to the Water Apportionment Accord of 1991.

The report argues that the mechanism should be developed for public participation and to expedite track-2 diplomacy and accommodate the resulting concerns and recommendations.

Integrated efforts can help decrease water losses and improve water productivity through remedial measures, such as the lining of canals, the laser-levelling of fields, water informatics and related water smart irrigation and agriculture technologies and practices.

The impact of climate change on the Himalayan cryosphere has been clear from the 21pc deglaciation of 466 glaciers in the three major basins since 1962, which is supported by data of early snowmelt and resulting increased flows during winter.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1264325>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MAY 30TH TO JUNE 5TH 2016

PAKISTAN MAY RUN DRY BY 2025: STUDY

Sehrish Wasif

The Express Tribune, May 30th, 2016.

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) has warned that the country will approach absolute water scarcity by 2025.

According to a report available with The Express Tribune, Pakistan touched the 'water stress line' in 1990 and crossed the 'water scarcity line' in 2005. If this situation continues, then chances are high the country will face acute water shortage or drought-like situation in the near future, the study predicts.

To deal with the upcoming situation, there is a need to carry out research at various levels to find out the best possible solutions. "Unfortunately, the PCRWR has no funds to ensure sustainable research," an official of the science and technology (S&T) ministry says.

The PCRWR is an apex body of the S&T ministry responsible for carrying out, coordinating, organising and promoting research in various aspects of water resources.

The official talking on the condition of anonymity said the PCRWR recently asked the government to create an endowment fund within the PCRWR for the purpose of research and development activities.

According to PCRWR documents, the objective behind the endowment fund is to avoid its dependence on the annual Public-Sector Development Programme (PSDP) and on recurring budget expenses on research. The council has sought Rs50 million for the government.

The fund also aims to focus on water scarcity for agriculture and poverty alleviation by carrying out surveys at various levels without wasting time to obtain PSDP funds, the documents state.

The primary source of funds shall be from the income of the proposed endowment funds and the savings out of the research projects awarded by the international and national donors to the PCRWR with the seed-money of Rs50 million coming from the government.

"The funds will help continue and sustain research activities, which are the need of the hour in a country like Pakistan where rising population is decreasing per capita water availability," the S&T official said.

The focal person for the S&T ministry, Mohammad Khalid Siddiqui, admitted a scarcity of funds at the PCRWR for which efforts were underway to convince the government to allocate a spare budget.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1112704/pakistan-may-run-dry-2025-study/>

‘IF WATER RATIO FALLS, PAKISTAN WILL BE A WATER SCARCE COUNTRY’

Dawn, June 2nd, 2016

Ikram Junaidi

ISLAMABAD: At present, 1,100 cubic metres of water are available for each person in Pakistan. If this number decreases to 1,000 cubic metres, we will be included in the list of water scarce countries. We have been facing heat waves even in the north of the country, said Dr Chaudhry Inayatullah, a representative of Sungi, a non-government organisation, on Wednesday.

Speaking at a consultation on the ‘Human Cost of Environmental Degradation’ hosted by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), Dr Inayatullah said a heat wave is when the temperature of an area remains above 35 degrees Celsius for many days.

“Climate change is one of the bigger reasons for hunger and diseases. The use of pesticide is also contributing towards environmental degradation. Genetically modified crops require more pesticides and these crops are also becoming a reason for diabetes, skin problems and other issues,” he said.

Rice contributes 20pc to the country’s export bill, he said, adding that Pakistan may not be able to export rice to Europe in future as the country’s rice has been found to have been contaminated.

Also attending the event was former Awami National Party (ANP) Senator Afrasiab Khattak, who said: “We live in a strange place where when discussions have begun over how the next war will be fought over water, we started preparing for the war instead of increasing the country’s water storage capacity.”

He stressed the need to implement Paris agreement.

Last year in Paris, various countries had agreed to combat climate change and to accelerate and intensify the actions and investments needed for a sustainable low carbon future.

Mr Khattak said: “Chapters on climate change need to be included in the curriculum to make the younger generation aware of the hazards of climate change.”

PPP Senator Farhatullah Babar said that political parties have never focused on environmental degradation.

“Hunger and diseases are increasing because of environmental degradation from which the poor are suffering more. But no efforts are being made to raise awareness about the issue. The Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra) should make sure that the media allots 10pc of time to public welfare messages,” he said.

He suggested that a separate ministry for environment and climate change be made.

“There was a ministry of environment and climate change before, but the minister used to speak more about the political environment,” he said.

Senator Babar added that the whole region was suffering from climate change and that Pakistan and India were vulnerable to climate degradation because of identical features.

“Water and climate issues should be included in the dialogues between the two countries. Maybe this will become a reason for progress in other areas as well. The Sustainable Development Goals should also be implemented”, he said.

Representing the women’s rights organisation Shirkatgah, Khawar Mumtaz said that Pakistan was suffering more from climate change even though it was not contributing to it as much.

“Women suffer more than men from climate change. When people were displaced during the floods and drought, women faced a lot of harassment, child marriages increased and they faced health issues,” she said.

Ms Mumtaz said that trees are being cut down and cities are becoming hotter because of more construction and no green areas.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1262192>

FALLING SHORT: FUNDS FOR WATER PROJECTS REMAIN UNDERUTILISED

The Express Tribune, June 5th, 2016.

Zafar Bhutta

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's agriculture sector, which recorded a negative growth due to lack of government focus, has missed the target of utilising allocated funds for water projects in the outgoing fiscal year 2015-16.

Farmers are forced to rely on groundwater with the help of tube wells due to dearth of storages in the country. Agriculture production is directly linked with the availability and effective consumption of water as a major input.

Government estimates suggest that 10 million acre feet (maf) of additional water will be needed at the farm gate by the end of the 11th Five-year Plan (2013-18) in order to meet the needs of a growing population, increase agriculture output and achieve planned targets of the Vision 2025.

According to the Annual Plan 2016-17, an amount of Rs30.12 billion was allocated for water sector's development programme in 2015-16. "Out of which, more than Rs25 billion is expected to be utilised by the end of June 2016, comprising 83% of the total allocation," revealed the annual plan.

In line with the commitment made every year in the budget, the government declared that the focus of investment would be on construction of small and medium-sized dams and disposal of effluent in a safe manner in the upcoming fiscal year 2016-17.

Of the total proposed budget amounting to Rs31.06 billion for 2016-17, maximum resources have been earmarked for the ongoing development projects that are nearing completion, construction of small and medium dams, drainage schemes, construction of new canals and improvement of the existing irrigation system.

The government expects overall water availability at the farm gate to be about 134.6 maf in 2016-17. This will be achieved through surface water supplies through canal withdrawals, canal lining and remodelling, irrigation system rehabilitation and improvement, construction of small and medium dams, check dams and retention weirs.

About 51 maf of groundwater would be included in the system mainly by private tube wells.

The government has emphasised on conservation measures to curb water losses through seepage including the remodelling and rehabilitation of the existing irrigation system, lining of irrigation channels and watercourses and completion of ongoing mega projects.

It has also earmarked Rs500 million to complete the ongoing and new small flood protection schemes in 2016-17. An amount of Rs7.96 billion has been allocated for small and medium dams whereas Rs5.47 billion will be spent on delay action dams to control floodwater and recharge the ground aquifer.

After the 18th Amendment to the Constitution, provinces were responsible for conservation projects such as on-farm water management and the high-efficiency irrigation system.

However, ongoing projects for the lining of irrigation channels in saline zones will continue in Punjab and Sindh with a federal allocation of Rs900 million for the next fiscal year.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1116478/falling-short-funds-water-projects-remain-underutilised/>

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July 2016

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JULY 25TH TO JULY 31ST 2016

BALUCHISTAN FARMERS HOLD RALLY TO PROTEST STOPPAGE OF CANAL WATER BY SINDH

Dawn, July 25th, 2016

DERA MURAD JAMALI: Traffic remained suspended for several hours between Sindh and Balochistan on Sunday as hundreds of growers and farmers staged a sit-in on the National Highway against the stopping of irrigation water in Temple canal.

The protesters marched on various roads and later assembled on the main highway linking Balochistan with Sindh. The protest was organised by Zamindar Action Committee and Umrani Qaumi Ittehad.

The participants of the protest blocked the highway, putting barricades and big rocks.

Carrying banners and placards inscribed with their demands, the protesters chanted slogans against the Sindh government for not releasing water in the canal.

Addressing the protesters, Mazar Khan Umrani, Mir Asghar Umrani, Jumma Khan Umrani, Haji Shabbir Ahmad Umrani and others said that the stopping of water in the canal standing had badly affected crops and created serious drinking water shortage in the area.

“Our agricultural lands are becoming barren because of non-availability of water in the canal,” Haji Shabbir Umrani said.

They also criticised the performance of the irrigation department and said that engineers of the department were responsible for the situation.

They demanded of the Balochistan chief minister and the irrigation minister to take notice of the situation which was worsening with every passing day.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1273018>

‘BRAIN-EATING’ AMOEBAS KILLS TEENAGER IN CITY
Dawn, July 26th, 2016

Hasan Mansoor

KARACHI: Naegleria fowleri, better known as ‘brain-eating’ amoeba, claimed a second life in the city within a month, health officials confirmed to Dawn on Monday.

Ahmed, 17, a resident of Shanti Nagar area of Gulshan-i-Iqbal, died over two weeks after visiting Keenjhar Lake for swimming, they added.

Naegleria fowleri survives on the bacteria in warm waters.

The teenage boy had been suffering from high fever with all the symptoms which later confirmed that he was a victim of naegleria fowleri. Some three days ago, he had been admitted to a private hospital where he died on Sunday, the officials said.

“We have got confirmed report of the death due to naegleria today,” said Dr Syed Zafar Mehdi, focal person of the provincial government’s naegleria programme, while speaking to Dawn on Monday. Ahmed was the second victim of naegleria fowleri as earlier this month, the brain-eating amoeba had killed a 30-year-old resident of Baldia Town.

While the Sindh government did not release funds and resources required for efficient functioning of the committee that it had formed last year to check spread of naegleria fowleri, the committee worked on its own.

In its primary findings shared with the media the committee revealed that most neighbourhoods of Karachi got unchlorinated water supply.

Recently, the committee began inspecting swimming pools of hotels and clubs. It sealed two of pools for lack of chlorination until their management ensured satisfactory levels of chlorine in their swimming pools.

Chlorination is the key method to kill the germ and keep the life-taking disease at bay. Another way is to use boiled water for cleaning nose as the germ enters through the nasal cavity of its victim and attacks the brain.

Officials and experts had earlier warned that with the monsoon drawing near, its germs would get breeding grounds in the shape of pools of rainwater.

Last year the naegleria fowleri left more than a dozen people dead. They said the germ could potentially approach enter human brain through nasal cavity during ablution at home or mosques where water supply was not properly chlorinated or boiled. The dangerous amoeba, which survives on the bacteria in warm waters and enters human brain through nasal cavity and eats up its tissues, could only be decimated through proper chlorination or boiling of water.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1273212>

WATER SUPPLY PROJECT IN PUNJAB: 12 GLOBAL COMPANIES PRE-QUALIFY Business Recorder July 27, 2016

Twelve globally-acclaimed companies having experience of implementing engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) projects, after fulfilling stringent criterion laid down by Punjab Saaf Pani Company (PSPC), have pre-qualified to execute Khadim-e-Punjab Saaf Pani Programme in the first phase in rural areas of 35 tehsils of 10 districts of the province.

Internationally-renowned companies namely De Nora-SKAFS International (USA-Pakistan), Vinci and FZC (France), Hyundai (Korea), Sultan Mahmood & Company-ESER Contracting (Turkey-Pakistan), Beijing Enterprises, China Railway, China Gezhouba Group, China Aerospace Construction and AnuhiShui A Construction Group (China), Dam & Water Works Construction Co, SABIR MahabGhodss Consulting Engineering Co, AMCORP Engineering & Consulting (Iran-Pakistan) and Veolia Water Systems (United Arab Emirates) have pre-qualified for 14 contracts.

PSPC had invited pre-qualification applications for award of 14 contracts worth US \$1.15 billion in first phase to implement safe drinking water solutions (water filtration plants) in 35 priority tehsils of 10 districts of Muzaffargarh, Dera Ghazi Khan, Rajanpur, Bahawalpur, Lodhran, Rahim Yar Khan, Sahiwal, Faisalabad, Kasur and Okara in the biggest province of Pakistan.

More than 23 million rural people of 7,496 villages will have sustained access to safe and clean drinking water in the wake of execution of first phase of multi-billion dollar project, said the Punjab Saaf Pani Company (PSPC) sources here on Tuesday. Thirty companies from USA, Turkey, Austria, China, Pakistan, Australia, Germany, UAE and Malaysia have provisionally qualified because of notarization and attestation of their submitted documents are still awaited. These companies will be issued Request for Bid Documents conditionally. However, their technical bid will not be opened if they fail to submit the required notarization /attestation before the deadline of submission of technical/financial bids.

As many as 24 companies have been disqualified for failing to meet the requisite technical and financial criteria and failing to provide technical information. To ensure utmost transparency in the award of contracts, PSPC has announced that the aggrieved parties may submit their grievances to Grievance Redressal Committee within 10 days of the notification related to disqualification and provisional qualification.

PSPC had received more than 440 pre-qualification proposals for 14 contracts from 64 international companies, some of them had collaborated with local Pakistani companies to execute the project in the form of joint venture.

Safe & clean drinking water supply project is a mega project costing approximately US \$3000 million, which will cover 137 tehsils [20,000 villages] to provide basic necessity of life to over 50 million rural population in province of Punjab. This landmark programme will provide safe drinking water to every household within 0.5 km radius in a comprehensive, integrated and sustainable manner.

The project will benefit over 50 million people residing in rural and peri-urban areas of the Punjab province in next three years. So far, 80 water filtration plants have been installed in five tehsils of South Punjab including Minchanabad, Khanpur, Hasilpur, Dunyapur and Lodhran to provide safe drinking water to 250,000 individuals.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172/69251/>

WATER LOSS, LOW RIVER FLOWS JEOPARDISE FILLING OF DAMS Dawn, July 28th, 2016

Ahmad Fraz Khan

LAHORE: Early water losses and reduced river flows because of lowering temperatures are threatening the prospects of dams' filling.

The Mangla Dam is now struggling to get filled and the Tarbela Lake has started depleting even before it could get close to the optimum level.

According to Irsa, it had to release a massive 3.7 million acre feet – almost half of the Mangla Dam – to the sea early this season because Wapda was working on a rim road of the Mangla Lake and had told the Authority to keep the lake level down to 1,210 feet. Similarly, the Tarbela Dam level was also kept down to 1,481 feet to allow work on its Extension 4th Project.

These factors are now haunting Irsa which finds it hard to fill the Mangla Dam. This is despite reduction in releases from the Mangla to a bare minimum of 10,000 cusec.

According to the Irsa projections, the Mangla Dam should have achieved a level of 1,236.86 feet by July 26, whereas it was reeling at 1,229.70 feet. Similarly, the river Jehlum, which was expected to be flowing at 61,200 cusec, has dipped to mere 34,000 cusec which jeopardises the filling of dam which is 13 feet away.

Other rivers have also betrayed Irsa expectations because of slide in temperatures; the river Kabul was projected to be flowing at 67,000 cusec but was down to 39,000 cusec on Tuesday. The Irsa had hoped the river Chenab would contribute 87,000 cusec but it was flowing at only 68,000 cusec. The river Indus is also down to 205,000 cusec against Irsa expectations of 250,000 cusec.

“Yes, the Authority is struggling to fill dams, especially the Mangla Lake,” says Rana Khalid, the official spokesman for Irsa. Though the country has received seven per cent more water than what it had anticipated by July 26, early losses are hard to make up for. Irsa had expected 69maf water but it received 74maf water or seven per cent more. But out of this 5maf additional water, 3.7maf was wasted to the sea because Wapda was working on both dams – rim road repair work at Mangla and the Tarbela Extension 4th – and had asked the authority to keep lake levels low to allow it to work. The authority thus kept releasing more water from both dams to allow development work, he explains.

This loss is now becoming hard to make up for because of lowering temperatures and river flows. He hopes that the Tarbela Dam may still have chances of filling up because of longer period of expected water supplies right up to Sept 10 but Mangla has no chance of being filled.

Irsa was providing 220,000 cusec to Sindh against its demand of 133,000 cusec to maintain water level at barrages so that Sindh can operate its canal. This additional water also means that 50,000 to 80,000 cusec would continue escaping to the Arabian Sea, increasing cumulative water losses for the season, he says.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1273667/water-loss-low-river-flows-jeopardise-filling-of-dams>

CALL TO ENSURE EFFICIENT, SYSTEMATIC WATER SYSTEM FOR THAR

Dawn, July 28th, 2016

HYDERABAD: Speakers at a one-day conference have underlined the need to establish an efficient and systematic water management system for Thar, keeping in view its population and their livestock.

The moot was held on “Water Security Planning — Tharparkar” organised at the Institute of Sindhology on Wednesday under the aegis of Abida Taherani Sindh Development Studies Centre in collaboration with Sukaar Foundation, Water Aid Pakistan and Big Lottery Fund, UK.

One minute silence was observed on the occasion in memory of late vice chancellor Prof Dr Abida Taherani. A documentary film on her life and accomplishments was screened amidst applause from the audience.

Acting Sindh University VC Prof Dr Muhammad Siddique Kalhoro said Tharparkar could be the richest among all districts of the country provided that coal extraction scheme and water projects got required attention. He assured NGOs of SU's support and cooperation for extension of academic collaboration.

He said NGOs working for the development of Thar could capitalise on faculty and human resource of the varsity towards designing and development of water-related projects. Upon approval, those projects could help overcome water crisis in Thar, he said.

Prof Dr Parvez Ahmed Pathan, pro-VC of Mirpurkhas campus, said efficient and systematic water management, not water scarcity, was the real problem and issue of water conservation remained integral part of national agenda since 1947 when dams were built.

He said that in 1980, the same infrastructure was rehabilitated and currently bodies like Indus River System Authority (Irsa) and Council of Common Interests (CCI) were formed to ensure judicious distribution of water among the provinces. But now, he proposed, national-level efforts for resolution of water crisis in Tharparkar.

Dr Sarfaraz Hussain Solangi, pro-VC of Thatta campus, elaborated geological zone break-up of Tharparkar and assured that the SU faculty were capable of extending technical and academic assistance to Sukaar Foundation and other NGOs working in Thar's water sector.

Abid Channa, chief executive officer of Sukaar Foundation, said they had formulated recommendations for improvement of water crisis in Thar after ground research, involving 75 villages of Thar. He said it would be submitted to the Sindh government in Dec 2016. He said that prior to it, they would consult water experts in the SU to refine those recommendations.

Hina Dastagir, CM's coordinator for youth development, said the Sindh government had tried its best to resolve water related problems of the people of Thar by establishing water supply schemes and reverse osmosis plants, but massive demographic and physical scope of Thar always came as a major hurdle.

Dr Arfana Mallah, president of Sindh University Teachers Association, said the people of Thar felt neglected and marginalised and the denizens of Thar were as good as anyone else in Sindh. She said they were an integral part of socio-cultural fabric of Sindh.

Senior development activist Prof Mushtaq Mirani said that population in Thar was a major factor responsible for its dilemma.

He said human population of 1.5 million and that of livestock six million were huge to use resources whatsoever.

He said that for improving water situation in Thar, one needed to control population first.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1273609>

CENTRE TO BUILD 20 DAMS ACROSS BALOCHISTAN
Business Recorder 29 July 2016

Naveed Butt

ISLAMABAD: Federal government will start construction of 20 small to medium dams throughout Balochistan at an estimated cost of Rs 8.53 billion.

According to documents available with Business Recorder, the government is sponsoring construction of 100 dams in Balochistan which have been prioritized and divided into five packages.

Package-I comprising 20 dams, has been completed. Package-II including 26 dams and is in the final stage of implementation. Package-III, for which a PC-I has been prepared, envisages the construction of 20 small to medium dams across the Balochistan.

Ministry of Water and Power is sponsoring the construction of these 20 dams which would be completed in three years. The project will be implemented by Irrigation Department, Government of Balochistan through contractors under supervision of consultants. All funds would be provided by the federal government and there is no foreign component.

The government has budgeted Rs 1 billion for 20 dams in Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) for current financial year 2016-17.

According to documents, Balochistan province generates total surface flood flows of 10.79, 3.25 and 25.23 billion cubic meters during average, dry and wet years respectively. This indicates an increase of 134 percent during wet years and a decrease of 70 percent during dry years. It is therefore evident that harnessing of flood flows for, inter alia, direct irrigation, drinking and recharge purposes offers great potential.

The project will directly address the water scarcity issue by providing storage during flash floods thus not only providing water for irrigation and drinking purposes but also reducing the risk of flood damage. By delaying the flood peaks, the dams will also contribute to Ground Water Recharge.

The area for 20 dams has been divided into two zones (south and North). The dams in South Zone include Jandra Dam at an estimated cost of Rs 185.75 million, Shamshi Dam, Rs 555.56 million, Sohinda Gravity Dam Zehri, Rs 1.3 billion, Morgi at Bal & Rodangi Dam, Rs 425.24 million, Neelag Dasht Dam, Rs 246.47 million, Sorap Dam, Rs 166.73 million, Soran Dam, Rs 144.3 million, Bunap Dam, Rs 169.44 million, Arrah Dam, 634.18 million and Washuk Dam at a cost of Rs 574.94 million.

The dams in North Zone included Zawarkan Gravity Dam at an estimated cost of Rs 229.89 million, five small/check dam in Killa Abdullah, Rs 148.69 million, Sanjadi Dam & small dam at Saran Tangi River, Rs 348.8 million, Kuchani Dara Dam in Urak area with small dam in Kilikhanan, Rs 290.2 million, Kadani Dam, Rs 585.99 million, Khaisar Dam at a cost of 467.37 million.

The project covers the entire province therefore all stakeholders would be taken on board and locations of dams are to be reviewed and finalized by Irrigation Department in consultation with public representatives. This will help strengthen the political implication of the project.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2016/07/29/11-page/780938-news.html>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JULY 18TH TO JULY 24TH 2016
TACKLING CHALLENGES: USE HARVESTED RAINWATER, SAYS EXPERTS
The Express Tribune, July 18th, 2016.

Sehrish Wasif

ISLAMABAD: Weather and water scarcity experts believe that Pakistan can overcome its water, power and food security challenges by turning to monsoon rainwater.

The Pakistan Meteorological Department has estimated that up to 30-40 million acres feet of monsoon rainwater is being dumped into the sea annually. The amount varies depending on the amount of rain the country witnesses. They claim that because of a shortage of reservoirs this water is wasted.

Director General Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) Dr Ghulam Rasul while talking to The Express Tribune said monsoon rainwater is one of the biggest resources for water in Pakistan.

He also said that monsoon rain water also helps in cultivation of barren lands. He emphasised that by diverting monsoon rain water towards desert areas like Tharaparkar and Cholistan it can help to rehabilitate the areas.

Rasul said, "A large quantity of water is wasted every year. Though proper utilisation it could help in power generation, among other sectors".

Director General National Water Quality Laboratory, Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) Lubna Bokhari, while talking to The Express Tribune said: "If Pakistan does not receive monsoon rains just for few years, it will result in disaster".

Bokhari said that a rainwater harvesting system can help Pakistan overcome chronic water shortages. Monsoon showers help in fighting water pollution as it takes away all the waste material gathered in the lakes, nullahs, streams, rivers with it.

However, Bokhari warns, there is a need to focus on the significance of monsoon rains as well rather than just talking about overflowing causing disasters which are leading to deaths, injuries, widespread damage to homes, etc.

“Pakistan is already becoming a water stressed country therefore heavy showers during monsoon at least helps for recharging ground water which ultimately helps the drought-stricken areas like Tharparkar and Balochistan to put an end to water scarcity to some extent,” she said

“For people living in drought-hit areas, heavy monsoon showers are more than a blessing as it is one of the major sources for water conservation for their families,” she said.

They also believed that through proper planning and management it is easier to avoid destruction at higher level caused by over flooding in Pakistan every year.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1143845/tackling-challenges-use-harvested-rainwater-says-experts/>

‘WATER THEFT’ BY INDUSTRIES: SITE BODY ANGUISHED AT REPORTS

Business Recorder, July 18 2016

KARACHI: The office-bearers of SITE Association of Industry have expressed their anguish and dismay over the false and misleading reports in the media about purported theft of KW&SB water by the industries.

The fact remains that despite being the largest contributor to national revenue and the GDP, the industries of SITE are the major victim of water mafia in Karachi. The SITE industries have got nothing to do with the theft of water in Karachi. Rather, due to the utter negligence and failure of KW&SB to provide even the bare minimum of the required water, they have to purchase it at very heavy cost through other sources.

As against the estimated minimum requirement of 40 MGD water in SITE Area in 2013, the KW&SB had pledged to provide 5 MGD water to the SITE area. But unfortunately, due to vested interests of water mafia, only one MGD is being provided. In order to maintain its lifeline, industries are forced to buy this deficient water at much higher rates from other sources being controlled by water mafia.

This exploitation of the most productive segment of National Revenue is being executed systematically at the behest of masters of water mafia. Now once the representatives of the industry have become vocal against this criminal exploitation and have demanded the Sindh Government of their due share, they are being accused of becoming cause of water theft which is very shameful and unjust.

This point was raised before the Minister of Industry Mohammed Ali Malkani on his visit to SITE Association of Industry on 12th July 2016. He had promised to raise this genuine demand at all forums.

To preempt this, water mafia working under the umbrella of many at the helm of affairs, has maneuvered to thwart this move by the industry under the pretext of Supreme Court’s ruling against illegal hydrants, the industries have nothing to do with.

Not even a single hydrant is located in the SITE area. All such Hydrants have been operating under the umbrella of CDGK and KW&SB. If any of these private vendors steal the KW&SB water, he must be caught and punished. How can industries be blamed for this. They purchase Sub-Soil water through lines laid by the private suppliers perforce to meet the deficiency created by KW&SB.

The SITE Association of Industry has offered many times to all the stakeholders to sit together in order to resolve this matter amicably, but so far no to avail. The K-4 and similar projects have met their fate at hands of Water Mafia despite immense cries by the masses. —PR

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2016/07/18/3-page/777526-news.html>

PAKISTAN TO TAKE WATER DISPUTE TO COURT

Business Recorder, July 18, 2016

Pakistan has decided to return to an international tribunal to settle a dispute with India over sharing waters of the Kishenganga and Ratle rivers. Pakistan’s latest decision to go to the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), The Hague, was made public after talks between officials of both sides in Delhi failed to make progress, according to The Hindu newspaper.

“Visit of a team, led by Water and Power Secretary of Pakistan to New Delhi on July 14-15, was in response to India pointing out to Pakistan that the latter was violating provisions of the Indus Waters Treaty in rushing to a third forum

without attempting to avail Treaty provisions for amicably resolving matters of mutual concern pertaining to two hydro-electric power projects on Kishenganga and Ratle,” Indian spokesperson Vikas Swarup told the media.

He said Pakistan’s decision to move the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the case is expected to erode the established mechanism of solving disputes on river water sharing which has served both sides successfully under the Indus Waters Treaty, 1960.

India’s response came a day after Pakistan’s Minister of Defence, Water and Power, Khawaja M. Asif announced on Twitter that two and half years of negotiation on Kishenganga and Ratle projects have failed. “Pakistan with the consent of stakeholders has decided to take it to the full court of arbitration,” Mr. Asif said.

However experts in Pakistan are pointing out that unlike the previous arbitration at the PCA which lasted from 2010-2013, Pakistan will this time around take up the issue of “design” of the Kishenganga and Ratle river projects in Kashmir.

<http://www.brecorder.com/top-stories/0/66453/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JULY 11TH TO JULY 17TH 2016

FEASIBILITY OF HUDIARA WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANTS FURTHER DELAYED

Dawn, July 11th, 2016

Khalid Hasnain

LAHORE: A feasibility study that was scheduled to start in February 2015 for installation of the wastewater treatment plants at various points along the Hudiara drain couldn’t be launched after the independent consultants sought more time to submit documents for participating in the bidding for the contract.

According to a senior official of the environment department, the bidding for award of the feasibility study contract to any suitable company out of total four couldn’t be completed after the four firms, including the National Engineering Services Pakistan (Nespak), wrote a letter to the department, seeking more time.

“I had seen a letter from Nespak sometime ago. Through the letter, the company had sought some more time for submitting the documents related to the feasibility study amid technical and financial proposals,” says a senior official on the condition of anonymity.

About 35 years back, Hudiara drain was a stormwater drain used for irrigation and draining wastewater into the Ravi. The drain originates in the Indian Punjab, runs along the border enters Pakistan and passes along the eastern suburbs of Lahore (Raiwind) before ending up in the Ravi. This drain has been the centre of attention for many environmental protection agencies in Pakistan and India due to high levels of toxic in it.

The World Wildlife Fund (WWF-Pakistan), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), etc had also launched a project to study the toxic levels in the drain. This project ended in the late 2006 with shocking results, showing that the drain was a wastewater carrier that didn’t meet even the National Environmental Quality Standards (NEQS) devised for the industrial effluents. Based on certain parameters for total dissolved solids (TDS), cadmium, copper and manganese concentrations in drain water, its water was deemed not suitable for irrigation in long-term use because of contamination.

The WWF-Pakistan has also been actively pursuing this project reportedly since long. In addition to conducting a study on Hudiara drain pollution and its treatment issue, the government had a plan to raise the issue with India that could not materialise to date.

“We are planning to install an instrument at the drain’s entry point to assess the air and other sorts of contamination in the drain. We have started taking all stakeholders on board and as soon as we get the instrument installed to measure the waste coming from India, we will take up the issue with the Indian government,” a senior environment department official told Dawn on Sunday with a request not to be named.

He said he would also take up the matter related to the inordinate delay in conducting a feasibility study of the drain regarding wastewater treatment plants’ installation.

“As far as I know, a letter from Nespak had been received regarding extension to various dates of the bidding. So the department delayed it for a while. Four companies have so far expressed their interest in the project,” he explains. On the other hand, he says, the department is carrying out sampling and testing of the wastewater flowing into the drain on a daily basis.

Environment department’s director Naseemur Rehman says the drain runs for about 35km in Indian Punjab. “It enters Pakistan and runs for about 55km in the Pakistan’s territory before falling into the Ravi. Since the drain runs in India for 35km, it brings toxic waste into Pakistan where more contamination/wastewater discharged by scores of factories in Lahore falls into it at various points.”

The official says that about 215 factories dispose of their water into Hudiara. Of them, 125 are facing it at various locations while 55 others add more waste into it besides waste from 35 more factories of Kot Lakhpat industrial area and housing societies. However, he says, some factories have already installed their own treatment plants.

Mr Rehman also quoted meetings of a high level committee held sometimes back to consider options to resolve Hudiara contamination issues.

“The options related to installation of a couple of wastewater treatment plants had been floated and discussed in the meetings from time to time.

Finally, it was decided to first conduct a study before taking a final decision. There are 54 kinds of plants and the committee left the final decision to the senior officials.”

He says PC-2 has already been approved by the government to conduct the study and as soon as it is completed, a PC-1 will be prepared and submitted to the government for installation of plants.

“I believe that the process of the selection of the consultant will be finalised soon. But I can’ give a final date,” Mr Rehman concludes.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1270061>

IRSA STOPS FILLING TARBELA AHEAD OF MONSOON

Dawn, July 11th, 2016

Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: Amid troubled construction work, the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) has stopped filling the Tarbela dam to make way for the expected heavy inflow of water during the monsoon season.

A senior Irsa official told Dawn that water level in the reservoir had crossed the 1,511 feet mark almost a week ahead of the July 10 target date, after construction work on the Tarbela 4th Extension Project saw an unfortunate accident last week in which some Pakistani and Chinese workers died.

He said that engineering and irrigation experts had advised the water regulator to remain extra careful in building up water storage as the Pakistan Meteorological Department had predicted rains to be 10-20 per cent higher than normal. It was important, the official said, to leave sufficient storage capacity in the dam to absorb inflows in case of heavy rainfall and greater-than-anticipated river flows.

He said the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) had also advised that some space should be available in the reservoir to cope with an emergency situation in case of heavy flooding. Therefore, the Irsa members unanimously decided to let flows from upstream of Tarbela to flow downstream without any conservation.

Similarly, Wadpa requested the regulator to allow for a maximum drawdown of water from the Chashma barrage to help flush out the silt that had built up over the past couple of years and reduced its storage capacity.

This, however, led to a flood-like situation downstream from Chashma for a couple of days. Those flows have now reached Guddu barrage, where there is a low-to-medium flood.

Meanwhile, the flows in the Indus and Kabul rivers returned to normal on Sunday and the filling of Chashma barrage was resumed.

The official said a follow-up Irsa meeting was expected to be convened later this week to review the dam-filling criteria for Tarbela, depending on provincial irrigation requirements because provinces still required water for crop-watering before the advent of the regular monsoon season.

He said the filling would be resumed in a manner that the storage was built up at a rate of not more than one foot per day, to ensure the dam's safety.

He said that temperatures in Skardu were rising again, which would lead to higher flows due to the melting of snow and rainfall.

The Federal Flood Commission on Sunday said the Indus continued to be in 'low flood' in Kalabagh-Chashma, Chashma-Taunsa and Taunsa-Guddu reaches. Kabul river was also in 'low flood' in the Warsak-Nowshera reaches. The other main rivers such as the Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi and Sutlej were flowing normally on Sunday.

The water in the Tarbela and Mangla reservoirs on Sunday stood at 1,511ft and 1,219.65ft, respectively — 39ft and 22.35ft below their respective maximum conservation levels of 1,550ft and 1,242ft.

The combined live storage capacity of Tarbela, Chashma and Mangla reservoirs was recorded at 10.005 million acre feet (MAF) as compared to last year's 10.76 MAF.

According to the Flood Forecasting Division (FFD), Saturday's trough of the westerly wave over northern parts of Afghanistan was over north-eastern Afghanistan and its adjoining areas on Sunday.

The FFD predicted isolated thunderstorms and rain with one or two heavy falls over the upper catchments of all major rivers, including Punjab (Rawalpindi, Sargodha, Gujranwala, Lahore and Bahawalpur divisions), as well as Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and north-eastern Balochistan, over the next 24 hours.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1270086>

NAI GAJ DAM PROJECT: DELAY AND COST OVERRUNS

Dawn, Business & Finance weekly, July 11th, 2016

Mohammad Hussain Khan

THE long-delayed Nai Gaj dam project in Sindh has been badly hit by cost overruns owing to inadequate federal funding. The dam was slated to be completed in April-May 2015.

According to a senior Wapda official, contractors' liabilities now stand at Rs8bn. He says around half of the project has been completed though implementation machinery remains fully mobilised in anticipation of release of funds.

“Cost escalation always affects projects like Nai Gaj. The government faced with resource constraints, makes inadequate allocations and then insufficient releases. Actually, a project that is taken in hand must be completed on time to achieve its objectives”, Wapda Chairman Zafar Mehmood told this scribe.

Recent reports suggest that 47pc of the the dam's physical work stands completed, and the federal government is said to have allocated Rs3bn for Nai Gaj dam in the 2016-17 budget that would mostly be diverted towards payment of liabilities of contractors. As a result, the actual project's cost would remain uncovered and prone to escalation.

The multiple-purpose project is designed to provide water of rain-fed plains of Kacchho and Kohistan in Dadu, besides supplying water to Manchhar lake. It will have 0.30MAF gross storage capacity and a power plant to generate 4.2MW of electricity.

The dam will ensure regulation of flows of river Nai Gaj Daj — the only source of water for local farmers — that supplies freshwater to Manchhar lake now affected by saline water coming from upper Sindh and Balochistan through Main Nara Valley (MNV) drain or Right Bank Outfall Drain (RBOD-I). Gaj is, in fact, a hill torrent that emanates from Balochistan's Khuzdar district and after passing through plains of Kacchho, eventually enters Manchhar, which lost much of its biodiversity long ago.

Like components of Right Bank Outfall Drain (RBOD) project, funded under federal government's Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) Nai Gaj faces repeated cost escalation and is set for the third cost revision being estimated at Rs46bn against the earlier Rs26bn. RBOD's cost, also, is about to be revised at over Rs60bn by the Planning Commission of Pakistan (PC). It was to be completed in 2006 at a cost of Rs14bn though it would now have a revised cost of Rs60bn.

Surprisingly, official sources said, PC didn't approve the link — gravity main pipeline — that was to take water to Manchhar lake for the lake's revival. For cost rationalisation, the PC had excluded a number of the dam's components like internal roads, operational and maintenance (O&M) expenses, funds for residential colony and the gravity main pipeline.

The Sindh irrigation department had also pressed Wapda to keep the proposal of Manchhar's rehabilitation intact in the project. Finally, in suo motu proceedings, the apex court called for ensuring water flows to Manchhar lake. So, now the same is again proposed in revised PC-I which is yet to be approved by the federal government.

Ghulam Shah Jillani, Sindh Assembly's member from the area where dam is being built, is worried about likely changes in the project that affect lands in the dam's south. He said that the dam's canal that was to irrigate close to 4,000 acres of land has not yet become a part of project.

“Area between flood protective bund and river Indus remains dry for eight months and gets water in four months during monsoon season in the Nai Gaj area”, said retired Sindh's secretary irrigation Ashfaq Memon.

Nai Gaj flows often devastate flood protective (FP) bunds and inundate agricultural lands when Manchhar lake is not in a position to receive flows after attaining peak levels of 118RL and it becomes imperative for irrigation authorities to empty it. An outlet was supposed to be built by increasing the carrying capacity of the lake's connecting channels so that it gets flows from the river Indus and releases its own water in the river to protect the lake's banks. This has not happened.

Gaj's stored water is to benefit the lake's rehabilitation, provided the saline water flows or RBOD are stopped. It would ensure cultivation of winter crops in Kachho and Kohistan plains where around 60pc of the population depends on it for irrigation water.

The dam will serve as a lifeline for the people of this mountainous region, that lies in Dadu, with the potential of changing the socio-economic conditions of the people. Around 28,800 acres of land are to be brought under cultivation through sustainable flows from the dam.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1269913>

HYDROPOWER PROJECT: CHINESE FIRM'S PLEA TO HALT BIDDING PROCESS FOR DAM REJECTED
The Express Tribune, July 12th, 2016.

Hasnaat Malik

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Monday turned down a Chinese company's plea, praying the court to stay the process of bidding for the construction of the Dasu Hydropower Project.

A two-justice bench led by Chief Justice Anwar Zaheer Jamali and included Justice Sheikh Azmat Saeed also asked the Power Construction Corporation of China to place on record the Lahore High Court verdict regarding the matter.

In 2014, Wapda had announced it would undertake a project on the Indus River located at Dasu Town. The stage-I of the project was estimated to cost \$4.3 billion. The World Bank conceived an innovative approach to finance the project.

In this regard, the World Bank has provided a loan of \$588 million and partial credit guarantee of \$460 million. It has also indicated to provide another IDA/IBRD tranche of \$533 million and a partial credit guarantee of \$460 million in 2017.

All this covers approximately 25 per cent of the total project cost of the stage-I. As indicated in the Project Appraisal Document, about \$2 billion commercial loan is to be obtained from the local as well as foreign banks by utilising World Bank's partial credit guarantee.

A single-bench of the Lahore High Court on May 31, 2016 and its divisional bench on June 29, 2016 held that the court has no jurisdiction to issue directives to the World Bank under Article 199(3) of the Constitution.

Salman Aslam Butt, representing the Chinese company, argued that under the writ jurisdiction, the high court has the authority to give a directive to anyone and any authority.

He also contended that as public funds are involved in the project, therefore, the high court has the jurisdiction to issue orders to the World Bank. He said that Indian courts had passed such orders.

He argued that no company could be barred from taking part in tender and bidding processes merely on the dictation of the World Bank, adding that the country has its own constitution and relevant laws while barring a company is violation of fundamental rights. In this respect, he argued, high courts have jurisdiction to entertain the plea.

Justice Azmat asked: What shall we do in case the World Bank refused to obey the court's directive? He said they could not interpret the law in a vacuum and for that they needed the order of the high court and asked the counsel to provide the judgement. The judge further said that a foreign company is asking a Pakistani court to give a directive to the World Bank.

The counsel prayed the bench that they (the company) may be allowed to participate in the bidding process". He said this is a huge project and if the judgment does not come and in the meantime the process of bidding continues then they (the company) would suffer.

The counsel for Wapda informed the court that bids have been called from the companies and have already been opened. However, the Chinese company lawyer requested the court that till the judgment of this court is delivered, bids result should not be made public. He further said that the evaluation process would take at least three to four months.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1139744/hydropower-project-chinese-firms-plea-halt-bidding-process-dam-rejected/>

FIRM TOLD TO FILE COUNTER-AFFIDAVIT IN PLEA AGAINST SUBSOIL WATER RESERVOIR AT THAR
Dawn, July 14th, 2016

HYDERABAD: A division bench of Sindh High Court (SHC) on Wednesday asked the counsel for the Engro Coal Mining Company to file a proper counter-affidavit along with all documents and records relating to a petition challenging construction of a reservoir for storage of subsoil water — extracted during mining in Thar Coal project — in Tharparkar by Aug 2.

The bench comprising Justice Munir Akhtar and Justice Mohammad Saleem Jessar said advance copies of the counter-affidavit should be given to petitioners' counsel and the additional advocate general (AAG).

It issued notices to the Thar Coal Energy Board and Thar Coal Authority after Sindh AAG Allah Bachayo Soomro stated that those respondents were not served notices and that's why none was present in the court on Wednesday. He said they should be directly served on them.

The court passed the order on the constitutional petition jointly filed by one Mr Lakho and 10 other residents of Islamkot, Mithi district. They are represented by Ayatullah Khawaja advocate.

Mehar Kazi, counsel for respondent Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company, submitted before the court that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) had been conducted regarding the project, yet the company was blamed for contravening environmental laws, which was untrue.

Mr Khawaja contended that the respondent company was building a reservoir to store saline water to be extracted during mining in Islamkot area and that would be built on petitioners' land stretched over 2,700 acres. On a court query, he pointed out that it was a dam for storage of saline water and it was admitted by the company itself.

Justice Akhtar told Mr Khawaja that he had not mentioned particulars of the dam in the petition for understanding of the court as to wherefrom water would be extracted and where it would be stored. The counsel was also told that he had not given details of the dam/reservoir.

Mr Kazi said it was a dam as mentioned by the petitioners and that his client had got lease of Block-II of Thar Coal Project. He said the subsoil water, extracted during mining, would be stored in this reservoir for the EIA was done and it had already been brought on court's record along with an approval letter.

Justice Akhtar asked him to show that this aspect (of reservoir and subsoil water) was addressed in the EIA so that the court could understand it. The bench was informed that points VIII and IX were there in the EIA's report which dealt with the issue of environmental nature.

The AAG opposed the petition, saying that it was not maintainable. He said he had submitted comments of official respondents, including the deputy commissioner of Tharparkar. He sought time to file comments of some respondents. He said he would also file a reply on the petition, but his objection was there.

Mr Kazi said the counter affidavit had been drafted in detail, but it could not be submitted earlier for lack of time. The court in its order directed the company's counsel to submit a proper counter affidavit along with documents with advance copies to AAG Sindh and petitioner's counsel by Aug 2. The counsel undertook to submit it.

The petitioners, in their petition, prayed to the court to declare respondents' act of constructing dam over petitioners' land illegal and against natural justice. They said the court should hold that such dam would be hazardous for eco system and environment. They also pleaded to the court to restrain respondents from harassing the petitioners.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1270658>

RANGERS DISPERSE BALOCHISTAN GROWERS' RALLY AT SUKKUR BARRAGE

Dawn, July 13th, 2016

Waseem Shamsi

SUKKUR: A large group of growers led by two former Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) lawmakers from Balochistan drove into Sindh riding many vehicles to settle a water dispute with the Sukkur barrage chief engineer but held a protest sit-in outside his office after the talks failed on Tuesday. Rangers personnel intervened to move them away as holding of any protest within the vicinity of the barrage is prohibited.

Growers having their lands in the Jafferabad and adjoining areas bordering Sukkur travelled to Sukkur barrage for a meeting with Chief Engineer (right bank) Nazeer Mahar. They were led by ex-MNA Mir Changez Khan Jamali and ex-MPA Ghulam Hyder Jamali.

The lawmakers and their companions took up the issue of what they claimed "a drastically curtailed" supply of irrigation water to their areas from the barrage over the last couple months.

They said their areas were supposed to receive 2,400 cusecs but the supply for two months had diminished to just 1,100 cusecs. As a result, they said, thousands of acres of land was turning barren and growers of rice, cotton, sugar cane and other crops were apprehending heavy losses as they were unable to cultivate their lands for want of adequate water. At the end of the meeting, the Jamalis and their companions emerged from the chief engineer's office in an angry mood and started raising slogans against him. The visitors parked their vehicles on a road leading to the barrage and held a demonstration, blocking the thoroughfare to vehicular traffic.

Speaking to the media, the Jamalis said they wanted to register their protest against usurpation of Balochistan's share in water. They accused the chief engineer of selling away water to his favourites and influential landowners at the cost of Balochistan growers' share.

They urged of authorities concerned to hold an inquiry into the affair and take stern action against all those involved in the corrupt practice.

After receiving information about the demonstration, a Rangers team led by several officers rushed to the scene of the protest and asked the growers and their leaders to leave as no protest at this 'highly sensitive' installation was allowed to be held.

The Rangers men also reprimanded the chief engineer for failing to dissuade the visitors from holding a demonstration at the place.

The Jamalis realised the situation and agreed to leave without indulging in an altercation with the Rangers men. They asked their companions to move out of the area and clear the thoroughfare.

In the meantime, the Jamalis spoke to Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Syed Khurshid Shah by phone and briefed him about their grievance and attitude of the chief engineer.

Mr Shah spoke to the chief engineer and asked him to address the issue to the satisfaction of the aggrieved growers. The chief engineer told the Jamalis that the issue would be resolved on a priority basis.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1270391>

KALABAGH DAM WILL BE BENEFICIAL TO ALL PROVINCES: LCCI
Business Recorder, 14 July 2016

LAHORE: The Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) while supporting the stance of Chairman Wapda Zafar Mehmood on Kalabagh dam has said that this project should be completed with determination to avoid the hunger and famine, to control the floods and to generate the cheap electricity.

The LCCI President Sheikh Muhammad Arshad said that it is a good omen that head of one of the most important departments Zafar Mehmood is advocating Kalabagh dam at all forums.

They said that there is a dire need to support such personalities who think about the country.

The government should not listen to those elements that are used to cry against only those projects which are beneficial for Pakistan and always utilized their energies to put the national interests on stakes.

Kalabagh Dam is the most viable solution of these key issues but a particular lobby is opposing this mega project under a well-planned conspiracy.

These elements have not said a single word about Bhasha dam as they know well that in the present scenario, construction of Bhasha dam is a very hard task while Kalabagh Dam could be built with quite ease, he added.

He said that this impression is completely wrong that Kalabagh dam will benefit only Punjab. This project will be beneficial for all of the four provinces of Pakistan. They said that electricity generated from Kalabagh dam would be supplied to the national grid and would be distributed throughout the country.

He said that all provinces should keep the technical aspects of Kalabagh Dam in their minds instead of doing criticism for criticism. "An opinion gained widespread support across the country that the losses of floods in Pakistan which are estimated to be billion dollars could have been reduced if big dams and water reservoirs were in place", he added.

Kalabagh Dam, is not only beneficial to Punjab alone but it would be more helpful in erasing poverty from Khyber Pakhtun Khawa as it would irrigate 800000 acres of cultivable land that is located 100-150 feet above the Indus river level in the province. This land could only be brought under cultivation if the river level is raised that is only possible if Kalabagh Dam is built.

Any further delay in construction of unduly politicized Kalabagh Dam will cost highly to the coming generations. "It is the high time that all undue stands should be brushed aside to save the country from that era of darkness. Unlike Pakistan, India is constructing dams at every possible site.

It has left us decades behind and coming time does not promise any good thing either" he said. The existing dams are constantly silting up leaving ever decreasing capacity to store water.

The construction of Kalabagh dam along with other new dams is desperately needed to store adequate water. According to a conservative estimate about 35 million acre feet of water is being wasted into the sea because the country has no big water reservoirs to store it, he maintained.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2016/07/14/17-page/776261-news.html>

NO HEADWAY IN WATER DISPUTE TALKS WITH INDIA
Dawn, July 16th, 2016

Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will move the International Court of Arbitration (ICA) to restrain India from building two major hydropower projects on rivers assigned to Islamabad under the 1960s Indus Waters Treaty.

“Pakistan to move international court of arbitration,” said Federal Minister for Water and Power Khwaja Mohammad Asif in a tweet. An eight-member delegation led by Secretary Water and Power Mohammad Younas Dagha is currently in the neighbouring country for final talks on resolving the dispute bilaterally or to seek arbitration.

Khwaja Asif, who is also holding the portfolio of federal minister for defence, said the talks for two and a half years with India on resolution of Pakistan’s objections regarding Kishanganga and Ratle Hydroelectric projects have failed. “Pakistan with consent of stakeholders decided to take it to full court of arbitration,” he said.

The minister said India had invited the Pakistani side to discuss points of dispute over the Indus Waters Treaty.

He did not receive telephone calls or respond to messages after his afternoon tweets. “Talks have failed,” said a water and power ministry spokesman but declined to go into details.

Another official said the Pakistani delegation would return from India on Saturday. He said the delegation was meant to discuss both options with India i.e. resolve the dispute through bilateral means or else move the ICA.

Under the treaty, in case the parties fail to resolve water disputes through bilateral means, the aggrieved party has the option to invoke the jurisdiction of the ICA or the neutral expert under the auspices of the World Bank.

The jurisdiction of the ICA could be invoked either jointly by the two parties or by either party as envisaged under Article IX (5) (b) or (c) of the treaty for constitution of a seven-member arbitration panel.

Pakistan’s experience with both international forums — neutral expert and ICA — has not been satisfactory for varying reasons and outcomes, partially due to domestic weakness, including belated decision-making. Pakistan first challenged Baglihar Hydroelectric Project before the neutral expert and then Kishanganga Hydroelectric and Wuller Barrage before the ICA. He said India was also in violation of the ICA decision of 2013.

Islamabad has been under criticism at home for losing its rights through legal battles instead of building diplomatic pressure in world capitals to stop India from water aggression.

An official said Pakistan now again felt its water rights were being violated by India on two rivers, the Chenab and Jhelum, through a faulty design of 850MW Ratle Hydropower Project and 330MW Kishanganga Hydropower, respectively.

He said the government had originally decided to take up the matter at international forums provided in the 1960 treaty in December 2015 but the process was delayed for unknown reasons. He said even two US law firms, Three Crowns and Willams & Connelly, had been selected at the time.

The official said Pakistan had exhausted all bilateral avenues to settle the dispute but in vain. Pakistan’s Foreign Office had also written to India last year highlighting points of difference and seeking its consent for appointment of neutral expert over the designs of the two said projects as both the countries had failed to resolve the issues at the level of Permanent Commission of Indus Waters (PCIW).

Both Pakistan and India have already declared their failure to resolve the issues pertaining to the designs of Kishangana and Ratle hydropower projects at the PCIW.

Pakistan believed Kishanganga’s pondage should be a maximum of one million cubic metres instead of 7.5 million, intake should be up to four metres and spillways be raised to nine metres.

On Ratle, Pakistan has four objections. Freeboard should be one metre instead of two meter, pondage should be a maximum of eight million cubic metres instead of 24 million, intake level should be at 8.8 metres and spillways at the height of 20 metres. It believes the Indian design of Ratle project would reduce Chenab flows by 40 per cent at Head Marala and cause irrigation loss to crops. The Ratle dam is believed to be three times larger than the Baglihar dam.

Under the provisions of the Indus Water Treaty, 1960, the waters of the eastern rivers — the Sutlej, Beas and Ravi — had been allocated to India and the western rivers — the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab — to Pakistan except for certain non consumptive uses.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1271195/no-headway-in-water-dispute-talks-with-india>

QAIM ORDERS 'RUTHLESS OPERATION' AGAINST WATER MAFIA

Dawn, July 16th, 2016

Hasan Mansoor

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah on Friday asked the city commissioner to launch a “ruthless operation” against the powerful water mafia, accused of stealing more than 10 million gallons of water every day in the city.

“The mafia is stealing such a huge quantity of water every day in Karachi and selling it to the industrialists. I would not allow this criminal act any more come what may,” said the CM while presiding over a meeting on different projects of Karachi at CM House.

The meeting was attended by provincial ministers, Murad Ali Shah, Jam Khan Shoro, Chief Secretary Siddique Memon, Principal Secretary Alamuddin Bullo, ACS (dev) Mohammad Waseem, secretary finance Sohail Rajput, Commissioner Karachi Ejaz Ali Khan, secretary local government Baqaullah Unar, administrator Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) Laiq Ahmed, managing director Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB), Misbahuddin Farid, among others.

“You have to arrest the thieves,” said the CM.

The meeting was informed that the water mafia was so powerful that they were stealing over 10mgd water from the main lines, and selling it.

They said such theft was rampant in the neighbourhoods along the Federal main trunk, Shershah, Pak Colony, Baldia, Gulbai, Tekri, Maripur and Grax villages, Lyari, Jahanabad and PIB Colony.

The meeting was informed that under the law, the punishment for water theft was 10 year imprisonment and penalties of various denominations.

The chief minister expressed his surprise that the mafia was still active despite taking serious measures in the recent past.

“This is intolerable,” he curtly said. “I would give you a special police force to dig out their lines, arrest them and make them an example for others,” he said.

The meeting was told that the director general of Rangers and the inspector general of the Sindh police had been provided a list of 25 water thieves but no action against them has been taken so far.

CM Shah asked the chief secretary to post a separate “honest and strong” superintendent of the police to start operations against the water mafia. “This is a final decision and I want results,” he told the commissioner and the KWSB MD.

The meeting was informed that a Rs200 million grant given by the CM to the KWSB for the rehabilitation of Pipri and Dhabeji pumping stations was being utilised astutely. It suffered from delays last year due to litigation issues, but now work was progressing and tenders were being issued.

The meeting was also informed that an Rs1 billion 65mgd water supply scheme to Karachi had been taken-up and rehabilitation and overhauling of pumping stations at Hub and Dhabeji had been launched for Rs1.6 billion. The overhauling would enable the pumping stations to pump 50mgd more water. This would help reduce 20 per cent water of the shortage faced in the city.

The additional chief secretary (dev) told the meeting that Rs10 billion had been allocated for the development of the city.

The CM said Sharea Faisal was the face of Karachi and should be upgraded at par with international levels. He asked the chief secretary to personally sit with the concerned officers and approve schemes of widening both sides of Sharea Faisal.

Local government minister Jam Khan Shoro said he had worked on the traffic flow and bottlenecks on Sharea Faisal and identified traffic issues at Regent Plaza and Baloch Colony Flyover. He said the road had been closed from two sides at the Star Gate, Drigh Road, and Natha Khan Bridge where either an underpass could be constructed or the existing design altered.

The CM asked the KMC to prepare PC-Is of the projects for which Rs10 billion had been allocated in the current budget, and conduct a study of all the bottlenecks in the traffic flow as pointed out by the minister so that underpasses or flyovers could be constructed.

He said the flyover, which had design issues like that of Drigh Road connecting the Drive-In Cinema Road, should also be given additional arteries.

CM also said at the meeting that he would personally visit the storm drains where desilting was in progress.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1271113/qaim-orders-ruthless-operation-against-water-mafia>

KALABAGH DAM: 'OPERATIONAL CONTROL SHOULD BE GIVEN TO SINDH'
The Express Tribune, July 16th, 2016

LAHORE: The authority is ready to work closely with the business community in order to address stakeholders' reservation, especially in Lahore, said Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) Chairman Zafar Mehmood while emphasising the need to construct the Kalabagh dam (KBD).

"Operational control of KBD should be given to Sindh to address its reservations and the province's role in IRSA should also be more powerful," he said during his visit to the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) on Friday.

Mehmood said that the dam would be beneficial for all stakeholders and would not be a threat for the people in Nowshera or Peshawar valley as is widely feared.

"KBD would produce 1,550 million units of electricity annually. A wrong perception has been created through rumours while facts and figures convey something quite different."

He revealed that work on various hydel power projects is under way and three will be commissioned next year, which would generate around 2,500MW of electricity, helping to curb load-shedding to a great extent.

The chairman informed that the Neelum Jhelum project of 960MW, 4th tunnel of Tarbela of 1,410MW and Golen Gol hydropower project of over 100MW would be operational during 2017, while work on Dasu dam is also ongoing. He said the land acquisition process for Diamer-Bhasha dam had also been completed.

Meanwhile, LCCI Senior Vice President Almas Hyder said that the share of hydropower in the energy mix should be enhanced to bring down cost of production that would ultimately benefit the economy.

"Projects of national importance should not be unduly controversial. The policy of criticism for criticism is damaging the national cause."

Expressing his unconditional support the KBD, the LCCI official said that it would help economic growth, bring down the oil import bill and also reduce trade and current account deficits.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1142748/kalabagh-dam-operational-control-given-sindh/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JULY 3RD TO JULY 10TH 2016
PPP WARNS GOVT AGAINST CAMPAIGNING FOR KALABAGH DAM
Dawn, July 3rd, 2016

Amir Wasim

ISLAMABAD: The main opposition Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has expressed its concern over what it called re-launching of the campaign in support of the construction of the controversial Kalabagh dam by the PML-N government, warning that the move could bring disastrous consequences for the federation.

Talking to Dawn here on Saturday, PPP's Parliamentary Leader in the Senate Saeed Ghani alleged that the government was intentionally touching the controversial matters in an effort to divert the attention of the nation from the real issues, including the Panama Papers scandal.

The PPP senator alleged that the present Wapda chairman had been writing columns in newspapers in support of the dam perhaps after getting a green signal from the rulers.

Mr Ghani recalled that the provincial assemblies of Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan had adopted resolutions against the construction of the proposed Kalabagh dam on a number of occasions.

"Is he [Wapda chairman] a representative of those having a particular thinking on the issue or a representative of the whole country?" he asked.

Mr Ghani asked the federal government to take action against the Wapda chairman, saying "a government employee should not be allowed to reject the resolutions passed by three provinces".

When contacted, PML-N Chairman Raja Zafarul Haq rejected the allegation that the government was intentionally raising the sensitive matters to divert the attention of the people from the real issues.

"The Kalabagh dam issue has nothing to do with the leaked Panama Papers," he said.

Mr Haq said the PML-N had a principled stance on the issue that the dam could not be and should not be built without a national consensus.

When asked about the Wapda chairman's act of writing columns, Mr Haq said that people and experts in the field of energy and water were writing on their own in support of the dam. He said there were many people in the country who believed that had the Kalabagh dam been constructed, the country would not have been facing the present energy crisis.

Meanwhile, five PPP MNAs on Saturday submitted an adjournment motion to the National Assembly secretariat regarding the recent alleged statements and columns written by the Wapda chairman in support of the construction of the controversial dam.

"Three provincial assemblies have already passed resolutions against the construction of the Kalabagh dam. Publication of such statements/articles by the Wapda chairman will open a Pandora's box," says the motion, adding that "the Wapda chairman's attempt is not only beyond his mandate but it is also leaving an adverse impact and challenging the unity of the federation".

The motion has been submitted by former water and power minister Naveed Qamar, Shazia Mari, Nafisa Shah, Ijaz Jakhrani and Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah.

Talking to Dawn, Naveed Qamar said that the Wapda chairman being a government functionary was required to take a neutral position on the issues, particularly on the controversial matters.

"He [the Wapda chairman] can't take the position of a political party," he added.

Saeed Ghani had also raised the matter of the Wapda chairman's act of writing columns in newspapers.

Another PML-N senator, Ghaus Mohammad Niazi, had defended the Wapda chairman for writing columns and endorsed Mr Majeed's viewpoint of initiating a debate on the issue of the Kalabagh dam.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1268805>

BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY: RETURN OF NAEGLERIA ALERTS WATER BOARD

The Express Tribune, July 3rd, 2016.

KARACHI: A 30-year-old man died of *Naegleria Fowleri* on Thursday after he was admitted to a private hospital on June 25.

Zahid Khan, a resident of Noor Muhammad Goth, Gadap Town, was diagnosed with the 'brain eating amoeba' virus after various tests. His attendants brought the water sample from his house and the mosque where he regularly went to pray but no traces of *Naegleria* were found in the samples.

It was speculated that Khan might have been infected from other sources of water as he worked as a construction worker on different sites.

The incident put Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) and other officials on alert to ensure that the virus claims no further lives. Karachi commissioner Ejaz Ahmed Khan also directed the water board to add required level of chlorine in the water being supplied to the residents of the metropolis.

According to an international water technologist Dr Ahsan Siddiqui, *Naegleria* is a 'brain eating amoeba,' which exists in unconscious state in 23 to 25 degrees Celsius. However, its activity increases with rising temperatures.

At 39 degree Celsius, its activity is the maximum, he pointed out. Water storage tanks which are underground or fiberglass overhead tanks don't allow water to evaporate which results in increase in temperature, he said.

According to Siddiqui the best way to avoid *Naegleria* is by using oxidising agent, which results in decreasing the amount of oxygen level in water to less than 12 milligrammes (the amount necessary for any living organism in water).

"Sodium pentachloro phenol is the best oxidising agent for killing all types of bacteria in water for drinking purpose," he said. Other options include chlorine gas which is induced through a chlorinator.

The third and the most easily available option is using sodium hypochlorite commonly known as liquid bleach.

"The trend of using storage tanks for water lessens the effectiveness of chlorination" said Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) focal person on *Naegleria* Azam Khan.

He added that the chlorine induced into the water from the filter plants of KWSB gets consumed within a day which poses a great risk for the residents of Karachi.

According to him, the water board injects chlorine into the water from the six points identified as Gharo filter plant, Pipri filter plant, Central Ordinance Depot filter plant, North East Karachi-I, North East Karachi-II and Hub Pumping filter plant.

He further added that in order to enhance the chlorine level the water board adds sodium hypochlorite at different spots if the officials feel the level of chlorine is diluted.

On average, 180 cylinders of chlorine are used on daily basis. In summers, the amount is raised to 200 cylinders, he pointed out.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1134928/better-safe-sorry-return-naegleria-alerts-water-board/>

PROBLEM SOLVER: #FIXIT CAMPAIGNER INSTALLS RO PLANT TO MEET DRINKING WATER SHORTAGE

The Express Tribune, July 4th, 2016.

KARACHI: To resolve the problem of fresh drinking water for residents of Moosa Goth, Khando Goth and Mujahid Colony, #Fixit campaigner Alamgir Khan has installed a reverse-osmosis (RO) water plant in the area.

Khan dedicated the plant to and named it after slain qawwal Amjad Sabri. With a capacity to fulfill the needs of around 1,200 families a day, the plant will operate eight hours a day and produce 3,000 gallons of water.

The plant has been installed by the Health Factory International and an RO incharge will be on duty at the plant daily. “The plant usually costs around Rs0.8 million but we have given it to the #Fixit campaigners without keeping any profit margin,” said RO plant supplier Aijaz Ahmed Siddiqui.

He said the plant cost Rs0.5 million and will be maintained mutually by the #Fixit representatives and residents. The plant has a warranty of one year but if it is maintained properly then it can last for a lifetime, he added.

“We will install a new plant if the current one does not work properly after five or 10 years,” Siddiqui promised.

RO incharge Muhammad Mukarram told The Express Tribune that the plant is purifying and filtering two gallons per minute.

Explaining how it works, he said to supply unpurified water, boring has been done to reach a depth of 200 feet. The water obtained during boring is then saved in a tank which is connected to a dissolved solid tank from where the water is transferred to the initial feed pump.

Mukarram said after the pre-filtration process, it is sent to a sand filter then a carbon and cartridge filter. Lastly, the water is purified in a high-pressure pump with the help of pressure vessel membranes which help turn the water into ‘soft water’. The water is finally extracted to the product or finishing tank, from where the residents can retrieve it, he said.

This plant has been only installed for drinking water; to meet the supply of water for household purposes, another two borings have been done in the area, which provide water to residents for free.

While inaugurating the plant, Khan said they are trying to help the common people and play the role of a pressure group for the state. “We will be installing 10 RO plants in areas with water shortage issues, including Malir, Khokhrapar, Baldia and the suburbs of Nazimabad,” he said, adding that they have a plan to extend it to 100 RO plants. The plants have been donated by supporters and businesspeople while the water will be provided to the people at just Rs1 per litre.

Ghulam Mustafa, a longtime resident of Moosa Goth, appreciated the effort and said, “We have never seen fresh drinking water coming to our houses, we have always used ‘hard water’ from boring”.

However, another resident, Muhammad Irfan, criticised the installation and said there are already three RO plants fitted in the area which provide a gallon of fresh water for just Rs5. He said the #Fixit plant is expensive for them. “Those RO plant managers even drop one gallon containers of water to our homes, why would we come here to use something which is comparatively far and costly for us?” he questioned.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1135638/problem-solver-fixit-campaigner-installs-ro-plant-meet-drinking-water-shortage/>

GROWERS PROTEST EIGHT-MONTH WATER CLOSURE

Dawn, July 4th, 2016

THATTA: Growers protesting against closure of Monarki minor and Paban minor (irrigation channels) for over eight months took to the streets of Thatta late on Saturday evening and held a sit-in at a section of the Karachi-Shah Yaqiq shrine road blocking it for about four hours.

Led by Khadim Hussain Khoso, Rahim Bukhsh Marri and Raees Noor Ahmed Khoso, the protesters kept raising slogans against the provincial government and irrigation department during the sit-in at Nandhi Goongri, causing suspension of vehicular traffic during the course of the protest. A large number of people going to or returning from the shrine, as well as other commuters, remained stuck in their vehicles.

Speaking to the media, the growers’ leaders said that due to the closure of the two channels, hundreds of acres of farmlands had gone dry. The irrigation authorities had been keeping them on false hope but were not releasing water in the channels for one reason or the other over the past eight months, they said.

They feared that they would not be able to cultivate their lands in the Kharif season that was about to begin. They said they had already suffered huge losses due to the unavailability of water for eight months and now their once-fertile lands were feared to go barren.

The protesters said that they had constantly been complaining with the irrigation department over the long period and holding protests but to no avail.

Sindh Minister for Trade and Industries Mohammed Ali Malkani, who was among the commuters stuck in the gridlock, walked up to the sit-in venue and held negotiations with the growers' leaders. He held out the assurance that their grievance would be addressed as soon as possible. He persuaded them to end their sit-in and clear the thoroughfare.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1268852/growers-protest-eight-month-water-closure>

PLEA AGAINST 'HAZARDOUS WATER' RESERVOIR AT THAR COAL SITE TERMED POLITICALLY MOTIVATED

Dawn, July 5th, 2016

Hyderabad: Additional Advocate General (AAG) Allah Bachayo Soomro appearing in the Sindh High Court, Hyderabad circuit, on Monday filed the provincial government's comment on a petition challenging the construction of a subsoil water reservoir in Islamkot for the Thar Coal project. Strongly opposing the petition, the AAG termed it a politically motivated plea.

Petitioners Mr Lakho and 10 other residents of Mithi, have moved the court citing the Coal Energy Board, Thar Coal Authority and Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company as respondents stating that they were building a dam on their [petitioners'] lands near Gorano and other villages in Islamkot taluka. The covered area of the dam was 2,700 acres and it was supposed to store hazardous water to be extracted from coal mines.

The petitioners said that the dam would destroy their own lands as well as those of other people living in 15 other villages. They informed the court that the vulnerable villages had a population of 15,000 whose livelihood, farming and livestock, would be affected.

According to the petitioners, who were represented by Advocate Ayatullah Khawaja, the Thar desert faces a water scarcity where 200,000 trees, 100 per cent cultivable land, 20,000 sweet water wells and 10 natural ponds are considered precious. About 50 per cent of the land is categorised as Qabuli owned by people and there are temples and five old graveyards.

Filing the provincial government's comments on the petition, AAG Soomro contended that an annexure [newspaper clipping] of the petition, concerning a visit by former chief minister Dr Arbab Ghulam Rahim, indicated that it was a politically motivated petition. He submitted in court that it was a development project of the provincial government which the petitioners wanted to sabotage.

Advocate Umer Memon, who held brief on behalf of Engro's counsel Advocate Umer Soomro, before the SHC bench, comprising Justice Zafar Ahmed Rajput and Justice Mohammad Saleem Jeesar.

Advocate Memon said that the environmental impact assessment (EIA) of the project had been done and the petitioners had not raised any objection there. He said that it was not a dam but a reservoir for storing subsoil water.

He said that the petition raised an environmental issue for which the project stood clear under the EIA.

An Engro representative informed the bench that the subsoil water to be extracted during coal mining would be pumped out and stored in a natural depression within the area.

Advocate Khawaja argued that his clients did not oppose establishment of the reservoir but wanted it to be built away from their lands as alternative sites were available. He said the hazardous water reservoir would affect the lands, sweet water wells, 200,000 trees and as many animals within the surrounding areas.

Justice Rajput observed that nothing was more important than national project, and told Mr Khawaja: "Let Sindh progress". Advocated Khawaja insisted that any of the seven available alternative sites could be chosen for the reservoir.

The court adjourned the matter till July 13. During the hearing of the petition, the Tharparkar deputy commissioner and Islamkot assistant commissioner also filed their comments terming certain points mentioned in the petition false/incorrect. They said that affected people could be compensated accordingly as per the relevant law.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1269117/plea-against-hazardous-water-reservoir-at-thar-coal-site-termed-politically-motivated>

WATER SHORTAGE IN QAMBAR-SHAHDADKOT AGGRAVATING: SAB
Dawn, July 5th, 2016

M.B. Kalhoro

LARKANA: Crisis of irrigation water in Qambar-Shahdadt district deepened as its supply through Saifullah Magsi branch remained disturbed from the head of the North Western Canal originating from the River Indus.

Evaluating the situation, Sindh Abadgar Board (SAB) Qambar-Shahdadt president Ishaque Mughiri told Dawn on Monday that what to talk of getting the sanctioned water quantity into the Saifullah Magsi branch when growers in abortive attempts were trying to save the prepared paddy nurseries. "We don't have enough water to keep them (nurseries) alive while irrigation officials keep us on false hopes and hollow claims for getting water," he said.

The level of water scarcity in Saifullah Magsi branch and its offshoots could be gauged from the fact that currently it got hardly 300 to 400 cusecs which should have been 1,800 cusecs in this season to cultivate rice, he said. Pointing towards illegally releasing water from Ruk regulator into Warah Canal by irrigation officials, he said actually Warah Canal should get its share from Rice Canal.

Also the North Western Canal (NWC) originating from Sukkur Barrage which feeds Saifullah Magsi branch is presently not getting share in accordance with its designed discharged capacity.

Grang regulator was the main distribution point for Sindh and Balochistan from Khairthar branch, the irrigation sources said. But currently what both provinces were getting was insufficient to irrigate paddy land. A couple of days ago, growers from Balochistan demonstrated at Grang regulator to press irrigation staff for their due share in time to save paddy nurseries, but in vain.

The executive engineer of Saifullah Magsi branch, Syed Mukhtiar Shah, talking to Dawn on Monday, admitted the shortage of water in the branch and water courses, and claimed that situation was gradually improving. The key irrigation artery for Qambar-Shahdadt district is Saifullah Magsi branch which has 156,000 command area running from Grang regulator to Chukhi close to Balochistan border.

Wajid Chandio — a grower who takes water from Gul Shah, Tanveri Shakh, Noorpur and Dhori to cultivate his land — said all have either dried up or were hit by extremely low water flow in this peak season. This was not sufficient even to save the paddy nurseries, he said.

He said that at RD-124 of Saifullah Magsi branch, growers should have mandatory share in this season with 8 to 8.5 feet height of water, but currently it was flowing at four feet. One could easily assess future economic losses and the building up situation for the people linked with the only crop, Mr Chandio said.

"We don't have alternate crop to live on while already the poisonous water gushing from Balochistan through Hairddin Drain has ruined about 18400 acres wheat growing belt in this area. The manpower connected with agriculture is now left with the only option to earn their livelihood from Rice crop," he said.

Shahdadt situated at Sindh-Balochistan border is the economic hub, with around 100 rice mills. The problem of acute water shortage would ultimately have its impact on the labourers connected with the paddy crop. The population of Shahdadt, Qubo Saeed Khan and other areas in the district, which already was inflicted with delta virus of hepatitis, under the circumstances would be prone to aggravate the intensity of the disease, Ishaque Mughiri. Probably if situation persisted long, it would affect the animals too, he said.

The executive engineer of Saifullah Magsi branch on Monday linked the low water level to fluctuation in the River Indus. The situation continued for three days, he said and claimed the flow was improving.

The water would take certain time to travel to reach the tail. Currently Saifullah Magsi branch that had the design discharge capacity of carrying 2,500 cusecs was flowing with 1,600 cusecs, he said. However, the SAB and other tillers disputed the claim.

The SAB would kick off a protest campaign after Eid if situation remain unchanged, said Mr Mughiri.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1269115/water-shortage-in-qambar-shahdadkot-aggravating-sab>

440 PROPOSALS RECEIVED FOR SAAF PANI PROJECT

The Express Tribune, July 5th, 2016.

LAHORE: The Punjab Saaf Pani Company (PSPC) has received 440 proposals, including 64 from international companies, for pre-qualification for engineering, procurement and the construction of safe drinking water projects across the province.

The company had recently invited proposals for 14 contracts worth \$1.15 billion. The 64 multinational companies are from Australia, Austria, China, France, Iran, South Korea, Malaysia, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The authorities had arranged two roadshows in Dubai and China to attract the companies.

In the first phase, safe drinking water solutions (water filtration plants) will be implemented in 35 priority tehsils in 10 districts. More than 23 million people in 7,496 villages will have access to safe drinking water after the completion of the first phase. The evaluation of documents submitted by international companies is underway. Tender documents will then be floated for the award of contracts to the pre-qualified companies.

“It is due to our efforts that these many international companies have shown interest in the project. We have also facilitated visits by staffers from interested companies to the project sites so that they might have a better geographical understanding of the project,” PSPC CEO Waseem Ajmal Chaudhry said.

The \$3 billion project will provide water to more than 50 million rural population in 137 tehsils (20,000 villages). So far, 80 water filtration plants have been installed in five tehsils in southern Punjab.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1136428/440-proposals-received-saaf-pani-project/>

KP GOVERNMENT TO CONSTRUCT JABBA DAM

Business Recorder, July 10, 2016

For provision of drinking water to residents of the provincial metropolis and adjacent tribal area of Khyber Agency, the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has planned the construction of Jabba dam. The project has been included in the Annual Development Program of the current financial year under the name of Peshawar Greater Water Supply Scheme (PGWS) to provide clean drinking water to the people city, Hayatabad and Khyber Agency.

According to sources in the Public Health Engineering (PHE) Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the feasibility study of Jabba dam has already been completed and is found feasible in engineering point of view. The dam will serve as a principal source of water supply to Khyber Agency and Peshawar. In case of timely availability of funds, Jabba dam located in Jamrud tehsil of Khyber Agency will be completed by end of next calendar year.

Upon completion, the dam will also bring an estimated agricultural land of 20,000 acres under cultivation of land besides protecting Peshawar and Khyber Agency from floods during monsoon.

The dam is projected to provide about one million people with clean drinking water facility and store up to 38,000 gallons of water by providing enormous agriculture benefits to local populations. Similarly, the feasibility study of Bara Dam has also been prepared with an estimated capacity of irrigating 50,000 acres area in Tehsil Bara, Khyber Agency and suburban areas of Peshawar.

The Bara dam will also serve as a source of drinking water for nearby areas and about two million cusecs potable water can be provided to the Bara Bazaar and about eight million cusecs to Hayatabad in Peshawar.

Bara dam is very important for Peshawar as its life span is estimated between 80 and 100 years besides its storage capacity of about 88,000 acres feet. The dam has potential generating several megawatts electricity.

Third possible project for provision of drinking water to Peshawar is Warsak Dam, a mega project, deemed as main source of water for Peshawarits. This dam is supposed a good project for provision of drinking water to the residents of the city.

<http://www.brecorder.com/agriculture-a-allied/183:pakistan/63732:kp-government-to-construct-jabba-dam/?date=2016-07-10>

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August 2016

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM AUGUST 29TH TO SEPTEMBER 4TH 2016

WATER SHORTAGE IN SINDH

The Express Tribune, August 29th, 2016.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation has presented an alarming report about the shortage of water in several districts of Sindh. According to the report, which has been shared with both the national and provincial disaster management agencies, over 1.1 million individuals in Sindh are below emergency threshold levels when it comes to the access of clean water.

The report also lays out the problems created by this limited access to water, which include deaths of livestock, food insecurity, malnutrition and disease caused by poor sanitation. Those reliant on labour jobs in the agriculture and livestock sector have been hit particularly badly since their employment opportunities have dried up.

Drought-prone areas which have suffered during the 2013-15 drought season are witnessing high child mortality rates and poor nutrition. In parts of Sindh, cultivation has stopped altogether due to unavailability of water.

The report goes on to lay out a detailed proposal, which if adopted could alleviate the suffering of those whose lives and livelihoods have been adversely impacted. If the Sindh government intends to take these findings seriously, it must adopt both an immediate and long term relief programme to reduce the damage to people's lives.

The report has proposed that the government look into the construction of additional storage for water to avoid a repeat of this situation down the line. As weather patterns continue to become more erratic, it is likely that droughts will become a fact of life not only for the already affected districts of Sindh but for several other parts of the country as well.

As an agrarian society that is highly reliant on crop yields, both federal and provincial governments must look into the development of water-related policies. Several other countries have already started working on this and such foresightedness is required in Pakistan to avoid a large-scale disaster. Meanwhile, the drought-affected people in Sindh require immediate attention and relief.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1171539/water-shortage-sindh/>

FRENCH FIRM TO REFURBISH MANGLA'S SIX UNITS

Dawn, August 30th, 2016

LAHORE: The Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) on Monday signed a contract worth Rs10.81 billion with a French company for refurbishment and upgradation of six power generating units installed at Mangla station.

The contract comprising package-1 and 7 is a part of Mangla Refurbishment Project.

The contract was signed at a ceremony held at Wapda House on Monday, according to a spokesman.

Wapda General Manager (hydel development) Engineer Muhammad Arshad Chaudhry and representative of the company Alstom Hydro France, Benoit Dhien, signed the agreement on behalf of their organisations.

Wapda members (power and finance), senior officers, and representatives of the company and USAID also attended the event.

The Mangla Refurbishment Project envisaging additional power of 310MW will be implemented in various phases, wherein the generating units will be refurbished by closing down one tunnel (two generating units) at a time. First two units will be refurbished by 2018, the next two by 2019 and the other two by 2020. Refurbishment of remaining four units will be carried out in the next phase. The approved PC-I cost of the project is Rs52.224bn.

The USAID is providing \$150 million as grant for the purpose, while rest of the amount will be arranged by Wapda through loans.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1280921>

60 PERCENT OF KEY S ASIAN WATER BASIN NOT USABLE: STUDY
Business Recorder, 30 August 2016

PARIS: Sixty percent of the groundwater in a river basin supporting more than 750 million people in Pakistan, India, Nepal and Bangladesh is not drinkable or usable for irrigation, researchers said Monday.

The biggest threat to groundwater in the Indo-Gangetic Basin, named after the Indus and Ganges rivers, is not depletion but contamination, they reported in the journal Nature Geoscience.

“The two main concerns are salinity and arsenic,” the authors of the study wrote.

Up to a depth of 200 metres (650 feet), some 23 percent of the groundwater stored in the basin is too salty, and about 37 percent “is affected by arsenic at toxic concentrations,” they said.

The Indo-Gangetic basin accounts for about a quarter of the global extraction of groundwater — freshwater which is stored underground in crevices and spaces in soil or rock, fed by rivers and rainfall.

Fifteen-to-twenty million wells extract water from the basin every year amid growing concerns about depletion.

The new study — based on local records of groundwater levels and quality from 2000 to 2012 — found that the water table was in fact stable or rising across about 70 percent of the aquifer.

It was found to be falling in the other 30 percent, mainly near highly populated areas.

Groundwater can become salty through natural and manmade causes, including inefficient farmland irrigation and poor drainage.

Arsenic, too, is naturally present, but levels are exacerbated by use of fertilisers and mining.

Arsenic poisoning of drinking water is a major problem in the region.—AFP

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2016/08/30/58-page/789919-news.html>

‘APPLIED RESEARCH IN WATER A MUST TO OVERCOME CHALLENGES’
Business Recorder, 30 August 2016

HYDERABAD: The Vice Chancellor of Mehran University of Engineering and Technology (MUET) Jamshoro Prof Dr Mohammad Aslam Uqaili has said that applied research in water is need of the day to overcome the water challenges faced by Pakistan.

He expressed these remarks while speaking as chief guest at the welcome and orientation ceremony for the second batch of MS students of US-Pakistan Center for Advanced Studies in Water (USPCAS-W) held at MUET Jamshoro on Monday.

In order to tackle the water crisis of Pakistan, he said USPCAS-W has been established in MUET with financial assistance of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and technical support provided by University of Utah (UU), United States.

He said that USPCAS-W is a state-of-the-art water research centre of Pakistan, dedicated to contribute in resolving water crisis of the country through applied research, developing human capital, and academia-industry collaboration and policy formulation.

While congratulating the students of the new batch of the centre, Dr Uqaili said that they should take maximum benefit of the facilities provided by MUET to cater their study and research needs.

He said that after getting their MS/PhD degrees, they shall become quality professionals and serve as MUET ambassadors in building bridge between the academia and industry.

On the occasion, Prof Dr Bakhshal Khan Lashari said that importance of water is global and there is dire need of high quality professionals to tackle the water issues faced by today's world in general and Pakistan in particular.

He said that USPCAS-W at MUET with the support of USAID and UU trying its best to produce water leaders in the field of water. Keeping in view the significance of water and sanitation, two-year MS programme in Water, Sanitation, and Health Sciences (WaSHS) has also been introduced from this year.

He informed the students about the benefits of the project including Rs 15000 per month stipend, transport, and hostel accommodation for female students.

Later, Dr Kamran Ansari, Deputy Project Director gave presentation regarding the academic rules, code of conduct and MUET and UU partnership along with internship opportunities and other facilities provided by the project.

Among others, Prof Dr Tauha Hussain Ali, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Prof Dr Hafeez-ur-Rahman Memon, Dean Faculty of Engineering, Dr Rafique Ahmed Chandio, Director Administration USPCAS-W, Shabnam Baloch, Gender and Communication Specialist UU, USPCAS-W faculty and other staff of the Center also attended the ceremony.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2016/08/30/5-page/789723-news.html>

WATER SUPPLY FROM HUB DAM MAY RESUME SOON

Dawn, August 31st, 2016

Shazia Hasan

KARACHI: After three years of waiting for the Hub dam water level to rise and cross the 300-foot mark making water supply to Karachi possible from there, the level was measured to be at 305 feet on Tuesday.

The water is expected to rise further and engineers at the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) are optimistic that it could even reach 310 feet. The peak or spill level at the dam is 339 feet and the reservoir capacity happens to be 600,000-acre feet.

When filled to capacity, the Hub dam may supply water to Karachi for three years. The last time the dam filled to capacity was in 2013. After that it fell to dead level of 275.25. Things started looking up last year when the level rose again to 289 feet during monsoon. Still it couldn't fill up to the desired level.

As a result of the recent increase in the level of water due to the recent rains, in June, July and August, especially in lower Sindh and the 250-kilometre radius around the dam's right side falling in the Kirthar Mountain Range in Balochistan from where the water flows downwards, things are beginning to look up for Karachi, which can now expect 100 million gallons per day (MGD) for over one year.

The Hub dam used to be a major source of water supply to the city before the situation there grew from bad to worse. KWSB Chief Engineer, Bulk Water Supply, Sikandar Ali Zardari told Dawn that after reaching the spill level, 339ft, the dam also supplies around 33MGD to the Hub area in Balochistan.

Karachi already receives 500MGD to 550MGD from the Indus river. But due to no supply from the Hub dam for the last three years to supplement the population's increasing need for water was giving rise to water theft by the tanker mafia as well as protests by the people facing a grave water shortage.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1281040>

FOOTPRINTS: NO END TO WATER CRISIS

Dawn, September 2nd, 2016

Muhammad Akbar Notezai

GWADAR: Considered to be the backbone of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), Gwadar has been in the grip of a water crisis over the last several years. Owing to the neglect of the provincial government, residents of Gwadar are compelled to collect water from distant areas of the district. Gwadar residents say many people have left the port city because of the water crisis.

The major source of water in Gwadar is rainwater, collected and stored in the Ankara Daur dam. Completed in 1993, the dam was built at a time when Gwadar's population was far smaller than it is today. This is why the port city's reservoir is not enough to serve the needs of the current population of the district. Sometimes, due to long drought spells, the reservoir dries up. There is no other source of drinking water for the Gwadar people than the Ankara Daur dam.

"In Gwadar, we get water supply at home after four or five days. Usually, we buy well water from donkey cart operators. Sometimes, our women have to go from door to door to seek even a bucketful of water," says Mohammad Ilyas Baloch, a resident of the port city.

"Those who can afford it buy water from tanker operators, but that is too expensive for a majority of the population."

Local newspapers often report government officials and politicians saying that they are trying their best to overcome Gwadar's water crisis. Because of the CPEC, they say, the strategic importance of Gwadar has increased manifold, which is why they will leave no stone unturned for Gwadar people's well-being, and resolving the water issue is their top priority.

Speaking to Dawn, Mariyam Suleman, a local social scientist, says: "During retired General Pervez Musharraf's regime the Mirani dam, about 150 kilometres from Gwadar city, was constructed to overcome the city's water crisis. It only needs laying pipeline to supply water to the city, but this government is not doing even that much. Several meetings of the relevant committees were held during the acute water shortage we faced this year as well as in 2012. But once it rains, and the water crisis eases, everything fades into oblivion and there is no proper planning for a lasting water supply. Of course, the Ankara Daur dam alone cannot fulfil the people's water needs."

Talking to Dawn, Siddique Baloch, a senior journalist who has exhaustively written on the Gwadar port project, says there are 360 seasonal rivers in Makran and five big rivers in its nearby coastal areas. This means there are many potential new sources of water to alleviate the current crisis in Gwadar in particular and Makran in general, provided the government builds necessary storage facilities on them.

"Iran's Chabahar Port, some 72km from Gwadar, does not face any water crisis," says Baloch. "The reason for this is that, unlike our government, they overcame the water crisis by working on it. But we, despite having potential sources for water, seem uninterested in resolving the water crisis in Gwadar."

Answering a question, Suleman says: "I do not personally see any progress being made by the government in resolving the water crisis. In 2012, when Gwadar was severely hit by this crisis, government officials had vowed to resolve it. Later on, they merely made committees and did nothing tangible. This is why the port city is facing a water issue today.

"However," she recalls, "I do hear about the Sawad dam, which has been in progress for several years [If completed, the dam will be nearer to Gwadar than the Mirani dam]. The dam was expected to be completed by 2014, but there are no signs of its completion soon."

Dr Shahid Ahmad, an expert on water affairs and author of several papers on the water crisis in Gwadar, says: "First, water can be brought to Gwadar from the Mirani dam, which is situated in the neighbouring district of Kech. But before that, we have to keep in mind the following questions: how to deal with the local people who have preferential right on the water? Will they allow it? If they allow it, what will be their conditions for it? These questions and conflicts need to be addressed by the government before bringing water from there [the Mirani dam] to Gwadar."

Secondly, he says, there are several feasible sites around Gwadar where dams can be built, as well as the existing ones improved, if the government takes due interest in it.

Thirdly, another option the government can explore is desalination of seawater. However, he says, the government cannot do this alone. Instead, the government should install and lease desalination plants to the private sector for better functioning and to ensure that Gwadar's water problem is solved permanently.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1281513>

PAST GOVTS BEHIND ENERGY, ECONOMIC CRISES: SHARIF

Dawn, September 4th, 2016

Saleem Mubarak

FAISALABAD: As Imran Khan and Dr Tahirul Qadri began their anti-corruption rally and Qisas march in Lahore and Rawalpindi, respectively, on Saturday, their key opponent Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif used the inauguration ceremony of an energy project in Faisalabad to handle the fresh onslaught by the duo, promising a better Pakistan at the end of his government's constitutional term in 2018.

Pakistan, PM Sharif claimed, was emerging as an economic power and the world was accepting it to be so because his government was bringing improvement to departments like railways and PIA as well as launching various projects to end the energy crisis.

Besides, the PML-N government was striving to reduce power tariff which he hoped would help bring prosperity and improve living standard of the masses.

Mr Sharif said that the law and order situation in Karachi had deteriorated a couple of years ago, but now it was improving day by day and soon the city would regain its lost glory.

The PM was addressing the inaugural ceremony of a 40MW coal power plant which has been completed in 27 months at a cost of Rs3.7 billion. Recalling the energy situation before the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz assumed office, he said that people had been forced to endure long hours of loadshedding. But now even the industry had been having smooth supply of electricity and gas, he said, adding that he was happy to note that investment over the past three years had increased.

"We are struggling to control the electricity shortage...and it [issue] would be resolved by 2018," he said.

The PM said the government was not only focusing on power and infrastructure projects but would also provide quality education and healthcare facilities to people for which it had planned to establish 40 big hospitals across the country.

He said that previous governments must be called to account for the energy and economic crises that dragged the country into darkness and made it lose the distinctive status of the best economy in South Asia, adds APP.

"In 1960 we were ahead of South Korea in development. In 1990, we were the best in the region. In 1999, we were the top economy in South Asia, but in 2013 we stood in the last," he regretted.

The prime minister said that a dictator had ruled the country for seven years before allowing an elected government to complete its five-year term.

"They will have to account for it. History will never pardon them," he remarked.

In his address, Mr Sharif also touched on several projects which were launched by his government in energy, road and other sectors.

Punjab Governor Rafiq Rajwana, Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, Water and Power Minister Khawaja Asif, Commerce Minister Khurram Dastgir Khan and Minister of State for Water and Power Abid Sher Ali were present on the occasion.

The 40MW coal power plant at Sitara Chemical Industries Ltd is the largest of its kind in the industrial sector of Faisalabad.

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM AUGUST 22ND TO AUGUST 28TH 2016
RBOD-II VIRTUALLY AT A STANDSTILL
Dawn, Business & Finance weekly, August 22nd, 2016

Mohammad Hussain Khan

WORK on the Right Bank Outfall Drain-II is virtually at a standstill for want of funds, while the held up revised project cost proposed by the Sindh government is awaiting approval of the Planning Commission of Pakistan.

The allocation under the previous revised cost of Rs29bn has been fully utilised. According to a project officer, work came to a halt around three to four months back. He explained that the delay in cost revision is taking time due to procedural formalities, including approvals at different forums.

The second revised project cost (PC-I) of RBOD at around Rs64.66bn was forwarded by the Sindh government to the Planning Commission of Pakistan (PC) in 2015, in response to a set of observations made by the National Engineering Services of Pakistan (Nespak).

The project has already missed two deadlines. It kicked-off in 2001 to be completed in January 2006. The second deadline was missed in December 2014, which led to cost overruns.

Nespak's observations were technical in nature regarding the RBOD's outfall structure, third party evaluation and various drain reaches getting closer to the River Indus.

"The drains in these reaches are vulnerable to floods in the Indus, as seen in the flood of 2010-11. These reaches may be threatened during flood seasons.

"On the basis of quantum of work and a requirement of verification of quantities and expenditures, a provision for TPM on the executed work, by some independent consultant, should be included in the second revised PC-I".

Project sources said observations — responded in para-wise comments — mentioned that TPM was being carried out by the army's 5-Corps headquarters through project support and a monitoring team.

As far as the drain's vulnerability due to floods is concerned, spurs have been recommended to keep the river's direction away from the existing channel. With the spurs' construction, the river would not directly hit the channel. Stone lining was extensively used in bund for flood protection at identified locations.

About the outfall structure, the authorities say it was kept intact and an amount of Rs1,583.67m was also provided in PC-I of 2015.

Another reason for delays in RBOD-II is land acquisition. Around 17pc of land (1,554 acres) that falls in right of way (RoW) of the project is yet to be acquired, involving an acquisition cost of Rs3bn.

Some landowners have gone to court and cases are pending for adjudication. The cost envisaged in 2005 initially has increased manifold. Of the 8,745 acres needed for the drain, 7,191 acres have been acquired.

The RBOD-II project is considered vital for rehabilitation of Asia's largest fresh water lake — Manchar — which receives contaminated water of the RBOD-I — which is commonly known as Main Nara Valley Drain (MNVD). Project officials claim that 70pc of the overall three reaches of the project, but for piecemeal work, has been completed.

Project authorities are now focussing on the reach-III falling in Thatta, and mainly covering the tail-end of the drain. While the Frontier Works Organisation (FWO) is the project's principal contractor, others are engaged by the Pakistan Railways, the National Highway Authority and the provincial highways department to build bridges and nullah crossings.

The second revision was proposed by the Sindh irrigation department after the 2015 floods. PC officials visited the site from Sehwan in Jamshoro to Gharo, Thatta district where the project's outfall structure would dispose of effluent into the Arabian Sea.

The drain's capacity to carry wastewater was revised to 3,525 cusec from 2,271 cusec following directives of the then premier, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, who wanted the drain to carry Balochistan's wastewater.

Initially, the Sindh government had revised the cost to Rs71bn and sent it to the PC. The PC, said a project source, reverted it, advising the Sindh government to go for cost rationalisation.

After necessary modification and amendments, it was revised to Rs64.66bn. The provincial government has been given to understand that the second PC-I would be approved by the federal government.

A former RBOD project director says that some new river training works have been added in the backdrop of the 2010 super floods. Spurs, stone pitching etc are kept in view owing to the experience of 2010 floods which had caused massive damage to the drain, requiring the authorities to start work afresh at various locations. "It is primarily due to incomplete drain that these damages were seen in 2010 floods", says a project official.

The cost of 273km long RBOD-II was estimated at Rs14bn with 2006 as completion year. It was revised to Rs29bn in 2005 with targeted completion in 2008 and subsequently, 2014. Authorities linked delay to poor releases of funds. Official sources told this scribe that Rs28.24bn had been spent and an amount of Rs973m was pending to be released by the Sindh government.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1279042/rbod-ii-virtually-at-a-standstill>

IRSA CUTS WATER SHARES OF SINDH, PUNJAB

Dawn, August 23rd, 2016

Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: The Indus River System Authority (Irsa) slashed on Monday water shares of Sindh by 27 per cent and Punjab by 14pc because of 'inability' of the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) to conserve water for irrigation purposes despite availability of sufficient water.

Irsa "showed serious concern over Tarbela situation and said Wapda is responsible for not taking prompt action on its request," according to an official statement issued after a meeting of the water regulator presided over by its chairman Rao Irshad Ali Khan.

An Irsa official said the water regulator had requested Wapda through a letter on July 28 to take advantage of substantial river flows and conserve higher quantities of water. Irsa had pointed out that weather conditions had become unpredictable and, therefore, storage should be built until Aug 20 at a higher scale instead of one foot every day.

The official said Wapda remained adamant about conserving water at the rate of one foot per day, saying it could not go beyond that.

A Wapda spokesman said the authority had followed standard operating procedures (SOPs) on dam safety while filling the dam and had told Irsa through a letter that it could not compromise on dam safety SOPs.

But the Irsa official claimed that dam safety SOPs required filling of water level by 1-4 feet per day after the Tarbela dam's storage level of 1,510 feet. He said Wapda had not responded to Irsa's request for almost a week during which substantial water quantities had to be allowed to flow downstream. As a consequence, the dam could not be filled to capacity despite availability of water.

He said the Irsa chairman had complained to Minister for Water and Power Khwaja Mohammad Asif during a meeting held last week to review the flood situation that Wapda was not following the water regulator's filling requests. "Irsa has already taken up the issue at an appropriate forum regarding filling of Tarbela dam," the Irsa statement said.

The situation would lead to water shortage during the Rabi season beginning Oct 31, an official said.

In view of the situation, Irsa decided to reduce the provincial water share and directed Punjab to take water from the Mangla dam for Trimmu and Panjand canals, instead of the Tarbela dam.

The Chashma-Jhelum link canal has already been closed while the Taunsa-Punjab canal will be closed in three days as per time lag.

Irsa also decided that Punjab and Sindh would get their fixed shares under para-2 of the Water Apportionment Accord of 1991, with 20pc conveyance losses.

Sindh wanted treatment of the conveyance losses at 40pc to allow higher water quantities to reach the province. This was not acceptable to Punjab. As a consequence, a decision was taken with 3-2 majority to reduce provincial shares and start distribution of water on the basis of fixed shares.

Balochistan sided with Sindh while Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the centre were with Punjab.

Sindh's demand for 180,000 cusecs was scaled down to 131,000 with 20pc losses and para-2 share, while that of Punjab to 120,000 cusecs from 140,000. To ensure the quota, releases from the Tarbela dam were reduced to 145,000 from 150,000 cusecs and those from the Mangla dam increased to 45,000 from 30,000 cusecs.

The Federal Flood Commission reported that all main rivers —Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi and Sutlej — were flowing normal. Tarbela and Mangla reservoirs were at elevation of 1,541.47 and 1,241.50 feet, respectively — 8.53 and 0.50 feet below their respective maximum conservation levels of 1,550 and 1,242 feet.

The total combined live storage capacity of Tarbela, Chashma and Mangla reservoirs was reported at 13.417 million acre feet, compared to last year's 14.067 MAF.

Irsa had estimated zero shortage for Kharif in March this year. Because of substantial river flows, the provinces have been drawing their water shares at will so far.

The Kharif season starts from April-June and lasts until Oct-Dec in different parts of the country. Rice, sugarcane, cotton, maize and mash are some of the key crops of the season.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1279392/irsa-cuts-water-shares-of-sindh-punjab>

RS22BN WATER RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT FOR BALOCHISTAN APPROVED

Dawn, August 23rd, 2016

Amin Ahmed

ISLAMABAD: The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (EcneC) on Monday approved the Balochistan Integrated Water Resource Management and Development Project at an updated cost of Rs22.2 billion.

The project – considered highly important with its location on Nari and Porali river basins – will cover almost one fourth of Balochistan and provide multiple benefits including clean drinking water facility, reducing the risk of floods, less erosion, more fuel wood, more fodder for livestock and saving endangered mangroves and juniper forests as well as enhanced agriculture productivity in the province.

The project would be completed in six years, with \$200 million as foreign aid from the World Bank-affiliate International Development Association (IDA).

The EcneC meeting, chaired by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, also approved the Lowari Road Tunnel and Access Road Project at the revised cost of Rs27bn. The project is expected to complete by October 2017.

The meeting was informed that the project cost was revised due to increase in the width of the tunnel from 6 metres to 7.5 metres, with a clear height of 5 metres.

The scope of work also includes provision of ventilation and electrical works for road tunnel, construction of platforms, operational buildings along with allied facilities, installations and equipment for snow clearing.

The cost of the project also includes a foreign exchange component of Rs5870m. The National Highway Authority will be the executing authority for the project.

Related to the Lowari Tunnel Project, the 'Improvement and Widening of N-45 Project' was approved at a revised cost of Rs17.42bn. The project is located at Chakdara, Timergara, Akhagram, Dir Kalkatak, Chitral. Both Lowari Tunnel and N-45 Projects are expected to help in the development of the area and provide better facilities to the public.

The construction of Burhan-Havelian Expressway (E-35) was also approved at the revised cost of Rs34.2bn. The project is expected to be completed by September 2017.

The project cost has been revised due to addition of the third lane on either side of the already ongoing project for construction of 59.1km limited access controlled four lane divided motorway.

The revised project is being funded through the Asian Development Bank loan of \$200m. The bank has also agreed to provide remaining loan amount for additional scope of work.

Ecneec also considered and approved the 'Installation of Ship lift and Transfer System and Associated Machinery and Equipment to provide docking and repair facilities to surface ships, submarines and commercial vessels' at the Karachi Shipyard at a revised and rationalised cost of Rs96bn, including a foreign exchange component of Rs36bn.

The facility will cater to commercial vessels up to 7781 tonnes of dead weight net lifting capacity along with establishment of 13 fully equipped repair stations. The project, currently under construction, will be completed by September 2017.

The Ecneec also approved construction of Lahore-Sialkot Motorway at a total cost of Rs45.4bn. The project will be complete in 27 months (Sept, 2016 – Dec, 2018), and envisages construction of 89 km, four-lanes access controlled motorway with 0.6metres New Jersey Barrier as median with allied facilities. The project will be operated on BOT basis.

The committee approved the procurement of 75 diesel electric locomotives project at the total cost of Rs45.5bn with foreign exchange component of Rs31.73bn. These will be completely built units (CBU) used for operation in freight and passenger operations.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1279292>

GROWERS DEMAND SUBSIDY ON ELECTRICITY FOR TUBE-WELLS

Dawn, August 23rd, 2016

HYDERABAD: The Sindh Growers Alliance demanded on Monday the Sindh government should play its role in provision to growers of the federal government's subsidy on electricity for tube-wells.

A meeting of the alliance held here said the subsidy would be of great help to farmers since their counterparts in Punjab were already availing the facility.

The meeting demanded the government rid growers and general public of the revenue department's bribe which was fixed at Rs5,000 for the issuance of a sale certificate.

It pointed out that spurious pesticides being sold openly in market had caused huge monetary losses to farmers as around 80 per cent of pesticides were spurious.

The trade was flourishing because of collusion between agriculture department and pesticides manufacturing companies, it said.

The meeting appealed to the government to ensure that sugar mills started crushing in October according to the relevant laws and sugarcane price was fixed at Rs250 per 40kg.

The government should ask sugar mills to pay the growers quality premium and last season's liabilities as well, it said.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1279309/growers-demand-subsidy-on-electricity-for-tube-wells>

PUNJAB SUFFERS DUE TO 'NON-MAINTENANCE' OF CHASHMA CANAL

Dawn, August 24th, 2016

Ahmad Fraz Khan

LAHORE: Non-maintenance by Wapda and silting up of the 170km Chashma Right Bank Canal (CRBC) has reduced its capacity by 20pc, hurting tail-end farmers over 240,000 acres in Punjab.

The Punjab Irrigation Department has also written to the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda), pointing out its procedural and practical slackness in maintaining the canal, which has jeopardised irrigation supplies to 240,000 acres in the DG Khan and Taunsa areas.

According to the officials of the Irrigation Department, out of total 170km canal route, 106km falls in the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and 64km in Punjab.

According to a tripartite agreement (among chief engineer Chashma barrage, the KP and Punjab), Wapda is supposed to run operation and maintenance (O&M) of the canal whereas Punjab and the KP governments would share expenses (50pc each) for the 106km part falling in the KP.

The KP government would look after all tributaries falling in the canal. For the 64km tail part, Punjab would bear 100pc expense and also look after the flood channels that fall into the canal.

Punjab, however, now accuses Wapda for failing to maintain the canal, which has resulted in reduction of its capacity from 4,879 cusecs to 4,000 cusecs – a loss of some 880 cusecs.

“The Punjab has a case here,” concedes an official of Indus River System Authority (Irsa), who did not want to be named because of provincial sensitivities of the issue.

He said the Punjab troubles are compounded by three factors. First, 20pc reduction directly translates into Punjab shortage because the farmers on the first part draw their share anyway. Second, the KP is exempted from national shortages and can draw as much water as it can which adds to the Punjab’s woes, worsening the shortages downstream.

Third, the law and order is also controlled by the KP government on first 164 kilometers and farmers and anyone who can lay hands on canal water is at liberty to pump out as much water as it can. All these problems have made Punjab special victim of deteriorating conditions at the canal and the province is protesting at every available level, the Irsa official said.

Punjab thinks Wapda is not following the procedures agreed upon in the tripartite agreement for the canal maintenance, says one of its officials.

It was agreed that Wapda would submit maintenance plans and costs to the provincial governments every year, which, on their part, would vet them both and return to Wapda, along with money, for execution. “Unfortunately, Wapda has not been following the procedure and health of canal is deteriorating, creating massive problems for Punjab in the canal command area,” he accused.

The Wapda public relations wing officials were approached by this reporter for the authority’s version on the issue more than two weeks back, but they didn’t give their version despite repeated reminders.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1279605/punjab-suffers-due-to-non-maintenance-of-chashma-canal>

POTABLE WATER: FILTER PLANTS TO BE INSTALLED IN 25,000 VILLAGES IN 18 MONTHS

The Express Tribune, August 24th, 2016.

LAHORE: The government has set a target to install water filtration plants in 25,000 villages of the province in coming 18 months. It has directed the Punjab Saaf Pani Company (PSPC) to complete filtered potable water schemes.

PSPC Managing Director Waseem Ajmal Chaudhry said community-based organisations (Saaf Pani Tanzeems) were being set up at village level where reverse osmosis (RO) water treatment plants, ultra-filtration plants or tube wells with distribution pipelines would be installed.

Chaudhry was addressing a meeting on Tuesday. Additional Chief Secretary Shamail Ahmad Khawaja chaired the meeting. PSPC Manager Hina Ibrar and S&GAD Additional Secretary Sahibzadi Wasima Umer were present.

The PSPC MD said these community-based organisations would provide five marla land in each village for installation of water treatment plants or tube-wells and would be responsible for devising water distribution system at mohalla and village level. “Design consultants hired by the company have already started identification of probable underground potable water reservoirs in thousands of villages in the province. Feasibility studies are being finalised along with the engineering estimates. The bids in this regard have been invited till August 31 and the contracts will be awarded in September,” he said.

He said in the first phase of the project was being completed in 18 southern districts of the province, including Bahawalpur and Rahim Yar Khan. “Eighteen filtration plants have been installed till now. Around 36 RO water treatment plants will be installed till September 15,” he said. Khawaja reviewed the organisational structure and key performance indicators (KPI) of the PSPC during the meeting. He directed the officials to establish a core management team.

A total of 56 million rural residents will benefit from these water filtration plants. The government has already allocated a budgetary grant of Rs30 billion for the project.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1168794/potable-water-filter-plants-installed-25000-villages-18-months/>

DELICATE ISSUE: SC REJECTS KALABAGH DAM REVIEW PLEA

The Express Tribune, August 25th, 2016.

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court declared on Wednesday that the review petition seeking the apex court to instruct the executive for building the Kalabagh dam was not maintainable.

The three-judge bench, headed by Chief Justice Anwar Zaheer Jamali, had reserved judgment on July 18 over a petition filed by the Engineers Study Forum under Article 184 (3) of the Constitution.

AK Dogar, representing the Forum, had argued that the construction of Kalabagh dam was a matter of public importance and the petition pertained to fundamental rights. Dogar said the court could advise parliament in this regard in view of its public importance.

Pakistan, he feared, would be facing a severe water crisis in the next 10 years if Kalabagh dam was not constructed. He requested the SC to grant adequate opportunity for hearing.

However, Justice Gulzar Ahmad, a co-author of the four-page judgment, observed that the review jurisdiction did not allow re-hearing of cases already decided more so when the court “has given conscious and deliberate decision on the point of law ... while disposing of the constitution petition before it”.

Similarly, points not raised at the time of hearing of the constitution petition “cannot be allowed to be raised in the review proceeding”, says the order.

Similarly, the court maintained that the court was not bound to give indefinite hearing to the counsel appearing for a party before it nor the counsel could claim such a privilege.

“It is the function of Court to regulate hearing of the matters fixed before it and at the same time to ensure that it has given adequate time to the counsel for hearing in a given case. What is the adequate time for hearing of a given case, it is not for the counsel appearing for a party before the Court to decide rather it is more a function of the Court.”

It also noted that the court at the time of handing over its judgment was fully conscious of its implications and had in mind all the issues which were raised by AK Dogar. “The review petition accordingly is not maintainable, (and) is dismissed.”

On January 9, 2015, a bench headed by former chief justice Nasirul Mulk, dismissed identical petitions for the construction of Kalabagh dam, observing that it was responsibility of the government to convene a meeting of Council of Common Interests to resolve the issue.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1169463/delicate-issue-sc-rejects-kalabagh-dam-review-plea/>

ILLEGAL HYDRANTS CASE: KWSB 'PATRONISING' WATER MAFIA, OBSERVES SC

The Express Tribune, August 26th, 2016.

Naeem Sahoutara

KARACHI: The Supreme Court (SC) observed on Thursday that the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) was patronising the mafia running the illegal water hydrants and selling the essential commodity to residents at higher prices than tap water.

A three-judge bench, headed by Justice Amir Hani Muslim, also called for a report from the provincial government on efforts being made to resolve the issue of artificial water shortage in Karachi.

The bench, which also comprised justices Mushir Alam and Khilji Arif Hussain, was hearing the applications against operation of illegal hydrants in the city at SC's Karachi registry. The complainants said hydrants had taken illegal connections by damaging the KWSB's lines in different areas of the city.

At the outset of proceedings, the water board's managing director, Misbahuddin Farid, presented a report on action initiated against the illegal hydrants in the city. He maintained that all the illegally set-up water hydrants had been demolished, adding that now only 13 legal hydrants were supplying water to the residents in areas with no pipeline system.

Expressing concerns over the supply of the essential commodity by commercial tankers instead of via the water board's taps, a bench member, Justice Khilji Arif Hussain, remarked, "We grew up drinking tap water but now a poor man needs to buy mineral water." He added that today, the citizens are demanding clean water and access to basic necessities as they have been deprived of these amenities.

Justice Muslim noted that the system of water supply in the city had been destroyed and now the valve-men were supplying the essential commodity to areas as per their own wishes. "The city [has been] left at the mercy of the valve-men, who have held it hostage," he further remarked.

The bench also inquired from the KWSB MD about a system of water supply through which the essential commodity could be supplied to the city impartially. It expressed displeasure over failure of the relevant authorities to install the water meters and remarked that had such meters been installed, the problem of unfair supply would have been resolved by up to 80%. Farid informed that only 20 meters had been installed, while the other 121 could not be installed due to lack of funds.

The bench members noted that water shortage in the city was taking place due to mismanagement on part of the water board. They observed that the water board itself was patronising the tankers mafia, adding that the engineers and other staff members were also getting their share from it.

Farid replied that the city was receiving 550 million gallons of water on a daily basis, which was lesser than its requirements. Justice Muslim told the water utility's chief that it meant every resident should get 18 gallons of water every day.

Expressing serious concerns over the capability of the board's management to run its affairs, the judge asked the MD to outsource the system of water supply if they found it difficult to run it.

The judges also inquired about the number of water tankers in the city. Farid informed that 10,000 private tankers were supplying water in the city. Confronting the officer, the bench members questioned how 13 water hydrants could supply water to 10,000 tankers. There must be more hydrants still operating in city, they added.

The bench warned that it will get the MD's report verified through physical inspections by the district and sessions judges and that action will be taken if the report was found contrary to the factual position.

Farid claimed that the situation of water supply in the city had improved following removal of illegal water hydrants.

Justice Muslim remarked that the action had brought change to this extent that a water tanker, which was earlier sold at Rs1,000 was now being sold at Rs2,500.

The apex court asked the KWSB MD to submit complete details of pending cases in courts related to water hydrants. It also sought record of the statements given by the KWSB officials in the courts.

The bench further directed the provincial finance department authorities to resolve the issue of payment of outstanding dues to the contractors, who had supplied water to the camps set-up in Karachi for the people displaced by floods in 2010.

Farid was directed to hold consultation with the provincial government and present a report in one week. Meanwhile, the provincial law officer was asked to file a report on behalf of the provincial government on steps being taken to resolve the issue of water scarcity in Karachi.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1169954/illegal-hydrants-case-kwsb-patronising-water-mafia-observes-sc/>

WATER SCARCITY IN SINDH RISING: FAO

Dawn, August 27th, 2016

ISLAMABAD: The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has warned that water scarcity in Sindh is on the rise and estimated that over 1.1 million people are now below emergency-level thresholds.

The UN's specialised agency shared findings of two of their latest reports with the the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA).

Surveys were carried out in nine districts — Khairpur, Sanghar, Mirpurkhas, Umerkot, Tharparkar, Badin, Thatta, Jamshoro and Dadu — 33 tehsils, 100 union councils, 272 villages and 3,565 households.

Tharparkar was considered a 'high drought area' followed by Jamshoro and Sanghar. Moderate drought areas were found to be Umerkot, Mirpurkhas, Dadu and Thatta.

Southern Sindh was prone to droughts, the reports said. The current drought spell started towards the end of 2013 and has continued since intermittently for leaner monsoons. The drought was most severe in the western and southeastern Tharparkar regions.

According to the report, the drought was mostly moderate or low in the northeastern region, while the irrigated zones were largely spared by this particular drought.

The 'Sindh Drought Needs Assessment' (SDNA) was carried out to understand the situation and its impacts on livelihood, food security, nutrition, health, water and sanitation in Sindh whereas the objective of the 'Household Economy Analysis' (HEA) field assessment was to assess the impact of the 2013-15 drought on livelihoods in some of the worst drought-affected districts of the province.

The reports highlighted the three categories of households which suffered from the drought.

Pastoralists (livestock breeders) who lost up to two-thirds of their animals and income. Sharecroppers, particularly in the west zone, have been forced to seek alternative livelihoods. They were already among the poorest of households. And the agricultural labourers, particularly women workers who have been hit with dwindling labour opportunities.

In their broader conclusion, the reports say the drought had a negative impact on food security as the reduction in cultivation and harvests increased both unavailability and lack of access to food.

Water scarce areas experienced significantly higher levels of food insecurity, while food insecurity was worsening malnourishment in the southeast parts of Sindh. The reports pointed out that households located in high drought and extreme water scarcity areas, and in southeast zone, had low ownership of assets, higher access to unsafe water sources, difficult and very difficult access to healthcare, high mortality and prevalence of diarrhoea, and poor nutrition.

With regards to water and sanitation, the reports called for the provision of safe drinking water in all areas as priority of the government and partner organisations, in the short term. In medium term, the government should take responsibility to ensure water security and construction of new ponds for water storage.

Strategic water points should be established as part of a more sustainable longer-term effort to ensure access to safe water to the drought-affected communities and to ensure water security.

Households which lost livestock and agricultural production, earning subsistence livelihood, and living in high drought and extreme water scarcity areas required diverse support and assistance, the reports added.

The SDNA revealed that the 2013-15 drought had increased water scarcity in Sindh, causing large reductions in yields and abandonment of cultivation altogether in the most drought-affected zones.

Overall, the report said 17 per cent of households surveyed were found to have poor food consumption, 67.2pc were on a borderline consumption, whereas just 15.8pc were at an acceptable food consumption level.

Households in the irrigated zone and the east zone mostly relied on their own production for cereals. The share of food expenditure was significantly higher for households living under extreme water scarcity conditions. The share of households having poor and borderline food consumption is highest in extreme and moderate water scarcity areas respectively in east zone.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1280236>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM AUGUST 15TH TO AUGUST 21ST 2016

SINDH CM, GOVERNOR LAY FOUNDATION OF FIRST PHASE OF K-IV WATER PROJECT

Dawn, August 15th, 2016

Hasan Mansoor

KARACHI: Sindh Governor Dr Ishratul Ibad and Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Sunday performed the groundbreaking ceremony of the first phase of the long-delayed Greater Karachi Bulk Water Supply Scheme, commonly known as K-IV.

The first phase of the Rs15.25 billion project will add 260 million gallons daily water to the city's system in 2018.

The groundbreaking ceremony of the same project had earlier been performed by then chief minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah in June 2015. However, work on the project could not begin due to funding issues for more than a year.

The 50 per cent cost of the project is being borne by the federal government. The Frontier Works Organisation (FWO) would construct a 75-kilometre gravity canal system, two pumping stations, four filtration plants and as many storage lagoons. The water would be brought from Keenjhar Lake.

While thanking the federal government for sharing half of the project's cost, CM Shah recalled the services of his predecessor and said that Qaim Ali Shah was determined to complete the K-IV project even in the case of the federal government's refusal to release its share.

"This is a big gift for the people of Karachi and I am giving it to my citizens today," he said and thanked Governor Ibad for his effort in launching the scheme.

Mr Shah said water shortage in Karachi was one of the serious problems and, therefore, his government launched the K-IV project to provide 260 MGD water to the city on a priority basis. "But this is not enough I would promise to launch K-IV phase-II on next Aug 14 to provide another 260 MGD to households as well as industries."

He said when he was finance minister he had allocated enough funds for the K-IV because it was envisaged in 2007 but was kept on the backburner. The former CM had also given special attention to the project.

"We all, Sharjeel Memon, the former local government minister, and Jam Khan Shoro, the sitting local government minister, and the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board had decided to award the K-IV project to the FWO," he said, adding that then CM Qaim Ali Shah had relaxed public procurement rules and allowed the award of the contract to the FWO because "we all believed in the quality of its work".

Mr Shah said: “You [Karachiites] may have to face another water shortage next summer, but after that you will have enough water to beat the heat,” he said, adding that the K-IV would be completed within two years and “without waiting for its completion I will start K-IV phase-II next Aug 14 and again the FWO will be building it.”

He said that the Sindh government had given its land, resources for the project and “I am thankful to the officers who worked hard to approve its plan”.

He added that a Rs10bn Karachi package had been launched, and out of 19 of its schemes he had approved 14 so far while the approval of other schemes was under way.

Governor Ibad appreciated the collective efforts of the Sindh government and the KWSB. He thanked the FWO chief for starting the project with his commitment. “This project has finally been launched after a delay of many years.”

Dr Ibad said with the completion of the full scheme additional 520 MGD potable water would be supplied to the citizens of Karachi.

He said that the project was of immense importance for the city and hoped that after its completion the problem of water shortage would be eliminated.

He further said that the launch of the project was a challenge but the bigger task was to ensure the availability of required water from the Indus River System Authority (Irsa), which was managed before the initiation of the project.

“Those who contributed towards arranging this additional water from Irsa should be commended by all of us,” he said.

He lauded the federal government for sharing the project’s cost and said he was thankful to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

He also appreciated the personal interest of CM Murad Ali Shah in the project and said the pledge by him to start the second phase of the project next year was welcome news for the citizens.

The governor said with the completion of K-IV and other development projects, the infrastructure of basic amenities would improve considerably and people of Sindh would feel a difference soon.

He appreciated efforts of law enforcement agencies, particularly of the Rangers, for the restoration of peace in Karachi.

FWO director general Maj-Gen Muhammad Afzal highlighted the scope of the K-IV project and vowed to complete it within two years.

Earlier, the CM, governor along with minister Nisar Khuhro and Jam Khan Shoro arrived at the venue on the Superhighway in a helicopter. They jointly unveiled the plaque to formally perform the groundbreaking of the project.

Rangers DG Maj-Gen Bilal Akbar, additional chief secretary (dev) Muhammad Waseem and KWSB chief Misbahuddin were also present.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1277560/sindh-cm-governor-lay-foundation-of-first-phase-of-k-iv-water-project>

DASU DAM AFFECTED SEEK AGREEMENT

Dawn, August 19th, 2016

MANSEHRA: An 80-member committee of those affected by the Dasu hydropower project has asked the government to ink an agreement with them on nine points mutually agreed last week otherwise they would not allow the work on the project site.

Members of the committee met at Barsin area in Dasu to evolve a future line of action as they said that the district administration was yet to sign an agreement with them. They said that if the administration delayed inking of an agreement with them they would be left with no other option but to decide their future strategy besides halting work on the dam site.

Members of the committee, including Maulana Sabir Jamil, Haji Gulab and Shamsur Rehman, spoke on the occasion. They said that prices of the built up property be brought at par with the built up property of people of Tangir and Darail.

“We also demand Wapda to vacate lands of local people which is occupied by it without payment,” said one of the members. They also said that the agreement should ensure employment to the local people, as they were being ignored in the jobs at the dam project.

They rejected the survey conducted earlier and demanded that a new survey should be conducted under the World Bank guidelines. They also addressed the deputy commissioner, Kohistan, asking him to immediately finalise an agreement on their demands.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1278547>

SENATE BODY CONCERNED OVER DELAY IN BALOCHISTAN WATER STORAGE PROJECTS

Dawn, August 20th, 2016

Kalbe Ali

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Planning and Development on Friday expressed concern over delay in launching of water storage projects in Balochistan.

At a briefing held at the Parliament House, Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal updated members of the committee on the progress of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and other development projects.

The minister said the most important water project in Balochistan was Katchi canal.

His statement, however, angered Senator Nawabzada Saifullah Magsi who said the Katchi canal project was launched in 1998 and around Rs55 billion had been spent on it, but it was yet to be completed. He said it would be difficult for the project to take off because of a number of constraints, such as the topography of the area and the long length of the canal.

Senator Magsi said when he was provincial minister in 2007-8 a summary was moved to construct 200 small dams to collect floodwater. The federal government had told the Balochistan government that 100 dams would be constructed in the first phase. But, he added, only 20 dams were being claimed to have been constructed since then.

He said the Bolan dam was severely damaged in the 1976 floods and its reconstruction was stalled due to some problems. There was a long list of water projects which were incomplete for years, he added.

Officials of the Planning Commission informed the committee that 6,000 cusecs of water would be provided to Balochistan after completion of the Katchi canal project. But, they added, around Rs100 billion was required for the second phase of the project.

Secretary of the Planning Commission Yousaf Naseem Khokhar informed the committee that a survey was being conducted to determine the amount of floodwater in Balochistan.

At this, Senator Sirajul Haq said that during his tenure as provincial minister in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa he had come to know that a number of such surveys were already available. He said these were conducted by British rulers of India. There was also a topography survey on Balochistan, he said, adding that these documents could be used because they were accurate and practical.

The suggestion of Senator Haq, however, did not receive any response from the officials of the Planning Commission.

Briefing the committee on the CPEC project, Ahsan Iqbal said goods transportation from Gwadar to Quetta and Ratodero would begin in December.

He rejected reservations of senators from Balochistan on the CPEC project, saying that the province would be major beneficiary of the project.

Chairman of the Committee Tahir Mashhadi said for China the CPEC project was a business and Pakistan could benefit from this project only by having a proper planning and implementation strategy.

Ahsan Iqbal highlighted education and electricity projects being launched in Balochistan.

He said the government had completed 95 per cent of projects launched under the Public Sector Development Programme over the past two years.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1278798>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM AUGUST 8TH TO AUGUST 14TH 2016

QUESTIONS ABOUT WATER PROJECT FOR QUETTA

Dawn, August 8th, 2016

Shahzada Zulfiqar

The government of Balochistan intends to embark upon an ambitious plan of providing water to Quetta from Pat Feeder and Kachhi canals through a 271-km-long pipeline, but the project has already set off a debate among experts on water issues.

The total cost of the project has been estimated at Rs40 billion (56 per cent of the current Public Sector Development Plan — Rs 71bn) and it is scheduled for completion in three years.

In the current financial year Rs10bn has been earmarked for feasibility report, mobilisation work, consultant fee and land acquisition.

The pipeline, with a diameter of 56 inches, will run from Naseerabad to Quetta. It will pass through the districts of Lahri, Sibi, Kachhi and Mastung — areas which feature plains as well as mountainous terrain.

All these districts constitute a high-risk zone where Baloch militants have frequently blown up power pylons, gas pipelines and rail tracks. Attacks on passenger trains and buses are not uncommon either.

Although officials of the government departments concerned are optimistic about its success, water experts have raised questions about its safety as well as operational and management costs.

Officials of the Public Health Engineering Department discount safety fears, saying that the project will run parallel to other networks like roads, rail tracks and the Sui gas pipeline. They contend that trains and buses carrying hundreds of passengers pass through these areas safely every day, barring the isolated incident. “The government cannot afford to sit idle on account of safety concerns,” quipped Sheikh Mohammad Nawaz, Secretary, Public Health Engineering, while talking to Dawn.

He suggested that the government should make it unlawful for people living in the districts in question to draw water from the pipeline. “Otherwise, the shortage in Quetta won’t go away.”

The project envisages pumping of 120 cusecs of water with the help of eight pumping stations from a height of 350 to 7,000 feet above sea level.

The general public has shown an almost habitual cynicism, predicting that the project will, as usual, turn out to be a jackpot for a handful of politicians and bureaucrats.

Another question, and a technical one, is that how 120 cusecs will be pumped from a height of 350 feet to a height of 7,000ft with the help of eight power stations on different sites. And at what cost?

“It is virtually impossible to pump water round the clock with eight power stations, each having six 240 horsepower motors, while the whole system needs an uninterrupted electricity supply,” an official of the Planning and Development Department asserted.

At present, the official hastened to add, Balochistan’s interior gets only four hours of uninterrupted power supply, on an average.

He argues that naturally the pumping stations will either be powered with the help of fuel-fired generators or solar energy or a separate power house having a capacity of 100 megawatts will have to be set up.

Sheikh Nawaz, the PHE secretary, defends the project, saying that an expenditure of Rs40bn for two million people was not uneconomical. “Considering its utility, the cost is nothing and it should be executed on priority.”

According to him, there is not much groundwater near Quetta while dam projects like Mangi, Halak and Burj Aziz have yet to take off.

Moreover, he warned, since Quetta was not in the monsoon range, these dams might go dry.

Sixty million gallons of water per day (MGD) are needed for Quetta’s two million people while the combined projected output of the three dams would be, at best, 35MGD.

OTHER OPTIONS: Dr Shahid Ahmad, an Islamabad-based water expert who has been studying different projects for over eight years in Balochistan, feels that the project can be executed, but at the same time considers the security, operational and maintenance cost aspect as unfavourable.

“My suggestion is that cheaper options should be adopted, for example a network of small and big dams around Quetta to solve the water problem,” he adds.

The military authorities are also monitoring the whole process —ranging from inviting proposals for feasibility report to its completion.

According to sources, NESPAK and FWO are being engaged to expedite the pace of work. “I am very much optimistic because military authorities are doing everything under their supervision, but If NESPAK is co-opted, it will reduce the odds for success,” one of them said.

“The NAB has investigated a project undertaken by NESPAK in Gwadar and found some wrongdoing,” a senior official recalled.

The organisation undertook water treatment projects on Sabzal and Samungli roads in Quetta, but has yet to complete them even though many months have lapsed since expiry of the deadline, another official observed.

Most of these officials recommend hiring of foreign companies, especially the Chinese ones, to execute this gigantic project.

Some officials have said the government should organise seminars and public forums to seek the opinions of experts and the general public before embarking upon such an ambitious undertaking.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1276120>

AUSTRALIA TO INVEST AUD11M IN ENERGY, WATER MANAGEMENT IN PAKISTAN

The Express Tribune, August 9th, 2016.

Peer Muhammad

ISLAMABAD: The Australian government will continue assisting Pakistan over the next four years in dealing with water, food and energy security issues, said Australian High Commissioner Margaret Adamson on Monday.

“Australia will invest AUD11 million in phase-II of the Sustainable Development Investment Portfolio (SDIP), which is focused on improving energy and water management in the Indus Basin,” said the ambassador.

“Phase-II will build on the phase-I – an AUD4 million investment, which helped strengthen the capacity of Pakistan officials in taking an integrated approach to water resource management,” she added.

The SDIP is a 12-year programme which began in 2013 with an aim to promote water, food and energy security in South Asia through improved management of shared water resources, renewable energy cooperation, sustainable climate, resilient agricultural practices and strengthened national capacity and coordination.

Adamson said Australia was working with Pakistan to help adopt efficient water-use practices at the farm and community levels and to encourage better coordination in water resource management at the provincial level to mitigate the effects of climate change and increasing population pressures on water availability.

“Australian experts have been assisting Pakistan since the 1980s in water management including water harvesting and crop water productivity in Balochistan, irrigation efficiency for mango and citrus orchards in Punjab and Sindh and construction of community-managed drinking water and drainage facilities in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P),” said Adamson.

She said the SDIP phase-II would promote best practices in water management, develop and strengthen the capacity and innovation in Indus Basin communities, which would help them adapt, innovate and cope with the risks related to climatic and non-climatic factors.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1158309/sustainable-development-australia-invest-aud11m-energy-water-management/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM AUGUST 1ST TO AUGUST 7TH 2016

RIVER INDUS IN LOW FLOOD, SAYS COMMISSION

Dawn, August 1st, 2016

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Flood Commission (FFC) has said that River Indus continues to flow in low flood at Kalabagh-Chashma reach while Rivers Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi and Sutlej are in normal flow.

According to an FFC report issued here on Sunday, river flows and reservoir elevations indicate that Tarbela and Mangla reservoirs are at elevations of 1,519.3 feet and 1,233.2 feet respectively — 30.7 feet and 8.8 feet below their maximum conservation levels of 1,550 feet and 1,242 feet.

The combined live storage capacity of Tarbela, Chashma and Mangla reservoirs is 11.59MAF as compared to the last year's 13.11MAF.

The report says that rain-thunderstorm is likely at isolated places of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Islamabad and Kashmir while mainly hot and humid weather will prevail in other parts of the country in the next 24 hours.

Rain is likely in Malakand, Hazara, Peshawar, Mardan, Kohat, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Lahore and Sargodha divisions, Islamabad and Kashmir.

Light rain is likely along the Sindh-Makran coast.

According to a Met Office official, heat low lies over northeast-Balochistan and its adjoining area.

Weak monsoon currents are penetrating upper and central parts of the country.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1274562>

MICROHYDEL PROJECTS, AFFORDABLE ELECTRICITY

Dawn, Business & Finance weekly, August 1st, 2016

Mubarak Zeb Khan

SINCE it took power in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa some three years ago, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf- led coalition government has intensified efforts to set up micro-hydel projects in the province.

In all 75 micro-hydel projects of 3.1MW have been completed. The remaining 281 projects, due to be completed by 2019, will generate 31.9MW electricity.

When operational these projects will provide cheap and off-grid electricity to 350,000 people in far flung areas. The target is to enhance the number of micro-hydel projects to 1,000 to cater to 1m consumers.

Being executed by Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organisation (Pedo), the province has added 105MW of electricity since 2007.

Pedo's CEO Akbar Ayub Khan told Dawn that the Asian Development Bank has showed its willingness to invest \$300m in the construction of medium size power projects in the province. The ADB is organising a consortium to raise \$1bn.

Mr Khan said Pedo has developed an investor-friendly KP Hydro Power Policy 2016 and associated guidelines. The investors' response is very positive. He also disclosed that Pedo had offered seven projects with a generating capacity of 668MW to the private sector, involving an investment worth of \$2bn. It is, for the first time, that it has received an overwhelming response from 56 companies for pre-qualification.

Pedo plans to build 21 long-term projects which would generate 3,631MW of energy at a cost of around \$12bn. Since the government does not have enough funds to finance these projects, it is trying to bring in private investors, he said.

The feasibility studies of 18 projects have been completed. Of these, international tenders have been floated for six projects to invite private investors.

A 57MW project started by the previous government has been completed by the current regime. Of these, Machai and Ranolia were completed in July 2015. But they are not generating power because the transmission lines are not yet ready and the province is losing Rs40m every month.

Pedo had made payments to NTDC for extension of transmission lines to Machai, Mardan (2.6MW) and Ranolia, Kohistan (17MW) plants, which together generated 19.6MW of hydro power. The delay by the federal entity has held up the operations.

Pesco's arrears to the Pehur Power Plant (12MW) have also piled up to Rs900m. It is only paying 20pc for the electricity supply. In February 2016, the federal government agreed to evolve a mechanism to settle the matter.

Besides this the PTI government has also started work on five projects having a total power generating capacity of 214MW which are at various stages of implementation. One or two out of them may be completed by 2019 and the remaining during the tenure of the next government.

Construction has been initiated on three projects — Jabori, Mansehra (10.2MW), Karora, Shangla (11.8MW) and Koto, Dir (40.8MW) – and formalities are at an advance stage for awarding contracts for two other projects — Lawi, Chitral (69MW) and Matiltan, Swat (84MW).

The province is negotiating with the ADB to sponsor a mega project of 300MW which will either be constructed in Balakot or Chitral.

KP has a Rs15bn hydropower development fund to initiate these projects and expects to receive past arrears of Rs70bn from the centre. The timely release of the funds can largely resolve the issue of cash required to initiate work on the identified projects.

The KP power policy revolves around two basic themes — an assured supply of cheap electricity to private sector-led management of the industrial zones and cheaper electricity offered to investors near the gas extracting spots.

Under the proposed policy, industrialists will be encouraged to set up their factories near hydropower generation sites. Electricity would be supplied to such industries from the new projects through wheeling charges by using the Wapda distribution network.

For example, Gadoon Amazai Industrial Estate in Swabi district will be offered electricity at concessional rates and priority basis from Pehur High Level-I hydropower plant. Investors in Dargai, located in semi-tribal Malakand Agency (earlier identified for setting up an industrial zone), will be offered electricity from the Malakand-III hydropower plant.

The Malakand-III power station generates 553m kilowatt per hour (kWh) of electricity annually. The cost of generation is around 2.18 cents per kWh. Wapda gets this electricity at a cheaper rate.

The PTI-led government intends to revise its agreements with Wapda, to get a higher per unit rate, and secure a maximum share of power for the industrial zone to be set up near plant sites.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1274540>

RAINWATER HARVESTING

Dawn, Business & Finance weekly, August 1st, 2016

Dr Rai Niaz Ahmad

PAKISTAN has been facing severe floods and droughts due to a lack of planning during the monsoon for the last many years.

There is a dire need to formulate a comprehensive national policy on water as the country is going to face an acute water shortage in the near future.

An increasing population makes it imperative to save each drop of precipitation. As 80pc rainfalls occur during the monsoon season, within 2-3 months, the storage of rainwater is the only way to address water and food security in the country.

Monsoon has set in and it is time to store every drop of water, from households to ponds and from ponds to dams. The Meteorology Department can help using its advanced forecasting system to gauge the quantity of rain expected, with reference to time and location.

No doubt the biggest source of storing rainwater is by constructing big dams which are imperative on a long term basis to address our current and future energy and water needs.

Looking at the climate and topography, most of the rains occur in mountains followed by Potohar and then the plain areas. The range of rainfall lies between 200-1500mm per year, much of it in the short span of two months.

The rainfall on mountain tops needs big dams while the monsoons in pre-mountainous areas can be stored in small ponds.

There is a potential of over 13,000 ponds in just four districts of Potohar. Water stored in small ponds can change the traditional agriculture of the Potohar to the production of fruits and vegetables, not only for domestic consumption but also for export to the international market.

Our agriculture is not merely canal based agriculture but relies significantly on groundwater extraction.

The canal system was designed to irrigate only 70pc cropping intensity which has gone up to 200pc and most of the irrigation water is being pumped. This may eventually play havoc if not properly recharged.

The rain-fed ponds also would address water recharge. The lack of groundwater recharge may lead to the dire consequences of desertification. Groundwater recharge can be done by various techniques such as rainwater harvesting at household level in urban areas, developing ponds in our parks and farms, plugging our flood drains and even diverting our river flows to facilitate artificial groundwater recharge.

The most important concern is about water waste. The inhabitants of the five rivers' land should now realise that they need to save and conserve water.

The situation is further worsened as increasingly contaminated and brackish water is also left unattended, leading to groundwater pollution.

As a nation we have to come up with solutions to overcome water scarcity. The solution lies in adopting international best practices.

Our scientists and researchers have successfully customised and developed successful models, which, if adopted, can result in a paradigm shift in our efforts to improve the livelihood of the people.

We at Arid Agriculture University developed models for urban and agricultural rainwater harvesting systems.

In the first stage a rainwater harvesting pond was developed at the university in order to store rain water from roof tops, roads and streets. In addition to groundwater recharge for existing tubewells in the university and nearby pumping units this water is used to irrigate plants, meadows and crop experimentation within the university.

In the second stage five ponds have been built on the area of 2,200 kanal of land with collaboration of the Higher Education Commission.

The 80-acre feet of water is stored at University Research Farms.

The Agency for Barani Area Development has tried to store rain water in sloppy and low lying areas by building mini dams.

It is very difficult to take downward water to upward areas, and thus the command area of Potohar could not be developed for fruit farms, flowers and vegetable farms.

GIS and Remote sensing surveys reveal that as many as 13,000 ponds can be built in the Potohar.

Collective efforts for rainwater harvesting even in the irrigated areas by individual farmers at their farms can bring a revolution in livelihood in this country along with a solution to the groundwater recharge for future use.

We as a nation have to move for zero runoff at every level to minimise flood devastations in terms of precious lives, lands and infrastructure, and as an answer to our increasing water shortage.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1274534>

CONSTRUCTION OF DASU HYDROPOWER PROJECT IN THE DOLDRUMS

Dawn, August 2nd, 2016

Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: The timely construction of \$2.5 billion first phase of the Dasu hydropower project is in the doldrums owing to petty disputes among stakeholders which may lead to cancellation of international funding.

A senior official at the Economic Affairs Division told Dawn that they feared cancellation of \$1.1 billion loan agreement by the World Bank on Nov 1 this year owing to the inability of the stakeholders — the federal and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governments and Wapda — to complete land acquisition.

The acquisition of about 80,000 kanals of land is a fully funded component of the World Bank, having a precondition for its completion by Oct 31, 2016. The 4,320 megawatt (MW) Dasu HPP worth about \$4.5 billion is one of the top-priority hydropower projects under the 2013 Power Policy and Vision-2025.

The World Bank is providing \$590 million loan along with a \$460m credit limit as partial risk guarantee for external commercial financing. Mid-term review of loan agreements has to be completed by Oct 31 this year. Separately, Wapda has contracted about Rs144bn from commercial banks to make available matching financing to meet local expenses.

At the heart of the dispute is a claim of the KP government to charge 2.5 per cent service charges from Wapda on account of land acquisition. This is unacceptable to Wapda.

“The justification being created by the Government of KP for fleecing 2.5pc charges is by declaring Wapda as a private company,” said a senior Wapda official requesting anonymity.

He said such charges had no legal authority and particularly when all services were already being paid for by the federal government through Wapda — a 100pc state-owned entity. This was also acknowledged by a former senior member of the Board of Revenue of the KP government.

The dispute has lingered on for more than 10 months now and in the process non-payment of compensation against the land has developed anxiety and dissatisfaction among people affected by the project who have now started protest and forcibly stopped construction works on many occasions. Violent protests are hampering construction activities which would delay the completion of the project with huge financial implications for all the three major stakeholders.

As a result of non-payment, the KP government had failed to stop illegal construction by locals on the land being marked for the project.

“The implication of such unlawful action would be alteration in the land categories causing thereby further increase in already negotiated land price. The district administration is unable to stop the process and the total financial bearing of this alteration is approximated to be Rs8-10bn,” an official said.

While a spokesman for the KP government did not reply when requested for comment over the issue, Zafaryab Khan, the spokesman for the water and power ministry, confirmed there were some issues with the project but declined to go into details.

He said that funds for land acquisition had been transferred to the provincial government.

“The land acquisition is a provincial matter and the federal government is taking up the matter with the provincial government to remove irritants,” he said.

After completion of the first stage, the project would generate about 33.5GWh per day, translating into Rs335m per day (at Rs10 per kWh). The Wapda official said that a 10-month delay in payment of land compensation would cause Rs100bn economic loss to the nation besides Rs11bn revenue loss to the KP government on account of net hydel profit at the rate of Rs37m per day.

As the cost of land acquisition is being funded by the World Bank besides the overall project cost the problem becomes more precarious because of the conditionality imposed by the World Bank that the amount earmarked for land acquisition must be disbursed within two years from the loan effectiveness, which in this case will expire in November, and if not achieved the funding would be withdrawn by the World Bank.

The project is to be constructed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on the Indus River, about 350km from Islamabad and 240km upstream of Tarbela Dam. Being executed by Wapda, the first phase of the project is scheduled for completion by 2019. Its second phase of another 2,160MW has to be completed by 2022. The priority project is being developed through the World Bank support to modernise and expand energy supply in the country. About 80,000 kanals of land is required for the project in Kohistan district.

In order to address concerns of local people, the federal government decided to have negotiated settlement at market rates through the provincial government instead of forced compulsory land acquisition. With approved rates after negotiations, Wapda had put Rs1.5bn at the disposal of district collector of Kohistan for the payment of land and property compensation of priority areas to the affected people.

Another Rs52.66m was also paid to the Kohistan official for establishment of a Land Acquisition and Assessment Unit, which also includes incentives for revenue staff along with deputy commissioner’s office and the revenue staff transferred from other districts to complete the land record.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1274778>

‘LAKES SHOULD BE BUILT TO STORE FLOOD WATER’

Dawn, August 2nd, 2016

ISLAMABAD: During a meeting of the National Assembly Standing Committee on Climate Change on Monday, Inspector General of Forests Syed Mahmood Nasir said that instead of being fearful of floods, arrangements should be made for storing flood water and putting it to use.

The Ramsar Advisory Mission paid a visit to Pakistan in 2012, after the 2010 floods and gave a number of recommendations including the establishment of a coordinating authority for the sustainable management of the Indus River Basin, Mr Nasir told the meeting, which was chaired by Hafeezur Rehman Khan Drishak.

The mission had suggested the government move away from its policy of using a hard-engineering approach only for flood control and should also consider soft-engineering approaches.

A number of sites along the Indus River were also identified for flood management, which will also improve the lives of local communities, Mr Nasir said.

He added that China has also faced problems with floods in the past and that it had then decided to construct lakes near the Yangtze River.

“The lakes stores 20 billion cubic metres of flood water from which China produces 23,600 MW of electricity. Crops and fish farming have also improved,” he said.

“There is no department to look into the floods issue, The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is responsible for fire fighting. Wetland Authorities should be established in the provinces as the irrigation departments are not doing anything,” he said. Flood water can be stored in natural depressions, the IG Forests said.

“A Chinese company has said it can propose the flood issue if a project is included in the China Pakistan Economic Corridor,” he added.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1274824>

ACUTE WATER SHORTAGE CRIPPLES EXPORT-ORIENTED UNITS: SSAI
Business Recorder August 3, 2016

KARACHI: President of Site Superhighway Association of Industry (SSAI) Mehtabuddin Chawla has demanded of the Sindh Chief Minister, Governor and the D.G. Rangers to ensure that the industrial estate get its share of water according to its allocated quota.

“Due to water shortage, a large number of export-oriented industries have been closed and more are on the verge of closure,” he said here in a statement on Monday. He added that despite repeated requests to the Managing Director of Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KW&SB), no improvement was seen. He said that acute shortage of water supply being experienced by the export-oriented manufacturing sector was not only crippling this vital sector of economy but was compelling large number of such industries to close down their units and lay-off workers.

The SSAI president lauded the role of the rangers saying that Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) had restored peace in Karachi brining a dramatic fall in the gory crimes such as murders, kidnapping for ransom and extortion.

He asked the government to give special powers to Rangers at least for three years to save economy from further damage and revive confidence of the investors.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2016/08/02/3-page/781959-news.html>

HUB DAM TO START SUPPLYING WATER IN A WEEK
The Express Tribune, August 2nd, 2016.

KARACHI: Water supply to District West will finally be resumed after the inauguration of the first phase of a Rs300 million project that will allow Hub Dam to supply 50 million gallons per day.

Commenting on the benefits of the project, local government minister Jam Khan Shoro said that the project will benefit Karachi, especially District West, as a pump has been installed that can fetch water from the dam’s dead level. Before this project, he said that Hub Dam used to supply 100MGD to the city through its canal system but this came to a halt in February this year after the lack of rain.

Though the water level has only risen three feet above the dead level after rainfall in the dam’s catchment areas, the minister believes that soon they will be able to fetch 50 million gallons of water after the installation of two additional pumps.

Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) managing director Misbahuddin Farid told The Express Tribune that they had to find an alternative source of water for District West and they had an eye on the remaining water in the dead level of Hub Dam. The proposal to fetch the remaining water with the help of additional pumps was presented to then chief minister Qaim Ali Shah in April and later the KWSB was asked to start work on the project. Farid added that the system will start pumping water after a week.

If there is more rainfall in the catchment areas, the situation will be under control and they will be able to continue water supply till the end of the year, said Farid.

A superintendent engineer of District West, Owais Malik, said he believes that the supply will only last for three months. From the 50MGD additional supply, 20MGD will be wasted in line losses but if we manage to get 30MGD then the supply, which now comes every 10 days, will come every five days.

Malik explained that his district has five towns and water is supplied through four different lines. He said till now his district was receiving water through the 72-inch-diameter North East Karachi line and, with addition of water from the Hub Dam, the situation will surely improve.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1153731/hub-dam-start-supplying-water-week/>

MOST WATER SOURCES IN ISLAMABAD UNSAFE, SAYS REPORT
The Express Tribune, August 4th, 2016.

Danish Hussain

ISLAMABAD: Around 53 per cent of water samples taken from filtration plants and other sources in Islamabad contain high bacteria.

A report submitted to the Islamabad mayor's office by the Water Quality Control Cell (WQCC) of the civic agency shows that along with filtration plants, water from a number of tube wells and overhead tanks is also contaminated and unsafe for human consumption.

In late July, the WQCC collected a total of 55 samples from different water sources across Islamabad. "Of the 55 samples, 26 samples were found safe to drink, while the remaining 29 samples were found unsafe," says the report, which was issued on July 29.

Incidentally, while a few areas had at least one source of clean drinking water, sectors G-6, G-7, and I-9 had zero sources of clean water between them, forcing residents who cannot afford bottled water to travel long distances to get water or risk falling sick.

"'Unsafe' means that the water contains excessive levels of bacteria, chloride, and fluoride," said WQCC Deputy Director Nadir Hussain Soomro.

Soomro attributed a number of factors to the appalling test result, including irregular cleaning of supply lines and overhead tanks, and setting up tube wells which are too shallow to provide clean water.

Although the issue of inconsistent water quality at filtration plants is well-known among citizens, the extent of contamination in secondary water sources is worrying.

Only three of the eight tube wells checked provided acceptable water, while two of the ten water tanks tested were safe to take a drink from. Earlier this year, the cell tested 11 water filtration plants, seven of which were unsafe to drink from.

Soon after the report was issued, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif directed the CDA to ensure the supply of "superior" quality water to residents of Islamabad. The report suggests the directive has been ignored. Islamabad Mayor Sheikh Ansar Aziz admitted that after inspecting some of the filtration plants and overhead tanks across Islamabad, he found their condition to be "unsatisfactory".

He said that majority of the water filtration plants were not being run by the CDA as the civic agency has outsourced them to private contractors.

"The WQCC report has just been released but it has not arrived at my table," Aziz said, adding that action would be taken against those responsible.

The mayor said that he was working with local government representatives to improve the situation while noting that it would take some time to make discernable progress.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1155419/alive-water-water-sources-islamabad-unsafe-says-report/>

NEELUM-JHELMUM POWER PROJECT SET TO MISS DEADLINE

Dawn, August 4th, 2016

Ahmad Fraz Khan

LAHORE: The 969MW Neelum-Jhelum hydropower project is set to miss even repeatedly extended deadline of June 2017 and create more troubles for the PML-N government to overcome loadshedding and fulfil its electoral promise of smooth power supplies before next elections in 2018.

The first unit of the project was scheduled to come online by mid-2017, followed by three more units by the end of the year. The project authorities have now informed the Prime Minister Secretariat that the “force majeure activities regarding reinforced concrete lining, grouting and drain repairs may take additional time of four to five months”.

The Ministry of Water and Power on July 27 in its “most immediate fax” message asked Wapda Chairman Zafar Mahmood to “furnish a detailed report on seeking additional time of four to five month, currently identified by the project authorities to the ministry, on “top priority” basis for onward submission to the Prime Minister Office”.

The Prime Minister Delivery Unit (PMDU) had reviewed the progress on July 18 and had a detailed review of steel lining, Jhelum River crossing, tunnel boring machine targets, concrete lining, Rock Filled Dam and overall concrete works, update on power house and financial position.

In their report to the ministry and the PMDU, project authorities later said that the PMDU expressed its concern about the concrete lining of the project and said that at current rate (475 metre per month) of concrete lining, the activity would be extended to Nov 2017. The project authorities, however, assured the PM team that the pace of lining would be enhanced after Aug 2016 when muck work stops.

About the Rock Filled Dam, the PMDU “showed its serious concern regarding progress at the dam earthwork. The PMDU was told that there were “serious seepage and water control issues” within the dam. The project authorities, however, held out an assurance that these issues would be addressed very soon and the pace of work would be speeded up as all construction material is available on the site. Nevertheless, the PMDU expressed its concern that on every presentation, the quantity of material of the dam is changed.

Though the Wapda chairman, while addressing a ceremony at the site on March 30, had declared overcoming all financial hurdles and having finances in place, the PMDU was told that though 83 per cent funds had been spent, the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) had not released even a single penny out of its signed loan of \$100 million.

A consortium of local banks have agreed to provide Rs100 billion Sukuk facility and additional funding of \$576m is being arranged by the Exim Bank of China.

These are difficult times for the PML-N government as all its hydle initiatives were in doldrums, claims a former member (water) of Wapda. The Tarbella extension plan, which was supposed to contribute 1,410MW by June next year, has already been in trouble and its acceleration has almost been abandoned.

The first phase of Dasu project is totally uncertain and now the NJHP is seeking additional time of five months. It means that the project would miss the monsoon next year and be online somewhere early 2018, when rivers are already dry and elections fever already on.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1275315/>

SHC ALLOWS INCLUSION OF SEPA AS RESPONDENT IN PLEA AGAINST WATER RESERVOIR AT THAR COAL SITE

Dawn, August 4th, 2016

HYDERABAD: A division bench of the Sindh High Court, Hyderabad circuit, comprising Justice Munib Akhtar and Justice Anwar Hussain has allowed the application filed by the counsel for the Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company (SECMC) asking the court to implead/add the Sindh Environmental Protection Agency (Sepa) as respondent in a constitutional petition, which challenges the construction of a dam in Thar Coal Project block-II in Islamkot, Mithi district.

The court allowed the application with consent of the petitioners' counsel, Ayatullah Khowaja, who also sought to implead the Sindh wildlife department to be added as necessary party. Justice Akhtar asked him to file an application which would be examined by the court.

SECMC counsel Mayhar Kazi contended before the court that the petitioners' counsel had filed a rejoinder in which some new points were raised, which were not part of the petition as the petition's contents were too generalised in nature.

He requested the court to allow him to file a surrejoinder in response to one filed by Mr Khowaja. Sher Ali Rizvi appeared on behalf of the Sindh Coal Authority (SCA) and Barrister Salman Mirza represented the contractor, ie the Balochistan Construction Company and both sought copy of the petition. Mr Khowaja filed his rejoinder in response to counter affidavit filed by the SECMC.

In the rejoinder, the petitioners' counsel said that the environmental impact assessment (EIA) study was not in respect of environmental impacts of the project at Gurano so work was being done sans meeting provisions of Sepa 2014 Act.

The respondent concealed the fact that initially in violation of Sepa Act 2014 they obtained approval under initial environmental examination (IEE) and commenced construction in May 2015 which had to be stopped after community's protest. Then respondent was forced to submit the environmental impact assessment (EIA) and got it approved clandestinely, he added.

He said that the EIA's approval was conditional. Out of 37.5km pipeline of saline water reservoir, 28.6km is located in Rann of Kutch Wildlife Sanctuary, a declared wildlife sanctuary under Aug 17, 1980's notification thus disposal of effluent and laying pipeline violate the Sindh Wildlife Protection Ordinance 1972.

Respondents failed to mitigate adverse environmental effects. Only half of effluent would evaporate and remaining would be environmentally hazardous and conditions under Sepa's approval are not complied with to date, he said.

SECMC, in counter-affidavit, said that the petition was liable to be dismissed. It said, a committee formed by the Sepa director general asked the SCA to submit water quality analysis which was done in Nov 2015, addressing all concerns of committee and those raised at public hearing. On analysis's basis Sepa accorded approval on Feb 10, 2016 for pipeline and two reservoir sites.

It added that 50 cusecs effluent disposal scheme (EDS) was an essential component of Thar Coal and Mining Block-II and power generation project worth \$2bn and no dam was being built by the SECMC.

For storing subsoil water extracted prior to commencement of mining, 37 km pipeline was being laid under EDS and two areas of natural depression at Gorano and Dukkar Cho were earmarked along its path as natural reservoirs. These sites did not require special construction except some for banks for safe storage, it said.

It claimed that these were carefully selected sites as some were not feasible due to inadequate capacity, some had potential to become subject of cross border tensions with India and others were dropped for Sepa related concerns.

Earlier, a natural salt lake called 'Trisingri Dhand' was selected in 2014 but it was a proposed site for Ramsar Treaty and connected to Rann of Kutch Wetlands close to Indian border. Use of such sites would lead to breach of obligations under convention of wetland of which Pakistan is a signatory, it said.

It said that unless subsoil water was removed, coal extraction could not take place and the extraction of groundwater was in line with international mining practices and it was a misstatement that the SECMC was seeking to build a dam.

It denied the petitioners' assertion that area of reservoir at Gorano was 2,700 acres, saying in fact it was 1,400 acres and land belonging to petitioners did not fall within 1,400 acres at Gorano. Petition is replete with misstatements and is premised on statements of a local politician. Work on up to 37km pipeline is already completed on 18km area and petitioners didn't submit any technical study, mentioning adverse impacts on environment, it said.

It informed that extracted groundwater would be saline but it won't contain coal or chemically possessed or mixed with pollutants as alleged in the petition.

Once power plant gets operational in 2018, more than 75 per cent of water would be used to meet requirements of power plant and small fraction of it would be directed towards Dukkar Cho reservoir. Gorano reservoir would no

longer be required for storage as water remaining there would evaporate. It said that coal mining and power project is part of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and is the biggest public-private partnership project of CPEC initiative.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1275228>

INDIA USING WATER AS WEAPON AGAINST PAKISTAN: LCCI

Business Recorder, August 04, 2016

Founders Group of Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry in its urgent meeting on Wednesday has given a wakeup call to the policy makers saying that India is seriously using water as weapon against Pakistan and pursuing policies to strangle Pakistan by controlling water flow of Pakistani rivers.

Group's leaders including Chairman Ijaz Butt, Mian Muhammad Ashraf, Syed Mohsin Raza Bukhari, Iftikhar Ali Malik, Tariq Hameed, Sheikh Mohammad Asif, Mian Misbah-ur-Rehman, Shahid Hassan Sheikh, Mian Muzaffar Ali, Farooq Iftikhar, Ijaz A Mumtaz, Abdul Basit, Almas Hyder and Nasir Saeed spoke on the occasion and shared their point of view on Indian water aggression.

The participants said that reportedly India has got carbon credit certificates from the United Nations for construction of three dams on River Chenab. After completion of dams, India would be able to stop around 20 million cubic feet of River Chenab's water. They said that these carbon credit certificates could not be issued without willingness of Pakistan but concerned authorities of Pakistan are sleeping.

They said that Pakistan is stakeholder and victim of Indian water aggression. He said that after issuance of carbon certificates from the United Nations to India could weak the Pakistan's stance on Indian water war. They further said that India is constructing over 300 small and major dams to contain Pakistan's share of water by violating Indus Basin Treaty 1960. Reportedly, they said, India has also allocated over US 100 billion dollars for turning the water course of River Chenab, Jhelum and Indus from North to South to deprive Pakistan of its share water.

They said that it is a well planned conspiracy to deprive Pakistan of its water. They said that according to Indus Water Treaty 1960, India is not allowed to build dams for the purpose of water storage on Indus, Chenab and Jhelum rivers but violation is going on.

They said that agriculture sector of Pakistan would be badly affected by the Indian control of the waters of several rivers that flow into Pakistan. They said that Indian water aggression has adversely affected 13 million acres of irrigated land around the Chenab and Ravi Rivers, forcing Pakistani farmers to change crops, and in the face of starvation, deepening Pakistan's dependence on food imports.

They urged the government to raise the issue of Indian water aggression at international forums with full force. They said that in a such situation, this kind of attitude of Indian government is horrible and laying foundation of a calamity in South Asia. Leader of Founders Group Farooq Iftikhar said that such control would only be used to destroy the Pakistani economy, agriculture sector and power generation through hydel resources and but would also be used to cause floods in Pakistan.

Nasir Saeed said that Pakistan is on the brink of a water disaster, as the availability of water in Pakistan has been declining over the past few decades, from 5,000 cubic meters per capita 67 years ago to around 1000 cubic meters per capita. He said that by 2020, the availability of water is estimated to fall to about 800 cubic meters per capita.

They also urged the government to start work on large dams in general and Kalabagh Dam in particular to avoid any catastrophe-like situation in the country. They said that Kalabagh Dam should be constructed before Bhasha dam as Kalabagh Dam could be constructed in shortest time.

<http://www.brecorder.com/business-and-economy/189:pakistan/71831:india-using-water-as-weapon-against-pakistan-lcci/?date=2016-08-04>

SINDH APPROVES TWO SCHEMES WORTH RS3.9BN

Dawn, August 6th, 2016

KARACHI: The Sindh Provincial Development Working Party (PDWP) on Friday approved two schemes worth Rs3.942 billion in the energy and health sectors.

The first PDWP meeting for the current fiscal was presided by Additional Chief Secretary for Development Muhammad Waseem. One scheme relates to the construction of pretreatment system for RO (reverse osmosis) plant at the Left Bank Outfall Drain (LBOD) water supply scheme at Nabisar for Thar Coal power project worth Rs3474.950 million while the other is for strengthening of Sindh Government Qatar Hospital in Orangi Town, Karachi worth Rs449.458m.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1275709/sindh-approves-two-schemes-worth-rs39bn>

WATER SCARCITY CONTINUES TO HAUNT PEOPLE IN SUKKUR

The Express Tribune, August 6th, 2016.

SUKKUR: Despite living at the right bank of River Indus, residents of Sukkur time and again are haunted by water issues. The residents complain of getting contaminated water, low water pressure and no water at times.

Civic services including water supply, drainage and sanitation were handed over to the North Sindh Urban Services Corporation (NSUSC) in January 2011 to improve their conditions. However, NSUSC failed to meet the expectations of citizens despite spending billions of rupees.

Many localities situated around the main water tank near Islamia College, Sukkur, including, Shalimar Road, Jail Road, Minara Road and others are also facing acute shortage of drinking water for last many days.

“We are facing shortage of water since last some weeks but despite repeated complaints nobody seems interested,” said Mujahid Ali, resident of Shalimar complex.

Faheem, a resident of Jail Road, complained about the supply of contaminated water and low pressure.

“We live near the main water tank and still don’t get enough water,” he said, adding that condition of people living in other areas is much worse.

At first we used to get limited amount of water, but now the water we get is not fit for use, said Jameel Ahmed, a resident of Numaish Road.

Upon contact, NSUSC operations director Masar Dayo informed that the company’s filtration system choked and it will take a couple more days to clean it.

Speaking about the shortage of water, he said the water pressure is perfect and there is no shortage in the city. He further said he will ask the relevant staff members to look into the matter and resolve the problem, if any.

Another official of the NSUSC, requesting anonymity, confirmed the water scarcity and said that the main line carrying water from the main tank is choked and it will get two to three days to restore its capacity.

After, the line is cleaned, the problem of shortage and low pressure will be resolved, he added.

NSUSC managing director Mehmood Shah informed that residents won’t be able to access filtered water till December, this year. “Our project will complete in mid-Decemeber after which most of the localities will get filtered water,” he said.

After its establishment, the NSUSC authorities claimed to provide clean drinking water to the residents within one year but this promise has yet to materialise even after five and half years. Some of the employees of NSUSC informed the political influence and nepotism in the department responsible for the poor performance.

Interestingly, NSUSC charges Rs540 per year from every household for supplying water through half inch diameter pipeline. The same amount is also charged from people living in individual apartments in high rise buildings, even though they are supplied water using the same line. NSUSC’s managing director admitted the mistake and said a bigger line should be used for apartments and then the amount should be charged from them.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1156638/water-scarcity-continues-haunt-people-sukkur/>

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September 2016

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM SEPTEMBER 26TH TO OCTOBER 2ND 2016

INTERVIEW: ‘INDUS TREATY CAN’T BE REVOKED UNILATERALLY’

Dawn, September 27th, 2016

Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: In its anti-Pakistan rhetoric following Islamabad's recent diplomatic effort to highlight the Kashmir issue, the government of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been whipping up ideas to scrap the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) of 1960 to cause irreparable economic loss to the lower riparian.

While such a move could be labelled as a 'hostile act' and attract international criticism, India has the capability to increase the use of waters flowing into the Indus, Chenab and Jhelum rivers. It can also build more reservoirs in India-occupied Kashmir as a double-edge weapon.

Signed by President Ayub Khan and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in Sept 1960 and brokered by the World Bank, the treaty set bilateral principles of water sharing between the two nations. Under the provisions of the treaty that also survived the 1965 and 1971 wars, the waters of the eastern rivers — the Sutlej, Beas and Ravi — had been allocated to India and the western rivers — the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab — to Pakistan except for certain non-consumptive uses.

Dawn spoke to Ahmer Bilal Soofi, a former federal law minister, President Research Society of International Law and an advocate in the Supreme Court on the issue. Following is the Q&A of the session.

Q: Can India unilaterally revoke IWT?

A: India has no legal competence under the treaty to revoke it per se on its own. Article 12(4) of the treaty entitles the termination of the treaty only if both India and Pakistan agree in writing. In other words, a termination treaty has to be drafted by both states and then ratified by both, to bring the IWT to an end. The treaty has no provision for unilateral "suspension". It is of an indefinite duration and was never intended to be time-specific or event-specific.

The IWT is not regime-specific — but rather state-specific. It will not expire with regime change. It is binding on both the states equally and offers no exit provision. Walking away from a treaty is in effect its breach. If India unilaterally stops following the treaty by giving any justification such as "revocation", "suspension", "withdrawal" or "annulment" etc. then it really means that it has decided to interrupt the water flow into Pakistan. In other words what India will call "revocation or withdrawal", Pakistan will refer to as a "breach".

Q: Is there any arbitration clause that can be set in motion should India go to that extreme?

A: There is an arbitration clause in the IWT. It is article IX and annexes F and G which contain detailed procedures about the taking of the grievance by either party under the IWT first to the commission, then to a neutral expert and later to the forum of arbitrators. Under the IWT, if India thinks that Pakistan's conduct constitutes a dispute under article IX, then it must commence the procedure prescribed under Annexes F and G. India cannot itself conclude that Pakistan has breached the treaty on any grounds, including mistrust.

In case India "revokes" the treaty, it literally means it has shunned it. The dispute resolution mechanism under article IX and Annexes F and G of the IWT will be of no use and assistance to Pakistan.

It is limited to a dispute under the treaty and not meant to provide for specific performance of the treaty itself.

Since there is no provision in the IWT about its duration or suspension, there is no avenue that Pakistan can approach for "revival" of the treaty. Nor can Pakistan approach the International Court of Justice seeking specific performance to implement the treaty because of the Indian reservation given under IC J statute that bars filing of case by Pakistan against India.

In other words, Pakistan will not be left with any peaceful mechanism for seeking performance of the treaty by India.

Q: What if India stops Pakistani waters downstream and could this set a precedent for China upstream? Indian acts as a precedence for China?

A: Even if there were no IWT, an upper riparian, under the International Water Law, has no right to stop the water flow to a lower riparian. In case India tries to interrupt water flow into Pakistan as an upper riparian, it is setting up a regional state practice which under international law can serve as a precedence and equip China with an argument to consider suspension of the waters of Brahmaputra river.

India may have already damaged itself by even considering the suspension of water flow as an upper riparian and the Chinese government must be watching Indian moves with interest.

Q: How did IWT survive the 1965 and 1971 conflicts?

A: The treaty survived the two wars as well as other Pakistan-India conflicts because none of them were termed a war under international law. They were armed conflicts short of the legal status of “war”.

In the event of a war, states are entitled to suspend treaties, including diplomatic relations. In fact, if India considers revoking the treaty, it is itself signalling the same to be an act of war or a hostile act against Pakistan. This will equip Pakistan with the right under international law to take up any other coercive or non-coercive measure as an act of reprisal.

Treaties are state-specific obligations, and not regime-specific. These are not contingent upon deterioration of political atmosphere. It is much better that the states implement treaties through mutual trust, but even if there is deterioration of trust on account of extraneous events then that, per se, cannot be the sole reason to consider revocation of the treaty.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1286307>

REVOCATION OF INDUS WATERS TREATY CAN BE TAKEN AS AN ACT OF WAR: SARTAJ AZIZ
ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz on Tuesday told the Senate that revocation of the Indus Waters Treaty by India “can be taken as an act of war” against Pakistan.

“The Indus Waters Treaty is quoted as perhaps the most successful water treaty ever conducted between the two countries. Its revocation can be taken as an act of war or a hostile act against Pakistan,” Aziz told lawmakers.

“If India tries to interrupt water flow into Pakistan, it will not only violate the Indus Water Treaty, but also set a regional state practice under which international law can be serve as a precedent. It will provide China, for example, a justification to consider of suspension of waters of the Brahmaputra river,” he said.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday decided to suspend Indus Water Commission talks until “Pakistan-sponsored terror” in India ends, according to Indian media reports.

Aziz’s statements come amidst reports that India plans to accelerate building of new hydro-power plants along three rivers that flow into Pakistan. Modi told officials on Monday that India should use more of the rivers’ resources, Reuters reported, quoting sources familiar with the plans.

According to our assessments, India is not following the option of revoking the treaty but it is trying to use provisions of the treaty to construct run of the river projects, Aziz said, adding that it was possible India would misuse these provisions by constructing structures which are not allowed under the treaty, according to Radio Pakistan.

Pakistan is identifying all the possible misuses and activities that India can undertake to interfere in the treaty as well as its implementation, he said.

Jamaat-i-Islami chief Siraj-ul-Haq in Senate said that India had been constructing dams on the Kabul river in collaboration with the Afghan government in order to make Pakistan’s land barren.

Senator Sherry Rehman said that India has adopted a policy of water terrorism against Pakistan. The Indus Water Treaty is an international treaty that India cannot revoke unilaterally, she said. If it does so, it will be illegal and will set a precedence for China, being upper riparian, to divert waters of Brahmaputra, she added.

Earlier in the day, Aziz addressed the National Assembly saying that provocative statements and actions from the Indian leadership on the Indus Waters Treaty are a violation of international laws and breach of the treaty.

Pakistan will ‘react befittingly’ if India attempts to violate the Indus Waters Treaty, the adviser told the NA.

Pakistan will not accept any pressure from India and will continue to highlight human rights violations perpetrated by Indian forces in India-held Kashmir (IHK), Aziz said.

Pakistan is gaining the support of the international community on the issue, Aziz said, and is considering briefing the P5 countries — China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States — on the dangers of suspending the treaty.

There is no provision of suspension in the treaty, Aziz said, adding that India cannot revoke the treaty unilaterally.

The adviser pointed out that the treaty was not suspended even during wars between the two countries.

The NA passed a unanimous resolution moved by Syed Naveed Qamar condemning India's claim a day earlier in the United Nations General Assembly that "Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India and will always remain so".

The resolution said Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj in her speech at the UNGA ignored the fact that Jammu and Kashmir is still on the agenda of the United Nations Security Council, and that IJK is universally accepted as a disputed territory.

The resolution also said the Modi government has a history of threats and holds 'the misguided belief' that Pakistan will move away from extending support to Kashmiris.

The House believes that peace and progress are dependent upon good neighbourly relations and the only way forward is through constructive dialogue, not threats being issued by the Indian PM to unilaterally terminate the treaty, the resolution said.

It added that the hostile environment being perpetuated by the Indian government will not be in the best interests of peace and stability in the region.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1286437/revocation-of-indus-waters-treaty-can-be-taken-as-an-act-of-war-sartaj-aziz>

IMPLEMENTATION PACT FOR \$1.9BN KAROT POWER PROJECT SIGNED

Dawn September 29th, 2016

Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: The federal and Azad Jammu and Kashmir governments on Wednesday signed an implementation agreement with a Chinese consortium for development and operation of \$1.98 billion Karot Hydropower Project on river Jhelum at a levelised tariff of 7.57 cents per unit for 30 years.

The agreement was signed by Secretary Electricity of AJK government Fayyaz Abbasi, Managing Director of Private Power and Infrastructure Board (PPIB) Shah Jahan Mirza and Chief Executive Officer of Karot Power Company Sheng Zhendong.

The 720-megawatt Karot Hydropower Project is a priority project of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to be completed in 2020. It has the capability to generate 3.249 billion units of clean electricity per year for the national grid.

The project is being developed on a Build-Own-Operate and Transfer (BOOT) basis at an estimated cost of \$1.98bn including a development cost of \$1.698bn and interest during construction of \$243m by Karot Power Company Private Ltd, comprising of M/s Three Gorges South Asia Investment Ltd (TGSAIL) and Associated Technologies (Pvt) Ltd of Pakistan.

The project would be constructed on a concrete gravity of 91 metres high dam with a crest length of 320 meters near the village of Gohra. The dam's reservoir will be approximately 152 million cubic metres in volume, with a length of 27 kilometres. Around 72 homes and 58 businesses are expected to be relocated due to project construction while 2.8-km of the Karot-Kotli road, and 8.9-km of the Azad Pattan-Kahuta road will need relocation.

The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) had approved in February this year the project's levelised tariff at 7.57 cents per unit for 30 years at an exchange rate of Rs101.6 per dollar. Its ground breaking ceremony was held in January.

In July this year, the federal government had decided to transfer the ownership of private sector hydropower projects to the governments of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan on the basis of their location on completion of a 30-year term of the private sector contracts to facilitate a 720MW project under CPEC.

The decision was taken by the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the cabinet to bring uniformity among projects built under the power policies of 2002 and 2012. Under all power policies, private sector hydropower projects built on the build-own-operate-and-transfer (BOOT) model stand transferred from the project sponsor to the Government of Pakistan or its nominated entities. Under the 2002 policy, the ownership was to be transferred to the federal government or the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) while the 2012 policy required these to be transferred to the respective regional governments.

Also, the water use charge under the 2002 policy was only payable at the rate of 15 paise per unit to the province, AJK or GB governments while this was increased to 42 paise per unit under the 2012 policy to encourage provincial and regional governments to facilitate development of private hydropower projects.

To ensure that this was not seen as a special favour, it was decided that these concessions would require to be extended to any other upcoming hydropower project being implemented under the

2002 policy for which the financial close had not yet been achieved, irrespective of the location of the project.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1286749/implementation-pact-for-19bn-karot-power-project-signed>

OVER 150,000 GET ACCESS TO CLEAN DRINKING WATER IN SOUTH PUNJAB

Business Recorder, 29 September 2016

LAHORE: More than 150,000 people in the far-flung areas of Hasilpur, Khanpur, Lodhran and Duniyapur tehsils now have uninterrupted access to clean and safe drinking water from the state-of-the-art water filtration plants installed by Punjab Saaf Pani Company (PSPC).

As many as five water filtration plants have been installed in villages of Bunga Akbar Mari Nehal, Munshi Autar, Khazan Singh Dhudi, Hazara Singh and Rehana Bhand Wali which were inaugurated by Mian Shaukat Ali Laleka (MPA), Asghar Shah (MNA), said a hand out issued by the PSPC on Wednesday.

The safe and clean drinking water supply project is a mega project of the Punjab government which will cover 137 tehsils [20,000 villages] to provide basic necessity of life to over 50 million rural population in province of Punjab.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2016/09/29/13-page/798228-news.html>

KALABAGH DAM ON LIST OF 'READY FOR CONSTRUCTION' PROJECTS

Dawn, October 1st, 2016

Iftikhar A. Khan

ISLAMABAD: The controversial Kalabagh dam is on the government's list of 'ready for construction' projects.

This was disclosed when a list of under-construction, ready for construction and under planning hydel power projects was presented before the Senate by the Ministry of Water and Power on Friday.

The house was told in a written reply that the detailed design and tender documents of the 3,600-megawatt Kalabagh dam had been completed in 1988. But the construction of the dam can be undertaken by the government only on the basis of a "consensus decision".

Senators from Balochistan protested over the inclusion of the dam in the list as Senator Usman Kakar questioned the reason for bringing the list on record.

Strangely enough, senators from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa belonging to the Awami National Party and the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf and members from Sindh belonging to the Pakistan Peoples Party did not speak on the issue. The two provinces have been vehemently opposing the project.

However, Minister of State for Water and Power Abid Sher Ali referred to resolutions adopted by some provincial assemblies against the project and said that the government would not undertake construction of any controversial project.

The other two ready for construction projects are: 34.5MW Harpo power project and 1320MW fifth Tarbela Dam extension project.

The house was told that PC-1 of the Harpo power project had been approved on March 28, 2014 and hiring of consultants was in progress.

PC-1 of fifth Tarbela Dam extension project amounting to Rs81 billion was approved on Feb 17 this year and hiring of consultants is in progress. Pre-qualification of firms for civil, electrical and mechanical works is in process. The World Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank have recently approved the project financing.

The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Resources, in a written reply, informed the Senate that 6.093 tonnes of gold, 9.693 tonnes of silver and over 76,000 tonnes of copper had been excavated from the Saindak project in Chagai, generating revenues to the tune of over \$834 million, over the last five years.

The house was astonished to know that the federal and Balochistan governments had received only \$105.46m and \$70.76m, respectively, as their shares in the earning.

Senate Chairman Raza Rabbani regretted that a major chunk of the earning had been taken away by the foreign company working on the project. "There is a loot sale for foreign companies in Pakistan," he deplored.

Responding to a calling attention notice by Senator Mian Ateeq Sheikh about the rise of circular debt in the power sector to around Rs300bn, Abid Sher Ali confirmed that the debt stood at Rs312bn at present.

However, he said, regular payments were being made to the Pakistan State Oil and no power generation company had been closed.

He said that non-payment of power dues by the provinces had led to the increase in circular debt. According to him, Sindh has to pay Rs71bn, KP Rs20bn, Balochistan Rs4bn and Punjab Rs3.8bn. Besides, Balochistan also has payables of Rs106bn on account of tubewells.

Likewise, the dues against the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and Azad Jammu and Kashmir are Rs19bn and Rs62bn, respectively. The K-Electric has liabilities to the tune of Rs39bn.

The house also held a discussion on an adjournment motion regarding illegal border crossing by Pakistani citizens with assistance of human smugglers leading to grave consequences.

Senator Taj Haider said that people chose to illegally travel to foreign countries because of joblessness in the country.

He said that 18,000 industries had been closed in the country and called for legislation to revive the industry and abandoning the privatisation policy which he noted had caused harm to the country's interests.

Senator Nihal Hashmi said that investors had been averse to setting up industries in the country after nationalisation of different industries in 1970s.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1287284/kalabagh-dam-on-list-of-ready-for-construction-projects>

RABI 2016 SOWING SEASON: SINDH AND PUNJAB FACE 18% CUT IN WATER SHARE
The Express Tribune, October 1st, 2016.

ISLAMABAD: The Indus River System Authority (Irsa) has decided on a reduction of 18% in the water share of Sindh and Punjab in the Rabi 2016 crop-sowing season, which commences from October 1.

Balochistan and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, however, have been exempted from the impact of water shortage as their demand is relatively lower than Sindh and Punjab.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the Irsa Advisory Council on Friday, which met to finalise the share of provinces in the light of water availability during the Rabi season.

Representatives of the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda), chairman of the Federal Flood Commission as federal member and provincial secretaries of irrigation attended the meeting.

Participants of the huddle, presided over by Irsa Chairman Rao Irshad Ali Khan, noted that five million acre feet (maf) of water could not be stored in the Tarbela Dam because of Wapda's inefficiency.

According to the data prepared keeping in view the 10-year average, Punjab's share will be 16.16 MAF of water compared to 16.87 MAF in the previous Rabi season whereas Sindh will receive 12.20 MAF against 14.57 MAF last year.

Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa's water share will be 0.70 MAF against 0.48 MAF last year while Balochistan will receive 1.02 MAF compared to 0.98 MAF in the previous year.

Total shortage of water is estimated at around 31.08 MAF in the Rabi season. This year, however, Pakistan has received 15% more water in the Indus River due to rains.

System losses in the earlier Kharif 2016 crop-planting season, which ran from April to September, stood at 15.54 MAF compared to anticipated losses of 12.58 MAF in the Indus River.

On the basis of 10-year average, Punjab's share was 16.31 MAF, Sindh's 12.64 MAF, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa's 0.54 MAF and Balochistan's 0.86 MAF.

It was for the first time in 16 years when Mangla and Tarbela reservoirs were not filled by September 20. According to proposals, Pakistan should fill Mangla and Tarbela by August 20 each year because after this date water flows decline drastically.

The water shortage figures are finalised during the advisory council meeting on the basis of data submitted by the provinces, Wapda and other departments concerned. Irsa released 10.39 MAF of water downstream Kotri from April 1 to September 20, 2016.

Irsa was of the view that water shortage in the Rabi season could be reduced partially or eliminated completely if western winds entered Pakistan on time in December and January.

It was noted that Pakistan was facing climate changes because of which substantial water variation existed in the country.

"Water availability was satisfactory at the initial stage of Kharif season but later its supply started falling. Seasonal fluctuations, which stem from climate changes, will always continue to disturb Pakistan," an official commented.

At present, Tarbela and Mangla reservoirs are at heights of 1,515.48 feet and 1,216.60 feet respectively. The reservoirs are 34.52 feet and 25.40 feet below their respective maximum conservation levels of 1,550 feet and 1,242 feet respectively.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1191518/rabi-2016-sowing-season-sindh-punjab-face-18-cut-water-share/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM SEPTEMBER 19 TO SEPTEMBER 25TH 2016

SINDH'S RECHARGE DAMS

Dawn, Business & Finance weekly, September 19th, 2016

Mohammad Hussain Khan

MONSOON rains in July and August have broken the dry spell in Sindh's hilly areas, filling 33 recharge dams (weirs) where cultivation is done through spate irrigation.

Although Darawat Dam has been filled with water after a long time, the water cannot be released for cultivation in the absence of watercourses and land development.

Over 33-recharge/small dams have attained maximum storage levels. Rainwater has also replenished/recharged groundwater aquifers, from which water is lifted through pumps by growers for animal rearing and cultivation of crops.

“At some sites groundwater level has risen up to 20ft, up from 100ft before it rained in that area”, says Zahid Sheikh, irrigation department’s superintending engineer for small dams.

Sheikh goes on to say that groundwater at the current levels can be used for cultivation of over 94,143 acres in the hilly areas of Jamshoro, Dadu, Karachi and Nagarparkar. The native community usually grows millet or corn in kharif and wheat in rabi seasons, besides other crops which need less water. Construction of around 40 more re-charge dams by the Sindh irrigation department is under way.

“Rain in our area is certainly helpful for spate irrigation. Around 200-250 acres of land is cultivated with millet and corn through spate irrigation but rainfall still remains below the desired level”, says Raza Mohammad Tanghyani, a resident of Manjhand in Jamshoro district. Another resident, SaleemAbro says, “If enough rainfall is received then we can irrigate around 6,000-7,000 acres, in all, through spate irrigation.”

Climate change-induced rainfall has led to longer droughts and dry spells in hilly plains and arid regions of the province. Although Sindh has got considerable potential for spate irrigation/agriculture, it remains largely unexploited and unorganised. A recent study of the National Engineering Services of Pakistan (Nespak) show that 1.4m acres could be brought under the plough through spate irrigation in Sindh if the required infrastructure is developed.

There are 17 recharge dams in Jamshoro, Thatta and Karachi (with 8,308 acre feet of water storage), 13 in Dadu (with 3,667 acre feet) and three in the Nagarparkar area (with 3,796 acres feet).

But the use of groundwater is not equitably distributed. The more resourceful a landowner is, the more benefit he can get by lifting subsoil water, while small farmers cannot afford to pump water.

Monsoon rains-driven spate flows and hill torrents have provided the Darawat Dam 50,000 acre feet of water ever-since its completion. Its dead level is 30,000 feet.

The Darawat dam was completed by Wapda on Aug 31, 2014. It is supposed to irrigate 25,000 acres if it attains maximum level of storage i.e., 121,600 acre feet. According to the project director Iqbal Sheikh, water from the dam cannot be released for want of water-courses and absence of land development in the command area.

Irrigation department sources said the dam’s command area is to be irrigated through four canals spreading over 46 kilometres. Around four to five companies have shown their interest in land development, and after completion of a

survey, they are to submit a report as to which kind of irrigation system suits the area. Then project cost-I will be prepared and approved by the Sindh government.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1284525/sindhs-recharge-dams>

WATER BLUES: RAINWATER HARVEST PROGRAMME NOWHERE IN SIGHT

The Express Tribune, September 21st, 2016

Shahzad Anwar

ISLAMABAD: The rainwater harvest programme, meant to provide water for the public sector and private buildings in the federal capital, has become a distant dream due to unknown reasons.

Monsoon rains are the only source of recharging water in the Islamabad aquifer. Due to the extensive construction of buildings, concrete roads and footpaths, rainwater fails to find a way to seep into the ground and is directly streamed into Nullah Leh and other natural streams without being used.

The current population of Islamabad is more than two million and is growing at a rate of 5.7% per year, and it is predicted that it will likely rise to 4.5 million by 2050. The scarcity of water, especially of the potable variety, is one of the major impediments to development of new sectors in Islamabad.

The main sources of water are the reservoirs built at Simly and Khanpur, apart from tube wells installed in different sectors. Previously, the peak accumulative water production from these sources was 84 million gallons per day. It then dropped down to 62 MGD, as compared to the average demand 176 MGD. Water shortage worsens in Islamabad during the summer and water rationing is imposed.

To overcome the shortage, around 200 buildings were selected to launch a water conservation project, which was a joint venture of the Climate Change Division, now Climate Change Ministry, and its attached department Pakistan Environment Protection Agency (EPA) a few years ago. The PC-1 was prepared and submitted to the Planning Commission of Pakistan for approval. However, it was dropped in the fiscal budget for 2014-15. Since then project could not be incorporated in the annual financial layout plans.

“There is a dire need to conserve water as the population increases and water level drops, especially in fast-growing cities like Islamabad. Rainwater harvesting is an effective system of water conservation,” an official of the Ministry of Climate Change told The Express Tribune, requesting anonymity.

The official said though Pakistan was blessed with surface and groundwater resources, the rapid growth in population, unplanned urbanisation and unsustainable water consumption practices had placed immense stress on the quality and quantity of the country’s water resources.

Over 250,000 children die due to waterborne diseases in Pakistan every year, he said. He added most housing societies are extracting water through tube-wells and hand pumps and have to dig deeper every year in search of water due to the dwindling supply.

He suggested that the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and private housing schemes should construct check dams and delay action dams in order to overcome the growing problem of water scarcity by developing their own resources.

“Check dams and delay action dams collect surplus rainwater which can later be used to recharge the subsurface water when needed, and these are ideal for rugged terrains and aquifers,” he said.

The official pointed out that rainwater harvest is being utilised as a source of conservation internationally, while some countries, like India, also use rainwater for irrigation.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1185457/water-blues-rainwater-harvest-programme-nowhere-sight/>

WB OFFERS SUPPORT FOR IRSA CAPACITY BUILDING

Business Recorder, September 21st, 2016

M RAFIQUE GORAYA

LAHORE: The World Bank has offered support to Indus River System Authority for its capacity building and cut water lines losses from Tarbela dam downward to far off Kotri barrage in Sindh to conserve maximum fresh water for drinking and crop Irrigation purposes.

Punjab Irrigation department sources told Business Recorder that a World Bank delegation held a meeting with IRSA on Tuesday which was attended by senior water expert of the four provinces to deliberate upon the current and future water outlook of Pakistan’s water resources.

It may be recalled that the World Bank had facilitated the most enduring Indus Water Treaty for apportionment of rivers water between the two estranged neighbours Pakistan and India in 1962. Currently there are divergences of views among the provinces over the desirability of constructing water reservoirs. Since the river Indus and its tributaries are the life line of the four the provinces, the dwindling flows in the rivers has given rise to the provincial tensions, over the sharing of this precious re source which was once considered infinite.

Veteran water expert and consultant to Punjab government Eng. M.H. Siddiqi who represented Punjab in the meeting told this scribe that there are widen difference between the estimates of water line losses of Punjab and Sindh. Punjab estimates that 15 percent water is lost in transmission; Sindh says it is about 40 percent; this has disturbed the distribution of water among four provinces according to 1991 water accord.

1. The World Bank has advised IRSA to install dependable Telemetry System at the barrages over the Indus river; a tool for water management.

This will help monitor transparent and real time water transactions between Tarbela dam and Kotri barrage for correct estimates of water losses and resolution of this dangerous issue between the two provinces. He said that IRSA would also take some other measures for better management and economical use of this life line resource.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2016/09/22/5-page/796069-news.html>

BALUCHISTAN ACCUSES SINDH OF STEALING ITS WATER

The Express Tribune, September 22, 2016

ISLAMABAD: Balochistan on Wednesday accused Sindh of stealing its share of water that is causing severe shortage of the precious resource in the less developed federating unit.

Member of the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) (Balochistan) Muhammad Naseem Bazai lodged the complaint during a meeting of the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Water and Power. He said the province is getting less water than its needs, adding that Sindh is stealing about 6,000 to 7,000 cusecs of water from what the authority allocates to the province.

The committee met here with MNA Muhammad Arshad Khan Leghari in the chair. Bazai said since 1991 to 2014, Balochistan got almost 50% less water than it demanded that resulted in losses of around Rs93 billion to the province.

MNA Nawab Muhammad Yousuf Talpur told the committee that due to water shortage, around five million acres of land in Sindh has turned barren that inflicted losses to the tune of tens of billions of rupees on the province.

Irsa chairman Rao Irshad Ali Khan, while briefing the committee, ruled out the impression that provinces, especially Balochistan, are being allocated less water. He said no discrimination is being made in the distribution of water among the four federating units and "if we have ample water supply we also increase the water share of the provinces". This year Sindh has been given 15% more water than the preceding year. Likewise, all provinces have been given above their allocated quota due to the availability of excess water in the country.

He added that since 1992 to 2016, on average Sindh got 6% less water than its share and Punjab (9%) while Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa received more than its share of water whereas Balochistan has got only 60% of its share.

Moreover, officials of Distribution Companies (DISCOs) operating in Sindh and elected representatives from the province also accused each other of not cooperating in reducing power theft and other irregularities in the power distribution system in the province.

The committee adopted the report prepared by its subcommittee on "the performance of DISCOs of Sindh" and expressed its concern over the non-cooperative attitude of the Hyderabad Electric Supply Company (HESCO) and Sukkur Electric Power Company (SEPCO).

The panel also directed the Ministry of Water and Power to address the issues identified by the subcommittee and submit its compliance report within 15 days.

Water and Power Additional Secretary Umar Rasool told the committee that the issue of overbilling would be resolved by the start of 2017.

"We are set to implement the mobile meter-reading system across the country, but meter readers were the main hurdle in implementing this digital reading process," Rasool said and added, "Many meter-readers have been laid off from different DISCOs that were organising resistance to this digital reading process."

He told the committee that the digital metre reading process has been implemented on 88% LESCO consumers, 90% FESCO consumers, 90% MEPCO consumers and 90% in Islamabad (IESCO).

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1186158/water-indent-balochistan-accuses-sindh-stealing-water/>

WORLD BANK APPROVES \$390 M LOAN FOR TARBELA FIFTH EXTENSION

The Express Tribune, September 22nd, 2016

Shahbaz Rana

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank has approved a \$390 million loan for the Tarbela fifth extension to add an additional generation capacity of 1,410 megawatts, a development that also marks the lender's first co-financing project with the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) in South Asia.

For long, the China-based AIIB and World Bank, based in Washington, had been seen as rivals to each other, but the two lending institutions signed an agreement earlier this year to undertake joint projects. The Tarbela fifth extension will be the duo's first co-financing project in South Asia.

The AIIB will also extend a \$300 million loan for the project, which will be its second project in Pakistan and first in the energy sector. The AIIB may also approve the \$300 million this month.

The Board of Directors of World Bank approved the loan to help a sustainable expansion of Pakistan's electricity generation capacity, according to a handout issued by the local office of the Washington-based lending agency.

The share of World Bank in the total project cost of \$826.1 million is 48%. The AIIB will provide \$300 million while Water and Power Development Authority and National Transmission and Dispatch Company will arrange the remaining \$133.1 million.

The World Bank's loan is a relatively expensive one with Pakistan due to return the amount in 20 years.

The Tarbela Fifth Extension Hydropower Project will add 1,410MW of low-cost electricity generation during the high-demand summer season. The loan finances the installation of a powerhouse at the existing tunnel five that will enhance the total capacity at Tarbela to 6,298MW. Three units with a capacity of 470MW each would be constructed on tunnel-5, which is on the left bank of Indus River.

The current installed capacity of the 3,478MW Tarbela hydroelectric power stations will increase to 6,298MW after completion of the ongoing fourth extension and the planned fifth extension. The World Bank had earlier given \$840 million for the fourth extension.

The government wanted to complete the fourth extension by June 2017, also having 1,410MW capacity, and paid an extra \$51 million to contractors and suppliers. However, the government will still miss the deadline and out of three units of Tarbela fourth extension only one unit is expected to be completed by August 14, according to officials involved in project execution. The remaining units may be ready by the end of 2017.

Work on the fifth extension will be completed in three and a half years from the date of inception. The fifth extension is among half a dozen hydroelectric and nuclear power projects with a cumulative generation capacity of 14,700MW, which would be completed between 2018 and 2023.

For the last many years, Pakistan is facing acute power shortages. In the fiscal year 2015-16, the country's total generation capacity was 18,760MW during the summer and 14,833MW in winters, whereas the demand remained around 22,880MW.

Pakistan's power needs are increasing at a growth rate of 7% to 8% per annum. Various estimates suggest that the demand will be 96,000MW by 2029-2030 whereas additional generation is too slow to keep pace, according to World Bank project documents.

The Executive Committee of National Economic Council recently approved the fifth extension project at a cost of Rs81 billion on the condition that Indus River System Authority (IRSA) will certify that the expansion would not affect the water flows for irrigation purposes.

The construction of powerhouse on tunnel five would proceed in parallel to the ongoing work on tunnel four in a manner that it would remain operational until the construction of powerhouse on tunnel four is completed and available for water releases for irrigation purposes, said the World Bank. The project also includes the laying of about a 50-kilometre long transmission line for carrying additional generation from Tarbela to the national grid.

Increased supply at competitive prices from tunnel five will support economic growth for all enterprises that use electricity, regardless of size or sector, said Illango Patchamuthu, the World Bank country director for Pakistan. He said that the project will contribute to long term energy security.

In addition to maximising the use of existing facilities and meeting the power needs of the country, the project will also introduce a pilot floating solar power plant over part of the reservoir area, said Masood Ahmad, the World Bank

task team leader of the project. He said that the successful completion of the pilot and its possible expansion over the rest of the reservoir surface area could lead to an additional generation capacity of 5,000MW of solar power.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1186099/infrastructure-world-bank-approves-390m-loan-tarbela-fifth-extension/>

PUBLIC SUFFERING: WATER SCARCITY RETURNS TO DISTRICT WEST

The Express Tribune, September 22nd, 2016

SHEHRYAR ALI

KARACHI: Taps continue to run dry in District West as many residents bear the brunt of an operational dispute between the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) and Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB).

According to District West superintendent engineer of KWSB, Owais Malik, the recent rain-induced rise in the water level of Hub Dam was seen as a good sign and it was expected that residents of District West, comprising Baldia Town, Orangi Town and SITE, will receive regular supply of water. However, he said, only 60% of the district has been enjoying water supply while the tail-end areas continue to suffer.

The water level in the Hub Dam, which is administrated by Wapda, had reached its dead level in February this year. Keeping in view the dead level, the water board, with the assistance of the Sindh government, had initiated a project worth Rs300 million to fetch water from the dead level in the beginning of August.

KWSB bulk water supply chief Zafar Palijo said that the dam's catchment area received ample amount of rainfall during the monsoon season in August this year and the water level rose by 30 feet, reaching 306 feet from the dead level of 276 feet. He added that water supply was resumed in the first week of August at 25 million gallons per day (MGD) and it increased with time after the rainfall.

According to the Wapda project director of Hub Dam, Tariq Khoso, the dam has a capacity of 339 feet while at the moment the water level stands at 306 feet. He said that the reason for the water scarcity in the tail-end areas is that the authority is trying to be economical with the commodity.

According to him, 78MGD is currently being supplied to Karachi and 56MGD to Balochistan. He clarified that the sanctioned quota of 100 MGD for Karachi can only be supplied when the dam reaches its full capacity of 339 feet. He added that by utilising the water cautiously, they can continue to supply water to District West for seven to eight months. "If we supply 100 MGD, we can only supply water for four to five months," he claimed. Meanwhile, KWSB's Palijo claimed that despite the dam's capability of supplying 100MGD to the city for more than a year, only 70MGD is currently being provided.

He explained the division of water supply from Hub Dam in its full capacity: 100MGD to Karachi, 2MGD to Sindh irrigation department for the area of Band Murad and 59MGD to Balochistan. Elaborating on the division formula, Palijo explained that the reason why Sindh gets a bigger share of the water supply from the dam is because 67% of its catchment area lies in Sindh while the remaining 33% are in Balochistan.

Requesting anonymity, a KWSB official said the reason behind the shortage in District West is because of the dues that KWSB owes Wapda. Responding to this, Khoso said Wapda never stops water over such issues, adding that meetings are being conducted with KWSB to resolve the dues' issue.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1185991/public-suffering-water-scarcity-returns-district-west/>

DIAMER, DASU WORK PLAN READY: WAPDA

Dawn, September 23rd, 2016

LAHORE: Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) says it has chalked out plans for initiation of construction works on the main components of the Diamer Basha Dam and Dasu Hydropower Project within the shortest possible time.

"Although the process of land acquisition, preparatory works and infrastructure development is continued, it is all the more important to initiate construction work on the main components of these projects in the shortest possible time. That is why we have chalked out a work plan in this regard," Wapda Chairman retired Lt-Gen Muzammil Husain said while speaking to senior officials after visiting sites of mega hydropower schemes here on Thursday.

The chairman said since these projects were of vital importance to meet the increasing requirement of water and electricity in the country, the officials would have to show an immense zeal and zest while accomplishing various tasks.

Earlier, he visited various sites of the projects and colony at Thor and model village Harpan Das being developed for resettlement of the project's affectees.

Gilgit-Baltistan Chief Secretary Tahir Husain also accompanied the chairman during the visit. He also witnessed construction activities at Dasu hydropower project and met local Jirga to seek its support in land acquisition.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1285590>

IN A PARCHED CORNER OF XINJIANG, ANCIENT WATER TUNNELS ARE RUNNING DRY

The Express Tribune, September 23rd, 2016

ANDREW JACOBS

TURPAN, China — It is an improbable journey that begins on the highest peaks of the Tianshan Mountains, where glacial snowmelt descends across one of the world's most arid landscapes to reach the lush oasis communities of this ancient Silk Road outpost.

Powered by gravity, the water — pure and cold — makes the entire voyage underground, traveling through scores of subterranean channels, some of them 15 miles long and 100 feet deep, that were built 2,000 years ago by the pastoralists who settled this inhospitable corner of China's far western Xinjiang region.

Known as karez, the system of channels is an engineering marvel that has long fascinated scientists and filled this city's ethnic Uighurs with pride.

“Our ancestors were amazing because they built these without machines,” said Salayidin Nejemdin, 29, whose family has been growing grapes in Turpan for generations. “Without them, we would not be able to live in such a harsh place.”

But after millenniums of nourishing the region's farmers, goat herders and cross-continental traders, the karez channels of Turpan are drying up. Although scientists say global warming has shrunk the glaciers that feed the elaborate irrigation system, the more immediate threat is the soaring demand for water from the petroleum drillers and industrial-scale farmers, who are sucking the Turpan Basin dry.

There are just over 200 working karez in the region, down from nearly 1,800 in the 1950s, according to government figures. Every year, as many as a dozen of the underground tunnels run dry. Others, contaminated by oil, are abandoned.

Shalamu Abudu, a hydrology expert at Texas A&M AgriLife Research Center at El Paso, who has written extensively about Turpan's hand-dug tunnels, said their disappearance threatens a way of life that has persevered against all odds.

Turpan, he noted, occupies one of the world's hottest locales: a parched depression, devoid of rivers, that receives an average of just over a halfinch of rainfall a year.

“The karez is a symbol of our civilization,” said Professor Abudu, a Uighur, who until recently worked for the state-run Xinjiang Water Resources Research Institute. “It is something we feel very emotional about.”

The water helps sustain the region's half-million residents and ensures that Turpan's family farms can grow the grapes that have shaped the city's identity for centuries. Grape arbors grace nearly every home here, and the rural landscape is dotted with imposing brick-and-mud drying towers, where the grapes are turned into raisins.

Standing beneath a tangle of grape vines, Mijiti Saludin, 32, said he and his wife were forced to buy water from the municipal government after the karez across from their home ran dry several years ago. “We used to get it for free, but now we have to pay for our water and it isn't very clean,” he said.

He led a visitor to an opening in the chalky gray earth, and into a tunnel just tall enough to crouch inside. When he was a child, he recalled, the entire community would turn out each spring to clean out the karez, using buckets to

remove silt that impeded the flow of water. "Every family would send a young man, but now it's hard to get people to work for free," he said.

The Chinese government recognizes the threat to the region's karez, and in recent years it has sought to ban the drilling of new wells that have contributed to a steady drop of the water table. In 2008, the regional government announced a \$182 million project, funded in part by a loan from the World Bank, to protect and rehabilitate the system.

According to government estimates, the aquifer beneath the Turpan Basin shrinks by about three million cubic meters a year, much of it because of oil drilling and agriculture.

Despite efforts to keep the karez system alive, some officials appear resigned to its demise. "There is no need to make a fuss about the drying of the karez," Lu Zhen, the former head of the water resources research institute in Turpan, told the state-run People's Daily newspaper. "It is a historical certainty that the karez be replaced."

The origins of Turpan's karez are unclear, though experts note their similarity to the underground qanat, or canals, found in Iran, Iraq and water-starved swaths of Central Asia.

Given Turpan's role as a vital pit stop on the northern route of the Silk Road, Dr. Abudu of Texas A&M said the technology was probably introduced by Persian traders and then improved by local Uighurs.

"Although the length and method of construction of Turpan's karez are different from others, the basic principles of how they work is the same," he said.

Those principles are at once simple and impossibly complex.

Most karez start at the foot of the Tianshan Mountains, tapping into subterranean aquifers fed by glacial runoff. There are underground dams and reservoirs, but a hallmark of the system is the vertical wells, dug every few dozen feet, that provide access to the channels and allow for maintenance and ventilation. Top of Form

Viewed from the air, the wellheads look like oversized anthills pocking the expanse of lifeless desert.

By constructing the system entirely underground, its creators sought to shield the water from animal droppings, silt and, more important, the evaporating power of the sun, which regularly sends summertime temperatures above 110 degrees Fahrenheit.

Residents share a deep reverence for the karez, and they try to enforce rules that bar bathing or washing clothes directly in the waterways.

"In the winter it's warm and in the summer it's cool," said Mr. Nejmdin, the farmer, as he walked down stairs that provide access to a rushing underground stream that skirts the edge of his family's compact farmstead, a traditional walled compound shaded by mulberry trees and grape-laden trellises.

The city government recently installed a pipeline to bring water to his neighborhood from a distant reservoir, but Mr. Nejmdin said his family preferred to use water from the karez. "The piped water tastes like medicine," he said.

With so many karez drying up, he said it was a matter of time before he was forced to buy water from the city. The thought made him scowl. "Our ancestors were so smart, banding together to solve the water problem," he said, "but these days, being smart is not enough to keep our traditions alive."

http://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/22/world/asia/china-xinjiang-turpan-water.html?_r=0

SUPREME COURT ORDERS: KWSB SHUTS DOWN 12 LEGAL HYDRANTS

The Express Tribune, September 25, 2016

KARACHI: Acting upon the Supreme Court's (SC) order to close down all the water hydrants, Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) shut 12 out of the 24 of its legal hydrants in the city.

The SC ordered the relevant authorities on September 8 to ensure all water hydrants legally operated by the KWSB are immediately shut down and their fresh tenders are issued within five weeks. Previously, the apex court had also ordered strict action against illegal hydrants in the city.

We have decided to decrease the number of hydrants run by the KWSB to six, which means one hydrant for each district of the city, said the water board's spokesperson, Rizwan Hyder. He said that the step has been taken in compliance with the orders of the SC and the organisation will also issue fresh tenders of these six hydrants to ensure transparency.

Talking about legal hydrants, Hyder explained that they were supposed to provide water to the areas where there is no supply of water through line.

On Friday, as many as 11 illegal hydrants were demolished in Damloti area, Malir, and Chakra Goth, Korangi, he said, adding that Malir district and sessions judge Khalid Shahani and the managing director of KWSB, Misbahuddin Farid, were also present on the occasion.

Hyder added that cases have also been registered against seven owners of illegal hydrants, while heavy machinery and three generators were also seized along with 100-foot-long pipes.

During the last one-and-half years, more than 300 hydrants have been taken down, he claimed. We have requested the local police to keep an eye on the demolished hydrants and discourage any action being taken to set them up again, he added.

The government rate for a 1,000-gallon water tanker is Rs1,000 while a 2,000-gallon tanker costs Rs1,300, he informed.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1187754/supreme-court-orders-kwsb-shuts-12-legal-hydrants/>

Wapda Chairman For Timely Completion of Neelum Jhelum Project

Business Recorder, September 24th, 2016

LAHORE: Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) Chairman Lt-Gen Muzammil Hussain (retd) has sought concerted efforts to complete the Neelum Jhelum hydropower project well in time.

The chairman WAPDA made a visit to the strategically important 969 MW Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project on Friday which is under construction in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

He said completion of the under-construction projects in the shortest possible time is a must to rid the country of electricity shortages and stabilise the national economy.

He inspected the construction activities on the weir site located in Nauseri – 41 kilometres east of Muzaffarabad besides the main dam, composite dam, desander, and sedimentation basin and debris channel.

Later, he visited the power house site at Chattar Kalas located some 22 kilometres south of Muzaffarabad to inspect the underground power house, surge shaft and transformers hall. He also reviewed electro-mechanical works for installation of power generating units and the transformers.

Speaking on the occasion, he appreciated the pace and quality of construction work for completion of the project. It may be noted that the construction work is being carried out simultaneously on three sites of Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project. It has four generating units with capacity of 242.25 MW each, totalling 969 MW.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2016/09/24/3-page/796545-news.html>

11 'ILLEGAL' HYDRANTS DEMOLISHED IN MALIR

Dawn, September 24th, 2016

KARACHI: The Malir district administration on Friday demolished at least 11 'illegal' hydrants in its jurisdiction, claiming that it was the first time that they pulled down so many hydrants in a single day.

At least five people were arrested at the scene during the operation, said district officials.

They said the campaign aimed at retrieving the encroached government land and putting an end to the widespread theft of drinking water meant to be supplied to the residents of Karachi.

“The drive was planned as per directive of the court,” said an official. “We have removed the remaining illegal hydrants in our area, which were functioning on the encroached land and stealing drinking water from our main water supply lines and selling it back to citizens on exorbitant prices,” said an official.

Previously, officials said, the district administration in support with the police had dismantled five illegal hydrants in its remits.

“The administration and the police had pulled down five illegal hydrants previously, however, they were demolished from time to time,” said the official.

“This is first time the campaign was planned against encroachers and land grabbers on a large scale in which all the remaining hydrants have been removed.”

Malir deputy commissioner Muhammad Ali Shah said the anti-encroachment operation was conducted in different areas of Malir.

Officials said the district and sessions judge concerned and managing director of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board accompanied the deputy commissioner during the campaign.

No one would be allowed in the district to violate government laws, the DC said.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1285657/11-illegal-hydrants-demolished-in-malir>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM SEPTEMBER 5TH TO SEPTEMBER 10TH 2016

WATER SECURITY FOR DROUGHT AFFECTEES

Dawn, Business & Finance weekly, September 5th, 2016

Ashfak Bokhari

ON Aug 16, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif asked the chairman of the Water and Power Development Authority to expedite construction of water reservoirs across the country.

When implemented the planned projects would enable the country to better meet the water requirements of various sectors of the economy and also help overcome acute shortages in the coming years.

More dams and reservoirs need to be built to help boost output of both the agriculture and industry and provide clean drinking water to the poor. Such a step cannot be avoided any longer.

However, a more sustainable solution for the populace living in drought-affected areas would be the creation of small reservoirs or ponds to fulfil their basic needs and enable farmers to irrigate their lands. The mini-dams and pond projects can be easily financed by provincial governments producing budget surpluses with development funds often underutilised.

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in its latest report has suggested the government undertake the construction of as many water ponds as required in the drought-hit areas of Sindh, to ensure water security to the rural population.

It has warned that water scarcity in Sindh, particularly in Tharparkar, has reached a point where over one million people are now below emergency-level thresholds. The government should establish strategic water points as part of a more sustainable long-term effort to ensure access to safe water to the affected communities.

Southern Sindh is prone to droughts and Tharparkar is considered a ‘high drought area’ followed by Jamshoro and Sanghar. The drought, the report says, had a negative impact on food security as it caused large reductions in yield and abandonment of cultivation altogether in the most drought-affected zones.

The current spell started in 2013 and has continued since, intermittently, for leaner monsoons. It was most severe in the western and south-eastern Tharparkar regions but the irrigated zones were largely spared by it.

In India, the Kerala state has decided to revive at least 600 ponds and water bodies under a drought relief plan, breaking away from the usual practice of pumping water via tankers in drought-affected areas. The plan envisages cleaning, de-silting and removing waste from ponds and lakes and storing safe water there.

Indian Railways has been running 'water trains' from Miraj in western Maharashtra to drought-hit Latur in Marathwada, a distance of nearly 350km, for the past few months. Each train carries about 0.5m litres of water.

Pakistan's performance in storing water and creating reservoirs has been disappointing. Federal Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal says the country's planners and policymakers across different sectors now have the daunting challenge of increasing its water storage capacity.

Pakistan requires a minimum storage capacity of 40pc of the water available in the Indus river system throughout the year. Its current storage capacity is only 7pc and is further decreasing due to sediment build-up in reservoirs. This gives Pakistan a stored water supply to meet its needs for just 30 days.

Under the Indus Basin Replacement Works two major dams, Tarbela and Mangla, were initiated. Mangla, built with assistance from the World Bank, became operational in 1967 while Tarbela was ready in 1976. Since then, no major dam or a reservoir, with the exception of Chashma dam, has been added although a few, such as the Diamer-Bhasha dam, are in the pipeline.

A myriad of small dams, mostly of local significance, were initiated in the provinces but many were later abandoned.

In Balochistan, more than 60 small dams were launched but only half of them were completed in 1980s and 1990s. Prominent among them were the Hub dam and Mirani dam. The Sabakzai dam was completed this year.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 24 small dams were launched and completed. In Punjab 34 dams were designed but only three could be completed. And in Sindh only four were designed though none were launched.

From the major dams, due to excessive sediment in the river water inflow, all the three reservoirs, Tarbela, Mangla and Chashma are now rapidly losing their capacity. By the year 2025, these reservoirs will lose 37pc (6.27MAF) of their capacity, which amounts to losing one mega storage project.

Because the source of the Indus River water to Tarbela dam is glacial melt which has sediment, the annual suspended sediment load is about 430m tonnes. The useful life of the dam and reservoir was estimated to be somewhere around fifty years which may increase to 85 year for sedimentation is considered to be much lower than predicted.

Direct rainfall contributes less than 15pc of the water supplied to crops. The major user of water for irrigation is the Indus Basin Irrigation System. About 105m acres feet (MAF), out of 155MAF of surface water, is being diverted annually to irrigation, while around 48MAF is pumped from groundwater.

Hence, to save and utilise available water, construction of additional storage facilities is essential for facilitating irrigated agriculture, which supports about 70pc of the population of Pakistan.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1281997>

80PC PAKISTANIS DRINK CONTAMINATED WATER, SENATE TOLD
Dawn September 7th, 2016

Jamal Shahid

ISLAMABAD: More than 80pc Pakistanis consume contaminated and unsafe water, Minister for Science and Technology Rana Tanveer informed the Senate on Tuesday. Responding a question from PPP Senator Sherry Rehman, the minister said the Pakistan Council for Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) had conducted various water quality monitoring projects in the country.

He said 69pc to 82pc water samples collected from 2,807 villages in 24 districts across the country were found contaminated or unsafe for drinking.

The PCRWR, which is a research and development organisation of the Ministry of Science and Technology, reported that major contamination was due to bacteria (coliforms), toxic metals (mainly arsenic), turbidity, total dissolved solids (TDS) and nitrate and fluoride pollution, said the minister.

The upper house was informed that besides setting up 24 state-of-the-art water testing laboratories around the country, several other initiatives had also been undertaken. These included the development of microbiological testing kits, low-cost arsenic detection testing kits and production of chlorination and disinfection tablets.

However, bacteriological, arsenic and turbidity are the leading causes of contamination in the drinking water.

He said bacteriological contamination, detected in drinking water in most parts of the country, was as high as 69pc, arsenic 24pc in some parts of the country and turbidity 14pc.

While microbiological contamination remains one of the leading causes of cholera, diarrhoea, dysentery, hepatitis, typhoid etc., arsenic can cause various types of diabetes, skin, kidney, heart, black foot diseases, hypertension, birth defects and multiple types of cancer, according to the PCRWR.

A senior official in the PCRWR told Dawn that the function of its laboratories were in jeopardy due to the lack of funds.

Set up at a cost of Rs1.2 billion, the labs were to identify contamination in drinking water and ensure the availability of potable water to the citizens.

Initiated in 2007, the “Provision of safe drinking water” project has seen more setbacks.

“Its staff members have remained without salaries for months. The promises to regularise the services of contractual employees have not been fulfilled. Most of the technically qualified staff, including PhDs, have left for better paying opportunities,” said the official requesting anonymity. He said the chairman of the PCRWR, Dr Mohammad Ashraf, had been struggling to keep the project operational, taking up the case of the 200 staff members and meeting its expenses by diverting funds from other departments.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1282557>

82 PERCENT WATER SAMPLES FOUND CONTAMINATED, SENATE TOLD

Business Recorder, September 07, 2016

The Senate was told on Tuesday that from 69 percent to 82 percent water samples were found contaminated or unsafe for human consumption through a survey of 2807 villages of 24 districts across Pakistan, conducted by Pakistan Council of Research and Water Resources.

Major contamination was due to bacteria (coliforms and E.Coli), toxic metals (mainly arsenic), turbidity, total dissolved solids (TDSs), nitrate and fluoride. In a written reply to a question asked by Senator Chaudhary Tanvir Khan of the ruling government, Finance Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar told the House that of Rs 271 billion outstanding loans, consisted of Rs 216 billion regular loans and Rs 55 billion non-performing loans (NPLs) and that no loan was written off of these disbursed in the last five years.

Speaking on behalf of the Finance Minister, Law Minister Zahid Hamid said that the NPLs were not written off loans and were recoverable, when the bank would initiate cases under the recently-amended law.

In the written reply, it was contended that the names of persons, who obtained loans from the National Bank of Pakistan, was private information of borrowers and was protected under Section 33-A of the Banking Companies Ordinance, 1962 and Section 9 of Protection of Economic Reforms Act, 1992 etc, which stipulate that no bank or financial institution shall divulge any information relating to the affairs of its customers and secrecy of bonafide banking transaction shall be strictly observed.

However, Senators Tanvir, Nauman Wazir, Azam Swati and Dr Jehanzaib Jamaldeni questioned, “Why the identity of the beneficiaries of the loans were not shared with the House and are banking laws more sacrosanct than the parliament”.

The senators decried giving massive loans and then there was no hint of recovery of these loans, obtained from the state-owned bank. Zahid Hamid to a volley of supplementary questions said that excessive borrowing was the story of

the past and said that the estimated amount of domestic debts to be obtained by the government during 2016-2017 was Rs 1589.9 billion.

Likewise, he explained the estimated amount of foreign debt to be obtained in the next two financial years was expected to be dollars 9743.63 million while repayment of debt would be dollars 8159 million. The House was also informed that the Competition Commission of Pakistan had passed complaints against 152 banks, newspapers, cellular companies and cement factories and car manufacturers.

A question by Senator Ahmad Hassan of the PPP was deferred, as he was chairing the sitting. However, the written information shared with the Senate revealed that under the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund, during the financial year of 2015-2016, a total Rs 5.122 billion were disbursed among as many as 80 NGOs.

About the NGOs working in militancy-devastated Malakand division, the Senate was told that funding was extended for water and infrastructure, health and education. Minister for Industries Ghulam Murtaza Jatoi conceded he was not satisfied with the process of induction of board of directors of the Utility Stores Corporation and the related rules needed to be amended. He also assured the House that in future Fata would be not overlooked in appointment of board of directors in the corporation.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172:pakistan/83198:82-percent-water-samples-found-contaminated-senate-told/?date=2016-09-07>

PBIF DEMANDS CONSTRUCTION OF NEW DAMS PROMPTLY

Business Recorder, September 07, 2016

resident of Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum (PBIF) Mian Zahid Hussain proposed that small dams should be preferably built in those areas in Sindh and Balochistan that were facing drought that caused deleterious effects on lives of masses, livestock and agriculture.

“Pakistan cannot afford delay in the construction of new dams any more, he said in a statement adding that the demand for water continued to increase hence all needed to bury their differences on mega dams also. He urged that construction of hundreds of mini dams should be initiated without any delay lest country would turn into a desert. He said Pakistan was capable to store only 7% of its water resources and that could meet the water requirements of the country for only 30 days. He stressed on the need to enhance the storage capacity to 40% of the total water resources.

“Collective storage capacity in Tarbela, Mangla and Chashma will be reduced by 37 percent and that will be a nightmare because more than 80 percent of the total crops are irrigated by rivers and canals,” he said adding that only 15% crops were irrigated by rains water and a small portion through groundwater.

He cited that in past 24 small dams were planned and completed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 60 were planned in Balochistan and half were completed, 34 were planned in Punjab and 3 were completed and 4 were planned in Sindh and none was completed. Mian Zahid said that 70% of the population was linked to agriculture and they need enhanced water-storage without which food security could not be guaranteed.

<http://www.brecorder.com/business-and-economy/189:pakistan/83184:pbif-demands-construction-of-new-dams-promptly/?date=2016-09-07>

CHINA UNDER PRESSURE AT ASIA SUMMIT OVER SEA ROW

Dawn, September 8th, 2016

VIENTIANE: Beijing came under pressure at an Asian summit on Wednesday over its “illegal” island-building in the South China Sea, after the Philippines produced photos it said showed fresh construction activity at a flashpoint shoal.

Any artificial island at Scarborough Shoal could be a game-changer in China’s quest to control the South China Sea and raises the risk of armed confrontation with the United States, security analysts say.

Beijing insists it has not started building at the shoal — a move that could lead to a military outpost just 230 kilometres from the main Philippine island, where US forces are stationed.

But the Philippines released images which it said showed Chinese ships in the area that were capable of dredging sand and other activities required to build an artificial island.

The photos were released during an annual summit of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Laos, and the bloc voiced alarm.

“We remain seriously concerned over recent and ongoing developments and took note of the concerns expressed by some leaders on the land reclamations,” said a joint statement at the end of their two-day summit.

China claims nearly all of the South China Sea, through which \$5 trillion in trade passes annually, even waters approaching the coasts of the Philippines and other Southeast Asian nations.

The competing territorial claims have long been a major source of tension in the region, with China using deadly force twice to seize control of islands from Vietnam.

Tensions have escalated sharply in recent years as China built islands and airstrips on reefs and islets in the Spratly archipelago — another strategically important location — that are capable of supporting military operations.

The United States has reacted to that build-up by sailing warships close to the new islands, and sending warplanes over them, deeply angering China.

A UN-backed tribunal ruled in July that China’s claims to most of the sea had no legal basis and that its construction of artificial islands in the disputed waters was illegal. But Beijing vowed to ignore the ruling.

China took control of Scarborough Shoal in 2012 after a standoff with the Philippine Navy, and has since deployed large fishing fleets while blocking Filipino fishermen.

Expanding that presence with a military outpost is vital to achieving China’s ambitions of controlling the sea, according to security analysts.

US officials fear any Chinese military airfield at the shoal would enable Beijing to enforce a threatened air defence identification zone in the sea.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1282734>

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NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 24TH TO OCTOBER 30TH 2016

PAKISTAN EXPECTS WB DECISION IN 15 DAYS ON ITS PETITION FOR ARBITRATION COURT ON INDIAN DAMS

Dawn October 24th, 2016

Khalid Hasnain

LAHORE: Pakistan expects a decision from the World Bank within next 15 days on its petition seeking change in designs of two Indian run-of-the-river hydropower projects — Ratle and Kishan Ganga — through constitution of a court of arbitration under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT).

Pakistan had objected to the construction and design of the 850MW Ratle and 330MW Kishan Ganga hydropower schemes, saying that both the projects would have adverse impacts on the flow of Chenab and Neelum rivers.

The two projects are being constructed by India on the Chenab River, downstream of the village of Ratle in Doda district and Kishan Ganga River (called Neelum River downstream in Pakistan) near Bandipor in Jammu and Kashmir, respectively.

“Since the World Bank acts as a facilitator to resolve any issue between Pakistan and India, we had visited the bank’s headquarters in Washington (USA) about 20 days ago in view of the proceedings it initiated on our petition seeking

constitution of a court of arbitration under the IWT for giving a decision on our objections,” says Pakistan’s Commissioner for Indus Waters Mirza Asif Baig.

A team of technical and legal experts headed by the attorney general of Pakistan had appeared before the World Bank’s officials after India didn’t acknowledge its objections on the two projects’ designs. The differences on the designs of the two projects had been discussed many a times in the meetings of the Permanent Commission for Indus Waters, comprising one commissioner from each country, which is responsible for the implementation of the treaty, but to no avail. Secretary-level talks were also held between the two countries time to time, but concluded without any outcome.

Mr Baig, who was also a member of the delegation, said Pakistan presented its case well, stating that the methodologies being adopted in the construction of the dams would surely affect flow of the western rivers in general, including the two in particular. And since the case was sort of technical as well as legal, it must be heard by a court of arbitration that can be constituted under the IWT provisions, the commissioner added while talking to Dawn on Sunday.

According to him, India has almost completed civil work of the Kishan Gang dam, while the construction of Ratle hydropower project has not yet started after the contractor left the job due to international litigation initiated by Pakistan.

The Indian delegation also appeared before the WB officials and rejected Pakistan’s stance for constituting a court of arbitration. “India opposed our stance, stating before the WB officials that there was a need of appointing some neutral experts under the treaty and not the court to resolve the issue. However, the bank has heard us as well as India in detail and we hope that it will order for the court we have sought under the treaty,” he explained.

Talking about media reports of the IWT suspension by India unilaterally, Mr Baig termed it a tactic to bring Pakistan under pressure. The treaty is a bilateral agreement between the two countries and none of them could suspend it unilaterally. However, it can be suspended, revised or ended if both the countries agree to make a new treaty on Indus waters. “After the media reports, there were some official vibes from India that the IWT is not suspended. So the treaty is still intact,” he maintained.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1291905/pakistan-expects-wb-decision-in-15-days-on-its-petition-for-arbitration-court-on-indian-dams>

SC REJECTS CHINESE FIRM’S PETITION ON DASU DAM

The Express Tribune, October 26th, 2016.

ISLAMABAD: The top court has rejected a Chinese company’s plea to allow it to participate in the bidding process of the 4,320MW run-of-the-river Dasu Hydro project on the Indus River.

A three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice Anwar Zaheer Jamali had been seized with the petition of Messers Power Construction Corporation of China Limited (PCCCL) seeking a direction for the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) not to open the result of the pre-qualification of the bidding for the construction of the project in Kohistan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The hydropower project is being developed in two stages: Stage 1 includes installation of six hydropower units each of which will produce 360MW power, while in Stage 2, nine additional 360MW units will be installed.

Additional Attorney General Rana Waqar informed the court that the World Bank has the authority to approve the name of any company for the bidding of the dam and added it had asked the federal government to reject the Chinese company’s plea to include it in the bidding process.

Justice Sheikh Azmat Saeed asked: whether that was a “request” or a “direction”. “Is it the government’s stance that if a foreign company would invest in Pakistan and the government would not take any action against it?”

Represented by Advocate Salman Aslam Butt, the petition moved by the Chinese firm had challenged in the Supreme Court the June 29, 2016, intra-court appeal in the Lahore High Court in which the petitioner’s request to suspend the operation of its disqualification from the bidding process was rejected.

Butt urged the court to issue a notice to the World Bank to which Justice Azmat said when the World Bank is not a party in the case, then how they could issue a notice to it.

In 2014, Wapda had announced undertaking the project on the Indus River located at Dasu Town. The project is partly funded by the International Development Association (IDA) – an organisation forming part of the World Bank Group. The IDA has approved the financing of Stage-1 of the project with a credit of \$588.4 million.

Shahzada Mazhar, representing Wapda, contended that they (the Chinese company) are not the citizens of Pakistan; therefore they couldn't enjoy equal rights under Article 25 of the Constitution. He pleaded that they don't have any case and the guidelines protected in the agreement.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1210358/open-competition-sc-rejects-chinese-firms-petition-dasu-dam/>

ADB REFUSES TO FUND MEGA DAM PROJECT

Dawn October 27th, 2016

Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Wednesday declined to commit funds for the \$14 billion Diamer-Bhasha dam project and called for governance reforms to encourage private investment and equitable growth for all Pakistanis.

“We did not really make any commitment. This is a very big project,” ADB president Takehiko Nakao said on Wednesday at a joint news conference with Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on the conclusion of the 15th ministerial meeting of the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) programme.

He said the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was conducting a feasibility study on the Diamer-Bhasha dam, adding that while it was a very important project for Pakistan's energy and irrigation requirements, it called for the formation of more partnerships that could provide funding for the project.

“We haven't decided [whether to fund] this project yet because it needs big money,” he said, adding that the ADB might consider joining the financing of this project at a later date.

The ADB was originally seen by Pakistan as the lead financier of the strategic project, which would have a water storage capacity of over six million acre feet and a power output of 4,500MW. Repeated efforts to rope the World Bank in as a co-lender failed two years ago when the government declined to seek an NoC from India for the project.

Instead, Finance Minister Ishaq Dar accepted a funding offer from the World Bank to start the Dasu Hydropower project, downstream of Diamer-Bhasha, saying the government would simultaneously go ahead with both projects.

The ADB has been advising the government to adopt a professional approach towards the construction of the big dam that cannot be funded by a single institution, country or group given its mammoth financial requirements and the risks involved.

As a way out, the ADB had advised Islamabad to restructure the Diamer-Bhasha dam project by separating power generation, land acquisition and main dam structures and their various modes of financing.

To do that, the government engaged USAID for a feasibility study and is seeking investment from US investors to develop it as an independent power project (IPP). The government is providing funds for the land acquisition of the project through Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) funds.

The ADB president said Pakistan's successful completion of a multi-year IMF programme was encouraging, but added that the country still faced several challenges in maintaining its hard-earned gains. He said that deeper structural reforms in the energy sector should continue where smart metering was possible and public sector enterprises should be made more efficient so that private investors — both domestic and foreign — could be encouraged to come forward and contribute.

Mr Nakao stressed that it was very important for Pakistan to continue fighting against corruption, tax avoidance and money laundering, saying that the government should make efforts to minimise these menaces. He said the signing of

a tax avoidance treaty with the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) would greatly help in this regard.

Responding to a question, he said good governance was critical for improving spending on the safety and security of people and raising their living standards. The government should take corrective steps; the sooner, the better, he said.

Responding to another question on start-up problems in ADB-funded projects, he said the bank was currently providing on average \$1.5 billion to Pakistan per year, but admitted that it was important to improve implementation standards for accelerated disbursement, timely construction and completion so that the benefits of these projects could reach the people.

He also asked Pakistan to wisely implement projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and utilise their funds well so as to avoid debt or repayment problems. He said the ADB supported regional integration efforts such as the CPEC because they ensured shared development.

Finance Minister Dar and the ADB chief also witnessed the signing of a \$250 million loan-agreement on the 'Regional Improvement of Border Services' between Pakistan and ADB to improve border management facilities at Torkham, Chaman and Wagah under the auspices of CAREC.

The projects aims at the modernisation of the physical infrastructure at border crossing points, provision of equipment such as scanners, weighing bridges etc, IT hardware & software support for the transition to a one-window system, and streamlining cross border procedures and capacity development.

The minister said the CAREC ministerial meeting had formally adopted Georgia as its 11th member. Existing members include Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Pakistan.

Multilateral and International development agencies including International Monetary Fund, World Bank, Islamic Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, UNDP, Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), USAID, DFID of UK, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the World Trade Organisation also participated in the meeting.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1292536/adb-refuses-to-fund-mega-dam-project?preview=>

CBC TOLD NOT TO COLLECT TAX WITHOUT SUPPLYING WATER

Dawn October 27th, 2016

Tahir Siddiqui

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court on Wednesday restrained the Cantonment Board of Clifton from charging water tax from residents who were not provided water through supply line or bowsers within its territorial jurisdiction.

The court ruled that it was the statutory duty of the Cantonment Board Clifton to ensure adequate and continuous water supply to all citizens residing within its territorial limits.

A two-judge bench headed by Justice Nadeem Akhtar gave the observations and directions in its seven-page judgement on the petition of a resident of Khayaban-i-Sehar, Phase VI, DHA, against the CBC and others for their failure to supply water.

The judgement said: "The CBC shall not be entitled to charge, claim or collect water tax from those residents to whom water is not being supplied or provided through supply line or bowsers."

The CBC was also directed to ensure that permissions and approvals for fresh construction and new water connections were granted without disturbing, restricting or curtailing the rights of all those residents who were already enjoying such rights.

The CBC counsel had submitted a statement, saying that due to an acute shortage and scarcity of water occurring from time to time, the CBC had to arrange additional water bowsers for residents of the DHA to whom water was not being supplied on a regular basis through water supply line.

The residents are required to file a request online and subsequently they are issued coupons for five water bowsers per month per property.

The court directed the CBC to display its statement and the court's directions on its website and all notice boards with immediate effect, which shall not be removed without permission of the court.

The woman petitioner had earlier submitted that she had approached the CBC in 1997 for a water connection for her house. For this purpose, all the requisite formalities, including payment of charges, were fulfilled.

She said the CBC started supplying two water bowsers on a weekly basis. Later in 2003, the CBC demanded additional amounts of Rs484,500 and Rs1,187,000 for supplying water through supply line instead of bowsers and installing water meter.

Subsequently, the petitioner said, she made payment of all amount but despite that the municipal authority failed to supply water through the proper supply line.

Another bench headed by Chief Justice Sajjad Ali Shah directed the excise department to file a list of wholesale wine shops and the mechanism of their operation.

The bench gave the direction while hearing a petition seeking cancellation of licences and closure of liquor shops being operated in Muslim-majority areas.

Additional advocate general Ghulam Mustafa Mahesar filed a report and informed the judges that 160 retail wine shops had been given notices for cancelling their licences.

The hearing was adjourned to Oct 27.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1292432/cbc-told-not-to-collect-tax-without-supplying-water>

ASSESSING INDIA'S WATER THREAT

Dawn, Sunday Magazine, October 30th, 2016

Fahim Zaman | Syed Muhammad Abubakar

Blood and water can't flow together," declared a belligerent Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 26, 2016 in the wake of 19 Indian soldiers dying in a militant attack on Uri military base, just inside Indian-administered Kashmir. Holding Pakistan responsible for the violence, Modi promised to unshackle India's policy of "restraint" — implying that India was now going to hurt Pakistan by choking its water supply.

For the people of Pakistan, a nation dependent upon agriculture for its survival, the Indus rivers are their lifeline. As it is, Pakistan is ranked second, after China, in the Water Shortage Index, highlighting the vulnerability of the Pakistani population to frequent water shortages. Modi's proclamation generated lots of nationalistic hyperbole in the two nuclear-armed twins but also inflicted some damage: many on this side of the border are perturbed about Modi making good on his threat and stopping water supply to Pakistan.

Can Modi turn the taps off immediately?

Not quite.

The Indus Waters Treaty of 1960, which governs water sharing arrangements between India and Pakistan, outlines a framework for how either country can exploit water potential and how they can't. While the Indus Waters Treaty is upheld, India cannot turn the taps off — in fact, it does not have the capacity at the moment to do so either — but it can definitely delay the release of water flows. And historically, India hasn't been averse to using this tactic when relations with Pakistan turn sour. This time has been no different.

In a story printed in the October 12 edition of Dawn, irrigation department officials warned of a record reduction of water levels at Head Marala in the Chenab. The fear is that water shortage in the river and two of its canals, Marala-Ravi Link Canal and Upper Chenab Canal, can adversely affect the sowing of crops particularly in Sialkot, Gujrat, Gujranwala and Sheikhpura districts. The situation has worsened at the time of this report going into print.

The cultivation cycle in the subcontinent is divided into two seasons: khareef (monsoon) and rabi (winter). Khareef sowing starts in July or even June while the sowing of rabi crops begins in September and October, depending upon glacial melts and the amount of rains. The water flows in the Indus system varies exponentially in different months. Up to 90 per cent of flows can be accounted for during July to September.

For rabi crops such as wheat, pulses, onions, tomatoes and potatoes, timing is crucial. With October at an end, the record reduction of Chenab water flows can translate into delayed rabi sowing, which in turn will adversely impact produce for local consumption in the coming season and lead to price inflation.

In practical terms, consider this: tomatoes are being sold in the market at 25 rupees per kilo today; expect this price to rise manifold in the coming year. This is besides the food and income insecurity that thousands of growers in Punjab and Sindh will be pushed into.

A crisis is certainly brewing.

Beyond hyperbole and nationalistic fervour, the two South Asian giants need to be at the negotiating table. Normally a dispute like the one reported by Dawn on October 12 could have been resolved at a meeting of the Indus water commissioners, mandated by the Indus Waters Treaty to be held once a year. But the Indian assertion that these meetings will resume only once “an atmosphere free of terror is established” spells disaster for our farmers. The only safeguard that the Indus Waters Treaty offered Pakistan was through the Permanent Indus Commission whose meetings India has been routinely flouting under one pretext or the other. If the situation persists, Pakistan will have no option but to take the matter through the cumbersome route of World Bank and international arbitration. All through this period, India will enjoy undue exploitation of water resources at the expense of the people of Pakistan.

What can India not do?

Caught in nationalistic fervour, hawks in the Indian media have been blaming their previous governments for failing to exercise a water offensive like the one PM Modi is intent on implementing.

Indeed, India can hypothetically terminate the Indus Waters Treaty and restrict even the rivers flowing into Pakistan through the diversion of Indus rivers waters. But when it comes to practice, this position remains untenable.

The waters of the Indus rivers flow through deep gorges of the Karakoram and Himalayan mountains. The only way to divert water from here is to tunnel through hundreds of kilometres of the world’s highest and toughest mountains.

Granted that all technical problems have technical solutions. However such an undertaking would be financially prohibitive, technically extremely challenging, and with minimal cost-benefit ratios. The longest tunnel dug in the world is the Gotthard Base Tunnel to facilitate rail travel. Although it is being drilled for the last 22 years through the Swiss Alps, it is merely 57 kilometres long and has already incurred an estimated cost of 12 billion US dollars. For India to divert waters of the western Indus basin rivers for meaningful use, it will have to dig up to 300 kilometres of tunnels.

Source: Wapda

As such, diverting the water going into western rivers which feed Pakistan is not a feasible option.

In addition, India has remained part of the Non-Aligned Movement and prides itself in having contributed towards drafting many international conventions including the UN Convention on the Law of the Non-navigational Uses of International Watercourses 1997, Helsinki Rules 1966 and their Berlin Revisions of 2004. Politically, an attempt to scrap the Indus Waters Treaty would bring massive international condemnation to India.

India’s planned infrastructure projects: how can they affect Pakistan?

While India may not have the capacity to turn off the taps immediately or divert the waters of the rivers flowing into Pakistan, it is undertaking a number of projects that could have an adverse impact on Pakistan’s water availability in the future.

The Indus Waters Treaty handed Pakistan the right to unrestricted use of the three western rivers — Indus, Chenab and Jhelum. The eastern rivers — Sutlej, Beas and Ravi — went to India. While the treaty allowed India to divert the

waters of the eastern rivers, it could only tap into 3.6 MAF of water from the western rivers for irrigation, transport and power generation.

Experts at the Indus River System Authority (IRSA) complain that India has been constructing huge water storages on all six Indus basin rivers, not just on the three under its full control. For example, Baglihar and Salal on Chenab are already generating 450 MW/h and 690 MW/h respectively while the planned Bursar and Pakal hydroelectric projects also on the Chenab will produce 1020MW and 1000 MW/h respectively. The size of the energy outputs is an indication of the size of the projects. Pakistan's Mangla, for comparison, generates 1000MW/h.

In all, India is in different phases of planning or construction of some 60 storages of varying capacity over the six Indus rivers, though analysis of satellite imagery obtained by Dawn suggests the number may be more [see map]. Technical experts in Pakistan worry that such storages will provide India ultimate strategic leverage of increasing or decreasing river flows during tensions between the two countries, even if it cannot legally divert the waters for its own use.

Sheraz Memon, additional commissioner of the Indus Water Commission, argues that India does not have sufficient capacity to withhold the water of the western rivers nor it can divert them. "But they may keep the implementation of the treaty at a snail's pace, for example through delaying the meetings of the Permanent Indus Commission and not providing data or information about their new hydroelectric plants," he warns.

There is also talk of expediting the construction of the Pakal Dul, Sawalkot, and Bursar dams, also in Jammu and Kashmir. Indian media reports claim that the Indian government might also resume work on the Tulbul Navigational Project — also known as Wullar Barrage — work on which began in 1985 but stopped soon after Pakistan lodged a formal complaint against its construction. Pakistan opposed the project at the time since it would have allowed India to store, control and divert River Jhelum, which was a clear violation of the Indus Waters Treaty. If completed, Tulbul will adversely affect the water storage potential of Mangla Dam.

Original sins

During 1956, Pakistani negotiators were warned by their irrigation officials and technical experts not to accede to Indian delegation chief ND Gulhati's demand — also supported by the World Bank — to allow India to build small storages over the western rivers.

Until the signing of the treaty, the Indian predicament was that while Customary International Law and conventions gave them a legitimate right over 33 MAF or 21 percent of the six Indus rivers water — corresponding to 21 per cent of the Indus basin being in Indian territory — India had little room to utilise this water within the basin. The Indus Waters Treaty gave them an opportunity to divert water towards Rajasthan for irrigating over 700,000 acres of land which was previously bare sand dunes.

Before the Treaty, the waters of the Ravi, Beas and Sutlej were utilised for the cultivation of lands as far south as Bahawalpur State. Suddenly there was no water for thousands of farmers on this side of the border until Tarbela Dam was finally opened in 1976.

But Pakistani negotiators at the time acquiesced, on the pretext that this shared water would also benefit their Muslim brethren in Kashmir. Pakistani negotiators did not even bother to specify the size of the so-called small storages but agreed to India officially withdrawing up to 3.6 MAF of water for local use. In comparison, the current storage capacity of Mangla Dam, after expansion, is about 7.4 MAF.

Given the pliancy of Pakistani negotiators at the time, the Indus Waters Treaty emerged as a treatise that was skewed in favour of India. Perhaps it is for this reason that PM Modi announced that while India will not review or abrogate the Indus Waters Treaty, it will exploit water under its share to the fullest. It will, for example, build more run-of-the-river hydropower projects on the western rivers and irrigate over 400,000 acres in Jammu and Kashmir.

One thing seems certain: India will continue to build additional storages on the Indus rivers to store more than its allowed quota of up to 3.6 MAF of water. This will also provide hawks the option of delaying khareef crops in Pakistan from time to time. If the winters' torment is harsh, delay in summers sowing would be a national crisis.

Looking within: what Pakistan needs to do

There is a real danger that current Indian antics will push Pakistan towards construction of very large dams at Diamer and Kalabagh, displacing more people and adversely impacting our environment which is already in a poor state.

“India is employing pressure tactics on Pakistan by announcing it will speed up dam construction,” argues Dr Pervaiz Amir, director of the Pakistan Water Partnership. “Pakistan must address its own internal water security and create sufficient storage. India has 200 projects in hand. Saving water is a planned response by India, and Pakistan should follow suit.”

But increasing storage capacity is not the same as storage capacity from large dams, which in any case is not the panacea that it is made out to be.

During the last 69 years, Pakistan has developed three major water storages at Tarbela, Mangla and Chashma with a cumulative storage capacity of 12.1 MAF against average water flows of 133 MAF annually through the three Indus rivers. There have been little or no independent studies to either assess or address the issues of resettlement, the massive loss to the environment and overall economic cost due to construction of large dams. In addition, issues of climate change—which have only recently come to the fore—raise questions about the risks posed to and by large dams. Freak weather conditions, such as unusually intense cloudbursts, are becoming more common and have already resulted in threats to people living downstream of large dams.

Key

To add insult to injury, we have been ruthlessly pumping out underground water through tubewells. Such pumping is severely affecting the underground water levels in the country and often being replaced by saline water, adversely affecting agricultural output. The number of tubewells in Pakistan has risen from 2,400 to over 600,000 since 1960.

While we could continue to curse the World Bank bureaucracy, American interests in the region and Indian cunning for having deprived the country of its water share, we must also look at our own wasteful attitudes towards utilisation of available water resources as well as the politics around available water.

Pakistan loses almost half of its existing available water through seepage in the irrigation system [see table]. This is a prime cause of waterlogging and salinity which are turning large areas of fertile land barren. Surely lining of water canals and water courses should be the first priority in saving the water we have at our disposal, rather than the construction of large dams.

According to WAPDA’s published figures, average cereal production in Pakistan against a metre cube of water is mere 0.13 kg. In India, the same amount of water yields 0.39 kg, yield in China is estimated at 0.82 kg, in the US 1.56 kg and in Canada 8.2 kg [see table]. Clearly better management of water resources, efficient crop yields and serious efforts towards population control will be much more advantageous than building additional dams and storages that will ultimately result in catastrophic environmental issues and human resettlement crises as being faced in India and China.

The issue of water supply does not simply concern the two nuclear-armed neighbours. Tahir Rasheed, CEO of the South Punjab Forest Company (SPFC) and a senior environmentalist, warns that if the Indo-Pak water crisis spirals out of control, the friction can engulf other countries of the region as well, especially Afghanistan.

“Afghanistan is [currently] utilising 1.8 MAF of water [from the Kabul River which feeds into the Indus], which is estimated to rise to 3.6 MAF in the future,” says Rasheed. “Pakistan currently does not have any water sharing accord with its northwestern neighbor. But the projected increase of water use by Afghanistan can affect the lower riparian, Pakistan.”

In conclusion

The Indus Waters Commissioners of Pakistan and India have met every year since the Indus Waters Treaty came into force. The wars of 1965 and 1971, the Siachen and Kargil conflicts and the Mumbai attacks weren’t able to dent it. In standing the test of time, the treaty has shown that it generates the least conflict and more cooperation between the South Asian neighbours.

The chances of India scrapping the treaty altogether and diverting the western rivers are negligible to none. But one must not put past India its flouting the spirit of the treaty and manipulating water flows to turn the screws on Pakistan.

Pakistan's response, however, should not be as cavalier as when it negotiated the treaty, ignoring sound technical advice and short-changing itself in the bargain. It needs to put its own house in order on an urgent basis — by better utilising its existing water resources. Pakistan's protestations against India's perfidy will then carry far more weight.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1292901/assessing-indias-water-threat>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 17TH TO OCTOBER 23RD 2016

DELAY IN PROJECTS IMPLEMENTATION IRKS ADB

Dawn October 19th, 2016

Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has expressed concern over slow progress of project implementation in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development (ANR) mainly in Punjab and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Fata).

The Manila-based lending agency is currently providing more than \$750 million to provincial governments and regional authorities under the ANR portfolio of nine loans for seven projects.

In the latest annual review for the financial year 2015-16, the ADB said the main challenges in the ongoing portfolio primarily in Punjab were contract management of ongoing projects, sustainability of reforms and associated operations and management (O&M) of rehabilitated infrastructure by farmers management organisations and associations.

The O&M performance is an important factor for consideration in the design of future green-field projects like Jalapur, Greater Thal and Cholistan irrigation projects. "In some contracts, there are significant slippages from work programme, leading to extensions of time in contracts," the ADB noted and proposed incentivising good performing contracts.

Also, the bank noted that the Fata Water Resources Development Project did not have a good start due to unattractive salary packages, longer recruitment process and subsequent delays associated with establishing project management units.

It said the project success rate in the previous country partnership strategy (CPS) ending 2015 remained high as three integrated, multi-sector, rural and area development projects completed in 2012-13 were rated successful to highly successful. On the contrary, the Agribusiness Development Project was rated unsuccessful.

During the current CPS period (2016-19), no project was completed except for Sindh irrigation component of Flood Emergency Reconstruction Project (FERP) which was implemented successfully and the loan accounts were not closed in 2015. The project was completed at 99 per cent of the estimated cost and was able to achieve targets.

Against the appraisal target of restoring 59 million cubic metres carrying capacity, it restored 41.2 billion cubic metres; rehabilitated, reconstructed and strengthened 103 flood embankments measuring 1,453km against the target of 81 flood embankments with an estimated length of 1,000km. About 2.2 million hectares of agricultural land was protected and restored against the appraisal target of 1.5 million hectares.

All damaged flood embankments, canals and drains identified in donor need assessment were rehabilitated, strengthened and re-sectioned against the appraisal target of 90pc.

The Fata Water Resources Development Project was approved in December 2014 with \$41.03 million of concessional development funds and the PC-1 was approved by Ecnec in March last year. The loan was signed in April and declared effective on Aug 7, 2015.

"The project is experiencing significant start-up delays. The Peshawar-based project management unit (PMU) and the three project implementation units (PIU) for the project area (Bajaur, Khyber and Mohmand agencies) were established in second quarter of 2016. Procurement activities are also delayed. As a result, the project is rated as 'Actual Problem'," the ADB said.

The CPS 2015-19 on ANR envisaged development of water resources through supporting both investments and reforms in the sector, mainly through continued assistance for Punjab Irrigated Agriculture Investment Programme Development (PIAIP) under \$900 million multi-financing facility and planned assistance for rehabilitation and upgrading of irrigation infrastructure in Balochistan, Fata, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1290905/delay-in-projects-implementation-irks-adb>

NEELUM-JHELUM SURCHARGE: GOVERNMENT TO COLLECT RS 57 BILLION FROM POWER CONSUMERS

Business Recorder, October 19, 2016

Naveed Butt

The federal government would collect Rs 57 billion from the electricity consumers through the levy of a Neelum-Jhelum surcharge at the end of this year while the cost of Neelum-Jhelum Hydro Power Project has increased from Rs 274.9 to Rs 404.32 billion. The Ministry of Water and Power informed this during its briefing on Neelum Jhelum Hydro Power Project to the National Assembly Standing Committee on Planning, Development and Reforms which met with Abdul Majeed Khan Khanan Khail in the chair at the Parliament House on Tuesday.

The National Highway Authority (NHA) Chairman Shahid Ashraf Tarar informed the Standing Committee that the Lowari Tunnel Project would be completed in March 2017 and the Prime Minister would inaugurate the project in April 2017. He maintained that the Neelum Jhelum Hydro Power Project would be completed in February 2017. The members of the committee expressed serious concern over unnecessary delay in Neelum Jhelum Hydro Power Project and said that the project might not be completed within in next year due to its slow pace.

The sources said the surcharge collection began in 2008 and will continue till the end of 2016. The entire cost of the project is being met through loans from banks, including Exim Bank and through collection of surcharge from electricity consumers. According to demounts, second revision of PC-I of the project was approved by ECNEC on 03-07-2013 at a total cost of Rs 274.88 billion with Foreign Exchange Component (FEC) of Rs 158.37 billion. The third revision of PC-I of the project was also approved by the ECNEC on 19-12-2015, a total cost of Rs 404.321 billion.

A joint venture of five international and national firms was engaged as Neelum Jhelum Consultants comprising (i) Montgomery Watson Harza (USA) (ii) NORPLAN, Int. (Norway) (iii) National Engineering Services (NESPAK), Pakistan (iv) National Development Consultants (NDC), Pakistan and (v) Association Consulting Engineers (ACE), Pakistan.

Construction contract was awarded to a Joint Venture of China Gezhouba of Companies and China Machinery Corporation (CGGC-CMEC) at a cost of Rs 90.90 billion and construction work on the project commenced on January 30, 2008.

About the project implementation status, the documents further revealed that construction activities are at the critical stage, with day and night working in shifts is being simultaneously executed on all sites. The progress at Dam site is 84.5 per cent and 66.35 km (96.71 per cent) of tunnels has been excavated. 20.16 km out of 26.64 km of HRT Concrete Lining has been completed (77.10 per cent). The Powerhouse has been excavated 100 per cent and concrete work (99 per cent) is in progress. Physical progress of the project is 85.3 per cent while financial progress is 63.74 per cent (as per 3rd Revised PC-I 2015).

The issues of the project are (i) Due to non-signing of Exim Bank Loan of US \$576 million, an amount of \$114.273 million is payable to the contractor by NJHPC, payment could not be made due to non-availability of foreign component and (ii) EMH contractor is in dispute with tax authorities of AJK and if the tax issue is not resolved, it is likely the EMH contractor may not deliver according to the work plan.

While briefing about Lowari Tunnel Project, the NHA Chairman Shahid Ashraf Tarar said that the total cost of the project is Rs 26.86 billion including Rs 20.985 billion local component and Rs 5.87 billion Foreign Exchange Component (FEC). He said that in the past, the project was delayed due to lack of funds. We got enough fund of (Rs 6 billion) this year due to the directives of the Prime Minister, he said, adding that almost 80 per cent project has been completed.

<http://www.brecorder.com/market-data/stocks-a-bonds/0/94378/>

OIC FOREIGN MINISTERS' MOOT: INDIA SLAMMED FOR WATER AGGRESSION

The Express Tribune, October 19th, 2016.

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Tuesday strongly denounced India for threatening to use water as weapon, saying it is a 'flagrant violation' of Delhi's international treaty obligations.

"Such an action could only be contemplated by an irresponsible state," said Prime Minister's Special Assistant on Foreign Affairs Tariq Fatemi while leading Pakistan's delegation to the meeting of the foreign ministers of OIC member states in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Fatemi accused India of pursuing a policy of destabilisation in its neighbours and strongly condemned the state-terrorism it has let loose in Occupied Kashmir, a Foreign Office statement said. He called for a fair, independent and transparent inquiry into grave human rights violations by Indian security forces in the occupied territory and urged the international community to reject Delhi's claim that Kashmir is an integral part of India.

Calling the claim as 'ridiculous', Fatemi pointed out that Jammu and Kashmir dispute is recognised by the UN as an international dispute between two sovereign member-states. He called upon the Muslim Ummah to continue its support for the Kashmiris in their just struggle for the right of self-determination.

The special assistant also expressed Pakistan's strong support for the right of the Palestinians to self-determination in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

Meanwhile, FO said Pakistan-Italy Political Bilateral Consultations were held in Islamabad on Tuesday. Foreign Secretary Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry led the Pakistani delegation while the Italian side was led by Ambassador Elisabetta Belloni, secretary general of Italy's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

The two sides discussed the entire spectrum of bilateral relations including political, economic, educational and cultural cooperation. Noting with satisfaction the positive trajectory in the bilateral relations, they agreed to further expand the existing cooperation in the fields of trade and investment.

Acknowledging the deepening defence ties they agreed to further strengthen cooperation in this area. A wide range of regional and multilateral issues were also discussed. The Italian side was apprised about the recent developments in the region, including the current situation in the IOK and the massive human rights violations that were being committed by the Indian security forces.

The Pakistan side also briefed about the efforts to facilitate an intra-Afghan reconciliation. The Italian side acknowledged the important role being played by Pakistan in promoting peace and stability in the region.

The two sides expressed satisfaction at the close cooperation between Pakistan and Italy at various multilateral fora, including the UN, and agreed to intensify this cooperation.

These annual consultations, at the foreign secretary level, are part of the institutional mechanism established under the Pakistan-Italy Enhanced Strategic Engagement Plan concluded in 2013.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1202732/oic-foreign-ministers-moot-india-slammed-water-aggression/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 10TH TO OCTOBER 16TH 2016

KARAK TRADERS COMPLAIN OF WATER SHORTAGE

Dawn, October 10th, 2016

Karak: The local traders association has complained about shortage of drinking water in the district headquarters, Karak.

The concern was expressed at a meeting of the association with tehsil municipal officer, Karak, here on Sunday. Traders' delegation was led by president Gul Razi Khan Khattak.

After the meeting, the association's press secretary Iqbal Khattak informed the media persons that the meeting expressed grave concern over shortage of drinking water in the city because of which the traders were forced to purchase the commodity.

He also regretted that there was no washroom, car park and other facilities in the Karak city, and the people, particularly women, were facing problems while shopping. He said the TMO was urged to force the market owners to provide the said facilities.

Mr Khattak said the traders also expressed concern over more than 20 hours of loadshedding in the city, which had badly affected their businesses.

They also called for lifting the long-enforced ban on commercial gas connections in the city.

Mr Khattak said the Karak city traders also expressed dismay over lack of cleanliness in the city, and pointed out that workers of tehsil municipal administration didn't discharge their responsibility of ensuring cleanliness and provision of drinking water to the residents. The trader body's leader said the TMO assured them of resolving their problems at the earliest.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1289144/karak-traders-complain-of-water-shortage>

FARMERS PROTESTING CANALS' CLOSURE BLOCK ROAD

Dawn October 10th, 2016

Toba Tek Singh: Scores of farmers from various villages blocked Toba-Khikha-Pirmahal road on Sunday in protest against sudden, unscheduled suspension of water supply to Gogera and Jhang branch canals, apprehending loss of their cash crops.

Farmers from Khikha, Chuttana, Rajana, Janiwala and Pirmahal areas gathered at Khikka village from where they marched on Toba-Khikha-Pirmahal road and blocked it for traffic for half an hour.

According to protesting farmers the water supply to these canals was suddenly suspended on October 5 for a month.

PML-N MPA Mian Muhammad Rafiq also joined the farmers protest to show solidarity with them.

Addressing the protesters, office-bearers of various farmers' organisations, along with chairmen and vice-chairmen of union councils, said that as a result of suspension of water supply for one month their crops of cotton, maize and sugarcane would be destroyed while they would be unable to sow wheat, fodder and canola crops.

They added that canals have been closed on the pretext of construction and widening of head-works at Khanki (Hafizabad) without consulting farmers who are the major stakeholders.

They warned of a massive protest rally after 10th of Muharram at Toba, if water supply to the canals was not restored.

MPA Mr Rafiq told the protesters quoting Punjab irrigation secretary even if the water was restored temporarily, the canals would be closed again from Oct 20 as there was insufficient water in River Chenab.

Faisalabad area water board member Arif Zahid announced full support to the protesters if water supply was not restored.

Others who also spoke included UC chairmen Ghulam Mustafa, Hanif Anjum, Arif Saeed, Munir Ahmad, besides farmers' leaders Faqir Muhammad, Ashraf, Manzoor Ahmad, Latif, Haji Razzaq and Shahid Iqbal Hiraj.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1289213/farmers-protesting-canals-closure-block-road>

THE RHETORIC OF BLOCKING WATER

Dawn, Business & Finance weekly, October 10th, 2016

Ashfak Bokhari

INDIA'S threat to block the flow of western river's water to Pakistan, scrap the Indus Water Treaty and withdraw the country's MFN status, is just rhetoric, as it lacks the capability to carry them out.

The officials of the water and power ministry informed the Senate standing committee on Sept 29 that India could not stop Pakistan's water because it had no infrastructure to do so. Some senators argued that India may develop this capability within a couple of years and, hence, the country must be prepared to counter such a possibility.

Officials are of the view that India, however, can stop the water of the Chenab River during December, January or February by storing water at the Salal Dam Lake. Having a storage capacity of around 60,000 acre feet, India can impound all of the Chenab river's water flow for around 7-8 days, which comes down to 4,000 to 5,000 cusecs during a severe winter period.

India can also increase the use of water flowing into the Indus, Chenab and Jhelum rivers. And it can build more reservoirs in its part of Kashmir.

Sheraz Memon, Additional Commissioner, Indus Water Commission, in a presentation, briefed the senators about the treaty and its historical perspective. He dispelled the impression that the World Bank is a guarantor of the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) signed between Pakistan and India on September 19, 1960.

The World Bank had brokered the treaty and facilitated negotiations between the two countries. Its key role today relates only to the treaty's two articles: appointment of neutral experts in case of disputes and Chairman, Court of Arbitration.

Giving the historical perspective of the water dispute between the two countries, Shiraz Memon recalled that India had stopped water to Pakistan from two barrages located in Indian Punjab in 1947. It later released this water after a payment of Rs50,000.

In 1949 India again stopped water flow to Pakistan, and when the Government of Punjab (Pakistan) approached the Government of Indian Punjab for the release of water, the Indians argued that even though they had sold water to Pakistan in 1947, they had no plans of doing so again. After this incident, differences between the two countries escalated, with the World Bank coming forward and brokering a deal.

According to Memon, setting up run of river hydroelectric projects by India, with pondage, creates issues. Pondage cannot stop the flow, but flows fluctuate for a few hours which later on bridge the flow gap.

Pakistan is, however, worried that if India continues to construct pondages, a time will come when India will be able to stop water to Pakistan, or divert it away from the country. The Senate committee was informed that an 80pc water share (approximately 137 MAF) of the Indus basin, as per the IWT, is allocated to Pakistan, and the remaining 20pc to India.

According to the treaty, Pakistan must receive unrestricted use of all the water of the western rivers, Indus, Jhelum and Chenab, which India is under obligation to let flow, without interference, under the provisions of paragraph 2 of the treaty.

Even if there was no IWT, the upper riparian, under International Water Law, has no right to stop water flow to a lower riparian. In case India tries to interrupt the flow of water into Pakistan as an upper riparian, it would serve as precedence to others.

Seen in this light, China has blocked a tributary of the Brahmaputra River as part of a major hydroelectric project, whose construction began in 2014. China's move is in fact a warning to New Delhi against moving too far in the latter's current tussle with Islamabad.

Pakistani lawmakers want the government to take any unilateral violation of the IWT as an act of war and the country's security forces "must be ready to launch surgical strikes on Indian water installations."

This was recommended by the Senate Standing Committee while discussing any threat to the Indus Water Treaty in the backdrop of statements by India's ruling party leaders although, according to a spokesperson of the US State Department, the treaty has served as "a model for peaceful cooperation" between India and Pakistan for over 50 years.

Of late, there has been an overwhelming demand by Indian ruling party politicians and media personnel to revoke the Most favoured Nation (MFN) status granted to Pakistan in the wake of the growing political temperature.

This, though, cannot be pursued further because the bilateral trade between the two countries has since then been largely in favour of India, mainly because of non-tariff barriers that it has erected to curb imports.

India accorded the MFN status to Pakistan in 1996, claiming that the status was given to honour the commitments made with the WTO. Pakistan has not reciprocated by awarding a similar status to India on political grounds, insisting that unless basic disputes between the two countries were resolved, it would not grant the MFN status to India.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1289173/the-rhetoric-of-blocking-water>

MR LINK CANAL SHUT DUE TO WATER SHORTAGE

Dawn, October 12th, 2016

SIALKOT: The Marala-Ravi-Link (MR Link) Canal has been lying shut for the last two weeks due to water shortage in the river Chenab at Head Marala.

Irrigation department officials told Dawn the water was decreasing day by day in the Chenab at Head Marala due to which the MR Link Canal was shut.

The supply to Upper Chenab Canal (UCC) has also been reduced to 14,050 cusecs and it would come further down in the coming days, they said.

The two canals originate from the Chenab near Head Marala.

District Coordination Officer (DCO) Dr Asif Tufail said the water level had dropped to 15,337 cusecs in the Chenab and the downstream discharge was only 8,000 cusecs at Head Marala.

The water level is 1,940 cusecs in river Tavi and 2,777 cusecs in river Jammu. This is record reduction of water level in the Chenab here during this season.

The irrigation officials feared that the water shortage in the Chenab and the two canals could badly affect the sowing of crops on the thousands of acres of land along the belt, especially in Sialkot, Gujrat, Gujranwala and Sheikhpura districts.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1289615>

KAROT HYDROPOWER PROJECT TO BECOME OPERATIONAL BY 2020

Business Recorder, October 12, 2016

The 720 megawatt Karot Hydropower Project being built from Silk Road Fund initiated by Chinese President, Xi Jinping, would become operational by the year 2020. The construction work on this project has already been started at Karot village of Rawalpindi district in January this year and is expected to be completed in 2020, a senior official in the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms said.

He said, it is the first hydropower project financed by China's Silk Road Project for which land acquisition is being completed at a fast pace. After completion in 5 years, the Karot Power Company will run and maintain the project for 30 years after which it will be transferred to the Punjab government.

The Project site is accessible through the road from Islamabad-Kahuta-Kotli Road approximately 29 kilometres from Kahuta village, and 65 kilometres from Islamabad. The major project features included construction of concrete gravity 91 meters high dam with a crest length of 320 meters near the village of Gohra.

The dam's reservoir will be approximately 152 million cubic meters in volume, with a length of 27 kilometres. However 72 homes and 58 businesses are expected to require relocation as a result of construction, while 2.8 kilometres of the Karot-Kotli road, and 8.9 kilometres of the Azad Pattan-Kahuta road will need relocation.

The power intake structure will be constructed on right bank of the river immediately upstream of Dam site and will divert the water into headrace tunnels entering into Cavern Powerhouse. The water will be discharged back to River Jhelum through tail-race channel located at right bank of the River Jhelum immediately downstream of Karot village. The dam will generate mean annual energy 3,436 GWh, and will connect to Pakistan's national electricity grid.

<http://www.brecorder.com/fuel-a-energy/193/92975/>

LAW OF THE INDUS

Dawn, October 15th, 2016

“The upstream users of an international river are no longer entitled to the unrestricted use of (the waters) of such a river, and are bound, when taking decisions concerning its use, to take reasonable account of the interests of other users in downstream areas.” On Sept 25, 1997, the ICJ gave its imprimatur on the rule in a case between Hungary and Slovakia (concerning the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros Project), putting it beyond dispute.

Thus, even if the Indus Waters Treaty did not exist, India would not be able to take any of the diversionary measures that official leaks in the media threaten. It reflects legal incompetence, contempt for international morality, and a barbaric outlook.

The court followed an earlier ruling of its predecessor, the Permanent Court of International Justice, in 1929 with regard to the River Oder, which said “the community of interest in a navigable river becomes the basis of common legal right, the essential features of which are the perfect equality of all riparian states in the use of the whole course of the river and the exclusion of any preferential privilege of any one riparian state in relation to the others”.

Therefore, in its judgement, the ICJ pointedly stated: “Modern development of international law has strengthened this principle for non-navigational uses of international watercourses as well, as evidenced by the adoption of the convention of 21 May 1997 on the Law of the Non-Navigational Uses of International Watercourses by the United Nations General Assembly. The court considers that Czechoslovakia, by unilaterally assuming control of a shared resource, and thereby depriving Hungary of its right to an equitable and reasonable share of the natural resources of the Danube [...] failed to respect the proportionality which is required by international law.”

The law mandates equitable and reasonable shares for all the countries through which an international river runs. In 1895, US attorney general Judson Harmon was asked for an opinion on the rights of the US and Mexico over their shared river, the Rio Grande. US farmers had increasingly begun to divert its waters, significantly reducing its flow to Mexico.

He responded: “The fundamental principle of international law is the absolute sovereignty of every nation as against all others, within its own territory.” He conceded that he had found in support of his view “no precedent or authority which has a direct bearing” and the “case presented is a novel one”. The Harmon Doctrine of absolute territorial sovereignty, which privileged the upper riparian state, died swiftly and was buried by the US supreme court.

East Punjab was therefore ill advised to cut off the water supplies in every canal crossing into Pakistan in April 1948, which ran contrary to the agreement reached by Committee B (one of the committees set up to deal with issues arising from Punjab’s partition) when it stated: “There is no question of varying the authorised shares of water to which the two zones and the various canals are entitled.” Cyril Radcliffe expected that “any agreements [...] as to the sharing of waters from these canals will be respected”.

It is unnecessary to trace the tortuous course of events that followed this standstill agreement of May 1948 until the signing of the Indus Waters Treaty in Karachi, on September 1960, by Jawaharlal Nehru, Ayub Khan and W.A.B. Iliff (representing the World Bank) — albeit for specified purposes. As judge Richard Baxter, an expert on international waterways law, noted, the World Bank was not a disinterested presence but one of the parties to what were actually tripartite negotiations. It was, therefore, not a bilateral treaty but a multilateral one — for yet another reason.

On the same day and place, two other agreements were also signed: the Indus Basin Development Fund Agreement by representatives of Pakistan, the US, the UK, Australia, Canada, Germany, New Zealand and the World Bank, and a loan agreement between Pakistan and the World Bank. Enormous sums of money were spent and expensive irrigation works construction was undertaken.

The treaty says that it can be terminated only by another treaty. Article 63 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (1980) says: “The severance of diplomatic or consular relations between parties to a treaty does not affect the legal relations between them by the treaty except in so far as the existence of diplomatic or consular relations is indispensable for the application of the treaty.” Even severance of diplomatic relations does not affect the treaty.

To obstruct the Permanent Indus Commission is to trigger the formation of a court of arbitration (Article IX). The treaty is not a weapon to be used for political ends; it has a long history and is entrenched in international law.

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 3RD TO OCTOBER 9TH 2016
INDUS WATERS TREATY MODEL OF PEACEFUL COOPERATION, SAYS US
Dawn, October 3rd, 2016

Anwar Iqbal

WASHINGTON: The United States has urged India and Pakistan to adhere to the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), calling it a model for peaceful cooperation.

The Indian media reported this weekend that India was seriously considering a proposal to scrap the treaty to force Pakistan to change its Kashmir policy.

“The Indus Waters Treaty has served as a model for peaceful cooperation between India and Pakistan for over 50 years,” a spokesperson for the US State Department told Dawn.

“We hope and encourage India and Pakistan to resolve any differences through bilateral dialogue,” the US official added.

The IWT is a water-distribution agreement between India and Pakistan, brokered by the World Bank and signed in Karachi on Sept 19, 1960, by then president Ayub Khan and then prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

The treaty gives India waters of the Ravi, Sutlej and Beas rivers and Indus, Jhelum and Chenab to Pakistan, with limited allowance to India over the three western rivers for power generation, etc.

But after the Sept 18 militant attack on an Indian military facility at Uri in held Kashmir, New Delhi suspended biannual talks with Pakistan — as mandated in the treaty — to discuss water distribution.

Last week, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a meeting to review the 56-year-old treaty, which decided to “exploit to the maximum” the water dispute as a foreign policy tool.

Pakistan reminded India that international laws prevented upper riparian states from stopping the flow of water to those down the river. Pakistan also warned India that stopping the rivers was an act of war.

On Sept 27, a Pakistani delegation met senior World Bank officials in Washington and urged them to prevent India from making illegal constructions on the Neelum and Chenab rivers.

The delegation reminded the officials that the treaty authorised the bank to establish a court of arbitration and appoint three judges to the court. India and Pakistan each appoint two arbitrators.

Diplomatic sources in Washington told Dawn that the review meeting in New Delhi discussed three options: scrapping the treaty, recommencing work on one of the dams and suspending biannual talks.

The sources said that all three options were still on the table, forcing Pakistan to take the matter to the World Bank.

The construction on the dam, called Wullar Barrage in Pakistan and Tulbul Project in India, started in 1987 but stopped when Pakistan objected. The review committee has now decided to resume it.

A senior Pakistani diplomat, while pointing to the US description of the treaty as “a model of cooperation”, said that “India may find it difficult to scrap the treaty as it will irk the international community, but it may continue working on the other two options”.

The Pakistani team that met World Bank officials in Washington reminded them that the Kishanganga project was also a violation of the Indus Waters Treaty.

The Indians, however, argue that the World Bank can only establish a court of arbitration when the biannual talks fail. Since the talks have only been suspended, not scrapped, the bank cannot set up a court yet.

“The Pakistanis are saying that they have exhausted all efforts at the bilateral level. And earlier this year, the Indus Water Commission also declared it a dispute. So now is the time for the World Bank to play its role,” said an official aware of the proceedings.

Pakistanis are believed to have told the bank that they consider the resumption of disputed projects a “very serious violation” of the treaty and an example of “India’s high-handedness”.

The Pakistani team informed the World Bank officials that “the three rivers are their lifeline as they are an agrarian nation”, said the official who spoke to Dawn.

On Saturday, China blocked a tributary of the Brahmaputra river as part of a major hydroelectric project, which also strengthened Pakistan’s case.

In Washington, the step is seen as a warning to New Delhi against using water as a foreign policy tool.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1287720/indus-waters-treaty-model-of-peaceful-cooperation-says-us>

SENATORS CALL FOR BUILDING SMALL DAMS, WATER RESERVOIRS

Dawn, October 4th, 2016

Amir Wasim

ISLAMABAD: Senators on Monday stressed the need for building more small dams and water reservoirs for the development of the agricultural sector and to overcome energy issues.

Before holding a full-fledged debate on the problems being faced by farmers on a motion moved by Taj Haider of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), the Senate unanimously adopted a resolution “recommending that a 250-kilometre highway be constructed along the coast from Sir Creek to Karachi to serve as a wall against sea intrusion”.

The resolution was tabled by the PPP’s Sassui Palijo after Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Shaikh Aftab Ahmed assured the house that the federal government would ask the National Highway Authority to construct the road once the Sindh government prepared feasibility of the project.

Ms Palijo warned that if the highway was not built, Badin and Thatta districts would drown under sea water in the near future. She urged the federal government not to leave the matter to the provincial governments and play its role in preventing sea intrusion considering its responsibility.

The PPP senator said sea intrusion could be stopped through construction of the highway, otherwise the coastal areas of Sindh would be completely annihilated. She regretted that there had been no mention of the problem of sea intrusion in the government’s “Vision 2025 programme”.

She said that when it came to the affairs of ports and coasts, it became the federal subject, but when its attention was drawn to the submerging of over three million acres under sea water, the federal government started declaring it a provincial subject.

Shaikh Aftab admitted that a large part of land in the coastal areas had been lost due to sea intrusion. However, he said that since the land belonged to the provincial government, it was its responsibility to take steps to prevent sea intrusion.

He said the federal government was ready to play its role and help the provinces in this regard.

Later taking part in the debate on the problems being faced by farmers, the senators belonging to opposition parties criticised the government for what they called ignoring the agricultural sector.

The PPP’s Taj Haider called for introducing land reforms in the country, alleging that big landlords were exploiting small farmers. The Federal Land Commission had also supported the need for land reforms, he said.

Independent senator Mohsin Leghari stressed the need for improving water management for better crops. He claimed that a large cultivable area had already been lost due to salinity and poor water management. He alleged that those involved in the business of pesticides were also exploiting the small farmers.

Usman Kakar of the Pakhtunkhwa Mili Awami Party asked the federal government to grant a Rs200 billion package for the construction of small dams in Balochistan.

Dr Jahanzeb Jamaldini of the Balochistan National Party-Mengal accused the rulers of not giving priority to the construction of small dams in the country.

Mohsin Aziz of the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf regretted that banks were not providing loans to small farmers.

Without naming the controversial Kalabagh dam project, Ilyas Bilour of the Awami National Party said that whenever they talked about the need for construction of small dams, the ruling party's members started talking about construction of one big dam.

Jamaat-i-Islami chief Sirajul Haq said the underground water level had gone down because the respective governments had failed to build reservoirs to save rainwater.

PPP's Aajiz Dhamra regretted that the government had recently announced a Rs430bn 'Kissan Package', but it later reduced the amount under pressure from the World Bank.

Concluding the debate, Minister for National Food Security Sikandar Bosan asked the provinces to also play their role in the development of the agricultural sector because the subject had been devolved after the 18th constitutional amendment.

He claimed that despite all challenges there was no shortage of food in the country as wheat stock was surplus and rice production was more than its requirement.

Mr Bosan said the package announced by the prime minister had only been implemented in Punjab because three provinces had not yet given their share for the package. He particularly criticised Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Pervez Khattak for what he called flatly refusing to jointly work with the federal government for improving the agricultural sector.

Meanwhile, speaking on a point of order, Hafiz Hamdullah of the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (JUI-F) drew the attention of the house to a reported statement of former military ruler retired Gen Pervez Musharraf that democracy did not suit Pakistan. He said the whole house should condemn the statement which showed that the dictator did not believe in democracy and democratic institutions.

Senate Chairman Raza Rabbani observed that the former military dictator was actually "insulting" the whole nation through such remarks.

Meanwhile, speaking at the inauguration ceremony of the "Clerks of Parliament" conference earlier in the day, Mr Rabbani, in an apparent reference to Gen Musharraf's statement, said the future of Pakistan was in democracy and parliament and those who had something else in their mind were "living in a fools' paradise".

"Any effort to weaken the democratic process and constitutional parliamentary system would be a threat to the federation," he said, adding that a strong parliamentary administration and transparency could further augment the parliamentary system in the country.

The Senate chairman said that conscious efforts had been made by different forces in the past to keep parliament in isolation from people. After the 18th amendment, he added, Pakistan had become a true federation.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1287883/senators-call-for-building-small-dams-water-reservoirs>

WATER SUPPLY SCHEME FOR MARTYRED SOLDIER'S VILLAGE

The Express Tribune, October 5th, 2016

Shabbir Mir

GILGIT: The Gilgit-Baltistan government on Tuesday announced a water supply scheme for the native village of Havaladar Jumma Khan, the Northern Light Infantry soldier who was killed by Indian firing along the Line of Control last week.

The scheme, worth Rs1 million, was announced by the Minister for Local Government and Rural Development Farman Ali.

Havaladar Jumma, a father of three children, was a resident of Faqir Kot, a small village in Astore valley of Gilgit-Baltistan. "Jumma Khan is our hero and this [water supply scheme] is a small gift for the people of his village," Ali said.

The minister had visited the village on Tuesday and laid a wreath on Havaladar Jumma's grave.

The scheme is the first such project announced for the village where the martyred soldier's wife, children and the rest of the family still live.

"We want to tell the enemies [of Pakistan] that we are united and ready to offer sacrifices of all sorts," the minister said.

Coincidentally, Ali also hails from the Astore valley.

Referring to the independence of Gilgit-Baltistan, the minister said natives of the region had forced the Dogras to flee G-B in 1947 and that they still had enough strength to "deal with people like Modi".

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1193652/honour-water-supply-scheme-martyred-soldiers-village/>

DENIED 'DUE' SHARE: AUTHORITIES HAND IN GLOVE WITH TANKER MAFIA

The Express Tribune, October 5th, 2016.

Mudaser Kazi

Karachi: The chronic water shortage in Defence Housing Authority (DHA) – a result of alleged connivance between the 'tanker mafia' and relevant government officials – forced some concerned residents to protest outside the Clifton Cantonment Board (CBC) office on Tuesday morning.

Fliers calling out residents to join the demonstration were being delivered to houses or reached residents through newspapers since Sunday.

The organiser of the protest, former ex-vice president of CBC, Najeeb Wali, remarked that despite an abundant supply of water, DHA residents are forced to buy water from official and private tankers.

Commenting on the fact that no official from the CBC approached the demonstrators to listen to their grievances and in fact closed the main office doors, Wali said, "The CBC should know that we are peaceful today but they should not test our nerves as next time things may be different."

He also demanded the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) to provide a dedicated line for residents of DHA since "we are among the highest tax payers."

Muhammad Sohail, a DHA resident for the last 23 years, said they are protesting against the low supply of water. He claimed that nine million gallons of water is approved for DHA but "we are getting only three million gallons." He claimed that the authorities save that water only to later sell it to residents via 'official' tankers.

He also blamed the local MNA, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) Dr Arif Alvi, for being "unable to resolve his voters' main issue."

"I am sorry but PTI is being rejected in DHA," he claimed. Dr Shakeel Rizvi was also among the scores of protesters who chanted slogans against the CBC. He was of the view that water scarcity in the area has never been this bad since he has been living in DHA – for nearly three decades.

He remarked that five to six years ago the underground water tanks in their houses used to overflow with line water, but now they only get line water once a week and that too for just a few hours.

“Since water supply has diminished we have to get water tankers from private contractors. The CBC also sells water from tankers, charging us thousands of rupees for it,” he shared.

Displaying a computer-generated receipt for availing water tanker services from DHA, he termed it proof of “institutional corruption”.

Rizvi said that CBC is operating like an ‘organised mafia’.

Mrs Mohsin, another resident, said CBC has not only failed in supplying water to residents but is also failing to resolve sanitation issues of the locality.

Talking to The Express Tribune, the elected vice-president of CBC, Aziz Suharwardy, claimed that a majority of the residents who participated in the protest either lost the previous cantonment board elections or were residents of katchiabadis who never pay taxes.

However, he acknowledged the shortage of water supply in DHA. He explained that instead of receiving water supply against the demand of 14 million gallons per day (MGD), they receive only 6.1MGD from the KWSB.

KWSB’s technical services deputy managing director Fahim Zaidi remarked that the water board and DHA have an agreement, inked in 1999, wherein nine MGD is provided to DHA, but since the housing society is at the tail end of the supply chain, and due to water scarcity in the metropolis, the KWSB has been unable to supply the agreed amount.

According to the CBC vice-president, in such a situation, it is very hard to provide adequate water to DHA residents. He added that if the DHA allots land to CBC for a desalination or reverse-osmosis plant near the coast, they can offset the water shortage within three to four months. When contacted, DHA spokesperson Major (retired) Aurangzeb was unwilling to comment on the issue.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1193496/denied-due-share-authorities-hand-glove-tanker-mafia/>

PEC (AMENDMENT) BILL 2016 PASSED: SENATE BODY FOR RAISING WATER SUPPLY MATTER AT CCI FORUM

Business Recorder, 6 October 2016

ISLAMABAD: Senate Standing Committee on Science and Technology passed Pakistan Engineering Council (Amendment) Bill 2016 and recommended that the matter regarding supply of clean drinking water should be taken up in Council of Common Interest (CCI).

The meeting of the Senate Standing Committee was held under Usman Saifullah Khan on Wednesday.

The committee reviewed shortage of clean drinking water and facilities of water purification in Capital city, alleged fake degree of chief executive of National Testing Service, dual degree scam of Comstats University and Pakistan Engineering Council (amendment) Bill 2016.

Chairman committee said it was unfortunate that lab results showed that drinking water of his house was contaminated. Minister for Science and Technology Rana Tanveer also said the supply of drinking water at his house was also not fit to consume. He said his ministry and sub-departments were working for supply of clean drinking water.

The committee was further informed that Ministry of Science and Technology issued notices to 50 factories running in capital city which were causing water pollution in the metropolitan. Conservation of water was subject of Water and Power Ministry, the committee was informed.

Minister for Science and Technology Rana Tanvir Hussain told the panel that water was a blessing of Allah, but unfortunately, people were not getting clean drinking water.

The minister further said the Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR)’s reports on water was also shared with provincial governments so that they could take appropriate measures to make sure supply of clean drinking water.

The committee also recommended the government to set up a think tank comprising renowned scientists, educationalists, technocrats, policy makers and researchers. The think tank would be assigned the task to formulate a national policy for the promotion of science and technology in the country.

Rana Tanveer assured the committee that executive committee of Ministry of Science and Technology met after 14 years and it would implement the decisions being made in the committee.

The committee also directed to resolve the matter regarding awarding of dual degrees to 2,500 students of Comstats University in three months.

The committee was further informed that a fact finding inquiry committee was set up to probe the fake degree scam of chief executive officer of National Testing Service. The inquiry report would be available in one week. An exemplary punishment would be awarded to the accused, the minister said.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2016/10/06/3-page/800202-news.html>

INDIA CANNOT UNILATERALLY REVOKE OR ALTER INDUS WATERS TREATY: FO
Dawn, October 7th, 2016

Iftikhar A. Khan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has made it clear that India cannot unilaterally revoke or alter the Indus Waters Treaty.

“The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) is not time-barred and was never intended to be time- or event-specific. It is binding on both India and Pakistan and has no exit provision,” Foreign Office spokesman Nafees Zakria said at a weekly press briefing on Thursday.

He called upon the international community to take note of Indian claims as they were a violation of New Delhi’s obligations and commitments under the treaty. According to the sub-provisions (3) and (4) of Article XII of the IWT, the treaty cannot be altered or revoked unilaterally, he pointed out.

The remarks came days after the reported decision of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to suspend the Indus water commission talks. At a recent high-level meeting, Modi had been told by water management experts that India could not afford to walk out of and abrogate the 56-year-old treaty and that it would be interpreted as a declaration of war.

The FO spokesman did not offer any comment when asked to analyse the timing of China’s decision to block a tributary of the Brahmaputra river in Tibet for a hydroelectric project. “We have seen media reports. You may like to approach the government of China to ascertain details.”

In reply to a question about reports that Indian media was preparing doctored videos of the so-called ‘surgical strikes’ New Delhi claimed to have carried out across the Line of Control last week, he said the baseless Indian claim had been rejected by Pakistan. “Falsified and irresponsible statements can only escalate tensions and are indeed a threat to regional peace and security, which India sought to create on purpose,” he warned.

Mr Zakaria referred to voices within India questioning sketchy and vague claims of the Indian government and seeking evidence of surgical strikes.

He recalled that the ISPR had taken media teams to the area to see the situation.

He said the United Nations Military Observer Group for India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) had also visited the area and found nothing in support of the Indian claim.

The FO spokesman deplored the detention of All Parties Hurriyat Conference chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani despite his poor health. His house has been converted into a sub-jail. “We are deeply concerned about the health of JKLF chairman Yasin Malik, who has developed life-threatening heart problems due to inhuman treatment meted out to him during his illegal detention.”

He urged the international community, particularly prominent human rights organisations, to take notice of the genocide and crimes against humanity being committed by Indian forces in held Kashmir, help stop the bloodshed and

human rights violations and make arrangements for supply of food, medicines and other basic items to halt the humanitarian catastrophe.

Commenting on the rejection by the White House of an India-backed petition seeking to declare Pakistan a terrorist state, the FO spokesman said: “We understand that such moves are based on the views and personal motives of individuals. In this particular case, it was a malicious move by some members of the Indian-American community, and does not in any way reflect the policy or views of either the US administration or the Congress. Obviously, the White House saw through the real motivation behind this move and acted rightly in rejecting the petition.”

He said Pakistan had already raised the issue of financing of terror groups in Pakistan by India at all forums. “We will hand over the evidence when the time is propitious.”

Mr Zakaria refused to confirm or deny reports that the national security advisers of Pakistan and India had discussed over phone proposals to de-escalate tension. He advised the questioner to raise it with ‘relevant authorities’.

About India’s decision not to invite Pakistan to sports events, including the Kabaddi World Cup, he said: “We are disappointed to see such an approach which reflects the level of anti-Pakistan rhetoric in India.”

He expressed his inability to confirm if Afghan President Ashraf Ghani had expressed a desire that his country be included in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. “I have seen media reports, but can’t confirm. I need to check this. CPEC has apparently evinced interest from some countries as it is an economic development initiative.”

Asked to explain the background of a statement by the Foreign Office about a new US law that allows families of the 9/11 victims to sue Saudi Arabia, he said Pakistan was concerned at the adoption of a domestic law which has an extra-territorial application.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1288529>

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NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM NOVEMBER 28 TH TO DECEMBER 4TH 2016

BALOCHISTAN’S IRRIGATION DILEMMA

Dawn, Business & Finance weekly, November 28th, 2016

Sikander Brohi

Balochistan’s irrigation system is in bad shape. Centuries-old traditional irrigation systems, including Karez, have become dysfunctional owing to depleting groundwater resources.

The province’s mega irrigation infrastructure — especially the dams damaged by the floods of 2010 — is still in shambles. Thus, there is a serious threat to the lives and livelihood of local communities in case of heavy rain or floods in the region.

The much publicised ‘100-dams’ project for the province by the federal government has hit snags.

In a bid to resolve the irrigation problem, the World Bank approved its six-year ‘Balochistan Integrated Water Resource Management and Development Project’ in June, at an estimated cost of \$253.72m. This includes the International Development Agency’s \$205.56m and the International Fund for Agricultural Development’s \$38.06m. The Balochistan government will contribute \$10.11m.

The project is located in the Nari and Porali River Basins. The physical works proposed under the project are as follows:

The perennial irrigation schemes mainly include construction of off-take structures from the main river, channel lining and outlets, construction of water distribution structures and cross drainage.

The Spate irrigation component consists of: construction of weir-controlled floodwater diversion systems, including the headwork; main canal, distributaries and watercourses for the distribution of water to the command area; and development of the command area and Spate farming.

The flood protection work comprises of the construction of: earthen bunds with rip rap, earthen spurs with stone pitching, and gabion structures.

Collectively, across the two river basins, the flood protection work will protect 14,400ha, and 3,220 homes, from erosion, and benefit 4,500 farming families by minimising damage to the agricultural land.

The water supply scheme envisages the development of 16 village water supply schemes.

Although the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the project has been conducted and approved, there are a number of serious gaps in the report, raising doubts about the level of public consultation and participation.

Independent experts, civil society and community representatives are raising serious concerns about the nature of the project and its activities.

According to the report, during consultations residents of over 12 villages — the supposed beneficiaries of the project — showed a unanimous willingness to voluntarily provide their land for the construction of the projects' various components; raising questions about the way these meetings were conducted.

This willingness of the residents is synonymous to them giving a license to the authorities to acquire land from local farmers without any compensation, allowing for deforestation and demolition of any construction in its way, while displacing millions of locals in the process.

The rehabilitation of the irrigation infrastructure of Balochistan — destroyed during the floods of 2010 — has been a key demand of the local farmers. Their elected representatives have long been raising this issue. A number of destroyed dam infrastructures exist on both the Nari and Porali Rivers of Balochistan. Even the EIA report identifies this as a key issue. Yet, on the contrary, the focus of the project remains on perennial irrigation schemes.

Moreover, integrated sub-projects under the project largely include weir-controlled spate irrigation. According to irrigation experts, key emphasis in the project has been on spate irrigation infrastructure which diverts water from ephemeral rivers beds during floods.

Balochistan has been experiencing reduced rainfall with climate change further reducing its frequency and intensity. About 61pc of river flow occurs during the months of July and August. Therefore, developing spate irrigation instead of rehabilitating existing infrastructure and small dams seems to be a misplaced investment.

The project document also accepts that 'uncertainty in the number and sequence of floods and the quantity of sediments are the primary factors affecting spate irrigation.' It also says: "The project will develop 22,056 ha of command area in the Nari River Basin under spate irrigation through community participatory procurement with water users contributing 15-35pc to construction costs in-kind"; a step which is likely to affect the local communities as well as their investment would also be in vain.

The project document further says, "beneficiary farmers will contribute in-kind with their labour, for cost sharing of the development work", raising fears that there would be a 'budgeted' threat of forced farmers' labour.

The EIA report shows that only a single 'public consultation' was held at Winder, a small town in Lasbela District. This is particularly interesting as Winder is not even included in the project area, yet the majority of the participants were from Winder and surrounding villages. There was barely any participation of the Porali command area and the Khuzdar district, from where the Porali River originates and where majority of the project infrastructure development schemes are planned to be implemented.

Similarly, there was no participation in the public hearing of the entire command area of the Nari River — the largest river basin in Balochistan — despite the fact that only 60pc of the project investment will be utilised there. The project seems to be a case of misplaced priorities without the proper participation of the local communities in the project design, including while identifying its key activities.

Keeping in view the continuing irrigation dilemmas of Balochistan, there is a strong need to re-plan this World Bank loan-based project by holding serious consultations with the local communities as well as experts and civil society organisations on the nature and activities of this process before its implementation.

It should be ensured that the process is carried out in a way which does not harm the local communities that, under the current project plan, may face displacement and forced labour.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1299001/balochistans-irrigation-dilemma>

LCCI SAYS GOVT SHOULD START KALABAGH DAM

Business Recorder, 28 November 2016

LAHORE: The Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry has strongly condemned the Moodi's threat to stop every drop of water for Pakistan saying that this ugly statement of Indian Prime Minister has proved the opponents of Kalabagh Dam are actually safeguarding the Indian interests and are fully involved in the conspiracy to harm Pakistan.

In a statement issued here, the LCCI President Abdul Basit, Senior Vice President Amjad Ali Jawa and Vice President Muhammad Nasir Hameed Khan said that threat of Indian PM has entirely cleared the intensions of India. Government should not only raise this issue at international level but should also start construction of Kalabagh dam without wasting more time. They said that this matter should be taken very seriously, government should take strict action against Indian threat to Pakistan and it should be cleared to India that Pakistan would go to any extent for its right.

“Any laxity by the Pakistani side would encourage India to implement its threat that would turn country into a desert and we would be left with no other option but to import commodities to feed huge population”, they added.

The LCCI office bearers urged government to ignore anti-Pakistani elements on Kalabagh Dam and start its construction immediately as any further delay would be as like as to protecting the Indian interests.

They added that water resources in Pakistan are depleting rapidly and we cannot afford to waste huge amount of water to the sea. They said that Kalabagh Dam is the most feasible project for national economy that could be completed within five years.

They said that around \$13 billion would be required for only construction of Bhasha dam while other expenses of billions would also be occurred besides the cost. For example, they said, around 150km area of Karakrum High way would have to be reconstructed with the cost of \$6 to 7 billion and hundreds precious lives. They said that around \$3 billion more would be required for transmission line from Bhasha to national grid. They said that collectively more than \$20 billion would be required for construction of Bhasha dam.

They said that Kalabagh Dam would produce 3600 MW of electricity annually at the cost of only Rs.2.50 per unit while after the time span of 5 years, when Kalabagh Dam will bring back its construction cost, it would produce electricity at the rate of only Rs. 1 per unit and country would save \$ 4 billion annually in the account of electricity production.

They further said that one million acre feet saved water gives benefit of around \$ 2 billion to the economy. They said that Kalabagh dam would give benefit of \$ 14 billion to the national economy as its water storage capacity would be 7 million acre feet. They urged the government not to consider the Indian agents and start construction of Kalabagh dam immediately.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2016/11/28/5-page/823300-news.html>

HANDING OVER OF RO PLANTS TO COUNCILLORS OPPOSED

Dawn, December 1st, 2016

MITHI: Thar villagers have opposed the government move to hand over control of hundreds of reverse osmosis (RO) plants to members of local governments and urged the authorities concerned to hire experts to run the plants.

They feared the experiment to hand over the sensitive plants to non-technical people might endanger the entire project.

Acting on the directives of Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, Tharparkar Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Zaman Narejo has formed a committee to hand over the plants to representatives of local governments.

The committee has assistant commissioner of Mithi, chief municipal officer of Mithi, town officer of Islamkot and two representatives of Sindh Coal Authority and Pak Oasis Company as members.

The committee members would visit all RO plants, including the one in Misri Shah locality in Mithi town, which was dubbed as the largest solar-powered plant in Asia, and submit the report to DC office. The administration officials said that chief minister had directed them to hand over all plants in the district to union councils after expiry of contract with the existing contractor in June 2016.

Experts working on various water projects in Thar believed the move would make access to drinking water difficult because chairmen of union councils did not have required technical expertise to run such sophisticated plants and thus most of the plants would eventually develop faults.

They said that out of 500 plants 60 were already out of order due to various faults in tube-wells and motors which needed immediate repairs to restore water supply to villages.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1299719>

CALL FOR MERGING SIDA INTO IRRIGATION DEPT

Dawn, December 1st, 2016

MIRPURKHAS: Office-bearers of farmer organisations of Nara Canal Area Water Board have accused officers of the irrigation department of being involved in gross irregularities and corruption and demanded merger of the Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (SIDA) into the irrigation department.

They said the department had been devastated and a persistent water shortage in tail-end areas of Lower Nara Canal had destroyed agriculture sector.

They were speaking at a convention of farmers bodies at the State Life building here on Wednesday. Besides hundreds of FOs representatives, officers of the irrigation department and SIDA also participated in the gathering.

Farmer Organisation Council chairman Javed Ahmed Junejo demanded that 47 illegal direct outlet on Jamrao and Mithrao canals and watercourses which had been approved on political grounds in past should be closed immediately to end an acute shortage of water in tail-end areas. He said that Sindh government had allocated Rs400 million for the lining of Doso distributary and its contract had allegedly been given to retired officers of the irrigation department in lieu of large cut in the commission.

The contractor was, therefore, using substandard material in the lining work which was causing salinity and waterlogging in the areas along both sides of the distributary, he said.

He urged the chief minister and director general of the National Accountability Bureau to take immediate notice of gross irregularities and corruption and order an impartial inquiry to punish the corrupt officers.

He said that no desilting of the distributary had been carried out for two years and the budget allocated for the purpose had been misappropriated by the officers concerned.

Nara Canal Area Water Board member Zahid Bhurgari urged the government to run 14 canals from the Nara Canal to ensure supply of water till tail-end areas.

Prof Yousuf Rajput, chairman of Tail Abadgar Association, demanded the Sindh government merge the SIDA into the irrigation department.

Adviser to Sindh chief minister on irrigation Babar Effendi also spoke.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1299715>

45PC SHORTFALL OF WATER IN KARACHI: KW&SB

Business Recorder, 1 December 2016

KARACHI: Karachi is presently facing water shortfall of almost 45 percent and the rapid increase in the city's population and constructions of multi-story buildings may further aggravate the issue in the future.

Addressing a press conference at Karachi Press Club (KPC), Managing Director Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KW&SB) Misbah-uddin Fareed said that the city's actual water requirement is around 1100 million gallon per day (GPD); but the water utility is able to provide only 680 million gallons to its 1.7 million consumers.

To cater the growing water needs, the provincial government has designed K-4 project which will complete within two years since its starting, he said. The multi-billion project is under consideration at Chief Minister House. The provincial government has already handed over 11000 acre of land in Hyderabad and Karachi Division to the KW&SB.

He said the city's infrastructure needs urgent attention from the government. The MD said, "Without proper planning, dream of developed Karachi may not come true." He also identified various flaws in water distribution system, underscoring the need of upgrading the existing mechanism.

Fareed said the availability of water to KW&SB's system is linked with the level of reserved water at dams. Recalling he said six to eight months back the city faced acute crises as water level of Hub Dam went below the average point. However, the rainfall in the dam's catchment area increased its water level to 350 feet, which would help sustain supplies from the reservoir to the city.

He said there are some 16 big and 180 small water supply stations in KW&SB's network, and huge monetary resources are required for their continuous operations. Elaborating he said,

"The water board's monthly expenditure under the head of power bill has gone up to Rs 520 million.

He said there are almost 1.7 million KW&SB consumers, of them only 0.3 million are used to pay their water bills and taxes, due to which the board was facing severe financial constraints.

To a query, Mishah said since he has taken over the office charge, some 193 illegal hydrants were closed down and over 2100 lines were disconnected in various operations with the help of Sindh Police and Rangers.

To another question regarding the KW&SB's 'inaction' over water theft mafias operating in the city with impunity, he said some 100 FIRs have been launched against various people under the section 14-A of the Board's act. But, unfortunately not a single culprit has been brought to justice for the reasons best known to police.

Explaining the section 14-A he said, "If any person who damages, punctures water trunk mains ranging from eighteen inch dia to eighty four inch dia, canals, pumping stations of the Board for any purpose including selling of water or taking illegal connections; shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to 10 years and with fine which may extend to rupees 1 million or with both."

"I can't rule out the possibility of ghost employees within the water utility. But disciplinary actions are being taken against them. We have fired as many as 500 employees for being regularly absent from the offices", he told.

He said that in compliance with the Supreme Court's orders, KWSB demolished the subsoil water hydrants in the city. These hydrants were supplying substandard water to different localities in the metropolis.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2016/12/01/5-page/824283-news.html>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM NOVEMBER 21ST TO NOVEMBER 27TH 2016
WHEAT CROP SEASON: SCA URGES SINDH GOVT TO ENSURE REGULAR SUPPLY OF WATER
Business Recorder, November 21, 2016

Sindh Chamber of Agriculture (SCA) has urged the Sindh Government to ensure regular supply of irrigation water as the sowing season of wheat crop has started.

The SCA's meeting, held at its secretariat here Sunday and attended by farmers' representatives through video link from several districts, pointed out shortage of water in the irrigation system, warning that the scarcity would affect the sowing of wheat crop.

The meeting asked the Sindh Government to approach Indus River System Authority (IRSA) to obtain proper share of water from Indus River for Sindh province for the winter sowing season.

The meeting warned that if due to shortage of irrigation water the wheat crop was affected, the farmers of Sindh would hold the government and IRSA responsible for their losses.

The meeting also expressed grave concern on the performance of Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (SIDA) and Left Bank Canal Area Water Board holding the two organisations responsible for water shortage in Phuleli and Akram canals which pass through Hyderabad.

The growers at the meeting also pointed out violation of Section 144 imposed against the inter-provincial sale of sugarcane crop and claimed that sugar mills in upper Sindh region were buying crops from Punjab.

The farmers at the meeting also expressed grave concern over the continuous sale of harmful and spurious pesticides and fertiliser in the market.

The SCA's President Dr Syed Nadeem Qamar chaired the meeting which was attended through the video link by farmers' representatives from Karachi, Sanghar, Sukkur, Ghotki and other districts.

<http://www.brecorder.com/agriculture-a-allied/183/105037/>

INDUS WATERS TREATY A MODEL OF WHAT BILATERAL PACTS CAN ACHIEVE, UN TOLD
Dawn November 24th, 2016

NEW YORK: Pakistan has decried the use of water as an “instrument of coercion and war” while asserting that access to water was a fundamental right that must be protected at all times.

Speaking in the Open Debate of the United Nations Security Council on Water, Peace and Security on Tuesday, Pakistan's Ambassador to the UN Maleeha Lodhi said, “Pakistan denounces any such practice, real or threatened, as we believe it to be inconsistent with the precepts of international humanitarian law.”

She described the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960, between Pakistan and India, with the World Bank as guarantor, as “a model of what can be achieved through bilateral agreements”.

Earlier, the UN secretary general, in his address to the council, also cited the treaty as an example of positive cooperation.

Ms Lodhi said the treaty also provided a good case study of what could go wrong if such agreements were not honoured or were threatened by one of the state parties. She urged the international community to remain vigilant to any sign of unwillingness to maintain cooperation and be willing to act to avert any conflict.

Pakistan also called on the international community to ensure that states remained willing to resolve water issues cooperatively and ensure that bilateral and multilateral arrangements were not undermined through unilateral or coercive measures.

She called on the UN to develop, nurture and protect normative frameworks on waterways, at multilateral and bilateral levels.

Ms Lodhi said if the United Nations wished to maintain international peace and security, it must strive to find ways to ensure two things: that member states remained willing to share water resources peacefully and cooperatively; and that member states' willingness to resolve such issues were not constrained by lack of capacity, a press release issued here said.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1298256/indus-waters-treaty-a-model-of-what-bilateral-pacts-can-achieve-un-told>

SUKKUR RESIDENTS TO GET POTABLE WATER BY JUNE, 2017

The Express Tribune, November 25th, 2016.

SUKKUR: The North Sindh Urban Services Corporation (NSUSC) is involved in a water supply project and the residents of Sukkur will hopefully get potable drinking water by June, 2017, claimed the utility's director of operations, Masar Dayo. He was talking to members of the Sukkur Development Alliance (SDA) Thursday evening.

According to him, most of the water pipelines were laid in 1954, 1964 and 1971, through which only four million gallons of water was being supplied. “After increasing its capacity, we are now supplying 16 million gallons of water

to the citizens and by June, 2017, after completion of the project, we will be supplying 30 million gallons of potable water to the citizens,” he said.

Presently, we are supplying raw water to the residents, Dayo explained, adding that this does not mean the utility is supplying contaminated water. At some places, he said, the water pipelines have been damaged, due to which waste water has been mixed in the clean water but other than that no contaminated water is being supplied by them.

“Funds of Rs4 billion were allocated to NSUSC for supplying clean water to the residents of Sukkur, Khairpur, Rohri, Larkana and other areas but, in Sukkur, the project remains unfinished while the residents of Khairpur are getting potable water,” he lamented. As far as the drainage system of the city is concerned, he said no funds have been allocated for it since 2009. “Therefore, we have requested the government to allocate funds for the megaproject of drainage [repair]. If the funds are not allocated, Sukkur will be inundated by 2018 due to overflowing drains,” he warned.

Ruling out any corruption in the utility provider, Dayo said the utility has failed to come up to the expectations of the people due to other reasons. The officer painted a very bright picture for Sukkur’s future, where machines will carry out sweeping, cleaning of drains and unclogging of manholes.

Earlier, SDA chairperson Jawed Memon pinpointed the civic problems residents have been facing. “Due to lack of interest of the NSUSC, we were forced to create the SDA and register our protest against the worst civic conditions of the city,” he said. Memon added that the utility is providing contaminated water in the city, due to which people are falling prey to waterborne diseases. Heaps of garbage can be found everywhere in the city, which is due to the recruitment of white collar persons as sanitary workers on political grounds, he claimed.

“The sanitary workers used to leave sewage on the main roads for days and resultantly it has become a permanent problem for the people,” he said.

Inviting the attention of the officer towards the choked manholes and overflowing drains, Memon said that sewerage water accumulates in most localities of the city, especially in market areas, which is quite disturbing for shopkeepers and people. He demanded that the NSUSC induct at least two citizens on its board of directors so that they can brief the senior officials about the factual position for future strategy.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1243503/civic-issue-sukkur-residents-get-potable-water-june-2017/>

MODI THREATENS TO USE WATER AS WEAPON AGAINST PAKISTAN

Dawn November 26th, 2016

Monitoring Desk

CHANDIGARH: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday avoided making any pronouncement on an ongoing [Sutlej Yamuna Link] canal row between the states of Haryana and Punjab, but he did indicate that he would use river waters as leverage against Pakistan.

“Now every drop of this water [of the Ravi, Beas and Sutlej] will be stopped and I will give that to the farmers of Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir. I am committed to this,” he said, addressing a rally held in Bathinda in connection with the upcoming elections in Punjab.

His remarks on the waters of the Indus system come a week before the Heart of Asia Conference is to be held in Amritsar on Dec 3-4, according to a report which appeared on the web edition of The New Indian Express. The conference is to be attended among others by Sartaj Aziz, the PM’s Adviser on Foreign Affairs.

Mr Modi alleged that waters of the three rivers were going to waste in Pakistan under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT).

He said that the share of river waters due to India as per the IWT would now be “fully utilised”.

“In the Indus Waters Treaty, the waters of the Sutlej, Beas and Ravi rivers, over which our farmers have a right, are not available to them. The water is India’s right...[but it’s] flowing into Pakistan and going [to] waste into the sea,” he claimed.

The Indian leader then turned his focus from water to more common issues with Pakistan. “From here Pakistan is not far off. When schoolchildren are killed in Pakistan [a reference to the Taliban attack on the Army Public School

Peshawar], 125 crore Indians cry for them. We are with the people of Pakistan. I want to urge the people of Pakistan that they should tell their rulers that Pakistan should fight against poverty, corruption and black money.”

He then sharpened his diatribe. “Pakistan now knows fully well what the Indian army is capable of, and it should not destroy itself by fighting against India.”

He said there were “tremors” across the border after India’s surgical strikes of Sept 29. “Our soldiers carried out surgical strikes in Pakistan which completely shook the country. It has not been able to recover from that shock,” he alleged.

The Times of India quoted Mr Modi as saying that a task force had been constituted to ensure that each drop of water that flowed out of the Sutlej, Beas and Ravi reached Punjab and the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

“There is no reason that we cannot use our rights [over our waters], and let our farmers suffer,” he said, adding, “I need your blessings in order to fulfil your requirements for watering your fields.”

Criticising previous governments, PM Modi said, “waters kept flowing to Pakistan, but successive governments kept sleeping on this issue and my farmer kept crying for want of water”.

“If Punjab farmers get sufficient amount of water, they could produce ‘gold’ from the soil and could fill the coffers of the country,” he said.

The 1960 World Bank-mediated IWT is considered one of the great success stories of water diplomacy, especially as it has survived the India-Pakistan wars of 1965, 1971, 1999 and much bad blood during and after the wars.

Under the treaty, which was signed by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and President Ayub Khan, water of six rivers — Beas, Ravi, Sutlej, Indus, Chenab and Jhelum — are to be shared between the two countries.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1298707/modi-threatens-to-use-water-as-weapon-against-pakistan>

DRY SPELL: FARMERS URGED TO IMPROVE IRRIGATION

Business Recorder, November 27, 2016

The Met Office has said that the prevailing dry weather spell was likely to continue till mid December, asking the farmers of the plain areas to irrigate their fields for crops. “During the last two months dry weather has been reported in most of agricultural Plains of the country and is likely to prevail by mid of December,” it said, adding that “farmers obtaining crop water through tube wells are advised to schedule the irrigation as per crop requirement”.

It said that the growers may sow the recommended varieties of seeds in consultation with agriculture officers. “Farmers are advised to cultivate winter vegetables in time.” Farmers of Potohar region and adjoining areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa should irrigate crops by sprinkler irrigation methods. The Met forecast mainly dry weather for the most parts of Punjab. Weather in Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan is expected to be mainly dry. Mainly cloudy weather is expected in most parts of Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir. Snowfall is likely in Gilgit and Skardu on November 29, 30.

<http://www.brecorder.com/agriculture-a-allied/183/107289/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM NOVEMBER 14TH TO NOVEMBER 20TH 2016

CHINESE FIRM LAUDS SECURITY FOR DIR DAM PROJECT

Dawn, November 14th, 2016

CHENGDU (China): Fool-proof security arrangements made for Chinese workers and engineers engaged in the construction of Koto hydropower project at Timergara in Lower Dir coupled with administrative support by the government departments concerned would hopefully make the project operational some three months earlier than the stipulated time.

Zhou Dong, a senior official associated with the Sichuan Province Geological Engineering Complex (SPGEC), the company assigned for the job under an agreement, told APP recently that the project with a capacity to generate 40.8 megawatts of electricity would be operational by early 2019.

“It is because of the absolute commitment and support at every level that we have been able to complete a part of the dam and are hopeful to get the project completed some three months earlier than the envisaged date,” said Mr Zhou.

In reply to a question, he said the total working period of the project was 48 months and while the contract was signed in January 2015, the work was initiated in August 2015 and since then SPGEC was actively engaged in the construction work on Panjkora River upstream.

The official said his company had signed another contract in October to build the Lawi hydropower project, also in Dir area, with a capacity to generate 69MW of electricity.

The Koto project launched under the Annual Development Programme and supported by the Asian Development Bank with the KP Energy Development Bureau as the major stakeholder will be completed at a cost of Rs14.765 billion.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1296264>

WATER SUPPLIED TO THREE HOSPITALS FOUND UNFIT FOR DRINKING

Dawn, November 18th, 2016

Faiza Ilyas

KARACHI: Water samples collected from the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC), National Institute of Child Health (NICH) and the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) have recently been found unfit for human consumption, it emerged on Thursday.

The tests, some conducted over the last two months and the rest last week, at an NICH laboratory showed a high presence of coliform (180 per 100ml), a broad class of bacteria found in environment, including faeces.

The organisms isolated during the tests were: Escherichia coli (E.coli) and Klebsiella spp. Both can cause a number of diseases and, according to international guidelines, coliform should not be present at all in drinking water.

“It’s like playing with public life. At least, the government should ensure provision of safe drinking water to hospitals,” said Dr Nizamul Hasan, president of the Child Aid Association, a non-governmental organisation working at the NICH, citing his recent illness after drinking tea at the hospital.

“I got these tests done after recovering from a severe cholera-like illness.

Test of the samples collected from the NICH underground tank and the taps located in the JPMC and the NICVD was repeated, but there wasn’t any change in the results,” he said.

The pipeline supplying water to these hospitals was the same and presence of these germs indicated mixing of water with sewage in the system.

Water, he pointed out, was not just used in operation theatres, but also by patients and their attendants for drinking. “This is a dangerous situation as E.coli is now getting resistant to all the known antibiotics all over the world and there can be serious problems for patients as well as their families.”

The health department, he said, was informed in writing about the matter a month ago, but apparently nothing had been done about it.

Upon contact, Dr Hamidullah Malik representing the NICVD also expressed concern over the quality of water being supplied to the hospital and said: “We had raised the matter with the cantonment authorities and the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) six months ago. It seems there is no progress (on the matter).”

The hospital, he said, had installed filter plants but supply of safe drinking water to the entire facility could not be managed from its own resources.

“Tap water is supplied to the general ward. At any given time, the hospital has 700 admitted patients whereas 500 and 1500 patients report at the emergency and outpatient departments (OPD) on a daily basis,” he explained.

To a question, he said patients were immediately treated if they reported any secondary infection.

The JPMC, like the NICVD, has small filter plants at various departments, but lacked a major facility to treat water.

“There are spots in the hospital where we don’t have filter plants and they receive water from the line. A mega filter plant is very much needed here,” said Dr Anisuddin Bhatti, JPMC executive director.

KWSB managing director Misbahuddin Farid believed that the problem might have developed due to some flaws in ‘the internal water distribution system of hospitals’.

“The same line supplies water to the Askari apartments, military establishments and some areas of Clifton. But, we haven’t received any complaints from there. Having said that, I will get the water tested,” he said, adding that nobody had contacted him over this issue.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1296976/water-supplied-to-three-hospitals-found-unfit-for-drinking>

MINING FIRM REJECTS THARIS’ STANCE ON CONTROVERSIAL WATER RESERVOIR

Dawn, November 19th, 2016

MITHI: Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company executives, speaking to the media here on Friday during their visit to the Thar coal fields’ block-2, rejected local residents’ claim that the reservoir being laid at a site within the project area would cause destruction of thousands of acres of lands around it and affect livelihood sources of the population.

Kashif Soomro, Fayaz Ahmed, Sadruddin Jatui and others supervising the construction work claimed that their firm had acquired the land for the reservoir from the government. “Almost the entire land to be used for the reservoir is owned by the state. A few acres were owned by some villagers but they have died,” the executives said.

Regarding the lands acquired for other purposes, they said more than 80 owners of such lands had suitably been compensated and other claimants were being entertained by the revenue department. They told the newsmen that the firm had procured some 3,000 acres to accommodate residents of Tharyo Halepto and Sinhri Dars villages who would eventually be rehabilitated in the model villages to be built for all those who had been displaced due to the acquiring of their lands for the Thar coal project. Such people would be provided basic amenities and best possible health and education facilities, besides a better environment, they said.

The executives informed the media that the work on the open pit mining and installation of power generation plants was in full swing and the firm would be able to start supplying 330 megawatts to the National grid by the end of Dec 2018.

Residents of several villages situated around the site earmarked for the reservoir have been holding a protest for about a month demanding its relocation to a site proposed by their leaders. They have pitched a hunger strikers’ camp outside the Islamkot Press Club to facilitate fasting by protesters in groups.

They had earlier rejected the company’s offer to resolve the issue through negotiations insisting that the reservoir site must be shifted to some other site.

The protesting villagers believed that the reservoir with a projected area of around 2,700 acres was meant for the disposal of toxic liquids generated during the mining process. The hazardous liquids will cause destruction of at least a dozen villages and thousands of acres of fertile lands of Tharis, according to them.

HYDERABAD: Separately, a large number of Tharparkar residents held a demonstration outside the Hyderabad Press Club on Friday demanding relocation of the reservoir, being laid in Gorano village.

The protesters were led by Nehal Kumar, Sandesh Ramani, Peerumal, Dr Sajjan and others. They told the media that the hazardous water planned to be disposed of in the reservoir would affect at least 15,000 people and 200,000 animals, besides farmlands, trees, graveyards and environment.

They said that they were disappointed by the government’s indifferent attitude towards their continued protests in Islamkot, Hyderabad and Karachi over the last four weeks.

They said that they had already identified alternative sites for the reservoir in a document provided to the provincial government.

The mining company was also aware of the document, they added.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1297222/mining-firm-rejects-tharis-stance-on-controversial-water-reservoir>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM NOVEMBER 7TH TO NOVEMBER 13TH 2016

SDA PROTESTS AGAINST POOR SANITATION, WATER SUPPLY SITUATION

The Express Tribune, November 8th, 2016.

SUKKUR: Poor civic hygienic conditions in the city once again forced Sukkur Development Alliance (SDA) activists to take to the streets against the North Sindh Urban Services Corporation (NSUSC), which has failed to meet the expectations of the people, despite spending millions of rupees on sanitation and water supply.

Carrying banners and placards, the protesters, led by SDA chairperson Jawed Memon, took to the streets from Gharibabad and marched along the main road. They shouted slogans against the NSUSC and staged a sit-in at the Clock Tower Roundabout for an hour. The rally comprised activists of different political, religious and social parties, including the Pakistan Muslim League – Functional, Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam – Fazl, Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan, Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and Sunni Tehreek among others.

Speaking on the occasion, Memon condemned the NSUSC for its poor performance and accused it of turning Sukkur into a garbage dump. “Sukkur is the third biggest city of Sindh and used to be a clean city back in the 1970s and 1980s but ever since the NSUSC took over the system of sanitation and water supply in 2011, the city is in a shambles and all the funds are being pocketed,” he claimed.

According to him, 20 sanitary staff are deployed in every union council but due to politically motivated appointments, the staff members are drawing their salaries while sitting at home. “It was expected that after the revival of the local government system, the civic conditions of the city will improve, but nothing has changed,” lamented Memon.

“We have been forced to take to the streets because of the poor civic conditions of the city.” He warned that if NSUSC does not improve its performance, the SDA will besiege their offices.

Sukkur Municipal Corporation mayor Arsalan Shaikh and deputy mayor Tariq Chohan were not available for comments.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1223697/sda-protests-poor-sanitation-water-supply-situation/>

PROJECT TO END CHAKWAL’S WATER SHORTAGE REMAINS STALLED

Dawn, November 10th, 2016

Nabeel Anwar Dhakku

CHAKWAL: The Punjab government has not yet released funding for a water supply scheme for Chakwal city that was approved two years ago.

The city has been facing an acute shortage of water for the last few years, but according to official documents the Planning and Development Board (P&D) has refused to release funding for the water supply scheme mega project on the grounds that the cost estimate for the scheme was not prepared according to the board’s updated guidelines.

According to an official, Chakwal city requires nine cusecs of water daily, but only receives three, which means the “city is facing an immense water shortage”.

Sensing the gravity of the situation, Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif during his election campaign visit to Chakwal in May 2013, promised the people of Chakwal that if elected he would solve the problem of drinking water.

His party swept the polls in the Chakwal district and secured all six seats – two in the National Assembly and four in the Punjab Assembly – but it took the chief minister two years to approve a water supply scheme for the city. Mr Sharif sanctioned the scheme in April 2015, to be completed by 2018 at a cost of Rs572.1 million.

According to plan outlined in documents available with Dawn, two cusecs of water were to be fetched from Khai Dam while four cusecs were to be collected through the installation of 16 tube wells in the Bhoun and Khai villages. Villagers in these areas resisted the plan to install these tube wells, believing that they would render the villages dry by sucking out underground water. The villagers filed a writ petition before the Lahore High Court Rawalpindi Bench, and the court directed the Public Health and Engineering Department (PHED) to reconsider the scheme. During the legal battle between the PHED and the villagers, the former continued to work on acquiring two cusecs of water from Khai Dam.

The PHED reconsidered the scheme after the court order and decided to collect four cusecs of water from the Dharabi Dam instead of installing tube wells, but the proposal drew greater costs due to the great distance between Dharabi Dam and Bhoun village. The cost reached Rs957.7 million, compared to the approved cost of Rs572.1 million.

The PHED sent its revised and escalated estimate to the P&D, which returned the proposal with the objection that it had not been prepared according to the updated guidelines.

On Sept 3, the PHED secretary wrote a letter – a copy of which is available with Dawn – in which he asked the chief minister to approve the revised scheme amounting to Rs957.7 million.

“During the current financial year only Rs10 million has been allocated which is highly inadequate. Additional funds are required for partial completion and for the benefit of the inhabitants of Chakwal city with the facility of clean drinking water,” the letter stated. So far, no action has been taken on the request.

According to the official Rs170 million have been spent on the project thus far. “If Rs150 million more is released Chakwal city could get two cusecs water from Khai Dam, and with the provision of two cusecs the drinking water problem could be eased,” the official told Dawn.

“Unfortunately, only Rs10 million have been released for the current financial year, through which nothing can be done.”

The mega project has also put at stake MPA Chaudhry Liaquat Ali Khan, his wife MNA Iffat Liaquat Ali Khan and their son Chaudhry Haider Sultan. Since 1985, Chaudhry Liaquat Ali Khan has remained loyal to the Sharifs and despite becoming an MPA six times he has not been able to bring any big project to Chakwal.

When Shahbaz Sharif approved the water supply scheme for Chakwal in 2015, Chaudhry Haider Sultan claimed on social media that they had achieved a mega project for Chakwal, but it appears the project will be incomplete by the 2018 elections.

MNA Iffat Liaquat said: “We are trying our best to get funds released for the project as we are aware of the problems of the citizens.” She claimed Rs150 million would be released soon.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1295350/project-to-end-chakwals-water-shortage-remains-stalled>

WATERFALL DAYS

Dawn November 10th, 2016

Fahad Malik

PAKISTAN’S transition from water-rich to water-stressed didn’t come without fair warning. At the turn of the ’90s, experts predicted that freshwater resources in the country would dwindle substantially and become scarce by 2005. The predicted ‘waterfall’ was confirmed by the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR), which further added that acute water shortage would follow by 2025 if the current situation was allowed to prevail.

While our country is no stranger to various kinds of shortfalls, the impending water crisis is not one that will stay confined to the odd street demonstration; unlike, for example, in the case of electricity shortage, where protests can be curbed by simply reallocating electricity from rural suburbs to urban metropolises. When the most essential compound on earth absolutely necessary to sustain life and land is threatened, it could potentially signal the onset of armed conflict in an already volatile region.

The deadly drought that plagued Syria from 2007 to 2010 gives further context to that statement. Ancient irrigation technologies combined with water mismanagement have contributed significantly to the ongoing conflict in Syria, which has claimed thousands of lives and incurred millions in property damage. Widespread crop failures led to mass migration of families that relied solely on farming as their primary source of income.

The large-scale exodus of ‘water refugees’ to neighbouring Jordan and Sudan is stretching thin the host countries’ water resources as well. The influx of 600,000 refugees into Jordan, for instance, has caused ground water resources there to fall into sharp decline. Consequently, interpersonal dynamics between the natives and refugees are worsening steadily. Needless to say, in a region that faces conflict on several fronts, scarcity of water can drastically increase the likelihood of local skirmishes breaking out over control of the remaining resources.

Although there are no parallels between war-torn Syria and terrorism in Pakistan, the water situation, on the other hand, is following the same predicted trajectory. Our water reserves are erratically disseminated at best. Punjab gets 55.94 million acre feet — the lion’s share of the overall water supply. Other provinces, Sindh in particular, accuse Punjab of leveraging its upstream position and controlling the water infrastructure to determine sharing on the basis of historic use.

The disproportionate distribution is cause for considerable tensions between the provinces. Attempts to initiate the construction of new dam projects to preserve water, as well as increase power output, have met an early demise in the past because a single, cohesive solution that benefited all stakeholders equally could not be mutually agreed upon.

Apart from interprovincial water disputes, experts often cite global warming as a phenomenon that is causing rapid depletion of our water resources. For a country heavily dependent on the annual monsoon rains and summer ice melt in the Himalayas to replenish its aquatic reserves, the effects of climate change are undeniable. However, that argument only takes into account one side of an extremely intricate water equation. Man-made interventions — or lack thereof — are as much to blame as Mother Nature retaliating to even the odds.

Take into account the crucial agriculture sector of our country. Being the primary driver of Pakistan’s economy, agriculture accounts for 20pc of Pakistan’s overall GDP and it is the livelihood of half its inhabitants. The Indus and its associated rivers and tributaries form the lifeline of the agrarian industry, which relies on the single largest contiguous irrigation system in the world. Despite that impressive feat, Pakistan’s crop yield per unit is among the lowest in the world — an alarming state of affairs considering that an astonishing 97pc of our water supply is made available to the agricultural sector alone.

However, due to reliance on obsolete irrigation practices and subpar delivery systems, two-thirds of surface water is lost to seepage and evaporation — water that could be harnessed to irrigate arid lands and exponentially increase crop yields. As a result, 29pc of the overall perfectly cultivatable land (or 22.6 million acres) remains uncultivated, which in turn affects national food security.

While the loss of water is causing the agricultural sector to spiral downwards, it has severe implications for the national economy as well. Once crops are lost due to drought, rifts begin to develop among the populace. The resulting social unrest is likely to aggravate the security situation if the country is already struggling to maintain peace. Add the interprovincial water dispute to the mix and the equation becomes increasingly hostile.

The current status quo is a result of political inaction and lack of funding for PCRWR to conduct water preservation studies. Unfortunately, if the threat of acute water shortage is prolonged any further it would grow to rival and surpass homegrown militancy in its potential to cause harm.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1295297/waterfall-days>

A COMPLETE WASTE: UNTREATED SEWAGE POISONING CAPITAL’S WATERWAYS
The Express Tribune, November 10th, 2016

Shahzad Anwar

Islamabad: Untreated sewage is being drained into natural streams which flow down from the Margalla Hills.

This is polluting the streams in the federal capital and emanating unpleasant odours throughout the city, besides turning brooks into breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

The city has about 26 small and large streams, which take hill torrents/rainwater and pass through different residential sectors. They finally converge into two main streams when leaving Islamabad.

“Due to discharge of domestic waste and leakage of municipal sewers, these streams are highly polluted and give out a foul odour. They also end up becoming breeding places for mosquitoes,” says a Pakistan Environment Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) official, requesting anonymity.

In the initial master plan of Islamabad, the natural streams were left open with large spaces on both sides to allow them to flow smoothly along their natural courses.

Later on, CDA started to encroach and narrow them down to create space for residential and commercial plots. There has been a mushroom growth in Sector E-11 in the recent past and streams were badly tapered by CDA.

“Sometimes sewerage lines are choked due to overpopulation. Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation (IMC) maintenance workers rip apart pipelines and let the sewage water directly into the natural streams and nullahs instead of cleaning,” Institute of Architects Pakistan (IAP) Vice President Haroonur Rasheed told The Express Tribune.

“If you go upward, you will find the water of these natural streams is crystal clear. However, they are filled with dirt and a foul smell lower down,” Rashid says. He adds that at some spots, sewage water flows directly into natural streams thanks to broken lines. “It becomes worse at night.”

He points out that there are many reasons for the flow of sewage into natural streams. In the initial master plan, rainwater and sewage drains were laid separately. Later on, some CDA inspectors turned a blind eye towards monitoring and enforcing this mandatory regulation and gave completion certificate to house owners in return for a bribe,” he claims.

He continued that such actions of inspectors encouraged people not to lay separate lines for sewage and rainwater. “To save the meagre cost of pipelines, they started discharging sewage into rain drains which ultimately flowed into natural streams.”

Now, the sewage of a large number of housing units is being discharged into streams. “There is a need to keep natural streams in their original state and avoid creating plots by contracting nullahs,” Rashid stresses.

There was only one sewage treatment plant installed in I-9 under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) which was funded by French Government in 2009. However, that too stopped working.

“Due to faulty equipment, coupled with insufficient inflow, we had to close the plant recently,” a CDA source says. He continued that it only received two million gallons daily (MGD) against a capacity of treating 17 MGDs.

There is no treatment plant in Sector E-11 and the sewage generated by residents is also directly drained into natural streams. Needless to say, these are spreading different diseases and polluting underground water in downstream areas. The source says compact STPs can be installed at different sectors instead of relying on an integrated one.

A few people reside in large size plots, while small plots in the federal capital have more occupants.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1226095/complete-waste-untreated-sewage-poisoning-capitals-waterways/>

INDIA TOP COURT ORDERS PUNJAB STATE TO SHARE RIVER WATER

Dawn, November 11, 2016

India's top court ordered authorities in northern Punjab state Thursday to share river water supplies with a neighbouring state, triggering a spate of resignations by angry lawmakers. The water dispute between Punjab and Haryana has been simmering for over a decade, after a bilateral agreement to construct a 214-kilometre (133-mile) canal connecting two rivers in the states was unilaterally scrapped in 2004.

The Supreme Court said the Punjab government's decision to terminate the agreement via a state legislation was unconstitutional and defied the court's own earlier orders calling for the canal's completion.

Khalid Hasnain

LAHORE: The World Bank (WB) has started proceedings for the formation of a court of arbitration on Pakistan's request by appointing three internationally recognised personalities to select three umpires — chairperson, legal member and engineer member — who will devise a mechanism leading to resolving issues regarding construction of the Kishanganga and Ratle dams under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT).

Under a procedure called “drawing of lots”, the WB has also proposed to Pakistan and India the names of three potential candidates for appointment as neutral experts after the latter prayed for it to resolve the issue in response to the former's petition seeking constitution of the court of arbitration.

Pakistan had objected to the construction and design of the 850MW Ratle and 330MW Kishanganga hydropower schemes, saying that both the projects would have adverse impact on the flow of the Chenab and Neelum rivers. The two projects are being constructed by India on the Chenab River, downstream of the village of Ratle in Doda district, and the Kishanganga river (called the Neelum river downstream in Pakistan) near Bandipor in held Jammu and Kashmir, respectively.

“The WB has accepted requests of both countries, initiating a formal procedure leading to formation of the court of arbitration as well as a panel of neutral experts. And we are hoping completion of the entire procedure by Nov 28, the next hearing of the petition we had filed before the WB under the IWT,” says Pakistan's Commissioner for Indus Waters Mirza Asif Baig.

Talking to Dawn on Friday, Mr Baig — a core member of the Pakistani technical and legal experts pursuing the matter with the WB — said the WB (Washington headquarters) in its decision on Thursday evening (early hours of Friday morning in Pakistan) appointed the chief justice of the United States' supreme court and the rector of the Imperial College of London to select legal and engineer members, respectively, for the court.

Similarly the WB president has been appointed / assigned to select chairperson / chairman of the court. Since the court comprises total seven members, Pakistan and India under the treaty are required to submit names of four (two from each side).

“Pakistan has already nominated its two members for the court, while India is yet to do so despite various requests,” the IWT commissioner added.

He said the court of arbitration or appointing neutral experts were the only options available to resolve various issues on waters between the two countries by involving the WB that has the facilitative role under the treaty.

He said both Pakistan and India had received names of three potential candidates proposed by the WB as neutral experts. “The WB will also finalise the Terms of Reference (ToR) soon and other preparations for mediation between the two countries through the court or neutral experts to resolve the issues,” the commissioner explained.

Meanwhile, according to a press statement, the World Bank Group has urged India and Pakistan to agree to mediation in order to settle on a mechanism for how the IWT should be used to resolve issues regarding two dams under construction along the Indus rivers system.

The World Bank Group made the appeal as it told the two countries it was responding to their separate proceedings initiated under the Indus Waters Treaty, 1960. It held a drawing of lots on Thursday at its headquarters in Washington, DC to determine who will appoint three umpires to sit on the Court of Arbitration that Pakistan has requested.

The WB also proposed to the two countries the names of three potential candidates for appointment as a neutral expert, following India's request.

“The WB Group has a strictly procedural role under the IWT and the treaty does not allow it to choose whether one procedure should take precedence over the other. This is why we drew the lots and proposed potential candidates for the Neutral Expert today,” said Senior Vice President and World Bank Group General Counsel Anne-Marie Leroy.

“What is clear, though, is that pursuing two concurrent processes under the treaty could make it unworkable over time and we, therefore, urge both parties to agree to mediation that the World Bank Group can help arrange. The two countries can also agree to suspend the two processes during the mediation process or at any time until the processes are concluded.”

The IWT is seen as one of the most successful international treaties and has withstood frequent tensions between India and Pakistan, including conflicts. The bank is a signatory to the treaty.

The treaty sets out a mechanism for cooperation and information exchange between the two countries regarding their use of the rivers, known as the Permanent Indus Commission which includes a commissioner from each of the two countries. It also sets out a process for resolving so-called “questions”, “differences” and “disputes” that may arise between the parties.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1295900/world-bank-begins-process-for-arbitration-on-dams>

GROWERS PROTEST OUTSIDE KHURSHID’S RESIDENCE OVER WATER THEFT

Dawn November 13th, 2016

SUKKUR: Growers of tail-end areas of Salehpat taluka on Saturday held a demonstration in front of the residence of Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Syed Khurshid Shah against theft of their share in Nara Canal water by an influential figure of the area. They ended the protest only after Mr Shah assured them that remedial measures would be taken as soon as possible.

Leading the protesters, Eidan Bhambhro, Sultan Ahmed Chachar, Sain Dino Bhutto, Jetu Mal and others briefed Mr Shah about the problems being faced by growers of the tail-end area. They said they had not been receiving water since an influential figure of the area had laid an illegal watercourse and installed a machine at RD-104 point to divert water to his lands.

They said that their lands had turned barren for want of water and their wheat crop had already sustained heavy damage due to the diversion of canal’s water.

After giving a sympathetic hearing to the protesters, Mr Shah held out the assurance that the illegal watercourse would be dismantled and the machines removed. The PPP leader said he would ask the irrigation officials concerned to undertake the job and ensure normal flow of water to the tail-end area of the taluka as soon as possible.

Speaking as the chief guest at the skills competition held at the Sukkur Institute of Business Administration (IBA), the opposition leader appreciated the ‘Prime Minister’s Youth Skills Development Programme’ under which youth are being imparted training in various trades through the National Vocational & Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC).

He noted that 50,000 youths had been trained in the third phase of the programme.

He also lauded the participating youth’s keen interest in the training and hoped that they would be able to earn a respectable livelihood in their respective fields and contribute to nation building.

NAVTTTC executive director Zulfiqar Ahmed Cheema was the guest of the honour at the event, in which 90 trained youth belonging to 22 institutes of Sukkur zone — comprising Sukkur, Ghotki, Shikarpur, Kashmore, Jacobabad, Larkana and Qambar-Shahdadkot districts — demonstrated their skills.

In his speech, Mr Cheema said the programme was aimed at eradicating unemployment from the country. He announced that the NAVTTTC would increase the number of seats at its institutes across the country 100,000 next year.

Sukkur IBA director thanked the guests, as well as the federal government and NAVTTTC, for helping and encouraging youths in receiving the training.

Khurshid Shah later gave away a cash prize of Rs25,000, Rs20,000 and Rs15,000 to the first, second and third position-holders, respectively, adjudged by the jury as the best ones among the 24 participants nominated for the three prizes.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1295934/growers-protest-outside-khurshids-residence-over-water-theft>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 31ST TO NOVEMBER 6TH 2016
WORK ON 128MW HYDROPOWER PROJECT YET TO BEGIN

Dawn, October 31st, 2016

Khalid Hasnain

LAHORE: The Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) has so far failed to get civil work initiated on the 128MW Keyal Khwar hydropower project (KKHP) despite paying 50 per cent of the mobilisation advance to the contractor about two years ago.

The project, scheduled for completion next year as per the original plan, got attention of the authority after the Prime Minister's Office sought report on delayed hydropower projects, forcing senior officials to quickly issue commencement order to the contractor last month to mobilise machinery, equipment, labour, etc, on the site.

The project is now expected to be completed in January 2020 and its cost has increased more than four times the original PC-1 cost. The project — a concrete gravity dam — is located along Keyal Khwar, a right bank tributary of the Indus in Kohistan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. M/S Lahmeyer International — the lead partner of a joint venture — has been appointed as consultant of the project.

A senior Wapda official, however, claimed that the project was delayed because local people had stopped Chinese engineers from entering the site till the construction of a grid station for smooth supply of electricity to them.

“The project was delayed due to locals and not us as they wanted work on installation of a 132kV grid station to go ahead simultaneously with the construction of KKHP,” Wapda's member (water) Eng Mohammad Shoaib Iqbal told Dawn.

But an official source blames incompetence and negligence on the part of senior officials for the delay, questioning why they had failed when everything (land acquisition, mobilisation advance, preparatory works, etc) had been completed two years ago.

“The project's detailed design was ready in 2010 while the process for prequalification of contractors and tendering commenced in 2011. Similarly, construction of a staff colony and camp offices was launched and simultaneously completed about three years earlier,” says an official.

He said the contractors — M/s Sinohydro-Hajvairy JV (civil works) and M/s Sarwar & Company Private Limited (powerhouse ventilation tunnel exploratory audit) — were selected through a bidding process in 2012. However, agreements for the project between the government and the contractors were signed in 2014 after Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau Bank (Germany) and the European Investment Bank pledged to fund the project in association with the federal government.

The official said the process of land acquisition for the project's power house had been completed in 2011, but the failure to start civil work was a question mark on those entrusted with the task of completing power projects on a fast track.

He feared that the delay might provide an opportunity to the contractor to charge escalation cost, besides revision of the project cost. “The contractor may demand payment of escalation cost worth millions of rupees on the pretext of completing the preparatory arrangements related to deployment of labour, manpower, vehicles, etc,” the official said, adding that appeared to be a win-win situation for the contractor.

Wapda member Shoaib Iqbal admitted that it was true that the mobilisation advance to the contractor had been paid two years ago. “But it is also true that the problem doesn't exist on our part. Actually it was difficult to fulfil the locals' demand for constructing the grid station since it doesn't come under our purview,” he said. “Therefore, we requested Pesco to fulfil the public demand, but it couldn't do so. And finally, the cost of the grid station was also included in the revised cost estimate for the KKHP.”

He said Wapda had taken up the issue with the federal government and informed it that a local MNA was behind the protests in Pattan and Bisham. On the other hand, he added, the lead partner of joint venture, Sinohydro-Hajvairy, had some problem with its JB partner — Ms Hajvairy. But this issue has also been resolved.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1293353/work-on-128mw-hydropower-project-yet-to-begin>

1.2MW HYDEL POWER PLANT GOES ON STREAM IN KALAM

Dawn, October 31st, 2016

PESHAWAR: A power house with a generation capacity of 1.2MW has started functioning on a test basis in Ashuran area of Kalam here.

The power house has been set up by Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP) with the assistance of European Union under the Peace Project.

The Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organisation (Pedo) had handed two dysfunctional power houses at Kalam to SRSP in 2013 to restore and run them as a social enterprise, according to a statement issued here.

This was part of the government's initiative to bring innovative solutions to local problems in remote regions. Chief Minister Pervez Khattak, PTI chief Imran Khan and senior leader Jehangir Tareen had attended the ground-breaking of the project in 2013.

Both the power houses at Jungle Inn and Ashuran had been set up by the then Sarhad Hydel Development Organisation (SHYDO) and had run for some years, but remained dysfunctional for six years after the 2010 floods and the militancy in Swat.

The Jungle Inn power house was raised to 400KV by SRSP and restored in 2014 in a six-month period. The 400KV power house at Ashuran was raised to 1.2MW capacity, but it took two years for completion as a 5,400-foot channel, including a 174-foot aqueduct and a huge fore-bay and a very large intake, were built. The project got completed in July this year. Chinese teams took another four months to complete its technical installation.

The Jungle Inn power house is already supplying electricity to 1,100 households and 50 hotels, and the Ashuran power house will supply electricity to another 64 hotels and over 4,000 households over a 14 kilometre area. It is estimated that Kalam will have a total of 1.6KV of electricity and estimated 400 kilowatts of excess electricity which would help boost economic activity in the area. Kalam could thus become the first valley in KP with excess electricity. With the running of Ashuran Power House Kalam will not have electricity shortages in winters because the water flow unlike Jungle Inn is sufficient at Ashuran to supply electricity to the area.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1293333>

INDIA IN NO POSITION TO VIOLATE INDUS WATER TREATY: BAIG

Bussiness Recorder, 1 November 2016

Hassan Abbas

LAHORE: Pakistan Commissioner for Indus Water Treaty Mirza Asif Baig said on Monday that India was not in a position to suspend the Indus Water Treaty as it had not excessive storage capacity.

Mirza Asif Baig was addressing the seminar on present situation with India on the Indus Water Treaty which was organised by the Pakistan Engineering Congress.

Asif said India was committing violations of the treaty regarding non-performance of designing criteria on the run of the river projects. "Even if India increases its storage capacity, it will not be in a position to manipulate the treaty."

"Since the Indus Treaty is a well-thought out agreement, India will not violate it as it is expected to respect the mechanism of dispute resolution." About the water aggression by India, Asif said they would have no objection if India made any development within parameters of the treaty but the situation was other way round as it (India) was committing violations of the pact regarding designs of run of the river projects.

Asif said that Pakistan had approached the World Bank for the solution of Kishan Ganga project. He said empanelment had started in the court of arbitration and they had spared two arbitrators for the said purpose. India is insisting on neutral experts just to delay the matter unnecessarily, he further added.

Asif said: "We have requested the court to set out procedures to avoid future complication with India over ponding and spillways. The government is focusing on building water reservoirs and it has started acquisition of land for the construction of Bhasha Dam."

He suggested that Pakistan should act in a coherent manner on all levels. “We should work on increasing our storage capacity besides constructing Marala-Mangla Link canal to minimise the effects of the Indian water aggression.”

On this occasion, President Pakistan Engineering Congress Engineer Chaudhry Ghulam Hussain presented a resolution on construction of Bhasha Dam which was passed by the house.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2016/11/01/13-page/810521-news.html>

SINDH TO TAKE UP WATER ISSUE AT CCI MEETING

Dawn, November 3rd, 2016

Habib Khan Ghori

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has vowed to take up the pending issues of water allocation, devolution of some institutions, transfer of Zakat and royalty on crude oil with the federal government at the next Council of Common Interest (CCI) meeting to be held in Islamabad.

The federal government will be asked to ensure additional supply of 650 million gallon a day (mgd) water from the Indus river system for Karachi, where domestic water consumption due to the high urban growth rate has reached the abysmally low level of 12.75 gallons per capita per day though the international standardised level was 40 gallons per capita per day, according to the chief minister.

Mr Shah was presiding over a meeting, which was held to discuss CCI issues, at the New Sindh Secretariat here on Wednesday.

The meeting also developed a consensus to decide a date for the sixth population and housing census in Sindh. Emphasis was laid on the measures to exclude the 3.5 million aliens, including two million Afghan nationals, living in the province from the local population count.

The chief minister said he would also take up the health department-related issues with the federal government after seeking legal opinion about transfer of administrative control of some institutions including the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council, Pakistan Nursing Council, College of Physicians and Surgeons of Pakistan, National Council of Tib, National Council of Homoeopathy, Pharmacy Council of Pakistan, Directorate of Central Health Establishment and Tobacco Control as well as the institutions related to the livestock and fisheries department which were yet to be devolved to the Sindh government.

They included the Quality Control Laboratory Karachi, Marine Fisheries Research Laboratory, Karachi, Fisheries Research Center, Oceanography and Hydrological Research, Central Fisheries Department and Korangi Fisheries Harbour Authority, he added.

Mr Shah also decided to take up issues related to the population welfare department at the CCI meeting. He was earlier informed that the federal government had not yet transferred the directorate of Central Warehouse and Supplies and National Research Institute for Fertility Care in Karachi to the Sindh government. Despite the Ecnec-approved Rs13.33 billion PC-I of the Sindh population welfare programme (2010-15) that was to be funded under the current NFC award, the federal government had only released Rs10.41 billion, indicating the shortfall of Rs2.92 billion.

The other issues included non-transfer of collected Zakat to Sindh by the State Bank of Pakistan and collection of royalty on crude oil by the federal government despite residual subject.

Besides, it was agreed that the matter of devolution of plant protection department of the ministry of food, agriculture and livestock, including standardisation of pesticides and fertilisers, seed testing and seed certification, would be taken up with the federal government.

Similarly, the transfer of assets of central archaeological library, Pakistan culture and arts foundation relief fund, museum compensation fund, tourist information centres and motels pertaining to the culture department would be taken up with the federal government.

About EOBI, the meeting was informed that the Punjab government had filed a suit in the Supreme Court to stop the Federal Board of Revenue from EOBI collections. The chief minister directed law adviser to be a party in the case.

The meeting was attended by provincial ministers Dr Sikander Mandhro, Mir Hazar Khan Bijarani, Mumtaz Jakhrani, Syed Sardar Shah, Ghulam Qadir Malakani, Murtaza Wahab, chief secretary Siddique Memon, relevant secretaries and others.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1293900>

TENDERS FOR SAWAR DAM ISSUED, SAYS CM
Dawn November 5th, 2016

KARACHI: Balochistan Chief Minister Nawab Sanaullah Khan Zehri on Friday said his government had floated tenders for the construction of the Sawar dam so that water shortage in Gwadar city and surrounding areas could be brought to an end.

Mr Zehri, who came to Karachi to attend a seminar on 'China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Role of Gwadar', was talking to journalists. The seminar was organised by the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI).

He said that with the help of the federal government desalination and RO plants were also being installed in Gwadar.

In reply to a question, he said a joint investigation committee headed by an army officer had been set up to probe the terrorist attack on the police training college which would submit its report within 17 days.

The chief minister did not agree with the suggestion that law and order situation in his province was not improving. He pointed out that four to five years ago dead bodies used to be thrown on the streets and nobody dared remove them but now not only such incidents had dropped but no bomb blast had occurred in Gwadar city.

He hoped that once tender process for Sawar dam was completed the work would immediately start and this would ensure water supply to the entire city as well as Gwadar port.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1294404/tenders-for-sawar-dam-issued-says-cm>

UAF HOLDS SEMINAR ON WATER RESOURCES
Business November 06, 2016

Agricultural and water experts have expressed concern over non-establishment of new big dam for the last 40 years in the country and mentioned that more than 30 MAF of water was wasted annually by sending into the sea, which causing the loss worth billions of dollars. They were addressing at a seminar on "Pakistan Water Resources" arranged at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad as part of the Rabi Festival.

While chairing the session, Federal Minister for National Food Security Rao Sikandar Hayat Khan Bosan said the government was making all-out efforts to address the issues of water that are deepening every year. He said that dams were being constructed to meet the demand of increasing population amid the threat of decreasing water reservoirs.

He showed his concern that in the index of per capita water availability; the Pakistan had been put on red zone. He said that construction of Kalabagh dam was a way forward to fight the challenges of the water scarcity that could not be metalized due to politics.

He said that the heavy investment was being made on the agricultural sector. He also lauded the steps being taken on the part of the Punjab government for the issue. He said that the Member IRSA Rao Irshad Ali Khan said that storages of 22 MAF presently flowing annually.

He stressed upon the need to develop dams by saying that electricity produced from hydel costs Rs 2.62, gas Rs 7.43, coal Rs 12.91, furnace oil Rs 17 and the wind electricity at the cost of Rs 11.62. He said that due to reservoirs sedimentation, Tarbela capacity had declined by 35 percent as it was designed for 9.6 MAF and now it 6.33 MAF. Mangla dam storage capacity has reduced by 16 percent and Chashma storage capacity has squeezed by 61 percent.

UAF Vice Chancellor Professor Dr Iqrar Ahmad Khan said that at the time of inception, the water per capita availability was 5650 while it has reduced to 991 MAF now, ringing the alarm bells of water scarcity. He said that the canal system brought the life to Faisalabad which was a barren land a century ago.

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December 2016

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 26 TH TO JANUARY 1ST 2016

RABBANI WARNS INDIA AGAINST DISRUPTING WATER FLOW INTO PAKISTAN

Dawn, December 26th, 2016

LARKANA: Senate Chairman Mian Raza Rabbani has said that it is a matter of concern for Pakistan that world powers and World Bank are not playing their due role in ensuring the implementation of the Indus Water Treaty.

Speaking to journalists at Bhuttos' mausoleum in Garhi Khuda Bukhsh Bhutto on Sunday, Mr Rabbani said: "We will resist any move favouring India on reducing or stopping water [flowing into Pakistan under the treaty]."

Commenting on the Indian threat to disrupt flow of water, the Senate chairman declared that any such attempt would be a violation of the treaty and would construed to be war.

Accompanied by Sindh PPP president Nisar Ahmed Khuhro, Senator Saeed Ghani, Waqar Mehdi and other party leaders, Mr Rabbani also criticised what he called the "wrong statement" given by former president retired General Parvez Musharraf in his recent interview, and observed that it could create a wedge between institutions. He expressed the view that the judiciary and armed forces were performing in accordance with the Constitution.

Regarding the ongoing operations against terrorism in the country, the Senate chairman said it was wrong to believe that terrorism could be wiped out within a few days or with one or two operations. "We should repel such an impression as well ... this [rooting out terrorism] requires a long struggle," he said, and called for burying negative thinking to achieve the objective.

In reply to a question about the issue of regulatory authorities, the Senate chairman said that the federal law minister had submitted his statement, on legal aspects of the issue, in the upper house after which the ruling was reserved. "The ruling will be given in the next session of the Senate," he said.

Highlighting the sacrifices rendered by former prime minister and PPP chairperson Benazir Bhutto for the cause of democracy in the country, Mr Rabbani called Dec 27 a 'black day' in the country's history. He said Ms Bhutto was eliminated under an international conspiracy aimed at destabilising Pakistan and the subcontinent. "Ever since her assassination, the country and the subcontinent has been witnessing one crisis or the other," he observed.

He said that the country's political, internal and external conditions would have been different had Benazir Bhutto not been eliminated. "We have with us the her guiding principles ... and time demands from us all, irrespective of any territorial limitations, language and sect, to unite against terrorism, sectarianism and retrogressive forces and continue marching forward," he added.

Speaking about the opposition's bill on Panama Papers investigation, the Senate chairman said that the upper house had sent it to the National Assembly.

An identical bill tabled by the treasury benches was referred to the Senate's standing committee, which would submit its report in the house in due course of time, he said.

MNA Faryal Talpur on Sunday visited the residence of Sindh PPP president Nisar Ahmed Khuhro and discussed with him the arrangements made for the 9th death anniversary of slain party chairperson Benazir Bhutto in Garhi Khuda Bukhsh Bhutto. Senator Saeed Ghani, Suhail Anwar Siyal, Waqar Mehdi, Rashid Rabbani, Khursheed Junejo and other party leaders were present.

Later, Ms Talpur and Mr Khuhro different areas of Larkana to review progress of various development schemes.

She also visited the shrine of Qaim Shah Bukhari to lay a wreath and offer fateha. She then proceeded to Mahota village to condole the death of Ghulamullah Mahoto, the former convener of the Bhutto Mazar Committee, with his heirs. Later, she returned to the Naudero House. A statement issued by Mr Khuhro in the evening said that a future course of action would be announced at the anniversary programme in Garhi Khuda Bukhsh Bhutto. It said that PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari would address the participants.

Meanwhile, speaking to newsmen in Larkana, Mr Khuhro said time demanded that all opposition parties should forge unity. "The PPP will launch a movement along with other opposition parties as it never opted for a solo flight," he said.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1304485/rabbani-warns-india-against-disrupting-water-flow-into-pakistan>

WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN BALOCHISTAN

Dawn, Business & Finance weekly, December 26th, 2016

Mohiuddin Aazim

AWARENESS about efficient use of water is growing among farmers and orchard owners in Balochistan, while the government and multilateral lending agencies are focusing on water resource development.

Farmers in Balochistan rely on several ways, in varying degrees, of getting water for their cropland and orchards. And in a few areas they have started making the most of available water supplies, officials and farmers say.

For example in low-lying districts like Lasbela and Khuzdar, some crop farmers are now using solar-power generators to extract water from open wells. Besides, one can see the water-efficient tunnel farms of vegetables now coming up a bit faster and drip water irrigation for crop fields is gaining popularity, according to officials of the provincial agriculture department.

In Pishin, Qila Saifullah and other fruit producing districts a number of orchard owners now prefer micro-irrigation system over conventional sprinkling and flood and furrow system, they claim.

In micro-irrigation only tree-lines are watered, instead of applying water on the whole body of trees or keeping a selected area of orchards (hosting tree-lines) flooded with water.

Similarly, mounted sprinklers are also being used for watering upper parts of fruit trees or the trees growing on higher elevations and, revolving sprinklers for watering nurseries. The use of traditional plastic pipe and hose in the former case and water supply through buckets or wet water-courses in the latter case is gradually squeezing.

Over-extraction of groundwater in Balochistan exceeds the rate of recharge by 22pc, according to a report submitted to the Senate late last year. Officials claim that the provincial government is only developing new reservoirs to address this issue and has also been able to control sub-soil seepages and extraction wastefulness to improve the recharge rate.

Besides, growing use of tube wells has reduced dependence on the Karez system of irrigation that, due to its structural flaws, is less-efficient in underground water usage and impacts negatively on the use and recharge ratios.

Karez irrigation now accounts for just a fraction of the total use of water in agriculture, officials claim.

They say that efforts for water resource conservation are being made at two levels. On the first level rain harvesting is promoted. And on the second level, on-farm water management is being implemented through economising water uses in farms and in orchards.

In the latter case, not only the use of appropriate water sprinklers and water conveying machines are being employed, but water-efficient farming techniques and technologies like tunnel farming and micro irrigation systems are also being promoted.

The ambitious Rs40bn Quetta water supply project announced this fiscal year will not only help in providing clean drinking water to the city's population but it will also help agricultural irrigation in and around Quetta division.

But given the magnitude of the shortage for drinking water in Quetta (about 30pc or even more) any immediate relief to the farming community facing water shortage seems a distant possibility, farmers point out.

Besides, since under the scheme, Quetta's residents will initially be supplied additional water from Pat Feeder Canal through a pipeline, water supply from this canal to farming land might be compromised, they fear.

A ray of hope for improving water supply in agricultural areas of Balochistan is the \$100m, ADB-funded, water resource development project. Under this project, not only new dams are planned to be constructed but flood irrigation or spate system of water supply would also be improved.

In addition to it, 300km of surface water channels i.e. canals, drains and Karez would be improved. The project is likely to bring 10,000 hectares of barren land under cultivation and protect 1500 hectares of watersheds.

Another \$300m World Bank loan for water resource management is helping the province in water resource conservation and management in three river basins providing relief to farmers in several districts.

Way back in mid-2000s, some progress was made for arresting depletion and pollution of underground water and increasing irrigation efficiency under a joint project of the Balochistan government and the International Union for Conservation of Natural Resources.

Observers point out that construction of higher quality 'delayed action dams' or 'recharge reservoirs' coupled with improving rain harvesting methods and making them popular across the province is the real solution of water woes of Balochistan.

Officials claim that the new delayed action dams (that obstruct the flow of flood waters and store them beneath ground) being constructed in the province have, in some cases, boosted under-ground water levels by as much as 1.4 metres.

More than two dozen similar dams have been constructed in the last two years across the province, they say.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1304421/water-resource-management-in-balochistan>

PAKISTAN INSISTS ON ARBITRATION AT WATER DISPUTE TALKS

Dawn December 27th, 2016

Anwar Iqbal

WASHINGTON: World Bank president Jim Yong Kim called Finance Minister Senator Ishaq Dar on Monday and discussed with him the minister's request to help settle the Pakistan-India water dispute, official sources told Dawn.

The latest dispute concerns two hydroelectric power plants — Kishanganga and Ratle — that India is building on the Indus rivers system.

In his Dec 23 letter to Dr Kim, the finance minister said that delaying arbitration would seriously prejudice Pakistan's interests and rights under the Indus Waters Treaty. The letter explained that Pakistan was not withdrawing its earlier request to the bank to appoint the chairman of the Court of Arbitration and since this process had already been "inordinately delayed," Islamabad wanted the bank to appoint the chairman as soon as possible.

Pakistan believes that further delay would hurt its interests as India is working day and night to complete the two disputed projects. And once they are completed, it will be difficult to undo them.

The Indus Waters Treaty, signed in 1960, distributed the Indus basin rivers between the two countries, giving India control over the three eastern rivers — the Beas, the Ravi and the Sutlej — while Pakistan has the three western rivers — the Indus, the Chenab and the Jhelum. The treaty empowers the World Bank to arbitrate any water dispute between India and Pakistan.

But last week, Dr Kim sent a letter to the finance ministers of India and Pakistan, informing them that he had decided to 'pause' the bank's arbitration and urged the two neighbours to decide by the end of January how they wanted to settle this dispute.

Pakistan had asked the bank to appoint the chairman of the Court of Arbitration while India demanded the appointment of a neutral expert.

Dr Kim said he was ‘pausing’ arbitration to protect the Indus Waters Treaty, which has successfully resolved previous disputes between the two neighbours.

Tensions over the water dispute intensified in November when Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi threatened to block the flow of water into Pakistan — a threat which, if implemented, could lead to armed clashes between the two nuclear states.

In the formal request sent to the bank, Pakistan argued that the Court of Arbitration could be formed at the request of either party, if the party concludes that the dispute is not likely to be resolved by negotiation or mediation.

The bank would also be obliged to establish the court if the aggrieved party concluded that the other government was unduly delaying the negotiations.

Pakistan informed the World Bank that it has already exhausted the option to engage India for resolving the dispute through bilateral talks and was now exercising the option to take its case to the Court of Arbitration.

Inter-governmental discussions to resolve the dispute had also failed, Pakistan said.

Pakistan informed the bank that its discussions with India over the Kishanganga project began over two decades ago. Two threshold disputes relating to the permissibility of drawdown flushing and diverting the Kishanganga/Neelum River were resolved in 2013. But disputes relating to the calculation of pondage (water reservoir), the placement of the power intakes, and the design and height of both the sediment outlets and spillways remained unresolved.

These disputes have been the subject of subsequent discussions between the parties since 2013.

India first disclosed its design for the Ratle project to Pakistan in 2012, and Pakistan promptly objected to the various aspects of the design discussed herein. As with Pakistan’s objections to the Kishanganga design, the parties have discussed these points of dispute at multiple meetings and in extensive correspondence without reaching a resolution.

Although there are differences in the designs for the two hydro-electric power projects owing to site-specific conditions, the two designs raise conceptually similar legal and technical questions under the Treaty.

Both present questions concerning the method for calculating the maximum pondage (water reservoir) and for determining the design and placement of the power intakes, sediment outlets, and spillways for passage of floods. Additionally, in the case of the Ratle project, the parties disagree about the permissible scale of freeboard.

Pakistan raised questions regarding these issues in at a meeting in March 2013, soon after the issuance of the partial award by the Kishanganga dispute court, which clarified relevant aspects of treaty interpretation and reiterated certain design and operational

Pakistan reminded the World Bank that the treaty requires the party instituting the proceedings to appoint two arbitrators at the time it makes a request to the other party. Within 30 days of the receipt of this request, the other party shall notify the names of the arbitrators appointed by it.

Pakistan fulfilled these obligations and held a series of meetings with India and only after the two parties (India and Pakistan) were unable to reach any agreement, it decided to seek arbitration.

Pakistan also submitted to the bank copies of a series of written communications with India over this dispute. Despite extensive written communications, in-person PIC meetings, and inter-governmental discussions, the parties have been unable to resolve the disputes, Pakistan added.

Pakistan informed the bank that India was taking advantage of the daily and all indications are that significant construction work has been undertaken on both projects. The Kishanganga project either has been completed or is nearing completion. In fact, India notified Pakistan on Aug 12 that India intends to fill the plant’s dead Storage by Aug 20.

Pakistan argued that “any works completed in violation of the treaty have been undertaken by India at its own risk” and could not be presented as *fait accompli* in any negotiations.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1304704/pakistan-insists-on-arbitration-at-water-dispute-talks>

WATER: A NON-ISSUE FOR OUR POLITICIANS

Business Recorder, December 26, 2016

Pakistan has witnessed sporadic infrastructure development in its 69 year history with little if any focus on prioritizing either social sector projects (education/health) or approving projects on the basis of a cost-benefit analysis that would enable a sitting government to take informed decisions with respect to selecting development projects funded from the taxpayers’ money and/or multilateral/bilateral loans.

Pakistan is ranked 23 amongst water stressed countries category by 2040, the lowest amongst all South Asian countries including Afghanistan which was ranked at 31, by World Resources Institute (WRI) which used an ensemble of climate models and socio-economic scenarios including a measure of competition and depletion of surface water. The ranking implies that the ratio of withdrawal to supply are greater than 80 percent in Pakistan while other South Asian countries (apart from Afghanistan) registered a lower percentage of between 40 to 80 percent.

The International Monetary Fund ranks Pakistan as the third most water stressed country in the world and cites extremely disturbing data: per capita annual water availability is 1017 cubic meters, dangerously close to scarcity threshold of 1000 cubic meters, while in 2009 it was 1500 cubic meters. This implies that the decline in just seven years has been significant.

In a report dated 2013, Asian Development Bank described Pakistan as one of the most “water-stressed” countries in the world, with a water availability of 1,000 cubic meters per person per year – a fivefold drop since independence in 1947, and about the same level as drought-stricken Ethiopia.

The Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR), under the administrative control of the Ministry of Science and Technology, has warned that the country may run dry by 2025 if the government does not take action immediately. And Deutsche Welle, German news agency, revealed that as per a yet-to-be released report by PCRWR, parts of which have been made available to the media, “Pakistan touched the water stress line” in 1990.

Data suggests that we are the world’s fourth highest in terms of water use and our water intensity rate (defined as the amount of water used per unit of Gross Domestic Product) is the world’s highest; and no other country in the world is more water intensive than Pakistan. The Fund in a report argues that high use of water is because canal water is under-priced “recovering only one-quarter of annual operating and maintenance costs.

Meanwhile, agriculture, which consumes almost all annual available surface water, is largely untaxed”. In addition, experts point out that population growth and urbanisation are also responsible for the water crisis and further maintain that the issue has been exacerbated by climate change, poor water management, and a lack of political will to deal with the crisis.

To compound this sad state of affairs the major culprit in the country’s inexorable move towards becoming a water scarce country is the failure of successive governments, including the incumbent, of constructing reservoirs on rivers that flow into Pakistan. In India, approximately one-third of the water supply is stored in reservoirs, compared with just 9 percent in Pakistan.

And sadly the incumbent government has so far made no move to invest in building reservoirs. PCRWR notes on its website three ongoing projects that include: (i) demarcation of ground water quality zones in Indus plain and marginal areas for sustainable development and management of groundwater (lower Indus plain), (ii) establishment of national capacity building institution for water quality management and (iii) integrated water resources management in highly depleted Pishin-Lora basin of Balochistan.

Approved projects that have not yet received funding are (i) evaluation of interceptor drains and scavenger in LBOD component Shaheed Benazirabad, (ii) integrated approach for control of water logging and salinity in low lying areas of Sindh, (iii) improved land and water conservation practised to enhance waste land and productivity in Thar, (iv) exploration of ground water potential and promotion of intervention for rainwater harvesting and bio saline agriculture in Thar and (v) trans-boundary effects on ground and surface waters along the western border of Pakistan. The approved projects need to receive prompt funding, however, they are by and large area specific and one would urge the government to begin water storage projects on the same scale as energy generation projects.

All Pakistani consumers, domestic, agricultural and industrial, are expected to be subjected to water shortages as well as higher water related costs. Domestic consumers have been compelled to procure bottled water for drinking purposes in recent years but unfortunately, though perhaps not surprisingly, several companies began supplying contaminated bottled water.

This prompted the then government (2005) to direct PCRWR to monitor water quality of all bottled water companies on a quarterly basis and its following assessment dated 2016 is disturbing: total number of brands 111 with 89 brands declared safe and 12 brands unsafe with arsenic.

Why is drinking tap water no longer safe? As per World Health Organization: “drinking water quality is deteriorating continually due to biological contamination from human waste, chemical pollutants from industries and agricultural inputs.

Piped water also gets contaminated because pipes are laid very close to sewerage lines or open drains and cause many serious water borne diseases. It was found that 45% of infant deaths have been attributed to diarrhea and about 60% to overall infectious waterborne diseases in Pakistan”.

Pakistan as a lower riparian country also requires an India willing to abide by the international laws that govern upper riparian countries. Pakistan Water Partnership (PWO) has highlighted the fact that the frequency of monsoon rains has decreased while their intensity has increased and suggested the need to implement: (i) joint monitoring and data sharing climate change impacts, glacier melt and change in monsoon patterns; (ii) trans-boundary flood and drought management; (iii) joint research on enhancing food productivity; (iv) joint investment in developing energy resources of the basin; (v) joint efforts in water use efficiency plans; (vi) initiating trans-boundary energy sharing agreements; (vii) creating a strong cross border nexus of water, food and energy; and (viii) vigorously following Track-II diplomacy. Relevant suggestions for both India and Pakistan, however they appear to be undoable in Modi’s India.

Michael Kugelman, South Asia expert at the Washington-based Woodrow Wilson Center, told DW that Pakistan government must step up efforts to overcome the crisis, which is partly man-made. “First of all, Pakistan’s leaders and stakeholders need to take ownership of this challenge and declare their intention to tackle it.

Simply blaming previous governments, or blaming India, for the crisis won’t solve anything. Next, the government needs to institute a major paradigm shift that promotes more judicious use of water”. This in a nutshell is the responsibility of the incumbent government and one would hope that it focuses on discharging it forthwith.

<http://www.brecorder.com/articles-a-letters/187/117327/>

CONSTRUCTION OF THREE HYDEL POWER PROJECTS IN KP: SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS, OTHER FACTORS CONTRIBUTE TO COST ESCALATION

Business Recorder, December 26, 2016

Zaheer Abbasi

Security arrangements as well as depreciation of rupee against the dollars apart from other factors have contributed to cost escalation to Rs 15.7 billion of three hydel power projects constructed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under renewable energy development sector investment programme (REDSIP).

Sources said that Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) chaired by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar was requested by the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms that approval of the 2nd revision of the PC-I of the project will add 56MW more reliable and cheap power to the remote and rural areas of KP and national grid.

The ECNEC was informed that original PC-I of the REDSIP project was approved with Rs 4.7 billion in 2007. Original PC-I was first revised in 2011 with cost escalation to Rs 12.9 billion. Three power projects, 36.6 MW Daral Khwar Hydra Power Project (HPP) in Swat, 17 MW Ranolia HPP in Kohistan and 2.6 MW Machai Mardan are being constructed under REDSIP.

On December 20 2016, in the 2nd revised PC-I, cost of the REDSIP has been further revised upward to Rs 15.7 billion. The project aims at producing 56.2 MW power to meet the demand of domestic, agriculture and industrial sector as well contributing to reduce the load shedding. The reasons for second revision of the PC-I 36.6 MW Daral

Hydel power project were stated to be increase in EPC cost includes US\$-rupee parity, security arrangements, and preliminary works as well as provision of environment, health & safety price adjustment.

While reasons for 2nd revision of PC-I of 17 MW Ranolia heo project was increase in cost includes escalation, price adjustment as well as design change in switchyard and transmission line due to changing from 132kV to 220 kV by NTDC.

The Ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms cited the reason for 2nd revision of PC-I of 2.6 MW Machai hydro project were increase in EPC cost due to change/increase scope of 'work under the contract agreement, which were previously not foreseen during the revision of the first revised approved PC-I.

The ECNEC was informed that ADB offered a Multi-Tranche loan of US\$ 500 million for REDSIP which besides hydro power projects also includes construction of Pakhtunkhwa energy and power department (PEDO) office Hayatabad, and feasibility studies of Koto, Jabori & Karora HPPs (PC-II). KP government is also financing for the project through Annual Development Plan/Hydro Development Fund.

The main objective of the REDSIP project is to develop sustainable, environment friendly and affordable, renewable power generation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The ECNEC was informed that the overall physical progress on the above hydro power project is 85 percent and under REDSIP three feasibility studies of Koto HPP (31 MVV), Jabori HPP (8 MW) and Karora HPP (9.8 MW with the total potential of 48.8 MW were completed in the year 2010 and the projects are under implementation and are at various stages of physical completion.

The ECNEC was stated that despite huge hydro power potential, Pakistan has been an energy deficient country. The hilly areas of KP are facing power shortage due to harsh climate. There is a huge potential of water resources in these hilly areas for power generation and other irrigation purposes which could not be harnessed so far. The power generation from other sources like oil and coal is not environment friendly.

Ministry of Planning further stated that the government of KP has developed a strategy and giving priority to hydropower generation projects both in public and private sectors. Although there is huge potential of water resources in these hilly areas for power generation and other irrigation purposes, KP government is taking full interest to use this potential for the benefits of the people especially in the same areas.

<http://www.brecorder.com/fuel-a-energy/193:pakistan/117223:construction-of-three-hydel-power-projects-in-kp-security-arrangements-other-factors-contribute-to-cost-escalation?date=2016-12-26>

SAAF PANI TURNS OUT TO BE 'MURKY': CEO AMONG THREE REMOVED OVER INFLATED COST, DELAY

Dawn, December 28th, 2016

Khalid Hasnain

LAHORE: Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif on Tuesday ordered removal from their offices of three top officials of the Punjab Saaf Pani Company (PSPC), including its chief executive officer Waseem Ajmal, a BS-20 officer of the Pakistan Administrative Service.

The CEO Mr Ajmal and chief of contract and procurement of the company, Ms Shabnam, have also been suspended from service, while its general manager (projects and services) retired Col Tahir Maqbool has been dismissed from service.

According to sources, the officers were removed for allegedly making wrong cost estimations that caused 80 percent increase in the Rs120 billion total cost for the phase-1 of the project, originally aimed at provision of clean drinking water in 10 selected districts of the province.

The consultant hired by the company for the cost estimation of the project was also removed.

The official sources say that during a meeting held on Tuesday, the CM expressed dissatisfaction over the performance of the company in general, especially in view of the revised cost estimation for installation of water filtration plants in the rural areas of 35 tehsils in 10 Punjab districts during phase-1.

“Actually, on December 22, the chief minister had constituted an inquiry team, headed by his inspection team (CMIT) chairman, to probe into revised cost estimation of Rs200 billion for implementation of the project’s phase-1.

The CM did this after the company submitted the revised cost estimation to him for approval, as he was alarmed by such a huge (Rs80 billion) increase in cost of the project, caused due to delay in its execution. As per independent estimate, the increased cost should range between Rs5bn to Rs10bn or so,” an official explained while talking to Dawn on the condition of anonymity.

He said since the inquiry team found the revised cost estimations was based on unrealistic data/information, the CM during the Tuesday meeting snubbed the company officials over their failure in making realistic cost estimations and launching the project on time.

This, he said, resulted in suspensions and the dismissal.

The mega project costing approximately US\$ 3000 million, envisages covering 137 tehsils [25,000 villages] for providing a basic necessity of life to rural population in Punjab.

The programme envisages provision of safe drinking water to every household in a comprehensive, integrated and sustainable manner. It will benefit over 55 million people residing in rural and peri-urban areas of Punjab.

So far, 80 water filtration plants have been installed in five tehsils of South Punjab, including Minchanabad, Khanpur, Hasilpur, Dunyapur and Lodhran as a pilot project to supply safe drinking water to some 250,000 individuals.

Under the phase-1 of the project, 35 tehsils of 10 districts, including Muzaffargarh, Dera Ghazi Khan, Rajanpur, Bahawalpur, Lodhran, Rahim Yar Khan, Sahiwal, Faisalabad, Kasur and Okara will be provided clean drinking water.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1304880/saaf-pani-turns-out-to-be-murky-ceo-among-three-removed-over-inflated-cost-delay>

VILLAGERS OF GORANO CONTINUE PROTEST AGAINST WATER RESERVOIR

Dawn December 28th, 2016

MITHI: Children and women were among villagers of Gorano who resumed their hunger strike outside the Islamkot press club for the 68th consecutive day on Tuesday in protest against construction of a pond by a mining firm to dump water of coal mines.

Advocate Leela Ram, leader of the protesters, told local reporters that heavy machinery was being used by the mining firm to uproot thousands of trees in their areas for constructing the pond and laying a pipeline.

He said that officials of the firm were misleading people by showing fake reports that water of the mines would not affect the area and it could be used for cultivation instead.

Rights activists and members of civil society visited the camp to show their sympathies with the hunger strikers.

A large number of workers of the Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz launched a long march from Mithi to Islamkot town to express their solidarity with the protesting villagers.

On the other hand, the chief executive officer (CEO) of the Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company, Shamsuddin Ahmed Shaikh, has again claimed that genuine concerns of the villagers of Gorano would soon be addressed.

In a statement issued to reporters of Islamkot, he informed that talks with the protesting villagers were going smoothly and he hoped that the matter would soon be resolved.

He made it clear that the site of water reservoir on 1,500 acres of land could not be changed since the firm had spent millions of rupees on the project to dump water of the mines of block-2 of Thar coal field.

He said the firm was making sincere efforts to give maximum facilities to the villagers living within the area of the field. “Not a single villager even from the Gorano village will be affected and they could use the same water for cultivation of crops,” he added.

He said the company was focusing on various other projects to give maximum relief to the area people.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1304856>

TOP OFFICERS OF SAAF PANI PROJECT SENT PACKING

The Express Tribune, December 28th, 2016.

Imran Adnan

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday suspended Punjab Saaf Pani Company (PSPC) CEO Waseem Ajmal and Chief of Contracts and Procurement Shabnam, while terminating the services of General Manager Project Services Col (retd) Tahir Maqbool.

He believed that these officials had been negligent in their duties of rolling out the chief minister's much-touted clean water project.

“Those who cannot deliver have no right to stay in their jobs and get six digit salaries. Perks and privileges have to be matched by action,” he said on his Twitter account. In another tweet, the chief minister said there was no room for inefficiency, negligence and delays in a public welfare project of this significance. Therefore, he had to “send the top management home”.

An official communiqué, made available to The Express Tribune, shows that Shehbaz also formed a committee with the Chief Minister's Inspection Team chairman as convener. The committee includes Quaid-e-Azam Thermal Power CEO Ahad Khan Cheema and Punjab Additional Advocate General Barrister Khalid Waheed.

It will examine the methods through which the proposals for phase-1 engineering procurement construction (EPC) contracts were formulated. The committee will also look into the extent of due diligence exercised by the company's management and board when approving the requests.

The body will look into the mode of payment to bidders for various components and compare them with the standard EPC contract payment methodology in ongoing international competitive bidding (ICB) contracts of the Punjab government and government of Pakistan. It will particularly look into whether the conditions fixed by PSPC were an improvement on current practices or otherwise.

The communiqué states the committee will check how deftly the clause of 20% deferred payment on capital expenditure (CAPEX) was included in the RFP which might have allayed fears of the bidders that their payment would be guaranteed upon successful completion of the project. It will examine the depth of the PSPC board's engagement in the decision-making process so that any conclusion may be attributed as members' collective wisdom.

The committee is also tasked to fix responsibility on PSPC management officials who deviated from standard EPC contract practices which either resulted in delays or cost escalation.

The government has nominated the Punjab Education Endowment Fund CEO, Dr Kamran Shams, as acting head of the company. The company has also advertised for a new CEO after removing Ajmal's name from the website.

A company official disclosed that the CM had told the PSPC management to install water filtration plants in 7,500 villages in 10 district of Punjab by December 17. However, the company failed in its mission and wasted around nine months.

He said the company, after making hefty payments to consultants, prepared a feasibility study, which estimated the total cost to be around Rs120 billion. However, in the ICB process, the company got the lowest bid of Rs210 billion — almost double the initial estimates.

Like other development projects in Punjab, the chief minister had aligned the Saaf Pani timeline with the 2018 general elections. All these projects were to be completed by April 2018. However, the company failed to come up to the CM's expectations and the delayed execution was likely to increase costs, company officials believed.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1276868/operation-cleanup-top-officers-saaf-pani-project-sent-packing/>

UNFIT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION: SC FORMS COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE DRINKING WATER IN SINDH

The Express Tribune, December 28th, 2016.

KARACHI: Casting doubts over the performance of the second consecutive Pakistan Peoples Party-led government in Sindh, the Supreme Court (SC) constituted on Tuesday a judicial commission to probe allegations of the poor state of clean drinking water supply to the people and deteriorating sanitation conditions in the province.

A two-judge bench, headed by Justice Amir Hani Muslim, asked the Sindh High Court's (SHC) chief justice to nominate a serving high court judge to head the commission within one week.

Also comprising Justice Mushir Alam as its member, the bench issued these directives on a petition seeking provision of clean drinking water and safe environment to the people of Sindh at the SC's Karachi Registry.

Advocate Shahab Usto, who filed the petition, had taken the provincial chief secretary, local government and finance secretaries and North Sindh Urban Services Corporation (NSUSC) director-general to court over the failure of the organisation to provide basic necessities in eight districts of the province.

Claiming to be a permanent resident of District Shikarpur, the petitioner alleged that the Sindh government had established the corporation between 2009 and 2010 but failed to deliver despite the lapse of many years.

He recalled that the corporation was required to deliver sustainable water supply, sewerage and solid waste services in a safe, efficient and effective manner in eight districts of upper Sindh – Sukkur, New Sukkur, Rohri, Khairpur, Larkana, Shikarpur, Jacobabad and Ghotki.

In his plea, Usto had contended that the NSUSC was created by obtaining a loan of \$500 million from the Asian Development Bank, but the same has not benefited the public in these districts. Instead, the subsoil water was further contaminated, he added. The provincial government had failed to provide drinking water to the public at large in upper and lower parts of the province, he said, adding that the subsoil water is contaminated and not fit for human consumption.

During Tuesday's proceedings, chief secretary Rizwan Memon, LG secretary Muhammad Ramzan Awan and NSUSC managing-director Mehmood Abbas Shah filed their concise report through the advocate-general.

However, the petitioner pleaded to the judges to constitute a commission to probe the allegations made in his petition.

The chief secretary and AG Zamir Ghumro said they have no reservations to this request.

"In the circumstances, looking at the nature of controversy raised in these proceedings, we are satisfied that a commission needs to be appointed to probe into the allegations pleaded in the petition and after proper enquiry report to this court," observed Justice Muslim.

Forming the inquiry body, the bench ordered that: "The commission shall record its findings in regard to providing/supply of clean water to the residents of Sindh besides the deteriorating condition of sanitation in Sindh".

It further ordered the commission to examine the statutory role played by the Sindh Environmental Protection Agency on the issues mandated by the Sindh Environmental Protection Act 2014.

The court order said: "The commission will also examine the officials or material from relevant agencies/organisations inclusive of all the civic and land owing agencies. The federal government, the Sindh government or any organisation under their control shall cooperate with the proposed commission."

The apex court asked the provincial chief justice to nominate a serving judge of the high court as commission for the aforesaid purpose in terms of the Order XXXII of the Supreme Court Rules, 1980.

"The commission shall hold enquiry on the aforesaid issues and record its findings in detail in the proposed report within six weeks from the date of its notification. He shall hold the enquiry on day to day basis," read the order.

"As a commission it shall exercise all the powers of a high court judge inclusive of the powers conferred under the [Code of Civil Procedure]," it added.

The judges directed the office to send a set of the files to the SHC's registrar with the order to be placed before the CJ. "We expect that the commission shall be notified within a week from today," the judges ordered.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1276571/unfit-human-consumption-sc-forms-commission-investigate-drinking-water-sindh/>

POLITICS OF URBAN WATER

Dawn, December 30th, 2016

Noman Ahmed

It was sadly ironic that on Dec 27, 2016, while the political leadership of Sindh was busy taking a dig at their political rivals, the Supreme Court's Karachi Registry was constituting a judicial commission to investigate the poor state of drinking water in Pakistan's largest city. The two-judge bench, headed by Justice Amir Hani Muslim, asked the Sindh High Court chief justice to nominate a serving high court judge to head the commission.

It is common knowledge that the quality and level of service related to water and sanitation in Sindh cities, including Karachi, has declined drastically. At the same time, there have also been World Bank-led consultations on water and related infrastructural matters under way since the past few weeks.

Some of the core problems include: acute shortage at the bulk supply level; increase in water theft and leakages; institutional shortcomings due to unsatisfactory performance by the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB); financial handicaps faced by the water utility; an exponential rise in the operations of water tankers (especially during the peak of summer); aging and decrepit pipeline network; lack of a comprehensive maintenance and network rehabilitation plan for older neighbourhoods; and the inability of KWSB to add more fresh water connections in suburbs and elsewhere.

However, ground realities have to be addressed with the right depth and perspective, which is often missed in some of these deliberations.

About half of Karachi's population resides in Orangi, Baldia, Qasba, Korangi and Landhi. The water supply situation at the retail level is one of the worst in these localities. People living here have no option but to purchase expensive water through tankers after setting aside other essential priorities in spending. This diminishes the possibility of escaping from the poverty spiral. Options for access to water include erratic supply (where pipelines exist), collusion with area gangs who puncture water mains for commercial sales, boring and the use of semi-brackish water and purchasing tanker loads.

Karachi adds more than 0.6 million people to its tally every year, but the bulk water supply does not scale up correspondingly. For the past many years, the supply has been static at 550m gallons per day (mgd) against a standing demand of 1.1 billion mgd. Less than one-third of the consumers pay the water bill, even though it is charged at an extremely low tariff. The biggest defaulters of KWSB include federal and provincial governments; they owe the utility over Rs22bn.

The culture of non-payment has now trickled down to the level of the ordinary consumer. A study by this writer revealed that many folks considered urban piped water a gift of nature that does not need any monetary compensation! Sometime ago, the KWSB managing director was reported to have complained that 95pc of over 200,000 mosques and imambargahs in the city do not pay their bills.

On the other hand, the water tanker operators are able to recover much of the revenue for the over 50,000 tanker trips that are estimated to take place every single day. Most of these transactions are informal and cash based in nature, the proceeds of which are believed to be shared amongst the many layers of influential stakeholders.

The water supply is also facilitated through illegal hydrants developed by informal entrepreneurs. In this scenario, the quality of water is below the desirable level that would be suitable for consumption. Where water lines and supply do manage to work in concert, it is only after illegally installing suction pumps. Very limited action on this is taken by the concerned authorities despite the gravity of the situation. The bottled water business is another beneficiary of the breakdown of the water supply in the huge city. A multimillion-rupee enterprise, it thrives without any regulatory control.

The reform agenda for the water supply in the city must be prepared according to a realistic perspective. The KWSB board may be reconstituted in order to make it practical and relevant with respect to providing policy guidance to the utility. The addition of relevant stakeholders such as civil society organisations linked to water and sanitation, prominent professionals, representatives of trade bodies and developers may also be considered a part of this exercise. The recovery of bills may be considered as packaged services for targeted outsourcing. That could help raise the much-needed operational revenue for the board.

KWSB must make efforts to help acquire a brand name and status so that competent engineers and management professionals are encouraged to join it, which would bolster its human resource. A multipronged strategy must be worked out to invite interns — comprising technicians, engineering and management students — to the water and sewerage board. The latter's consumer relations must be upgraded, in which the creation of a robust complaint redressal mechanism is essential.

This unit should be geographically decentralised in order to address the range of operational grievances filed by respective consumers. Policy decisions related to tariff and operational privileges of tanker operators must be worked out so as to be more structured rather than ad hoc and laissez faire as they appear to be at present.

KWSB must negotiate with the bulk consumers, including the government agencies, to work out the schedule repayment of pending dues. The water board may consider preparing a business plan to fully utilise the options of water and sanitation related and other possibilities for revenue generation. The powers that be must note that Karachi, with a dysfunctional water supply, will not be able to shoulder strategic responsibilities in the wake of the implementation of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1305255>

OUTSTANDING DUES: POWER SUPPLY TO WATER UTILITY DISCONNECTED

The Express Tribune, December 30th, 2016.

SUKKUR: Due to non-payment of dues worth millions of rupees, the Sukkur Electric Power Company (Sepco) disconnected power supply to all the water supply and drainage stations of the North Sindh Urban Services Corporation (NSUSC) late Wednesday night.

The action has resulted into an acute shortage of drinking water in different cities and towns of upper Sindh, including Sukkur, Shikarpur, Khairpur, Larkana, Rohri and Jacobabad. Besides this, sewage water is accumulating on almost all the main roads and streets.

However, the NSUSC had purchased heavy duty generators to ensure the uninterrupted water supply to the citizens and pumping the drainage water in case of power failures, which are quite common in upper Sindh.

An official of NSUSC, requesting anonymity, said that these generators are seldom used for water supply or pumping drainage water. Instead, some officials save the fuel cost and pocket it for themselves, he said.

The organisation is already overburdened due to large-scale recruitments on political basis and despite having such a huge workforce, it has time and again failed to serve the people of upper Sindh, the official claimed. Many employees of the organisation continue to draw salaries and seldom show up for work, the official added.

Upon contact, NSUSC spokesperson Malook Baloch confirmed that their power supply was disconnected. The organisation has not been able to pay its bills for the past two months due to lack of funds, he claimed, adding that the Sepco authorities disconnected the connections without prior notice.

“We have informed the Sukkur commissioner and deputy commissioner regarding the disconnection of electricity, but it has yet to be restored.” He claimed that the Sindh government will release the funds to the organisation by January 10, after which it will clear all its outstanding dues.

“As far as the water supply and drainage disposal is concerned, we are trying to provide water to the citizens through heavy duty generators,” said Baloch. However, he admitted that generators are turned off for an hour after using them for two hours.

Sepco personal staff officer Karim Bux Soomro said that NSUSC has arrears worth millions of rupees but did not reveal the exact amount.

Making matters worse for the residents, the Sukkur Barrage canals will be closed from January 6 to January 20 and people of the area are likely face further shortage of drinking water.

Despite spending millions of rupees on the construction of a jetty at Bakhar Island, the project has yet to be completed. The project aimed to provide uninterrupted water supply to the citizens of Sukkur during the closure of canals.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1278802/outstanding-dues-power-supply-water-utility-disconnected>

US WANTS AMICABLE SOLUTION TO WATER ROW

Dawn December 31st, 2016

ISLAMABAD: US Secretary of State John Kerry telephoned Finance Minister Ishaq Dar on Thursday night and informed him that the United States would like to see an amicable solution to the Indus Waters Treaty row between Pakistan and India.

World Bank President Jim Yong Kim recently informed Mr Kerry about Pakistan's complaint against India on the issue of Indus Waters Treaty, the US leader told Mr Dar during the conversation.

According to a finance ministry press release issued here on Friday, Mr Dar said that the US support on principles and legal position of Pakistan on the treaty issues would be greatly appreciated.

The minister said that the treaty was an international commitment and it was the responsibility of the World Bank to make sure that India honoured it and that the water rights of hundreds of millions of people of Pakistan were protected.

He said that the Court of Arbitration was a legal requirement and appointment of its chairman must be ensured by the World Bank.

Mr Dar congratulated Mr Kerry on his statement of this week on the Middle East peace process and Palestinian rights.

Meanwhile, Pakistan and the US discussed prospects of promoting bilateral trade and economic relations here on Friday. The review of economic relations took place during a meeting between Finance Minister Dar and US Ambassador David Hale. Ambassador Hale told the minister that the US valued its ties with Pakistan and considered the country an important partner.

He also acknowledged the economic turnaround Pakistan had achieved over the last three years.

The minister said that Pakistan was open for foreign investment and that the US investors should be encouraged to invest in the country.

He highlighted that, according to World Bank's Doing Business 2017 report, Pakistan had moved up four places in the ease of doing business rankings and was also one of the top 10 global improvers.

He said that the European car manufacturer Renault had recently announced its automotive manufacturing plants in Pakistan, with production scheduled to commence in 2018.

Mr Dar assured his full support to any potential US investors looking for investment opportunities in Pakistan, and expressed confidence that the two countries would continue to work together for the promotion of bilateral economic relations.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1305467>

DEVELOPMENT: MAKING EVERY DROP OF WATER COUNT

Dawn, Sunday Magazine, January 1st, 2017

Dr Saeed A. Asad | Jo-Ellen Parry

Flowing out of the Hindu Kush, Karakoram and Himalaya (HKH) mountain ranges through dry plains to the Arabian Sea, the Indus River and its tributaries (Chenab, Jhelum, Ravi, Sutlej and Beas) are central to water, food and energy security in Pakistan. Collectively known as “the Indus Basin”, it is Pakistan’s primary source of fresh surface water and actively replenishes its ground water resources, along with providing nearly 90 percent of the country’s irrigation water for agriculture.

Water is an absolutely critical part of our daily lives, yet we are forced to make do with limited amounts of water due to immense shortages. Increasing demand for water is pushing the country’s vulnerable system to its limits, as a result of which the country faces a water shortage.

Pakistan was first classified as ‘water stressed’ in 1990. Over the years, while our population has increased, inefficient practices regarding the use of this precious resource have lingered. As a result we are now headed towards the ‘water scarcity’ line — according to the World Resources Institute (2015) report, water availability has fallen below 1,000 cubic meter per person as against 5,600 cubic meter per person at the time of independence. Accompanied with inefficient practices and population growth, climate change poses an additional threat to the already stressed water resources of the country.

Recently a study was conducted to review the vulnerability of Pakistan’s water sector due to climate change by the Centre for Climate Research and Development at COMSATS Institute of Information Technology, Islamabad and the International Institute for Sustainable Development in partnership with the ministry of climate change and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Pakistan.

The study shows that climate change does not appear to pose a significant threat to water supply in the coming decades. Scientific evidence suggests that until at least 2050 the volume of water flowing in the Indus River and its tributaries is likely to remain relatively stable or even increase.

However, the study also suggests that higher temperatures and growing population will lead to a significant increase in water demand across Pakistan, adding to the stress on our water system. In order to prevent disastrous consequences, we need to significantly increase our focus on managing the increasing demand for water.

There are several key steps that can and should be taken immediately to mitigate the problem. The first integral step is to improve irrigation practices. The Indus River irrigation system has large inefficiencies, and only about 30 per cent of the water flowing through the system is delivered to farms while farmers at the tail end of the system rarely get water.

We can improve these inefficiencies by ensuring that farmers use modern irrigation practices to yield maximum production per unit of water used and the result is not water logging. In the current scenario, the sprinkler or drip irrigation methods is one of the most efficient ways to irrigate land. These systems save up to 70 percent water as compared to conventional flood irrigation method which is currently in use.

Drip irrigation

In addition to promoting high-efficiency irrigation systems among farmers with small holdings, the next second step is to improve water management more broadly. This can be done by enforcing regulations in a better way, as well as by raising water prices and recovery rates. The revenues that are currently generated are not enough to meet the operation and maintenance costs in terms of hiring management staff and maintaining infrastructure. For instance, in Punjab, water is charged at a meagre flat rate of 85 rupees per cropped acre during summer (kharif season) and 50 rupees per acre during the winter (rabi season).

As a result revenue collection is only 68 percent of operation and maintenance expenditures (Agriculture and Food Security Policy, Government of Pakistan, 2013). This ratio between operation / maintenance cost and revenue collection is 80 and 77 percent in Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa respectively (Agriculture and Food Security Policy, Government of Pakistan, 2013).

A third critical step we can take is to urgently improve our water storage system. Not much of the water flowing through the Indus River is being stored for future use during the rabi and drought season. The back-up supply of water is only enough to last 30 days — dangerously far below the recommended 1,000 days.

According to the ministry of water and power (MoP, 2005), due to the non-availability of enough storage facilities and sedimentation of existing reservoirs, approximately 25 to 30 MAF (million acre feet) of water flows into the sea

annually against approximately 10 MAF needed to flow downstream the Kotri barrage for environmental needs. However, according to Dr Zaigham Habib, a consultant working in the water sector, downstream Kotri flow in the last 10 years (2006-2015) has decreased to 15-20 MAF. This extra water flowing into the sea can be stored by building new reservoirs or upgrading the existing ones to make Pakistan a water secure country.

The importance of taking steps to better manage our water cannot be overstated. Pakistan's population has increased four times since independence, and is expected to grow to more than 300 million by 2050.

We need a plan of action to keep our system from buckling under the weight of this growing water demand. By managing our existing water resources through better irrigation practices and improving how we store water for future use, we can make sure that every drop counts.

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<http://www.dawn.com/news/1305382/development-making-every-drop-of-water-count>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 19 TH TO DECEMBER 25TH 2016

IMPROVING GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT

Dawn, Business & Finance weekly, December 19th, 2016

Muhammad Arif Watto

Pakistan is close to being classified as a 'water scarced' country from 'water stressed' country, according to the Asian Development Outlook 2013.

The current per capita water availability of about 1100m³ has been decreased by almost 400pc since early 1950s, and is further projected to decrease by 375m³ by 2025.

As the population grows, the agriculture sector needs to grow in order to meet the food demands.

Farming heavily relies on irrigation water supplies from both canal water and groundwater. The surface water supplies are not only deficient but are highly skewed over time and are unevenly distributed across the Indus basin.

Currently, Pakistan meets more than 50pc of its overall irrigation water requirements through groundwater extractions.

Pakistan is the fourth largest groundwater withdrawing country with an estimated 60km³ extraction of groundwater each year. In terms of extraction, Pakistan accounts for about 9pc withdrawals of the global groundwater which constitute 4.6pc of the global groundwater-fed cropland.

Between 2000 and 2009, the over-extraction has resulted into annual depletion of on average 3.61km³ of groundwater, lowering groundwater tables rapidly in many parts of the country.

Recently, the Nasa's Grace (Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment) satellite based observations have identified several hot spots of groundwater depletion, with the highest depletion rates in north-east Pakistan and north-west India.

Many hydrologists are of the view that that there could be 10-20 metres decline in groundwater levels in the upper and the lower region of the Rachna Doab in North-East Pakistan in the next decade. Many tubewells in Punjab and Sindh, and much of the Karez system in Balochistan have collapsed due to declining of groundwater tables. The tubewell irrigation has affected groundwater quality and lowered its tables resulting in drying up of many karezes and dug wells.

Salinity is, perhaps, the most intriguing impact of over-use of groundwater in irrigation. Almost a decade ago, it was reported that more than 6m hectares of land was affected by different levels and types of salinity.

Besides salinity, other important negative environmental externalities include; salt water and sea water intrusion, land subsidence and disintegration of various ecosystem components in different parts of the country.

Though groundwater has a share in irrigation supplies, there is no mechanism either to protect groundwater from overdrafting and polluting.

In the absence of a governance policy mechanism, the ubiquitous nature and open access to groundwater makes it highly vulnerable to misutilisation. Moreover, there is no comprehensive information available within hydrological, ecological or socio-economic perspectives. There is also no system to record groundwater withdrawals and recharge rates.

One of the most alarming factors is lack of public knowledge and awareness towards groundwater resource situation, government and institutional negligence and apathy towards groundwater management and governance policies and practices.

Transitioning into growing water intensive crops such as rice and sugarcane which was encouraged through open groundwater extractions was not a wise strategy given the water resource endowments in the country.

Given the current state of water resources, a shift in the conventional water use strategy and an immediate focus on encouraging water efficient crops is required.

A sustainable groundwater extraction policy needs to be enforced immediately in order to ensure the longevity of groundwater resources. And that should be coupled with compulsive measures to protect the common pool resource from degradation.

The writer is an assistant professor at the Institute of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1303061/improving-groundwater-management>

INDUS TREATY INTERRUPTED

Dawn December 20th, 2016

Shamila Mahmood

LAST week, the World Bank temporarily halted the process for appointment of chairman of a court of arbitration requested by Pakistan and a neutral expert requested by India to allow the two sides to resolve issues concerning the Kishenganga and Ratle hydroelectric projects in an amicable manner. It briefly explained that the action had been taken to 'protect' the Indus Waters Treaty.

Article IX of the treaty on the settlement of disputes sets out the mechanisms for resolution of legal (disputes) and technical issues (differences) ie a court of arbitration or a neutral expert or any other way agreed by the Permanent Indus Commission. The bank has a very limited role in the appointment process, and any ambiguity arising from parallel processes being initiated simultaneously fall within the purview of the court of arbitration.

From information available, it appears that Pakistan initiated arbitration proceedings well before India requested the appointment of a neutral expert. The bank had decided to proceed with both appointments but paused upon India's objection that the pursuit of two parallel mechanisms was "legally untenable". Thus, efforts to neutralise escalating tensions between the two neighbours, albeit a noble gesture, allows space to question the bank's impartiality in the matter.

The pause is without any apparent legal basis and adds to the inordinate delay by authorities to resolve issues as required by the treaty; however, according to media reports the Kishenganga hydroelectric project is already a fait accompli and inauguration of the plant in October was postponed due to unrest in the region. The 850 MW Ratle hydroelectric project being built on the Chenab River in the Kishtwar district of India-held Kashmir is expected to start generating power in 2018.

Unfortunately, the commission has been unable to function in the true spirit of the treaty and has been ineffective in fostering an improved relationship and cooperation. Legal questions pertaining to India's intended permanent river diversion and depletion of the reservoir below dead storage level for sediment flushing were determined by the court of arbitration in its February 2013 partial award in the Kishenganga dispute.

Much has already been written about the award which was celebrated as a victory by both sides. Although Pakistan's gains were manifold, it was particularly significant as the award overturned the decision of the neutral expert in the Baglihar case and brought to an end India's reliance on an erroneous and inconclusive decision.

The Baglihar decision had allowed India the control of flows by eliminating the live storage limitation set by the treaty. Stringent design and operational restrictions had, in effect, been rewritten by the neutral expert. The court restored a tenet which was fundamental to Pakistan, allaying concerns on India's ability to manipulate water flows.

The late Prof John Briscoe described it as winning the war for Pakistan as the Kishenganga hydroelectric project diversion is a one-off; however, the finding on depletion of dead storage must be adhered to by India in all future projects.

The impact of this decision on the feasibility of India's 150 hydroelectric projects planned on the western rivers can be gauged from its present posture and threats to abrogate the treaty which Pakistan should not be sanguine about. India has been exploring avenues to renegotiate its use of the western rivers or abrogate the Indus Waters Treaty as part of a planned strategy. The 2010 task force report titled Water Security for India: The External Dynamics by New Delhi's Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis seems to have gone amiss. The court of arbitration's determination has certainly put a spanner in the works.

Shortly after the partial award was announced, an undertaking was requested from India that it would not proceed with the construction of the controversial works of the dam until the resolution of the differences as the stop work order had been lifted. A confirmation was also sought in March 2013 that India would alter the design of the Kishenganga hydroelectric project to ensure compliance with the design parameters set out in the treaty and as determined by the court of arbitration. Similarly, in the case of the Ratle hydroelectric project, efforts to resolve the issues bilaterally began at the end of 2012.

The award made the treaty functional, elaborating on the mechanism and time frame for the settlement of disputes in the event of an impasse; thus it is perturbing to note that several years have been spent on arduous parleys certain to end in futility. Inaction and delay have jeopardised the achievements of the Kishenganga award. The fear of failure had been amongst the reasons for reluctance to pursue dispute settlement options previously but given the certainty of outcome the delay is inexplicable. Public interest, during the days leading to the Kishenganga arbitration and thereafter, enhanced transparency on water issues with India which has been absent for the last three years.

The bank has offered to arrange for an independent third-party mediator to help the two countries reach an agreement on issues pertaining to the two dams. However, departure from the processes provided under the treaty should be viewed with caution as this could entail the risk of revisiting matters already determined by the court of arbitration.

The peculiar relationship between the two countries is an impediment in identifying constructive solutions acceptable to both sides, and navigating the conflicting interests has always presented a daunting task. Political exigencies are a barrier, with external stakeholders often fanning the divide. However, it is the lack of will, sound negotiation skills and techniques as well as capacity constraints thanks to little or no exposure to effective trans-boundary conflict management methods, tools and terminology that has been largely to blame for dispute paralysis.

Matters of strategic national importance require urgent and robust action and must take priority. The ramifications of this development should not be viewed casually as the consequences could be catastrophic to Pakistan's interests.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1303293/indus-treaty-interrupted>

CANAL BREACHED: WATER SUPPLY SUSPENDED FROM HUB RIVER
The Express Tribune, December 22, 2016.

Karachi: The water supply from Hub River was suspended on Tuesday after a breach occurred in the Hub Canal, which carries water from the dam to the city. Heavy machinery with technical staff has been sent to the spot and the breach will be plugged within 36 hours, said Karachi Water and Sewerage Board managing director Misbahuddin Farid. "We will supply water through an alternative canal," he said, adding that a few areas in District West may face a water scarcity.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1269339/canal-breached-water-supply-suspended-hub-river/>

RECOMMENDATIONS ON COUNTRY'S WATER POLICY FRAMEWORK LAUNCHED

Business Recorder, 22 December 2016

KARACHI: Hisaar Foundation on Wednesday launched the recommendations of Pakistan's national water policy framework for the consideration of the government. This is a culmination of two years of consultations which included discussion sessions with various water stakeholders across the spectrum as well as two international water conferences that focused on water cooperation and water security. The recommendations are part of the first report of the Think Tank on Rational Use of Water.

The recommendations focus on five main areas for further action. These include improving water access for the poor and landless, financing the urban and rural water value chain, safeguarding the Indus Basin and its infrastructure, improving water institutions and their management and governance and finally building a base for science, technology and social aspects of water.

The goals of the recommendations for Pakistan's national water policy framework call for extending irrigation system to arid districts of Pakistan. It also calls for creating new storages and enhancing existing storages at different levels. The policy framework calls for improvement in water efficiency by 10 percent. It also calls for increasing productivity in agriculture. The policy framework recommends preserving, repairing and maintaining the existing water infrastructure. It also calls for a reversal in abiyana to realize the true value of water.

The policy framework calls for control in groundwater withdrawals as well as generation of additional indigenous hydropower. The recommendations also call for increased coordination between water, agriculture and industry for maximum benefits. Finally it calls for making investment in water infrastructure and hydropower a core part of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The policy framework was presented by Simi Kamal, Convener, Think Tank on Rational Use of Water. Samar Ali Khan, also spoke on the occasion and highlighted the fact that mismanagement of water is a governance issue and that the government is non-responsive. The panelists included notable personalities such as Ehsan Malik, Arif Alvi and Seema Taher Khan. Panelists also included Abdul Fateh Tunio from Planning and Development Department and Irshad Bohio of Wapda Hyderabad. The discussion was moderated by Zohair Ashir, Chairperson Hisaar Foundation.

Pricing of water was an important topic of discussion amongst the panelists as was the inaction on the part of the government to formulate a national water policy. Arif Alvi said that Karachi is dumping approximately 420 million gallons of sewage into the sea. Ehsan Malik shed light on the water economy. He said that while the CPEC will raise investment of 50 billion USD, the cost of replacement of the existing Indus basin irrigation system amounts to 1 trillion USD which needs to be protected first.

To conclude, Seema Taher Khan urged the Sindh government to adopt the policy framework for implementation at all levels. She also said that the policy framework will be launched in all the provinces. Songs were also played depicting the plight of the people of Tharparkar and other arid areas.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2016/12/22/3-page/830889-news.html>

EXPECTED SHORTAGE: WATER TO DISTRICT WEST TO BE REDUCED

The Express Tribune, December 22nd, 2016.

Karachi: Supply from the Hub Dam to District West will be reduced for another 48 to 72 hours after a dilapidated portion of the Hub Canal was damaged on Tuesday.

Initially, it was claimed by the managing director of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB), that the breach would be repaired within 36 hours.

Hub Dam is the main source of water supply to District West which includes Baldia, Site and Orangi towns.

The dam supplies 90 million gallons of water per day (MGD) to the area but this amount is not sufficient as it does not reach the tail areas of District West.

A resident of Orangi Town, Sohail Khan told The Express Tribune that their regular water supply is the worst so what better could be expected when Hub Canal has been damaged. KWSB spokesperson Rizwan Hyder said that supply through alternative means is in process but it has been decreased to 10 to 20 MGD.

Hyder said that heavy machinery and technical staff have been sent to the spot and the breach will be plugged by Friday.

On the other hand, chief of bulk water supply Zafar Palijo explained that there is no such shortage of water in District West, as KWSB is supplying around 70 MGD of water through the North East Karachi line to meet the shortage in the area.

Palijo said that the breach has been filled and another 48 hours are required to completely repair the damaged part of the canal, therefore by Friday morning the canal will be able to supply water from the Hub Dam.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1270900/expected-shortage-water-district-west-reduced/>

INDIA SPEEDING UP INDUS BASIN WATER PLAN: REPORT

Dawn, December 23rd, 2016

NEW DELHI: India is stepping up efforts to maximise its use of the western rivers of the Indus basin, the BBC reported on Thursday quoting senior officials.

The move would involve building huge storage facilities and canals, it said. The three rivers flow through India-held Kashmir but most of the water is allotted to Pakistan under an international treaty. The officials, however, said the move would not violate the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT).

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said a government task force is finalising details of the water project, which he has made a priority.

“The ball has started rolling and we will see some results soon, most of them will be about building new storages in the basin,” one top official told BBC on condition of anonymity.

Another senior official said: “We are quite familiar with the terrain as we have already built a number of structures there.” But he added: “We are talking about few years here.”

The report quoted unnamed experts as saying Delhi was using the water issue to put pressure on Pakistan in the dispute over Kashmir. There is also speculation that state polls in Indian Punjab could be a factor for the stepped up rhetoric.

India wants to “maximise” its use of water from the Indus, Chenab and Jhelum rivers. Millions of people in the two countries depend on water in the rivers.

“An official with India’s water resources ministry insisted that this action would be ‘well within’ the terms of the Indus Waters Treaty,” the BBC said.

India reportedly began reviewing the treaty after a militant attack in India-held Kashmir in September in which 19 soldiers were killed.

New Delhi accused Islamabad of being behind the attack and relations deteriorated, leading to a rise in cross-border tensions.

The IWT was signed in 1960 and allocated the three eastern rivers — the Ravi, Beas and Sutlej — of the Indus basin to India, while 80 per cent of the three western ones — the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab — was allotted to Pakistan.

India says it has not fully utilised the 20 per cent of water given to it in the three western rivers. Pakistan disputes this.

Officials in Delhi said the IWT allowed India to irrigate 1.4 million acres of land using water from those rivers. But they say only 800,000 acres are irrigated at present.

They added that the building of hydropower projects would also be accelerated.

India currently generates around 3,000MW of hydroelectricity from the western rivers, but the Indus basin is said to have a potential of nearly 19,000MW.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1304008>

IRSA REDUCES RELEASES FROM MANGLA, TARBELA

Mushtaq Ghumman

December 23, 2016

Indus River System Authority (IRSA) has massively reduced water releases from Tarbela and Mangla reservoirs due to forthcoming annual canal closure to be commenced from December 26 for one month. According to IRSA Spokesperson Rana Khalid, Tarbela releases have been reduced to 20,000 cusecs from 30,000 cusecs of water with immediate effect. It will be further reduced to 12,000 cusecs from December 24.

He further stated that releases from Mangla would be reduced to 10,000 cusecs from 30,000 cusecs from December 25, 2016. With substantial reduction in releases of water from both reservoirs, hydel electricity generation would massively be reduced for one month and the government will have to rely on thermal generation.

Official sources told Business Recorder that the Ministry of Water and Power has sufficient stocks of furnace oil in addition to RLNG aimed at running all thermal power plants at maximum capacity so that people are supplied with electricity. "Presently there is no load shedding in those areas where recovery is 90 percent as electricity availability is linked to recovery. However, with massive reduction in hydel generation, load shedding duration would increase to some extent till end of January," the sources added.

However, Pakistan State Oil (PSO) which supplies furnace oil and RLNG to the power sector is again on the verge of default due to continuous pile-up of receivables against power sector which have reached Rs 230 billion in addition to Rs 7 billion of SNGPL against supply of RLNG as of December 1, 2016. The PSO has written a number of letters to the top brass of Ministry of Petroleum as well as Ministry of Water and Power, besides having meetings for payment of receivables, but the commitments made have not been honoured so far.

<http://www.brecorder.com/agriculture-a-allied/183/116363/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 12 TH TO DECEMBER 18TH 2016

WATER FROM FILTRATION PLANTS MAY NOT BE FIT FOR CONSUMPTION

Kashif Abbasi

Dawn, December 12th, 2016

ISLAMABAD: The residents of Islamabad might be drinking unfit water from the filtration plants as the Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) is not taking their maintenance seriously.

Sources in the MCI said earlier a private contractor was running all the 34 filtration plants in various sectors. However, after the expiry of the contract in September, the MCI decided to run the plants on its own.

But since then, the MCI has slowed down the process of mixing chlorine in the water and replacing the filters of the plants due to a shortage of funds.

"Currently, a significant number of filtration plants are dysfunctional while those which are functioning are not being maintained properly," said an official of the water directorate.

"Though the situation is not as bad as being discussed in the corridors of the MCI, it is a fact that during the last three months we have slowed down the process of changing the filters and mixing chlorine in the water," he said.

In September, almost over a dozen filtration plants about which there were complaints were made dysfunctional. "In September, our senior officers directed us to close down some of the filtration plants until we get chlorine and new filters for them," he said.

When contacted, Chief Metropolitan Officer Suleman Warraich said the MCI was running the plants on an ad hoc basis. "There are some issues and we are trying to overcome them. Actually, we are facing a shortage of funds. Recently, I moved a summary seeking loans from the CDA and once the funds are made available we will purchase chlorine and filters for the plants." He claimed that the chlorine and filters of the plants were being changed through 'various arrangements'.

Asked from where the MCI was purchasing chlorine and filters, he said: “I guess some private contractors are supplying them.” But several officials in the MCI claimed that no purchase had been made for over three months.

The MCI has been running the filtration plants after taking them over from the CDA. There had been complaints against the CDA that the plants were providing water unfit for human consumption.

In February this year, CDA’s own water testing laboratory checked 11 filtration plants and found that seven of them were providing unfit water to the consumers.

A few years ago, a report compiled by the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources showed that 28 out of the 34 filtration plants had been providing unfit and unsafe water.

Dr Sharif Astori of Polyclinic Hospital said waterborne diseases were frequent problems in the city. He said consuming contaminated water put an individual at the risk of gastroenteritis, cholera, diarrhoea, dysentery, hepatitis A and E and typhoid.

“An individual who consumes contaminated water for an extended period of time can fall prey to liver and kidney problems as well,” he added.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1301923>

HYDROPOWER PROJECTS: AIDING INVESTMENT

Dawn, Business & Finance weekly, December 12th, 2016

Khaleeq Kiani

Hydropower generation and water sector projects are being put on a strategic path to rope in shy private investors.

The new draft policy paradigm, now in its initial phase, also supports net hydropower profit payments to all regional and provincial stakeholders, where these natural resources are located.

The private sector that has so far been reluctant to invest in long-gestation projects — having burnt its fingers in the past — would now be offered comfort through collaboration with the government, or its entities (such as Wapda).

A long standing grievance of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province over Net Hydropower Profit (NHP) has been effectively addressed through a backlog settlement of more than Rs75bn (being charged to consumers through the power tariff).

Similarly, an agreement has been reached with Punjab for the payment of Rs82bn by Wapda, on account of NHP for the Ghazi Barotha Hydropower Project, due since 2005. This will raise consumer tariff by 33paise per unit countrywide.

Of this, Rs38bn would be settled upfront and the remaining Rs44bn would be paid in the next three fiscal years at a rate of about Rs14.5bn per year. Wapda will continue to pay Rs9.5bn to Punjab every year for the productive life of the project. Punjab would get Rs1.10 on each unit of electricity produced by the GBHP — the same rate paid to KP for Tarbela.

Two other stakeholders — Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir — however may not benefit equally despite being major sources of hydropower, because of constitutional reasons, but may be compensated on the basis of equity.

Taking a leaf out of a draft policy for the development of mega hydropower projects, which is expected to be formally approved by the Council of Common Interest (CCI) in its coming meeting, the prime minister recently agreed, in principle, to divide the Diamer-Bhasha Multipurpose Project in to two.

This would allow that the dam portion of the project to be funded through the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) allocations and Wapda generated resources, while financing for power generation will be arranged on a commercial basis through Wapda or by leasing its existing projects.

The policy is drawn from on past experience when private investors would lose their breath with time consuming preparatory work, which in addition to feasibility studies and engineering design, involved other legal and regulatory formalities like tariff approvals and competitive bidding.

This led to capacity addition of over 7423MW of thermal power plants by the private sector between 1995 and 2015 against only 84MW of hydropower, despite the later being cleaner and cheaper.

On top of that, multilateral lenders had their own policies and priorities for financing development projects 'in different regions' along with sensitivity towards dislocating and disturbing people, loss of heritage and environmental issues.

A total of seven mega projects of 24,200MW have now been identified for development on the Indus Cascade through the new initiative and more projects will follow.

The draft policy offers two options for private sector participation. Wapda will complete the preliminary work and get a feasibility stage, upfront tariff, from the regulator at attractive commercial terms before handing over the project to private investors through competitive bidding.

Competitive bidding, however, would not be based on the lowest cost and tariff because experience suggests that Chinese companies engaged in cut throat competition to secure projects at 20-25pc lower costs than engineering estimates and subsequently delayed projects or created problems of cost escalation.

Therefore, under one option Wapda will complete a detailed engineering design by consulting firms of international repute, carry out environment impact assessment (EIA), acquire land and ensure resettlement of any to be affected persons, construct roads and infrastructure, put in place a power evacuation system, get Nepra approval on upfront tariff and engage an international panel of experts (IPE) before offering the project for competitive bidding.

The IPE would shortlist bidders on the basis of technical and financial strength who would be asked to compete on the basis of early completion of the project against a bank guarantee. Wapda would finance the IPE for supervising the construction. The actual cost would form the basis of shareholding between Wapda and the investor.

Under this option, major projects like Dasu 5,400MW, Diamer-Bhasha 4,500MW and Bunji 7,100MW have been selected and would be offered to the private sector in the first stage. For this, the construction of the main dam of the Diamer-Bhasha, and its land acquisition, would be completed by Wapda while its power generation would be offered for private-public partnership.

The second option would be applied to projects like the 4,000MW Thakot and 2,400MW Pattan where the detailed engineering designs was not ready as yet. The preference for the bidder would be on the basis of early project completion and maximum energy output.

In this case as well, the government or Wapda would complete the EIA, land acquisition and resettlement, development of roads and the power evacuation system before offering the project for bidding.

The successful bidder would be selected by IPE on the basis of technical experience and financial strength against a bank guarantee to ensure committed performance targets.

In both cases, the investor would have the incentive to complete the project before the deadline and secure additional revenue due to early power sale.

They would be guaranteed additional years of operations with a higher return on equity while providing saving of interest during construction and cost savings.

Exemptions in duties and taxes during construction phase, income tax holiday for initial five years of operation will be offered to private investors.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1301972>

REHABILITATION OF GUDDU BARRAGE

Dawn, Business & Finance weekly, December 12th, 2016

Mohammad Hussain Khan

With the feasibility report now finalised, Guddu barrage's rehabilitation will start with the bid award for construction. The total cost of project is estimated at Rs20bn.

Guddu barrage — being the first barrage over Indus River in Sindh — is supposed to play a crucial role in managing normal river water flows, shortages and emergencies like floods.

Besides improving flows and supplies for Balochistan through the Pat Feeder, Guddu would help Sukkur barrage to ensure steady flows to its seven major off-taking canals that feed both lower and upper Sindh.

The World Bank has recently approved a loan for rehabilitation work and the Sindh government is poised to see the project enter the into execution stage, say officers connected with the project.

Factors like climate change-driven exceptional flows, water-related disputes with a neighbouring country that may result in an adverse situation, conservation of an endangered species — the Indus Dolphin, that is found near Sukkur etc — have been given serious consideration in the feasibility study. The study, which started in 2010, was originally to be completed in 2014 under the Water Sector Improvement Project. Sukkur barrage's feasibility study was to complete in 2014 too, but has been delayed.

Guddu barrage has a floodwater canal called the Raini channel. With its addition, the barrage would undergo some changes. The dividing wall will be shifted from gate number five to gate seven. This shift will help the Ghotki Feeder Canal get better water supplies.

In order to meet emergencies in floods, a 4ft freeboard is to be erected in barrage's dykes to avoid stress on the barrage. The World Bank, says an officer, has got an independent evaluation done by international panel of experts to look at the hydrological and environmental issues after the government hired consultants submitted their report.

After being vetted by forums like the Central Development Working Party and the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council, the project is at construction contract award stage.

The procurement process would follow the World Bank's guidelines once the contract is awarded. It is learnt that three companies, two Chinese and one Pakistani, have bid for the award.

“In fact the lowest bidder was selected, but it was questioned by a contending party and the matter went into litigation. But now the Sindh High Court has asked the concerned department to decide the dispute in accordance with law. It is hoped after a bidder gets the nod, the project execution will start”, comments a senior officer.

Rehabilitation works include the replacement of all 65 gates, building spurs upstream the barrage to centralise the river water-flows to avoid current on the left side to avoid silting to the right side; rebuilding the dividing wall at the seventh bay and raising height of marginal bunds to increase the river water's retention time. Spurs would push main current of water to the centre of the river. Until now, the dividing wall was ensuring flows for the Ghotki Feeder alone on the barrage's left side.

With the project's completion, Guddu barrage would withstand discharges of varying, even unusual flows with improved management.

Silting issues of Guddu's downstream and Sukkur's upstream are a major problem which impact operations of Sukkur barrage. With the replacement of gates of barrage and off-taking, the channels' operation would be easier. Senior officers believe that post-rehab Guddu barrage would be able to maintain its pond level to provide desired flows to its main canals.

As a result of rehabilitation, says one officer, Guddu would be in a position to retain water till its closure and start downstream supplies in April, a time when lower Sindh's farmers demand irrigation water for early kharif. Similarly, if peak flows are released in one go for Sukkur, it would pose a serious threat to it but with this modernisation Guddu response time would be increased during floods.

It is deferred maintenance of the barrages which reduced thickness of the barrage's skin plates by 30-40pc due to ageing process. The barrage — built in 1962 — has completed 50 years and its thickness reduction should be taken up

seriously by the authorities. A provincial irrigation officer says that if gates are not replaced now, they might not be able to withstand the pressure of water in the long run.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1301834>

WORLD BANK PAUSES ARBITRATION IN WATER DISPUTE

Dawn December 14th, 2016

Anwar Iqbal

WASHINGTON: The World Bank Group (WBG) has paused its arbitration in the water dispute between India and Pakistan, saying it is doing so to protect the Indus Waters Treaty.

WBG president Dr Jim Yong Kim announced this in letters sent to the finance ministers of India and Pakistan on Monday, emphasising that the bank was acting to safeguard the treaty. "I would hope that the two countries will come to an agreement by the end of January," he said in a statement.

The treaty, signed in 1960, has prevented a war between the two countries despite serious differences over water distribution. But in November, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi threatened to block the flow of water into Pakistan — a threat which, if implemented, could lead to armed clashes.

As tensions escalated, India and Pakistan initiated separate processes to get the dispute resolved by the World Bank. New Delhi sought the appointment of a 'neutral expert' while Islamabad asked the bank to appoint the chairman of the Court of Arbitration.

"Pausing the process for now, the bank would hold off from appointing the chairman for the Court of Arbitration or the neutral expert — appointments that had been expected on Dec 12 as earlier communicated by the bank," the World Bank said.

The bank said that both countries had asked it to resolve issues regarding two hydroelectric power plants that India is building along the Indus rivers system but were seeking different processes.

"Both processes initiated by the respective countries were advancing at the same time, creating a risk of contradictory outcomes that could potentially endanger the treaty," the bank said.

"We are announcing this pause to protect the Indus Waters Treaty and to help India and Pakistan consider alternative approaches to resolving conflicting interests under the treaty and its application to two hydroelectric power plants," Dr Kim said.

He said the pause was "an opportunity for the two countries to begin to resolve the issue in an amicable manner and in line with the spirit of the treaty rather than pursuing concurrent processes that could make the treaty unworkable over time."

The World Bank — then the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development — brokered the Indus Waters Treaty and both India and Pakistan accepted it as its arbitrator.

The treaty gave India control over the three eastern rivers — the Beas, the Ravi and the Sutlej — and over the three western rivers — the Indus, the Chenab and the Jhelum — to Pakistan.

The current dispute revolves around the Kishanganga (330 megawatts) and Ratle (850 megawatts) hydroelectric plants. India is building the plants on the Kishanganga and Chenab Rivers. "Neither of the two plants are being financed by the World Bank Group," the bank said.

Seen as one of the most successful international agreements, the Indus Waters Treaty sets out a mechanism for cooperation and information exchange between the two countries regarding their use of the rivers. The mechanism, known as the Permanent

Indus Commission, includes a commissioner from each of the two countries and sets out a process for resolving the so-called "questions", "differences" and "disputes" that may arise between the parties.

In Islamabad, the finance ministry acknowledged receiving the World Bank letter and said that it had already briefed the ministry of water and power on the matter.

The water and power ministry has in turn asked the Pakistan's Commissioner for Indus Waters Mirza Asif Baig to take up the matter of the two dams with India.

Last month, the World Bank urged India and Pakistan to accept mediation for setting up a mechanism to resolve the dispute over the two dams.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1302223/world-bank-pauses-arbitration-in-water-dispute>

‘MODI’S THREAT OF REVOKING WATER TREATY SHOULD BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY’

Business Recorder, December 15, 2016

The government of Pakistan must proactively raise Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's threat of revoking Indus Water Treaty (IWT) at international forums, besides engaging in a legal diplomacy with India for resolution of outstanding issues, said Barrister Ahmer Bilal Soofi, a leading international law expert here Wednesday.

Speaking at Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) public talk titled “Pakistan-India: Avoiding a Water War,” Soofi said that termination of the IWT cannot be done unilaterally according to Article 12(4) of the treaty. “The Treaty is thus, perpetual and guaranteeing in nature,” he argued. According to him, the IWT is a regulatory framework giving technical specifications, adding it is confined to these technicalities and does not address the substantive decision of the number of dams that the Indian government may wish to construct.

Soofi said that Modi's threat of revoking the treaty should be taken seriously, adding it is also surprising in its nature, as in the international history it is for the first time when a head of a government is announcing that his country is going to revoke a treaty.

“This was totally an irresponsible statement and a serious threat as well and we must be mindful of the development, as the water issues with India are going beyond the IWT parameters,” he added. He further stated that Pakistan has mostly dealt with its water security issues from technical and political point of views, but never backed up its stance by strong legal arguments.

He suggested that engineers and lawyers in Pakistan need to sit together to interpret the IWT in a holistic manner, adding young scholars and lawyers should be encouraged to study water laws and develop their expertise in this area. In his presentation, he showcased the legal aspects governing the IWT and discussed the various aspects surrounding it, including what areas it does not cover, and emerging water security issues. He stated that every dispute should be looked at from five different viewpoints: customary international law, judicial decisions, academic writings, international organisations and other treaties.

He stated that although the IWT has its governing text, yet there are other treaties and their texts, having customary value governing this treaty as well. “It is also imperative to understand that not every water issue falls under the IWT's jurisdiction. Other water security issues should be tabled separately and bilaterally,” he said.

He also talked about how international law declares a positive obligation to not inflict unreasonable harm on the lower riparian state. He pointed out that Pakistani officials have been invoking the wrong forum on construction of dams by India, adding Pakistan's reservations on the technical aspects of a dam's construction will invoke the IWT's dispute-resolution mechanisms.

About the World Bank's declaring a pause on the IWT, he said what the WB is suggesting is quite strange to ask the parties to suggest an option, adding hence the WB is a party to the treaty and being an arbitrator it should have determined any solution to the dispute.

“This is quite unique that the World Bank has thrown back ... I am not aware of the technical details but if there is construction of a dam [on Indian side], the advantage would definitely goes to India [due to the pause],” he added.

Soofi further suggested legal diplomacy instead of political one with India on outstanding issues including Pathankot, Mumbai and Uri attacks, the issue of Kulbhushan Yadav, Kashmir dispute as well as Siachen and Sir Creek issues. According to him, these issues cannot be resolved politically and suggested that legal teams of the two countries should sit together to find solutions to these very issues.

Earlier, former Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, chairman board of governors of ISSI, in his remarks said that the water security issue is a very important one. Being one of the most water scarcest countries and an agricultural economy, he said that stakes for Pakistan are high and the issue should be taken very seriously amid threatening statements coming from Indian top leadership.

<http://www.brecorder.com/general-news/172:pakistan/113569:modis-threat-of-revoking-water-treaty-should-be-taken-seriously/?date=2016-12-15>

RISK TO INDUS TREATY

Dawn, December 16th, 2016

IF it appears that the World Bank has just treated India and Pakistan like petulant and entitled children by halting the arbitration in the latest dispute between them under the Indus Water Treaty, it is probably because both countries are behaving in an immature manner. It is worth bearing in mind that the water treaty is a landmark document, whose historical significance puts it in the league of the most enduring bilateral treaties anywhere.

It has survived wars and skirmishes between the two countries, has remained intact during periods of massive rupture in ties, and seen many governments — both democratic and military — come and go. In short, it has stood the test of time and its provisions have worked to apportion the waters of the western rivers in a manner that is as close to being consensual as anything can be between the two countries.

For this reason, the treaty and its mechanism for the settlement of water-related disputes should not be turned into a channel through which to pump the angst that both states harbour against one another. The treaty is not a vehicle for resolving the Kashmir dispute, nor should it be used as a signalling device for other foreign policy concerns that have nothing to do with the apportionment and utilisation of the waters in the western rivers.

Pakistan built up a track record of invoking the treaty to call for a neutral arbitrator with regard to various projects, from the Baglihar dam to the latest Kishanganga venture. India, for its part, has, in a fit of pique, threatened to withdraw from the treaty altogether, as well as initiate a parallel process of appointing a neutral expert to counter Pakistan's push to set up a court of arbitration.

The World Bank is right to feel that the rising temperature of the rhetoric threatens the integrity of the treaty itself, and has offered a mature response to temporarily halt both processes in order to ward off a potentially awkward situation. The interregnum should be used by both countries to calm down passions.

There is a long history of water-related engagements between both countries that have continued even through periods of extreme tension. It is the memory of this cooperation that ought to be leveraged now. It would be a calamity for future generations if both countries were to tear up the treaty in a moment of anger, then muddle through the consequences for decades.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1302558/risk-to-indus-treaty>

PAKISTAN NOT TO ACCEPT ALTERATION IN INDUS WATERS TREATY

Dawn, December 17th, 2016

Anwar Iqbal

WASHINGTON: Fearing that India is buying time to complete its two disputed water projects, Pakistan made it clear that it would not accept any modifications or changes to the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) after New Delhi said on Friday it was ready to bilaterally resolve its differences with Islamabad over the implementation of the treaty.

The treaty, signed in 1960, gives India control over the three eastern rivers of the Indus basin — the Beas, the Ravi and the Sutlej— while Pakistan has the three western rivers— the Indus, the Chenab and the Jhelum.

The IWT also sets up a mechanism, the Permanent Indus Commission, which includes a commissioner from each country.

Talking to Dawn here on Friday, Special Assistant to PM Tariq Fatemi said: “Pakistan will not accept any modifications or changes to the provisions of the Indus Waters Treaty. Our position is based on the principles enshrined in the treaty. And the treaty must be honoured in...letter and spirit”.

Earlier, a spokesman for the Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vikas Swarup, told reporters in New Delhi that the resolution process required more time.

“India has always believed that the implementation of the Indus Waters Treaty, which includes the redressal of the technical questions and differences, should be done bilaterally between India and Pakistan,” he said. “We believe that these consultations should be given adequate time.”

India’s request for more time, however, alarmed Pakistan. Islamabad argued that India used the same strategy on previous occasions, completing a project during the dispute and then insisting that since the project was already complete, it could not be modified.

The current dispute revolves around the Kishanganga (330 megawatts) and Ratle (850 megawatts) hydroelectric plants. India is building the plants on the Kishanganga and Chenab Rivers, which Pakistan says violate the IWT.

Tensions over the water dispute increased late last month when Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi threatened to block the flow of water into Pakistan. International experts fear that the threat, if implemented, could lead to armed clashes between the two sides.

New Delhi sought the appointment of a ‘neutral expert’ while Islamabad asked the World Bank to appoint the chairman of the Court of Arbitration. The IWT recognises the World Bank as an arbitrator.

Pakistan’s fear that India was buying time to complete the disputed projects was backed by independent experts Dawn spoke to. They noted that both sides had already completed the process proposed in the IWT and approached the World Bank only after the commission declared it “a dispute,” as required. “Dragging it through an already exhausted process will not help,” said one expert.

Pakistan was seeking a court of arbitration because only the proposed court had the authority to consider both legal and technical aspects of the dispute. A neutral expert could only consider the technical aspects.

Pakistanis argue that the designs of the two Indian projects violate both legal and technical provisions of the treaty. India, however, opposes Pakistan’s effort for setting up a court of arbitration.

The disagreement persuaded the World Bank to announce earlier this week that it was temporarily ‘pausing’ its arbitration and it was doing so to protect the treaty.

The next step was to go to the UN Secretary General who, under the treaty, has the authority to appoint a chairman for the proposed court.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1302848/pakistan-not-to-accept-alteration-in-indus-waters-treaty>

18 WATER TESTING LABS BECOME DYSFUNCTIONAL

Dawn, December 18th, 2016

Malik Asad

ISLAMABAD: As many as 18 water quality testing laboratories working under the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) – an autonomous body of the Ministry of Science and Technology (MoST) – have become virtually dormant as its 158 scientists and technical staff have not been paid their salaries since January 2016.

About six years ago, the PCRWR had established water quality testing laboratories across the country with a cost of over Rs2 billion. However, the Finance Division did not release the Rs75 million meant for the salaries of the scientists and technical staff due to which the laboratories became dysfunctional and the Pakistan National Accreditation Council (PNAC) also suspended the PCRWR’s accreditation as well.

With the suspension of accreditation, PCRWR cannot claim authenticity and credibility of its reports on water quality and research and this is the reason the PCRWR is unable to examine the quality of water in the filtration plants installed by the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and the Water and Sanitation Agency (Wasa) in the four provinces.

However, a senior official in the council said that as soon as the matter related to staff salaries is resolved, PNAC will be approached for the restoration of accreditation.

The officials who have not been paid their salaries were employed against the project titled 'Provision of Safe Drinking Water' (PSDW) which was approved by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council.

The project worth Rs1413.35 million was initiated in 2006 for a period of five years. The development phase was completed on December 31, 2015 after having many extensions in the implementation period.

A MoST letter dated February 25, 2016 conveyed the approval of 158 posts of the PSDW project to non-development (regular) side.

The Establishment Division on May 16 consented for regularisation subject to the fulfillment of formalities. The relevant PCRWR committee then interviewed the employees for regular appointments and forwarded the summary to the prime minister.

Meanwhile, some PCRWR officials filed a petition before the Islamabad and Lahore high courts, seeking direction to the government for the release of salaries. Some officials also filed an application before the Federal Ombudsman, which on Dec 15 ordered MoST to release the salaries. The ombudsman also asked the government to consider regularising the employees as well. PCRWR officials said the incumbent chairman Dr Mohammad Ashraf deliberately delayed the regularisation of PSDW employees as they were working in a project initiated by the former chairman.

PCRWR has spent millions of rupees on training its employees who have not been paid since January 2016.

When asked, the PCRWR chairman claimed the laboratories have not been closed as skeleton staff was available to run affairs. He did admit that due to non-participation of the employees, who are not paid, the laboratories could not produce desired results.

Dr Ashraf said the matter regarding the regularisation of employees was pending with the prime minister when the employees had gone into litigation which is why it had lingered on.

The council has closed the project to examine water quality in CDA and Wasa filtration plants as it requires a lot of money.

In 2010, PCRWR had reported that of CDA's 33 filtration plants, 28 were providing unfit and unsafe water, which CDA had contested and had restrained the council from testing water in its filtration plants in the future.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1302964>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 5 TH TO DECEMBER 11TH 2016

PM APPROVES FINANCING PLAN FOR DIAMER-BHASHA DAM

Dawn December 6th, 2016

Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has 'approved in principle' the financing plan for the Rs1.45 trillion Diamer-Bhasha dam and hydropower project with a directive to start physical work on it before the end of next year.

According to a statement issued by the Prime Minister Office on Monday, the innovative plan proposing the project financing on a self-reliance basis was presented by Water and Power Secretary Mohammad Younas Dagher.

Informed sources said the government had now made up its mind for a segregated approach to the project financing implementation in view of difficulties in taking on board major multilateral agencies, particularly the World Bank which was reluctant to finance it due to Indian pressure. As a consequence, the Asian Development Bank also had not committed to funding the project as confirmed by its president Takehiko Nakao at a news conference here in October this year.

According to the sources, the presentation on the project financing was made to the prime minister a few days ago. Under the new plan, originally floated by the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) in May this year, the project has been divided into two parts to reduce the size of the project and financing requirements.

The PM Office said the dam portion of the project would be funded through Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) allocations and Wapda-generated resources while the financing for the power generation portion would be arranged on a commercial basis by the water and power ministry either through Wapda or through leasing its existing projects.

The water and power secretary told Dawn that the power generation portion would be funded commercially either by Wapda or by offering it to the private sector.

He said the tentative cost of the project was estimated at around Rs1.450 trillion, including the dam's cost of Rs550 billion, over a period of seven years starting from 2017-18. It also includes Rs80bn already allocated for land acquisition and other activities.

Mr Dagha said that most of the land for the project had already been acquired two months ago.

Interestingly, the water and power ministry informed the Senate on Nov 24 that 28,247 acres out of 37,419 acres of land required for construction of the project had so far been acquired.

The water and power secretary said the prime minister had ordered finalisation of cost estimates and annual allocation by involving an international consortium of consultants to review the project's design and cost. "The project's groundbreaking is planned for end-2017," he added.

An official said the project would get about Rs60-70bn annually under the PSDP. The prime minister also constituted a committee comprising secretaries of water and power, planning and finance to expedite the process of completing the financial proposal. He asked the water and power secretary to start preparations so that physical work on the dam could start before the end of 2017, the PM Office statement said.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1300754>

'PAKISTAN CAN STORE 10 PC OF ITS ANNUAL RIVER FLOWS'

Business Recorder, 7 December, 2016

LAHORE: WAPDA advisor on Diamer Basha Dam Project Dr Izhar-ul-Haq has said that Pakistan can store 10 percent of its annual river flows while average water storage capacity the world over stands at 40 percent.

He was briefing a delegation of the participants of National Security Workshop, National Defence University (NDU) Islamabad at the WAPDA House on Monday.

The delegation was headed by NDU Director General Major General Ghulam Qamar, the delegation comprised of the Senators, Members of the National and Provincial Assemblies, senior civil and military officers and notables from civil society.

WAPDA advisor said that the per capita water availability in the country has gone down to 942 cubic meter per annum due to rapid increase in population. The countries having less than 1000 cubic meter per capita water availability are counted in water-stressed countries.

To cope with the situation, WAPDA is working on a number of storage projects. Of them, Diamer Basha Dam, Kurram Tangi Dam and Mohmand Dam are ready for construction, which would cumulatively store 10.6 million acre feet (MAF) of water besides generating 5383 megawatt (MW) of low cost hydel electricity.

Briefing about the hydropower projects, the delegation was informed that at present, WAPDA is constructing six hydropower projects with cumulative generation capacity of 4792 MW.

Out of them, three projects including Tarbela 4th Extension, Neelum Jhelum and Golen Gol with cumulative generation capacity of 2485 MW are scheduled to be completed by the year 2018. The delegation was also informed about water challenges of Pakistan and water issues with India and Afghanistan.

In another briefing, PEPCO General Manager (Revenue and Commercial Operation) Muhammad Saleem briefed the delegation about power sector reforms, electricity crisis and issues relating to power sector. The delegation was also apprised of the government's efforts to overcome the electricity shortages in the country. The other measures include

improvement in transmission and distribution systems, automatic metering infrastructure, net metering and better customer services etc.

Following the briefings, a question-answer session was also held, wherein the queries about water and power sectors raised by the participants were responded to. Later, WAPDA Member (Power) and NDU delegation head exchanged the souvenirs as memento to the visit.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2016/12/06/13-page/825828-news.html>

DESPITE ITS RISING STATUS, GWADAR SUFFERS FROM WATER CRUNCH

The Express Tribune, December 8th, 2016.

Mudaser Kazi

GWADAR: Gwadar, whose deep sea port is the terminal point of the multi-billion dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), is fast emerging as a city of great strategic importance in the region. Yet this evolving city suffers from huge civic problems, including extreme scarcity of potable water.

Water is a rare commodity in Gwadar and its adjoining areas which often depend on water sources, located hundreds of kilometres away from the city.

Residents of the city say their water supplies are too haphazard, restricted to just an hour every week. But sometimes supplies are available only after two weeks. The entire population depends on rain-filled Ankara Kaur Dam on the outskirts of Gwadar.

However, Mubarak Ali, who works in a hotel, recalls a time a few years back when the situation was even worse: women used to carry pots for miles to collect water for their domestic needs.

Speaking to The Express Tribune, Ali said the population of the city was galloping due to the influx of people from other parts of the country but the government was moving too slowly in providing amenities to the population.

According to a part-time journalist Behram Baloch, water is really a precious commodity in Gwadar. To illustrate the point he cites the example of an FIR being registered in 2015 against some people for stealing five cans of water from a house.

In some areas, he says, water is supplied after two weeks, forcing people to utilise every drop of water with extreme care. "People borrow money in other areas but people here are forced to borrow water at times," he said.

At the same time, he appreciated the government's effort in 2012 to provide Rs430 million worth water to the residents of Gwadar and Jiwani through water-tanks from Tallar and its adjoining areas when there was a serious water crisis after drying up of the dam.

Gwadar's Executive Engineer Public Health Shakeel Baloch, who is responsible for supplying water to the residents, outlines mass migration, urbanisation, and lack of rain as factors behind the water scarcity in Gwadar and its adjacent areas.

He said water had remained a primary issue for the residents due to their dependence on rain.

"Only one-week's water is left in the Ankara dam. This situation can cause a severe water shortage in the coming months," he said, adding that current the supply of water is 3-3.5 Million Gallons Per Day (MGD), whereas the requirement is of 8.3MGD.

He was of the view that the dam built in 1995 was supposed to cater to the needs of 20,000 to 25,000 people and had a lifespan of 20 years. However, the population of the city had now exceeded 0.2 million.

He said currently the dam was filled with 70% silt leaving behind the dead storage of only 6,000 acre feet out of its total 17,000 acre feet.

Mir Hamal Kalmati, an MPA from Gwadar, demanded that the provincial government connect Gwadar through a pipeline to Sword or Mirani or Shadi Khor Dam since it is the basic need of the people of the port city.

“The cost of a private water tanker stands at Rs6,000. Not everyone can easily pay that amount while at present extra revenue is also spent on water tankers by the government,” he said, adding that the total capacity of Sword Dam is 47 thousand acre feet.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1256981/cpecs-terminal-end-despite-rising-status-gwadar-suffers-water-crunch/>

AGREEMENT: CONSENSUS REACHED ON LAND ACQUISITION FOR DASU PROJECT

The Express Tribune, December 9th, 2016.

Lahore: In a bid to ensure speedy completion of the Dasu Hydropower project, Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) has reached a consensus with stakeholders over land acquisition issues.

The consensus regarding land acquisition and infrastructure as well as social sector development in the project area should pave the way for a smooth implementation of the project.

The consensus was a result of a two-month detailed negotiation among various stakeholders.

Subsequent to the signing of document by the stakeholders, Wapda Chairman Lieutenant General Muzammil Hussain (R) visited Dasu Hydropower Project site and also took a detailed round of the construction to witness the progress.

During the visit, the chairman had a meeting with elders of the area and affected people of the project.

Addressing the meeting, he appreciated the spirit of the stakeholders for reaching the consensus. He said that Dasu Hydropower project is of immense importance for generating a large quantum of electricity to stabilise the national economy and also for the socio-economic uplift of remote areas of the Kohistan district in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa.

He further said that the consensus between Wapda officials and the affected people regarding acquisition of land will prove to be instrumental in removing the bottlenecks for implementing the project.

It is pertinent to mention that besides compensating affected people for their land and assets, a hefty amount of Rs56.702 billion has also been earmarked for various uplift schemes in the project area including communication infrastructure, livelihood support and improvement power sector.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1257712/agreement-consensus-reached-land-acquisition-dasu-project/>

GWADAR MAY FACE SEVERE WATER SHORTAGE

Dawn, December 10th, 2016

Saleem Shahid

QUETTA: The port city of Gwadar may face a serious water crisis in the coming days as the water level in the Ankara Kaur dam has reached the dead level.

Provincial authorities in Quetta have received a Mayday call from officials concerned about the seriousness of the water shortage problem in Gwadar.

The rain-filled Ankara Kaur dam is the main source of water for Gwadar, Pasni, Jewani and their adjacent villages.

According to district authorities, water storage left in the dam can fulfil requirement of only two more weeks. They have suggested steps for making alternative arrangements for water supply to the port city.

After receiving reports about the water shortage problem in Gwadar, Balochistan Chief Secretary Saifullah Chhattah visited the port city on Thursday and presided over a meeting which discussed alternative arrangements for water supply to the city.

Deputy Commissioner of Gwadar Dr Tufail Ahmed Baloch briefed the meeting on the gravity of the situation. He said if immediate measures were not taken for alternative water supply the situation would worsen.

Mr Chhattah took serious notice of the situation and issued directives for making alternative arrangements for water supply to Gwadar. He directed officials concerned to make a plan for the purpose.

He said the government would ensure water supply to Gwadar through tankers from Shadi Kaur and Belmar dams near Pasni.

He said there was need for a comprehensive planning to solve the water shortage problem of Gwadar and asked relevant departments to work in this direction by coordinating with each other.

Shakeel Baloch, an executive engineer in the Public Health Engineering Department, informed the meeting that through alternative arrangements Gwadar would be provided 1.5 million gallon water per day and Pasni and Jewani 600,000 and 300,000 gallon, respectively. He said the Ankara Kaur dam was close to drying up because its catchment areas had not received rains for many years.

The entire Makran belt is facing a drought-like situation due to the dry spell.

The meeting also discussed many other issues, including implementation of development projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Chairman of the Gwadar Port Authority, Dostain Jamaldini, briefed the meeting on the Gwadar Port development programme. He said the CPEC would prove to be a game-changer for the economy of the region. The project, he added, would bring prosperity to the country, particularly Balochistan.

He said the pace of economic development in Gwadar had improved. The port city provided best investment opportunities, he added.

Inspector General of Police, Balochistan, Ahsan Mehboob, Secretary, Public Health Engineering, Sheikh Nawaz, Commissioner of Makran division Bashir Ahmed Bangulzai and Director General of the Gwadar Development Authority, Dr Sajjad Hussain Baloch, were among others who attended the meeting.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1301596>

GWADAR'S MAIN SOURCE OF DRINKING WATER HITS DEAD LEVEL

The Express Tribune, December 10th, 2016.

Mohammad Zafar

Quetta: Water stored in the Ankara Kaur dam, the main source of drinking water supply to Gwadar and its surrounding areas, has fallen to the dead level, sending warning signals to the officials concerned to make alternative arrangements for meeting the demands of locals.

Gwadar Deputy Commissioner Tufail Ahmed Baloch told this to a high-level meeting which was chaired by Provincial Chief Secretary Saifullah Chattha in Quetta on Thursday.

He asked the provincial government to adopt an alternative plan for ensuring water supply to the residents of Gwadar.

After discussing the alarming situation, the chief secretary immediately issued instructions to the departments concerned to ensure water supply to local residents using a fleet of tankers from the Belar dam and Shadi Kaur near Pasni.

Saifullah Chattha specifically instructed the officials concerned to ensure credible water supply to meet the shortfall of water due to the absence of rains and depleting sources of water from the dam and other reservoirs in the area.

The chief secretary said: "There is a need to make a comprehensive plan and execute the same in a proper way to deal with the impending water crisis in Gwadar, and for this all relevant departments should direct their efforts in coordination with each other."

In the past, the government brought water from Karachi using a large ship of the Pakistan Navy to tackle water scarcity in Gwadar and its surrounding areas. In addition to that water supply was arranged from Mirani dam.

The meeting was also attended by Gwadar Port Authority Chairman Dostain Jamaldini who briefed the participants about the Gwadar Port development programme.

“The CPEC can be a game changer. It will help in stabilising the economy of the country and ensuring prosperity of the people of this country, Balochistan in particular.”

He said the pace of the economic development had already started in Gwadar where bright prospects exist for investment that will guarantee jobs to the local workforce. Jamaldini said the Gwadar Seaport is a jewel in the crown of the CPEC, opening new avenues for development of Gwadar and also the entire province of Balochistan.

Those who attended the meeting among others were Deputy Commissioners of Turbat and Panjgur, DG GDA Dr Sajjad Hussain Baloch, IGP Balochistan Ahsan Mehboob and Secretary PHE Sheikh Nawaz.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1259063/impending-water-crisis-gwadar-ankara-kaur-dam-hits-dead-level/>

USAID-FUNDED: IRRIGATION CANALS OF GOMAL ZAM DAM INAUGURATED

The Express Tribune, December 10th, 2016

Peshawar: The recently-constructed irrigation canals of the US-funded Gomal Zam Dam Command Area Development project were inaugurated in Dera Ismal Khan Friday.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) signed an agreement with the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa government in March 2015 to provide \$22.22 million funding for the Gomal Zam Dam Command Area Development project.

“These canals will create opportunities for large-scale employment,” said USAID Mission Director John Groarke.

“The availability of water in the region will catalyse the integrated development of the command area. Farmers will also be trained on farm water management, productivity enhancement, value addition, processing and effective marketing.”

The first phase of this activity started in 2015 and consisted of baseline and feasibility assessments, preparation of a master plan for the development of the command area, formation of water user associations and training of farmers to improve agricultural productivity and the processing and marketing of crops.

The second phase of the project consists of construction activities, including 393 concrete lined irrigation canals in tank and Dera Ismail Khan Districts, land leveling, construction of water storage ponds and the introduction of drip and sprinkler irrigation systems.

Approximately 30,000 families are expected to directly benefit from this activity. The project will be completed in September 2018.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1258894/usa-id-funded-irrigation-canals-gomal-zam-dam-inaugurated/>

WARSAK PROJECT: 2ND REHABILITATION WILL INCREASE GENERATION CAPACITY

The Express Tribune, December 10th, 2016.

ISLAMABAD: The Second Rehabilitation Project of Warsak Hydel Power Project, which is to be executed by the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda), will help the plant regain its generation capacity, which has decreased to 193MW from 243MW due to aging of the electro-mechanical equipment.

The rehabilitation work, planned to be carried out with an approved PC-I cost of Rs22.25 billion, aims to overcome the aging problems, regain the capacity loss of 50MW with reliable annual energy generation of 1.14 billion units, upgrade and modernise the old system and achieve another life cycle of 30 to 40 years, officials told APP on Friday.

They said that German financial institution KfW and French Development Agency (AFD) were providing loan to the tune of 40 million Euro each, while European Investment Bank (EIB) was giving 50 million Euro.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1258891/warsak-project-2nd-rehabilitation-will-increase-generation-capacity/>

CLEAN DRINKING WATER TOP PRIORITY

Business Recorder, 10 December 2016

Ghulam Haider

Access to safe drinking water is not only a basic need and precondition for a healthy life but it is also a basic human right. At the same time, water is a scarce resource and its shortage usually results in economic and health crises. This can be assessed from global trends as well as from Pakistan's national and local struggles for better access to safe drinking water.

Comprising 144 tehsils in 36 districts, Punjab is the most populous of the five provinces of Pakistan, with an estimated population of over 100 million peoples. Main drinking water source is groundwater in the province, which once was considered to be safe but over the years it is increasingly found to be contaminated with bacteriological and chemical pollutants.

Water contamination in rural areas is mainly caused due to discharge of domestic sewage directly or indirectly into water bodies, open defecation, agricultural run-off during rainy season containing chemical fertilizers and pesticides and effluents from agro-based industries.

Majority of population in the province is exposed to hazards of drinking unsafe and polluted water from both surface and ground water sources. Contaminated water is a source of many diseases including diarrhea, typhoid, intestinal worms and hepatitis. Four major contaminants in drinking water sources are bacteriological, arsenic, nitrate and fluoride.

Access to tap water is very low in rural areas – 13 percent – as compared to 43 percent in urban areas of Punjab and the quality of drinking water remains substandard as the major sources are hand pumps and turbines supplying contaminated or brackish water.

According to Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources Survey 2011-12, it has been found that 79 percent sources of water supply schemes are unsafe for drinking. Additionally, 88 percent water supply schemes are found unfit at consumer's end. Moreover, 35 percent of the existing rural water supply schemes are either abandoned or non-functional.

Pakistan Social and Living Measurement Survey 2012-13 found that access to safe tap water is merely 13 percent in rural Punjab.

Public Health Engineering Department survey carried out in association with UNICEF in 2014 highlighted that excessive chemical contamination comprising totally dissolved salts (TDS), arsenic, fluoride and nitrate has rendered water of 73 percent of the total Punjab villages unfit for drinking. Percentage of contaminated water rises to 77 percent if microbial contamination is also included. Resultantly, water-borne diseases are alarmingly effecting the healthcare and economy of the inhabitants of the province.

In 2010, UNICEF reported that diseases related to hygiene and water quality, such as diarrhea, contribute to Pakistan's high child mortality rate, which accounts for 11 percent of all deaths among children under the age of five with a total of over 40,000 deaths every year.

Punjab Health Department found that 2.8 million people were reportedly suffering from water-borne diseases in Punjab province during year 2014.

Decades of lack of institutional capacity, poor weak sector governance, inadequate investment in water sector coupled with poor operations and maintenance practices have contributed to uncontrolled water extraction and supply of contaminated water to the population in rural areas and settlements of the province.

Realizing the gravity of situation, government of the Punjab has launched a Rs. 300 billion robust and comprehensive programme captioned "Khadim-e-Punjab Saaf Pani Programme" to provide safe and clean drinking water to marginalized and excluded segments of society inhabiting in far off villages and settlements of the province.

For this purpose, Punjab Saaf Pani Company (PSPC) has been established to plan and execute the programme with the aim of providing affordable and safe drinking water in phases to more than 55 million unserved and underserved rural population as per the WHO standards till April 2018.

Geographically, districts of Punjab have been divided into eight regions on the basis of priority in terms of poverty index, quality of water, service delivery and disease trend. Every package comprises three to five districts.

Engineering Management Consultants (EMC) led by international experts were hired for each region to carry out water quality and quantity survey of all areas, prepare GIS maps for all kinds of contamination, identify appropriate sources for water supply and carry out electrical resistivity survey (ERS) to determine aquifer quality and potential yield, conduct environment impact assessment (EIA) in the light of likely solution, propose treatment options based upon water quality, carry-out financial modeling to identify most cost effective option and prepare necessary documentation for hiring international engineering, planning and construction (EPC) contractors to implement water treatment projects, equipped with state-of-the-art technology and backed up by alternative energy source vis-à-vis using grid as the basic source.

Secondary data on water quality was also collected from all possible sources including but not limited to Public Health Engineering Department, Pakistan Council of Research in Resources (PCRWR), UNICEF, Local Government, Department of Land Reclamation, Wapda, etc., all over Punjab.

Keeping in view the complexity of projects in terms of technology, sustainability, value for money and associated risks, well-reputed international companies from China, the UAE, Turkey, Germany, Austria, Australia, etc., have been engaged for designing, procurement, installation, operation and maintenance of clean drinking water supply solutions all over the province. Each contractor will be responsible to provide water at a point less than half km from the farthest household while maintaining operations and maintenance of its plant at least for five years.

As far as water treatment options are concerned, each contractor is bound to provide the most economically feasible, technically sound, environmentally sound and socially acceptable solution. Likely solutions include canal seepage based package plant involving sand filtration, activated carbon adsorption and disinfection.

Contaminated canal seepage water will be treated by a contaminant specific column added to the package plant. Surface water from a reservoir will be treated using conventional treatment, i.e., pre-sedimentation, coagulation, flocculation, sedimentation, dual filtration and disinfection.

Surface water from a canal will be treated either through conventional treatment or slow sand filtration followed by disinfection. In areas of totally dissolved salt (TDS) is greater than 1000ppm, consultant will hunt for sweet water aquifer first. In case of failure, Reverse Osmosis Plant may be installed. In areas of small scattered communities where water TDS is less than 1000ppm, Ultra Filtration Plant may be installed.

In addition to Engineering Management Consultants, Social Mobilizing Consultants (SMCs) have also been hired in each region for development of Saaf Pani Tanzeems (village level community organizations) to take control of the projects. These SMCs are motivating and mobilizing communities to work with the company in acquiring land and running plants operations.

In order to monitor performance of plants, Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system will be in place. All systems will be designed to provide three litres of clean drinking water for per person per day. Getting top ranking based on the priority index, Bahawalpur Region in South Punjab has been selected for pilot project where 116 reverse osmosis and ultra filtration plants have been installed, which are providing safe and clean drinking water to more than 350,000 peoples.

In Phase-I of the project, 14 contracts worth Rs. 195 billion are being awarded to international contractors pre-qualified and selected through rigorous and transparent competitive bidding for provision of safe drinking water to 23 million populations in 36 tehsils of ten very high priority districts namely Kasur, Sahiwal, Okara, Faisalabad, Lodhran, Bahawalpur, Rahimyar Khan, Rajanpur, Dera Ghazi Khan and Muzaffargarh. This phase is expected to complete by December 2017.

In Phase-II, seven contracts worth PKR 71.8 billion will be awarded to international contractors for provision of safe drinking water to 7.69 million populations in 12 tehsils. This phase is expected to complete by Mar 2018.

In Phase-III, eight contracts worth PKR 89.7 billion will be awarded to international contractors for provision of safe drinking water to 9.8 million populations in 19 Tehsils. This phase is expected to complete by April 2018.

The Punjab government is very much aware of the importance of clean drinking water because it understands that for poverty eradication, health and socio-economic progress, it must provide clean drinking water to rural communities.

This clean drinking water programme is unique in the sense that it is for the first time in the history of Pakistan that such a gigantic and effective programme has been launched to cater to the clean drinking water needs of such a huge chunk of population in rural and peri-urban areas of the province.

Once completed, the clean drinking water programme shall result in drastic cut in health expenditures and a transformed lifestyle of the communities in the biggest province of the country, who could not have imagined even in their wildest of dreams to have a sustained access to tap water. (The writer is Manager Corporate Communication & Strategy, Punjab Saaf Pani Company)

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2016/12/10/18-page/827110-news.html>

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