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NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 23RD TO JANUARY 29TH 2017

WAPDA CANCELS RS5.4BN CONTRACTS FOR DASU PROJECT

Dawn, January 23rd, 2017

Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: Even before the formal launch of \$4.5 billion Dasu hydropower project, the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) has terminated two of its key contracts with a Chinese firm, citing ‘fundamental breaches’ of the agreement.

Moving swiftly, Wapda has not only encashed the performance guarantees of the two contracts awarded to China Railway First Group (CRFG) in November 2015 — worth Rs5.4bn — but also ordered the contractor to vacate the project area immediately, while calling for fresh tenders to make up for lost time.

The World Bank is the major financier of the 4,320MW Dasu project. The project’s terminated contracts include the ‘construction of colony and infrastructure’ worth Rs4.806bn and ‘resettlement of village Choochang and construction of Shatial Museum’ worth Rs572 million.

The completion of these two components was considered crucial to the start of construction work at the main project site.

CRFG project director Fan Lingang told Dawn: “The termination of the contract is un-contractual, illegal and fiercely unfair.” He claimed it was Wapda’s responsibility to complete the land acquisition process and hand over the required area to the contractor, adding that all Dasu contracts were suffering due to its default.

In reply to a set of questions sent to Wapda chairman retired Lt Gen Muzammil Hussain, the authority said it had “provided the partial possession of the site to the contractor M/s CRFG in line with the Contract Discussion Agreement/Conditions of the Contracts”.

Asked if the World Bank had indicated that it would take any action, such as loan cancellation or postponement because of project delays, Wapda said: “There is no such indication from the World Bank”.

“We are going to approach the local courts to allow us to approach an international court of arbitration to protect our rights because Wapda is not willing to resolve [the issue] amicably,” Mr Fan said, adding: “Arbitration is our right and we have to protect ourselves, not only financially but also our reputation and image.”

He maintained that his firm would “complain to the World Bank as well”. Mr Fan said the company had mobilised 30 staffers to the project site, but conceded that practically no work was done because of Wapda’s inability to settle land disputes with locals. “Wapda is the defaulter because it didn’t provide the land. The contractor actually had the right to terminate the contract, but it didn’t.”

He claimed that the contract had been terminated without prior legal notice and without being provided the opportunity to rectify any violation, if any, by the contractor. He said Wapda had blamed the CRFG for subletting the contract to a Lahore-based blacklisted company in order to terminate the contract, even though the former was not a legal contract.

The authority, however, defended its decision, saying: “The contracts were terminated due to fundamental breaches of the contract by the contractors. In these circumstances, no legal notice was required to be served on the contractor to rectify under the conditions of the contracts.”

Mr Fan explained that “a cooperation agreement” was signed with a local firm before the bidding took place as “a matter of comfort”. This, he said, was cancelled when it was pointed out by Wapda and the project consultants, long before the authority terminated the contract.

He called Wapda’s encashment of securities and refund of the mobilisation advance a case of fraudulent practice, misrepresentation and use of influence.

In response to CRFG’s claims, Wapda maintained that it “issued the notice of termination and lodged the claim for the encashment of the contractors’ advance payment and performance security guarantees to safeguard the mobilisation advance paid to the contractor and to cater other financial losses to Wapda in compliance with the requirements of the conditions of contracts”.

To secure itself legally against financial loss and project delays in the case of international arbitration, Wapda said it had lodged the claim for encashment of the contractor’s advance payment and performance security guarantees since it was the only tool available to safeguard Wapda and to avoid financial loss.

Wapda has already initiated procurement for these contracts by inviting fresh bids through leading newspapers and official websites of Wapda and the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority, the World Bank and UN Development Business to avoid delays in project implementation.

“There will be no delay in project completion if the contractor opts for [international] arbitration,” Wapda said, adding: “Termination will have no adverse impact on the CPEC framework or China-Pakistan relations.”

In August last year, the Economic Affairs Division had warned the government that the World Bank could cancel its \$1.1bn loan agreement owing to inability of the stakeholders — the federal and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governments as well as Wapda — to complete land acquisition. The acquisition of about 80,000 kanals of land is a fully funded component of the World Bank.

Dasu is one of the top-priority hydropower projects of the government under its 2013 power policy and Vision-2025. The World Bank is providing a \$590m loan, along with a \$460m credit limit as partial risk guarantee for external commercial financing. Separately, Wapda has contracted about Rs144bn from commercial banks to make available matching financing to meet local expenses.

After the completion of the first stage, the project will generate about 33.5 gigawatt hours per day, translating into Rs335m per day (at Rs10 per kilowatt hour).

The first phase of the project being executed by Wapda is scheduled for completion by 2019. The second phase to commission another 2,160MW has an expected completion date of 2022.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1310195/wapda-cancels-rs54bn-contracts-for-dasu-project>

FOUR DESALINATION PLANTS LYING IDLE IN GWADAR AMID WATER SHORTAGE

Dawn, January 23rd, 2017

Behram Baloch

GWADAR: Despite a serious water shortage crisis in Gwadar and adjacent areas, the government has not made four desalination plants functional which have been lying abandoned for seven years.

A desalination plant installed in the private sector is working successfully and is selling 100,000 gallons of drinking water to the public health engineering department daily for the supply of water to the people of Gwadar.

Sources said that in view of a serious water shortage crisis in Gwadar, Pasni and Jewani in 2008, the provincial government had decided to install four desalination plants in Gwadar district for making sea water drinkable. The installation of plants was planned for solving the water shortage problem of the district on a permanent basis.

The task for the installation of the four desalination plants was assigned to the Balochistan Development Authority (BDA) which had begun work on the project shortly. The construction cost of one plant being installed in Gwadar's industrial area was Rs1 billion. It had a capacity of two million gallons of water per day. The other three plants having capacity of 200,000 gallons of water were installed in Pasni, Jewani and Singhar Housing Scheme with a cost of Rs200 million for each.

The sources said the BDA awarded contracts for the plants and work had begun on all of them. Machinery for the plants had been purchased and shifted to the proposed places for installation. However, work on none of the plants could be completed on time.

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) had launched an inquiry into the delay in the installation of machinery in the plants, but to no avail.

Despite written assurances by the contractors to complete work on time, no plant has so far been made functional.

After Gwadar and adjacent areas were hit by a severe water shortage crisis in 2014, authorities had tried to complete the desalination plant installed in the Gwadar's industrial area on an emergency basis. Generators were provided and transmission lines were laid. But, the plant could not achieve its full capacity. It is now producing 300,000 to 400,000 gallons of water per day.

An official of the Gwadar administration told Dawn that the plant could not be made fully functional due to non-availability of engineers.

The three other plants in Pasni, Jewani and Singhar Housing Scheme are still not functional.

Officials of the Public Health Engineering Department told Dawn that water crisis was worsening in the Gwadar district. Gwadar town, Pasni, Jewani, Pishkan and many other villages need 8.3 million gallons of water daily while they are being supplied 2.5 million gallons of water from the Mirani dam, which is located in Kech district.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1310204/four-desalination-plants-lying-idle-in-gwadar-amid-water-shortage>

UPGRADING CANALS

Dawn, Business & Finance weekly, January 23rd, 2017

Mohammad Hussain Khan

A NUMBER of development projects with a focus on the Nara Canal of Sukkur barrage are being carried out by the Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority to improve water supply to farmlands though with some hiccups for the growers.

Four of the 14 main canals emanating from three provincial barrages have been handed over to the authority (SIDA) and the rest are managed by the Sindh irrigation department. The major works in Nara Canal include: construction of fall structure on upper Nara at RD550; rehabilitation of Ranto Canal; reconstruction of Old Jamrao Canal head

regulator; reconstruction of lower Nara Canal head regulator; rehabilitation of Makhi Complex and remodelling of Khipro Canal etc.

On-going works in the left bank canals are being executed at a cost of Rs2,859m; Rs2,989m will be spent on the Ghotki Feeder and Rs3578m on the Mithrao Canal. Cost of development works in the lower Nara and Makhi Complex are estimated at Rs7,474m and Rs2,479m respectively.

The upgradation projects include: Ghotki Feeder of Guddu Barrage, Phulelli and Akram of Kotri Barrage and Mithrao of Nara Canal System. According to a SIDA spokesman, 30pc progress has been achieved in the left bank canals and Ghotki Feeder canal while work is a bit slow in Mithrao canal. Nara canal feeds farms right upto Sanghar and Mirpurkhas districts.

Sindh Abadgar Board President Abdul Majeed Nizamani says that projects completed by the SIDA have improved water availability to tail enders.

But some farmers complain water shortages still persist.

They say some engineering works are adversely affecting water supply to farms.

Murad Nizamani — a grower from Sanghar — points out that Nara canal is taking lesser water flows at some points, as it accumulates silt.

The SIDA has set up farmers' participatory organisations (FOs) to manage of the canal systems. But farmers' representative Mahmood Nawaz Shah claims that usually selection is preferred over election in the farmers' body.

Water theft, admitted a SIDA officer, has not come to an end in SIDA controlled areas.

He, however, mentioned that in case of Khipro Canal, protests against water shortage have now died down. He also said issues in maintenance of these works are still a gray area.

A farmer-cum-member of the Left Bank Canals Area Water Board said unsettled administrative issues between irrigation department and the SIDA tended to fail the authority-run system.

Mahmood Nawaz Shah feels that an independent assessment of all these works is necessary to know how effectively the system has really been improved and whether the water supplies have indeed been ensured.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1310065>

K-ELECTRIC MAKES EXCESSIVE COLLECTION OF RS 62 BILLION

The Express Tribune, January 27th, 2017.

Zafar Bhutta

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Water and Power has revealed that K-Electric has pocketed Rs62 billion from power consumers and has advised the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Neptra) to make adjustment in the new tariff in order to pay the excessive amount back to the consumers.

The ministry has also called for a strict accountability of those responsible for causing such a colossal loss to the Karachi consumers.

In a recent letter sent to the power-sector regulator Nepra, Water and Power Secretary Younus Dagha said rough estimates suggested that with the help of excessive tariff determination, K-Electric consumers had been made to pay Rs62 billion in the past few years.

He described the tariff determination practice adopted for K-Electric a violation of the general policy and guidelines related to the tariff determination.

He advised Nepra to set a new tariff for K-Electric and not only address the anomalies but also transfer the excessive collection back to the consumers.

Ideally, in the base tariff of say Rs100 per unit, if the cost component over a period has fallen by 5% and transmission and distribution losses have been targeted to decrease by 5%, the cumulative tariff reduction effect will roughly be around 10% and the new tariff will be Rs90 per unit.

The multi-year tariff, which Nepra sets for K-Electric, provides for a mechanism whereby the tariff is adjusted every quarter to reflect the revised fuel and energy purchase costs as well as targets for the transmission and distribution losses.

The calculation shows that K-Electric had been allowed higher transmission and distribution losses than the stated benchmark that were recovered from the consumers.

Dagha said it had become now evident that the consumers were denied the benefit in fuel price adjustments. The windfall allowed to K-Electric on that account had been in billions of rupees every year through the multi-year tariff and quarterly adjustments determined by Nepra, he said.

The ministry further said the figures showed that the declared losses allowed to the company stood at 15% and the effective losses due to the tariff-setting mechanism allowed by such a calculation came to around 28.5% higher than even its actual losses at 23.7%.

“This has roughly provided a windfall of Rs12.91 billion in a single financial year of 2015, which under the law was supposed to be passed on to the consumers.”

The practice had been going on for the past several years and the estimated accumulative loss to the consumers stood at more than Rs60 billion, it said.

Another flaw in the K-Electric tariff calculations is the cost of generation allowed to the company for its own generating units.

While Nepra had been very strict with state-owned power generation units which were many a time not allowed their actual generation cost, K-Electric had been allowed to recover very high prices whereas actual generation costs were much lower, the ministry said.

The cumulative efficiency of K-Electric plants is around 40% while the cost is calculated by Nepra at an efficiency of around 37% allowing an estimated Rs2 billion last year.

K-Electric spokesperson refused to comment on the story, saying the company had not received the letter.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1308109/power-ministrys-letter-k-electric-makes-excessive-collection-rs62-billion/>

Dawn, January 28th, 2017

KARACHI: Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Friday gave assurance to the people of Sindh that the provincial government would get them their rights and would never move back from getting the 1991 Water Accord fully implemented in its true spirit.

While winding up the four-and-a-half-hour-long discussion on the water accord that continued till 8pm, the chief minister expressed gratitude to all the speakers across the house for pledging full support to the Sindh government to undo the ‘violation’ of the water accord by Punjab.

Sindh Health Minister Dr Sikander Mandhro initiated the discussion by tracing the history of the River Indus. His speech was followed by the speeches of Muttahida Qaumi Movement lawmaker Syed Sardar Ahmad, PPP lawmakers Khairunnisa Mughal, Dr Sikander Shoro and Nisar Ahmad Khuhro in which they talked about recent history of the river and related agreements since the creation of Pakistan.

They highlighted the suffering of agriculturalists due to shortage of water downstream Kotri and said the water shortage had caused intrusion of over 2.2 million acres of agricultural land. The lawmakers were of the opinion that if 10 million-acre-foot (MAF) water was not released, the districts of Hyderabad, Thatta, Sujawal and Badin would be inundated by seawater by the year 2050. Karachi, where sea intrusion had already started from the Malir area, would sink into the sea by 2070.

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Tracing the history of over half-a-dozen water accords since 1859 when for the first time Indus water system was disturbed, the chief minister of Sindh said every time the accord was signed, it used to be against the interest of the people of this area and despite objection from Sindh, their complaints had never been addressed.

Referring to the 1991 Water Accord, Mr Shah said one could very well understand the accord that had been prepared within a short period of three days was not flawless. It had certain flaws which could be removed only if the representatives of all federating units sit together, he said. But why would those getting advantage of the flaws in the water accord support any such move, he wondered.

Yet the least one could expect from them was that in whatever form the accord was, it should be properly implemented, he said.

The Chashma-Jhelum Link Canal and Greater Thal Canal, which had been dug up only to divert the spillover of floodwaters, were being used as regular canals by diverting water from Sindh’s share, the chief minister said.

Mr Shah said that negotiations on water that had started in 1952 culminated in the signing of the Indus Waters Treaty by President Gen Ayub Khan and Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in 1960. Under the treaty, he said, the three eastern rivers from Punjab were diverted to India. But Punjab later covered this loss by taking water from the Indus.

Responding to the criticism over the PPP government’s failure to get the flaws removed despite being in power in the centre for five years, the chief minister said that the previous government had ensured distribution of water according to the water accord. The Chashma-Jhelum Link Canal and Greater Thal Canal, which were being used as regular canals, were forcibly closed, he said. Besides, four resolutions were passed against the construction of Kalabagh dam compelling the authorities to drop the scheme that could have further cut Sindh’s share of water.

The chief minister also challenged those who alleged that the PPP government had allocated funds for the Kalabagh dam to produce evidence, explaining that not a single penny had been allocated in any of the annual budgets for the controversial dam.

Earlier in his speech, Dr Mandhro said Sindh had centuries-old history. According to a study conducted in 2005, the cultivation area of Sindh had reduced by 25 per cent for want of water supply, while cultivated areas in Punjab had increased by 21pc, he said. This was because Punjab had not been allowing Sindh to have its due share of water, he added.

Warning against the effects of water shortage, Syed Sardar Ahmad said the world was saying climate change was a threat bigger than terrorism.

Mr Khuhro said the Water Accord of 1991 was signed by Jam Sadiq Ali and Syed Muzaffar Hussain Shah from Sindh, and Ghulam Haider Wyne and Shah Mehmood Qureshi from Punjab.

Giving an example of the violation of the water accord, Mr Khuhro said that there was a section in the agreement for the provision of water for Left-Bank Outfall Drain (LBOD) but water had never been released.

Jam Khan Shoro, Dr Samar Ali Khan, Saeed Nizamani, Heer Soho, Syed Sardar Ali Shah, Kamran Akhtar, Mohammad Ali Malkani, Nusrat Sahar Abbasi, Deewan Chand Chawla, Rehana Leghari, Mumtaz Shamim and other lawmakers also expressed their views on the issue of water shortage.

The assembly session, which was called to order at 2.30pm, was finally adjourned at 8pm to meet again on Monday at 10am.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1311139/sindh-will-never-move-back-from-getting-1991-water-accord-enforced-pa-told>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 16TH TO JANUARY 22 ND 2017

TARBELA EXTENSION PROJECT: FAST-TRACKED TO FAILURE

The Express Tribune, January 16th, 2017.

Islamabad: Can you imagine a mega project worth \$1.6 billion going wrong just because of the political will to complete it by the 2018 elections?

The latest fiasco involving Tarbela extension project shows how a project owner with an unrealistic idea of fast-tracking becomes an unhappy client at the end of the day.

Tarbela dam is one of the world's largest structures that not only stores water for irrigation purposes but also generates low-cost hydropower as a by-product. The dam has five tunnels and currently hydropower units are installed on three of its tunnels.

Tarbela-4 extension hydropower project (T4HP) aims to install three turbines and generators, each of 470MW, on tunnel 4 that would add a cumulative 1,410MW to the national grid – at a project cost of \$914 million with 92% of financing coming from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the International Development Agency (IDA) respectively. The original project completion date was June 30, 2018.

Similarly, the Tarbela-5 extension hydropower project (T5HP) will add another 1,410MW to the system by constructing three turbines on its tunnel 5 by June 30, 2022. T5HP was approved in Sep 2016 after Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and World Bank agreed to provide a financing of \$690 million

T4HP and T5HP projects are considered as a low-hanging fruit being the least cost option (around \$25 per MWh) for electricity generation.

The government, however, has been pushing hard to complete the T4HP project a year before its original schedule. Wapda chairman Zafar Mahmood resigned in August 2016 when he could not commit to a timely completion of the Neelum-Jhelum project and an early completion of Tarbela-4 extension project. A variation order was signed by the government under its acceleration programme but in October 2016, the contractor refused to meet the deadline. The failure of acceleration scheme was attributed to geological compulsions and unexpected water flow.

Now a contractor has issued a work suspension notice when the government tried to recover the incentive bonus paid in advance.

Sinohydro Group of China is the prime contractor for civil works while the consortium of Voith Hydro of Germany and China has the contract for Electrical and Mechanical work packages. A joint venture of MacDonald and Coyne et Bellier is responsible for project supervision in the capacity of project consultants.

Fast tracking involves compression of project schedules through overlapping activities and reduction in activity durations. It sometimes involves sequencing of construction activities such that construction work on some work packages is started even though the design process is not completed on other portions of the project.

Fast tracking aims to cut the overall project schedule and save project costs in a sense that the project starts generating revenues earlier – reducing the payback period. However, in the case of T4HP, the payback period was already around three years – which is less than industrial average.

The clock speed required for a fast-tracked project leaves little room for the planning phase as thorough reviews can't be conducted when time between construction and design is very short.

When design work is not complete, it has an impact on cost due to continuous addition of scope as the project evolves. Very often a lot of unanticipated changes occur during fast track construction – resulting in overruns.

In case of fast-tracking, megaproject contracts need to explicitly address these extra risks and assign responsibilities among project stakeholders. When such a contractual framework for fast-tracking is missing, it is difficult to hold the contracting party responsible for overlooked work, delay damages, design errors, change orders, construction rework and inaccurate costing.

Unfortunately even standard agreements published by American Institute of Architects (AIA), the Associated General Contractors of America (AGC) and FIDIC (International Federation of Consulting Engineers) that are used worldwide have little provisions to address risks posed by a fast-tracking approach.

Even though most fast-tracked projects are governed by a design-build contract, contract documents do not quite fit for fast-tracking.

In a nutshell, Wapda has little experience of managing projects with a “fast-tracked” status as it requires specialised skills in contract management, extensive coordination between all stakeholders and a real-time monitoring and evaluation system.

The writer is a Cambridge graduate and is working as a management consultant.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1296008/tarbela-extension-project-fast-tracked-failure/>

NEELUM-JHELUM: SICK POWER PROJECT HEADING TOWARDS COMPLETION, SAYS PM

Zafar Bhutta

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) has made payments to contractors of the Neelum-Jhelum Hydroelectric Power Project without any work, but assessing the current pace of progress, the prime minister is pleased that the critical energy scheme is on its way towards completion.

The project came up for discussion in a high-level meeting chaired by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

The premier noted that despite the 969-megawatt Neelum-Jhelum project being ill-planned and payments made to the contractors without any work, the current Wapda chairman took personal interest in making the scheme move at a fast pace.

“It is heartening to see this sick project, which had become a national liability, heading towards completion,” he remarked.

Wapda Chairman Muzammil Hussain told the meeting that the project was scheduled to be ready for mock operations in December 2017, and dry and wet tests would be conducted in January and February 2018.

Giving the time frame for commissioning of the power units, he revealed that the first unit would start functioning by February 28, 2018, the second unit by March 15 and third and fourth units by April 15.

Hussain pointed out that Wapda had given Rs1.1 billion to the government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, where the Neelum-Jhelum project was located, for socio-economic uplift of people of the region.

He said the previous consultant, who was receiving Rs7.2 million per month, had been relieved of his duties and a new consultant of good repute, who had also been previously engaged with the project, was hired. “This change has been greatly beneficial to the project,” he said.

Wapda, tasked with building dams to ensure water and food security, has come in for a lot of criticism for poor design of the Neelum-Jhelum Hydroelectric Power Project.

News dams are critical to stave off floods that Pakistan has been facing for the past several years. The deluge has caused loss of human lives and damaged agricultural crops.

The Neelum-Jhelum project is being built on the Neelum River. Initially, its estimated cost in 1989 was Rs15.2 billion that jumped up to Rs420 billion later. The project has been designed in an effort to secure water rights over Neelum as India is constructing Kishanganga Dam upstream.

Wapda authorities acknowledge that the project was not properly planned from the beginning as realistic financial and geographical surveys were not reflected in the original project cycle.

The poor design necessitated mid-course changes in the dam structure, hydraulic structures, cross-section of the Head Race Tunnel and tunneling methodology.

Vague estimates and engineering surveys along with some force majeure like rock burst and water seepage below and above the tunnel were also the reasons behind the delay.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1297021/neelum-jhelum-sick-power-project-heading-towards-completion-says-pm/>

ISLAMABAD: The government sees no imminent threat to the World Bank-brokered Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) despite tense relations with India.

“India is engaging in posturing otherwise we do not see any imminent threat of repudiation of the Treaty,” Minister for Water and Power Khawaja Asif, who also holds the defence portfolio, told a Senate panel comprising all members of the upper house of parliament.

The panel chaired by Senate Chairman Raza Rabbani had been specially constituted to recommend guidelines to the government in the light of what was described as ‘emerging regional realities’.

The water and power minister’s statement stood in sharp contrast to concerns in Islamabad during the past few months over Delhi’s cryptic warning in the aftermath of the Uri military camp attack that it could consider revoking the 56-year-old accord. Adviser to the PM on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz had then responded by warning that revocation of IWT would be treated as “an act of war”. Pakistan’s ambassador to the UN Dr Maleeha Lodhi had, meanwhile, denounced India’s use of water as an “instrument of coercion and war”.

The Indian government last month set up a high-level task force for looking into the ‘strategic aspects’ of IWT and exploring options for maximum utilisation of the waters of the three rivers allocated to Pakistan under IWT — Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab.

Mr Asif believed that the Indian statements were motivated by domestic compulsions.

Recalling Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s statement about stopping “every drop of water (from the eastern rivers Ravi, Sutlej and Beas)”, Mr Asif dismissed it as political hot air. “These rivers are already with them,” he maintained.

He clarified that not all of Pakistan’s water was coming from the territory under Indian control and a major portion was from local sources with the Kabul and Swat rivers also contributing significantly.

“We have got enough water. If we put our house in order, it would matter little whether or not the treaty remains,” Mr Asif said adding almost in the same breath that, nevertheless, it was better that IWT remained intact.

The minister, however, did not directly talk about the Indian plans for exploiting the waters of the three western rivers by building new storages and hydro-power projects.

Mr Asif, replying to a question, said “empirical evidence does not suggest that Indians can have large storage facilities” on the western rivers.

“They have already made three run-of-the-river hydropower projects on the Jhelum and two on the Chenab. All of these are run-of-the-river projects and the water ultimately comes to us, it does not stop there. They did not make any reservoirs,” he asserted and said that even in Kishanganga’s case, in which Pakistan had unsuccessfully pleaded that the water was being diverted, the water went to the Wullar Lake and came back in the Jhelum.

The minister cautioned that India was nudging Afghanistan to raise issues on Pakistan’s use of water from the Kabul River. He said the European Union ambassador had alerted him to the Indian design.

The Senate panel concluded the day’s proceeding with a resolution calling on the World Bank to fulfil its obligations in terms of IWT.

KHAWAJA ASIF BRIEFS SENATE BODY ABOUT INDUS WATER TREATY

Business Recorder, 18 January 2017

Ali Hussain

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Water and Power Khawaja Asif Tuesday said that Pakistan has enough water resources and if these are managed and properly utilised then they will make the country sufficient enough to cope with the water threat whether or not Indus Water Treaty (IWT) with India remains intact.

Briefing Committee of the Whole of the Senate on the latest development over establishment of Court of Arbitration by World Bank (WB), construction of Kishanganga and Ratle Hydroelectric Plant by India, he said that Pakistan remains stuck to the treaty and is also following its terms and conditions.

A proposal by some senators to revisit the IWT was also rejected and Chairman Senate Mian Raza Rabbani even stated that the House should annul a previously passed resolution in favour of revisiting the treaty when Adviser on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz told the panel that “we should not call for revisiting the treaty as India would love to revisit the treaty.”

Responding to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s threat of blocking Pakistan’s water, the minister for water and power said that Pakistan is already not receiving a ‘single drop’ of water from the eastern rivers, adding Modi’s statement was just for the public consumption to befool Indian people. Water of three eastern rivers including Ravi, Sutlej and Biyass are already being used by India. “We’ve huge water resources and if we put our own house in order, we will not feel any threat of water scarcity in the future, no matter Indus Water Treat remains intact or not,” he said, adding, “We are dropping the ‘water bomb’ on our own by wasting a huge water without any strategy to properly utilise the available resources.”

However, he said that neither Pakistan nor India can abrogate IWT unilaterally; adding that Pakistan will never back down from its stance on the treaty. He said that Pakistan has presented the case before the WB and proceedings in this regard have been paused until the end of this month. He maintained that Pakistan’s case is stronger than that of India’s and the government will safeguard the national interests at all costs. He said that India wants that a neutral expert be appointed to resolve the issue, but Pakistan desires the case should be heard by the seven-member Court of Arbitration.

He said the treaty is an instrument to avoid wars, so Pakistan’s focus has always remained on the implementation of treaty in letter and spirit, adding that the treaty remained intact during wars and Pakistan’s delegation had even travelled to New Delhi during the 1965 war. He said that international community and the WB also want to continue the treaty in the future, adding the both countries are bound to follow the agreement in letter and spirit and no side could revoke it unilaterally. So far 112 meetings of the two sides have been held on water related issues under the IWT and 118 tours had been taken place since 1960 when the treaty was signed between the two countries, he added.

The minister also rejected the impression that India is using and storing more water than it is allowed under the treaty, adding India is even using and storing lesser water than it has the right under the treaty. He said that India has not constructed any dam on Chenab and Jhelum rivers but there are hydro projects, two on Chenab and three on Jhelum, but these projects are not blocking Pakistan’s share of the water.

Adviser to the Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs Sartaj Aziz, earlier, opposed a proposal by some senators, favouring to revisit the IWT, saying, “We should avoid calling for revisit of the treaty.” He said that Pakistan, being lower riparian, has right reason of claiming its shares from the western rivers, adding that there is also a UN Convention which protects rights of the lower riparian.

The Committee of the Whole of Senate also passed a resolution calling upon the World Bank to fulfil its obligations in terms of IWT. The resolution says; “Whereas the World Bank brokered the water accord between Pakistan and India; whereas under the treaty no party can ‘pause’ performance of the obligations under the treaty and the position taken by the World Bank would only prevent Pakistan from approaching a competent forum and having its grievances addressed; the Committee of the Whole of the Senate of Pakistan calls upon the World Bank to fulfil its obligations in terms of the IWT.”

On water issues with Afghanistan, Khawaja Asif said that Pakistan has an understanding with Afghanistan that “we will supply electricity to Afghanistan from our own system whenever it needs.”

A joint secretary of the Ministry of Water and Power told the panel that Kabul River was contributing 16 million acres water during Kharif season that too when the country lacks availability of water in the system.

The official said that Afghanistan cannot block the water in the river even if it cultivates entire land on the Kabul River. However, he said that the ministry has set up a desk for negotiation with Afghanistan on the water issues.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/01/18/5-page/840507-news.html>

\$720M ACCORDS SIGNED FOR TARBELA EXTENSION, BALOCHISTAN

Dawn January 19th, 2017

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) signed on Wednesday loan and grant agreements worth \$720 million with the government for the fifth extension project of the Tarbela dam and governance policy programme for Balochistan.

Under the loan agreement, the World Bank will provide a credit of \$390m for the fifth extension hydropower project of the Tarbela dam which will facilitate a sustainable expansion of the country’s electricity generation capacity by installation of three additional power generating units having installed capacity of 470 megawatts each on existing Tunnel-5 without affecting the capacity for irrigation release.

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With the addition of 1,410MW, the total installed capacity of the Tarbela dam will rise to 6,298MW.

The total cost of the project is \$823.5m, with the World Bank financing \$390m and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) \$300m. The remaining \$133.5m will be funded by Wapda (\$124.5m) and National Transmission and Despatch Company (\$9m) for a transmission line from Tarbela to evacuate additional power.

The project will help in further development of hydropower potential along the Indus cascade which is a cornerstone of the World Bank strategy and the government’s energy policy to reduce load-shedding, cost of electricity generation and improve financial sustainability of the power sector.

The project would also continue to support a number of schemes initiated by Wapda for communities of the area under the Tarbela-4 extension project.

A separate grant agreement for the provision of \$30m for the governance and policy programme (GPP) for Balochistan (\$16m) and Fata (\$14m) was also signed. The funds will be released from the second phase of Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MTDF) administered by the World Bank.

The objective of the programme is to strengthen the capacity for collection of sales tax on services and improve accountability in public finance management and service delivery in education and irrigation sectors in Balochistan and Fata. Economic Affairs Division Secretary Tariq Bajwa signed the loan and grant agreements while representatives of Wapda, NTDC, the government of Balochistan and Fata secretariat signed the project agreements on behalf of their respective sides.

World Bank Country Director Patchamuthu Illangovan and AIIB Procurement Adviser Ian Nightingale signed the agreements on behalf of their respective organisations.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1309397/720m-accords-signed-for-tarbela-extension-balochistan>

ONLY THREE OF 29 WATER TREATMENT PLANTS IN SUKKUR FUNCTIONAL, JUDICIAL COMMISSION TOLD

Dawn, January 19th, 2017

SUKKUR: The judicial commission formed by the Supreme Court to inspect the state of civic infrastructure, sanitation and water supply in Sindh, visited offices of the North Sindh Urban Services Corporation (NSUSC), several canals, pumping stations and sewerage drains in Sukkur and Jacobabad on Wednesday. It has already covered Larkana and Shikarpur over the last few days.

The SC had formed the judicial commission while hearing a constitutional petition filed by Advocate Shahab Usto, who prayed to the apex court to take notice of poor civic infrastructure and lack of sanitation as well as unhygienic water being supplied to people.

Justice Mohammed Iqbal Kalhoro of the Sindh High Court, acting as the one-man commission, received a briefing held in the Sindh High Court building in Sukkur.

NSUSC Managing Director Mehmood Abbas Shah and general manager Mutahir Dayo informed him that out of the 29 water treatment plants installed in the city to supply safe drinking water to citizens, 26 were lying out of order. Due to this, most people were not getting safe drinking water, they said.

They also admitted that the hazardous water being discharged from hospitals, high-rises, households and factories was not treated before its final disposal into the river.

They further admitted that the civic agency could not efficiently fulfil its responsibilities over the last seven years.

Sukkur Deputy Commissioner Dr Waheed Asghar Bhatti, Mayor Arsalan Islam Shaikh and senior officials of various departments and district administration attended the briefing.

Justice Kalhoro expressed his concern over the situation and remarked that failure and inefficiency of the institutions concerned seemed responsible for deteriorating civic conditions in the city.

The commission collected samples of drinking water and sewage for laboratory test during its visit to Zero Point near old Sukkur, Bundar Road and various sections of the River Indus.

In Jacobabad, Deputy Commissioner Agha Shahnawaz Babar gave a briefing to Justice Kalhoro at the district and sessions court on the city's water supply network and drainage system.

Advocate Usto, Jacobabad Municipal Committee Chairman Mir Ghulam Abbas Jakhrani, Shehri Ittehad president Akram Abro, Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl leader Dr A.G. Ansari, Hindu General Panchayat president Lal Chand

Seetlani, Ahmed Ali Khoso of the PPP-SB, G.M. Soomro of the Awami Tehreek and senior officials of the NSUSC and other relevant departments attended the briefing.

The DC attributed unsanitary conditions in the city to the neglect and carelessness on the part of the NSUSC, and referred to complaints made by the general public and municipal committee concerned about heaps of garbage littering every road and street.

He suggested that the NSUSC be relieved of its responsibilities and the jobs be assigned to the municipal committee.

Justice Kalhoro expressed his displeasure over highly risky water being sold to consumers by some people using tank-mounted donkey carts. He noted that the quality of such water had never been checked by the officials concerned.

He asked as to whom the city's major water supply scheme, completed in 2008, was handed over to, to manage. He was informed that it was the taluka nazim. But when he asked about the project director, none of the officials present could give a reply.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1309280/only-three-of-29-water-treatment-plants-in-sukkur-functional-judicial-commission-told>

AHSAN DIRECTS AUTHORITIES TO RESOLVE WATER SHORTAGE IN GWADAR

Business Recorder, January 19, 2017

Minister for Planning, Development and Reform (PD&R) Ahsan Iqbal has instructed relevant authorities to immediately solve the crises of potable water shortage in Gwadar. "Keeping in view the future expansion of Gwadar City, Port and planned industrialisation, all-out efforts must be ensured," remarked minister PD&R while presiding a meeting at Planning Commission in Islamabad. The meeting was attended by officials from Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform, government of Baluchistan and Gwadar Development Authority.

Ahsan Iqbal directed that existing desalination plant at Karwat should be immediately made operational. He made it clear that uninterrupted power supply from different sources has to be ensured in order to run the plant on its full capacity.

He further asked authorities to speed up work on necessary facilities of fresh water treatment, water supply and distribution projects initiated under China Pakistan Economic Corridor.

"This project will not only resolve this issue permanently but would cater for the future growth" Ahsan Iqbal added.

Ahsan Iqbal emphasised that the hospital at Gwadar should be run in a professional manner to ensure maximum health services to the local population. "An effective business model must be devised to ensure smooth functioning of this health institute," he added.

Earlier, Dr Sajjad Hussain, Director General, Gwadar Development Authority (GDA), informed the participants about the drought like situation in entire Makran belt which is mainly because of dry spell.-PR

<http://www.brecorder.com/agriculture-a-allied/183/129784/>

PAKISTAN ASKS INDIA, WORLD BANK TO INFORM IT OF ALL FUTURE HYDEL PROJECTS

Dawn, January 20th, 2017

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has asked the World Bank and India to inform Islamabad of all the dams and hydropower projects proposed to be built by New Delhi on the western rivers, and not just the two projects under dispute currently,

so that the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) could be followed smoothly in future, an inter-ministerial meeting presided over by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar was told on Thursday.

Ministers and other representatives of the ministries of water and power, foreign affairs and law and justice, the Attorney General's Office and civil and military experts attended the meeting.

Pakistan's executive director in the World Bank, Nasir Mehmood Khosa, attended the meeting as a special invitee and the water and power secretary briefed all those present on the ongoing dispute with India.

The meeting observed that the president of the World Bank had drawn up the lots for appointment of umpires for a court of arbitration before it had put on hold the process about two months ago.

"This meant that the World Bank was convinced and had accepted Pakistan's position," said Attorney General Ashtar Ausaf.

Pakistan's stance was that not only the two schemes under dispute at the moment — the Kishanganga and Ratle projects — but technical and other details of all the upcoming projects should be shared with the World Bank and Pakistan, along with their designs and locations, so that Islamabad could examine them in a manner that they did not create problems every now and then and the treaty could function smoothly, said Mr Ausaf.

The meeting also asked a taskforce led by the attorney general to formulate a strategy for future handling of the disputed projects.

Mr Ausaf said the chief executive officer of the bank, Kristalina I. Georgieva, who is second only in hierarchy to its president, would arrive on Jan 26 for deliberations on the subject. He said the senior official was inducted into the World Bank group on Jan 2 and her visit to Pakistan would be her first trip outside Washington, which meant that the bank was attaching great importance to Islamabad's case.

At the same time, Mr Ausaf said, it was decided that the bank must be reminded that it had a critical role to play and that it should honour its responsibilities under the treaty.

An official statement about the meeting said Pakistan viewed the treaty as a useful and time-tested mechanism for sharing water with India and that Islamabad had always abided by it.

The finance minister said it was in the interest of both countries that they continue to implement the terms of the treaty. In this spirit, Pakistan would continue to fulfil its obligations under the IWT.

The contrasting stances of Pakistan and India were deliberated in detail at the meeting.

The water and power secretary informed the meeting of the plans for beefing up of the Indus Water Commission.

Mr Khosa briefed the meeting on the role of the World Bank and presented an update on the interaction with the bank's management. He said that as a guarantor of the treaty, the bank appeared to be cognisant of its role.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1309561>

KILLED FOR 'HONOUR'

Dawn, January 20th, 2017

ZEENAT Rafiq was one of around a thousand women murdered in the name of honour in Pakistan last year. In the vast majority of such cases, the wheels of justice do not merely turn slowly; they do not turn at all. In Zeenat's case

however, there has been a reckoning. An anti-terrorism court in Lahore on Monday sentenced her mother, Parveen Rafiq, to death and her brother to life imprisonment for murdering the 18-year-old on the pretext of honour.

The young woman's killing in June last year had repulsed the nation, not only for the gruesome manner in which it was carried out — Zeenat being doused with kerosene and set alight — but also because it was her own mother who had torched her and then reportedly exulted over her actions. Even for Pakistan, inured to the slaying of women by fathers, brothers, husbands and the occasional uncle or brother-in-law, maternal filicide is a bridge too far.

The back story was a familiar one: a woman marrying of her own free will and a family determined to mete out the ultimate punishment to her for having 'shamed' them. While this paper continues to oppose the death penalty, one must note that there has been accountability in Zeenat's case. Most 'honour' killers go scot-free courtesy the legal loophole whereby families of victims can forgive the perpetrator, a particularly grotesque provision in the context of honour killings where the victim's family and the perpetrator are often one and the same.

However, that the accused in this instance have been punished owes more to the fact they were charged under the Anti Terrorism Act rather than the legal landscape for this terrible crime having changed significantly. Although parliament in October 2016 enacted amendments to ostensibly strengthen the law against such murders, the legislation falls short on an important front by not making honour killings non-compoundable, that is, one in which a compromise cannot be effected.

Instead, it does little more than prescribe imprisonment for life, ie 25 years, for those found guilty of the crime — and that too is subject to judicial discretion. That is not enough to serve the ends of justice, particularly given the problem has its roots in the society's cultural mindset. These legal shortcomings should be addressed and police, prosecutors and judges trained to appreciate that so-called honour is never a mitigating factor in murder.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1309459/killed-for-honour>

INDIA ASKED TO STOP WORK ON KISHANGANGA AND RATLE PROJECTS

Dawn January 21st, 2017

Mubarak Zeb Khan

ISLAMABAD: A rare joint sitting of the two committees of the National Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution seeking immediate suspension of work on two disputed projects by India and constitution of an arbitration court to resolve the ongoing water dispute between the two countries.

The resolution adopted by the committee on foreign affairs, water and power, called upon the World Bank to constitute a court of arbitration to adjudicate on issues raised by Pakistan against India's ongoing construction of Kishanganga and Ratle hydro projects.

Under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), it is the responsibility of the World Bank to play its role without further delay.

Until the World Bank constitutes the court of arbitration, it must persuade India to put an immediate halt to ongoing construction of the Ratle dam till the issue is resolved, read the joint resolution adopted unanimously by both the government and opposition members of the committees.

The construction of dams on the western rivers by India has brought the two countries at loggerheads and Pakistan has engaged the World Bank, a facilitator of the IWT, to stop India from going ahead with the construction so that the treaty could be followed smoothly in future.

The committees were briefed on the agenda — Indian threat on the Indus Waters Treaty and to chart out a course of action for Pakistan. The meeting was co-chaired by Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari and Muhammad Arshad Khan Leghari, MNAs and chairmen of the committees.

Ahmer Bilal Soofi, a special invitee and expert on international treaties, informed the committees that India couldn't scrap the IWT unilaterally. "Scrapping of the treaty unilaterally will be a violation."

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement of scrapping the IWT would also pose a serious threat to peace in the region, he added.

To scrape the treaty, Mr Soofi said there would be a need for negotiating another treaty. It was also a part of the international treaty to maintain a minimum level of water in rivers, he said.

Briefing the committees, Foreign Secretary Aizaz Chaudhry said all options were available with Pakistan in case India violated the IWT. He accused the Indian premier of playing politics over the issue.

"We will not let India violate the treaty," Mr Chaudhry said, adding that Pakistan had already engaged the World Bank to look into the issue as guarantor. "We have already requested the World Bank to appoint chairman of the arbitration court", he said.

The secretary said Islamabad would defend its right at any cost. New Delhi, he added, was using delaying tactics while "we want to resolve the issue at the earliest".

Pakistan has serious reservations over an Indian move to construct 45 to 60 dams on the western rivers, the foreign secretary said.

Water and Power Secretary Younus Dagha said Pakistan was challenging the construction of Kishanganga and Ratle projects in the court of international arbitration. However, he added, India had not as yet started work on Ratle project.

Mr Dagha said Pakistan would construct Basha dam with indigenous resources. In the fiscal year 2017-18 PSDP funds would be allocated for construction of the dam.

A former foreign minister and leader of the Tehrik-i-Insaf, Shah Mehmood Qureshi, had said the water dispute with India had reached such alarming proportions that it could even dwarf the Kashmir issue. "We are ready to support the government on this matter," he said. He suggested the government evolve a clear roadmap, assuring the ruling party of the PTI's support.

On the other hand, Mehmood Khan Achakzai said Pakistan had committed a mistake in handing over the control of three rivers to India. As a result of this, he said, Pakistan was now on the defensive. He ruled out any cooperation with India on any issue.

In reply to a question, he advised members to restrict themselves to the agenda and refrain from discussing internal disputes over water as the present discussion was about IWT.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1309767/india-asked-to-stop-work-on-kishanganga-and-ratle-projects>

MURAD PLEDGES SAFE DRINKING WATER SUPPLY, PROPER SANITATION ACROSS SINDH

Dawn, January 22nd, 2017

DADU: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that supply of safe drinking water to the people of Sindh is being ensured and held out the assurance that Manchhar Lake would be protected from pollution and contamination.

He was speaking at a gathering of PPP leaders, workers and supporters held in the guest room of a party colleague, Makhdoom Zamir Abbasi, in Bubak village near the lake on Saturday. He said that effective measures would be taken to stop disposal of effluent and toxic substances into the lake.

He said a new branch would be laid to facilitate release of fresh water from Indus into the lake. Later, speaking to journalists during his visit to different parts of Sehwan, the chief minister said that his government was executing numerous development projects in Sindh to improve the standard of living of the common man.

He said that he inspected progress of work on different schemes in Sehwan and directed the officials concerned to ensure their completion within the stipulated time. He said they were told that negligence on their part would not be tolerated. He said during his visit to water plant and sewerage installations in the town, he issued directives to the officials concerned to ensure supply of safe drinking water to people and proper sanitation.

In reply to a question, Mr Shah said that government jobs were being advertised in the media and eligible people should apply for them with confidence that merit and transparency would be upheld in the recruitment process.

Earlier, he was welcomed by PPP leaders Sardar Sikandar Rahupoto, Rais Amanullah Shahani and others on his arrival in the town. He also attended a tea party at the residence of Makhdoom Zameer Abbasi. Hyderabad Commissioner Qazi Shahid Pervez, Jamshoro Deputy Commissioner Munawwar Mahesar, DIG Khadim Hussain Rind and a large number of PPP workers attended the party. The chief minister also received a briefing on water supply, sewerage and sanitation system of Sehwan at the site of the under-construction Civic Centre in the town.

Mr Shah also visited the shrine of great Sufi saint Lal Shahbaz Qalandar and offered fateha on his grave after laying a wreath.

Caretakers of the shrine and officials executing the uplift work there briefed him about progress of the ongoing development schemes.

UMERKOT: Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Saturday visited the family of PPP's minority leader Rana Hameer Sindh in Rana Jagir village of Umerkot to condole the recent death of his brother, Dr Pritipal Singh.

Speaking to local journalists and other people present there, Mr Shah said the era of development, prosperity and a welcome change in Sindh had begun. He said scores of development projects had already been launched in the province while many more were in the pipeline. They pertained to water supply, sewerage, healthcare and other facilities, he added.

In reply to a question, the CM observed: "Unemployment in Sindh has reached an alarming level," and said that his government was striving hard to cope with the situation. He advised job seekers to try their luck in the private sector as well.

Regarding the local government system, Mr Shah said it was being strengthened and empowered. Special funds would be provided to municipal committees now when their accounts had been opened across Sindh, he added.

When asked about the new governor of Sindh, the chief minister replied that it was up to the federal government to take a decision. "We will welcome whoever is appointed," he said.

When his comment was sought on the unparliamentary words used and offending remarks made by a member of the Sindh Assembly during Friday's session, the chief minister said "Imdad Pitafi's attitude was improper".

MIRPURKHAS: CM Shah also visited MPA Haji Noor Ahmed Bhurgari in Hashim Bhurgari village of Kot Ghulam Mohammed on Saturday to condole the death of his father, Raees Ghulam Mohammed Bhurgari.

Speaking to local journalists at Bhurgari House, Mr Shah announced that Kot Ghulam Mohammed would be developed into a model town for which all required funds would be provided.

He said the initiative was part of the ‘massive development’ currently under way in Sindh. All LG institutions would be provided funds without any discrimination, he said.

Councillors belonging to the PPP, MQM and other parties apprised the CM of the problems of their respective areas. Mr Shah issued on the spot instructions for remedial measures.

Former MNA Pir Aftab Hussain Shah Jilani, MNA Pir Shafqat Hussain Shah Jilani and MPAs Mir Haji Hayat Talpur and Nawab Taimoor Talpur accompanied the CM during the visit.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1309831>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 9TH TO JANUARY 15TH 2017

ISLAMABAD URGES WORLD BANK TO RESTART ARBITRATION

Dawn, January 9th, 2017

Anwar Iqbal

WASHINGTON: Pakistan has asked the World Bank to restart the process of arbitration in its water dispute with India despite New Delhi’s objections.

In its communications with the bank, Pakistan argued that only arbitration can save the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), which has successfully resolved water disputes between India and Pakistan for more than half a century.

That’s why Pakistan wants the bank to restart arbitration, even if India disagrees with the suggestion, as “much precious time has already been lost”.

Pakistan first asked for arbitration on Aug 19, 2016.

Last month, the World Bank paused the arbitration process, asking India and Pakistan to decide by the end of this month how they want this dispute resolved. The bank said it was doing so to protect the treaty.

The 1960 IWT gives Pakistan the right to demand the formation of the court of arbitration 60 days after submitting a formal request. That deadline expired on Oct 29, 2016.

The current dispute concerns two hydroelectric plants — Kishanganga and Ratle — that India is building on the rivers whose waters were given to Pakistan under the IWT.

The treaty recognises the World Bank as a guarantor and arbitrator and gives both India and Pakistan the right to seek arbitration if they fail to resolve a dispute bilaterally.

On Thursday, a World Bank representative, Ian H. Solomon, visited India to hold discussion on the dispute. Indian officials told Mr Solomon that Pakistan’s request for setting up a court of arbitration was not acceptable to New Delhi. Instead, they urged the bank to appoint a neutral expert.

Pakistan demands a court of arbitration because it believes the dispute involves both legal and technical issues and while a neutral expert can consider the technical aspects, only a court can deal with legal problems.

Pakistan has also completed the formality of directly inviting India to appoint three umpires.

India's refusal gives Pakistan the right to demand the drawing of lots for the appointment of these umpires, as provided for in the IWT.

Refusal by one party to participate in the drawing of lots authorises the other to request the president of the World Bank to nominate a person to draw lots. The requesting party, however, is required to provide the World Bank with a copy of its submission to enable the bank's president to fulfil his responsibilities. Pakistan has completed these formalities.

Pakistan also has conveyed its willingness to accept the three appointing authorities identified in the treaty for nominating members of the court of arbitration. These are the secretary general of the United Nations, the rector of the Imperial College of S and T, London and the Lord Chief Justice of England.

Pakistan told the bank that after a series of negotiations with India, it concluded that the disputes could not be resolved by bilateral negotiations.

And that's why it decided to institute arbitration proceedings.

In March 2016, Pakistan asked India to settle the dispute amicably and named four negotiators for the talks.

India responded on April 28, accepting Pakistan's offer of negotiation and named four of its own negotiators.

The negotiators met in New Delhi on July 14-15, 2016 and presented their respective arguments but there were no significant changes in positions on either side. No compromise was reached on any of the disputes. This was followed by more meetings but all remained inconclusive.

Pakistan told the World Bank that it could not verify the precise status of construction because, until the July 14-15 meeting, India had refused to permit its representatives to visit the sites of the projects despite repeated requests.

Pakistan also shared with the bank the concern that despite its objections, India has continued to build the two plants.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1307291/islamabad-urges-world-bank-to-restart-arbitration>

WATER SHORTAGE LIKELY TO HIT SINDH CROPS

Dawn, Business & Finance weekly, January 9th, 2017

Mohammad Hussain Khan

THE lingering water shortage in rabi is likely to hit winter crops, especially wheat, and ultimately the kharif crops if rains do not come to the rescue of the farmers, according to the irrigation authorities.

Currently, 18pc of water shortage is reported in the Indus River System as assessed by Indus River System Authority (Irsa). The authority, however, expects rainfall during the current month and the next to offset the impact of water shortage. And in case of no rainfall, the shortage may increase to 26pc.

Wheat sowing has been completed in Sindh. Apart from wheat, crops like banana, mango and early sowing of kharif crops especially cotton are feared to be hit. Mango trees would be at a flowering stage in February, while banana orchards are to face the brunt of water shortage, if it persists.

Sukkur barrage officials point out until January 3, the storage levels of Mangla and Tarbela dams remained at 1,100ft and 1,412ft respectively, which, according to them, indicates that if 1-1.5ft of water is released on a daily basis, the situation would still be normal until this month.

The actual water shortage assessment would be made after the barrages' closure in Sindh when demands would be made for water supplies. Presently, the Kotri Barrage is closed and it would be reopened on January 10. The Sukkur Barrage will close on January 6 for its annual maintenance till January 20. Sukkur barrage in fact takes another four to five days after its reopening to start supplying water to its canals as its ponds have to be filled first.

"We will assess water shortage after the barrage's closure is over. The barrage starts operations for water supply in mid January", said a barrage official.

Irrigation department would also start the lining work of the Rohri Canal downstream, Sakrand regulator, but it plans to maintain the water supplies through Sakrand regulator upstream to many areas. Lining work also forces irrigation officials to keep the Rohri Canal closed for 30 days between January and February which means the command area of Sakrand would not get water during rabi and in early kharif periods.

Mango trees need fertiliser backed by irrigation water in February for their flowering and fruits setting stage and likewise banana orchards are given fertiliser with water in February. Low temperatures leads to frostbite in banana crop, and according to Karamullah Saand — a banana grower — frostbite coupled with water shortage could undermine the crop in February, he said.

Irsa Chairman Mazhar Ali Shah — who is from Sindh — says a minimum of 12c and maximum 26pc shortage in the Indus River System was assessed initially by Irsa. Right now, he said, that both dams are a few feet above their storage level.

Sindh Abadgar Board (SAB) Vice President Mahmood Nawaz Shah pointed towards reports that unusual withdrawals were made for power generation by Wapda from dams although the agriculture sector is the first priority for distribution.

Until the last week of December 2016, water supplies were ensured by the barrage authorities but now they are bracing for managing impending water shortages.

The Sindh irrigation department, according to an officer, did not get its required share of water as per its indents during early January.

The newly appointed, Sindh's Secretary Irrigation, Junaid Memon is, however, optimistic that water shortage would not be severe in Sindh as there are rain forecasts and irrigation department is also managing rotation in major water channels to ensure availability of the last cycle of water for wheat crop and for early kharif sowing.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1307207>

EXORBITANT AMOUNT: WATER PRICE IN SUKKUR TO BE INCREASED ALMOST TWELVEFOLD
The Express Tribune, January 9th, 2017.

SUKKUR: The North Sindh Urban Services Corporation (NSUSC) and Sukkur Municipal Corporation (SMC) have carved a strategy to extract more money from the citizens in the form of increased water prices and new taxes for garbage lifting and drainage.

Since its establishment in 2011, the NSUSC has failed to come up to the expectations of the citizens. NSUSC is currently charging Rs360 and Rs540 per year from its consumers, despite the fact that around 40% of the citizens living in the low-lying areas often complain of water scarcity. The utility has also been overburdened with political recruitments. Former chief minister Qaim Ali Shah called it a white elephant, while incumbent CM Murad Ali Shah has also expressed his dissatisfaction with the utility.

To conceal this alleged corruption and wastage of funds due to mismanagement, NSUSC and SMC have come up with a novel idea to impose new taxes upon the citizens who have been forced to consume contaminated water. According to the proposals prepared by NSUSC and SMC, the water price, which was earlier between Rs360 and Rs540 per year, will be increased to Rs4,596 per year. Apart from this, new taxes of Rs194 and Rs211 per month for lifting garbage and drainage will be imposed upon the citizens. Every household will have to pay Rs9,456 per year for water, drainage and lifting of garbage.

Billions of rupees were provided to NSUSC for providing potable water to the citizens as well as modernising the drainage and sanitation systems and, according to the plan, the citizens of Sukkur were to get potable water by the end of 2015.

This plan fell through as the residents still do not have access to potable water. Since its establishment in 2011, the NSUSC changed its managing directors and directors on a political basis, due to which all the development schemes are still incomplete. Meanwhile, massive corruption in the development funds is being investigated by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Sukkur. According to the NAB spokesperson, the inquiry was initiated on allegations of misappropriation of billions of rupees.

NSUSC spokesperson Malook Baloch told The Express Tribune that the new taxes will not be imposed till the green light is given by all the stakeholders, which includes citizens and traders. "The proposal for enhancing the water tax and imposing garbage lifting and drainage tax will be finalised by the Sindh government and not by the utility itself," he said.

SMC Mayor Arsalan Shaikh confirmed the proposals and said that in first phase, they are going to increase the water price. He said the reason for the NSUSC's poor performance was the fact that the utility was neither owned properly nor supervised.

Shaikh, who is also a member of NSUSC board of directors, said that Rs3 billion has been allocated for water filtration plants and the citizens of Sukkur will get potable water by the end of 2018. When asked if it would be a better idea to increase the water prices once the potable water provision begins, he said that they still have to run the company and the Asian Development Bank has been pressuring them to increase service charges.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1288375/exorbitant-amount-water-price-sukkur-increased-almost-twelvefold>

WATER SUPPLY FROM KHANPUR DAM REDUCED FOR PINDI CITY, CANTT AREAS

Dawn, January 10th, 2017

Aamir Yasin

RAWALPINDI: The supply of water from Khanpur Dam to Rawalpindi city and the cantonment areas has been reduced due to a decrease in the dam's water level.

The supply of water to Rawalpindi city was reduced from six million gallons daily (MGD) to 3MGD and that to the cantonment area was reduced from 8MGD to 4MGD, leading to a shortage of water in many localities.

Water and Sanitation Agency (Wasa) Managing Director Raja Shaukat Mehmood told Dawn the decrease in water supply had created problems for the agency, which was already getting less than the sanctioned quota of water from Khanpur Dam.

He explained that according to the quota, Rawalpindi city was to get 14.6MGD of supply and was getting 6MGD, which has now been reduced to 3MGD. He said the agency supplies water to its consumers via water tanks.

“The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is managing the supply of water from the dam to Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Wasa asked the CDA chairman to increase the supply of water from the dam or the agency will have to start rationing water,” he added.

Wasa supplies water from the Khanpur Dam to Pirwadhai, Dhoke Mangtal, Shamsabad, Saddiqabad, Muslim Town, Iqbal Town and adjoining areas where residents have made complaints about the short supply of water.

“It has been two days since we got water and if this is the situation in the winters, one can imagine what will happen in the summers,” said Zeeshan Haider, a resident of Shamsabad.

A Pirwadhai local, Mohammad Mazhar suggested Wasa install a tube well in the area to ensure an uninterrupted supply of water. He said residents now had to fill water bottles from the adjoining I-10 sector.

He said complaints had been lodged with Wasa, where officials said they were not able to resolve the issue as the supply of water from Khanpur Dam to the city areas had been reduced.

The Chaklala Cantonment Board (CCB) is facing an even bigger problem as it gets its supply from Khanpur Dam from the Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) which has further reduced supply.

“We were already getting less water and now the RCB has further reduced supply to 50,000 gallons a day. We raised the issue with the RCB, but it did not listen,” said CCB Vice President Raja Irfan Imtiaz.

Talking to Dawn, he said the CCB had repeatedly called for the completion of the Khanpur Dam Water Supply Project Phase III, under which overhead and underground water tanks were to be constructed.

He said that if these tanks were made functional and used to store water, water will be available to meet the requirement for 15 days to a month at least.

RCB spokesperson Qaiser Mehmood told Dawn that the RCB had to supply water in water tanks after the CDA decreased the supply of water to the Cantt areas. He said water from tube wells were being supplied to colonies by running them over time.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1307495/water-supply-from-khanpur-dam-reduced-for-pindi-city-cantt-areas>

NATIONAL WATER POLICY AWAITS FORMAL APPROVAL

Dawn January 10th, 2017

Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: The federal and provincial governments are on board over the country's first national water policy which will now be sent to the Council of Common Interests for formal approval, Minister for Water and Power Khawaja Mohammad Asif said on Monday.

He was speaking to journalists after announcing a \$1.8bn financial close of the first hydropower project — the 870MW Suki Kinari project — under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) framework.

The Chashma-3 nuclear power project was operational and the Chashma-4 project would follow by April, he said, adding that the government was on schedule to end loadshedding by 2018. Several thermal power projects, to be operated on re-gasified liquefied natural gas (RLNG), were in their testing phase, he said and hoped that the 969MW Neelum-Jhelum hydropower project would start generating electricity before the next monsoon season.

The government was making efforts to complete the conversion of Nandipur power project to natural gas by April, he said, adding that the power regulator had not yet issued the revised tariff for power generated through gas. If the tariff did not cover the cost, the matter would be sent to the federal cabinet for deliberation.

Responding to a question, he said they were yet to see a change in the stance of the power regulator after it was brought under the administrative control of his ministry last month.

The minister declined comment on the ongoing dispute over the construction of two hydropower projects by India in violation of the Indus Waters Treaty.

When asked about the difficulties the government has faced in raising funds for the construction of the \$14bn Diamer-Bhasha dam, the minister said Pakistan did not consider the dam area a disputed territory and that its construction would start this year. Those who considered the territory disputed were free to not fund the project, he said, adding that many countries had expressed interest in financing for the Diamer-Bhasha Multipurpose project.

The project has been bifurcated in two — a water reservoir and a power house. Mr Asif said the reservoir would be financed through the country's own resources while the power house would be funded through investors and financiers from abroad.

Earlier, Mr Asif presided over a ceremony marking the financial close of the 870MW Suki Kinari hydropower project. The required documents were signed by Shah Jahan Mirza, managing director of the Private Power and Infrastructure Board, and Haseeb Khan, the chief executive officer of Suki Kinari hydropower project.

This is the first hydropower project in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa being developed by the private sector and the largest independent hydropower project in the country so far. Construction activities at the site have begun and the project is expected to add 3,081GWh units of electricity each year to the national grid by 2022.

The KP government is estimated to receive around Rs1.3 billion each year as water use charges for 30 years. The project is being developed on a build-own-operate-transfer (BOOT) basis under the Power Policy 2002 and will be transferred to the province in 30 years.

The project is located on River Kunhar, a tributary of River Jhelum, in Mansehra district, the eastern part of KP between Naran and Paras towns. M/s Al-Jomaih Holding Company, (LLC) (Saudi Arabia), China Gezhouba Group Company (China) and Haseeb Khan (Pvt) Ltd. (Pakistan) have sponsored the project.

It is being developed with an investment of \$1.8bn through a debt-equity ratio of 75:25pv. The lenders for the project include the Export-Import Bank of China, and the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC).

REPORT ON SAFE DRINKING WATER SOUGHT BY 23RD

Dawn January 10th, 2017

KARACHI: The judicial commission, which was constituted to inquire into the government's failure to provide safe drinking water and sanitation facilities to the people of Sindh, on Monday asked the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) to submit its report by Jan 23.

The judicial commission, headed by Justice Mohammad Iqbal Kalhoro of the Sindh High Court, was informed by Dr Ghulam Murtaza, a senior research officer, appointed as amicus curiae, that water samples were collected from five different cities, including Karachi, Sukkur, Badin, Tando Mohammad Khan and Hyderabad.

However, he said, samples from other districts would be collected by Jan 11. The commission also appointed Suleman Chandio, former special secretary local government department, as amicus curiae to assist it in its inquiry into water woes and poor sanitary conditions.

The Sindh chief secretary, Cantonment Board Clifton's chief executive officer, Pakistan Railways divisional engineer, Karachi Water and Sewerage Board, the managing directors of SITE and WASA, and others filed their statements.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1307457/report-on-safe-drinking-water-sought-by-23rd>

FINANCIAL CLOSE: FUNDS ARRANGED FOR SUKI KINARI HYDROELECTRIC POWER PROJECT

The Express Tribune , January 10, 2017

Islamabad: Water and Power Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif has emphasised that work on different power projects is under way in a bid to end load-shedding in 2018.

He was speaking to journalists at the signing of financial close agreement for the 870-megawatt Suki Kinari hydroelectric power project on Monday.

Elaborating, Asif pointed out that Chashma-3 nuclear power plant with 340MW generation capacity had started operations whereas Chashma-4 would start running in April this year. "Load-shedding will end in 2018," he said.

"However, load-shedding will continue in those areas where recovery of electricity bills stands lower," he clarified while claiming more than 200 feeders in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa were facing no outages.

He acknowledged that power theft had been going on across the country, but the government was taking measures to control the problem.

The financial close of Suki Kinari project has been achieved and work on it will start in the next two to three months. A piece of land spread over 2,793 kanals has been purchased for the project, which will be completed in 2022.

According to Asif, Rs1.3 billion will be paid annually to Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa in royalty on the power project. "The Nandipur plant will begin electricity production on gas in April this year," he announced.

Responding to a question, the minister revealed that work on the Diamer-Bhasha dam had been divided into two parts – one was related to water storage and the other would be power house.

He said the government was trying to start work on the water storage phase from its own resources. It has spent \$1 billion on the purchase of land for the dam.

Different countries had expressed interest in pouring capital into the Diamer-Bhasha project and construction work was expected to begin in the ongoing year, he said, declaring that the Neelum-Jhelum hydroelectric power project would be completed this year.

He also disclosed that draft of the water policy would be sent to the Council of Common Interests (CCI) for approval.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1289208/financial-close-funds-arranged-suki-kinari-hydroelectric-power-project/>

TURKISH FIRM TO TAKE OVER WATER SUPPLY, SANITATION JOB IN KOHAT

Dawn January 11th, 2017

KOHAT: A Turkish company will take over water supply and sanitation job from the tehsil municipal administration, Kohat, from next week.

The sanitation inspector of tehsil municipal administration told Dawn on telephone on Tuesday that the new company had been released Rs40 million as initial amount by the chief minister with directives to start operations immediately. However, the sanitation and water supply fund of Rs30 million reserved for TMA per month has not been transferred to the company as yet.

He said that for each urban area a tractor, two compact tractors and six garbage-picking vehicles would be hired, adding the Turkish company would employ mechanical sweepers to dispose of waste.

He said the choked drains in the bazaar would be opened and roads hygienically cleansed with mechanical brooms. The compact tractors will squeeze the load of four tractors and shift it to the recycling plant constructed in Ustarzai, he added. The sanitation inspector disclosed that services of all the 213 sweepers, out of whom only 97 were performing their duties, and other employees of the TMA would be transferred to the new company, which he said, would also operate the tube-wells.

Under the new system, he disclosed, the waste dumping places would not only be cleaned but washed with chemicals to remove the smell.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1307734/turkish-firm-to-take-over-water-supply-sanitation-job-in-kohat>

GOVT TO EXEMPT CHINESE HYDROPOWER PROJECTS FROM SALES TAX

Dawn January 11th, 2017

Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: The government is expected to withdraw general sales tax (GST) on construction of hydropower projects being developed by Chinese companies under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) on the pattern of tax exemptions given to mass transits like Lahore Orange Line Metro Train last week.

Informed sources said that at least three major hydropower projects with cumulative generation capacity of over 2,700 megawatts among the priority list of CPEC would qualify for the GST waiver worth over Rs50 billion to facilitate their implementation, which is currently at very early stage. The move would improve cash flows of major investors like China Gazhoubu Group and China Three Gorges Corporation, they said.

Last week, the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet granted Rs20bn tax relief to the Orange Line metro project and decided to extend the same benefits to three future projects of similar nature in Karachi, Quetta and Peshawar with cumulative impact estimated at around Rs80bn.

The sources said the proposal currently under examination would also be in line with similar tax exemptions on Thar coal-based power projects in Sindh to promote indigenous energy resources. Early last year, the Sindh government withdrew GST on services on construction of power projects to be run on Thar coal.

The hydropower resources are not only cleaner sources of energy but also renewable and indigenous. Also, Clause 4 of the CPEC framework agreement requires that Pakistan would ensure all preferential conditions to China that it may have extended to any other investor. This meant that hydropower projects being developed by Chinese firms also qualify for tax benefits that have been extended to Thar coal, mass transit projects in four major cities or infrastructure projects of the National Highway Authority.

The hydropower projects to qualify for these GST exemptions at this stage have been identified as \$1.9bn, 720MW Karot Hydropower Project on the Jhelum river on the boundary of Azad Kashmir and Punjab; Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's 870MW Suki Kinari Hydropower Project on the Kunhar river, a tributary of Jhelum; and more than \$2.5bn, 1100MW Kohala Hydropower Project on the Jhelum river in Azad Kashmir.

Karot and Kohala hydropower projects with a cumulative capacity of more than 1,820MW are being developed by China Three Gorges Corporation and are in the process of financial close. The financial close of the \$1.8bn Suki Kinari project, being developed by China Gezhouba and Saudi Al-Jomaiah Group, was announced early this week.

The sources said the 16 per cent GST on these projects was adjustable under the input-output GST mechanism but the refund against input adjustment is quite tedious, causing cash flow problems while the government wants smooth implementation of energy projects.

Another problem is the fact that the output tax on electricity produced is chargeable on energy purchase price (EPP) component of power tariff after the commercial operation date, but this was not applicable on capacity purchase price. Since the EPP is less than 5pc of the overall tariff in case of hydropower projects, output tax was insufficient to cover input sales tax on construction and operations.

As a consequence, the tax adjustment cannot be recovered or adjusted during the 30-year life of the project. The overall impact of the Karot Hydropower Project at the end of its 30-year life works out at around \$120 million in adjustment shortfall.

Under the letter of support issued to Three Gorges, Karot should have achieved financial close last month. One of the factors for the delay is said to be an advance payment of Rs345m as GST on the EPC contract demanded by tax authorities.

In view of these challenges, the case is currently under active examination of the government to do away with GST application on hydropower projects in the priority list of CPEC to avoid cash flow problems to investors. Some stakeholders within the government, however, argue that such a dispensation would also be claimed by other investors on the basis of fairness and equity and could lead to have significant impact of FBR's revenue targets.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1307608/govt-to-exempt-chinese-hydropower-projects-from-sales-tax>

KARACHI SUPPLIED 200MGD UNFILTERED, UNCHLORINATED WATER

Dawn, January 11th, 2017

Faiza Ilyas

KARACHI: The city receives 200 million gallons of unfiltered water daily. The Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) has no functional system either to properly chlorinate drinking water or check the presence of major contaminants in it.

Only a handful of the 180 industrial units in the Port Qasim Authority (PQA) jurisdiction have their own effluent treatment plants and most of the waste is discharged into the sea without treatment.

These facts came to light on Tuesday when a judicial commission comprising Justice Mohammad Iqbal Kalhoro visited some important installations of the KWSB and a sewage treatment plant being run in the Port Qasim area.

He was accompanied by KWSB and Sindh Environmental Protection Agency (Sepa) officials, members of civil society organisations, petitioners as well as some journalists. The commission is being assisted by former managing director of the KWSB Mohammad Suleman Chandio and an official of the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR).

The commission had recently been formed by the Supreme Court to conduct an inquiry into the state's failure in providing clean drinking water, sanitation facilities and a healthy environment to the people of Sindh and present a report to the SC within six weeks.

The commission's terms of reference include examining the statutory role played by Sepa on the issues mandated to it under the Sindh Environment Protection Act, 2014.

One of the most alarming revelations of the fact-finding visit was the disclosure by KWSB officials at the Pipri pumping-cum-filter plant that the utility had the capacity to filter only 60 per cent of the water. The rest was supplied to the city unfiltered.

"Of the total 550MGD supplies from the Indus source to the city, 200MGD is supplied unfiltered owing to lack of capacity," said Asadullah Khan, the deputy managing director for technical services at the KWSB, while briefing Justice Kalhoro, adding that a project was in the pipeline to upgrade the system and increase the filtration capacity.

According to KWSB officials, the shortcoming has much to do with serious financial constraints which forced the board to focus on expanding the water supply system rather than improving the existing infrastructure.

Besides, they argued, the 'chlorination' carried out at the plant killed the germs that the unfiltered water might be carrying. "Though we lack complete filtration capacity, we do chlorinate the entire water and that improves its quality. Filtration is only meant to remove suspended particles from the water," a KWSB official said.

Much to the visitors' shock, the Pipri filter plant laboratory, supposed to regularly monitor water quality, lacked record of past testing analyses, suggesting to the team that water quality was not monitored at all on a daily basis.

In addition, the laboratory did not have the facility to test the presence of heavy metals in the water being supplied from the Indus source (Keenjhar Lake) that received untreated industrial and domestic waste from the surrounding areas.

At the Pipri filter plant reservoir, the last collection point from where the water is supplied to parts of the city, including Landhi, Malir, Korangi, Akhtar Colony, the Defence Housing Authority and Shah Faisal Colony, the chlorination system was found to be in a state of disuse whereas the reservoir, the officials admitted, had never been cleaned.

"It's all because of a funds' shortage. Besides, reservoir cleaning requires suspension of water supply for at least three to four months which we can't afford," an official told the team, which earlier visited the Dhabeji pumping station and was briefed by KWSB staff that the city faced a 50pc water shortfall.

The PCRWR expert assisting the judicial commission collected water samples from various sites during the visit. “We have already collected 200 samples from Karachi, Hyderabad, Badin, Sukkur, Tando Mohammad Khan and Shikarpur and will submit their report to the commission within 15 days,” said Dr Ghulam Murtaza of the PCRWR.

The findings would be part of the report that the commission would submit to the Supreme Court in coming weeks.

In the end, the team visited a small sewage treatment plant being run by the Port Qasim Authority. It appeared that the plant was made operational only for the occasion as it was evident from its condition, a concern also shared by Advocate Shahab Usto, one of the lawyers on whose petition the SC had formed the commission.

The team expressed concern over the fact that only a few industrial units were treating their respective sewage. The PQA official briefing the team was directed by Justice Kalhor to submit a detailed report on waste discharge within six days.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1307620>

WORLD BANK AGREES TO FUND THREE HYDRO PROJECTS IN K-P

The Express Tribune, January 11th, 2017.

Sohail Khattak

PESHAWAR: In the latest development, the World Bank has given the Khyber-Pakhtunkwa government a positive response for funding three hydropower projects.

“They [World Bank] have agreed to our request and are ready to grant loans for our three projects,” said a senior official of the K-P energy and power department who held a meeting with the international financial institution’s delegation in Islamabad on Monday.

The K-P government has been negotiating with the World Bank for securing a Rs70 billion loan to finance its developmental projects, however, no deal has been finalized yet.

“We don’t know about the rest of the projects but they [World Bank] are giving us loan and the first tranche would be received in July,” said the official, adding that \$100 million would be paid in the first tranche for feasibility studies and detail designing and capacity building for the three projects.

The projects include Gabral-Kalam Hydro Power Project (HPP) in Swat which will add 110 megawatts to the grid. The project is estimated to cost \$413 million. It also includes Barikot Patrak hydropower project in Upper Dir which is 47 megawatts with a cost of \$148 million. Shringal-Patruk hydropower project is the third project which will add 22 megawatts and is estimated to cost \$83 million.

“The second tranche would be given for the construction of these projects. They are okay with procurement rules and guidelines set down by the K-P government and the projects would be executed under our own guidelines,” said the official.

According to the official, the bank would also give Rs5 million technical assistance for making of policies. “We don’t have prepared policies including energy conservation policy, renewable energy policy, impact of the 18th Amendment on energy sector and this technical assistance would be used for carrying out studies and hiring consultancies to make these policies,” the official explained.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1291013/khyber-pakhtunkwa-wb-agrees-fund-three-hydro-projects/>

Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet on Wednesday approved a 10-paisa per unit surcharge on electricity for 18 months and payment of Rs38 billion to Punjab as the first instalment of Rs83bn hydropower profit.

The meeting presided over by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar also approved Rs180bn package for exporters announced a day earlier by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

The committee approved a proposal of the Ministry of Water and Power to extend the closing date for the collection of Neelum-Jhelum Surcharge at 10-paisa per unit from all electricity consumers until June 30, 2018.

The surcharge was imposed in 2007 for eight years with the expiry date of Dec 31, 2015 to finance about half of the project cost, which was then estimated at Rs130bn. It was later extended for one year.

It was expected the project would be completed in time, but it was delayed. Cost estimates almost quadrupled to Rs500bn with the fresh completion target of June 30, 2018.

An official statement said the continuation of surcharge would result in the collection of Rs9bn, which will help ensure successful completion of the project. An official, however, said that the surcharge was yielding Rs8-9bn a year depending on the number of units sold annually. The surcharge has already contributed about Rs60bn to the project finances.

Cost estimates for the 969MW Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project had been jacked up four times since 2002. Originally, the plant was projected to be completed at a cost of Rs84.5bn. It was revised to Rs277.5bn in 2012 to accommodate changes in design and geography caused by the 2008 earthquake. This was followed by a revised cost approval of Rs404bn in 2015 and Rs500bn now.

As a result, the cost of the project that was originally estimated at about Rs3-4 per unit on completion is now being worked out at Rs12-13 per unit. The project, located near Muzaffarabad in Azad Kashmir, was awarded to Chinese contractors in December 2007 and involved a diversion of Neelum River waters to Jhelum River through a cumulative tunnel of about 68 kilometres.

The ECC approved another summary of the power ministry that sought the issuance of a letter of comfort as the federal government's guarantee to Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) for the payment of Rs38.12bn to Punjab as the first instalment of Rs82bn arrears of net hydel profit.

The federal government had reached a settlement with Punjab two months ago that entailed Wapda to pay Rs82bn as net hydel profit for power generated by the 1,450MW Ghazi-Barotha hydropower project since 2005.

This will raise consumer tariff by 33 paisa per unit countrywide. The agreement was reached on the principles of a similar settlement made early last year with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government for the net hydel profit on Tarbela Dam.

Under the agreement, the Punjab government will be paid Rs82bn for power generated by the Ghazi-Barotha hydropower project since 2005. Of this, Rs38bn will be settled upfront and the remaining Rs44bn will be paid in the next three fiscal years at a rate of about Rs14.5bn a year. Wapda will continue to pay Rs9.5bn to Punjab every year for the productive life of the project.

Given Wapda's tight fiscal position and its overexposure to the banking sector, the ECC decision will now empower Wapda to issue a Rs38bn promissory note to the Punjab government.

The ECC also approved the Rs180bn Prime Minister's Trade Enhancement Incentives announced on Tuesday to mitigate exporters' difficulties and enhance the country's exports. It will remain in force from January 16 to June 30, 2018.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1307818>

WATER RESERVOIRS FACE 80 PERCENT SHORTAGE, SENATE BODY TOLD

Business Recorder, January 12, 2017

Three major water storage reservoirs of the country, including Tarbela and Mangla Dams and Chashma Barrage, are currently facing 80 per cent water shortage as compared to last year, forcing water cut in provincial shares against estimated water availability.

"Currently Tarbela Dam, the backbone of the country's irrigation sector is facing 78 per cent water shortage, Mangla 81 per cent and Chasma 79 per cent," said Tahir Anwar, Director General (DG) Federal Water Management Cell (FWM) of Ministry of National Food Security and Research. He was briefing the Senate Standing Committee on National Food Security and Research on situation of water availability for Rabi crop 2016-17 on Wednesday. The committee met with Senator Syed Muzafar Hussain Shah in the chair.

He said that according to water position on January 3, the country's three major storage facilities stored 1.375 million acre feet (MAF) of water. Out of the total, Tarbela stored 0.731 MAF of water, Mangla stored 0.630 MAF and Chasma 0.0143 MAF of water, he said.

Anwar further said that because of shortage of water in the country's main reservoirs, the water share of Punjab and Sindh province has been cut by 17 per cent each. The estimated water availability for Rabi season in Punjab is 16.311 MAF against average system usage of 19.751 MAF and Sindh 12.306 MAF against average system usage of 14.912 MAF. The average system usage for Rabi season 2016-17 for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is estimated at 0.701 MAF and Balochistan at 1.022 MAF, he said.

He said that irrigation water releases to the provinces during the last three Rabi seasons, including 2013-14, 2014-2015 and 2015-2016, against average system usage of 36.386 MAF are reported as 32.535 MAF, 33.100 MAF and 32.898 MAF respectively. The shortage during the same period are recorded as 11 per cent, 9 per cent and 10 per cent respectively.

However, he said that according to Indus River System Authority (IRSA), the available quantity of water will meet provincial requirements. A senior official of Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) while briefing the committee about agro-meteorology position in the country said that during the monsoon season (July-September 2016), the country as a whole received above 25 per cent normal rainfall. Dry conditions prevailed till December across the country and 88 per cent below than normal rainfall was recorded, he said, adding that provinces of Sindh and Balochistan remained completely dry during the aforesaid period.

He said that first winter rainfall spell occurred on January 3 and under the influence of this weather system, intermitted rain, thunderstorm and snowfall are expected over upper parts of the country on Saturday next. It would have positive impacts on Rabi crops, he said.

The official further said that in the second half of January, improved rainfall activity is likely over north Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab. Well distributed above normal rainfall is likely over most parts of the country during February and March, he said.

He further said that from October till December 2016, 5.63 MAF water has been received in Tarbela and 1.51 MAF water has been received in Mangla. Keeping in view the prevailing and expected meteorological conditions across the region, Tarbela is likely to receive 5 MAF and Mangala around 3.5 MAF till March 2017.

About withdrawal of cash subsidy on fertilizer sales, which was offered to the industry in the budget for fiscal year 2016-17 to provide support to farmers and the overall agricultural sector, Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research (MNFS&R) Sikandar Hayat Khan Bosan said that the amount which had been allocated in budget for fertilizer subsidy has been consumed. However, he said that the government knew its importance, therefore, thinking to revisit it.

He said that the withdrawal of subsidy on fertilizer will have no immediate impact over the prices of urea fertilizer as there is a sufficient stock of urea available in the country, while the General Sales Tax (GST) reduced by the government from 17 per cent to 5 per cent in the budget will remain intact till next budget. "Under the subsidy programme, sales tax had been reduced from 17 per cent to five per cent, which caused a reduction of Rs 184 in price of per bag of urea," he said.

The committee recommended the government to revisit the withdrawal of subsidy scheme. Bosan said that the committee needed to recommend reduction on General Sales Tax (GST) on urea and DAP and end of Gas Infrastructure Development Cess (GIDC) on fertilisers in order to reduce cost of production. "There will be no need of subsidy if the taxes on fertilizer are reduced and the GIDC is abolished," he said.

A senior official said that the price of urea fertilizer is high due to imposition of a number of taxes including GST at the rate of 17 per cent and GIDC. The overall tax quantum of GST was Rs 32.05 billion and GIDC was Rs 41.04 billion, it said.

Chairman Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), Dr Yusuf Zafar informed the meeting that PARC is preparing a project of Rs 2.2 billion for improving production of pulses in the country. "PARC will involve all provinces in this project and the government is likely to include it in the PSDP of the upcoming budget," he said. Senator Muhammad Mohsin Khan Leghari, Muhammad Zafarullah Khan Dhandla, Hamza, Brigadier (Retd) John Kenneth Williams and Muhammad Azam Khan Swati were present in the meeting.

<http://www.brecorder.com/agriculture-a-allied/183/122622/>

CENTRE ASKED TO GIVE FUNDS FOR INSTALLING TREATMENT PLANTS

Dawn, January 13th, 2017

KARACHI: Deputy Mayor of Karachi Arshad Vohra urged the federal government on Thursday to provide funds so that treatment plants could be installed and clean drinking water in sufficient quantity could be provided to Karachiites.

Briefing the media after the closing ceremony of the three-day water conference held at the Expo Centre, he said that the treatment plants should also be installed in industries so that untreated and raw effluent was not released from industries into the sewerage system / storm-water drains, etc, which eventually fall into the Arabian Sea harming marine life.

He stressed that the worn-out sewerage system in the city must be replaced.

Explaining the issue, he said that the sewerage system and water supply lines were laid years ago near each other and over the years both systems had been destroyed owing to which sewage was seeping into the water supply lines, contaminating drinking water.

The situation was leading to spread of various water-borne diseases, including diarrhoea, etc, and children were more vulnerable to such diseases, he added.

He said drinking water demand of the city, with an ever-increasing population, was growing and it could be met with installation of desalination plants; but the cost of these plants was enormous and the civic agency could not install them on its own so the governments — the federal as well as the provincial — were being approached to get the funding so such plants could be installed and water scarcity in the metropolis could be mitigated.

Referring to the water expo, he said that such exhibitions were important as these helped create and spread awareness among the masses of efficient use and conservation of water.

Responding to a question regarding the 100-day cleanliness campaign launched by the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation, he said that the civic agency had launched the 'symbolic' campaign in 18 union committees of the city to highlight the issue.

He said it was clear that the entire city would not become clean overnight or even after the completion of the campaign.

But the campaign had been launched to increase awareness of the issue and later it would be spread to other areas of the city and eventually the entire metropolis would become clean.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1308086>

WATER TREATY: UN, WB URGED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT VIOLATION BY INDIA

Business Recorder, 14 January 2017

HYDERABAD: The Sindh National Tehreek (SNT) have demanded of the United Nations and the World Bank to take notice of violation of Indus Basin Treaty by Indian government adding that negligence in this regard could trigger a war between the two countries.

The Chairman SNT Ashraf Noonari made such demand while addressing a big rally of the party workers, brought out from Gul Centre on Friday and later finished in front of Hyderabad Press Club where the participants staged protest demonstration against the policies of Indian government and also burnt the Indian flag as a mark of protest.

Ashraf Noonari lashed out at the role of Indian ruling party of irking Pakistan by making such decisions which could lead the war not only between the two countries, but said that it could also create unrest in the region and the world.

By building dams on rivers particularly on Indus River, the Indian government wants to create scarcity of water in Pakistan, the agriculture based country, he said and added that closure of water from Indian side is more dangerous than nuclear attack as such tactics could destroy the agriculture sector and create starvation in Pakistan.

He said that 80 million people of Sindh are ready to sacrifice if any move in this direction, made by Indian government as it become the issue of survival for them. After failure of stopping voice of the people of occupied Kashmir despite playing blood bath, the Indian government is now trying to stop water towards Pakistan by building dams on rivers, he said and demanded the United Nations and the World Bank to hold Indian government of its ill designed act of terrorism.

The central leaders of SNT including Lala Qurban Sodro, Dr Mir Allah Dad Talpur, Najeeb Ahmed Thebo, Dr Uzma Jokhio, Akhtar Sindhi and Jhangi Mallah attended the rally.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/01/14/2-page/839575-news.html>

SHAHBAZ VOWS TO PROVIDE CLEAN DRINKING WATER IN PUNJAB

Business Recorder, 14 January 2017

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif has said the Punjab government is determined to providing clean drinking water to 100 million population of the province and all out efforts are being made to achieve this objective.

“Khadam-e-Punjab Saaf Pani Programme has been evolved to ensure supply of clean drinking water to the whole population of the province and this project has been launched from Bahawalpur division of South Punjab,” Shahbaz said while speaking at a consultative seminar on provision of potable water to rural population at a local hotel. Delegates from China, Turkey, France, Europe, and the Middle East attended the seminar.

Shahbaz said the programme of clean drinking water would be implemented speedily to provide people the basic need of life. The programme was being implemented in a professional manner and cooperation of international companies was being sought in that regard, he said. “The government is very serious regarding provision of clean drinking water to the rural population.”

He said a comprehensive strategy would be evolved in the light of suggestions and proposals of participants of the seminar to advance programme at the fast pace. “To advance this project, the chief secretary, chairman planning and development and concerned secretaries are working round the clock to ensure provision of clean drinking water to the masses,” he said.

As many as 80 water purification plants are working in Bahawalpur district and the number of purification plants is being increased throughout the province.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/01/14/8-page/839647-news.html>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 2ND TO JANUARY 8TH 2017

GROWERS CALL FOR RELEASE OF WATER FROM MANGLA DAM

Dawn, January 2nd, 2017

HYDERABAD: Sindh Chamber of Agriculture (SCA) has expressed concern over shortage of water in the Indus river and urged the federal government to release water from Mangla dam to save Sindh’s winter crops.

The chamber leaders who met here on Sunday with SCA president Syed Nadeem Qamar in the chair said that many areas in the province were facing acute shortage of water during peak Rabi season, which would badly affect their standing wheat crop.

They warned if the water shortage persisted the harvest of wheat crop cultivated on around 2.8 million acres would shrink by 50 per cent. Water shortage crisis was caused by less precipitation and snowfall, leading to depletion in water storages in Mangla and Tarbela dams, they said.

They said that Sindh had already received its share of water from Tarbela dam which had now hit dead level. The situation demanded that Punjab should act like an elder brother and release water from the dam for Sindh to save its winter crop, he said.

They said that if the Punjab took the initiative to release water to Sindh, it would promote inter-provincial harmony. The federal government always released water out of Sindh’s share to meet Punjab’s needs and now when Sindh required water it should be reciprocated.

SCA urged the federal government to take stock of present situation in the wake of climate change are being more likely in future therefore it should come up with a comprehensive strategy for meeting such emergencies in future as well to save its economy.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1305845/growers-call-for-release-of-water-from-mangla-dam>

ANIMALS, HUMANS DRINK FROM SAME POND IN KAMBER-SHAHDADKOT

Hafeez Tunio

The Express Tribune, January 2nd, 2017.

Kamber-Shahdadkot: We are ready to provide a one-time meal but don't ask us for drinking water, says Qurban Chandio, who lives in a hilly area that falls in the Kirthar mountain range in Kamber-Shahdadkot district.

Potable water, which is a basic amenity that must be ensured for all residents by the state, is a distant dream for the locals of this area. Qurban lives in a makeshift shanty village in Karo Har area of Gabi Dero union council, which lies around 54 kilometres from Kamber town. As he travels around three kilometres on his donkey to fetch water, he doesn't seem perturbed by the fact that the pond from which he is collecting the water is shared by humans and animals. "All the wandering animals come here to quench their thirst," he says while scratching his head. "We also fill our utensils from the same pond for drinking purposes."

A few naked children bathe in the same pond from which animals and residents of the area quench their thirst. Meanwhile, a few women wash their clothes simultaneously as some sheep and cows drink from the pool. The fact that the same body of water — an accumulation of rainwater — is used for bathing, washing and is also accessible to animals for direct consumption raises questions on how safe the water is for humans.

According to Hawa Guramani of Sono Khan Chandio village, diarrhoea is a common disease among the children of the area. "This year, two children in our village had diarrhoea and vomiting and died on the way to the hospital," he shares.

Access to potable water is not the only problem looming large in the faces of people living in scattered villages, including Sono Khan Chandio, Seeta, Kehri and Shaallo. Donkeys and camels are the common means of transportation in the villages as not even a single road has been built in the neglected areas. The areas fall under the domain of provincial assembly seat PS-42 and National Assembly seat NA-206, from where chieftains of Chandio and Magsi tribes, Nawaz Sardar Ahmed and Nawaz Aamir Magsi, respectively, have been elected.

According to local residents, politicians, elected representatives and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have neglected their regions in similar manner. An elderly woman, Hawa Guramani, walks barefoot. "If nothing else, drinking water should be provided to us," she says. "I, along with other women of this area, have spent most of my life searching the sweet water wells and reservoirs as underground water is not fit for drinking." The abject poverty that these people live in reflects from their faces.

"It takes around a half day to reach district headquarter Kamber, which is hardly a one-hour drive of a car if roads are built," says a herdsman, Ghulam Mohammad Marfani. According to him, in cases of emergencies, they carry their loved ones on camels and donkeys to reach a nearby small town, Gabi Dero, wherefrom they get transport. "There is only one bus on this route, which leaves for Kamber early morning and comes back before sunset," he says.

Since the land is barren, people's source of income is mostly livestock. "We grow different kind of vegetables and crop when rain lashes this area," shares Marfani. However, he adds, lots of animals and people, especially children, die in the area due to malnutrition and drought, which hits the area every year. "No one takes notice," he laments.

When The Express Tribune tried to contact Nawab Aamir Magsi, he did not attend the phone. Meanwhile, Nawab Sardar Ahmed Chandio, the most influential person of this area, counted a number of initiatives on his part. "We have included some roads schemes in the annual development plan and provided water to those areas where contamination level is high," he said, adding that a few Reverse Osmosis (RO) plants have also been installed in nearby town so that people can get potable water.

"We have also started tanker service in some areas," he said, adding that the right bank outfall drain, which carries the contaminated water from Balochistan, has created a mess by contaminating the underground water. "The drain's poisonous water penetrates wherefrom it crosses," he said. According to him, the water crisis has worsened due to lack of rains in the area.

Shamshir Bhutto, the deputy commissioner of the area, said that he has recently taken charge and will probe into the problems. His assistant said that the district government has installed solar panels in these villages to resolve electricity and drinking water issue. He added that water pumping wind mills will be installed and this scheme is in the process of approval.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1281317/animals-humans-drink-pond-kamber-shahdadkot/>

US INITIATES PROCESS FOR RESOLVING PAKISTAN-INDIA WATER DISPUTE

Dawn, January 3rd, 2017

Anwar Iqbal

WASHINGTON: The US administration has initiated the process for peacefully resolving the current water dispute between India and Pakistan without waiting for an invitation to do so, official sources told Dawn.

The latest dispute concerns two hydroelectric power plants — Kishanganga and Ratle — that India is building on the Indus rivers system. Pakistan believes that the projects violate the design parameters of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), which provides specific criteria for such plants.

Earlier this week, US Secretary of State John Kerry called Finance Minister Ishaq Dar and discussed with him different options for an amicable settlement of the dispute. After the call, US Ambassador to Pakistan David Hale also met Mr Dar in Islamabad at the finance ministry for further talks.

The initiative stems from the fear the US administration shares with the World Bank that the dispute, if dragged, may harm the treaty that has effectively resolved water disputes between India and Pakistan for more than half a century.

The IWT is a water-distribution agreement between India and Pakistan, brokered by the World Bank and signed in Karachi on Sept 19, 1960. It recognises the bank as the main arbitrator and suggests appointing neutral experts and a court of arbitration for resolving disputes.

Pakistan has asked the World Bank to appoint chairman of the court of arbitration while India has demanded appointment of a neutral expert.

World Bank President Jim Yong Kim wrote to the finance ministers of India and Pakistan, informing them that he has ‘paused’ the requested arbitration and asked them to decide by the end of January how they wanted to settle the dispute.

On Dec 23, Finance Minister Dar told the bank that Pakistan was not withdrawing its request and since the process had already been “inordinately delayed,” the bank should appoint chairman of the court of arbitration as soon as possible.

Two days later, Dr Kim called Mr Dar for further talks, followed by Secretary Kerry who called the finance minister during the Christmas holidays.

It is unusual for a US official to do so, particularly because the Obama administration completes its final tenure on Jan 20.

Usually, the outgoing administration leaves such issues for the incoming administration to tackle.

“But seriousness of this dispute, particularly the fear that it may harm the treaty, forced Mr. Kerry to make this call,” an official source told Dawn.

Diplomatic observers in Washington say that since the United States has facilitated the Indus Waters Treaty, it feels obliged to take a proactive role in this matter.

The treaty requires appointment of chairman of the court of arbitration and its three members within 60 days after a disputing party asks for arbitration.

If the two countries fail to appoint umpires, the two parties prepare a draw of lots and request a “person” mentioned in the treaty to select the umpire.

While the chairman can be selected by either the secretary general of the United Nations or president of the World Bank, technical members can be selected from a draw of lots by president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology or rector of the Imperial College of Science and Technology, London.

The legal umpire can be selected from a draw of lots by either chief justice of the United States or lord chief justice of England.

Pakistan took its case to the World Bank in Sept 2016, urging the bank to prevent India from making illegal constructions on Neelum and Chenab rivers.

The differences on the designs of the two plants were discussed but could not be resolved in the 108th, 109th, 110th, 111th and 112th meetings of the Permanent Commission for Indus Waters, comprising one commissioner from each country, which is responsible for the implementation of the treaty.

Secretary-level talks followed but they also failed.

On Aug 19, Pakistan formally requested the government of India to refer the dispute to the court of arbitration, as provided in Article IX of the treaty.

The Indian media reported in September that New Delhi had decided to suspend water talks until “Pakistan-sponsored terror” in India ends.

And last month, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi also threatened to choke the flow of water into Pakistan if it does not stop terrorists. This caused Islamabad to fear that India was determined to complete the two plants and was buying time to do so by dragging the talks.

Pakistan wants a court of arbitration, instead of a neutral expert, because only the court can take a decision that’s legally binding.

An expert can only give a technical opinion, giving India more time to complete the projects.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1306011>

COMMISSION WANTS REPORTS FILED IN A WEEK ON WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION MECHANISM IN UPPER SINDH AREAS

Dawn January 3rd, 2017

KARACHI: A judicial commission set up to probe the allegations of non-provision of potable water to people as well as worsening sanitary conditions in the province, granted on Monday a week to the authorities concerned to file detailed reports on the efforts so far taken to improve the situation.

The commission headed by Justice Mohammad Iqbal Kalhoro of Sindh High Court had on a previous hearing summoned the provincial chief secretary, law secretary, managing director of North Sindh Urban Services Corporation (NSUSC), director general of the Sindh Environmental Protection Agency (Sepa), secretary of local

government department, secretaries of the public health and engineering and planning and development department and secretary of the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board to appear before the commission along with reports on Jan 2.

When the matter came up for hearing on Monday, additional attorney general Sindh Salman Talibuddin and advocate general Zameer Ghumro sought three weeks' time to seek detailed reports from the authorities concerned. But Justice Kalhor granted only a week observing that the commission had to wrap up the investigation within six weeks.

The commission also directed both the law officers to propose names of experts on the subject for their appointment as amicus curiae for assistance of the commission.

The commission provided a questionnaire containing 26 queries to the law officers and asked them to prepare the reports in their light.

It asked both the governments what were the modes, means and sources to supply clean drinking water to the people of Sindh and whether the Indus river was not a source of potable water to the province and whether its water had become poisonous and unfit for human consumption and had any laboratory tests been carried out before supplying river water to people.

The commission asked them to inform whether the subsoil or underground water was clean and fit for human consumption along with results of water sample tests carried out by renowned laboratories, adding that what was the statutory and supervisory role of Sindh government over bodies like the Water and Sanitation Authority (Wasa) and NSUSC, which were primarily responsible, among others, for providing clean drinking water and maintaining better sanitation conditions in their respective areas of operation.

The commission asked how much amount was being spent by the provincial government annually on supply of drinking water and improvement of sanitary conditions and how and where the sewage, effluent or waste were being disposed of in the major cities of the province, the waste management programme in each district and its implementation.

It asked the authorities concerned about the planning, projects or schemes started to treat disposal of pumping stations and if not then what was its adverse effect on human lives as well as environmental sustainability.

The commission questioned what role Sepa had played as provided in the Sindh Environmental Protection Act, 2014, adding whether the agency had conducted any study to determine adverse impact of non-provision of clean drinking water to people and consequences of the poor sanitation conditions on the ecology. It asked the agency's head to explain the causes if such exercise had not been carried out so far.

The inquiry commission also questioned the statutory responsibility of the provincial government in the whole scheme and what policies, initiatives, schemes and projects had been undertaken by the departments concerned to supervise and ensure unhindered provision of drinking water and prevalence of better sanitation conditions in the province.

The commission asked the authorities if there was any mechanism for accountability in the Sindh government of the officials found delinquent in performance of their duties to ensure provision of facilities of clean drinking water and improved sanitation.

The commission was constituted on the directive of a two-judge bench of Supreme Court headed by Justice Amir Hani to conduct probe into the allegations made in a petition over the failure of authorities concerned.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1306021/commission-wants-reports-filed-in-a-week-on-water-supply-and-sanitation-mechanism-in-upper-sindh-areas>

Zafar Bhutta

ISLAMABAD: Germany and United States-based companies are locked in a race to win a contract for providing converter stations that will be set up in Tajikistan and Pakistan for transmitting electricity under the Central Asia-South Asia (Casa) 1,000 power supply project through an energy corridor.

The Central Asia-South Asia Regional Electricity Market is envisaged to be developed in a phased manner through institutional arrangements and infrastructure building that will utilise Central Asia's power resources to tackle shortages in South Asia.

“In a fresh tender, four companies have submitted bids including US-based General Electric and Siemens of Germany, which have expressed interest in providing converter stations for their installation in Tajikistan and Pakistan,” a senior government official said.

One station each will be set up in Tajikistan and Pakistan. One year ago, bids had also been sought for setting up converter stations, which convert high-voltage direct current into alternating current or the reverse, but they were cancelled due to the high price offer.

All countries participating in the Casa project, which will bring electricity from Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan and Afghanistan, have invited separate bids for laying transmission lines in their territories.

According to the official, Afghanistan will lay transmission lines spread over 500 kilometres and has invited three bids for three different parts of the transmission lines.

In one of the three bids, Indian and Chinese companies have participated and their evaluation is under way. “There is a high possibility that the Chinese company will win the bid,” the official said.

He pointed out that third-party access rules had been framed for the Casa project, which would allow a third country, which was not part of the original project, to export electricity.

He said Pakistan was also eager to purchase thermal electricity as Tajikistan would be providing hydroelectric power for only five months in a year. No hydroelectric power will be supplied by the Central Asian states in the winter season.

Originally, three converter stations were planned to be set up as part of the Casa project. However, the number of stations has been brought down to two, which will reduce cost of the project.

Earlier, the Joint Working Group and the Intergovernmental Council of the Casa project met in Almaty in April 2016 to evaluate the sole bid received for establishing the three converter stations.

They noted that since the bid was very high and the countries that were part of the project had concerns about technical capability of the bidder, the three-station plan could be modified.

The regulator – National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) – has already approved a tariff of 9.41 cents per unit for electricity import from the Central Asian states.

This includes energy charges at 5.15 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh), transmission charges at 2.91 cents per kWh, transit fee for Afghanistan at 1.25 cents per kWh and wheeling charges for Tajikistan at 0.10 cent per kWh.

Already, Pakistan is importing 73 megawatts from Iran to meet the requirement of Gwadar at a cost of 6.25 cents per unit, which is higher than the 5.15 cents that will be paid to Tajikistan. The difference is because of the fuel as Iran consumes oil and gas for power generation while Tajikistan will supply hydroelectric power.

The total cost of electricity import from Iran amounts to 10.60 cents per unit. In Pakistan, gas is a cheaper source of power generation and it costs 5.33 cents per unit, but it is also higher than the 5.15 cents for electricity import from Tajikistan.

In Afghanistan, the power generation cost is estimated at around 6 cents per kWh.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1282215/casa-power-supply-project-german-us-firms-race-win-converter-station-contract/>

JUDICIAL COMMISSION ORDERS QUALITY TEST OF POTABLE WATER

Dawn, January 4th, 2017

KARACHI: A judicial commission looking into the issues of potable water and sanitation conditions in Sindh on Tuesday asked the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) for microbiological and chemical testing of water being supplied to the province's population.

The commission, headed by Justice Mohammad Iqbal Kalhoro of Sindh High Court, observed that in order to record precise findings, it had decided to call for test reports in respect of water samples (surface or subsoil water) to determine the quality of water being provided to the people.

The commission directed the council to test water of the areas, including Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Badin, Tandojam, etc, where its laboratories existed and submit its reports within the next 10 days.

The inquiry commission also issued directions that water samples be collected in the presence of the district and sessions judge and deputy commissioner (DC) concerned. It asked the officials to provide all logistical support to the council's staff in this regard.

On Jan 2, besides directing the authorities concerned to submit detailed reports regarding efforts to improve the situation within a week, the commission had also sought names of the experts to assist the commission. Earlier, it had also invited the organisations working on the subject as well as members of the general public to assist the commission in the proceedings by submitting their statements supported by affidavits.

At the outset of the Tuesday proceedings, Additional Attorney General Salman Talibuddin proposed the name of Dr Ghulam Murtaza Arain, a senior research officer of the PCRWR, while Additional Advocate-General Mohammad Sarwar Khan recommended the names of Idrees Rajput, the former irrigation secretary, Dr Ahsan Siddiqui, the man in charge of the Chilya Laboratory in Thatta, Bashir Ahmed Dahar and Dr Samiuzzaman.

On his part, petitioner Shahab Usto proposed the name of Dr Noman Ahmed, who heads the NED University's architecture department, for his expertise on the subject.

With the consent of all, the commission appointed Idrees Rajput, Dr Noman Ahmed and Dr Ghulam Murtaza as amicus curiae to assist it. The hearing was adjourned till Jan 9.

The commission was constituted on a directive of the Supreme Court's two-judge bench headed by Justice Amir Hani Muslim to look into the petitioner's claim about failure of the authorities concerned in providing clean drinking water, proper sanitation facilities and a healthy environment to the people of Sindh.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1306212/judicial-commission-orders-quality-test-of-potable-water>

WASHINGTON: The US State Department has reminded India and Pakistan that the Indus Waters Treaty has been a model for peaceful cooperation between them for more than 50 years and they need to continue using it for resolving differences.

“The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) has served, I think as you know, as a model for peaceful cooperation between India and Pakistan for now 50 years,” the department’s spokesman John Kirby told a news briefing in Washington. “We encourage, as we have in the past, India and Pakistan to work together to resolve any differences.”

The IWT is a water-distribution agreement between India and Pakistan, brokered by the World Bank and signed in Karachi on Sept 19, 1960. The United States facilitated the treaty, which had helped resolve several water disputes between the two neighbours.

The latest dispute concerns two hydroelectric power plants — Kishanganga and Ratle — that India is building on the Indus rivers system. Pakistan believes the projects violate the design parameters of the treaty, which provides specific criteria for such plants.

At his news briefing held on Tuesday, Mr Kirby confirmed that US Secretary John Kerry telephoned Finance Minister Ishaq Dar over the weekend and discussed the issue with him. But Mr Kirby avoided a straight answer when asked if Washington was mediating between India and Pakistan.

Asked if he had a readout of Secretary Kerry’s call to Mr Dar, the spokesman said: “I can confirm that he did speak on the 29th of December with Finance Minister Dar. I’m not going to read that out in any great detail”.

When a journalist asked him if the United States had offered to mediate between India and Pakistan on this issue, Mr Kirby said: “As I said, we encourage India and Pakistan to work together bilaterally to resolve their differences.”

“Has he talked to the Indians also on this issue?” the journalist asked again. “We’re in regular communication with the Indian and Pakistani governments on a wide range of issues. I just don’t have any more details for you,” the US official replied.

When another journalist asked if the United States had discussed this issue with India at the same level as it did with Pakistan, Mr Kirby said: “I don’t have any more detail for you.”

Diplomatic sources in Washington told Dawn that Pakistan had not asked the United States to help implement the treaty as the treaty gives this role to the World Bank. The IWT recognises the World Bank as the main arbitrator and gives it the power to appoint neutral experts or set up a court of arbitration for resolving water disputes between India and Pakistan.

Pakistan had asked the World Bank to appoint chairman of the court of arbitration while India had demanded the appointment of a neutral expert.

Last month, World Bank President Jim Yong Kim wrote to the finance ministers of India and Pakistan, informing them that he had ‘paused’ the requested arbitration and asked them to decide by the end of January how they wanted to settle the dispute.

On Dec 23, Mr Dar told the bank that Pakistan was not withdrawing its request and since the process had already been “inordinately delayed,” the bank should appoint chairman of the court of arbitration as soon as possible.

Two days later, Dr Kim called Mr Dar for further talks, followed by Secretary Kerry who called the finance minister during the Christmas holidays.

The State Department's reminder to India and Pakistan that the IWT had successfully resolved past differences between them stems from the fear that the current dispute, if dragged, may harm the treaty.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1306538/indus-treaty-model-for-peaceful-cooperation-says-us>

GOVT PLANS 10-PAISA PER UNIT SURCHARGE TO COVER NEELUM-JHELUM COST OVERRUNS
Dawn, January 6th, 2017

Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: The government is expected to impose 10-paisa per unit surcharge for all electricity consumers for at least 18 months to finance cost overruns of Rs500 billion Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project and extend Rs3 per unit reduction in power tariff for industrial consumers for six months.

A senior government official told Dawn on Thursday that a meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet has been called on Friday to approve two proposals moved by the Ministry of Water and Power following green signalled by the Prime Minister Office.

The official said the 10-paisa per unit surcharge was originally imposed in 2007 when the Neelum-Jhelum project cost was approved at Rs130bn with a sunset clause of Dec 31, 2015. It was envisaged that half of the financing would be generated through this surcharge on every unit of electricity sold to consumers in eight years.

The cost of 969-megawatt run of the river project in Azad Kashmir kept on increasing with latest estimates at Rs500bn for targeted completion in 2018. The 10-paisa per unit surcharge was extended for one year up to Dec 31, 2016 when the total cost was approved at Rs404bn early last year. So far, the surcharge contributed about Rs70bn.

However, the power ministry has now proposed to continue with the surcharge until June 2018 when the project may come into production. It expects additional revenue generation of about Rs15-18bn in 18 months, the official said.

The official said the cost estimates for the Neelum-Jhelum project had been jacked up four times since 2002 when the plant was projected to be completed at a cost of Rs84.5bn and was revised to Rs277.5bn in 2012 to accommodate changes in design and geography caused by 2008 earthquake. This was followed by revised cost approval of Rs404bn in 2015 then Rs500bn now.

As a result, the per unit cost of the project which was originally estimated at about Rs3-4 per unit is now being worked out at Rs12-13 per unit, the official explained. The 10-paisa surcharge is not applicable to consumers of K-Electric.

The project, located near Muzaffarabad in Azad Kashmir, was awarded to Chinese contractors in December 2007 and involved diversion of Neelum River waters to Jhelum river through a cumulative tunnel of about 68 kilometres.

The government is currently charging about Rs2.5 per unit of different surcharges on electricity rates over and above approved by the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Neptra) to cover inefficiencies in the system on account of debt servicing, late payments and tariff equalisation across the country etc.

To go beyond 87pc physical progress without financial closure — a prerequisite for any project to begin with — makes the strategic initiative, which is also meant to establish Pakistan's rights on the Jhelum waters, a rare venture.

The PML-N government was expecting the first unit of the project to become operational by July 2017, followed by subsequent units every quarter, to reach 100pc operation by January 2018, in accordance with the agreement signed with the Chinese contractor in December 2007. Work started in May 2009 and was to be completed in eight years.

The project is now expected to bring its first unit to operations at the end of February 2018 and the other three before the start of next summer, extending the completion date by seven months. The full capacity will be available for use by May 2018.

Tariff Cut For Industry: The ministry has also sought extension of Rs3 per unit reduction in industrial tariff announced by the prime minister in January last year for another six months i.e. June 2017. However, this lower tariff mostly goes against the industrial consumers because they are kept outside the purview of monthly fuel based tariff cuts.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1306634>

CHINESE FIRM ENCROACHED ON DOMAIN OF POLICY MATTERS: SC
The Express Tribune, January 8th, 2017.

Hasnaat Malik

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has observed that its rejection of a constitutional petition filed by a Chinese construction giant for participation in the bidding process of the 4,320MW run-of-the-river Dasu hydropower project as a bid to encroach into the domain of policy matters.

The Supreme Court's three-judge bench, headed by former chief justice Anwar Zaheer Jamali, has issued a written order regarding the rejection of a petition filed by the Power Construction Corporation of China Limited (PCCCL). The company's petition sought a direction for the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) against opening the result of the pre-qualification of the bidding for the construction of the project on Indus River in Kohistan district of the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P).

Earlier, the Lahore High Court had also rejected the company's plea.

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 the first stage of the project with a credit of \$588.4 million.

Representing the PCCCL, Advocate Salman Aslam Butt argued before the court that Wapda was not bound to act upon the recommendations of the World Bank because this was against the municipal laws, the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) rules.

Authoring the 23-page judgment, a member of the bench Justice Sheikh Azmat Saeed observed: "In our opinion, the constitutional petition filed by the PCCCL was not maintainable, as it sought to encroach into the domain of the policy matters in respect whereof the judicial restraint is to be exercised"

The verdict said the court does not totally agree with the interpretation as well as the guidelines, "as has been done by the high court by way of the impugned judgments but such an exercise is not necessary by this court (SC)."

Additional Attorney General Waqar Rana, who defended the federal government in this case, believes that this will be a landmark judgment, in which the SC has shown no interest in interfering in public policies. Legal experts do not appreciate judgments, wherein the court has interfered in financial matters particularly during former chief justice Iftikhar Chaudhry's era.

In its written order, the court said decision of Wapda not to agitate the matter further with the IDA at the behest of the Chinese company was not too difficult to discern. "It appears that a pragmatic commercial decision was taken not to jeopardise the funding from the IDA and thereby putting the entire project at risk," it said.

The court noted that in the instant case, the decision of the IDA to pre-qualify the Chinese company and make a 'reasonable request' for deletion of its name from the list of pre-qualified bidders is not the subject matter of the instant list, in as much as, the said decision and request by the IDA was not challenged in the constitutional jurisdiction nor was the IDA impleaded as a party to the proceedings.

“In the absence of any finding, in this behalf, it is legally impossible to adjudicate upon the reasonableness or otherwise of the ‘request’ by the IDA or to determine whether the respondent/Wapda was obliged to accede to such a request,” it said.

The court said if the loans are obtained from international financial institutions like the IDA, the same come coupled with conditionalities, which includes the mode and method of the award of contracts for the projects and the process of pre-qualifications of bidders.

“Such conditionalities are also catered for in the law, as is evident from Rule 5 of the PPRA Rules, 2004. Thus, obviously, the World Bank Guidelines, including paragraph 2(a) of the Appendix-I thereof and its enforceability and effectiveness are contemplated in law,” it added.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1287943/dasu-hydropower-project-chinese-firm-encroached-domain-policy-matters-sc/>

AGRICULTURE WOES: SINDH’S BARRAGES FACING 30% WATER SHORTAGE

The Express Tribune, January 8th, 2017.

Sukkur: All three barrages in Sindh – the Guddu, Sukkur and Kotri – are running with more than 30% water shortage. This is already affecting the last spell of Rabi crops and will have a negative impact on the early Kharif crops as well.

The closure of all seven off-taking canals of the Sukkur Barrage from January 6 to January 20 for annual repairs and maintenance might further complicate the situation.

All seven off-taking canals have been closed from midnight of January 5 and all the gates of the Sukkur Barrage were raised to release the water in the downstream to facilitate cleaning and oiling of the gates of the barrage and its canals. This practice is done every year, during which all the gates of the barrage and its canals are thoroughly inspected and greased. The filter blocks of the barrage and canals are also inspected and repaired if any faults are found.

Sukkur Barrage control room incharge Abdul Aziz Soomro told The Express Tribune that the gates of the barrage and its canals remain underwater throughout the year and therefore it is important to inspect and grease them for smooth operation. This operation will continue till January 20 and then all the barrage’s gates will once again be lowered at midnight, he said.

Talking about the closure of the canals, Soomro said, water is not needed immediately for the Rabi crop because the wheat crop does not need much water at this time.

“However, the standing wheat crop will require water next month and as we are already facing more than 30% shortage of water, it might affect water supply for irrigation purposes,” he explained. “Unless ample rainfall takes place in the catchment areas this month, the shortage will continue till the beginning of the Kharif crop season,” he warned.

According to him, the pond level at the Tarbella Dam on Saturday was 1,424.05 feet, the inflow was 18,700 cusecs and outflow was 7,500 cusecs. “Keeping in view the pond level of the dam, we can say that this pond level will be reduced to zero within a month, after which we will become dependent upon the flow of the river,” said Soomro.

On Saturday the upstream at the Guddu Barrage was 17,536 cusecs and the downstream was 7,580 cusecs, at the Sukkur Barrage the upstream and downstream was 12,904 cusecs and at the Kotri Barrage the upstream and downstream was 2,062 cusecs.

The North Sindh Urban Services Corporation (NSUSC) failed to take measures for the smooth supply of drinking water to the citizens. The jetty meant for sucking water from the left bank to the right bank has yet to be completed, despite the fact that millions of rupees have been spent on this project during the last four years.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1287672/agriculture-woes-sindhs-barrages-facing-30-water-shortage/>

February 2017

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM FEBRUARY 20TH TO FEBRUARY 26TH 2017

SINDH'S CONTAMINATED FRESHWATER SOURCES

Dawn, February 20th, 2017

Mohammad Hussain Khan

NALYSIS of water samples, conducted recently in Sindh, has revealed the presence of animal and human fecal matter in major freshwater bodies and the River Indus.

Similarly, the quality of groundwater, which is excessively used in agriculture sector, is also fast deteriorating in the province.

These findings are a grim reminder of the government`s failure to improve the supply of drinking water and decontaminate the water bodies.

And the latest water analysis has been done under the directive of the Supreme Court appointed, one-man judicial commission headed by Justice Mohammad Iqbal Kalhoro of the Sindh High Court.

A team of the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources had collected samples of water randomly from the River Indus and major canals of three barrages in different districts for testing.

According to the preliminary report of water sampling, municipal, animal, hospital and domestic waste is being disposed off into the River Indus and other freshwater bodies.

Though, water filtration plants exist in urban centres, the rural population is largely dependent on water from irrigation canals and distributaries for drinking and domestic use.

Along with water experts, Justice Kalhoro visited the entire Sindh to see the condition of canals, filtration plants and River Indus. The commission was apprised by districts authorities quite candidly that sewerage and industrial waste go into water bodies without treatment, turning these sources of water as part of the sewerage drains.

Data analysis also indicates that samples don`t meet the National Environmental Quality Standards (NEOS). According to a PCRWR officer, associated with analysis, the wastewater could be released under certain controlled values but in Sindh`s case, it is being directly thrown into freshwater sources. As this water is used in agriculture sector for crop cultivation, it affects the groundwater quality.

He said even freshwater pockets in Sindh are facing an imminent threat of turning brackish. Lands in the farm sector are already saline in many areas. He added that this contaminated water is used for producing vegetables and fruits.

The judicial commission appointed on a public interest litigation filed by Shahab Usto advocate, was to submit its detailed report by February 19. But now, according to Mr Usto, the commission is being requested to extend its period of working and information gathering so that the state of reverse osmosis which has emerged as another major problem, could also be discussed and covered in the commission`s recommendations.

Justice Kalhoro-led commission has also passed some directives in different districts which are likely to have a positive bearing on those areas. For instance, he directed Hyderabad's district administration to immediately close the slaughter house which was working on the right bank of Phulleli canal.

The blood of slaughtered animals was being released into the canal that serves as a source of freshwater supply to people of Tando Mohammad Khan, Thatta and Badin districts.

The commission expressed its surprise as to why a modern slaughter house is not being made functional and animals are being slaughtered on the bank of canals and at homes by butchers.

Complying with the commission's directive, the district administration has banned animals' slaughtering in different localities although it is still taking place in some areas.

Hyderabad Municipal Corporation is now working to make its modern slaughter house functional as soon as possible.

Referring to water quality analysis report, Mr Usto pointed out that PCRWR findings show that 82pc water of Sukkur, 79pc of Shikarpur and 88pc of Larkana is unsafe for drinking purposes.

He said hardly any filtration plant is satisfactorily working or carrying out chlorination in cities including Karachi and Hyderabad. He asserted that Karachi gets water from Keenjhar Lake that is fed by Kotri barrage's Kalri Baghar (KB) feeder.

KB feeder faces uninterrupted contamination after it emanates from the barrage as it gets municipal, hospital wastewater and effluent from Kotri's industrial area.

The Rs700m combined effluent treatment plant, set up at Kotri site, is not working properly. Now in the light of the commission's directive, a committee has submitted its recommendations on how to make the plant functional to save the KB feeder from contamination. •

http://epaper.dawn.com/DetailImage.php?StoryImage=20_02_2017_604_003

TAJIKISTAN'S HYDEL POWER PRODUCTION – A MODEL TO FOLLOW

The Express Tribune, February 20th, 2017.

Zafar Bhutta

Islamabad: Pakistan is currently working on the Central Asia-South Asia (Casa) 1,000 electricity import project. Under this arrangement, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan will export 1,300 megawatts to Pakistan and Afghanistan.

This is a pilot project that will open the energy market of Pakistan to other countries like Russia, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan.

Tajikistan, rich in hydroelectric power resources, has 4% of the world's and 53% of Central Asia's hydel energy resources. At present, the hydroelectric power potential of the country stands at 527 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh) annually, of which only 4-5% is used.

Tajikistan's energy sector has been recording sustainable growth for the last 15 years. Apart from big plants, 20 medium and 40 small hydroelectric power stations are running in remote mountainous areas, with capacity ranging from 5 kilowatts to 1,500 kilowatts.

Tajikistan recently announced that it would construct one of the biggest power plants called Rogun. Its construction will take time and when the dam is completed, it will become one of the main electricity suppliers not only in Tajikistan, but also to neighbouring Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Rogun will be the world's tallest dam of 335 metres with power production capacity of 3,600 megawatts and average annual production of 13.1 billion kWh.

In addition to the power projects, Tajikistan is working on sustainable development and integrated management of water.

The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on December 21, 2016 entitled "International Decade for Action – Water for Sustainable Development 2018-28", sponsored by 177 member-states of the world body.

Tajikistan President Emomali Rahmon launched the initiative during the seventh World Water Forum in South Korea. This initiative focuses mainly on sustainable development and integrated management of water resources for achieving social, economic and environmental goals.

It further focuses on cooperation and partnership at all levels in order to achieve internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, including those contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This is how Tajikistan is moving ahead to use water for power generation in an attempt to bridge the energy deficit and achieve economic development. This water management will offer an opportunity to Tajikistan to build more dams to generate electricity.

There are lessons for other countries like Pakistan that has huge water resources, but adequate work has not been done to construct new dams. Pakistan has mainly banked on two major dams over the past decades, which are Tarbela and Mangla.

Though the country has vast water resources, successive governments have failed to attach importance to utilising them in an efficient manner. For the past few years, floods have caused devastation across the country, still no heed has been paid to calls for building big and small water reservoirs.

This vital resource is not only used for drinking, but is also consumed for cheap hydroelectric power production and irrigating crops of agriculture commodities, which make a key contribution to the overall economic growth.

At present, total water storage capacity of Pakistan stands at 14 million acre feet (MAF) whereas its annual requirement is 117 MAF.

Officials believe 12 to 15 MAF goes into the sea every year because of lack of storages. A loss of 1 MAF has an impact of \$1 billion on the economy, this way Pakistan has been suffering a loss of \$12 to \$15 billion annually.

Of the two major dams, Tarbela was built in 1977 and its storage capacity has dropped to 6.4 MAF against earlier 9.4 MAF. However, Mangla Dam's capacity has been enhanced by 3 MAF to 7.4 MAF following a structure raising project.

Keeping this in mind, the government should embark on a fast-track campaign of building storages on the Indus River in order to provide water to those areas that count on supplies from the river.

It should build big reservoirs instead of focusing on small structures as it will lead to a marked reduction in oil imports for power production and electricity costs for consumers.

The electricity produced with the help of water costs only Rs1.5 per unit compared to average cost of Rs4.5 and Rs22 per unit for gas and diesel respectively.

Of late, the government has kicked off work on some hydel power projects like Diamer-Bhasha, Dasu and others. Their completion by the deadline will significantly transform energy landscape in the country with significant improvement in power production and water storage.

Pakistan and Tajikistan have close relations and they are already working on the Casa power supply project. They have formed the Joint Commission on Energy Cooperation and Pakistan should ask Tajikistan to share its experiences in developing hydroelectric power resources that is need of the time.

Otherwise, thermal power plants will make the situation worse in the future when energy prices will go up. Moreover, Pakistan needs dams to save its agriculture sector, which has recorded negative growth recently.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1332527/tajikistans-hydel-power-production-model-follow/>

SUJAWAL GROWERS FACE WATER CRISIS

Dawn, 22 February 2017

THATTA: Standing crops over hundreds of acres in the Darro, Bannu, Laiqpur and other areas of Sujawal are facing destruction while sowing of seasonal crops is also at stake as water channels in the district have not been receiving inflows from their respective sources for more than a month.

Growers and tillers of the areas told local reporters on Tuesday that they were facing a crisis-like situation because of unavailability of water, which was bound to cause heavy losses to them.

A delegation of growers (abadgars) comprising Prakash Lal, Haji Nawaz Gugho, Hussain Soomro, Haji Abbasi, Danish Shah, Zahid Memon and others told Dawn that Raj Wah, Bannu minor, Laiqpur Wah, Barahn Gazzo Shakh, Old Ganj Bahar and other water channels had dried up more than a month ago and there were no signs of supplies resuming as yet.

They said that a large number of growers and tillers of the district feared starvation due to this `artificial` water crisis, alleging that local irrigation officials were responsible for the situation.

They said most of the affected farmers cultivated sunflower, banana, cereals and vegetables.

They claimed that corrupt elements within the Darro subdivision office of the irrigation department had curtailed water supply to benefit some big landowners and feudal lords, who had installed their own pumping machines to draw the share of small growers and tillers from the dykes of various channels.

They said that if timely release of full supplies in the network was not ensured, the crisis would deepen in the next few weeks.

http://epaper.dawn.com/DetailImage.php?StoryImage=22_02_2017_119_003

GOVT URGED TO HELP END WATER SHORTAGE

Dawn, February 24th, 2017

HYDERABAD: Office-bearers of the Sindh Growers Alliance (SGA) have urged the Sindh government to help end acute shortage of water and ensure proper water supply in many areas of the province, including those of Rohri and Nara canals.

They also demanded of the government to open wheat procurement centres, fix official support prices of wheat and cotton at Rs1,500 and Rs4,000 per maund respectively, distribute gunny bags transparently, form committees of growers at district level to distribute gunny bags fairly, provide subsidy to growers to regain lost target of cotton and stop illegal rotation of water.

They were addressing a press conference at the local press club on Thursday. Alliance president Nawab Zubair Ahmed Talpur, general secretary Ali Palh advocate, vice president Mohammad Jawed Riar and others were present.

“We were a big exporter of cotton in the past, but for a couple of years, we are importing the commodity,” Ali Palh said.

He said there was an acute shortage of water in many parts of Sindh, including areas of Rohri and Nara canals, and Kotri barrage. Proper water from Rohri, Nara and other canals was not reaching the tail-enders. They said shortage of water would take a heavy toll on standing crops, sowing of new crops and national economy ultimately. On the pretext of lining of walls of canals, water was also being closed in some areas, he added.

He said the government must fix wheat rate of Rs1,500 per maund and open procurement centres in the province. If the rate was not fixed, growers would suffer a loss of Rs200 and more per maund as they would have to sell wheat at lower rates.

He also said the government must fix the rate of cotton at Rs4,000 per maund and provide subsidy to growers.

Nawab Zubair Ahmed Talpur said canals were annually closed from Jan 6 to Jan 25 or 26 for desilting, but it (closure) already took more than the given time. He claimed that there was no proper desilting of canals.

He said harvesting of wheat had already started in Mirpurkhas division while there was an acute shortage of water. He said rampant corruption in distribution of gunny bags was committed in previous years, especially in the past year. He said he was among many growers who had been deprived of gunny bags.

He warned that if gunny bags were not distributed transparently this time, growers would stage a rally against it.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1316590>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM FEBRUARY 13TH TO FEBRUARY 19TH 2017

MANAGING MEAGRE WATER RESOURCES

The Express Tribune, February 15th, 2017.

Talat Masood

The threat of water scarcity looms large in Pakistan, posing a threat to the country's security, stability and environmental equilibrium. India has threatened to set aside the Indus Waters Treaty that has been the cornerstone of division of water resources between the upper and lower riparian. The treaty even bore the brunt of two wars and several skirmishes between the two countries and yet managed to survive.

Wastage and improper utilisation of existing water resources is another area that needs our serious attention. What is not well known that India having the advantage of being the upper riparian is cleverly utilising the ground water to its advantage! In Pakistan, unlike India, there is absence of laws for ground water usage to ensure equitable distribution among provinces.

There is very little realisation of the importance of ground water and in the absence of regulation water table is decreasing at an alarming level. Experts are warning us that very soon 20% in Balochistan and 15% in Punjab underwater pumping will become impossible. Balance between extraction and recharge of ground water has to be maintained for maximum utilisation and preservation.

This would require both supply and demand side management. The unfortunate aspect is that in Pakistan most vulnerable communities facing water shortages are also the poorest. As the cost of pumping water from deep underground sources is more expensive it hurts the poor farmer the maximum.

Successive governments have focused more on development and less on management of water and this trend persists. Pakistan unfortunately has the lowest productivity in water usage and more so in ground water usage. From this it is apparent that we are applying outdated strategies in the utilisation and preservation of water resources.

Pakistan is also faced with the danger wherein in certain areas saline water is mixing with sweet water. An integrated approach to face these challenges is very much needed which would require good ground water governance. "LEAD" Pakistan, a major think tank, has undertaken several comprehensive studies and organised many seminars to raise awareness on water-related issues. There are few other think tanks, such as SDPI that are also focusing on these vital issues.

In contrast the government is not giving the attention that the looming water crisis deserves. The government needs to develop an exhaustive water policy and experts are of the view that in the absence of any clear guidelines Pakistan's interests could be compromised.

After the constitutional amendment water has become a provincial subject and there is less federalism in water distribution. Punjab is now dependent on Mangla Dam and the other three provinces get their share of water from Tarbela Dam.

The reservoir capacity of Tarbela and Mangla dams is only for 30 days of flow and that too is gradually diminishing due to sedimentation. It is important that there is absolute equity in the distribution of water to the provinces and it should be released on the basis of needs.

Aggravating the water challenge is the impact of climate change and global warming. The melting of glaciers is directly affecting the flow in the rivers. Our experts have been warning of this impending threat for many years but the government has failed to take any concrete measures to counter it. Equally important is to control population growth otherwise Pakistan's problems will continue to multiply and the water crisis will further aggravate. All this reinforces the need for integrated thinking and planning.

At the time of partition 21 million acres of land was under cultivation and now it has increased to 46 million. We are tapping about 74% of our resources, which is fairly satisfactory. But it is the shortage of reservoirs that is costing Pakistan dearly.

Moreover, there is extreme vulnerability of river flows between summer and winter. It is 84% in summer and 16% in winters. This big variation poses a major problem, giving rise to floods in summer and shortages in winters. The need is to build new reservoirs to reduce wastage and collect surplus flows.

Adding to our worries Prime Minister Modi has threatened to blow up the Indus Waters Treaty and block access to water from three Western rivers of Indus. The World Bank, which is the guarantor of the treaty, responded by announcing a pause in the arbitration of disagreement over dams being constructed in India. It was of the view that by doing so it would save the treaty.

The Indus River basin aquifer spans the two countries and when the Indians carry out excessive abstraction it results in starving the Pakistani side and lowering the water table. This in turn creates a favorable situation for Indian Punjab as water starts flowing to their side having a lower water table. This in turn adversely affects the water availability and quality on the Pakistani side.

Engaging with India on water and other issues has become very difficult. Prime Minister Modi has adopted a very hostile policy toward Pakistan. He conducted an orchestrated campaign to defame Pakistan at the regional and global level by using the UN and other regional forums but failed to muster broad support.

The LoC has remained volatile and Pakistan has countered it by strengthening its defences. All these measures having failed in pressuring Pakistan, India is now exploiting the lacunae's in the Indus Waters Treaty. He knows that Pakistan is water scarce and further restrictions on flow could put enormous pressure on it.

However, it may not be that easy to do away with the treaty or to divert waters of the three eastern rivers. Not only that it would be violation of international code of conduct but technically an extremely difficult task. When sanctity of treaties are violated then it could well open up a Pandora's box with China similarly exercising the option of diverting the Brahmaputra River!

Pakistan clearly faces multiple challenges and governance issues in managing its water resources. What it needs is good planning and management strategy for a better future.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1326900/managing-meagre-water-resources/>

FAST-TRACK CONSTRUCTION: NEELUM-JHELUM PROJECT TO BE LAUNCHED ON 28TH

The Express Tribune, February 16th, 2017.

ISLAMABAD: The Neelum-Jhelum hydroelectric project will be ready for inauguration by February 28, Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) chief said on Wednesday.

His remarks came at a special briefing for Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

A statement issued by the PM House stated that PM Sharif had tasked the newly-appointed Wapda chairman with speeding up the execution of crucial hydropower projects within their respective deadlines.

Last October, work was completed on the left tunnel connection of the Neelum-Jhelum hydroelectric project. By April 30 this year the right tunnel connection is expected to be ready.

The project's dry run test is scheduled for December this year while the wet test will be undertaken next February by initiating electricity generation, earning \$15 million in revenue.

The second unit of Neelum-Jhelum will become operational by March 15 next year while its third and fourth units will start functioning by April 15 next year, the chairman said.

Kachhi Canal Project, he said, is also being quickly executed. The project, according to him, will provide irrigation water to at least 72,000 acres of land in Dera Bugti upon its completion in August this year.

Acquisition of land measuring 9, 917 acres for the 2,160-megawatt \$4.3 billion Dasu hydropower project will be completed by May this year, he said.

Meanwhile, the prime minister is likely to perform the ground-breaking of main works on the Dasu project in June this year.

The Rs29. 077 billion Golen Gol hydroproject, which would have an installed generation capacity of 108MW, is to be ready by December 2017.

Producing thrice the energy needed for Chitral, this run-of-the-river project straddles the Golen Gol Nullah, a major tributary of the Mastuj River. The project will have a 3.8-kilometre-long tunnel.

The Tarbela Fourth Extension Project will boost the capacity of the project from 3,478MW to 4, 888MW, while the first unit of the extension would also be commissioned in December. Its second and third units, he said, are to be commissioned by the middle of 2018.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1328439/fast-track-construction-neelum-jhelum-project-launched-28th/>

UNSATISFACTORY: ONLY 30% FUNDS RELEASED FOR WATER, POWER PROJECTS

The Express Tribune, February 16th, 2017.

ISLAMABAD: Scores of water and power projects have slowed down as the government could so far release only 25-30% of funds allocated for financial year 2016-17, say officials of the Ministry of Water and Power.

Briefing the National Assembly Standing Committee on Water and Power that met on Wednesday under the chairmanship of MNA Muhammad Arshad Khan Leghari, the ministry officials said of a total of Rs216 billion for 173 projects, only 25-30% was released in the current financial year.

For the next year, Rs231 billion has been sought for 180 water and power projects.

The parliamentary panel was apprised about budgetary proposals for the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) for the next financial year 2017-18.

It endorsed all the proposals of power distribution companies and directed them to give top priority to completing the ongoing projects.

The panel was of the view that due to delay in completion of the projects, their costs had increased, causing a huge loss to the national exchequer. It also decided to approach the Finance and Planning Divisions for allocation of the proposed funds to the Ministry of Water and Power in the next financial year.

Additional Water and Power Secretary Hassan Nasir Jami told the parliamentary body that they had sought Rs150 billion for water projects under the PSDP for the next financial year 2017-18.

The allocation for water and power projects had dropped to Rs31 billion from Rs70 billion, he said, arguing that funds for water schemes were not enough to meet the requirement.

Jami pointed out that Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) wanted Rs46 billion for four water schemes and demanded Rs127 billion in the next financial year's budget for new schemes. K-P had four fertile districts but they were connected to an old irrigation system, he said.

Similarly, Balochistan has sought Rs18 billion for three schemes and needs an allocation of Rs91.8 billion for 18 new schemes.

Officials of the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) told committee members that the cost of mega Kachhi Canal project had jumped up to Rs80 billion compared to earlier Rs57 billion.

The committee members voiced concern over the cost escalation and made queries about accountability.

Sindh's chief engineer of irrigation pointed out that they had planned six projects for the harvesting of rainwater and for that they needed land. "Sindh requires Rs91 billion for new projects, but it has demanded Rs74 billion in the next financial year," he said.

He warned that the Sukkur Barrage would become useless in the next 10 years if the water reservoir was not rehabilitated. "Sindh has demanded Rs16 billion for the barrage which will enhance its life by 40 years."

Earlier, State Minister for Water and Power Abid Sher Ali briefed the committee on projects included in the PSDP for 2017-18.

He suggested that provinces should also bear responsibility and release matching grant to resolve the issue of fund shortage. He emphasised that the government had provided funds for re-gasified liquefied natural gas (LNG) power plants and Diamer-Bhasha Dam, which would play its role in meeting the government's responsibility.

He acknowledged that Pakistan was facing water losses and no new storages had been built over the years. He stressed that the people behind the delay in projects should be held accountable and awarded punishment.

Committee members proposed that a bill should be brought in that regard and a policy should also be framed.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1328216/unsatisfactory-30-funds-released-water-power-projects/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM FEBRUARY 6TH TO FEBRUARY 12TH 2017

MCI WANTS CLOSURE OF SERVICE STATIONS TO IMPROVE DOMESTIC WATER SUPPLY

Dawn, February 6th, 2017

ISLAMABAD: In a bid to enhance the supply of water to the domestic consumers, the Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation (MCI) has decided to close all unauthorised car washing centres.

In a letter, the directorate of water supply informed Mayor Sheikh Ansar Aziz that the car washing centres in various parts of the city consumed a huge quantity of water.

"All licences issued for car washing may be cancelled enabling this formation to ensure provision of water to the citizens besides stopping the non-conforming use of buildings," stated the letter written by director water supply Said Badshah.

It said opening of service stations had been permitted only in petrol pumps and the water supply network had been laid as per the designed capacity of each sector to meet the drinking water requirements of the residential and commercial areas.

But a huge quantity of water is being wasted by the service stations set up in various areas due to which the residents have to face a severe shortage of water, the letter added.

Sources said there were over 40 unauthorised service stations and car washing centres set up outside petrol pumps.

These stations were illegally awarded licences by the Directorate of Municipal Administration (DMA).

They said as per the CDA by-laws, a car washing centre could only operate in a petrol pump but the DMA issued licences to private individuals, allowing them to use drinking water for car washing.

On the other hand, the residents have been facing a severe shortage of water. Currently, the civic agency is supplying around 70 million gallons daily (mgd) water to the citizens against the demand of 211 mgd.

During the summer, the gap between the demand and supply widens.

Besides the car washing centres, a significant portion of water from the main conduction line of Simly Dam goes into the waste through leakages in the supply network.

“By closing all the unauthorised car washing centres, repairing the supply lines and making all the tubewells functional, we can overcome the water shortage to some extent.

“However, we have failed on all fronts,” said an official of the water directorate.

There is no water project in the pipeline except the Ghazi Barotha project from the Indus River which, if executed, will provide 100 mgd of water to Islamabad.

But the CDA/MCI have no funds to execute the project which requires over Rs50 billion.

Recently, the city managers decided to request the federal government to include the project in the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

When contacted, Mayor Sheikh Ansar Aziz, who is also the CDA chief, said all illegal car washing centres would be closed.

“Our main priority is to ensure provision of drinking water to the residents,” he said, adding that his team was also working on the Ghazi Barotha project.

“Currently, my team is conducting a survey of land for the project, which is the only solution to the water shortage in the city. We are also working to repair the pipelines,” he said.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1312984/mci-wants-closure-of-service-stations-to-improve-domestic-water-supply>

PAKISTAN TURNING INTO A WATER-SCARCE COUNTRY, SAY EXPERTS

Dawn February 6th, 2017

Amin Ahmed

ISLAMABAD: Leading experts on water resources are of the view that there is not sufficient awareness among the policy-makers of the impending water crisis in Pakistan, which is posing a threat to the country's security, stability and environmental sustainability.

Former chairman of the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) Shamsul Mulk highlighted water security issues discussed in a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report, 'Development Advocate Pakistan'.

Pakistan's water policy does not exist and key policy-makers act like 'absentee landlords' of water in Pakistan, he said. "Because of this absentee landlordism, water has become the property of the landlords and the poor are deprived of their share".

A draft report on water resources was framed at the expressed request of the ministry of water and power. Mr Mulk said it was unfortunate that the federal cabinet never allocated the time for its review and approval.

“The worst example of landlordism is in Sindh. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Pushtoon society is a lot more egalitarian. In general, landlords don’t want the poor to become economically self-sufficient to remain in power. So, this water issue is very political in nature,” he said.

Mr Mulk pointed out the extreme variability of river flows season-wise— 84 per cent of flows in summer and only 16pc in winter—as a major problem.

According to the report, with a Kharif to Rabi ratio of two to one, the seasonal needs were about 66pc in summer and 34pc in winter, showing surpluses of 18pc in summer and shortages of 18pc in winter.

The surpluses of summer create floods, inflicting major damages to the infrastructure in the Indus plains and shortages in water disable Rabi crops from its optional yields. Owing to the lack of a strong government, this disability continues to hurt Pakistan and its economy, said Mr Mulk.

According to Director General of Federal Water Management Cell of the ministry of national food security and research, Muhammad Tahir Anwar, 18 million acre feet (MAF) of rainwater or hill torrent potential have not been realised in the overall policy framework.

It is imperative that a comprehensive policy framework inclusive of river basin, groundwater and rainwater and hill torrents be developed and adopted to ensure sustainable use of scarce water resources, he said.

According to all indicators, Pakistan was rapidly becoming a water-scarce country, said Chairman of Pakistan Council of Research in water resources, Dr Mohammad Ashraf. However, there is little awareness of this looming disaster amongst stakeholders, particularly policy-makers and they cannot foresee the real picture of its repercussions on social and economic fronts, he added.

He said that the draft ‘National Water Policy’ should be approved which provides policy guidelines for sustainable management of water resources, adding that provinces should develop their own strategies within the framework of the national water policy.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1313054>

WATER SHORTAGE IN CHILAS PROTESTED

Dawn February 7th, 2017

GILGIT: The residents of Chilas town in Diamer district on Monday took to the street against shortage of water due to power loadshedding and lack of health facilities.

About 200 workers of various political parties and students demonstrated at Siddiq Akbar Chowk, and burnt tyres, blocking the road.

The protesters chanted slogans against the authorities for not taking notice of public issues.

Sharif Shah, a protester, said the town was sustaining electricity loadshedding due to which water shortage had become acute.

The protesters said power houses in the area were outdated, while there was no doctor in the government hospitals.

The protesters said that people were forced to consume contaminated water.

They lamented that the district administration was not serious in resolving these issues.

They warned of more protests if their demands were not met.-Correspondent

http://epaper.dawn.com/DetailImage.php?StoryImage=07_02_2017_007_002

SC COMMISSION'S HEAD UPBRAIDS THATTA OFFICIALS OVER NEGLIGENCE

Dawn February 7th, 2017

THATTA: A judicial commission, recently formed by the Supreme Court to probe the state's failure in providing clean drinking water and sanitation facilities to the people of Sindh, upbraided administration officials after witnessing poor state of water reservoirs, pumping stations and drainage system in Thatta and Makli on Monday.

The commission head, Justice Mohammad Iqbal Kalhoro of the Sindh High Court, expressed dissatisfaction over the performance of the departments concerned and remarked: "For what wrong over 200,000 population of Thatta and Makli are deprived of smooth supply of clean drinking water as 95 per cent of the towns' residents are compelled to buy water for daily use?"

Advocate Shahab Usto, whose petition was instrumental for the formation of the commission, also accompanied Justice Kalhoro besides water technologist Ahsan Siddiqui, Thatta district and sessions judge Abdul Naeem Memon, Hyderabad Commissioner Qazi Shahid Pervez, president and general secretary of Thatta Bar Association Advocate Punhoon Uqaili, Liaquat Jamali and others, during the judge's visit of water supply and drainage installations. The commission also collected water samples for laboratory examination.

Justice Kalhoro convened a meeting after the visit of citizens, lawyers and members of civil society in the court of district and sessions judge and inquired about the situation.

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Justice Kalhoro called Thatta DC Mirza Nasir Ali, engineer of special initiatives department Abdul Haleem Memon, Thatta chief municipal officer Qazi Fayaz and executive engineer of public health engineering department Noor Ahmed Jalbani and made them stand in the balustrade to respond to queries.

When Justice Kalhoro asked the officials why the administration had deprived over 200,000 population of clean drinking water and inquired about major water supply sources for the towns, the officers could not come up with a satisfactory reply.

The DC, however, gave a reluctant answer and said after a brief pause that K.B. Feeder was the main source of water supply but the petitioner, Mr Usto, and his colleague Mr Uqaili disputed the official's claim and said the towns were getting water from Sakro Branch, Jam Wah, Thatto Naali and Machki Naali, not from K.B. Feeder.

Councillor Ghulam Hussain and general secretary of district bar association Liaquat Jamari informed the commission that almost entire population was getting unfiltered and un-chlorinated water and a majority of residents were compelled to purchase water which was being supplied to them from Thatta outfall drain and saline water drain.

The officials finally disclosed that there was no filtration plant in Thatta and Makli, on which Justice Kalhoro observed that the bureaucracy had shown its traditional attitude towards the general public.

"You, the bureaucrats, don't even know the names of water supply sources to the towns under your care. You are in the habit of sitting in your offices and always engaged in making fake vouchers. Who has given you the right to deprive people even of clean water?" he asked.

He asked the special initiatives department officials about the number of reverse osmosis plants in the district but they, too, failed to respond, drawing the ire of the judge who directed them to immediately provide facts to the commission.

Justice Kalhoro directed to issue summons to the CEO of the Pak Oasis company, which installed the RO plants, and asked the commissioner to ensure chlorination of water being supplied to citizens.

He also asked the district and sessions judge to seek reports on the subject from the departments concerned.

The petitioner said that citizens of the historic towns were being supplied highly contaminated water which was causing hepatitis, diarrhoea and other waterborne diseases.

He said that he and his colleagues would move the National Accountability Bureau on the basis of final reports of the commission to call for probe into irregularities and corruption in the projects of water supply and drainage in Sindh.

The commission was scheduled to present its report to the SC within six weeks.

KHAIRPUR: The district and sessions judge Ghulam Shah visited water supply and drainage installations in the city on Monday under the directives of the SC commission and expressed dissatisfaction over quality of water being supplied to the citizens.

He collected water samples for laboratory tests and said its report would be sent to the commission.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1313194/sc-commissions-head-upbraids-thatta-officials-over-negligence>

HDA WORKERS DECIDE TO STOP WATER SUPPLY TO CONSUMERS

Dawn 7 December.2017

HYDERABAD: The Hyderabad Development Authority Employees Union (CBA) has announced that workers will stop water supply to consumers in the city on Tuesday in protest against non-payment of their four months` salaries and the authorities`indifferent` attitude towards their other demands.

A large number of HDA workers, including those serving with its subsidiary, the Water and Sanitation Agency (Wasa), held a sit-in outside the local press club for a third consecutive day on Monday to press the institution to accept their demands.

During the sit-in, from 10am to 4pm, they kept raising slogans against HDA and Wasa heads, the district administration and Sindh government while CBA leaders were delivering their speeches.

CBA president Bahram Khan Chaang announced that all five filter plants of Wasa would be kept closed from 8am to 4pm on Tuesday and the scope of the protest would be extended if the demands were still not accepted. CBA general secretary Abdul Qayyum Bhatti told the media that the other demands including payment of pension to around 560 retired workers, disbursement of six months` wages to contractual and work-charged employees, and payment of all other dues to workers, besides reinstatement of many laid-off employees.

He said the CBA decided to go for closing down the plants after its meetings with heads of the HDA and Wasa broke down.

http://epaper.dawn.com/DetailImage.php?StoryImage=07_02_2017_119_002

PROTESTING WORKERS DISRUPT WATER SUPPLY IN HYDERABAD FOR SALARIES, DUES

Gohar Ali Khan

HYDERABAD: Hyderabad Development Authority (HDA) workers on Tuesday stopped water supply to consumers in the city from 8am to 4pm in protest, causing a water shortage and other related hardships to citizens.

Led by their collective bargaining agent (CBA), they were protesting against non-payment of salaries, pension and other dues. A call for the agitation was given by CBA president Bahram Khan Chang on Monday.

He said workers would continue their agitation by stopping water supply to the city from 8am to 4pm on Wednesday as well.

The protesting workers, including those of the HDA's subsidiary Water and Sanitation Agency (Wasa), held a meeting at Latifabad and Jamshoro water filtration plants and held sit-ins at both places to press the authorities concerned to accept their demands. They vowed to widen the scope of their protest if their demands were not met immediately.

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Leading the demonstration at the Jamshoro filtration plant, Mr Chang along with CBA general secretary Abdul Qayyum Bhatti said that no officers of the HDA, Wasa and district administration bothered to speak to them during the day-long protest on Tuesday.

Expressing workers' grievances, they said they underwent severe financial problems for want of salaries.

They slammed the Sindh government and departments concerned that were paying no attention to the issues of workers.

The CBA leaders said that various departments of the Sindh government owed over Rs2 billion to Wasa in terms of monthly water, sewerage and service charges bills as Wasa issued bills worth Rs35 million to these departments each month. But the Sindh government was reluctant to pay dues and monthly bills, they added.

They suggested to the HDA and Wasa administration to get those dues and deposit them in the bank for monthly profit over the amount and in the meanwhile, they should ensure receipt of monthly bills regularly so that the issues of salaries and pensions of Wasa employees could be resolved permanently.

"Wasa needs Rs60m to pay salaries and pensions and to run the system each month while it acquires over Rs20m from commercial and domestic consumers in terms of bills. The federal departments do not pay over Rs15m for monthly bills regularly," Abdul Qayyum Bhatti told Dawn.

Meanwhile, when contacted, Wasa managing director (MD) Masood Juman said that he agreed to the demands of the CBA. He said HDA director general Qazi Shahid Pervez had written to the Sindh chief secretary and local government secretary to ensure those payments, but the Sindh government's finance department was putting hurdles in the way of payment of salaries, pensions and other dues.

He said he had also given his comments in favour of the CBA.

"Wasa is not begging; this is the right of Wasa in terms of monthly utility bills. But it is sad that they are not being paid so far," he said, adding that it was very difficult to run the system under these circumstances when Wasa was unable to pay salaries and ensure maintenance of damaged lines properly.

Hyderabad city faced a shortage of water as Wasa already fails to fulfil demands of the city properly in normal days.

“Wasa supplies 60 MGD (million gallons per day) to consumers daily while Hyderabad consumers need 128 MDG. We are trying to expand the system to meet the requirement,” a senior officer of Wasa said.

The CBA has appealed to the Sindh government to pay four-month salaries and pensions to 850 regular employees of Wasa and 560 pensioners; ensure payment of six-month salaries to 1,300 contractual and work-charged employees of Wasa; pay pending general provident fund, gratuity, and commutation of other workers; implement son and deceased quota and to reinstate laid-off workers of HDA’s three units forthwith.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1313334/protesting-workers-disrupt-water-supply-in-hyderabad-for-salaries-dues>

CDWP APPROVES 258% INCREASE IN COST OF KACHHI CANAL PROJECT

Islamabad: The government on Tuesday approved a further increase in the cost of Kachhi Canal project to Rs80.5 billion, up a whopping 258%, despite admitting that the scheme is plagued by several technical shortcomings and an illustration of lacklustre implementation and ill-planning.

It was the second revision in the project’s cost in less than four years, which the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) approved without looking at findings of an inquiry conducted by a former chief justice of Pakistan into allegations of corruption in the mega project.

Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal chaired the CDWP meeting.

The CDWP also approved almost 25% increase in the cost of Chashma Nuclear Power Plants III and IV. The revised cost of the power plants is now Rs233.9 billion, up Rs44 billion.

The 630-megawatt Chashma III has already become operational while Chashma IV, having a similar generation capacity, will start running by October this year.

The Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission had sought an increase of Rs29.2 billion in the cost of these projects on account of exchange rate impact. An additional Rs5.7 billion was approved for auxiliary contracts while Rs3.4 billion was cleared for change in the scope of work.

Of the Rs44 billion additional cost, Rs14.7 billion will be given from the Public Sector Development Programme.

The cost of power plants also rose because of increase in salaries of employees, high utility bills, increase in prices of vehicles and high rates of duties and taxes.

Both the Kachhi Canal and Chashma power projects will now go to the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecne) for final approval.

General Pervez Musharraf-led government had approved the project at a cost of Rs31.2 billion in 2003 for irrigating 713,000 acres of land in Balochistan. The plan envisaged provision of 6,000 cusecs of water to Balochistan districts through the construction of a 500km-long canal from the Taunsa Barrage, Punjab.

However, the project suffered since the beginning due to the irregular award of contracts and compromises on the quality of work. The PML-N government reduced the scope of the project from 713,000 acres to just 72,000 acres and still the cost went up 258% from the original cost of 2013.

It was the second revision in the cost and scope of the project by the PML-N government and that too without addressing its shortcomings.

The government first revised the cost to Rs57.6 billion in December 2013 and made the second revision on Tuesday without taking the culprits to task.

Some high-ranking officials of the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) were involved in corrupt practices, according to officials privy to the findings of investigations.

“The project is a troubled venture facing an ongoing inquiry into technical soundness and financial transparency by a committee constituted by the Council of Common Interests,” said the project documents.

“Several technical shortcomings have been identified during the technical and financial audit of the project,” they said. The project has become an illustration of lacklustre implementation and ill-planning, according to the documents.

The Kacchi Canal project is not the only case facing serious financial issues as the Neelum-Jhelum project has also met a similar fate. Its cost has swelled to Rs500 billion from just Rs274 billion.

The Planning Commission found shortcomings even in the revised project but still the CDWP approved it.

Against the Rs4 billion allocation for new contracts in the 2013 revision, the CDWP on Tuesday sanctioned Rs12 billion. For engineering and administrative expenditures, Rs7.4 billion was approved, up from Rs1.2 billion in 2013.

According to an understanding reached between the Ministry of Water and Power and the Ministry of Planning and Development, Wapda will operationalise the project by August this year by providing water for 55,000 acres of land.

The planning ministry will release Rs10 billion in the next three months to support the construction work.

Wapda will certify the irrigation of 72,000 acres by December 2017 and the planning ministry will release Rs13 billion in the next financial year 2017-18.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1319686/cdwp-approves-258-increase-cost-kachhi-canal-project/>

‘VIOLATION OF INDUS WATERS TREATY WILL CREATE INSTABILITY IN REGION’
Dawn, February 9th, 2017

Jamal Shahid

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a consultation on Pakistan’s water challenges urged the government to protect the Indus Waters Treaty which they said India is violating.

“Pakistan has not made a strong statement. India must refrain from engaging in war for water. The Indus Waters Treaty is more than an agreement on water, it ensures peace. Violation of the [treaty] will create chaos and instability in the region,” said defence analyst Lt Gen Talat Masood.

Speaking at the National Consultation on Pakistan’s Water Challenge on Wednesday, Lt Gen Masood said India has been using water as a weapon to isolate and harm Pakistan.

“[Violating] the Indus Waters Treaty will have serious consequences. All [issues between] India and Pakistan should be solved on the table. India’s attempts to malign Pakistan in the world have failed and it has now resorted to another tactic, that of threatening to cut off Pakistan’s water,” he said.

Dialogue is the only way to solve the water issue between India and Pakistan, said State Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Marriyum Aurangzeb.

“A breach of the treaty will have severe consequences for both India and Pakistan. The Indus Waters Treaty pertains to the common development of the Indus River basin and protects both the upper and lower riparian. Dialogue, and not hostility, is the solution,” the minister said.

She added that Pakistan is reviewing the treaty to identify the loopholes which threaten the country’s water sustainability. The minister added that the Pakistan Water Policy is in the final stages and has been sent to the Council of Common Interest for final approval. The policy focuses on addressing water related challenges.

Other speakers said the wastage of water is a bigger problem than its availability.

Some of the speakers said climate change will lead to shortage of water in Pakistan in the near future, now that the monsoon is moving from Pakistan to Afghanistan.

However, though there was a lot of discussion on policies, no one spoke about treating waste water and saving rain water.

Dr Pervaiz Amir of Global Water Partnership, which promotes water management, urged the government to ensure class A agricultural practices are followed as agriculture is the country’s biggest sector and used the most water.

Simi Kamal, an expert in water management, said that with the average global temperature and our population on the rise, we need a long term water plan and also the will and money to implement it.

She said the trust deficit among stakeholders is threatening the country’s security, stability and environmental sustainability.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1313610/violation-of-indus-waters-treaty-will-create-instability-in-region>

MANAGING RESOURCES: TIME TO START TURNING THE TAP OFF

The Express Tribune, February 9th, 2017.

Imran Adnan

LAHORE: To avoid wastage of water and increase revenues, the Punjab government is mulling over installing water meters in five large cities of the province at an estimated cost of Rs7.94 billion.

Water and sanitation agencies (WASAs) of Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan, Rawalpindi and Gujranwala will start installing the meters in the current financial year, official documents available with The Express Tribune show.

The project has been included in the medium term five-year plan and will be funded through the annual development programmes (ADP) from 2016-17 till 2019-2020.

Lahore WASA Deputy Managing Director (Engineering) Chaudhry Aftab Ahmed said the agency had submitted its proposals to the Punjab Planning and Development Department and would start rolling out the project after approval and provision of funds.

Punjab Housing and Urban Development Deputy Secretary Moazzam, in a meeting held for deliberations on the project on Wednesday, said the proposal was presented in the pre-PDWP (Provincial Development Working Party) in which the department had asked for some clarification about the project. “Hopefully, the project would be presented in

the upcoming PDWP meeting scheduled to be held on Tuesday,” he added. Documents indicate the water supply metering project will help agencies in increasing their revenues and improve service delivery.

The water agencies of the five cities are currently operating on a fixed tariff system for water and do not have the actual estimate of usage. The fixed tariff also results in negative effects like wasteful water use and difficulty in billing according to the received amount of water.

Under the flat tariff regime, consumers do not bother to avoid water wastage. Hence, the areas at the end of the supply system (tail areas) receive lower pressure that ultimately causes water shortage.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1321014/managing-resources-time-start-turning-tap-off/>

INDIA TO LOSE IF IT BREACHES WATER TREATY: MINISTER

The Express Tribune, February 9th, 2017.

ISLAMABAD: Urging the Modi government to stop politicising the water issue with Pakistan, Minister of State for Information, Broadcasting and National Heritage Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Wednesday that India will be a net loser if it violated the treaty.

Speaking at a national consultation on ‘Pakistan’s Water Challenges’, she said that the government was formulating a comprehensive strategy to deal with challenges facing the Indus Waters Treaty.

“India itself will suffer if it violates the Indus Water Treaty ... Instead of politicising the issue, it must adopt a policy of dialogue,” she said.

The treaty was brokered by the World Bank in 1960, which survived three wars and many bouts of tensions between the two neighbors. It governs the distribution of water from six rivers between Pakistan and India.

The treaty’s fate is uncertain ever since Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi threatened to ‘review’ it in the wake of simmering tensions between the two countries.

Pakistan, however, is adamant that India cannot unilaterally revoke the water accord.

Recently, the head of WB visited both Pakistan and India to ensure that the situation did not deteriorate.

The minister of state said that the government believed in reaching out to its neighbors, including India. “We want amicable solution to all problems with India,” she said, adding that despite Indian belligerence, Pakistan was showing restraint and acting in a responsible manner.

Aurangzeb pointed out that both countries’ economic progress was linked with the treaty.

She said that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif believed in politics of consultation and reconciliation. “Therefore, he will consult with all political parties on water issues,” she said.

After 17 years, she said, the government had decided to carry out census this year because it was crucial for assessing population and devising strategies to overcome challenges.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1321187/india-lose-breaches-water-treaty-minister/>

KACHHI CANAL PROJECT: SUMMARY TO BE MOVED TO PM FOR APPROVAL OF RS80.4BN
ADDITIONAL FUNDS

Naveed Butt

ISLAMABAD: A special summary will be moved to the Prime Minister for approval of Rs 80.4 billion additional funding for Kachhi Canal Project, it is learnt.

According to sources, the Central Working Development Party (CDWP) on Tuesday discussed the second revised PC-I of Kachhi Canal Project and approved it, in principle, with the condition that (i) a special summary will be moved to Prime Minister's office seeking approval of additional funding for Kachhi Canal Project and (ii) the cost of the project will be rationalized to a reasonable limit.

The sources revealed that the Chief (Water Resources) of Ministry Planning, Development and Reforms (PD&R) presented the working paper of the project in the CDWP meeting for discussion. The Chief (Water Resources) submitted that first revised PC-I of the project was approved on 31-12-2013 at a cost of Rs 57,562 million. However the project could not be completed within the approved time and cost owing to multiple reasons including frequent variation orders/claims, limited working hours due to precarious law and order situation and improper work sequence.

He said that second revised PC-I of the project was discussed in a consultative meeting held on 01-02-2017 under the chairmanship of Secretary, PD&R which was attended by Secretary, Ministry of Water & Power and Chairman, Wapda. Therein, it was assured by Wapda that project could be completed for 55,000 acres by August 31, 2017 provided that Rs 10 billion during the current financial year is released to the project. In addition, Wapda agreed to certify that 72,000 acres of land will be brought under irrigation by December 31, 2017 for which Ministry of Planning, Development & Reforms will release Rs 13 billion in next financial year.

The sources said Adviser (Development Budget) pinpointed that it was literally impossible for Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform to arrange such a huge amount out of the meager budget for the water sector due to unavailability of fiscal space. Secretary, Ministry of Planning, Development & Reform apprised that a summary would be moved to Prime Minister's Office seeking approval of additional funding for the project.

The sources said Ahsan Iqbal noted that the unprecedented increase of cost from Rs 57.6 billion to Rs 80.4 billion lacked a cogent reason. Secretary, Ministry of Water & Power admitted that the project was ill planned without a proper feasibility and haphazard approval accorded during military regime led to a number of issues culminating in an abnormal increase in cost. However, the project should now be brought to a meaningful and logical end so that intended benefits may be accrued, it was argued.

The sources said that on a query by the Chair, Chairman Wapda assured that project will be completed by August 31, 2017 for 55,000 acres and by December 31, 2017 for 72,000 acres subject to release of requisite funds.

Chief (Water Resources) reportedly submitted that performance of consultants in this project was a question mark despite exorbitant consultancy charges of Rs 900 million. There must be a proper check on the consultants and further payment must be coupled with their performance, he said.

The sources further said the representative of Government of Punjab submitted that Kachhi Canal Project had some implications for DG Canal due to improper hill torrent management. Chief (Water Resources) responded that Kachhi Canal Project after its completion would act as a first line of defense for DG canal and hill torrent management project of Government of Punjab will further help resolve these issues.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/02/09/3-page/848058-news.html>

SINDH, BALOCHISTAN FORM JOINT BODY TO RESOLVE INTERPROVINCIAL WATER ISSUES

Habib Khan Ghori

KARACHI: The governments of Sindh and Balochistan have constituted a joint committee comprising secretaries of irrigation from both provinces to study ways and means to resolve their water-related issues and remove encroachments from their common canal systems for smooth supply of irrigation water.

This decision was taken at a meeting held here between the two chief ministers, Syed Murad Ali Shah of Sindh and Sanaulah Zehri of Balochistan.

Former prime minister Mir Zafarullah Jamali, who specially attended the meeting, raised the interprovincial issues between Sindh and Balochistan on behalf of the Balochistan government. The issues included short supplies of water in Pat Feeder and Khirthar Canal, removal of encroachments from Pat Feeder canal embankments, pumping of drainage effluent into Khirthar Canal, delay in timely completion of RBOD-III projects and inequitable distribution of Hub Dam storage (water) between Sindh and Balochistan.

Besides CM Zehri and former premier Jamali, the Balochistan side was represented by Mir Jan Mohammad Jamali, adviser Haji Khan Lehri and MPAs Mir Dostain Khan Domki, Tariq Magsi, Majid Abro, Mir Asim Kurd and Izhar Hussain Khoso. Secretary irrigation Balochistan Saleem Awan was also present.

The Sindh CM, who also holds the portfolio of irrigation minister, responded to the issues raised on behalf of Balochistan. He was assisted by provincial ministers Mir Hazar Khan Bijarani, Manzoor Wassan, Dr Sikandar Mandhro, Jam Mehtab Dahar and secretary irrigation Junaid Memon.

Both CMs agreed to hold another high-level meeting in Quetta in March to review the progress of the decisions taken in Thursday's meeting.

Regarding the complaint of short supplies at Pat Feeder and Khirthar Canal, the Sindh CM said Balochistan got water mainly through Pat Feeder Canal off-taking from Guddu Barrage and Khirthar Canal of North-Western Canal off-taking from Sukkur Barrage.

Besides that Balochistan is also getting water from Uch which has design discharge of 700 cusecs, and Manuthi Canal, having design discharge of 600 cusecs, off-taking from Desert Canal and from more than 50 direct outlets with design discharge of about 727.55 cusecs.

Mr Shah said there was no complaint or little concern regarding supplies of water from Guddu Barrage and if water supplies from direct outlets might be accounted for in Balochistan's share, Sindh was supplying more water than the share earmarked in the water accord.

However, he said, it was a fact that there were some complaints of shortage of water in Khirthar Canal from Sukkur Barrage because a pond level had developed at Sukkur Barrage, therefore North-Western Canal and Dadu Canal could not draw their full discharge. As a result, the entire system in Sindh and Balochistan suffered water shortage.

The Sindh chief minister proposed to constitute a two-member committee comprising secretaries of irrigation of both provinces to study the ways and means to solve this issue.

The Balochistan chief minister welcomed the decision and said: "We both are brothers and hope that all issues would be solved amicably." The Sindh chief minister hosted lunch for the visiting Balochistan delegation and presented them with mementos, ajraks, caps and CDs of Sindhi music.

JUDICIAL COMMISSION FINDINGS: 'CHLORINE BEING USED IN MIRPURKHAS FILTRATION PLANT IS 12 YEARS OLD'

The Express Tribune, February 10th, 2017.

Hyderabad: The water filtration plant in Mirpurkhas has been using 12-year-old chlorine, which was then provided by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (Unicef), to kill bacteria.

The disclosure was made by Jawad Zahoor, the incharge of water supply, before the Sindh High Court's (SHC) judicial commission on water, which conducted hearing in the Mirpurkhas district and sessions court on Wednesday.

"... 12 years back, chlorine was provided by Unicef, which [the] municipal committee has been using over the years to chlorinate the water," Zahoor informed the single-judge commission, headed by Justice Muhammad Iqbal Kalhoro.

He told the commission that he assumed the charge in 2009 and was given 100 packs of chlorine by the previous incharge, claiming that he has been managing with that scant supply ever since.

According to deputy commissioner Mehdi Ali Shah, 1.5 million people live in the district among whom, around 330,000 live in Mirpurkhas city. They are supplied drinking water through two filtration plants, which carry water from East Jamrao and West Jamrao canals. Two other plants in the district are defunct.

The water expert, Dr Ahsan Siddiqui, who is assisting the commission, told The Express Tribune that chlorine loses its power to kill bacteria and other microbes from drinking water if exposed to moisture or open environment. "The bleachability of 12 years [old] chlorine may have reduced to around 10% or may be two to three per cent."

The judge also visited East Jamrao filter plant. "... the claim of the district administration about filtration and chlorination was found false," the judge wrote in the commission's report. "The clarifier [settling tank used for sedimentation] was not in working condition and the filter beds were as dry as [the] desert."

The civil surgeon of Mirpurkhas Civil Hospital, Dr Asghar Ali, informed the commission that the hospital is supplied water through two reverse osmosis (RO) plants. However, upon inquiry he admitted that the hospital neither conducts water quality tests nor they have ever carried out any maintenance of the RO plants since they were installed around eight years ago.

"The undersigned [judge] visited Civil Hospital, Mirpurkhas. The RO plants were in a dilapidated condition and in one of the water tanks attached with the plant ... a dead lizard was seen floating," the judge observed.

The representatives of district bar association and other citizens complained before the judge that the housing schemes and buildings are being allowed to be built in the absence of town planning in Mirpurkhas.

Taking notice that Hyderabad Electric Supply Company (Hesco) has not provided electricity connection for the filtration plant of Umerkot district, the commission ordered the Hesco chief to appear before the judge on February 13 to explain the inordinate delay.

The commission, tasked to find facts of water supply and sanitation, was formed on the Supreme Court's order in a petition filed by advocate Shuhab Usto. The judge conducted hearings and inspected water supply, drainage and waste disposal mechanisms in Thatta, Badin, Tharparkar, Umerkot and Mirpurkhas districts from February 6 to 8.

At the Misri Shah RO plant in Mithi taluka of Tharparkar, which was built at a cost of Rs7.5 billion, the judge observed that only the chemical test of water is being conducted regularly. However, no physical or microbiological tests are being done.

“There was no meter or any other yardstick to gauge how much water was actually being produced,” the judge noticed. The plant, built and operated by Pak Oasis Company in January, 2015, is said to have two million gallons per day capacity. The company’s official, Abdul Wahid Khan, informed the judge that they are supplying 900,000 to one million gallons per day, charging Rs160 per 1,000 gallons from the government.

“... supply of that much quantity every day is a simple guess work of the technical staff and on the basis of this guess work, Pak Oasis is charging Rs160 [per] 1,000 gallons ... and the government is paying the said amount without even checking the company’s claim.”

The commission was also informed that some 778 RO plants are either installed or are being installed in Tharparkar, all by the Pak Oasis Company. However, only 412 among them are working. Another 150 are non-functional, 92 are under construction and proposals for 118 are lying with the government for approval.

The company’s official, Muhammad Irshad, told the commission that they charge Rs160 per 1,000 gallons for 81 big RO plants and Rs20,000 per month for the small RO plants.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1321806/judicial-commission-findings-chlorine-used-mirpurkhas-filtration-plant-12-years-old/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JANUARY 30TH TO FEBRUARY 5TH 2017
SCA SUPPORTS SINDH ASSEMBLY’S STANCE ON PROVINCE’S RIGHT ON WATER
Dawn January 30th, 2017

HYDERABAD: Supporting views of Sindh Assembly members over provincial water rights, a meeting of the Sindh Chamber of Agriculture (SCA) observed that they truly reflected growers’ aspirations.

The SCA vowed to support parliamentarians whenever they would protest over water rights of Sindh.

The meeting, held here on Sunday under chairmanship of Qabool Mohammad Khatiyani, observed that the 1991 Water Apportionment Accord and Indus Water Treaty had affected Sindh badly as those treaties led to water shortage in Sindh. It said that on account of water shortage, Sindh was not able to get its due share of water for sowing crops.

It said sea intrusion was increasing in the absence of adequate flows downstream Kotri barrage. Sea had devoured agriculture land in the coastal region. It said that such situation had attained alarming proportions and if remedial measures were not taken immediately, sea would stomach the entire farmland in the coastal belt. It feared that not only this, but the entire cities of Badin and Thatta would be devoured by sea intrusion.

The meeting alleged that Punjab always robbed Sindh of its water share, but now people of Sindh would not tolerate this.

There would be no bargain with the federal government or Punjab over water issue as it was a matter of life and death for people, the participants said.

The meeting demanded release of 10MAF water downstream Kotri barrage, which was recommended following a survey by international experts to check sea intrusion.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1311556/sca-supports-sindh-assemblys-stance-on-provinces-right-on-water>

MANAGING PUNJAB'S WATER RESOURCES

Dawn, Business & Finance weekly, January 30th, 2017

Amin Ahmed

Punjab is to put all water-related organisations, including the Punjab Irrigation Department, under one umbrella — the Water Resources Department.

The Punjab Irrigation Department — set up as far back as 1849 — has been handling issues beyond its mandate and reach, such as integrated water resources management (IWRM) and water-related disaster risk management.

Several changes have occurred in irrigated areas during the last six decades. Water logging and salinity, land degradation, poor drainage, shallow groundwater (which meets 40pc of irrigation water demand) and increased disaster risks.

The Asian Development Bank and the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction have approved a technical assistance for the institutional transformation of the Punjab Irrigation Department to the Water Resources Department.

ADB will implement technical assistance in close consultation with the irrigation department during the January 2017 — December 2019 period. According to Amjad Saeed, Head of the Project Management Office in the irrigation department, the process began this month as per schedule with the recruitment and mobilisation of consultants.

The irrigation department official said all water related institutions and bodies, including the agriculture department, fisheries and even Wasa will come under the umbrella of the new water resources department.

Once water resource management is put in place, the Punjab assembly will approve an act to enforce levies, cost recovery, and licensing practices by 2019.

An ADB document says that piecemeal efforts of irrigation reforms by the bank and partners during the 1998-2013 periods were not successful. Therefore, a comprehensive policy and institutional review and a complete transformation of Punjab Irrigation Department into a responsive water resources department are required.

Punjab's mid-term development framework (2015-18) prioritises reliable irrigation supplies, enhanced agricultural productivity, improved rural economy, and broad-based institutional reforms.

During the 36-month period, water resources development plans including the organisational structure of the new entity will be developed. The Punjab government will approve allocations for the Water Resources Department in its budget for 2019-20 to make the water body operational.

When asked as to why such a lengthy process will be required for the new department, Mr Amjad Saeed said that some legal procedures involved in the process for preparing legal framework for institutional transformation from PID to WRD.

The technical assistance involves developing a basin-based integrated water resources management approach; reviewing ongoing irrigation and drainage reforms; and establishing a hydraulic structures safety evaluation unit.

The World Bank initiated irrigation and drainage reforms through sector investment project and policy loans. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) also supported the implementation of irrigation reforms in some canal command areas.

ADB has been supporting the reforms through the ongoing multi-tranche financing facility for the Punjab Irrigated Agriculture Investment Programme. The new technical assistance will review all these reforms, and related plans and actions, and will integrate them as appropriate into the transformational process into a water resources department.

The ADB and Japanese assistance will help develop a framework and action plan for institutional transformation, and contribute to the sustainability of the investment programme. However, the assistance will not be able to support the complete modernisation of the WRD for which a separate loan will be required to support the medium- to long-term needs of the institutional transformation, ADB document explained.

Punjab's irrigation system is controlled through fourteen barrages constructed on the river Indus and its tributaries Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi and Sutlej under various projects constructed in the eighteenth century.

According to ADB, best international practices of change management will be thoroughly analysed by the government, ADB, and the consultant team before recommending any new ideas for transformation.

The creation of water resources department is also aimed at preparing a water vision and 10 to 20 years investment programmes. The technical assistance will also help develop a water resources information system using satellite-based remote sensing technology and a geographic information system for cost-effective monitoring, evaluation and management of water resources.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1311462/managing-punjabs-water-resources>

WASTEWATER USE IN AGRICULTURE

Dawn, Business & Finance weekly, January 30th, 2017

WITH food demand and water scarcity on the uptick, it's time to stop treating wastewater like garbage and instead manage it as a resource that can be used to grow crops and help address water scarcity in agriculture.

Properly managed, wastewater can be used safely to support crop production — directly through irrigation or indirectly by recharging aquifers — but doing so requires diligent management of health risks through adequate treatment..

How countries are approaching this challenge and the latest trends in the use of wastewater in agriculture production was the focus of discussions by a group of experts last week in Berlin during the annual Global Forum for Food and Agriculture.

The event was convened by FAO along with the United Nations University, Institute for Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH), the UN's Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation and the Leibniz Research Alliance Food and Nutrition.

“Although more detailed data on the practice is lacking, we can say that, globally, only a small proportion of treated wastewater is being used for agriculture, most of it municipal wastewater. But increasing numbers of countries — Egypt, Jordan, Mexico, Spain and the US, for example — have been exploring the possibilities as they wrestle with mounting water scarcity,” says Marlos De Souza, a senior officer with FAO's Land and Water Division.

“So far, the reuse of wastewater for irrigation has been most successful near cities, where it is widely available and usually free-of-charge or at low cost, and where there is a market for agricultural produce, including non-food crops. But the practice can be used in rural areas as well — indeed it has long been employed by many smallholder farmers,” notes De Souza.

The important thing is that wastewater be managed adequately and safely used in a way that is appropriate to local conditions, he adds.

An alternative source of a critical resource Water is of course fundamental for food production, and the intensifying scarcity of this important natural resource — likely to be more intense in a context of climate change — has very significant implications for humanity's ability to feed itself.

Globally, population growth and economic expansion are placing increasing pressure on freshwater resources, with the overall rate of groundwater withdrawals steadily increasing by 1pc per year since the 1980s. And those pressures are now increasingly being exacerbated by climate change.

Already, agriculture accounts for 70pc of global freshwater withdrawals — with demand for food estimated to grow by at least 50pc by 2050, agriculture's water needs are poised to expand.

Yet demand from cities and by industries is on the rise as well.

Greater use of non-conventional, alternative sources of water — including the urban effluent and farm-runoff — can help mitigate this competition, if properly treated.

In addition to helping cope with water scarcity, wastewater often has a high nutrient load, making it a good fertiliser. "When safely used and managed to avoid health and environmental risks, wastewater can be converted from a burden to an asset," De Souza says.

Managing risks Untreated wastewater often contains microbes and pathogens, chemical pollution, antibiotic residues, and other threats to the health of farmers, food chain workers, and consumers — and it also poses environmental concerns.

A number of technologies and approaches exist that are being utilised around the globe to treat, manage, and use wastewater in agriculture, many of them specific to the local natural resource base, the farming systems in which they are being used, and the crops that are being produced.

In Egypt, for example, where water supplies are limited and wastewater tends to be highly contaminated, constructed wetlands are proving to be a promising, economically viable approach to treatment. In Egypt and also in Tunisia wastewater is being widely used in agroforestry projects, supporting both wood production as well as anti-desertification efforts.

In Central Mexico, municipal wastewater has long been used to irrigate crops. In the past, ecological processes helped reduce health risks. More recently, crop restrictions — some crops can be safely grown with the wastewater, while others cannot — and the installation of water treatment facilities have been added to the system.

In Jordan, reclaimed water represents an impressive 25pc of all total water use in the country.

In the US, treatment and managed aquifer recharge is a common practice, especially in the West.

Beyond helping tackle the problem of water scarcity, reducing environmental contamination, and supporting food production, infrastructure and management systems for reclaiming, treating, and re-using wastewater can be job creators, according to De Souza.

The Global Forum for Food and Agriculture, organised by the German Federal Ministry for Food and Agriculture (BMEL) takes place every year, bringing together high-level decision makers, technical experts, researchers and farmers to discuss pressing issues affecting agriculture worldwide.

The Forum's theme this year was 'Agriculture and Water — Key to Feeding the World'.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1311463>

SOME 300 WATER FACILITIES FAULTY ACROSS K-P

The Express Tribune, January 30th, 2017.

Izhar Ullah

PESHAWAR: Despite the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf led provincial government's claims, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa faces acute shortage of water as 318 Water Supply and Sanitation (WSS) Schemes across 25 districts of the province are either dysfunctional or damaged.

Documents available with The Express Tribune reveal that Karak district faces the most shortage with a total of 43 WSS schemes out-of-order and the locals are forced to bring water from far-flung springs or rivers.

After Karak, a total of 32 WSS schemes are dysfunctional in Lakki Marwat district while 13 schemes are damaged each in Peshawar, Newshehra and 22 are not working in Charsadda.

In Tank, locals are forced to consume water from ponds for washing clothes, dish washing and even for drinking purposes.

A resident of Tank Ahmad Shah said that for many years the residents were using water from the same ponds animal used for drinking.

He lamented that Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) had always been voted into power from Tank, Karak, Lakki Marwat and other southern districts but they [JUI-F] are yet to address the water issue.

The officials of the Public Health Department in respective districts blamed low electricity voltage for the damaged water schemes. They said the department concerned has time and again informed them about the water issue but it has yet to be resolved.

The issue has also been raised in the provincial assembly by Mufti Saeed Janan. Janan told the house there are various reasons for the damaged WSS schemes including overdue motors used in them.

"The tube well machinery has a lifespan of 10-15 years in every WSS scheme and it should be replaced after this period but most of the damaged schemes have machinery installed of many decades which is not properly working."

Additionally, other schemes were damaged in various districts owing to natural disasters but have not yet been replaced.

The K-P government each year in its Annual Development Programme allocates budget to make damaged WSS schemes functional but the issue is yet to be resolved.

When contacted, Minister for Public Health Engineering Shah Farman did not respond.

<http://tribune.com.pk/story/1311012/water-shortage-300-water-facilities-faulty-across-k-p/>

PFA COLLECTS WATER SAMPLES FROM DIFFERENT AREAS OF LAHORE

Business Recorder, 31 January 2017

LAHORE: The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) has started collecting water samples from different areas of the provincial metropolis aimed at ensuring provision of clean drinking water to the masses.

The Authority's field teams collected samples of water being provided through WASA, TMA, Cantonment Board and other sources.

According to the information, Nishtar Town team collected water sample from WASA filtered water plant situated in Gulistan Colony on Ferozepur road, TMA filter plant in Shaukat Colony and TMA water plant in Fazal Park Shaukat Colony Shahdara. Wagha Town team collected water samples from water filtration plant in Mushtaq Colony and Main Sandha Road. Teams also collected water sample from Lahore Water Plant in Zeenat Block Iqbal Town and directed the owner to follow the directions issued to it earlier.

Clean and Clean Water Filter Plant situated in Kashmir Block and Divine Water Plant of Johar Town were also checked and samples were taken for further analysis.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/01/31/9-page/845722-news.html>

UNDP SEES PAKISTAN'S NEGLECT BEHIND LINGERING OF WATER DISPUTES WITH INDIA

Dawn, February 2nd, 2017

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) says that Pakistan's negligence in conducting a sound analysis of trans-boundary water issues and delays in presenting the cases of dispute with India to the Indus Water Commission or the World Bank on the issues related to the Indus Waters Treaty have caused the issues to linger on and remain unaddressed.

Focusing on water security situation in Pakistan which is the most critical development challenge for the country, a UNDP report points out that awareness about trans-boundary water issues is a recent phenomenon and systematic studies are needed in this regard.

The report titled "Development Advocate Pakistan" was released by the UN global development network on Wednesday.

According to it, an increase in water stress in the basin states since the early 90s has brought the treaty under strain. In fact, its survival appears weak, although there is no exit clause. The treaty fails to address two issues: the division of shortages in dry years between India and Pakistan, when flows are almost half as compared to wet years, and the cumulative impact of storages on the flows of the River Chenab into Pakistan.

The Wular Barrage and Kishenganga project on the Jhelum and Neelum rivers present a similar problem whereby water storage during the Rabi season is critical as flows are almost one-fifth of the Kharif season.

The report says that Pakistan has gone as far as calling the treaty an inefficient forum for resolving water issues, elevating the water issue to a "core issue" and including it in the composite dialogue. But India has refused to include the issue in the composite dialogue because it is not ready to discard the treaty.

The treaty permits India to create storages on the western rivers of 1.25, 1.60 and 0.75 million acre feet (MAF) for general, power and flood storages, respectively, amounting to a total permissible storage of 3.6 MAF.

The report says: "A clear ambiguity in the treaty occurs in its permission to be interpreted differently, thereby creating conflicts between Pakistan and India. The treaty also fails to clearly address India's share of shortages in relation to storage dams on the western rivers, an issue of major concern."

As a consequence of climate change, shrinking glaciers and changing precipitation patterns render the need to address issues of water scarcity and resources, it says. During floods, for example, majority of the water runs into the rivers of Indus-Pakistan which leaves the province of Sindh flooded. Such negative setbacks on the economy will eventually have dire consequences if not addressed, the report warns.

It says that with control of the River Chenab through the Salal dam, India has several plans under way for development of hydropower with enhanced water storage on the western river. Pakistan continues to face reduced flows from the Chenab owing to the recent storage of water in the Baglihar dam.

According to the report, annual flows in the Chenab during wet years have continued to decline since 1958-59 with an increase in droughts since 1937-38. Same is the case with the River Jhelum being controlled by India. Since the river is a major source of irrigation and hydropower for Pakistan, it will pose dire impacts for the country if India chooses to close the gates of the barrage.

Although the treaty does not allow Pakistan to prohibit construction of hydropower dams by India, it grants it right to voice issues regarding Indian developing strategy on water storage during dry periods.

Although Pakistan benefits from international legal frameworks for water resources management, it is largely dependent upon the treaty for resolving trans-boundary water conflicts with India, it points out.

In its conclusion, the report says that water has been a highly politicised issue in Pakistan and there is an extreme deficit of trust among the provinces. The trust deficit is largely due to a lack of access to data and information. It suggests that popular papers should be prepared along with posters and stickers for creating mass awareness. Without awareness, water cannot be made a 'business for everyone'.

It says that past efforts to create a single central data repository have been unsuccessful owing to data collection being conducted by a mix of several agencies in the federation and provinces. The solution lies in developing a decentralised database by different agencies, followed by centralising the database by feeding the data into one single central data repository. The federal statistics division will be the pertinent authority to take charge of coordination and networking in this regard.

With an increase in the demand and variety of water uses, its quality is now a growing concern, the report says. Therefore, standards for water quality need to be developed for all subsectors of water use. There is a need to develop an inventory of water quality for surface and groundwater to represent all the major ecosystems and environments, ranging from wet mountains to the Indus basin, barani lands, deserts and the coast.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1312231>

MURAD URGED TO ORDER AVAILABILITY OF WATER IN THAR'S RANN MINOR

Hanif Samoon

Dawn February 2nd, 2017

MITHI: Reminding Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah of his promise, people of Thar desert living in three union councils (UCs) have asked the CM to order the functionaries concerned to provide water in Rann minor off-taking from Jumrrayo Canal.

Talking to Dawn, people of the UCs — including Bhittaro, Kaloi and Mohrano — deplored that water in the lined Rann minor had not been provided for the past many years due to which over 50,000 acres of fertile land had turned barren, forcing landowners and farmers to migrate to other areas in search of livelihood.

They were of the view that the PPP government 'punished' its own voters who lived in the areas where anti-PPP people like the Arbab family lived.

They said the area right from Naukot town to the village of Dodo Jat in Kaloi taluka had turned into desert due to unavailability of irrigation water in the only irrigation outlet of Tharparkar district.

They said that soon after taking oath, Murad Ali Shah promised to ensure availability of water in the outlet for both irrigation and drinking purposes “but his promise is yet to be materialised”.

“On one hand the PPP government is spending millions of rupees on reverse osmosis (RO) plants and other projects to provide water in Thar while on the other irrigation officials had stopped water to a vast area,” said Arbab Lutfullah, a leader of the Arbab group.

He said that not only had their fertile lands turned barren but thousands of acres of poor farmers’ land had also been devastated due to man-made drought.

He said that when their irrigation channel used to get water as per designed capacity, the irrigated areas were providing food and fodder to inhabitants and their animals of Thar desert during droughts.

“Finding no other option, small growers and farmers are forced to pump out water from the Left Bank Outfall Drain (LBOD), which has not only increased salinity and water-logging in the area, but dykes of the drain are also getting weak at various points,” added a local farmer, Wali Nohrio.

Mr Nohrio shared that the practice of getting water from the LBOD for cultivation of crops had brought about a massive disaster in 2011 when the LBOD had developed breaches.

Another farmer, Hafeez, said irrigation officials were reluctant to release water down in the channel from the regulator at Naukot town. He lamented that their area, which was once famous for orchards and farmlands, had turned into ruins due to the terrible artificial water crises for some years.

Ahmed Dal, Chaudhry Suhail Ahmed, Raffique Ahmed Nohrio and other growers made fervent appeals to the high-ups to take notice of their plight.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1312173>

WATER SHORTAGE TO HIT RABI CROPS DESPITE RAINS

Dawn February 2nd, 2017

Mohammad Hussain Khan

HYDERABAD: Close to 20 per cent water shortage is likely to hit the ongoing Rabi season in Sindh despite the snowfall and recent rains in various parts of the country.

Seven canals branching off from Sukkur barrage remained closed till Jan 30 for de-silting of its right pocket. Indents have been submitted for three of the canals — Rohri, Nara and North-Western — but water is not being released by the barrage administration due to the de-silting work, which is to continue for another couple of days.

Sukkur barrage feeds large swathes of Sindh’s agricultural lands on the right and left banks of the mighty Indus. Indent of 6,000 cusecs, 3,000 and 2,000 cusecs have been submitted to the barrage management for Nara, Rohri and NW canals, respectively, says a barrage official.

Initially, 18pc water shortage was assessed by the Indus River System Authority (Irsa). If the current cycle of rains continues intermittently, it might offset impact of water shortage in the farm sector. Otherwise, it may increase to 26 to 27pc.

“Sukkur barrage’s canals will be opened in February when the actual ratio of water shortage will be assessed and dams’ position will also become clearer as to how much flows are being withdrawn from both dams, Tarbela and Mangla,” said the official.

Sowing of wheat crop was completed last month. Farmers do not rule out an adverse effect on crops if water shortage persists or becomes somewhat severe. The grain starts reaching market in lower Sindh areas like Mirpurkhas as summer crops are sown relatively at an early stage of Kharif season there. Growers fear that health of crops like banana and mango would be at stake as well if water availability is affected during the Rabi season.

Fertiliser supply, backed by flows of irrigation water, is to be made to mango orchards in February. It is the period when trees start flowering and fruits enter the setting stage. Healthy flowering and fruit-setting leads to better per-acre yield. Likewise, banana orchards need fertiliser and water in February. Belated water supplies always affect banana, say growers. February-March is the period when wheat crop is at grain-formation stage.

Irrigation officials say that until Jan 3, the storage levels of Mangla and Tarbela remain at 1,100ft and 1,412ft, respectively. According to a Sukkur barrage official, if 1ft to 1.5ft of water is released daily, the situation is considered normal till January but actual assessment will be made in February, when demands for major canals is to increase. Rohri canal’s lining, which was continuing in a piecemeal fashion, was not done this season during the annual closure of barrage for maintenance.

Sindh Abadgar Board (SAB) vice president Mahmood Nawaz Shah refers to reports about unusual withdrawals from dams by the Wapda authorities for power generation. “Principally, it is agriculture sector which is to be given priority in water distribution,” he says.

Mr Shah, speaking to Dawn, feared a 40pc shortage if there were no rains considering the fact that demands for water flow, soil temperature and rate of evaporation would increase from February onwards.

Irsa chairman Mazhar Ali Shah had told Dawn a few days back that a minimum 12pc and maximum 26pc shortage in the Indus river system was earlier assessed by his institution but now it appeared that it would be less than 26pc. “There will be 2MAF of water in two dams on Jan 30 — Mangla will have 0.9MAF and Tarbela 1MAF,” he said.

Till the second week of January, he said, both dams were a few feet above storage level than what otherwise was anticipated by Irsa. He added that so far provinces had borne 10pc water shortage. “We can now safely say that the shortage will not be more than 17pc and water will be available for early Kharif sowing in the lower Sindh region,” he said.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1312161/water-shortage-to-hit-rabi-crops-despite-rains>

PAKISTAN RISKS RUNNING ITS WATER RESOURCES DRY

The Express Tribune, February 2nd, 2017.

Sehrish Wasif

Islamabad: A UN agency put Pakistani authorities on notice that current water shortages could have a drastic impact on the country if the problem is not addressed well in time.

A report compiled by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in December 2016 – a copy of which is available with The Express Tribune – said that the per capita designed live water storage capacity available in Pakistan is 121 cubic meters per person which is only higher than that of Ethiopia.”

Titled: ‘Development Advocate Pakistan: Water Security in Pakistan, issues and challenges’ it says: “Pakistan’s water profile has changed drastically from being a water abundant country to one experiencing water stress. Increasing demand for water and its erratic supply together are resulting in water shortages.”

“Pakistan requires an increase of 14.2% in water availability to meet the requirement of population by 2025; however, the growing burden on water resources threats will add to Pakistanis’ wellbeing from unsafe or inadequate water supplies,” says the report.

Water demands continue to increase owing to a rise in population and a higher demand for multiple uses.

Describing water security as Pakistan’s most critical development challenge, the report says between 1990 and 2015, water availability had declined from 2,172 to 1,306 cubic metres per inhabitant.

Pakistan extracts 74.3% of its freshwater annually, thereby exerting tremendous pressure on renewable water resources, the report points out, adding, despite remarkable improvements in the proportion of population using an improved water source and sanitation facility, 27.2 million Pakistanis do not have access to safe water and 52.7 million do not have access to adequate sanitation facilities.

“The repercussions on health are severe, as it is estimated that 39,000 children under the age of five die every year from diarrhoea caused by unsafe water and poor sanitation.”

The study warns that rapid climate change and global warming will have major impacts on increased crop water requirement. This will hamper productivity owing to changes in crop boundaries and reduced length of the growing season. “Thus, the chances of reduced water availability during dry years can be expected, extremes will be more frequent and severe, which will have negative impacts on productivity and sustainability of irrigated agriculture,” says the report.

Khalid Mohtadullah, former member (water) Wapda, while sharing his opinion on the report, said in Pakistan, the increased storage capacity alone is insufficient to solve the problem. More efficient use of water needs to be targeted.

“The prevailing productivity per unit of water in Pakistan is among the lowest in the world,” he said.

A senior official of the science and technology ministry on the condition of anonymity told The Express Tribune: “Currently, it has become challenging for Pakistan to meet the increasing water demand, with an increasing population. Groundwater is also depleting with an alarming rate every year.”

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1314453/major-challenge-pakistan-risks-running-water-resources-dry/>

SHORTAGE OF WATER DUE TO SYSTEM FAILURE, SAYS MAYOR

Dawn, February 3rd, 2017

KARACHI: The city faces a serious shortage of potable water as the distribution system concerned has failed to deliver water to all citizens of Karachi.

This was stated by Karachi Mayor Waseem Akhtar on Thursday before the judicial commission inquiring into the government’s failure to provide safe drinking water and sanitation facilities to people.

The mayor appeared before the commission, headed by Justice Mohammad Iqbal Kalhoro of the Sindh High Court, and stated that construction of high-rise and multistorey buildings aggravated the problem of water shortage and poor sanitation.

He said there was no one to check illegal mushrooming of high-rise buildings being built in the city without adopting the standard procedure and ensuring provision of water and sanitation facilities.

Mr Akhtar claimed that illegal water hydrants being operated in parts of the city were one of the main causes of water shortage.

“The drainage system has also gone from bad to worse; resultantly sewage can be seen submerging the streets and the roads,” he added.

He said major water drains were encroached upon, but no action was being taken against encroachers.

The mayor said the civic departments providing municipal services were working independently without any central command. “All these departments should be brought under the mayor’s administrative control to bring about improvement,” he suggested.

Meanwhile, during the proceedings, the police and Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) shifted blame on each other for failing to combat the menace of illegal water hydrants.

The DIG and SSP West informed the commission that illegal hydrants were running under the umbrella of the KWSB.

They said that although police took action against illegal hydrant operators, the water utility officials were reluctant to come forward to lodge an FIR against them.

The DIG West said eight FIRs were so far registered in Jan 2017.

He, however, said the problem was more serious and deep-rooted.

Contradicting the DIG’s statement, the KWSB managing director said the water utility duly reported to the police illegal hydrants, but they would not take any action.

The DIG East informed the judicial commission that the police were taking strict action against illegal hydrants and in this connection, three FIRs were registered in Jan 2017 in his zone.

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1312322/shortage-of-water-due-to-system-failure-says-mayor>

PBIF PRESIDENT SEES POSITIVE IMPACT OF WATER RESOURCES DEPT

Business Recorder, 3 February 2017

KARACHI: President of Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum (PBIF) Mian Zahid Hussain has lauded the plan of Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif to put all water-related organizations under the umbrella of a new department.

“The planned water resources department will help resolve different issues while providing better services to civil, industrial and agricultural consumers,” he said, citing that Agriculture Department, Fisheries Department and WASA would become part of the Irrigation Department which would be renamed as water resources department.

The plan will be implemented within few years as Asia Development Bank (ADB) and Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction had approved technical assistance for transformation of the Punjab irrigation department to the water resources department.

Mian Zahid further said that the irrigation department was established in 1849 when British ruled the Sub-Continent but a lot had been changed since then and that had created many problems for the department.

“According to the plan, the paperwork including legal formalities will take two years to complete after which it will be approved by the provincial Assembly,” he said, adding that funds would be approved for the newly-established department in the budget for 2019-20.

PBIF president expressed hope that the move would not only provide relief to the masses but also impact rural economy positively to help attain target of water vision.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/02/03/9-page/846449-news.html>

REPORT BRINGS WATER WOES UNDER THE SPOTLIGHT

Business Recorder , 4 February 2017

MUSHTAQ GHUMMAN

ISLAMABAD: Former Chairman Wapda Shams-ul-Mulk has said that Pakistan’s policymakers have acted like absentee landlords by considering water as their property and poor users simply do not get their share.

According to a report of Development Advocate Pakistan (DAP) on Water Security in Pakistan, he said that range of other factors, including water theft, further exacerbates these issues. The worst example of it is in Sindh. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the ‘Pushtoon’ society is still a lot more egalitarian, so the problem is not as pronounced, but it still exists. In general, the landlords would not want the poor to become economically self-sufficient, as that would enable them to challenge the landlords. So, this water issue is also very political in nature, he argued.

Khalid Mohtadullah, former Member Water Wapda and Senior Advisor ICIMOD, said that despite the basin’s massive infrastructure, the storage capacity stands limited to a maximum of 30 days as of now, and only 11 percent of the identified hydro-potential has been developed. This allows more than 30 MAF on average to flow into the sea unregulated and unutilized, thus limiting the basin’s capacity to provide minimum required for the Indus delta.

According to him, equally important is the fact that it also limits the basin’s capacity to regulate flood flows as a consequence of which continued disaster in the wake of climate change, is brought upon. Unfortunately, the storage issue has evolved into becoming highly politicized, to an extent that renders no room to consider several viable options. The next best options however exist and needs to be vigorously pursued to provide much-needed resilience in the system.

According to him, increased storage capacity alone is insufficient to solve the problem. More efficient use of water needs to be targeted. The prevailing productivity per unit of water in Pakistan is among the lowest in the world. Add to this the fact that the irrigated agriculture sector consumes more than the total annual flows into the basin (after adding the groundwater component), it becomes evident that such a gross level of inefficiency in water usage is not sustainable in the face of rising domestic, industrial and environmental demands. Therefore, bringing efficiency in water use, particularly in the irrigated agricultural sector, is at the heart of sustainability for ensuring water, food and energy security in the country. However, this does not imply that water use in other sectors can be sidelined. Those have to be equally monitored as well, to ensure the same level of prudence in water use.

According to the report, inter-provincial disputes in spite of the water apportionment accord continue to prevail on the division of water as per entitlements and sharing of shortages. Punjab and Sindh have been facing such disputes since pre-partition. Sindh and Balochistan have also been facing similar disputes (Khirthar and Pat Feeder Canals), as Balochistan is a lower riparian of Sindh and is unable to utilize its due share of water owing to inadequate infrastructure. The question to be addressed then is regarding the utilization of the share of Balochistan. Provinces are not entitled to market their unutilized share of water as per the Accord, which is a limitation and may be rectified in the future.—

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/02/04/20-page/846817-news.html>

March 2017

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MARCH 27TH TO APRIL 2 ND 2017

PTI TO LAUNCH CAMPAIGN AGAINST CAPITAL'S WATER SHORTAGE

Dawn, 27 March, 2017

Ikram Junaidi

ISLAMABAD: The main opposition in the capital's local government, the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI), has announced a protest campaign against the water shortage in almost all of the city's residential sectors.

Elected representatives from the Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) and party workers will set up protest camps in all residential sectors on March 28, and on March 29 MNA Asad Umar will lead a protest rally from the G-9 Markaz to the CDA offices.

Mr Umar and MCI opposition leader Ali Awan will also hold a joint press conference on their future strategy.

Although summer has not yet set in, residents of the federal capital are already facing a severe water shortage.

Mr Awan has said the CDA should begin making arrangements to provide city residents with water to meet a shortage of 80 million gallons daily (MGD).

'We have asked the CDA to address the water issue many times, but it has never listened to our suggestions,' Mr Awan said.

On Sunday, Mr Awan, NA-48 PTI president Naeem Khan, general secretary Jamshed Mughal and party workers visited various union councils to finalise arrangements for their protest.

In addition to the CDA's failure to address the water shortage, some officials in the authority are also allegedly involved in stealing water using illegal connections.

The CDA last week initiated an inquiry against officials involved in stealing water using illegal connections from the main supply line from Simly Dam. The deputy director of the Simly Dam Division, Mohammad Adnan Younis, has been appointed inquiry officer, and was directed to inspect the supply line and point out the names of officials involved in water theft. Mr Awan told Dawn the PTI held a rally and press conference last year on the water issue, but the matter has risen again this year before the start of summer.

'There are short and long term solutions to the issue, but water is not included in the CDA's priorities,' he added.

When asked about the short term solutions, Mr Awan said two out of three pumps at the Khanpur Dam are out of order, which has led to a 66pc fall in the water supply.

'There are 192 tubewells, of which 80 are out of order. These tubewells should be repaired. The CDA has 36 water tankers, but out of those 21 are out of order. Not only should those tankers be repaired, but new tankers should also be purchased.

Unfortunately, just like in Karachi, private water tankers are being encouraged to provide water because they charge several times more,' he said.

In terms of long term solutions, Mr Awan said new tubewells should be excavated because the discharge of old tubewells has fallen. He said the Simly Dam should be upraised and new small dams established. 'Moreover, the time

has come to immediately finalise the Ghazi Barotha pipeline project as the cost of the project has increased manifold,` he said.

During the Musharraf government, a project to supply water from the Indus River was proposed at an initial cost of over Rs26 billion, but could not be completed because Sindh refused to give its share to Islamabad.

The water issue was later addressed, but work on the project was not started.

In February last year, the Capital Administration and Development Division minister Tariq Fazal Chaudhry told the National Assembly that the Ghazi Barotha project, worth Rs60 to 70 billion, would be started to soon to meet the city`s water needs for the 25 years, but work on it did not begin.

Shahid Nazir, an I-10 resident, told Dawn the water issue is `severe` and said immediate steps should be taken to address it.

According to CDA spokesperson Mazhar Hussain, it is the G and I sectors that are mainly facing the shortage, and the authority is working to address the matter because the water issue is a priority.

http://epaper.dawn.com/DetailImage.php?StoryImage=27_03_2017_004_005

WATER SUPPLY AS PER SC GUIDELINES ORDERED

Dawn, March 27th, 2017

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah has directed departments concerned to ensure supply of clean water across the province as per the guidelines of the Supreme Court.

The chief minister, who was presiding over a meeting regarding provision of clean water to the people of province, also directed the secretaries of the irrigation and environment departments to not allow release of industrial effluent into the Indus, any canal or sea.

“It [sewage] must be treated before releasing anywhere,” he said, asking them to make a comprehensive plan on a priority basis and also take all stakeholders into confidence.

He also directed the chiefs of the water and sanitation agency (Wasa) and Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) to make the water distribution system safe and efficient and also evolve a regular inspection system to ensure proper implementation of the standard operating procedures — such as like mixing of chlorine in water as per requirement, cleansing of storage ponds and timely maintenance of sewerage system — to bring improvement in the clean water supply system.

The CM also directed all departments concerned that he would also pay surprise visits to the water distribution system and treatment of municipal, industrial and hospital wastes and would tolerate no lapse on their part.

He also instructed the health department to install new incinerators and repair or restore the old ones so that the hospital waste could also be disposed as per international standards.

The meeting was attended by provincial ministers Manzoor Wassan, Jam Khan Shoro, Chief Secretary Rizwan Memon, secretaries Jamal Shah, Ramzan Awan, Tameez Khoro and the managing directors of the water board.

Strict measures to stop cheating in exams

The chief minister on Sunday also sent an open letter to the parents of all students appearing in the secondary and higher secondary school examinations, which are scheduled to be held from March 28.

In the letter, he emphasised the need of taking examinations, which he said was an important step in shaping up the academic lives and future of the students.

He, however, said that it was brought to his knowledge that many students adopted unfair means in the exams and in order to curb the trend of cheating he had issued directives to the administration to take stern action against this menace as using unfair means could not be tolerated.

“Teachers will be taking corrective measures to stop cheating and all those found involved shall be dealt with harshly, and penalties imposed on all, including invigilator and staff members.”

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1322972/water-supply-as-per-sc-guidelines-ordered>

AUTHORITIES MULL RAISE IN WATER TAX RATES

Dawn, Business & Finance weekly, March 27th, 2017

Faisal Ali Ghumman

THE Punjab Irrigation Department is considering an increase in the irrigated water tax (abiana) rate per acre for farmlands under Culturable Command Area while facing around 20pc shortfall in the overall targeted collection.

Such moves in the past have been frustrated by farmers’ resistance despite pressure from international lenders in order to recover cost of maintenance of canals from cultivators.

The department collects water tax as service charges through the patwari and the revenue department and through five area water boards in five canal circles and farmers organisations (FOs) at distributary level.

“There is a proposal to increase the annual flat rate by about 50pc but the irrigation and finance departments, despite several meetings, have yet to decide anything”, said a senior official.

Speaking to Dawn he said the government had been charging annual flat rate of Rs135/acre (Rs50 for rabi crop and Rs85 for kharif crop) for the last 12 years or so, whereas the supply of water cost the government Rs875/acre.

Under a phased programme and under persuasion of international financial institutions, the water rates are expected to go up to Rs1200-1800/acre, jumping from Rs135 to Rs850/acre in the first phase, according to unconfirmed reports. The rates could be revised upward after every two years.

The collection mode will also change. The payment will be computerised and will be paid in banks instead of revenue offices. There is also a proposal that the cemented canals will be given to the private contractors who will decide abiana rate. For this purpose, the Canal and Drainage Act 1873 may be amended.

However, officials do not confirm reports of an expected increase of 50pc in abiana rates.

Official statistics of the Punjab Irrigation and Drainage Authority (PIDA) show that abiana collection for fiscal year 2015-16 was 80pc of the total assessment.

PIDA plans to expand the scope of AWBs to the Pakpattan Canal and Thal Canal in near future. Official claims after the introduction of AWBs and involvement of farmers organisations, the ratio of water disputes and litigation among farmers has witnessed a decline in five canal circles.

Farmers complain of deprivation of their due water share, increasing water theft and diversion of their water share to influential landlords.

“How can you expect those farmers who do not pay abiana and either go into litigation when the irrigation field officials help influential politicians and landlords steal water share of deserving farmers especially those who have their lands at the tale-end of the canal”, says a farmer from Rajanpura.

He argues that the increasing abiana rate will have no impact on farmers who refuse to pay water tax on various grounds. “The small farmers and tenants will be the worst affected.”

However, Agri Form Pakistan president Dr Ibrahim Mughal believes the increase in abiana rate will have no negative impact on the farmers and agriculture productivity if it is collected properly and spent on the maintenance of canal, distributaries and water courses for improved water supply to the deserving farmers.

He says the real challenge for the department is to control water theft and ensure water supply up to tail-end if it expects from the farmers to pay abiana without any resistance.

Mughal held the irrigation department officials responsible for 90pc cases of litigation involving water disputes, non-payment of abiana and water theft. He believes that the constitution of AWBs and FOs since 2005 has apparently failed to protect the water rights of small farmers.

He suggests semi-privatisation and the abiana collection for canal maintenance.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1323070/authorities-mull-raise-in-water-tax-rates>

WATER SHORTAGE APPREHENSIONS SUBSIDE AFTER EARLY SNOW MELT FORECAST

Dawn, April 1st, 2017

ISLAMABAD: Fears of an acute water shortage in the Kharif cropping season have subsided as the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) now believes that the water shortfall will be limited to April only.

At a meeting of Irsa’s advisory committee on Friday, its chairperson Syed Mazhar Ali Shah concluded that while there would be an 18 per cent water shortfall in the early Kharif weeks it would be limited to April and would be followed by an upturn.

“Overall, there would be no water shortage,” spokesperson Khalid Idrees Rana said.

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

Sharing details about water availability in the coming months, Mr Rana said total water availability at rim stations was estimated at 110 million acre feet (MAF) during the entire Kharif season, starting on April 1 and ending in October. Of this, 23.63 MAF would be available in the early season and 82.2 MAF in the latter half of Kharif.

The meteorological department’s director general told the committee that there would be cloud streams in the early part of April, but overall temperatures would rise by two degrees centigrade. “Based on this forecast, Irsa believes that the snow will start melting quite early and contribute positively to the river flows.”

In response to a question about Irsa's previous estimates of 35pc water shortfall, the spokesperson said that estimate was history. It was based on the situation in the second week of March. He said the shortage in the last two weeks of March was managed by the provinces through prudent utilisation.

After setting aside 10.7 MAF water to flow downstream Kotri and conveyance losses, there would be 67 MAF for distribution among the provinces for irrigation. Mr Rana said earlier estimates of 35-40pc losses by the technical committee had been trimmed down to a maximum of 35pc loss in early Kharif weeks.

From the quantity of water available for distribution among the provinces, Punjab would get 33.23 MAF, Sindh 30.39 MAF, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 0.82 MAF and Balochistan 2.6 MAF .

The committee decided with consensus that the provincial indents for water releases would be met.

Mr Rana said that Balochistan had complained about a water shortage at its Kirthar and Garang stations. Sindh then agreed to postpone the closing of its canals from Sukkur and Guddu barrages to April 5 instead of April 1 to compensate Balochistan in the short term.

The advisory committee decided that in the long term, Sindh and Balochistan would jointly monitor discharges from Kirthar and Garang regulation stations during Kharif under the supervision of the water regulator.

The committee also allowed Punjab to reopen the canals from Trimmu and Punjnad, which it had closed in the middle of March. The province was also allowed to utilise 5000 cusecs from Chashma downstream and Taunsa.

In reply to question about the distribution formula, Mr Rana said it was decided that the releases would be made in accordance with the demands of the provinces and surplus water would be conserved for storage.

He said the committee was told that river flows had faced a dip between Tarbela and Chashma areas because Wapda authorities had been building stocks during the day for peak releases to maximise power generation.

Wapda was then directed to follow Irsa's discharge criteria on a 24-hour basis.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1324134>

IRSA SEES 18% WATER SHORTAGE IN KHARIF SOWING SEASON

The Express Tribune, April 1st, 2017.

Zafar Bhutta

ISLAMABAD: The Indus River System Authority (Irsa) on Friday estimated that provinces would face 18% water shortage while cultivating different crops in the Kharif season, beginning April 1.

Briefing media after a meeting of the advisory committee, Irsa spokesperson Khalid Rana said 110 million acre feet (maf) of water would be available in the Kharif season, of which 67 maf would be utilised to irrigate agriculture fields.

Of this, Punjab will receive 33.23 maf and Sindh will get 30.39 maf. The share of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) will be 0.82 maf whereas Balochistan will receive 2.6 maf.

Representatives of all provinces were present in the advisory committee meeting that was held to finalise water shares of provinces for the sowing season.

A couple of days ago, Irsa's technical committee noted in a meeting that 40% of water would be lost on the Indus River in the early Kharif season, but the level would be gradually brought down to 20%.

Chenab and Jhelum Rivers will face 10% water loss in early Kharif, which will be reduced to zero at a later stage.

Rana, however, said the advisory committee estimated 35% water loss on the Indus River, but all provinces would get water in line with their demand.

He pointed out that 27.3 maf of water would be supplied in the early season and later 82.32 maf would be available.

According to data for the previous Rabi season from October to March, provinces utilised 28.3 maf of water against the anticipated 28.2 maf. Punjab utilised 15.11 maf, Sindh 11.65 maf, K-P 0.54 maf and Balochistan 1.07 maf.

In Kharif, 52.26 maf of water will be available in the Indus River, 17.26 maf in Kabul River, 17.16 maf in Jhelum River and 20.94 maf in Chenab River.

Rana announced that provinces would start receiving water on Friday according to their demand.

"Sindh has agreed to provide water to Balochistan till April 5; the advisory committee has constituted a committee to find a short-term solution to the Balochistan water issue; it will monitor water flow between Sindh and Balochistan," he said.

Earlier, during the meeting of the technical committee, Sindh representatives argued that water must be made available first for the Kharif planting season and then it should be stored. Water should be released from dams to meet needs of the Kharif season, they stressed.

Balochistan and K-P are normally exempted from the impact of water shortfall. Keeping that in view, Balochistan representatives insisted that their province as well as K-P should not face a cut in their water share if there was scarcity of the resource in Kharif.

The Kharif season starts from April and its main crops are rice, maize (corn), moong, cotton and sugarcane.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1370952/irsa-sees-18-water-shortage-kharif-sowing-season/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MARCH 20TH TO MARCH 26TH 2017

ANALYSIS: INDUS COMMISSIONERS TALKS: FIRST STEP TO COMPOSITE DIALOGUE?

Dawn, March 20th, 2017

Mirza Khurram Shahzad

After months of tensions, India and Pakistan have finally agreed to resume talks of Indus Water Commission, which were threatened by the hawkish Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's aggressive policies towards Pakistan.

Though Indian authorities have publically downplayed the talks taking place on March 20-21 in Islamabad, saying these are just a regular meeting of the Indus Water Commission, the Pakistani officials concerned have termed it of 'much importance'.

The significance emanates from a letter by Indian Indus Water Commissioner P.K. Saxena in which he proposed to discuss highly important disputes such as the construction of Kishanganga and Ratle hydro projects on Jhelum and Chenab rivers by India.

Pakistan, however, has rejected this proposal as the matter has already been taken to the World Bank for dispute resolution.

The Indus Water Commission was set up following the Indus Waters Treaty signed by the two countries in 1960 after the World Bank succeeded in getting them reach an agreement on a water-sharing formula.

The commission has to meet at least once every year, alternately in India and Pakistan, and is responsible for the implementation of the treaty.

“These talks are important because India has come back to the table to discuss the issues after refusing for more than a year,” said Mirza Asif Baig, Pakistan’s Indus Water Commissioner.

“They were talking about suspension of the waters treaty but now they have come out of that paradigm,” he said, adding that the Indian commissioner wrote to him to include the Ratle and Kishanganga projects in these talks but Pakistan declined the proposal.

The last meeting of the commission took place in New Delhi in May 2015. The officials of the two countries could not meet for the annual meeting in 2016 because of heightened tensions between the two governments as Premier Modi threatened to suspend the treaty, saying ‘blood and water cannot flow together’, following an attack on an Indian military base in held Kashmir.

“The agenda of talks includes projects such as Miyar, Lower Kalnai and Pakal Dul, exchange of data (about flow of water, floods, etc), inspection tours and meetings,” Mr Baig said.

Syed Jamaat Ali Shah, Pakistan’s former commissioner, termed this meeting a ‘step forward’ from the former position but said it also showed Pakistan’s helplessness on the issue.

“Though it’s a routine meeting and India is trying to use it to drag back the issues already taken to the World Bank for arbitration, it has highlighted the reactionary policy of Pakistan government,” Mr Shah said.

“It’s like we say yes when India says yes, and when they say no, we have no option but to say no. We should have a proactive policy and not the reactive.”

“In my view, Modi is successful in his strategy. They have stalled Pakistan’s arbitration efforts at the international level and have started six mega hydro projects on a war footing,” he said.

“On the other hand, we are doing nothing. Our government is struggling for stability and is stuck in Panama issue; they have not devised any strategy to win these water disputes.”

Pakistan’s former High Commissioner to India Aziz Ahmed Khan differs.

“It’s not verified that Modi has ever said to suspend the Indus Waters Treaty. Some Indian officials categorically denied this statement to me. So I think these Indus water talks are a regular feature and continuation of an ongoing process,” he said.

Mr Khan said that linking this meeting to the resumption of higher level talks between the two countries was inappropriate. He, however, viewed that some other move can be expected by the Indian prime minister to take the process forward.

“Electioneering is over in India and Modi may take any other dramatic step to normalise the relations, but we should not link this water commissioners’ meeting to the resumption of high-level talks,” he said.

Pakistan’s foreign ministry takes this development as a bilateral initiative like other departments.

“It’s like our DGMOs (Director General Military Operations) talk to each other as and when required,” says Nafees Zakaria, spokesman for the Foreign Office.

“Recently Indian parliamentarians were here to participate in an Asian parliamentary conference. Earlier the parliamentarians of both countries were together in Dubai for a conference organised by Pildat, so it’s not an indication that this meeting will pave the way for foreign secretary-level talks,” he said, adding that the foreign secretary-level talks are a totally different ball game.

“For that India has to agree to discuss Kashmir and they are not showing willingness to talk about this issue so far,” Mr Zakaria said.

As the state elections are over in India, the subcontinent may finally see a chance for peace talks but some analysts believe that the landslide victory by the Indian ruling party BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) may worsen situation as the Indian leadership will become over-confident.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1321653/analysis-indus-commissioners-talks-first-step-to-composite-dialogue>

RENI CANAL PROJECT A VICTIM OF RED TAPE

Dawn, Economic & Business, March 20th, 2017

Mohammad Hussain Khan

THE execution of the second phase of the Reni canal project, located on the left side of Guddu barrage, is held up for want of funds from the federal government and approval from the Sindh government.

The project needs revision of PC-I due to cost overruns following inclusion of some defence-related works in it.

A summary has been sent to Sindh’s chief minister for an NoC for Thar canal’s construction. But approval for the revised cost of the project by the federal government is awaited.

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah met chairman Wapda this month and urged him to expedite the implementation of the Reni canal. Officials of the provincial irrigation department say the project would irrigate the desert in its command area for cultivation of summer crops when surplus water at Guddu barrage is available during flood season.

Of the total length of 175km, the canal’s first phase covering 110km is completed. Once operational, the canal with a capacity of 10,000 cusecs would provide 5,000 cusecs of water to Thar canal to irrigate 412,000 acres of land.

Of the total acreage, 113,000 acres are to be provided water from 110km length of the canal. The rest would get water from the remaining portion of the canal that covers a 65km distance.

Project officials said the entire cultivable land lies in the desert where there is no source of freshwater. Wapda proposed the canal as a floodwater channel. “Some surplus water can be retained for irrigating these lands instead of letting the entire floodwater flows downstream. These water flows will help recharge groundwater aquifer in the desert”, points out a Wapda officer.

The canal's command starts from Khenju Town in District Ghotki. Thar canal would emanate from Reni canal at RD-181 in Ghotki. Escape channel — along the main canal — has also been completed, according to a project official.

Under phase-II, Thar canal would go to Mithi to provide freshwater for drinking needs of the community and livestock. Storages are also planned on both sides of the canal covering the 65km length of canal.

“We don't have allocation of irrigation water for this area through Reni canal; with its construction additional acreage will be brought under cultivation during July-September period”, said an irrigation department officer.

According to official information, Rs18bn have been spent on the project so far. And its revised cost is assessed at Rs43bn. Approval from the federal government's bodies like CDWP and the Ecneec is pending.

Sindh's former secretary irrigation Babar Effendi proposed that a parallel escape channel upstream Guddu barrage with a capacity of 50,000-100,000 cusecs is also necessary to ease pressure on Guddu barrage.

Effendi says if 1.2m cusecs of floodwater is to hit the barrage, the diversion of 50,000-100,000 cusecs to the escape channel would ensure stable floodwater flows at the Guddu barrage.

He added that the federal government would have to pitch in funds for this project and even the World Bank's assistance could be sought in this regard. He is of the view that this escape channel with this capacity of water would fill wetlands in the desert and right upto Achro Thar (white desert) in District Umerkot.

The Sindh irrigation department had objected to crest level of Reni canal on left bank of the Guddu barrage, considering the fact the canal would get normal flows if its crest level was not different from Ghotki Feeder canal. It was suggested that it should be at least 3ft higher than Ghotki Feeder's crest level.

It is against this backdrop that the dividing wall of Guddu barrage would be built at the seventh instead of the fourth bay to keep Ghotki Feeder canal's intact for normal supplies.

Wapda officials said crest level didn't matter much in terms of the canal's operation as it is the gates that regulate the canal. They added that crest level issue was resolved in view of provision of divide wall at seventh bay under Guddu barrage's rehabilitation project under Water Sector Improvement Project.

The Sindh government is interested in Thar canal's construction so that it could ensure freshwater availability in the desert, especially for the Thar coal project which is at execution stage in block-II.

Besides, the government has also opted for treatment of saline water of Left Bank Outfall Drain through reverse osmosis in Thar coal project.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1321631>

HIGH-LEVEL 'WATER TALKS' WITH INDIA FROM NEXT MONTH

Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: India has decided to return to the negotiating table with Pakistan over its disputed hydropower projects in April, following the intervention of the US and the World Bank.

Water and Power Minister Khawaja Mohammad Asif said on Monday that the two nations would hold three-day secretary-level talks on the Kishanganga and Rattle hydropower projects, under the aegis of the World Bank, in Washington from April 11.

Speaking on the sidelines of the two-day talks between Indus water commissioners from both sides, the minister, who also holds the portfolio for defence, welcomed the Indian decision to resume negotiations under the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty on the proposed Pakul Dal, Miyar and Lower Kalnai hydropower projects, disputed by Pakistan.

“The US has intervened at the highest level to help both countries resolve the issue. There will be secretary-level talks on the Ratle and Kishanganga hydropower projects in Washington on April 11, 12 and 13,” he said at a press conference.

“We are happy that India has finally agreed to resume talks at the commission level. We welcome this decision and the visit of the Indian delegation,” he added.

The 10-member Indian delegation currently in Islamabad is led by Indian Indus Water Commissioner P.K. Saxena.

Khawaja Asif said Pakistan would be in a position to protect its rights on Ratle hydroelectric project, adding that the country’s stance had not been negated at any level. He refused to speculate whether or not the water talks could ultimately lead to the resumption of composite dialogue.

“We want that India should share the design of the three proposed projects, and if they hurt Pakistan’s interests, then objections will be raised at the appropriate forum; this is our right. Since the treaty was signed, 116 project inspection visits have been undertaken,” he said.

Pakistan has been protesting over the design and construction of the two projects — the 330MW Kishanganga hydroelectric project and the 850MW Ratle hydroelectric project in India-held Jammu and Kashmir. Islamabad has been demanding international arbitration through the World Bank — the so-called guarantor of the 1960 treaty.

The minister said Pakistan had decided to seek international arbitration following the failure of secretary-level talks on Ratle on July 14-15 in New Delhi.

Pakistan, he said, had objection over the project design. The minister claimed that the World Bank-sponsored International Court of Arbitration had given its verdict in Pakistan’s favour over the Kishanganga project and Islamabad was now demanding that it be implemented.

A former water and power secretary, however, disagreed. He was of the opinion that Islamabad’s main objection over the diversion of the river waters by India was not entertained by the International Court of Arbitration because authorities could not establish through evidence its water uses from the Line of Control to Muzaffarabad.

The minister, however, conceded that Kishanganga would affect the generation capacity of the 969MW Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower plant, which is located downstream of the proposed Indian project, by about 10pc.

The minister said the two-day talks on 1,000MW Pakul Dal, 120MW Miyar and 48MW Lower Kalnai projects would be led from the Pakistani side by Mirza Asif Beg, Pakistan’s Indus Water Commissioner.

He said India had not shared the design of these projects with Pakistan, as required under the treaty, adding that Islamabad had serious reservations over these projects and believed they would give India the capacity to impede water flows to Pakistan.

He said Pakistan always believed the accord was one of the few international treaties capable of resolving serious disputes over water reservoirs through peaceful means and sanctity of the treaty and resolutions of dispute though this was in the interest of the two nations.

In July 2016, a high-level delegation headed by the water and power secretary had visited New Delhi to discuss these projects, but India's inflexible attitude resulted in their failure to reach a conclusion. After this, Pakistan decided to approach the Permanent Court of Arbitration against India.

Last September, Pakistan approached the World Bank when Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi threatened to revoke the 56-year-old treaty following the Uri attack.

Under the treaty, the World Bank has an important role in establishment of the Court of Arbitration.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1321807>

CM ORDERS STRATEGY TO DEAL WITH LOOMING WATER SHORTAGE OF UP TO 60PC

Dawn, March 21st, 2017

Habib Khan Ghori

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has asked the irrigation department to evolve a strategy to meet the feared 10-60 per cent shortage of water for Kharif season.

It has also been directed to ensure that the shortage does not affect supply of drinking water to consumers.

The directives came at a meeting presided over by him at the CM House to review reports regarding imminent water shortages during the Kharif season.

Mr Shah asked the irrigation secretary to hold a meeting with chief engineers of all three barrages and discuss with them ways to deal with the situation in the shortage period. He directed him to keep the general public informed about water shortage.

They should also be informed that priority was assigned to the supply of drinking water, he said, adding that the farming community and agriculturists irrigating their lands from Nara and Rohri canals should be kept aware of the late sowing of cotton ie from May 1, and those getting water from the Ghotki canal from May 15.

"For the paddy/rice cultivation, a fresh strategy may be evolved to facilitate farmers and tillers getting water through the Rice Canal sources," he said.

The chief minister said that adjustment in the canal discharge to manage the shortages should be made in consultation and on the advice of the chief engineers concerned.

Kotri barrage would receive water proportionately but priority should be assigned to drinking water needs through the canals off-taking from the barrage," he said.

Earlier the chief minister was briefed by Irrigation Secretary Jamal Shah about the water availability position in the basin. He said that it emerged deficient, below the allocated discharge since March 9.

"The situation has worsened with the new spell of snowfall in the northern areas and a reduction in the temperatures. The run-off from the catchments has reduced which resulted in an alarming depletion of Tarbela and Mangla reservoirs," he said.

The secretary said that the expected shortage had started on March 18 and might stand at 10 to 60 per cent in the first 10 days of April. The situation might aggravate towards the end of April, he added.

Jamal Shah said that he had already held a meeting with the chief engineers to evolve a strategy under which there would be annual closure of Guddu barrage on March 31.

Till that time, the pond level would be lowered and maintained at RL 249 for supply of water to Balochistan, power stations and Ghotki canal.

On April 1, the barrage gates would be fully raised and water would be fully released downstream.

He said that almost all canals would have to bear a 50pc shortage, adding that the province had experienced a similar shortage in the past and successfully dealt with it.

The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Rizwan Memon, Principal Secretary to the CM Naveed Kamran Baloch and other senior officials concerned.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1321751>

WATER SUPPLY TO THATTA, FOUR TALUKAS BLOCKED TO MEET KARACHI'S NEEDS

Dawn, March 21st, 2017

Ghulam Hussain Khawaja

THATTA: Water flow to Kalri Baghar lower fed by Keenjhar Lake, which meets the essential water needs of Thatta and its four talukas — Ketri Bandar, Ghorabhari, Kharo Chan and Mirpur Sakro — has been blocked in order to meet Karachi's requirements, according to official sources.

The sources, who wished to remain anonymous, told Dawn on Monday that it had been done in the wake of sudden drop in the lake's level caused by shortage of water upstream Kotri barrage.

It necessitated lowering of water flow to Kalri Baghar upper feeder which filled the lake, resulting in decline in the lake level from 52 RL (reduced level) to 49.55 RL, said the sources.

The unannounced and unscheduled stoppage of water at the barrage had brought flows in the lake's link canals to a virtual halt and subsequently all four channels fetching water from KB lower for Thatta and Mirpur Sakro have been closed.

ADVERTISEMENT

As a result, Sakro branch, Jam Wah, Udero branch and their outlets and tributaries are almost running dry, causing acute shortage of water in the coastal talukas of Ketri Bandar, Ghorabhari, Mirpur Sakro and Thatta, their adjoining areas and remote settlements.

Agriculturists said that standing crops had started withering due to water shortage in these areas. Besides, it had added to difficulties in meeting routine demand of water for livestock as well as humans, they said.

Water needs of Thatta and its adjoining areas came to around 9,100 cusecs a day but the irrigation department was releasing merely 1,500 cusecs in the system — out of which some 200 cusecs were wasted in line losses — and that too on a rotation basis, which meant the water release was too little to be of any use to anybody, they said

Besides, they said, the irrigation authorities had advised people not to use water for irrigating farmland and consume the scare commodity cautiously, only for essential needs.

The agriculturists and heads of social organisations including Adam Gandro of Mallah Ittehad Tehreek, Rasheed Jakhro of Malhar Welfare Association, Allah Jurio Burfat of Sindh Cultural Forum feared if the situation did not change for the better, landholders and farmers were bound to sustain irreparable losses and the population would face worse water scarcity.

They demanded the authorities should release minimum required quantum of water to sustain standing crops and meet essential needs of humans as well as livestock.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1321748/water-supply-to-thatta-four-talukas-blocked-to-meet-karachis-needs>

‘DIRE NEED TO RECYCLE WASTE WATER IN PAKISTAN’

The Express Tribune March 23, 2017

KARACHI: In a country like Pakistan where millions are deprived of the basic necessity of water, there is a dire need for adopting the culture of conservation and recycling of waste water, said International Union for Conservation of Nature country representative Mahmood A Cheema.

He said this at a seminar, titled ‘Why Waste Your Wastewater’, organised by Barrett Hodgson University (BHU) on Wednesday. The event was held at the university’s Salim Habib campus on the occasion of World Water Day, which is observed across the globe on March 22.

The experts at the session discussed the challenges and opportunities in raising awareness about the issue of meeting the water needs of Pakistan through reutilisation of waste water. BHU Vice-Chancellor Dr Arif Siddiqui said the university pledges to join hands to reduce and reuse waste water in order to help achieve sustainable development goals by raising awareness, informing, engaging and inspiring the people.

Addressing the audience, Dr Hina Baig from the National Institute of Oceanography highlighted the plight of the oceans. “The sustainable management and use of water, due to its vital role in food security or supporting valuable ecosystem services, underpins the transition to a resource efficient green economy,” she said.

Academicians, environmentalists and representatives of civic bodies from both public and private sector universities and professionals from non-governmental organisations attended the event. The World Water Day was proclaimed by the United Nations in 1992 and has been celebrated since 1993.

Pakistan is among the countries that can face severe food and water crisis due to increasing demand for water resources by the agriculture, industrial and domestic sectors, said World Wide Fund for Nature-Pakistan (WWF-Pakistan) Director-General Hammad Naqi Khan.

In a press statement issued by WWF-Pakistan, Khan said that major cities of Pakistan are already facing an acute shortage of clean drinking water that has resulted in the over-extraction of groundwater, depleting the aquifer. The theme of World Water Day this year is ‘why waste water’.

According to the World Health Organisation, there are over 663 million people living without a safe water supply near their homes. These people spend countless hours queuing to get water and coping with the health impacts of using contaminated water.

Muhammad Moazzam Khan, WWF-Pakistan’s technical adviser for marine fisheries, said the public is unaware of the measures that can be taken to reduce generation of wastewater. Practices of washing, bathing and even shaving in almost all households are not properly managed and a huge quantity of water is wasted, he said.

The theme for World Water Day this year encourages people around the world to rally together to take pragmatic steps for water conservation and maximise the use of wastewater to tackle food security and climate change impacts.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1362959/dire-need-recycle-waste-water-pakistan/>

CIVIL SOCIETY VOICES CONCERN OVER FILTHY WATER SUPPLY

Business Recorder, 24 March 2017

HYDERABAD: Civil society activists from Hala, Saeedabad and Matiari talukas expressed deep concern over alarming increase in the volume of hepatitis cases in the district due to unsafe drinking water. The polluted water has a detrimental impact on the health of common man. There is an urgent need to address this issue with specific attention and resource allocation to develop filtered water supply system in the village's as well as urban towns of the district on priority basis.

Discussion held by Sindh Community Foundation and Villages Improvement Social Welfare Association in cooperation with UNDP Pakistan on the district level. The discussion was facilitated by Zulfiqar Halepoto – a social activist and an intellectual and Javed Soz of Sindh Community Foundation.

Participants said the underground water is becoming brackish, there is need to address this issue on urgent basis through accessible public water supply. The Waste of small towns is being dumped in Indus River. There is no mechanism in place for waste management to save natural resources.

Zulfiqar Halepoto was of the view that political commitment is required to implement SDG at local level considering protection of the rights of people as core value. He further added that there is need to create more awareness and understanding among the government officials on SDGs to localize targets at district level.

Javed Soz said that people's participation in policy and program designing process is not ensured which is why there is a huge gap in planning and implementation. He said that there is need to put people's concerns in planning and budget development process at district level to focus on the local problems.

Participants demanded setting up a commission to ensure availability of the clean water and check dumping waste in fresh water in the area. They also demanded the increase in budget and putting in place a strong mechanism to oversee rural health units.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/03/24/23-page/860044-news.html>

KHUHRO RAPS PUNJAB FOR 'STEALING' SINDH'S WATER, ASKS IRSA TO BEAR RESPONSIBILITY

Dawn, March 25th, 2017

HYDERABAD: Sindh Senior Minister for Food and Parliamentary Affairs Nisar Ahmed Khuhro has said that Wapda is involved in 'theft' of Sindh's share of water, which is diverted to somewhere else and the fact made headlines in Friday's newspapers.

Addressing a press conference in the Defence area here on Friday, he said Sindh's water was being 'stolen' through tube wells upstream Guddu along the riverbed in Punjab. He asked the Punjab government and the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) to explain why it had not been checked as yet.

Mr Khuhro said that the federal government's water-related excesses against Sindh stood exposed.

He recalled that being the chief minister of Punjab in the past, Nawaz Sharif had opened the Chashma-Jhelum link canal without seeking Sindh government's permission. Under a pact, it was mandatory upon Punjab to seek Sindh's

permission if this canal had to be opened. “The canal was not opened for one time, rather it had perpetually been opened. It was the PPP government that got it closed in 2008 and maintained the closure till 2013. Then [former president] Pervez Musharraf got the Greater Thal Canal built without Sindh’s permission,” he went on.

Mr Khuhro said that Sindh is the lower riparian and had the right to first use of water as the same principle was followed in water distribution with India when it came to the construction of the Baglihar dam.

He said that when a tail-ender or lower riparian claimed water share in its distribution within a province, such yardstick was equally applicable for a province within the inter-provincial distribution. He said that Irsa had proved that Wapda had committed irregularities in water distribution thus an artificial crisis was created for Sindh. He said Wapda was aware of the fact that it was time for early sowing of the cotton crop in lower Sindh and farmers needed water.

“Around 500 tube wells are operating upstream Guddu along the riverbed and water is being lifted there. Who has allowed it? When direct outlet cannot be allowed in a canal, how can this be permitted in riverbed,” he asked.

Mr Khuhro hinted that a survey of the area might be undertaken by the Sindh government along with the media to examine the situation if notice was not taken of it. He said Irsa should explain why this water was being ‘stolen’.

The senior PPP leader cautioned the federal government against antagonising Sindh. He said that excesses had been committed against Sindh in the past on the Kalabagh dam issue.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1322606/khuhro-raps-punjab-for-stealing-sindhs-water-asks-irsa-to-bear-responsibility>

NO INDIAN WORD TO HALT WORK ON CONTROVERSIAL WATER PROJECTS

Dawn, March 22nd, 2017

Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: Two-day Pakistan-India Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) talks concluded here on Tuesday on a positive note as India withdrew the design of a smaller hydropower project and agreed to reconsider Pakistan’s observations on two others.

There was, however, no commitment from the visiting side to halt construction work on the controversial projects, indicating India’s traditional time-gaining approach to project development.

This was evident from the fact that a senior member of the Pakistani team confirmed that construction work on the Lower Kalnai project was in progress while that on the Pakul Dal project was yet to start. Both projects are on two different tributaries of the Chenab River.

When asked by Dawn if India had given any assurance to stop constructions, the official requesting anonymity said he would not talk beyond an official statement.

A former water and power secretary said it was a pattern from all the previous controversial projects like Baglihar and Kishanganga that New Delhi engaged Islamabad in technicalities and kept civil and side works moving for years until reaching a fait accompli stage when challenged in international forums.

The Pakistani side was led by Indus Waters Commissioner Mirza Asif Baig while his counterpart P.K. Saxena led the Indian delegation.

A statement issued by the water and power ministry at the conclusion of the talks said India had withdrawn its design on the Miyar hydropower project after Pakistan raised objections to it at the commission's previous meetings. It said the 113th meeting of the PIC held discussions on India's proposed Miyar, Lower Kalnai and Pakal Dal hydropower projects as well as matters relating to exchange of data and conducting tours and meetings of the commission.

On the other two projects discussions were held on Pakistan's prior objections to pondage and freeboard of Lower Kalnai and freeboard and spillway of Pakal Dul hydropower projects.

"The Indian side has agreed to reconsider Pakistan's observations on these projects and will respond in the next meeting of the commission," the statement said.

The Indian side also agreed to inspection tour by the Pakistan's Indus Commission which is expected to be arranged before August. The Pakistani side asked India to provide data of outflows of Baglihar and Salal dams (on the Chenab) during the flood season so that it could issue early flood warnings.

"The Indian side has agreed to consider Pakistan's request and it is expected that India would start providing the required data starting from the coming flood season," the statement said.

Insiders said Pakistan had already withdrawn its objections to freeboard of the 1000MW Pakal Dul project located on the Marusadar River — a right bank tributary of the Chenab. Pakistan has raised objections to its pondage, spillway and filling criteria.

It is a storage-cum-power project and can have gross storage of about 108,000 acre feet of water. The project design envisaged its filling every monsoon season between mid-June and end-August.

Pakistan is of the opinion that the tunnel spillway of Pakal Dul should be raised closer to the dead storage level because its placement 40 metres below the dead storage level could allow drawdown flushing not permitted to India under the 1960 waters treaty.

On the 48MW Lower Kalnai project, Pakistan has raised objections to its freeboard, pondage and intake. Islamabad is of the view that depth of bridge girder and provision of freeboard should be close to one metre and considers two-metre freeboard as 'excessive'.

Pakistan has also challenged the discharge series of river Lower Kalnai at Dunadi for winter months and estimated permissible pondage of 0.38 cubic megametres compared to Indian design pondage of 2.74 cubic megametres.

The Lower Kalnai project is on a left bank tributary of Chenab and can have gross storage of about 1,508 acre feet of water.

Pakistan has also raised objections to freeboard, pondage, spillway and intake of the 120MW Miyar hydroelectric project on the right bank Miyar tributary of Chenab. It is also a run-of-the-river project but the barrage type structure could have gross storage of about 1,298 acre feet of water.

Under the provisions of the Indus Water Treaty 1960, waters of the eastern rivers — 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 for India.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1322106/no-indian-word-to-halt-work-on-controversial-water-projects>

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah on Tuesday demanded of the federal government that the management of water distribution from the Mangla and Tarbela dams be given to Sindh and Balochistan on a rotational basis since the Water and Power Development Authority was not reliable as far as fair distribution of irrigation water was concerned.

Speaking at a press conference, the CM said that the shortage of water would hit the province badly since early sowing took place in Sindh because of the weather conditions.

He was also critical of the ‘unfair attitude’ of the federal water and power ministry for creating hurdles in installing power plants and transmission and distribution system.

Accompanied by provincial ministers, the chief minister said that the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) conveyed to Sindh that there would be an up to 50 per cent water shortage due to alarming depletion in water level of the Mangla and Tarbela dams.

He said that the Sindh government highlighted to the federal authorities concerned the need for storing water but they did not act in a timely manner to fill the dams and instead kept on operating link canals to get more water against their fair share.

Recalling an earlier water shortage, he said that in 2015 the dams had 61 million acre feet of water, but this year, even though they had additional water, the authorities had failed to fill the dams despite Sindh’s warning to the federal government about the expected shortage in the Kharif season.

“We can no longer trust the Wapda officials in distribution of water, power and gas as they are not even under the control of their federal minister,” he said, referring to the assurances given by the federal minister.

He said that he had held a meeting with irrigation experts last week to evolve a strategy to cope with the situation. “There would also be a shortage of drinking water but we are trying to manage the situation,” he said.

He deplored that the link canals were being constructed without taking other provinces into confidence. “This is a very undemocratic attitude and would create serious differences among the provinces and the federation.”

He demanded that Sindh and Balochistan be taken into confidence in the decision-making process in the water, power and energy sectors.

He hoped that the grievances of smaller provinces regarding their due water share would be resolved within the framework of the Constitution as there would be no need for any of the provincial governments to take an extraordinary step, including approaching the apex court, to get these issues resolved.

The CM said that his government would continue to raise the issues whenever it was felt that legitimate interests of the people of Sindh were being compromised.

He said that he would send a letter to the federal authorities reminding them of their obligations for the just distribution of water among the provinces in accordance with the 1991 Water Accord.

He said he had also asked the provincial irrigation authorities to prepare a comprehensive case regarding Sindh’s due water rights so that the province could take up the issue at the forthcoming session of the Council of Common Interests.

He hoped that the federal government would listen to and understand the issues of Sindh regarding its water needs and would also take the required steps for fair distribution of irrigation water among smaller provinces.

He announced that the Sindh government would establish wind- and solar-powered district power plants and then develop a provincial distribution system to provide electricity in local areas. "This is the only way to control power shortage, otherwise the approach of the federal government to produce energy is not based on sincere intentions. Particularly, there are some unscrupulous elements creating problems and causing unnecessary delays," he said.

He also criticised the Hyderabad and Sukkur electric companies for prolonged load-shedding, overbilling and playing 'games' to delay power projects in Sindh.

To another question about Sharjeel Memon, the chief minister said that the whole episode was a proof of high-handedness of the National Accountability Bureau. Mr Memon was granted protective bail by the Islamabad High Court but even then he was manhandled. "He is an elected member of the provincial assembly of Sindh and has come to face the cases but was harassed," he said.

He also added that those who were facing serious cases in the Supreme Court were enjoying senior and important positions in the federal government, but NAB was harassing those who voluntarily returned to face the cases.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1322096/sindh-demands-management-of-mangla-tarbela-dams-for-fair-water-distribution>

LESS THAN 8% OF URBAN WASTE WATER IS TREATED IN PAKISTAN, SAYS REPORT

The Express Tribune, March 22nd, 2017.

Sehrish Wasif

Islamabad: Ten major cities of Pakistan produce more than 60 per cent of the urban wastewater, and out of this less than eight per cent is treated, revealed the World Bank's – Country Water Resources Assistance Strategy paper

The paper also says that, the rest of the contaminated water is being disposed of into the River Ravi and Kabul, irrigation canals, vegetable farms and drains.

On the other hand the study also revealed that major cities of Pakistan like Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Sheikhupura, Multan, Sialkot, lack water treatment plants.

The paper also says that in big cities like Lahore only 0.01 per cent of the sewerage water is being treated, in Faisalabad 25.6 per cent, in Karachi it is 15.9 per cent, in Hyderabad it is 34 per cent, in Peshawar it is 36.2 per cent.

Meanwhile, Chairman Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) Dr Muhammad Ashraf, while talking to The Express Tribune in connection to the World Water Day which is observed every year on March 22, said, "Just by recycling untreated water, Pakistan can easily address the ongoing water scarcity in the country."

Ashraf is of the view that if the country could utilise its recycled untreated water then it can help resolve the ongoing water crisis.

However, the PCRWR Chairman regrettably said, "Unfortunately in Pakistan the practice of water recycling is very rare and conservation is not being done due to a shortage of dams."

Meanwhile, an official of the irrigation department, who spoke to The Express Tribune on condition of anonymity, said, “The practice of using sewerage water for irrigation and farming purpose is increasing and the government is very much aware of this practice, but so far no action has been taken [to stop this practice].”

He also revealed that, “The sewerage water used for irrigation contains heavy metals which are later transferred into the fruits and vegetables produced by this untreated water. These vegetables and fruits are highly dangerous for human consumption as they have an adverse impact on human health,” he added.

The official was of the view that one of the major reasons behind an increase in the number of fatal diseases in Pakistan is the consumption of such fruits and vegetables.

Meanwhile Chief of Pakistan’s Meteorological Department said, “In Pakistan floods are common phenomenon during monsoon and every year the country wastes an ample amount of rainwater into the sea.”

Like the PCRWR chairman, the PMD chief also said, “The best possible solution for water conservation in the country is by constructing new dams.”

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1362083/world-water-day-less-8-urban-waste-water-treated-pakistan-says-report/>

MURAD WANTS CONTROL OF DAMS ON ROTATION BASIS FOR SINDH, BALOCHISTAN

The Express Tribune, 22 March 2017

KARACHI: Due to mismanagement and poor planning, the Tarbela and Mangla dams have gone dry, said Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah, demanding the administration of dams be given to the provinces of Sindh and Balochistan on a rotation basis.

He said this while addressing a press conference at CM House on Tuesday. He was flanked by provincial ministers Dr Sikandar Mandhro, Jam Khan Shoro, Jam Mehtab Dahar and Sohail Anwar Siyal.

The Indus River System Authority (Irsa), said Shah, informed the provincial government there would be a 10% to 60% shortage of water due to an alarming depletion of water stored at the Tarbela and Mangla reservoirs.

The CM said that at a time when there was plenty of water, it was being released into Link Canals instead of being stored in the dams.

This shortage will affect Sindh badly as early sowing always takes place here due to our weather conditions, said Shah.

Recalling last year, the chief minister said that there was also a shortage of water but even then the dams were filled with 61 million-acre feet of water. However, he said, this year there was plenty of water but they failed to fill the dams.

He said that the Sindh government kept warning the federal government about the expected shortage of water during the kharif season, urging them to take necessary measures but ‘all our warnings and uproar fell flat on deaf ears’, he deplored.

Shah claimed to have held a meeting with irrigation department experts last Wednesday to work out a strategy to cope with the situation. However, he said that there would still be serious problems all over Sindh and the worst affected would be the growers of the Kotri Barrage command area. “There will also be a shortage of drinking water but we are trying to manage that situation,” he said.

The CM deplored that link canals were being constructed and filled with water without taking other provinces into confidence. “This is a very undemocratic attitude and will create serious differences among the provinces and federation,” said Shah, demanding that Sindh and Balochistan also be taken into confidence when important decisions in the water, power and energy sectors are taken.

He also demanded that the administration of dams be given on a rotation basis to Sindh and Balochistan. “We don’t trust them [federation] in distribution of water, power and gas,” he said categorically.

Shah was surprised that the federal government was installing coal-fired power plant at Sahiwal and was of the view that the plant should have been installed in Sindh instead, since that is where the coal is.

“There are a number of other projects launched in the wrong places,” he complained.

The water and power ministry was a big hurdle for the Sindh government when they were installing power plants and distribution lines, said Shah. “We have installed a power plant at Nooriabad in which the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) created lot of hurdles for us.”

He added that the Sindh government has established its own dispatch and distribution company, but that is also not acceptable to Wapda.

Shah announced that he will establish district power plants of wind and solar energy and then develop the provincial distribution system to provide power to the local areas. “This is the only way to control the power shortage, otherwise the approach of the federal government to produce energy is not based on sincere intentions,” he said, blaming ‘unscrupulous’ officials for creating problems and causing unnecessary delays.

Shah complained that there were some people in the ministry of water and power who even refuse to listen to their minister.

He also criticised the Hyderabad Electric Supply Company and the Sukkur Electric Supply Company for prolonged load-shedding, over-billing and playing games to delay power projects in Sindh.

Shah warned the federal government to let go of its policy of victimisation, claiming that otherwise his government will take action against the federal institutions working in Sindh.

“I ask the federal government not to force us to take action against their institutions working in Sindh,” he remarked.

Replying to a question about Pakistan Peoples Party leader Sharjeel Inam Memon, Shah said that it was high-handedness on the part of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) that Memon was manhandled, despite being granted protective bail by the Islamabad High Court.

“He [Memon] is an elected member of the Sindh Assembly and came to face his cases but was harassed,” Shah said.

NAB or any other institution has no right to destroy or affect the smooth working of our development works in the name of corruption, he said while sharing that NAB had arrested senior irrigation officers but the court judgment in those cases was worth reading, as it exposes

He also added that people who are facing serious cases in the Supreme Court are enjoying senior and important positions in the federal government, while NAB harasses those who voluntarily return to court to face their cases.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1361946/murad-wants-control-dams-rotation-basis-sindh-balochistan/>

ALL OVERHEAD WATER RESERVOIRS TO BE MADE FUNCTIONAL: AZIZ

All overhead water reservoirs will be made functional which were abandoned in past due to the reasons best known to the policy makers and new overhead tanks would be constructed to supply water to new localities. This was said by Pakistan Water Operators Network (P-WON) Chairman Syed Zahid Aziz during P-WON's steering committee meeting in the city on Tuesday.

He said suitable steps must be taken to disconnect illegal water connections, establish waste water treatment plants and conserve clean drinking water across the country. The consultation was hosted by Water and Sanitation Authority (WASA) Multan and attended by representatives of various organisations.

“Illegal water connections must be disconnected to improve service delivery across the country,” the statement quoted Aziz saying. “They pose a major threat to water supplies across the country.”

Aziz said the provision of quality services to consumers would also enhance the revenue of the water utilities. “This is a need of the hour. A series of recommendations were put forward to improve the quality of drinking water and overcome its shortage. The criteria for a P-WON membership for other utilities and SoPs for the company were also discussed.

The steering committee was informed that Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) Faisalabad has prepared water regulations. “These will be shared with other utilities in the country and will help the provision of clean drinking water to consumers,” added the statement.

The committee also voiced concerns over changes in global weather conditions and agreed to take steps to gauge their impact on water reservoirs. It also agreed to invest in training officials of water utilities.

Managing Director Wasa Multan Rao Muhammad Qasim has said that water meter system will be launched across the city for improving the billing and recovery system. After holding a meeting with Chairman Pakistan Water Operators Network Syed Zahid Aziz here Saturday, he said over Rs 900 million had been pending with the defaulters.

He said all old sewer lines were being replaced in phases in the city to provide clean water to people and appealed to people to cooperate with Wasa authorities to achieve the desired objective.

The meeting was chaired by Zahid Aziz Chairman of P-WON, Maqsooda Fatima National Coordinator, Muazzam Jamil (Housing Department), Roohan Javed, Abdul Ghaffar, (Faisalabad) Nasir Ghaffoor, Muhammad Idrees, (Mardan) Khan Zeb Khan, Ali Rehman (Peshawar) Khurram, Fida Hussain, Rana Maqsood Ahmed (Gujranwala), Ayyub Sheikh (Karachi), Mohsin Nazar (Hyderabad), Muhammad Aslam, Muhammad Ramzan (Quetta), Zainab Abbas, Abdul Rehman (Lahore), Shaukat Mehmood, Aziz-ullah (Rawalpindi), and Arif Rauf (Kohat).

<http://fp.brecorder.com/2017/03/20170322156996/>

PROTECTION BUND TO BE BUILT ON JHELUM RIVER

Amin Ahmed

ISLAMABAD: With a view to minimising the damages of floods in Jhelum city, a new protection bund has been proposed to be constructed in open river bed along the right bank of Jhelum River where certain depth of river flow remains persistent.

The project, costing Rs1.7 billion, will be one of the thirteen subprojects which have been taken up by the Punjab under ‘flood emergency reconstruction and resilience’ project.

The dialogue between the Punjab government and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) at various levels finally resulted in materializing financial and technical assistance from the ADB to the provincial government for all post-flood rehabilitation and reconstruction works.

The Punjab irrigation network consists of 24 main canals fed by 14 barrages and head works and nine major inter-river canals, irrigating more than 21 million acres of land.

Following successful completion of negotiations between the Punjab government and ADB, the project has been evaluated, and it has been proposed to construct a 6km long flood embankment starting from new G.T. Road bridge of Jhelum River to Tahlianwala village upstream Jhelum city.

After implementation of the project, agricultural lands, livestock, valuable public and private infrastructure and human lives would be saved against flood hazards.

In 2014, heavy monsoon rains in the catchment areas of the eastern rivers of Chenab, Ravi, Sutlej and Jhelum, resulted in flash floods in various districts of the province, damaging physical infrastructure besides destroying houses and agriculture.

The experience of exceptionally high flood of 2014 arose the need for providing safeguards to the local population, infrastructures, livestock, properties and human lives in particular against high flood, and a decision was made to construct a strong bund.

Jhelum is an important commercial and industrial city with profound population. Any flood in the Jhelum River can create catastrophic situation in the area, ADB evaluation report warns.

Whenever high flood in Jhelum River crosses the limit of 250,000 cusecs, the floodwater of Jhelum River enters into the city, causing flooding of the city area.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1322820>

CENTRE, PUNJAB NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR SINDH WATER CRISIS: LCCI

Recorder Report, March 26th, 2017

The Lahore Chamber of commerce and Industry has expressed grave concern over holding Punjab and federal government responsible for water crisis in Sindh by some political elements. The LCCI President Abdul Basit said in a statement on Saturday that those people are responsible for water crisis in Sindh who oppose the construction of most important water reservoir and power generation project 'Kalabagh Dam'.

Their accusations are nothing more than sowing seeds of hatred and promoting discord between the provinces. The water shortage in Tarbela and Mangla dams is due to lack of rains and delay in glaciers melting, he said.

The Lahore Chamber of Commerce has already expressed their fears that the water crisis would hit the agriculture sectors of Punjab and Sindh as country has no sufficient water reservoirs while water storage capacity in Tarbela and Mangla dams has considerably reduced. Therefore 'Kalabagh Dam' is crucial for the country but unfortunately those elements are chanting slogans against this project who are blaming Punjab and Federation for water scarcity in Sindh.

"It would be better if Anti-Kalabagh elements play their positive role for early construction of this mega project instead of erecting obstacles and fuelling fire of provincial disharmony," he added. The LCCI President said the Kalabagh dam is inevitable for the progress and prosperity of the country as it will produce power at an average cost of Rs 2/kwh. This cheap power will annually replace costly power generation worth of approximately Rs 300 billion with consequential savings of costly oil imports.

There is no threat to Nowshehra city as it is 150 feet above the water level. He said that Kalabagh Dam is not only beneficial for Punjab alone but it would be helpful in eradicating poverty from Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The dam would irrigate 800,000 acres of land that is located 100-150 feet above the Indus river level in the province, he added.

He said that this land could only be brought under cultivation if the river level is raised which is only possible if Kalabagh Dam is built. He said that creditable studies have revealed that pumping water for potential cultivable land would cost farmers Rs 5000 per acre per year while canal water after construction of Kalabagh Dam would cost only Rs 400 per acre per year. He said that additional water would also be available for Sindh in all seasons.

All the stakeholders should show maturity on the issue of Kalabagh. 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 the time to come does not promise anything rewarding either, he maintained.

<http://fp.brecorder.com/2017/03/20170326158007/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MARCH 13TH TO MARCH 19TH 2017

SEVERE WATER SHORTAGE FEARED

Dawn, Economic & Business, March 13th, 2017

Mohammad Hussain Khan

THE outlook for irrigation water availability for kharif season in Sindh looks grim as indicated by the reduced water flows. Sindh irrigation officials anticipate that if there is no rainfall in upper reaches, the shortage during peak kharif season will be severe.

The water storage in Tarbela Dam, which feeds three barrages in the province, is fast depleting and, according to the March 5 information of Indus River System Authority, 0.3MAF water was available in the dam.

A Sukkur barrage official also said around 2ft of water is being withdrawn daily from Tarbela, whose current level is 1,398ft against its dead level of 1380ft.

He thinks that by mid-March, Tarbela will start providing run of the river flows for Sindh and water would not be stored in the reservoir considering its increased demand downstream.

With the current storage level in Tarbela, water could be provided for another 8- 10 days to the province. A similar scenario of storage in Mangla dam is presented by Mazhar Ali Shah, Sindh's member in Indus River System Authority, where 0.3MAF water is available. He pointed out that 14pc water shortage was seen across the province so far on an average against 18pc in winter.

Within Sindh's barrages, 40pc water shortage was recorded at Kotri barrage that feeds lands in lower Sindh region for early kharif sowing while 12-18pc shortage was reported at Sukkur barrage until last week of February. It was Guddu barrage where withdrawals remained normal, even slightly above normal occasionally.

As usual, early kharif sowing has started in lower Sindh. With each passing day, the demand for water availability would keep increasing only to force the irrigation authorities to manage water supply by reducing water flows in the main canals. It is Sukkur barrage which serves the largest cultivated area among all three provincial barrages.

During April, the Guddu barrage will be closed for annual maintenance. And Sukkur barrage's three right bank canals — Dadu, Rice and North Western Canal — will also be closed for desilting in the same month as growers don't need water for kharif sowing during this period.

This will enable the irrigation department to release water for Sukkur and then Kotri barrage to meet their requirements as best as possible. "If we don't have this kind of water management, we can't cater for water needs of Sukkur Barrage with around 8m acres of cultivated area which is always given preference. This leads to severe shortage at Kotri Barrage", conceded one official.

But, said a Sukkur Barrage official, it is in May when all 14 canals emanating from three barrages would need irrigation water for peak kharif sowing. He feared that in case of low rainfall he didn't rule out 30-60pc water shortage in different canals.

In some areas of lower Sindh, farmers did not get this last cycle of water for wheat crop.

Sugarcane's ratoon crop, summer vegetables, dundi cut chilli and cotton may be affected badly in the command area of Kotri Barrage which always has to bear with most of the water shortage. According to Sindh Chamber of Agriculture General Secretary, Nabi Bux Sathio, ratoon crop and vegetables are being severely affected since December for want of the required water. He feared this would worsen further in the days to come.

Cotton is grown in Tando Mohammad Khan, Badin, Thatta and Sujawal districts which are fed by Kotri Barrage. Besides, water shortage in the Indus River System, the lining works in some canals remains incomplete like in Nara canal which feeds the Mirpurkhas district.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1320011>

SC ANNOYED OVER GOVT'S INACTION ON WATER ISSUE

Dawn, March 14th, 2017

KARACHI: The Supreme Court on Monday expressed extreme annoyance over lethargic attitude of the Sindh government in taking action against those responsible for the shortage of safe drinking water and poor sanitation conditions and directed the judicial commission to continue its inquiry into the state's failure to provide safe drinking water and sanitation facilities.

Headed by Justice Amir Hani Muslim, a three-judge bench was seized with the petition against the provincial government's failure to provide safe drinking water and sanitation facilities across the province.

The bench also directed the district and sessions judges to submit reports on potable water and sanitation facilities in their respective districts.

The authorities concerned were also asked to submit progress reports before the judicial commission.

One of the bench members remarked that people from Karachi to Kashmore, Thatta and Badin were being made to drink unhygienic water and asked if the chief minister or any other elected representative ever had taken notice of the situation.

Justice Hani observed that there was moral deficit on part of the government as no minister had bothered to tender resignation after surfacing of such a startling report of the judicial commission. "There seems to be no sense of accountability in the government," he added.

The chief secretary sought time to appoint qualified and competent officers on the post of agriculture secretary and Karachi Water and Sewerage Board's managing director on a permanent basis.

The court asked the authorities to make the appointments and submit report till Thursday.

The health secretary appeared before the bench to concede that there was no proper mechanism for disposal of hospital waste.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1320310/sc-annoyed-over-govts-inaction-on-water-issue>

'ASIA'S BIGGEST RO PLANT' AMONG 84 OTHERS BEING SHUT DOWN TODAY

Dawn, March 15th, 2017

MITHI: Eighty-four reverse osmosis (RO) plants are being closed down today (Wednesday) in various areas of Thar due to non-payment of dues by the Sindh Coal Authority (SCA) to Pak Oasis, a firm engaged in Thar for installing the solar plants to provide drinking water to the people of the desert region.

Officials of the firm, which was awarded the contract in 2005 to install RO plants in Thar, on Tuesday said that they would stop running the plants from Wednesday. Those plants which would be closed down include reportedly the biggest RO plant of Asia at Misri Shah area of Mithi town.

The firm's contract ended in June 2016 and since then the SCA did not pay its dues.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1320532/asias-biggest-ro-plant-among-84-others-being-shut-down-today>

DELHI RETURNS TO THE TABLE AFTER WATER WAR THREATS

The Express Tribune, March 16, 2017

Pakistan and India are set to resume stalled water-sharing talks later this month under a 1960 treaty that the Indian prime minister had threatened to scrap blaming Islamabad of promoting terrorism in the region.

Late last year, Narendra Modi had threatened to scrap the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) in an attempt to ratchet up pressure on Pakistan after accusing the country of being behind a deadly militant attack on a military base in Uri, in the disputed Himalayan state of Kashmir.

The annual meeting of the permanent Indus Waters Commission will be held in Lahore on March 20 and 21, the BBC Urdu reported on Thursday. The meeting originally scheduled for September last year had been postponed after New Delhi pulled out of talks while blaming Pakistan for the Uri assault.

Delegations from Pakistan and India, led by their respective Indus waters commissioners, would attend the meeting. The IWT makes it mandatory for the two countries to hold talks at least once a year. However, it could be held anytime on the request of the either side.

Officials in the office of India's Indus Waters Commissioner PK Saxena confirmed that "the commissioner is busy preparing for talks scheduled for a few days later in Lahore". A staffer at Saxena's office said, "You should talk to water and power secretary Amarjeet Singh to get the official version on the issue." However, Singh did not take any questions when contacted.

Pakistan's Indus Waters Commissioner Asif Baig Mirza, while confirming the forthcoming meeting to the BBC, said the last meeting had been held between the two countries in May 2015.

The March meeting is important because as it recognises that the IWT is intact despite aggressive statements by the Indian prime minister. Pakistan has raised objections over the construction of the Kishanganga (300MW) and Ratle hydro projects (850MW).

It called upon the World Bank to constitute a court of arbitration to adjudicate on the issues raised by Pakistan against India's ongoing construction of the two projects. Under the IWT, it is the responsibility of the World Bank to play its role without further delay.

Meanwhile Indian authorities said that New Delhi has expedited work on six hydropower projects in Occupied Kashmir that will cost more than \$15 billion. A senior official of the Indian ministry of power, Pardap Kumar Pujari, told Reuters news agency that the projects were not purely meant for producing electricity.

He said they are also connected to important issues of defence and border management. He said money is allocated only after all these concerns have been taken into account.

Pakistan's Indus Water Commissioner Asif Baig said he would ask his Indian counterpart for details of the projects during the talks.

Reuters quoted Foreign Office spokesperson Nafees Zakaria as saying, "It seems that India has realised the importance of the Indus Waters Treaty and, therefore, she has decided to come back to the table of talks."

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1357354/indus-waters-treaty-pakistan-india-resume-dialogue-lahore-march-20/>

WATER LEVELS AT MANGLA, TARBELA AT LOWEST POINTS IN A DECADE

The Express Tribune, March 18th, 2017.

Sehrish Wasif

ISLAMABAD: The water levels at two major reservoirs of the country are reaching their lowest points in a decade while 'good showers' are not expected during the next two weeks to improve these levels.

Since March 10, both the reservoirs – Mangla Dam and Tarbela Dam – have been operating at the dead level. Experts believe that the current water levels in the reservoirs are likely to trigger a slight increase in load shedding across the country and may also have an impact on the early Kharif crop.

According to an analysis of the nine-year data, in the year 2017 the water level in Mangla Dam as on March 17 was recorded 1,049 feet which in 2008 was recorded 1,050 feet. Meanwhile in Tarbela Dam, the water level in 2008 was recorded 1,369 feet and currently it is 1,380 feet.

Talking to The Express Tribune, Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) chief Dr Ghulam Rasul said, "Good showers – that could help increase water levels in the two major reservoirs – are not expected during the next two weeks."

Commenting on the current water situation in the dams, he said in the past such situation arose in the country especially when it experienced a prolonged drought-like situation in 2008.

Meanwhile, the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) has convened its advisory committee meeting on March 31 to discuss issues pertaining to water availability and distribution for the upcoming Kharif season which starts from April 1.

Talking to The Express Tribune, Irsa spokesman Khalid Rana said the meeting is going to be chaired by the Irsa chairman and will be attended by the high officials of Wapda, provincial irrigation department, the Federal Flood Commission and others.

To a question about the current water situation in the reservoirs and its impact on the early Kharif crop, he said, "It is a bit early to comment on this and saying something a bit earlier could create panic among the farmers." He said from March 20 onward Irsa will start analysing the situation.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1358512/lowest-decade-water-levels-mangla-terbela-lowest-points/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MARCH 6TH TO MARCH 12 TH 2017

WATER SUPPLY: PROBE LIKELY AGAINST SINDH HIGH-UPS

The Express Tribune, March 7th, 2017.

Naeem Sahoutara

KARACHI: A judicial commission appointed by the apex court has called for opening an investigation against Sindh government officials for their failure to provide potable water and improve sanitation conditions under the multi-billion development schemes launched five years earlier, it was learnt on Monday.

The Supreme Court (SC) appointed the commission to probe the allegations of non-supply of clean drinking water, deteriorating sanitation conditions and its impact on the environment in Sindh.

The inquiry report, available with The Express Tribune, revealed that the relevant provincial authorities had failed to provide clean drinking water, save water sources from pollution, stop discharge of hazardous sewerage effluent and toxic industrial waste into the water channels and properly dispose of solid and toxic hospital wastes.

Justice Muhammad Iqbal Kalhoro of the Sindh High Court (SHC), who headed the inquiry, observed that all the reports of the district and sessions judges had revealed that despite the expenditure of billions of rupees over the last five years on schemes of water supply and sanitation, many of them were lying non-functional and even from functional schemes no tangible result improving provision of potable water and sanitation was being achieved.

"Directions may be ordered to launch an investigation into the finances incurred on all such schemes," the inquiry commissioner recommended to the SC.

In major cities like Karachi and Hyderabad, water shortage had multiplied due to illegal water hydrants, water theft, illegal connections and construction of high-rise buildings without expanding civic infrastructure.

It said even polluted water being supplied to the people for drinking water was gradually getting scarce, thanks to leakages in main transmission routes; water theft and lack of a system to monitor it; poor performance of outdated and inefficient pumping stations; water tanker mafia and illegal hydrants; mushroom growth of vertical buildings; old and rusted distribution system of water supply and inefficiency of officials of civic agencies and deliberate mismanagement in water distribution.

The inquiry commission noted, "Sanitation to keep us safe is notably absent because it seems to be a lost priority of the Sindh government. In some posh areas of big cities, some semblance of sanitation is being maintained but that is done against heavy cost and taxes. However, in the rest of the localities of big cities sanitation condition is deplorable as it is in relatively small cities, where sewerage, garbage, puddles and dirt seem to be a permanent feature of the roads and streets."

The commission found that the Sindh Environmental Protection Agency lacked organisational structure, as it was mostly concentrated in Karachi, and recommended strengthening and expanding its scope to the district levels for good results in environment related issues. It also found there were outstanding bills in respect of water, sanitation charges against government departments.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1348026/water-supply-probe-likely-sindh-high-ups/>

SC ORDERS GOVT TO FORM BODY TO MAKE ALL FILTER, TREATMENT PLANTS OPERATIONAL
Dawn, March 9th, 2017

Tahir Siddiqui

KARACHI: The Supreme Court on Wednesday ordered the provincial government to set up a committee to make all filter and treatment plants fully operational and ensure chlorination of water, setting up of computerised laboratories and deployment of trained staff to test the quality of water.

Headed by Justice Amir Hani Muslim, a three-judge bench was hearing a constitutional petition against the provincial government and others for their failure to provide potable water to people. The petition was filed by a senior practicing lawyer, advocate Shahab Usto.

The bench that comprised Justices Faez Isa and Faisal Arab, directed the chief secretary to constitute a committee comprising senior officers of the provincial government, water boards and water quality experts to oversee the work.

It ordered that the proposed committee come up with a report showing how much amount would be spent on making the plants operational and also specify the time frame for completing the task. The apex court directed the managing director of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board to immediately make operational Shershah and Mauripur sewage treatment plants and take steps to rehabilitate another plant whose land was stated to have been encroached upon.

Justice Hani came down heavily on the authorities for failing to make the treatment plants operational and observed that it was criminal negligence that toxic water was being drained into the sea without treatment.

The court barred the government from releasing more funds to private company North Sindh Urban Services Corporation (NSUSC) over its below par delivery of potable water and cleanliness services in different districts of the province.

Advocate General Zameer Ghumro presented a compliance report on the condition of filter and treatment plants, stating that the plants were not fully functional.

A water quality expert, who was one of the committee members inspecting the plants, told the judges that the filter plants were operational, but they were devoid of chlorine, skilled staff and maintenance.

Petitioner Usto suggested to the judges that the water purification system should be computerised to ensure provision of drinkable water to the public in a more effective manner.

The KWSB chief engineer told judges that there was dearth of qualified and skilled staff and the already present staff were not dedicated to their job. He said that those appointed in the water board and its laboratories lacked all the required credentials.

One of the bench members observed that the judges were taken aback by the report of the judicial commission of inquiry.

“The water utility seems to be in deep slumber while the city whose population is over 20 million depended on it,” Justice Isa remarked. “Had the board awoken even after the apex court set up the commission, there would have been substantial improvement,” he added.

The chief secretary assured the court that the government would release required funds to the water board for making all treatment plants operational.

The bench was also very critical of the NSUSC's managing director for the abysmal situation of sanitation and the company's failure to provide potable water in Sukkur, Larkana, Rohri, Shikarpur and other districts.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1319271>

TALKS ON INDUS WATERS TREATY ON 20TH

Business Recorder, 7 March, 2017

ISLAMABAD/NEW DELHI: Pakistan and India will hold talks on various aspects of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) in Lahore on 20 and 21 March.

The meeting of the Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) will take place nearly six months after New Delhi decided to suspend talks on the pact in view of the Uri terror attack. The meeting is being held "as the IWT, 1960 makes it mandatory" to hold parleys under the pact at least once in a fiscal.

India's Indus water commissioner and MEA officials will be part of the Indian delegation for the annual meeting. The last meeting of the PIC was held in May 2015 in New Delhi.

India had on Friday downplayed its participation in an upcoming meeting in Pakistan to discuss sharing of Indus river water, saying it does not amount to resumption of government-level India-Pakistan talks.

The commission, which has officials from both the countries as its members, was set up under the treaty to discuss and resolve issues relating to its implementation. It is mandated to meet alternately in India and Pakistan.—INP

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/03/07/1-page/855786-news.html>

SOLAR-POWERED WATER SCHEME FOR LAKKI RURAL AREAS

Dawn, March 8th, 2017

LAKKI MARWAT: A project is going to be launched in the coming weeks to provide clean drinking water to the residents of rural localities and equip public sector educational institutions with basic facilities in Lakki Marwat district, says an official of the local cement factory.

In a presentation to journalists from Lakki Marwat and DI Khan at National Club Dera, the factory's general manager Mohammad Anwar Tariq said under the project over Rs10 million would be spent on installation of solar-powered water supply schemes and setting up computer labs in government schools.

"Under CSR (corporate social responsibility) initiative the company has run regular educational campaigns in the schools located in rural localities of Lakki and Dera districts," he maintained.

Mr Tariq said the factory focused on infrastructure development, book distribution among students, organising reading and sports activities.

Besides the company also provided sports and recreational facilities at the Gomal University in DI Khan, he added.

He said the establishment of factory enhanced the value of property in Pezu town and adjacent localities besides it provided employment to around 3,000 locals. "It also established a dispensary with ambulance vehicle and medicine

facilities to ensure free healthcare to the local population,” he claimed, saying the company was a major donor of the women and children hospital located in Ghaznikhel town.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1319144>

‘84PC OF POPULATION LACKS ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER’

Dawn, March 8th, 2017

Iftikhar A. Khan

ISLAMABAD: Eighty-four per cent of the population does not have access to safe drinking water in a country where commercial banks posted windfall profits exceeding Rs475 billion in three years, the Senate was told on Tuesday.

Quoting a study, Provision of Safe Drinking Water, conducted by the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR), Minister for Science and Technology Rana Tanvir Hussain said only 72pc of water supply schemes were found to be functional, and 84pc of those had supplied water that was not fit for consumption.

The water from 14pc of water supply sources in Sindh and Punjab were found to be heavily contaminated with arsenic, well above the permissible limit of 50 parts per billion, Mr Hussain revealed.

He said Rs279 million had been spent on the project — Provision of Safe Drinking Water — over the past four years.

As part of the project, six regional water quality laboratories, under the PCRWR, had been upgraded and 17 new water quality testing laboratories had been established at the district level.

Funds were also used on the capacity building of 3,000 professionals associated with water supply agencies, Mr Hussain said.

Law Minister Zahid Hamid informed the Senate that commercial banks in the country had earned profits exceeding Rs472bn in the last three years.

The data shared with the senators showed an incremental rise in profits over three years — Rs115bn in 2013, Rs164bn in 2014 and Rs193bn in 2015.

Of the total profit earned by commercial banks in three years, four banks had earned profits exceeding Rs270bn. At the top is the Habib Bank Limited with a profit of Rs88bn, followed by MCB with Rs71bn, the United Bank Limited with Rs66bn and the Allied Bank Limited with Rs44.77 billion. The First Women Bank and the SME Bank were the only two banks that had suffered losses in three years.

The Senate took up the issue of the acquittals of culprits involved in torching Christians’ homes in Lahore.

Senate Chairman Mian Raza Rabbani directed the government to seek a report on the incident in which houses in a Christian majority colony in Lahore had been set ablaze. He also asked if the provincial government would prefer an appeal against the acquittals, besides a copy of the judgement.

The issue was raised by Senator Aitzaz Ahsan who said that the prosecution had not pursued the case properly, which was why all the accused had been acquitted.

“What would have been our reaction if this had happened to Muslims in Chicago or elsewhere,” he remarked. He said this would provide an opportunity to those pointing fingers at Pakistan and accusing it of prejudice.

Hafiz Hamdullah of the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl told the Senate that 150 girls had been recently abducted from Rawalpindi and sent to Afghanistan.

He said such incidents must be taken notice of and the culprits behind this must be traced and punished.

Noman Wazir of the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf raised the issue of the power sector's circular debt which has, once again, reached Rs560bn. He recalled that Rs480bn circular debt had been cleared in 2013.

The Senate chairman asked him to bring a calling attention notice so that a response could be sought from the minister concerned. The house will meet again on Wednesday (today) at 3pm.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1319157/84pc-of-population-lacks-access-to-safe-drinking-water>

ECNEC APPROVES OVER RS96BN WATER, POWER PROJECTS

Zaheer Abbasi

ISLAMABAD: A meeting of the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) has approved over Rs 96 billion development projects for water and power sector.

The meeting presided over by Finance Minister Ishaq Dar, however, deferred the projects related to Right Bank Outfall Drainage on the request of the Sindh government to allow it time to firm up views on its contribution for RBOD-II as per the financing plan.

The ECNEC considered and approved the project for a detailed design and construction of Pehur High Level Canal Extension Swabi, at a cost of Rs 10.156 billion. The cost of project also includes loan of US \$86.29 million from Asia Development Bank's (ADB).

The project is an extension to the command area of Pehur High Level Canal and draws its supplies through Gandaf Tunnel directly, which gets irrigation water from Tarbela Dam reservoir. The meeting was informed by Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms Ahsan Iqbal that the project will bring about 8,727 hectares (1316 hectare in Janda Boka and 7,411 in Indus-Amber area) of rain-fed land under irrigated agriculture. The project will enhance irrigated area and ensure food security due to increase in crop production over the next decade in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The ECNEC also accorded approval for conversion of existing 220KV substations at Bandd Road, Kalashah Kaku, Ravi and Nishatabad (districts Lahore and Faisalabad) to GIS technology at a cost of Rs 5.683 billion. Under the project, conversion of existing 220KV substations from air insulated substations (AIS) to gas insulated substations (GIS) will be undertaken.

The GIS substations will improve efficiency and reliability of the system and result in reduction in erosion and deterioration thereby cutting down maintenance costs and frequent tripping. The power flow will also increase by 684MW in the system. The meeting also approved Kachhi Canal Project (phase-I) at a cost of Rs 80.352 billion.

The project aims at development of water and land resources within the less-developed areas of Balochistan, covering districts of Dera Bugti, Naseerabad, Bolan, Kachhi and Jhal Magsi. Kachhi Canal off takes at Taunsa Barrage from River Indus with peak discharge of 6,000 cusecs and will ultimately irrigate an area of 713,000 acres.

Under the phase-I of the project, 72,000 acres of land would be irrigated. The project will boost the agriculture production of food grain, fiber and oilseeds. It will also facilitate availability of potable drinking water. Those who attended the meeting included Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Food Security Sikandar Hayat Bosan, provincial ministers and senior officials of federal and provincial governments.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/03/08/1-page/856011-news.html>

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: SAFE DRINKING WATER TARGET OUT OF REACH: EXPERTS
The Express Tribune, March 8th, 2017.

Sehrish Wasif

Islamabad: Pakistan will be unable to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for providing safe drinking water set to be achieved by 2030 mainly because of rapidly increasing population and urbanisation and rise in pollution.

These issues were discussed at a one-day 'Regional Dialogue on SDG-6.0' organised by the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) in collaboration with the Tajikistan Embassy and the ECO-Science Foundation.

Water experts and researchers said that these factors were mainly obstructing the country in meeting the SDG 2015-2030 on time.

They believed that the country was already off-track in meeting these targets.

The dialogue took place under the umbrella of the International Decade for Action-Water for Sustainable Development (2018-2028).

While talking to The Express Tribune an official working closely with the water sector in Pakistan, who wished not to be named, said Pakistan has already missed the MDG water and sanitation target.

"The pace with which Pakistan is currently improving its water and sanitation sector clearly indicated that the country will not be able to meet the target even by 2050," an official said.

By 2030 the country's population is expected to double and it would be more challenging for the government to meet the water requirement and improve sanitation issues, said the official.

The official cited a survey conducted by PCRWR in 2005-06, saying that only 20 per cent of the country's population had access to clean drinking water, while the same survey showed only 10 per cent improvement in 2015-16.

Earlier, PCRWR chairman Dr Muhammad Ashraf said that targets of SDG-6.0, especially 'provision of safe drinking water', could only be achieved by demonstrating strong political will, national ownership and the right methodology.

ECO-SF president Prof Dr Manzoor Ahmad said: "All ECO countries are facing water scarcity and quality problems. We must manage our water resources ... efficiently," he said.

Later, water experts and researchers outlined a draft framework for implementing SDG 6.0 targets in Pakistan.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1349047/sustainable-development-goals-safe-drinking-water-target-reach-experts/>

CHINESE MODEL OF WATER PURIFICATION SYSTEM SHOULD BE REPLICATED'
Business Recorder, 9 March 2017

LAHORE: “Chinese model of water purification system should be replicated in Pakistan to reduce possibility of water borne diseases, which are troubling Pakistan’s economy up to \$1.3 billion every year and are the biggest source of gastrointestinal infections.”

Pak-China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) President Wang Zihai stated this while speaking at a meeting with the Chinese delegation from HuaQi Tech Pvt Limited headed by Jun Zheng. PCJCCI Vice President Moazzam Ali Ghurki and delegation members including Su Shixun, Aibin Wang, Tong Ming, Wang Zhoumin and Wu Zhidan were also present at the meeting. The delegation visited the chamber to introduce Chinese water management system and purification technology to Pakistan.

He said that replication of this system could overcome water and water disease crises in Pakistan particularly in poor cities that are not getting access to clean water. Water crisis is a global issue and now china wants to benefit world, since Pakistan faces such crisis particularly in Sindh and northern Punjab, that’s why they want to introduce such plants to Pakistan.

Speaking on the occasion, Jun Zheng said the China’s global fresh water resources are merely 6 percent whereas they have to provide clean drinking water to 20 percent of world population. With the years of research and exploration, China has devised a water purification system that not only enabled China to meet its water need but also provided people with medically approved healthy water, he said.

Halo Source technology has created a series of water filtration devices that rely on gravity but do not require electricity or plumbing to operate.

“We have developed the products which kill deadly bacteria and viruses in parts of the developing world where access to water filtration is limited,” Jun added.

Aibin Wang said that about 80 percent of the water in Shanghai is obtained from the Huangpu River. The remaining 20 percent comes from the Yangtze River. Unfortunately, both are among the most polluted rivers in the world but with the help of latest technology of purification system we are combating this challenge and are willing to share it with the world, he added.

Moazzam Ali Ghurki said the existing framework of Pakistan’s water purification system needs to be revolutionized and such technologies will bring innovation in water facilities.

He asserted that safe water purification is really vital as water chlorination is causing more harm than tap water itself.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/03/09/13-page/856333-news.html>

STRIKE OVER WATER SHORTAGE

Dawn, March 10th, 2017

BADIN: Amid a shutter-down across Shaheed Fazil Rahu (formerly Golarchi) town on Thursday against an acute shortage of drinking and irrigation water for more than six months, former home minister Dr Zulfikar Ali Mirza on Thursday addressed several gatherings of his supporters and spoke to reporters in Badin and Tando Bago talukas to renew his pledge to force the provincial government to address the issue.

He reiterated that he would continue to expose ‘corrupt’ elements ruling the roost and would never compromise on principles.

He noted with concern that water shortage in this district was turning into a crisis.

During his visit to a number of villages in the district, he told the farming community that he fully realised that irrigation water was the burning issue of Sindh and he would do his utmost to force the authorities concerned to resolve it.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1319455/strike-over-water-shortage>

TARBELA REACHES DEAD LEVEL OF 1380FT: IRSA

Mushtaq Ghumman

Business Recorder, 12 March 2017

ISLAMABAD: The country's top water reservoir Tarbela has reached dead level of 1380 feet due to which Irsa will now release inflows only to the provinces.

On Saturday, inflow at Tarbela was 12.4 cusecs whereas outflow was 28 cusecs.

However, Mangla reservoir is nine feet above the dead level of 1040.3 feet due to rains in dam's catchment area. Inflow at Mangla was 25.2 cusecs while outflow was recorded at 22 cusecs.

According to Irsa spokesperson, water shortage is still 17 percent as was anticipated at the start of the season. All canals are opened and running as per provincial indents.

Against the water storage capacity of the country that stands at 14.01 Million Acre Feet (MAF) of water, the country currently has 1.37 MAF of stored water in Tarbela, Mangla and Chashma reservoirs.

Provinces have already reduced their indents. From March 6, 2017 Sindh indent has reduced to 40,000 cusecs from 45,000 cusecs whereas Punjab reduced its indent 57,000 cusecs to 50,000 cusecs. KPK in CRBC is 3,000 cusecs and Balochistan 4,000 cusecs.

Flow at Kabul River was 8.5 cusecs whereas at the reservoir at Chashma barrage it was 639.6 cusecs. Inflow at Chashma was 36.2 cusecs and outflow was 32 cusecs.

Outflow at Kalabagh upstream was 46.7 cusecs downstream 42.4 was cusecs. Taunsa upstream was 14.9 cusecs, downstream, Mean Rasul upstream was 14.9 cusecs, downstream 1.8 cusecs, Marala upstream 21.7 cusecs, downstream 14.8 cusecs, Trimmu- upstream 8.7 cusecs, downstream 0, Sidhnai upstream 7.1 cusecs, downstream 1.7 cusecs, Punjnud upstream 5.1 cusecs, downstream 0, Guddu barrage upstream 41.8 cusecs, downstream 36.5 cusecs.—

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/03/12/1-page/856969-news.html>

WATER BRINGS SENSE OF INSECURITY IN SINDH, SAYS FARMER

The Express Tribune, March 12, 2017

Z Ali

HYDERABAD: Go to any place in Sindh, you will find a sense of insecurity about water.

Mehmood Nawaz Shah, a progressive farmer and vice-president of Sindh Abadgar Board, said this at a consultative dialogue, organised at Indus Hotel in Hyderabad on Friday by Hisaar Foundation. Experts and participants discussed the relevance of formulating a national policy on water and reiterated the past inter-provincial concerns.

The significance of conserving water, irrigating the arid zones, building new dams, equitable sharing among provinces, releasing water downstream to preserve delta and ecology resonate in the academic, political and policy

discourses in Pakistan. However, forming a national policy for efficient use of surface, subsoil and rain water has eluded the country so far.

And one of the major stumbling blocks in the way of creating a national framework is the mistrust between Sindh and Punjab provinces, besides the governmental inaction over a broad range of other issues.

The event was held to seek recommendations from the stakeholders for inclusion in the policy draft prepared by the foundation, which is a think-tank working on water issues, for the government.

“Pakistan is a federation. But evolution of federalism started recently in 2010 after enactment of the 18th constitutional amendment,” Dr Rajab Memon, former vice-chancellor of Sindh Agriculture University and a leader of Sindh Taraqi Pasand party, said while elaborating the Sindh-Punjab relations vis-a-vis water. “It’s not possible to depoliticise water now. But it can be done after 10 to 15 years if the nascent federalism is allowed to become strong.”

Giving a presentation on recommendations for Pakistan’s water policy, Hisaar Foundation’s Seemi Kamal said five focus areas have been identified for the framework. These are improving access of poor and landless to water, financing urban and rural water economies, protecting the Indus basin, improving governance of water institutions and application of science and technology.

She said Pakistan could not achieve its goal to be counted among top 10 world economies by 2047 without developing the water economy and providing clean drinking water to citizens. Kamal said the government ought to develop a mechanism to supply irrigation water for agriculture in the arid districts in eastern Sindh, southern Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, southern Punjab and eastern Balochistan.

Improving water efficiency by 33%, achieving Rs100-billion production from one million acre-feet (MAF) of water, increasing water cess and generating 10,000 megawatt electricity from hydropower are set as the goals for the government.

An average of 104 MAF water is released in the irrigation network in Pakistan with Punjab taking 79% share. The propositions call for establishing a system of water entitlements based on availability of surface, ground and rainwater in a province and a district.

Kamal said Punjab has the largest deposit of groundwater. “Punjab will never agree to reduce its share from the surface water [despite] availability of groundwater. But does it mean we should stop pressing the province [with this demand]?”

The participants pointed out that the draft has omitted certain important factors like protection of some 1,200 wetlands in Sindh and the historic role of the federal government on water issues between the Sindh and Punjab provinces. They also suggested inclusion of food security and environment as part of the water policy.

According to SAB vice-president Mehmood Nawaz Shah, a majority of some 1,100 distributaries in Sindh, which supply water from the canals to the watercourses, fail to take water to the tail-end regions. He said fresh water aquifers no longer exist in Sindh. “Until the recent past, the aquifers were supplied with fresh water. But now they are being polluted like the Manchar Lake where Main Nara Valley (MNV) drain empties with poisonous chemicals.”

Abrar Qazi, the chairperson of Awami Jamhori Party, disputed with the figure of Sindh containing 21% groundwater among the national reserves. “In most places in Sindh, the subsoil water is saline. It contains high quantity of arsenic and lead.”

Qazi suggested that the government under the international laws should take water from the three rivers, which were given to India under the Indus Water Treaty for the delta region in Sindh. He argued that the laws governing the trans-boundary waters provide for such a share.

An official of Water and Power Ministry pointed out how unfinished water projects create shortage instead of increasing the supply. “Darawat Dam [located in the mountainous region of Jamshoro near Lunikot] was inaugurated in early 2013. But because so far the irrigation system to carry the dam’s water for cultivation of crops hasn’t been built, the water [that] accumulates in this rain-fed dam evaporates.” The dam’s construction also blocked the natural flow of Nai Baran on which thousands of people living in Jamshoro’s mountain region depended.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1352891/water-brings-sense-insecurity-sindh-says-farmer/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM FEBRUARY 27TH TO MARCH 5TH 2017

SHAHBAZ FOR RAPID IMPLEMENTATION OF SAAF PANI PROJECT

Business Recorder, 28 February 2017

LAHORE: The Chief Minister of Punjab Mian Shahbaz Sharif said on Monday that future strategy has been evolved for speedy implementation of Saaf Pani Project and provision of clean drinking water in 37 Tehsils of South Punjab in first phase.

The programme will be expanded across the province in phases while non-functional water schemes would also be restored.

Shahbaz Sharif expressed these views while presiding over a high level meeting on Monday which reviewed different matters regarding implementation of Khadim-e-Punjab Saaf Pani Programme and took various important decisions for its implementation in future.

The Chief Minister told that now work is being carried out in right direction for provision of potable water’s programme implementation. He said that this is an excellent public welfare programme; therefore, it should be forwarded as early as possible. He said that each and every moment regarding implementation of the said programme is precious and we have to compensate the time wasted in the past with hard work and determination.

He directed Saaf Pani Company to select best human resource on merit for its capacity-building and added that viable recommendations should be presented for the restoration of non-functional rural water schemes. He said that clean drinking water is the basic right of every citizen and Punjab government is working on this programme to ensure that right. He said that the targets of Saaf Pani Programme have to be achieved within stipulated period and work will have to be carried out vigorously in this regard.

He directed to keep in view future needs while implementing this programme so that there should be room for further expansion. He said that clean drinking water is life which is directly associated with human health and potable water is basic need of every citizen.

Chief Executive Officer of Saaf Pani Company South gave a briefing regarding different models and implementation of the programme. Chairman Saaf Pani Company South Ch Arif Saeed, Chief Secretary, Chairman Planning and Development, Secretary Housing and concerned officials were present on the occasion.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/02/28/12-page/854075-news.html>

WATER CONSERVATION AND WATER STEWARDSHIP IN PAKISTAN

Business Recorder, March 2 2017

Is ‘Water’ The Next Crisis In The Making? It Wouldn’t Be Wrong To Be Pessimistic About Its Availability And Conservation; People Believe That Water Is A Cheap Resource And It Is Plentiful, Which Is Not True. Right Now, Water Stewardship Is Largely Taken To Be A Fancy Term In Most Developing Countries. However, The Odds For This Resource To Emerge As The Global Challenge Are Very High.

Water, Unlike Climate Change, Is A Very Local Issue; The Kind Of Solutions For Water Is Different Geography By Geography, And Environmental Sector By Sector. Water Associated Problems Are Amongst The Key Challenges Faced By The Country. Pakistan's Water Profile Has Changed Drastically From Being A Water Abundant Country, To A Water Stressed Country. And Besides Just Increasing Demand And Availability, Issues Like Clean Water, Water Borne Diseases, Inadequate Supplies, And Inadequate Sanitation Are Severe Problem Areas.

Population Growth, Rapid Urbanisation, Water-Intensive Farming Practices And Industrialisation Contribute To Increasing Demand For Water. Whereas The Supply Is Being Hampered By Climatic Changes, Poor Infrastructure And Inadequate Storage Capacity, And Excessive Pumping Of Groundwater, Raising Concerns Over Its Sustainability.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'S Latest Volume Of Development Advocate Pakistan Is Also On Water Being A Critical Development Challenge. Besides Talking About The Causes Of Water Stress In The Country, The Editorial Highlights That Some Appropriate Steps At The Federal And Provincial Level Have Been Taken To Delineate The Government's Commitment Towards Combating Water Issues.

A Couple Of Them Are 'Clean Drinking Water For All' Project Launched In Punjab, And The National Climate Change Policy, Which Has Provided Appropriate Action Plans Focusing On Enhancing Water Storage And Infrastructure, Better Water Resource Management, Enhancing Institutional Capacities And Creating Awareness. However, It Further Highlights That More Is Needed In Terms Of Implementation.

Another Noteworthy Attempt Has Been Made By WWF Pakistan That Introduced The Concept Of Water Stewardship In Pakistan In Order To Reduce The Impacts Of Increased Water Use And Water Pollution On The Indus Basin, While Meeting The Needs Of Agricultural Development – Single Largest User Of Water – And Business.

What's The Rationale Of Water Stewardship? A Study By WWF Pakistan In 2012 Finds That It Will Not Only Provide The Means To Confront The Risk In The Future, But It Will Also Provide Opportunities For Best Water Management Practices In The Industries. For This, WWF Pakistan Introduced Water Stewardship Standards In The Corporate Sector Back In 2015 Where It Aimed At Reducing The Water Footprint And Urge Businesses And Firms Advocate And Promote Sustainable Water Resource Management.

In The Same Context, WWF Pakistan Had Started A Water Stewardship Project – A Partnership For Sustainable Water Use Among The Smes In Punjab – In 2013, Which Ended In 2015. The Programme Aimed At Promoting The Adoption Of Sustainable Consumption And Production (SCP) Among All Small And Medium Sized Entities.

But This Is Just One Project; Addressing Water Issues Require Interventions At Individual And State Levels At A Rigorous Level. Unless We Have Events, Seminars, And Discussion Forums That Bring Key Players In The Water Sector – From Water Managers And Policy Makers To Business Sectors, Experts And Ngos – For A Collaborative Dialogue To Bring The Water Security Issue To The Foray, We Can Never Make Progress On Management Of Water In The Future.

Holding Conferences And Dialogue Is The Beginning; Public Education Campaigns That Focus On Enhancing Water Usage Awareness Need To Become Aggressive. Conservation Needs To Be Done At Individual Level As Well As At A Broader Level. There Needs To Be A Proper Water Management System Interlaced With An Effective Institutional And Legal System. In Short, There Is A Dire Need For A Water Policy, And Each Sector Needs To Move On To A Path Toward Sustainable Water Stewardship Or Risk Being Left High And Dry!

<http://Fp.Brecorder.Com/2017/03/20170302146698/>

PESHAWAR: Qaumi Watan Party (QWP) Chairman, Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao along with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Senior Minister for Irrigation, Sikandar Khan Sherpao formally inaugurated the Doaba Canal on Friday to irrigate 33,977 acres of agriculture land, benefitting residents of 48 surrounding villages in district Charsadda.

While speaking on the occasion, Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao stated that the ADP scheme for the reconstruction and extension of the canal has been increased from 200 million to 500 million in order to meet the demands of people involved in the agricultural sector of the district.

He praised the efforts of QWP for addressing the long standing demands of the people of the area adding that QWP will always support farmers because agricultural sector is the financial backbone of the nation.

“Most of our people are employed in the agricultural sector and this canal will provide tremendous livelihood opportunities to them. Additionally, the extension of the canal will create many job opportunities for the locals as well as the people of the province,” he added.

The chairman further stated that QWP is the only political force in the province that believes in taking practical steps for the betterment and welfare of Pakhtoon nation. While commenting on the merger of FATA with KP, the chairman clarified that the merger of FATA with KP will open new avenues for development of Pakhtoons.

“We demanded complete and immediate merger of FATA with KP. However, the stance of the party, on the recent cabinet decision on FATA reforms, will be given only after evaluating and studying the decision,” he added.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/03/04/8-page/854975-news.html>

OVER 70PC WATER SAMPLES IN 13 DISTRICTS FOUND ‘UNFIT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION’
Dawn, March 5th, 2017

Faiza Ilyas

KARACHI: A majority of water samples collected from surface and underground sources in 13 districts of Sindh, including all six Karachi districts, by a federal institution in a recent survey have been found to be unfit for human consumption, it emerged on Saturday.

The Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) collected 300 water samples from Sukkur, Larkana, Shikarpur, Tando Mohammad Khan, Badin, Tharparkar, Hyderabad and Karachi’s six districts — East, West, South, Central, Malir and Korangi — and tested the same for a detailed physiochemical and bacterial analysis. Later, the findings were compared with the World Health Organisation and the National Environmental Quality Standards on safe drinking water.

“We have been regularly carrying out analysis of water samples for the past many years in Sindh and I can say with authority that there hasn’t been any improvement in the quality of water being supplied to the various parts of the province,” said Dr Ghulam Murtaza of the PCRWR.

According to him, the poor quality of water being supplied to Karachi, Hyderabad and Sukkur — the three districts whose water quality has continuously been monitored since 2005 — can be gauged from the fact that the number of unsafe water samples have usually ranged between 80 and 90 per cent.

“Improvement [in the quality of water] can only come when the factors contaminating water are addressed. They include mixing of sewage in the drinking water supply line, lack of treatment [where source of contamination is high levels of subsoil minerals] and filter plants [to disinfect and reduce turbidity], improper chlorination [in places where

filter plants exist] and contamination by industrial and domestic sewage at the drinking water source [for instance Keenjhar lake supplying water to Karachi],” Dr Murtaza explained.

In the recent analysis, over 70 per cent of water samples in Sindh were found unfit for human consumption, he added. The sampling, he said, was focused on urban areas, which largely did not have arsenic contamination in their water supply.

“This issue has been found in the groundwater of Khairpur, Tando Mohammad Khan, Tando Allah Yar, Gambat, Thatta, Jamshoro and Naushehro Feroz in previous studies,” he said.

Around 80pc samples had bacterial contamination in Karachi. Of them, 30pc samples had faecal contamination. The samples, more than half, also showed elevated turbidity levels and high concentration of total dissolved solids (TDS), hardness and sulphate, sodium and chloride and were unfit for human consumption.

Only 20pc samples were found safe in Karachi.

The water samples collected from Hyderabad, Larkana and Sukkur showed similar results; more than 80pc samples were found unfit for human consumption on account of bacterial contamination, whereas many samples had TDS, sulphate, hardness, calcium, chloride and iron content beyond permissible limits.

In case of Tando Mohammad Khan and Badin districts, more than half of the collected samples were found unsafe due to high TDS and bacterial contamination, whereas many were found with hardness beyond permissible limits and had elevated levels of calcium, magnesium, sodium, sulphate, chloride and iron content.

Between 50pc and 60pc of water samples were found unsafe due to bacterial contamination in Tando Mohammad Khan and Badin. Thirty per cent to 40pc samples in these districts were found safe.

More than half of the water samples collected from reverse osmosis plants installed in Tharparkar were found unsafe due to bacterial contamination and high TDS.

A significant number of samples were unsafe on account of high sodium and chloride.

According to experts at the PCRWR, these results were more or less similar to those published last year in a report titled Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey.

In 2014, the PCRWR conducted the water analysis of five districts of Sindh (which are not included in the present analysis) — Jacobabad, Kashmore-Kandhkot, Shikarpur, Khairpur and Ghotki. Out of 1,661 samples collected from subsoil sources of these districts, 970 (58pc) were found unsafe.

The major contaminants were turbidity, bacterial contamination, TDS, hardness, calcium, sodium, potassium, chloride, sulphate, fluoride, nitrate, iron, etc.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1318414>

GROWERS WARN TO LAUNCH PROTEST AGAINST ARTIFICIAL WATER CRISIS

Business Recorder, 5 March 2017

BADIN: The large number of the small growers and peasants and elected representatives hailing from different towns and cities of district Badin organised an important meeting on Saturday at Morjhar Farm presided over by former Speaker, NA, Dr Fehmida Mirza to devise their strategy against the alleged artificial water crisis in the irrigation channels of the district.

Participants of the meeting held Chairman, Area Water Board, Left Canals of Kotri Barrage, responsible for water crisis, which according to them, was involved in the mega scam of Rs 06 billion which was released for the upgradation and re-modelling of Ali-Pur regulator and others irrigation channels.

Fehmida Mirza, MNA, has alleged that people of the district are facing the worst water crisis and other issues mainly due to the rampant corruption and the bad governance.

She observed that the commission formed by the Supreme Court of Pakistan was doing its best to provide the quality drinking water.

Dr Mirza observed that Akram Wah canal and its outlets were not given the due share of water while Phuleli Canal and its channels were given extra water illegally since they were non-perennial.

She said that on one hand the flood canals were provided with ample share of water while the other side the outlets in Badin, Shaheed Fazil Rahu, Tando Bago and parts of Talhar Talukas were not given the water even the drinking purposes. She termed it a conspiracy against the farmers and the people of Badin. She said that the water flow was being badly obstructed by irrigation officials and the landowners by tampering with the modules and constructing the blockages in the canals.

On the occasion, Hussnain Mirza, MPA, Sikander Ali Memon, Haji Sher Jamali, Syed Zafar Ali Shah and other elected LB representatives and farmers' leaders were present. Jointly they demanded for the removal of the SIDA chairman and stern actions against all those responsible for the water crisis and in the massive scam. They warned to launch the peaceful protest movement under the leadership of Dr Fehmida Mirza, if their demands were not met.—
NNI

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/03/05/3-page/855189-news.html>

April 2017

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM APRIL 24TH TO APRIL 30TH 2017

ISSUE OF WATER SHORTAGE, UNFILTERED SUPPLY ECHOES IN ASSEMBLY

Dawn, April 25th, 2017

Habib Khan Ghori

KARACHI: Local Government Minister Jam Khan Shoro on Monday blamed the federal government for carrying out up to 16 hours of load-shedding in Hyderabad, Thatta and other parts of Sindh that resulted in an acute water shortage in the province.

He said this while responding to the call-attention notices of three lawmakers — engineer Sabir Qaimkhani and Kamran Akhtar of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement and Ameer Haider Sheerazi of the PML-Nawaz — who raised the issue of water shortage and unfiltered supply in the province, including Karachi, Hyderabad, Thatta and Gharo.

The same issue also echoed during the discussion on two quarterly reports of the provincial budget for financial year 2016-17 when five opposition legislators called upon the government to expedite the execution of K-4 water supply project and to improve water supply.

Minister Shoro said that the reason of disruption of water supply in interior of Sindh was 16 hours of load-shedding by the Water and Power Development Authority.

The PPP was already protesting against it, he said and asked the MQM legislators to join his party's protest.

He said besides taking care of the existing source of water and filter plants, people of Hyderabad would be gifted a big water plant in the upcoming budget to improve filtered water supply.

He said in Karachi the K-4 and other projects would be completed by 2018.

The minister criticised past governments which he said failed to take any practical steps to overcome the increasing water crisis in Sindh, including Karachi.

He said it was the PPP which had initiated the K-4 project and three projects to provide 65 million gallons daily. It also replaced and renovated decades-old pumping machines and initiated work on laying new water lines.

He said different parties during their rule in Sindh were involved in setting up illegal hydrant to steal water. However, at present only seven hydrants were operational in the city as some 72 illegal hydrants were demolished and many illegal underground water connections were also cut off.

The government had installed reverse-osmosis (RO) plants in Karachi and other cities to improve water supply. However, he conceded that a few of them were non-operational due to brackish water.

On Monday, when the assembly reassembled after a two-day break, five more legislators from the opposition benches spoke.

Criticising the government performance, they said the PPP despite remaining in power for the past nine years and spending billions of rupees in the name of development schemes failed to bring any improvement in the life of the common man because development funds were either unspent because of non-execution of projects or embezzled.

Jamal Ahmad of the MQM said although schemes of opposition lawmakers had been made part of the budget for the past many years, the government did not release funds.

He said that the PPP government was neither releasing any fund to elected representatives nor giving any power to the Karachi mayor to carry out development.

PML-F's Nusrat Sehar Abbasi said that the assembly was discussing the budget but neither ministers nor secretaries were present in the official gallery to take notes. She said this was an era of bad governance in Sindh. The PPP was protesting against load-shedding but why did it not paying any heed towards water scarcity and corruption, she asked.

Dr Zafar Kamali of the MQM said that the situation in Sindh remained unchanged despite the government's claim that it had allocated billions of rupees in the provincial budget. Soon after announcement of the new budget members of the treasury benches could be seen driving new cars, he said.

Khurram Sherzaman of the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf stressed the need for paying attention to direct taxes in the new budget. He said indirect taxes be avoided as they directly affected the common man.

Saeed Khan Nizamani of the PML-F said that the PPP government had totally ignored the constituencies of the opposition legislators. This is injustice as it was the responsibility of every government to look after everyone living in the province with equity and justice.

Before the house was adjourned at 6pm to meet on Tuesday, the assembly unanimously adopted a resolution tabled by PTI's Khurram Sherzaman with signatures from MPAs across the house to congratulate former Pakistan skipper Younis Khan on completion of his 10,000 runs in Test cricket.

The Sindh Assembly greeted Mr Khan for becoming the first Pakistani batsman to achieve the milestone of 10,000 runs.

Earlier, at the start of proceedings at 3pm, Speaker Agha Siraj Durrani warned all provincial ministers and lawmakers not to bring unregistered vehicles on the assembly premises.

He said it was brought to his knowledge that some MPAs brought unregistered vehicles with tinted glasses and the people accompanying them were found roaming in the assembly lobbies.

He said he had directed the assembly staff that if they found any unconcerned person roaming around in the assembly galleries the services of the member of the staff would be terminated as there could be no compromise on the security of the house.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1328979/issue-of-water-shortage-unfiltered-supply-echoes-in-assembly>

PEOPLE IN SINDH STILL TRAVELLING MILES FOR POTABLE WATER, DECRY MPAS

KARACHI: Opposition lawmakers cried foul over the severe water crises in Karachi and other districts of Sindh.

The MPAs said that despite the government's tall claims, people in various districts of the province are still traveling miles in search of potable water. "Thatta was once the capital of this province but unfortunately no one takes notice of the water crisis there," said Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz MPA Syed Ameer Hyder Shah while moving a call attention notice.

"[Keenjhar Lake] is located near Thatta city and the bulk of the water is being supplied to Karachi. But no concrete measures have been taken in our areas where water has now become rare commodity," he said, adding that a scheme was also planned in the budget to provide water from Dhabeji to Thatta, Gharo and Gujjo towns but nothing has been done so far.

Muttahida Qaumi Movement's (MQM) Sabir Qaimkhani said that the same situation persists in Hyderabad. He said that ideally, the government ideally should store at least 15 days' worth of water to cope with crisis-like situations but all mechanisms have collapsed. "One hundred million gallons of water is required daily but the municipality only has the capacity of 60 million and releases four million gallons per day," he said.

Kamran Akhtar of the MQM also raised the issue of the water crisis in his constituency in Karachi's District West and said the government had promised to resolve water the crises but the concerned authorities have not lived up to their pledges.

Local Government Minister Jam Khan Shoro blamed the hours-long loadshedding at pumping stations for the situation and asked, "What can we do with around 16 to 20 hours of loadshedding?" He said that his party is on the roads against the power and energy crisis, which has made the people's lives miserable. "I request all opposition members to help us in this cause, because the entire Sindh is suffering from water and power crisis," he said.

Shoro was of the view that government had taken drastic measures to deal with the water situation in Karachi, Hyderabad and other districts of the province. "We have given the K-IV scheme for Karachi, which will be completed by 2018 and the government will include a mega drinking water project for Hyderabad city in the upcoming budget," he said, adding that new water lines are also being laid down in Karachi and Hyderabad districts.

The local government minister also criticised the opposition parties and said, "Illegal hydrants have been big cause of water scarcity in Karachi and a few political parties and influential people were also running these illegal hydrants, which have not been demolished".

Shoro said that he did not want to disclose names of the parties but he was in possession officials. “Everyone knows who was running the illegal hydrant near Garden,” said the minister, adding that there are a total seven hydrants in the city and all are legal.

“After the K-IV scheme, we will get rid of hydrants,” he announced.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1392523/people-sindh-still-travelling-miles-potable-water-decry-mpas/>

‘NEELUM-JHELUM PLANT TO START PRODUCTION BY JANUARY’

Dawn, April, 27, 2017

MUZAFFARABAD: Minister of State for Water and Power Abid Sher Ali claimed on Wednesday that the 969-megawatt Neelum-Jhelum Hydroelectric Project would start production by January next year.

“More than 90 per cent work on this mega project has been completed and it will be commissioned early next year to help overcome the energy crisis in the country,” he told journalists in Chattar Klass, some 20km south of here, after visiting the project site there.

He however underlined the need of a proper investigation by the National Accountability Bureau into the delay in completion of the project as well as escalation in its cost beyond the sanctioned amount in PC-1.

“This project was subjected to deliberate delay and corruption of billions of rupees which must be investigated thoroughly,” he said.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1329529>

GROWERS WARN OF BESIEGING SIDA OFFICE OVER WATER SHORTAGE

Dawn, April 27th, 2017

UMERKOT: Local government representatives and growers have warned they will stage a sit-in at the Jamrao Canal regulator and besiege the office of the managing director of the Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (SIDA) along with thousands of growers, if water is not released to their lands within four days.

Umerkot district chairman Syed Noor Ali Shah, vice chairman Haji Baqa Palli, municipal committee chairman Haji Khalid Siraj Soomro and growers’ leaders Chaudhry Musaddiq Arain and others said at a press conference at the district council hall here on Wednesday that if the irrigation department did not release water immediately, growers would not be able to cultivate Kharif crops and would have to bear huge financial losses.

They said the area which was a major producer of chilli and cotton would not be able to grow the crops. For a long time, ‘contaminated’ water from Chotiaryoon Dam was being released into the Nara Canal which was unfit for human consumption and destroyed the soil, they said.

They said that more than 200 lift machines on the banks of Nara Canal had been stealing water under the nose of officials concerned but they had turned a blind eye to them for vested interests.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1329455>

WB OFFICIAL IN DELHI TO BREAK WATER TREATY STALEMATE

Anwar Iqbal

WASHINGTON: The World Bank's vice president for the South Asia region, Annette Dixon, is now in New Delhi for talks aimed at breaking the stalemate over a water dispute between India and Pakistan, official sources told Dawn.

They said Ms Dixon went to India on Tuesday, but the Indians did not publicise the visit as they discourage international mediation in their disputes with Pakistan.

The World Bank, however, is recognised as an arbitrator in the 1960 Indus Water Treaty (IWT) that distributes waters of the Indus and its tributaries between India and Pakistan.

The latest dispute concerns two hydroelectric projects — Ratle and Kishanganga — that India is building over one of the tributaries. Pakistan views these projects as a violation of the treaty and wants the World Bank to appoint a court of arbitration. India opposes the proposal and has asked the bank to depute neutral experts to further probe the matter.

Pakistan sees the Indian approach as aimed at buying time to complete the two projects and argues that since a neutral expert has no legal authority, the expert's decision is not legally binding.

As the two sides stick to their positions, the World Bank finds itself in a tight spot and is softly urging both sides to resolve the dispute through talks as it has the potential to undermine the water treaty.

Pakistan fears that India wants to go beyond the treaty by bringing in neutral observers. "We do not want to encourage any process outside the IWT, even showing an inclination to consider that option could hurt the treaty," said a senior Pakistani official while explaining why Islamabad is reluctant to accept the Indian demand.

Sources in Washington say the World Bank also is against wasting more time and is trying to persuade both sides to start negotiations on the matter.

The decision to send Ms Dixon to New Delhi also shows the importance the bank attaches to the issue. Her assignment at the bank includes promoting poverty reduction projects in South Asia. She oversees lending operations and bank-funded projects worth more than \$10 billion a year.

Pakistan and India were scheduled to hold three-day talks on the 850MW Ratle and 330MW Kishanganga hydroelectric projects at the World Bank headquarters in Washington on April 12, but India refused to send its delegation. Pakistan, however, had informed the bank that it would attend the talks, if held as scheduled.

Initially, the World Bank wanted to host secretary-level talks between Pakistan and India in Dubai, but Pakistan proposed that the venue be changed to Washington. Pakistani authorities had announced that Annette Dixon would personally attend the talks and facilitate both countries in resolution of disputes on run-of-the-river hydroelectric projects being constructed in India-held Kashmir.

The Indus water commissioners of both countries met in Islamabad last month to discuss the designs of three proposed hydroelectric projects — Pakal Dul, Lower Kalnai and Miya — in held Kashmir and flood supply data.

Pakistan says India has not shared the designs of the three projects.

The Ratle hydroelectric project is in initial stage and Pakistan has objections to its design. The Obama administration also played a supporting role in encouraging the talks, but so far the Trump administration has not indicated its approach.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1329771>

COURT ASKS OFFICERS TO COME UP WITH PLANS FOR STRENGTHENING RIVER DYKE

LARKANA: The Larkana circuit bench of the Sindh High Court on Thursday directed chief engineer of Sukkur barrage's right bank, superintendent engineer of western Sindh circle and executive engineer of northern Dadu division to appear in court on May 10 along with plans for strengthening weak points along the Hakra ferry point dyke of the Indus River.

The division bench comprising Justices Khadim Hussain Shaikh and Khadim Hussain Tunio issued the directives on a petition filed by a villager about vulnerability of the dyke.

The bench was angered to find an assistant engineer instead of high officials to submit comments of the department concerned.

The official told the court the high officers were in Hyderabad to attend a meeting to which the judges said no meeting could be more important than appearing in court.

When the official requested for time to file comments, the judges admonished him saying the officers should come prepared carrying details of the work so far done and the future plans to address the threat since a large number of villagers lived in the area which faced a direct threat in the event of a breach in the dyke.

The court said the strengthening work should be carried out prior to arrival of water in the river.

The petitioner, Wazir Ali Hulio of Hakra village, feared if stone-pitching was not carried out immediately and spurs were not erected at Hakra it would develop a huge breach like the Thori dyke, which had given way under pressure of massive floodwaters in 2010 and led to displacement of millions of people and destruction of properties.

The petitioner feared if the strengthening work was not carried out immediately and the dyke developed breach during flood season it could pose serious threats to ancient site of Moenjodaro, cadet college, Quaid-i-Awam Engineering College and Benazir Bhutto Medical University's Arija campus.

He requested the court to direct the respondents to carry out stone-pitching at the point where the river was fast eroding away large chunks of the dyke. Besides, spurs should also be built to protect the Larkana-Sehwan dyke, which was in very bad shape, said the petitioner who was represented by advocate Irshad Chandio.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1329656>

ONE MORE DAM NEEDED URGENTLY, SAYS EXPERT

The Express Tribune, April 28th, 2017.

LAHORE: As water scarcity during crop plantations sparks worries, a water expert has underscored the need for constructing at least one more big dam in order to meet future needs of the provinces.

“An additional water reservoir must be built on an urgent basis in order to address shortages in Sindh and Balochistan,” said Punjab Irrigation Department's former chief engineer Mahmoodul Hassan Siddiqi while talking to farmers and the media.

According to Siddiqi, water demand in summer from Sindh and Balochistan picks up from March every year as their Kharif sowing season starts a month earlier than Punjab's. As Tarbela Dam has lost its live storage capacity by about one-third from 9.5 million acre feet to nearly 6 MAF, water supply is squeezed in March and April every year.

“We usually don’t have carryover stock in the reservoirs after March 10 and run-of-the-river supplies are only available for utilisation at the onset of summer. This has a direct negative impact on crops due to insufficient water in lower riparian provinces of Sindh and Balochistan,” Siddiqi said.

Rich with experience of over 60 years in water distribution and regulation, Siddiqi is presently working with the Punjab Irrigation Department as a consultant with the task of handling water management affairs.

He is responsible for planning optimal utilisation of available water resources in addition to interacting with the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) about shares of provinces and running an efficient canal water management system.

Siddiqi said he had raised the issue of increasing water storage capacity on the Indus River with Sindh officials during a recent meeting in the federal capital.

He pointed out that the Mangla Dam was fed by early melting of glaciers of lower and mid-level reaches and thus needed to be filled earlier. “As we start to store water in Mangla for subsequent use in Rabi wheat sowing, Sindh starts objecting to the storage mechanism and demands water from March/April,” he explained.

“It is not possible as the water level in Mangla should have been raised up to 1,180 feet till May 20 if we want to ensure it remains filled to capacity in later months when its flow dwindles fast unlike the Indus River.”

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1395471/one-dam-needed-urgently-says-expert/>

NO RESOLUTION IN SIGHT FOR HYDERABAD’S CONTAMINATED WATER ISSUE

The Express Tribune 28 April 2017

HYDERABAD: The citizens of Hyderabad have long been consuming harmful elements such as mud, toxins and microbes in their drinking water. Unfortunately, however, no end to the exposure of this health hazard seems to be in sight as the Water and Sanitation Agency (Wasa) claims to be hard-pressed by its financial situation.

The agency’s critics allege that incompetence and corruption are also responsible for this permanent crisis, which, besides creating water supply and drainage woes, also recurrently deprives its employees of timely salaries and pensions.

Even the orders of Sindh High Court’s judicial commission on water and sanitation to Wasa for providing clean drinking water appear far from implementation. The single-judge commission headed by Justice Mohammad Iqbal Kalhoro conducted its first hearing and visits to sites in Hyderabad on January 19. The most recent hearing took place on April 15.

“We have submitted a summary for a Rs2.23-billion financial grant to the Sindh government,” Wasa Managing Director Masood Jumani told The Express Tribune. With this amount, the agency aims at rehabilitating its five filtration plants, which supply 60 to 70 million gallons of water per day, along with overhauling the water supply system.

Although the request for the grant was submitted to ensure compliance with the commission’s order, there is little hope that the provincial government will release an amount considered enough to kick off the rehabilitation. “We expect to get a Rs50-million grant in aid [from the Sindh government],” Jumani estimated, admitting that the paltry sum is too insignificant to allow any improvement beyond the most necessary process of chlorination.

However, that too will be done only in one of the five filtration plants in Hyderabad – the 30MGD New Filtration Plant on Jamshoro Road. “The judicial commission has given us May 15 [as the] deadline for completing the chlorination process there,” he said.

But chlorination is just one component of the filtration process. The 30MGD plant's clarifiers, sludge pumps and lagoons, besides other components, also require rehabilitation and improvement.

"It is one part of the whole filtration process ... unless the whole procedure of filtration is not applied, quality of water cannot be improved," the commission observed in its April 15 order.

According to Jumani, this plant supplies water to around half the city. The remaining parts of Hyderabad are supplied water from the Hala Naka, Paretabad, Latifabad and LSR filtration plants. Jumani, who also holds the acting charge of director-general of the Hyderabad Development Authority, Wasa's parent organisation, acknowledged that all these plants are providing raw water to consumers.

"The system was destroyed several years ago. The plants and pumping stations need complete rehabilitation to be able to filter water. And this is not possible without massive injection of funds," he explained.

The Latifabad and LSR plants pump water from the downstream of the Kotri Barrage and Hala Naka and Paretabad from the Akram Canal. However, both the barrage's downstream and canal are currently flowing at extremely low levels, with increased concentration of microbes.

"High concentration of microbes like E-coli, which are harmful for human health, is very likely [in the unfiltered water being supplied by these four plants]," said Prof Altaf Siyal of Mehran University of Engineering and Technology's US-Pakistan Centre for Advanced Studies in Water. But he ruled out presence of heavy metals or high turbidity at the locations from where the water is lifted by the four plants.

Complaints about dirty and smelly water by residents of parts of Latifabad and City talukas began as soon as the flows in the Indus River and its off-taking canals decreased.

On April 22, the judicial commission passed another order, asking Wasa and the Hyderabad commissioner to rehabilitate the four plants. They were also ordered to construct boundary walls around more than a dozen lagoons of the five plants and submit a compliance report on May 6.

The MD, however, said Wasa will express its inability before the commission to implement the order due to the funds constraints.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1395258/no-resolution-sight-hyderabad-contaminated-water-issue/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM APRIL 17TH TO APRIL 23RD 2017

RYK'S MAIN FILTRATION PLANT INOPERATIVE FOR YEARS

Dawn, April 17th, 2017

Irfanul Haq

RAHIM YAR KHAN: The unavailability of potable water has forced almost 87 per cent of the city's population to rely on unhygienic water, said a local government source.

The Municipal Committee (MC) and health department were responsible for water supply to various areas of the city through water tanks. Also, there were some turbines at Amingarh and west bank of Sadiqabad canal which provided water to certain areas. Four filtration plants had been donated by a philanthropist and established by the Tehsil Municipal Administration (TMA) in Garden area, Markazi Eidgah, Sheikh Zayed Medical College Hospital (SZMCH) and on Circular Road.

Now only the plants on Circular Road and SZMCH were functional. However, the main plant established in Garden area, which facilitated most of the city, had been out of order since 2009.

An MC water supply department officer said that this plant had been established in 2008 through Clean Drinking Water for All, a project of the federal environment ministry under the Khushaal Pakistan Programme. The Environment Protection Agency (EPA), which was tasked with installation of filtration plants across the country, had signed a contract with Lahore-based firm Rain Drop for construction of the plant here.

According to documents seen by this correspondent, EPA was responsible for operating and maintaining this plant for three years. But in August 2008, it transferred funds of the project to the Punjab Local Government Department on operate-and-maintain basis. The department signed a fresh agreement with Rain Drop for a year.

The TMA provided one marla on Nowshera Minor in Garden Water Supply Scheme along with water supply and electricity connections. The plant became functional in September 2008 and a private company successfully ran it, including filtration, chlorination and sterilization, every month. Monthly expenditure on the entire process was Rs15,000 back then.

Unfortunately, in August 2009, a part of the plant was not changed and water specimen tested only to be found unsuitable for drinking. Thereafter, the plant became non-functional. In December that year, the TMA requested the local government director general (DG) to provide guidelines about its future.

The documents further showed that in 2010, the TMA had sent three reminders to the DG and their copies were sent to the local government secretary as well as then district coordination officer, but to no avail.

Municipal Committee chief officer Mian Mazhar Rasheed said the filtration plant had been established by a non-governmental organisation (NGO) and the municipal committee had nothing to do with it.

When reminded that the plant was installed on MC land and electricity connection also provided by the committee, he admitted, but said that NGOs always undertook public facilitation activities.

Municipal Officer (Infrastructure) Muhammad Ansar endorsed all details about the filtration plant mentioned above and said that it had not been handed over to the TMA from the NGO. He said that the plant's membrane was out of order due to which it was not operational.

He further said that the main body and filter were leaking, which were the main hurdles to its operation. After allocation of funds, this filtration plant would be operational in two months, he claimed.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1327503>

STRIKE IN MALKANI SHARIF FOR WATER

Dawn, April 18th, 2017

BADIN: A complete shutdown was observed in Malkani Sharif town on Monday in response to a call jointly given by local traders' and farmers' organisations against an acute shortage of potable and irrigation water in the entire district.

All shops, business establishments, commercial outlets and even medical stores remained closed from dawn to dusk across the town.

A large number of people, including businessmen, traders, shopkeepers and growers took out a rally and held a sit-in outside the local press club on Pangrio-Jhudo Road and raised slogans against the provincial government. The sit-in lasted around five hours.

Speaking to the participants, Pir Fayyaz Hussain Shah Rashidi, Tariq Mehmood Arain, Manzoor Ahmed Chandio and others said that the district had been facing a crisis-like situation for years due to a chronic shortage of water.

They described it as an artificial crisis aimed at destroying their fertile lands.

They condemned that the authorities concerned were not releasing water to the area according to its quota despite a Supreme Court order issued in this regard.

They noted that influential landowners of the area had been stealing water through tampered modules and illegal 'direct outlets' in connivance with local irrigation officials.

They announced their plan to turn the protest into agitation on April 26 by blocking the tracks at the Hyderabad railway station against dishonouring of the SC order, which was issued after a series of protests by the people of various towns of Badin district.

Separately, a large number of growers coming from various areas of Shaheed Fazil Rahu (formerly Golarchi) taluka held a sit-in lasting four hours in Khorwah town against unavailability of water for many months.

They blocked the main thoroughfare by holding the sit-in at Khorwah Chowk on Badin-Karachi Road causing a snarl-up for four hours.

Abdul Hameed Mehri and other leaders of local growers said severe water shortage had already destroyed the crops and was turning their lands barren.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1327599/strike-in-malkani-sharif-for-water>

WATER SCARCITY ISSUE ECHOES IN SENATE

BUSINESS RECORDER , 18 April 2017

ISLAMABAD: The water scarcity issue echoed in Senate on Monday with senators accusing successive governments of acting as silent spectators that prompted Senate Chairman Raza Rabbani to refer the matter to Senate Committee of the Whole for a thorough debate on the issue.

Taking part on a deferred motion by Senators Salim Mandviwalla, Karim Khawaja, Farhatullah Babar, Saeedul Hassan Mandokel and others to discuss a UNDP report on water scarcity in the country, the MPs were unanimous in saying that the third-world war could start over water.

They said that there is no concept of building new water reservoirs in the country despite reports that the country could go dry by 2025 if this remains the situation as global warming is fast affecting everything across the globe.

Winding up the debate, State Minister for Water and Power Abid Sher Ali accepted that no attention has been paid to build new water reservoirs for the last so many years. He proposed that there is a need to make a comprehensive mechanism for this purpose by taking all the four provinces onboard.

He also warned the sooner the issue is resolved, the better it would be or else it will lead to confrontation among the four federating units, adding there should be a committee of parliament which could find a solution to the issue on emergent basis.

Senator Mandviwalla also endorsed the idea of setting up a parliamentary committee, saying the water issue is causing deaths to people as millions of people have no access to clean drinking water.

Senator Mohsin Aziz of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) said that there is no sufficient awareness among the policymakers about the impending water crisis in the country which is posing a threat to the country's stability and environmental sustainability.

Referring to reports, he said that with a Kharif to Rabi ratio of two to one, the seasonal needs are about 66 per cent in summer and 34 per cent in winter, showing surpluses of 18 per cent in summer and shortages of 18 per cent in winter.

Senator Mohsin Leghari said that canal system needs complete overhaul, adding, “We are rapidly becoming a water-scarce country which is mainly due to the policymakers who do not pay attention to this issue.”

Senator Taj Haider said that lining of the canals is needed, which could help save the water seepage. Another thing which he said is needed the most is desilting dams, adding two major dams – Mangla and Tarbela – are becoming dry as there is no desilting mechanism.

State Minister for Petroleum and Natural Resources Jam Kamal told the House that the Prime Minister has relaxed moratorium on gas schemes and announced 97 new schemes, including 77 in Punjab, depending upon the priority of the representatives of those areas.

“This moratorium had been there since 2009, but new gas connections were being managed from the PM House. Under PSDP some representatives demand roads and electricity projects while some give priority to gas schemes and same has happened in this case,” he added.

About the gas dispute between the Centre and Sindh provincial government, he said the controversy started when gas was not given to Nooriabad gas power plant in which Sindh government had shares, due to some official formalities pointed out by Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA).

He said that after the passage of the 18th Amendment over sixty per cent revenue generated through gas is given to the concerned province, and there is no truth the federal government is doing any injustice with the province which is producing gas.

The Senate passed ‘The Pakistan Penal Code (Amendment) Bill, 2017.’ The bill moved by Muhammad Azam Khan Swati provides to amend the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860 (Section 323).

The House also passed ‘The Pakistan Penal Code (Amendment) Bill, 2017.’ The bill moved by Muhammad Azam Khan Swati provides to amend the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860 (Sections 273, 274 and 275).

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/04/18/3-page/867722-news.html>

WATER CRISIS TO HIT COUNTRY IF RESERVOIRS NOT BUILT: AHSAN IQBAL

Dawn, April 19th, 2017

HYDERABAD: Federal Minister for Planning and Development Dr Ahsan Iqbal has warned that there is a potential threat from climate change and other factors which may cause a water crisis in the country within the next 10-15 years.

He was speaking to Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz workers and briefly talking to journalists at a reception hosted for him by senior party colleagues Jamal Arif Soharwardi and Shah Mohammad Shah.

“Climate change has placed Pakistan among seven top vulnerable countries. Therefore, we cannot afford laxity considering the fact that glacial line will melt within the next 10 to 15 years. The rainfall pattern has already changed. So, reservoirs should be built after consensus [of all stakeholders] under an anti-drought strategy,” he said.

Referring to the construction of Diamer-Bhasha dam having 6MAF storage capacity, he said the federal government was actively working on it. “In addition, Pakistan is trying to safeguard its rivers through diplomacy ... no power on earth can rob us of our water,” he said.

Dr Iqbal said that besides the Indus Water Treaty (IWT), there were agreements of international arbitration in which the international community stood guarantor. Pakistan would defend its right at all forums to protect every drop of its

water, he said, adding that simultaneously, Pakistan must ensure water efficiency and complete construction of its reservoirs.

The PML-N leader insisted that the credit of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) went to his party and challenged other claimants to produce a copy of the relevant documents. "I am ready to produce a copy of the agreement signed by me in July 2013 in the presence of two premiers," he said. He sought to discredit the PPP leadership on CPEC, saying: "Success has many fathers".

The minister said that Ketu Bandar project was included in CPEC while Thar coal and the Karachi Circular Railway had been resurrected.

Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has announced establishment of a university in Hyderabad and the federal government intends to start its classes in September.

The minister stated that the federal government was working in a close relationship with Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, whom he described as "a professional and an educated leader".

"We will never allow anything that may cause misgiving [between the two governments]," he said.

By levelling allegations against the federal government, the Sindh leadership could not absolve itself of the responsibility of service delivery, he said, citing failure of governance of successive governments in Sindh. He said the federal government never blocked transfer of resources of any province and it would never do that in future as well.

Earlier, speaking at the inaugural ceremony of a three-day international conference on 'CPEC: political, economic and social perspectives', at Sindh University in Jamshoro, the federal minister said that CPEC would bring prosperity, help curb unemployment and extremism and alleviate poverty in the country.

"CPEC is not a military or security pact; it is a mega project of economic cooperation and prosperity," he said. Dr Iqbal said the government had decided to focus on geo-economics instead of geopolitics because "Pakistan is situated on an ideal location in South Asia ie next to China and Central Asia with a population of three billion".

He said that without Pakistan, these regions could not be integrated because direct links of these states could not be made or it would not be possible geographically. Pakistan's inclusion would shape them into a huge economic block, he added.

He said CPEC was also addressing power generation issues because \$35 billion out of the basic investment of \$40bn was allocated for the energy sector.

He said light engineering, labour intensive work pattern and low-cost production mechanism were responsible for rapid growth of economy in China and relocation of 85 million job opportunities in the global setting.

"We need to cash in on these opportunities so that Pakistani youth could also profit," he said.

He stated that agricultural economy was being transformed into industrial economy.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1327834>

ASIF EXPLAINS HOW INDIA EXPLOITING RIVERS

Zulfiqar Ahmad

Business Recorder, Apr 19th, 2017

The government on Tuesday informed the Senate that after the signing of Indus Water Treaty, 1960, India has completed as many as 52 hydroelectric plants, another 32 are under construction while 103 others are at planning stage on Rivers Indus, Jhelum and Chenab. During the question hour, Minister for Water and Power Khawaja Muhammad Asif said that 15 hydroelectric plants are constructed on Indus, 19 on Jhelum and 18 on Chenab Rivers by India and 22 are under construction at Indus, five each at Jhelum and Chenab, 12 are planned at Indus, 38 at Jhelum and 53 at Chenab.

In a written reply, the minister said that at present, India has no storage work constructed on the waters of these rivers, though limited pondage is available in the run of the river hydroelectric plants/ dams constructed by India on the three rivers. "It may be noted that the Indus Water Treaty allows limited pondage in the run of the river hydroelectric plants for peaking operation in winter season," he explained.

"Considering all the constructed hydroelectric plants on the three western rivers, the pondage is 42,989 acre-feet (AF) while the controllable volume of water above pondage provided is 1,76,922 AF," the minister said. He was responding to a written question by MQM Senator Mian Ateeq Sheikh. Through a supplementary question, the senator wanted to know while India is building so many projects how many projects Pakistan is planning to build or are under construction.

In reply, State Minister for Water and Power Abid Sher Ali said that only project under construction is on River Neelum – Neelum-Jhelum hydropower project – on which India is raising objections. In a written answer to a question by PTI's Mohsin Aziz, Minister for Petroleum and Natural Resources Shahid Khaqan Abbasi said that SNGPL's unaccounted for gas (UFG) during the last four years was 236639 mmcf, worth Rs 78,218 million, and those UFG incurred by SSGC were recorded at 217020mmcf, valuing at Rs 93648 million.

It is interesting to note that SNGPL had managed to reduce UFG in 2012-13 from 71252 mmcf to 46652 mmcf in 2015-16. However, in contrast to it, SSGC's UFG that was 35258mmcf in same period spiraled to 64280 mmcf in 2015-16. To another question, Khawaja Asif said during the last three years, no addition of storage capacity has been made in the existing small and large dams because unless specific provisions are made at the time of original design and construction for raising capacity in future, existing dams cannot be raised for increasing their original capabilities. The minister noted that all studies on developing the water sector infrastructure projects duly consider the future projections to ascertain the availability of water and the demand of water for ever-increasing population and irrigated area etc.

These projects, he continued, provide the basis for evaluating the potential of water availability and scarcity: studies of these projects for planning of water resources are in process; Mohmand Dam with 0.676 million acre feet (MAF) live storage capacity, Akhori Dam with 6.00 MAF capacity, Shyok Dam with 5.400MAF capacity, Chiniot Dam with 1.00MAF, Bhimber Dam with 0.040 MAF, Dotara Dam with 0.132 MAF and Hingol Dam with 0.521 MAF capacity.

Replying to supplementary questions by Senator Sherry Rehman and Nauman Wazir Khattak, Abid Sher Ali said the government is trying its level best to ensure that public faces no difficulties during the approaching holy month of Ramadan. He pointed out that Khawaja Asif had already said that there would be stability in electricity generation and distribution in late April and early May.

<http://fp.brecorder.com/2017/04/20170419169958/>

POWERLESS LAHORE: CITY SUFFERS THROUGH SERIOUS WATER SHORTAGE

The Express Tribune, April 19th, 2017.

LAHORE: Prolonged power outages continued on Wednesday and caused a serious water shortage in various parts of the city.

At a number of locations, including Maryam Colony, Band Road, Township and other areas, locals continued protesting protest the load-shedding. A Township resident, Maria Khan, said unscheduled power outages had ruined routine life in the city. For the last couple of weeks, frequent power tripping and low voltage were the order of the day. As a result, there was a serious water shortage.

She pointed out that Lahore Electricity Supply Company (LESCO) was previously conducting load-shedding every alternate hour, but the duration has increased along with the temperature of the city. “Citizens are getting electricity for half-an-hour and facing blackouts for two hours. In the scorching summer heat, it is really difficult for children to concentrate on their studies and homework in the absence of electricity,” she maintained.

Another citizen, Asad, told The Express Tribune that his household had to spend Tuesday night without electricity as a transformer in their neighbourhood was burnt. Despite repeated complaints to LESCO, officials failed to replace faulty transformer and forced citizens to bear the brunt of hot and humid summer night.

He further stated locals were facing 14 to 16 hours of load-shedding in the provincial capital and this was a source of a great deal of frustration. “Neither the power company nor the government is paying attention to the public’s miseries,” he bemoaned.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaf (PTI) MPA Shoaib Siddiqui submitted a resolution in the provincial assembly against power outages. In the resolution, he asked the federal government to immediately address outages by increasing power generation. He pointed out that power shortfall was touching 7,000 MW in the country and hurting citizens who had to face up 12 hours of load-shedding in urban localities and 18 to 20 hours in rural areas.

Siddiqui said frequent power outages had ruined business and routine life in the country. He added people were protesting on the roads against prolonged load-shedding and thousands of industrial workers had become jobless due to the lack of production because of these outages.

“People are being forced to pay heavy electricity bills but they hardly get any power for few hours”.

A LESCO official said the company was facing an unprecedented power demand in April as rising the temperature had broken all records. “Right now, it is beyond the LESCO’s capacity to ensure electricity for domestic and industrial consumers as per their requirement. The company is facing nearly 40% power shortfall when compared to demand, which was increasing with the rise in temperature.”

Power generation and demand statistics show the country is facing an energy shortfall of over 6,000MW. While the demand is touching around 19,000MW, the generation is hovering at around 12,000MW.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1388428/powerless-lahore-city-suffers-serious-water-shortage/>

CURRENCY MARKET TREADS WATER

Dawn, April 21st, 2017

Shahid Iqbal

KARACHI: The currency market that normally responds to political events shrugged off the court’s ruling. “There was no impact on the currency market, either before or after the ruling,” said Malik Bostan, president of the Forex Association of Pakistan.

He dismissed reports that dollars were not available in the market. “It’s false. We have surplus dollars and no extra demand was noted” on Thursday, he said.

After stocks, the currency market is considered as the second-biggest speculative market, particularly in Pakistan, as it reacts to changes in economic/political scenario.

Market experts and currency dealers anticipated a change in the exchange rate after the Supreme Court's decision in the Panama Papers case.

“We were expecting some change in the exchange rate in kerb market but the [court's] decision did not create any ripple in the currency market. The local currency did appreciate slightly on Thursday,” said Atif Ahmed, a currency dealer in the inter-bank market.

The State Bank also plays a role to keep the inter-bank market stable by influencing the prices and there is an unseen red line for the currency dealers.

Experts said the instability may emerge once the joint investigation team, to be formed after the Supreme Court's decision, begins its job.

The team will seek testimony from Mr Sharif and his sons and investigate the money trail within two months.

“The 60 days could be disturbing since the media hype could create uncertainty for the government and the market,” money market expert S.S. Iqbal said.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1328190>

WASA BLAMES HESCO FOR WATER SHORTAGE IN HYDERABAD

The Express Tribune, : April 23, 2017

Z Ali

HYDERABAD: The Water and Sanitation Agency (Wasa), which is responsible for supplying 60 to 70 million gallons of water per day to Hyderabad, has blamed the Hyderabad Electric Supply Company (Hesco) for hindering the supply and drainage processes because of recurrent outages.

Acknowledging complaints of water shortage in many parts of Hyderabad, Wasa disclosed that it has not been able to operate its filtration plants and pumping stations. “Due to extended hours of load-shedding and frequent suspension of power supply, the process of supplying water from the filtration plants has been badly affected,” claimed Nadeem Yousuf, the spokesperson of Hyderabad Development Authority, which is the parent organisation of Wasa.

The spokesperson said that with the rise in the temperature, demand for water is also increasing. “Simultaneously, Hesco has also excessively increased unscheduled and protracted outages,” he alleged.

Yousuf claimed that all the five plants – New Filtration Plant, Latifabad, Pretabad, LSR and Hala Naka filtration plants – are confronted with the power supply problem. The pumping stations have also not been spared, he added. Complaints of water scarcity emerge from every other locality of Hyderabad City, Latifabad and Qasimabad talukas. According to Yousuf, Hesco has provided two connections from separate electric feeders to each plant and station. But despite this alternative supply, the company has not been able to manage load-shedding as the shutdown mostly synchronises in both the feeders of a given plant or station.

Hesco's spokesperson, Sadiq Kubar, denied these charges. He asserted that if the electric supply from one feeder is suspended, it continues from the other feeder. The two utilities have remained locked in disputes for years over unpaid electricity bills and periodic severing of power connections.

The official wrangle between the two public sector utilities, one controlled by the Centre and the other by the Sindh government, continues to the detriment of the citizens.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1391086/wasa-blames-hesco-water-shortage-hyderabad/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM APRIL 10TH TO APRIL 16TH 2017
SINDH LINING 930 WATERCOURSES TO CONSERVE PRECIOUS LITTLE
Dawn, Economic & Business, April 10th, 2017

Mohammad Hussain Khan

THE lining of watercourses has been resumed by the Sindh Irrigated Agriculture Productivity Enhancement Project with the World Bank's assistance of \$185m.

A total of 930 watercourses are to be lined by June this year, of which 355 have already been lined till March.

For the 30pc lining of watercourses, farmers have to provide skilled and unskilled labour, whereas the government bears the cost of material — a benchmark set by the funding agency.

Of the 47,000 watercourses in the province, according to the Sindh Agriculture Engineering Department, 19,000 were lined under the National Programme for Improvement of Watercourses (NPIW) and 4,355 watercourses under the Sindh government on Farm Water Management Programme.

Engineers say at least 30pc of canal water is saved by lining of these watercourses.

Under this project, high efficiency irrigation system will be installed for 35,000 acres, 380 flood shelters would be setup and 1,100 laser land leveling equipment would be provided to the farmers.

Under this project, a high efficiency irrigation system would be installed for 35,000 acres, 380 flood shelters would be setup and 1,100 laser land levelling equipment would be provided to farmers

Sprinkler system was installed for 1,663 acres and a drip system for 830 acres around four years ago on a cost-sharing basis between farmers and the provincial government.

Lining watercourses ensures better conveyance, efficiency along with stopping seepage. Had there been no lining of around 24,000 watercourses, shortage of water would have been more severe.

A study by the Drainage and Reclamation Institute (Drip) of Tandojam reveals that around 1,400mm of water per annum is needed per acre in rice and 2,000mm for banana. Growers, however, use 5,000mm of water per acre per annum in rice and 6000mm in banana, which is exceptionally higher than what is recommended or needed by these crops.

Rice and banana growers were advised by the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) to prepare raised land beds for these crops to save freshwater. This season, around 160 acres of banana and around 10 acres of rice are to be grown on raised beds in Hyderabad and Badin districts designed to save around 50pc of freshwater released in furrows instead of flooding the entire land.

PCRWR's senior researcher Ahmad Zeeshan Bhatti referred to a recent study by the International Waterlogging and Salinity Research Institute according to which 40pc of Sindh's irrigated land is water-logged.

For ensuring efficiency in watercourses, the Punjab government has carried out a precast parabolic lining (PCPL) of watercourses. It is more durable, according to some reports, than the brick lining done in Sindh. According to a project officer, so far 10pc of the lining has been with PCPL.

Sindh Abadgar Board Vice President Mahmood Nawaz Shah has pointed out that farmers are sharing 40pc of the system's per acre conveyance efficiency cost which comes to around Rs120,000, while the private companies offer to install the said system for Rs150,000 an acre.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1325941/sindh-lining-930-watercourses-to-serve-precious-little>

CAPITAL MAY FACE ACUTE SHORTAGE OF WATER BY JUNE

Business Recorder, 11. April 2017

Nuzhat Nazar

ISLAMABAD: The federal capital is more likely to face acute shortage of water by June 2017 as both the Simly and Khanpur dams are not capable to meet the daily water requirements of Islamabad.

The sources told Business Recorder that Simly Dam is left with 2,600 million gallons of water which will end in June and may cause a draught like situation in the federal capital.

The sources said that major reservoir of Islamabad is Simly Dam which supplies almost 90 per cent of water to the federal capital and the water stored in this dam is fed by the melting snow and natural springs of Murree hills, adding the dam had been built by the Capital Development Authority (CDA).

Other main sources include Rawal Dam, which provides water to Rawalpindi only, and Khanpur Dam which supplies only 8 million gallons water to Islamabad.

The recent spell of rainfall contributed in water stock, which made the water stock available till June.

Previously, 26 million gallons of water per day was supplied to the federal capital in winters and with the increase in temperature, water supply also increases accordingly, and 30 million gallons per day is supplied in summers, the source added.

However, with the change in CDA higher management, water was supplied up to 30 million gallons per day even in winters, he added.

In summers, water consumption becomes high which may lead to water scarcity, he said.

The sources further said that water supplied from tube wells will become insignificant and it will be hardly enough to meet the needs of the Parliament and Pak Secretariat.

The water recharge projects in federal capital were planned to raise the water level through rainwater harvesting and 20 different places of Islamabad were selected in this regard, but the CDA had dumped the project, he added.

The CDA previously evolved a plan for harvesting domestic and rain run-off and initiated several measures to keep water clean by not allowing activities that caused pollution in the catchment's areas.

Rainwater harvesting is being practiced as an alternative and supplementary source of water in many parts of the region as well as at international level, and holds considerable potential in Pakistan, especially in areas receiving regular rainfall.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/04/11/9-page/866172-news.html>

Former Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) president Atif Ikram Sheikh said on Tuesday that continued shortage of water in the country was taking its toll on the masses; however, policymakers seem indifferent towards addressing the issue. Sheikh said that water scarcity was a bigger threat to our security than militancy as the country may run dry by 2025.

“Pakistan may face drought-like situation in the near future if immediate and urgent steps are not taken that include containing wastage of water,” he said. “It is very alarming that our capacity to preserve water has shrunk over the years, while we have world’s fourth highest rate of water use.”

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1381020/officials-must-address-water-issue/>

WARSAK HYDEL POWER STATION: WAPDA AWARDS RS868M CONSULTANCY SERVICES CONTRACT
Business Recorder, 13 April 2017

LAHORE: The Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) has awarded a contract of consultancy services worth Rs 868 million through an international competitive bidding for second rehabilitation of Warsak Hydroelectric Power Station to a joint venture comprising four firms led by Dolsar from Turkey.

The contract was signed in a ceremony held here at WAPDA House. General Manager (Hydel) Development Muhammad Arshad Chaudhry and Dolsar representative Irfan Aker signed the contract on behalf of WAPDA and the joint venture respectively. WAPDA Chairman Lt Gen Muzammil Hussain (retd), Member (Power) Badr-ul-Munir Murtiza and other senior officers of WAPDA were also present on the occasion.

It is worth mentioning here that WAPDA, on the directions of the federal government has been vigorously implementing a least-cost energy generation plan to add low-priced hydel electricity to the system to overcome electricity shortages in the country. This plan aims at optimal utilization of the indigenous hydropower resources. In addition to constructing new projects, WAPDA has also been rehabilitating and up-grading its aging hydel power stations, including the Warsak, under the plan.

WAPDA is executing second rehabilitation project of Warsak Hydel Power Station to regain its generation capacity, which has decreased to 193MW from 243MW due to aging factor of the electro-mechanical equipment. The rehabilitation works are planned to be carried out with an approved PC-I cost of Rs 22.25 billion with the objective to overcome the aging problems, regain the capacity loss of 50MW with reliable annual energy generation of 1.14 billion units, upgrade and modernize the old system and achieve another life cycle of 30 to 40 years. German financial institution KfW and French Development Agency (AFD) are providing loan to the tune of 40 million euros each, while European Investment Bank (EIB) is giving 50 million euros for second rehabilitation project of Warsak Hydel Power Station.

It is pertinent to mention that Warsak is the first-ever main hydropower project executed in Pakistan after independence. The first phase of the Warsak Dam and Hydel Power Station was completed in 1960-61 consisting of the dam, irrigation tunnels, four generating units with cumulative capacity of 160MW, switchyard and transmission line. In the second phase, two more generating units of about 83MW were added in 1980-81 to raise the installed capacity of the hydel power station to 243MW. The first rehabilitation was carried out during 1996-2006 to stabilize civil structure and recover lost generation of about 70MW.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/04/13/13-page/866685-news.html>

TWO BILLION PEOPLE DRINKING FAECAL-CONTAMINATED WATER: WHO

GENEVA: Dramatic improvements are needed in ensuring access to clean water and sanitation worldwide, the World Health Organisation said on Thursday, warning that nearly two billion people currently use faecal-contaminated water.

Hundreds of thousands of people die each year because they are forced to drink contaminated water, the WHO said, urging large investments to help provide universal access to safe drinking water.

“Today, almost two billion people use a source of drinking-water contaminated with faeces, putting them at risk of contracting cholera, dysentery, typhoid and polio,” Maria Neira, who head’s WHO’s public health department, said in a statement.

“Contaminated drinking-water is estimated to cause more than 500,000 diarrhoeal deaths each year and is a major factor in several neglected tropical diseases, including intestinal worms, schistosomiasis and trachoma,” she added.

In 2015, the UN General Assembly adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) — a series of aspirational targets for eradicating poverty and boosting human wellbeing, including vowing to ensure universal access to safe and affordable water and sanitation by 2030.

But according to a fresh report on Thursday, published by WHO on behalf of UN-Water, countries will fall far short of this goal if they do not radically increase their investments.

The report welcomed the fact that countries had on average raised their annual budgets for water, sanitation and hygiene by 4.9 per cent over the past three years.

But 80pc of countries acknowledge that their financing is still not enough to meet their nationally-set targets for increasing access to safe water and sanitation, it found.

“In many developing countries, current national coverage targets are based on achieving access to basic infrastructure, which may not always provide continuously safe and reliable services,” WHO warned in a statement.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1326842>

MOST PARTS OF CITY REMAIN WITHOUT WATER

Dawn, April 14th, 2017

Faiza Ilyas

KARACHI: Most parts of the city had to go without water for several hours on Thursday when the Dhabeji pumping station under the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) faced a sudden shutdown.

While the KWSB blamed the shutdown on K-Electric for suspending power supply to the pumping station, the power utility held the water board responsible for what it described as ‘its internal fault’.

According to the KWSB, there was an hour-long power failure from 4pm to 4.55pm at the Dhabeji pumping station which suspended water supplies to most parts of the city.

“Although electricity supply resumed in an hour, it would take hours to resume water supply to the city,” said KWSB spokesperson Rizwan Hyder, adding that 16 pumps out of 22 stopped functioning when electricity went off.

According to him, power failures have occurred many times this year at the Dhabeji pumping station, which also faces persistent power fluctuation in its supplies.

“Three of our pumps have so far broken down due to high fluctuation. One has been replaced whereas the other had to be repaired,” he said.

The K-Electric, he said, had been reminded of these problems many times. “Earlier, we were told that old cables were causing problem so the KWSB got them replaced six months ago with the help of K-Electric. But fluctuation is still there, which is a serious threat to the pumping station.”

He warned that if electricity problems continued at Dhabeji, water situation could become worse in the city, already being supplied half (550MGD) of its total demand (1,200MGD).

The K-Electric staff stationed at Dhabeji, he said, was of no help as they had no control over fluctuated supplies from the source.

“The Hub Dam is also going dry since there have been no rains. The Water and Power Development Authority (the dam regulator) has recently reduced supplies from the dam to the city, first to 40MGD and then increased it to 60MGD when the media raised the issue,” he explained.

K-Electric, however, refuted KWSB’s stance over the Dhabeji pumping station shutdown and stated that there was no disruption in power supply to the facility.

“Power supply to the city, including the Dhabeji pumping station, is as per routine. K-Electric provides all possible support to the KWSB and its strategic installations are exempted from load-shedding,” said a statement from the power utility.

“We have surveyed our supply at Dhabeji recently and there is no issue in the supply. Pump malfunctions and other internal faults are not part of K-Electric’s purview.

“KE has also invested significantly to provide primary as well as backup feeder facility at the Dhabeji pumping station, where a technical team remains on standby to give priority to any issues at the KWSB facility,” added the statement.

It also urged the KWSB management to invest in system upgrade.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1326823>

KARAK PEOPLE WANT WATER SUPPLY SCHEMES COMPLETED

Dawn, April 16th, 2017

KARAK: The residents of Takki Mithakhel have demanded of the authorities to make operational the two water supply schemes which were launched during the term of last ANP government at a cost of Rs14 million.

The demand was made at a meeting here on Saturday with the local Islahi committee president Sardar Khan in the chair.

The participants said that laying of pipelines, construction of overhead water tanks and electrification of the scheme was needed, but the incumbent government had not taken any step to make it functional.

The elders said owing to shortage of water, local women were forced to fetch the commodity from far off areas.

They said that the district had huge oil and gas funds but the people were deprived of even the basic facilities of life.

They demanded of the district government to earmark funds for completion of the water supply projects.

The elders also constituted a committee to take up the matter with the district nazim.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1327318>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM APRIL 3 RD TO APRIL 9 TH 2017

CALL TO SAVE WATER GETTING POLLUTED AND WASTED

Business Recorder, 4 April 2017

HYDERABAD: The Divisional Commissioner Hyderabad Sohail Ahmed Rajput has said that water is a great blessing of Almighty Allah and there is no concept of life without water and it is imperative to save the water from getting polluted and wasted. He said that it was a collective responsibility of every member of the society to play his role to save the water from pollution. He was presiding over a review meeting regarding implementation on Water Commission's orders at his camp office.

He directed the WASA officers to prepare PC-I for water supply and drainage schemes at earliest so that these schemes could be approved and work could be started on them. He also directed them to improve WASA recovery system which would not only help resolve salaries problem of WASA employees but also grant could be got for its projects. He also directed to take measures to make the WASA autonomous gradually and for that short, mid and long term plans be made. He said that in short term plan sodium chloride should be used to improve the quality of drinking water, besides laboratories on filter plants should be made fully functional and all required facilities should be provided there, he directed. He also underlined the need of providing training to the WASA employees working on filter plants.

The Additional MD WASA Saleemuddin Qureshi informed the meeting that WASA had sufficient water but due to unscheduled electricity load-shedding WASA was facing difficulties to supply water to the people.

Later, the Divisional Commissioner Hyderabad along with concerned officers visited the WASA lagoons and directed the concerned officers for fencing the lagoons as soon as possible and later-on boundary-wall should be erected and encroachment be removed around the lagoons.

He also visited the New filter plant, Southern treatment plant, Hala Naka filter plant, Paretabad filter plant and Darya Khan Pumping Station. During the visit, the Commissioner Hyderabad was showed laboratory test of water in which he somewhat expressed his satisfaction and directed to further improve the quality of water. He also directed the concerned officers to work on drinking water plant on war footing basis.

Additional Commissioner-I Sajjad Hyder, DC Hyderabad Anwar Ali Shar and others also accompanied the Divisional Commissioner Hyderabad during the visits.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/04/04/21-page/864637-news.html>

RAINS TO IMPROVE WATER LEVELS AT MAJOR DAMS

The Express Tribune, 5 April 2017

Sehrish Wasif

ISLAMABAD: The ongoing spell of rain in upper parts of the country will help in increasing the water levels at two major reservoirs. These reservoirs had hit their dead levels on March 10.

“The current showers that are expected to continue till Thursday will not only help to increase the water levels at the Tarbela and Mangla dams but will also give a temporary relief to people scorched by intense heat in the last few weeks,” said Met Office chief Dr Ghulam Rasul on Tuesday.

“These showers will not fill these water reservoirs completely but at least will help to raise their water levels a bit that will help to meet water requirement for irrigation purpose to some extent,” he said while talking to The Express Tribune.

According to the Met Office, the water level at the Terbela Dam was recorded at 1,388.14 feet against its dead level of 1,380 feet while the water level at Mangla Dam was 1,084 feet against its dead level of 1,040 feet.

“In the last week of April, glaciers will also start melting which will also help to increase water levels in the reservoirs,” he said, adding that “In February Pakistan received below average rain due to which water levels in major reservoirs reached their dead levels.”

Sharing details about the weather, he said heavy showers along with hailstorm, windstorm, thundering and lightning was expected in many parts of the country.

“This will bring down temperature to 23-28 degree Celsius which is around 33-40 degree centigrade in various cities,” he said, adding that in the last week of March, temperature reached 45 degree centigrade in a few places of Sindh and Punjab.

“However after this spell, the temperature is expected to rise and will cross 40 degree centigrade in various cities again,” he said.

According to Met office, rain, dust and thunderstorms are expected within 24 hours at scattered places in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P), tribal areas, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Lahore, Sargodha, Faisalabad, Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan and a few places in DG Khan, Multan and Sahiwal divisions.

Heavy rains are also expected at isolated places in Malakand, Hazara and Kashmir. Due to heavy rainfalls there is a risk of flash flooding and landslides at vulnerable areas. Hailstorm is also expected in Islamabad, upper Punjab, upper K-P and Kashmir.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1374546/rains-improve-water-levels-major-dams/>

SPC TO PROTEST ON 23RD OVER WATER ISSUES

Dawn, April 5th, 2017

HYDERABAD: The Sindh Progressive Committee (SPC) has decided to hold a protest on April 23 against water shortage and contamination of Indus River's water.

The decision was taken at an SPC meeting held here on Tuesday in the office of the Awami Workers Party (AWP) under the chairmanship of comrade Bakhshal Thalho, the committee's convener.

The meeting was attended by Jeay Sindh Mahaz (J) chairman Abdul Khaliq Junejo and general secretary Hashim Khoso; Communist Party of Pakistan secretary general comrade Imdad Qazi and provincial secretary comrade Iqbal Khan, and Awami Workers Party senior vice president comrade Latif Laghari.

The meeting also discussed political situation in the country and the impact of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) over political and national rights of local people.

It expressed concern over severe water shortage in Sindh and a recently published report about contamination of freshwater resources according to which 87 per cent of water in Sindh is either brackish or unfit for human consumption.

The meeting noted that according to the report, River Indus has become a main source of disposal of effluent right from Mansehra to Hyderabad and the river's water was not fit for drinking.

It said this single reason was sufficient to cause disease amongst the people of Sindh.

The meeting stated that due to wrong policies of the rulers, water had been completely depleted in Mangla and Tarbela reservoirs and non-release of irrigation flows downstream Kotri had destroyed the Indus delta.

Sowing of cotton in lower Sindh had started and water shortage was badly affecting the process, it said.

Rice sowing in upper Sindh was also to be affected due to non-availability of water and its sowing would be affected even in May and June, which was otherwise ideal time for its sowing in that part of Sindh, it added.

The meeting asserted that water shortage and contamination of water resources was largely due to defective policies of the rulers and was not natural.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1324848/spc-to-protest-on-23rd-over-water-issues>

WATER DISTRIBUTION AND OUTAGES: 'STEP-MOTHERLY TREATMENT BEING METED OUT TO SINDH'

Business Recorder, 6 April 2017

KARACHI: The Sindh Cabinet has observed that the province of Sindh and its people are being meted out step-motherly treatment by the Center in respect of water distribution and prolonged load-shedding.

As a result, not only crops are turning pale but people and animal are suffering seriously in the sweltering weather.

The cabinet meeting held here at the CM House yesterday under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah. All the provincial ministers, special assistants, Chief Secretary Rizwan Memon and other officers concerned attended the meeting.

The agenda of the meeting was prolonged load-shedding and water shortage. The additional item included in the agenda was ongoing second phase of census.

Secretary Energy Agha Wasif briefing the cabinet on load-shedding said that Hesco was resorting to four to 16 hour load-shedding. He added that if the feeder losses are 20 percent it means load-shedding would be four to six hours, if feeder losses are from 20 to 30 percent meaning six to eight-hour load-shedding and then it goes on to prolong.

The rural areas of the province are faced with such a worst situation, he added.

He said SEPCO was resorting to load-shedding in district headquarters around four hours; taluka headquarters six hours and rural areas eight hour.

The cabinet expressed its displeasure that the HESCO and SEPCO were recovering power bills from residential consumers through NAB. "This is unacceptable at any cost," the cabinet unanimously said.

Talking about K-Electric, Agha Wasif said that where feeder losses are 40 percent, the KE was doing 2.5 hours load-shedding, at 25 percent losses it resorts to two hours and at 15 percent losses it resorts to one hour load-shedding.

Sharing the reasons of the load-shedding with cabinet, he said that peak demand in the country up to March 31, was 17970MW and in April 2017 it has come down to 15600MW. Another reason he counted is low recovery of dues from

private consumers. The inefficiency of DISCO, weak transmission and distribution system and delayed maintenance of GENCOS are also contributing factors in prolonged load-shedding.

He also added the other reason behind the load-shedding are gap between determined tariff versus actual cost, circular debt as on March 31, is Rs 385 billion, dues of gas companies are estimated at Rs 125 billion, net payable IPPS more than Rs 100 billion and KE is idle of 400MW due to reduced supply of gas to K-Electric.

He said that SSGC used to supply of gas to K-Electric is at a critical level. In April, last year KE was getting 208mmcf and at this time KE is getting only 120mmcf. As a result, gas-based power generation capacity cannot be fully utilised by KE. This has created a shortfall of 400MW in the city. Therefore, load-shedding in city has also increased up to 6 hours.

Giving payment details made to HESCO and SEPCO against powers bills of the government department, Agha Wasif said that Rs 27.398 billion were to be paid as full and final settlement of all dues from July 2010 to July 2016.

He added that so far Rs 22.83 billion, including of Rs 8.525 billion to HESCO and Rs 14.305 billion to SEPCO has been made. The current bill of Rs 1.069 billion (HESCO Rs 513.73 million and SEPCO Rs 555.82 million) have also been cleared which are up to December 2016. On this, the chief minister directed the Finance and Energy secretary to clear all the remaining dues. "I want to see the bill at zero," he said.

It was also pointed out that KE power bill against KWSB from June 2016 to Feb 2017 was Rs 4.796 billion, the claims Rs 952 million arrears against KMC/CDGK. On this, the chief minister said the Sindh government was paying KWSB electricity bills every month.

Census: The provincial Census chief also briefed the cabinet about the second phase of census. On this, Chief Secretary Rizwan Memon said that his house has not been counted so far. Only census team had visited him to count his family members and instead of asking him question mentioned in the questionnaire they asked me about the arms licences he has.

On this, the chief minister asked him who asked him that question. He said it was Pakistan Navy man and he directed him to ask only relevant question. The chief minister directed the provincial census chief to convey the reservation of the cabinet to the census commissioner. The cabinet also expressed its reservation on keeping the counting secret from the concerned family members.

Water shortage: Secretary Irrigation Minister Jamal Shah briefing the cabinet said that early Kharif has started from April 1 to June 10 and late kharif starts from June 11 to September 30. He said that the response to shortage has been made sagaciously. The drinking water is assigned priority by ensuring 4000 cusecs downstream Kotri. Rotation plan has been put in place and Irsa has been requested to open supplies from Punjnad and they allowed 4000 cusecs in March.

Talking about shortage during early kharif, the secretary Irrigation said that Irsa had anticipated 12 percent shortage but it has exceeded to 50 percent. On this, the chief minister said that the Irsa should give water share as per accord. During the shortage period no reservoir be filled. He urged Irsa to close all the link canals during the shortage period and fulfil Sindh's indent to save cotton crop.

Secretary Jamal Shah talking about emerging possibilities said that temperature is rising at Skardu. He said that yesterday it was 14.4 centigrade. Met office forecasts higher temperatures, low rains and sufficient melting of snow.

He said that inflows in Tarbella are improving to 27300 cusecs and Irsa has begun fulfilling indent obligations of Sindh. He said he was expected that the situation would improve by another 10 dailies subject to the condition that Skardu temperatures continue to rise.

The chief minister said that if there was a shortage of water in Tarbella then Irsa should give water to Sindh from Mangla. This demand of the chief minister was approved by the cabinet.

The Advocate General Sindh Zameer Ghumro briefed the cabinet about the verdict of the Sindh High Court in the case of IG Police. He said the court had observed that the cabinet had not approved the decision of surrendering the services of IG Police AD Khawaja and giving acting charge of the position to Abdul Majeed Dasti. On this the cabinet endorsed the decision—NNI

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/04/06/5-page/865034-news.html>

WATER CRISIS MAY DEEPEN AS SUPPLY FROM HUB SLASHED

Dawn, April 7th, 2017

Bhagwandas

KARACHI: As water supply from Hub Dam to the city has been slashed by more than half by the Water and Power Development Authority, various parts of the metropolis are likely to face severe water shortage, according to the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board.

The crisis may deepen if the supply is not restored immediately.

The KWSB spokesperson in a statement issued on Thursday said that Baldia Town, Surjani, Orangi, Qasba Colony, Banaras Colony, Paharganj, North Nazimabad, Saeedabad, SITE Town, Frontier Colony, Faqeer Colony, Farid Colony, Zia Colony, Ittehad Town and other areas could face water shortage.

He said the city was getting 100 million gallons a day from the Hub Dam but since April 3 the Water and Power Development Authority that manages the dam slashed the supply by 60 million gallons a day and currently only 40mgd was being supplied to Karachi.

The KWSB spokesperson said Wapda had cut the supply on the pretext that the water board had not paid its dues, which was incorrect because payment was being made on a regular basis. The water board had paid Rs2 million in February 2017 and another instalment of Rs2m would be paid in a day or two, added the KWSB spokesperson.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1325371>

SINDH LENDS 23,000 CUSECS WATER TO BALOCHISTAN

The Express Tribune, April 7, 2017

Sehrish Wasif

ISLAMABAD: Despite having differences over share of water, Sindh – for the first time in the history of Pakistan – has lent 23,000 cusecs of water from its share to Balochistan to avoid an expected shortfall of drinking water in the province.

On the other hand, the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) has increased – with an immediate effect – water share of Sindh from 40,000 cusecs to 45,000 cusecs as per its demand submitted on Thursday.

Talking to The Express Tribune, an official, who wished not to be named, said Sindh has lent extra water from its share to Balochistan for five days on special request made by Irsa.

“Around 14,000 cusecs of water was released in Pet Feeder Canal and 9,000 cusecs of water was released into another canal in Balochistan. Today Irsa has discontinued the water release to Balochistan from Sindh’s share as per the agreement which was meant for five days,” said the official.

He said since January this year Balochistan has been facing water shortage and now the situation has worsened. “There were chances that Balochistan may be hit by the worst water crisis, but Sindh province has rescued it well in time,” he added.

Earlier Balochistan’s secretary irrigation and power had written a letter to Irsa and told it that Sindh had halted supply of its share of 3,000 cusecs per day in Pat Feeder. The province had sought Irsa’s help.

Meanwhile, Irsa’s spokesperson Khalid Rana said the authority has increased water share of Sindh from 40,000 cusecs to 45,000 cusecs as per its demand. “The authority had received a demand from Sindh province to increase the water share in view of sowing of cotton crop.

Rana said around 65,000 cusecs of water had been released to Punjab and 31,000 cusecs to Khyber-Pakhtunkwa (K-P). He said water-inflow from Terbel Dam had been reduced by 9,000 cusecs which meant it had reduced from 30,000 cusecs to 21,000 cusecs.

“The recent spell of rain has helped to improve water levels in the reservoirs and hopefully in near future situation will remain stable,” he said, adding that the water level at Guddu Barrage had also increased as earlier it was too low.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1376574/sindh-lends-23000-cusecs-water-balochistan/>

SINDH’S WATER SHARE INCREASED BY 12.5PC: IRSA

Business Recorder, 7 April, 2017

Mushtaq Ghuman

ISLAMABAD: The Indus River System Authority (Irsa) in the wake of an unusual increase in inflows in River Jehlum has increased Sindh’s water share by 12.5 per cent from 40,000 cusecs to 45,000 cusecs as per demand and with immediate effect.

A spokesperson for the Irsa, Rana Khalid, said that inflows in Mangla reservoir had increased to 139,000 cusecs from just 39,000 cusecs, thereby implying that inflows have increased by 70,000 cusecs.

“The share of Punjab would be 65,000 cusecs and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) 3,100 cusecs,” the spokesperson said, adding that Balochistan canals are nowadays closed on account of annual maintenance.

On March 31, 2017 Irsa had estimated that provinces would face 18pc water shortage during cultivation of different crops in the Kharif season, beginning April 1 and, out of which Punjab would receive 33.23MAF and Sindh would get 30.39MAF. The share of KP would be 0.82MAF, whereas Balochistan would receive 2.6MAF.

Chenab and Jhelum rivers would face 10pc water losses in early Kharif, which would be reduced to zero at a later stage.

Representatives of all the provinces were present in the advisory committee meeting held to finalise water shares of provinces for the sowing season, the spokesperson added.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/04/07/1-page/865226-news.html>

SINDH DEMANDS IRRIGATION WATER TO SAVE ITS ECONOMY AS SHORTFALL REACHES 55PC

Dawn, April 08, 2017

Hasan Mansoor

KARACHI: The Sindh government has taken up the matter of ‘alarming’ shortage of irrigation water — which has now reached 55 per cent, more than thrice what the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) had promised for the season — with Irsa and relevant quarters in Islamabad to ward off imminent dangers to the province’s vital crops, it emerged on Friday.

Officials in the provincial government said that in the provincial cabinet's meeting held this week the secretary of the irrigation department had told the cabinet the shortfall in the irrigation water faced by Sindh had reached up to 55pc as compared to 17pc shortfall promised by Irsa.

"This has happened due to late filling of Tarbela Dam," the cabinet was told as quoted in the official minutes. The meeting was followed by Sindh's correspondence with Islamabad demanding mitigation of the province's water needs through all available resources.

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The official said due to increasing temperatures at Skardu there were chances that the situation might improve in 10 days. However, "if the situation does not improve, the irrigation ministry will implement the rotation policy".

According to the rotation policy, officials said the wheat-growing areas would be given priority.

The cabinet was informed that early Kharif season lasted from April 1 to June 10 and late Kharif from June 11 to September 30 and such water shortages were extremely dangerous.

Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah, during the meeting, asked about the position of irrigation water situation as per water accord and what should be demanded from the federal government.

The secretary of irrigation told the cabinet that according to the water accord Sindh should get flow of 40,000 cusecs of water, but "currently Sindh is getting only flow of 21,000 cusecs".

He added that to maintain indent of Sindh as per water accord the irrigation water should be given from Mangla and Jhelum River.

Official minutes of the meeting quoted CM Shah as saying that Sindh was part of Pakistan and Sindh had right over all rivers of Pakistan. "Sindh is allowing zero water for irrigation at Guddu Barrage to take care of lower riparian," Mr Shah was quoted as saying.

"The same is expected from the federal government that it should look after the interests of the lower riparian," he added.

The meeting participants were informed that it was due to the mismanagement on the part of Irsa that dams were not filled on a timely basis, and "it is very sad that there is no separate provision of minimum drinking water in the water accord".

Certain cabinet members, according to minutes of the meeting, indicated that lower-stream areas of Indus River were facing shortage of drinking water.

The chief minister asked the irrigation secretary to carry out an inquiry and take necessary action against 'illegal tube wells' in upstream areas.

The cabinet also decided that the irrigation ministry would inquire and take necessary action against the use of illegal tube wells for withdrawal of water in upstream areas of the Indus.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1325546/sindh-demands-irrigation-water-to-save-its-economy-as-shortfall-reaches-55pc>

HYDERABAD: Sindh Abadgar Ittehad (SAI) leaders have expressed their concern over worsening shortage of irrigation water in Sindh during the Kharif season and held both the federal and Sindh governments responsible for the situation.

They attributed the shortage to excessive withdrawal of water from dams by Wapda for electricity generation at a lower cost.

SAI president Nawab Zubair Talpur, general secretary Ali Palh, Mir Zafarullah Talpur and other leaders were speaking at a press conference in the local press club on Friday.

“Incorrect weather forecast was made to withdraw water from the Mangla and Tarbela dams with a motive to generate low-cost electricity. Since there was no rainfall as otherwise predicted, water shortage is being experienced now,” they said.

They noted that water was released from dams in December and January and reservoirs touched the dead level in March. The current shortage being experienced in Sindh should be blamed on Wapda and the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) which appeared incompetent in managing the affair, they said.

“It’s Sindh that is suffering the most these days as early Kharif sowing has been badly affected here. Since cotton sowing is not taking place in the lower Sindh region, a huge shortfall in cotton production cannot be ruled out,” they said, and apprehended that at least 10 per cent sowing of cotton could be affected.

The SAI leaders said that even the last cycle of irrigation water could not be provided to wheat crop when it was in the grain-formation stage, thus the size of grain would be affected and this would hit the overall productivity.

They said that water flows for Sindh should not be stopped now because rainfall was reported in the upper reaches of the Indus River system.

They pointed out that water was simply not available in the tail-end of different canals. “Mismanagement of water is also another big problem in Sindh because the upper riparian, whose lands are fed by the Rohri and Nara canals, always have the first use of water and their counterparts in tail-end face a shortage, they added.

The leaders criticised the role of Sindh’s member in Irsa — who happens to be the authority’s current chairman — and said it showed the Sindh government did not take interest in ensuring availability of water to growers of this province.

They were of the view that even Sindh was involved in excessive withdrawals from its canals because water was flowing in non-perennial canals as well. Because of excessive withdrawals, freshwater found its ways into the sea through drains, they added.

The SAI leaders said that transparency was not being observed in the distribution of gunny bags. Wheat procurement centres were opened belatedly which affected small growers while the whole process was hit by corruption. “Wheat procurement is being done for political considerations, which also involves payment of commission,” they claimed, adding that Rs20 per bag was being charged from farmers by food officials as ‘commission’ to issue gunny bags to them.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1325545/growers-disappointed-by-sindhs-member-in-irsa>

KARACHI FACES WATER SHORTAGE

Business Recorder, 9 April 2017

KARACHI: Water scarcity dogged the economic capital as locals have been badly irked by problem intensified in the metropolis.

The residents of Altaf Hussain Town have revealed that they don't have access to water as water board is not in a mood to solve the matter.

In addition, illegal connections have been taken from 48 inch main water pipe in Korangi cross. It has also been reported that thousands of gallons are also being wasted daily as water board is not able to cope with the wastage of water.

The daily need of the city is far more than the current availability of 55 crore galleons that amount to 40 percent of the total water consumption.

Sources revealed that tanker mafia benefit from this grave situation as they are selling water to locals at exorbitant rates.—NNI

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/04/09/17-page/865853-news.html>

‘SINDH IS SUFFERING FROM MORE THAN 50% WATER SHORTAGE’

The Express Tribune, 9 April 2017

HYDERABAD: As the war of words between Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) continues to rouse political furore, Senator Sassui Palijo has blamed the former for cutting down water and electric supply to Sindh.

At a press conference in Hyderabad on Saturday, she went on to warn of turning some districts, which are frequently visited by PML-N leaders, into ‘no go areas’.

She complained that the Indus River System Authority (IRSA), under influence of the centre, is passing on the shortage in Indus river's water to the lower riparian province. She disputed the IRSA's figure of demand for supply of 40,000 cusecs of water to Sindh in the current season as underestimated. The province is receiving 21,000 cusecs against the projected demand, she said.

“We are suffering from more than 50% water shortage [in the province]. In Thatta, [the last district from where the Indus passes before ending in the sea] we don't even have water to drink,” Palijo, who belongs to Thatta, claimed.

She indignantly questioned why Sindh was not being given additional water from the Mangla Dam. Last month, Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah also demanded that the federal government handover management of the Mangla and Tarbela dams to Sindh and Balochistan, while blaming the Water and Power Development Authority for unfair water distribution.

“The prime minister came to Thatta [on March 9] and announced the construction of a sea embankment to stop the sea intrusion, but he didn't bother to talk about implementing the 1991 water accord so that Sindh and the tail-end district of Thatta get their due share of water which can naturally offset the intrusion,” Palijo said.

The senator said the PM made false promises by announcing development packages for Thatta and Hyderabad last month. She claimed that the federal government funded projects initiated by PPP's federal government in 2011 have been halted by their successor.

Reacting to the press conference by Federal Power Minister Abid Sher Ali in Thatta on Thursday, she warned that PPP workers will not tolerate Ali's abusive language, threats and punitive actions if he came to the city again and spoke in the same way. “Hundreds of villages and rural towns have been blacked out. The Hyderabad Electric Supply

Company has removed hundreds of transformers and yet they are sending electricity bills and are adamant that the people should pay.”

Paliyo took exception to the PM’s announcement of electricity and gas schemes in Punjab. “Despite being producers of the natural resource, Sindh and Balochistan are deprived of the gas which is only going to Punjab,” Paliyo said, adding that Article 158 of the Constitution says a province producing gas has the first right to it.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1378326/sindh-suffering-50-water-shortage/>

May 2017

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MAY 29TH TO JUNE 4TH 2017

PROTEST AGAINST WATER AND POWER CRISIS

Dawn, May 29th, 2017

Behram Baloch

GWADAR: A large number of people, including women, members of political parties and local traders, continued their sit-it protest against load-shedding of electricity and shortage of drinking water in Gwadar and its adjacent areas at Mullah Musa square of the port city on the third consecutive day on Sunday.

The protesters marched on different roads of the city during which they chanted slogans against the government and local administration. They accused them of having failed to solve the problems of load-shedding and water shortage in the city.

Addressing the protesters, leaders of political parties and traders criticised the government for what they called not taking these issues seriously.

They said the problem of water shortage in the port should be solved on a permanent basis. Projects of desalination plants should be initiated and adjacent areas of Gwadar should be provided water through water tankers.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1336001>

INEFFICIENT IRRIGATION SYSTEM IN KP

Dawn, The Business and Finance Weekly, May 29th, 2017

Mubarak Zeb Khan

IN its forthcoming fifth and final budget, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa’s PTI-led coalition government is unlikely to break any new ground by denying substantial funding to agriculture to make the province self-sufficient in food.

Over the past four years, agriculture got only 1.5-2.5pc of the amount earmarked for the province’s annual development programme. The allocation is nominal when compared to agriculture’s contribution of around 24pc of the provincial GDP. Farming engages more than 50pc of the labour force.

In the year 2015-16, an amount of Rs1.829bn was utilised in the sector.

An official of the agriculture department said agriculture was not a priority and the sector suffered from lack of research capacity, use of outdated technology, non-availability of training programmes to develop human capital, and low resource allocation.

With agriculture neglected, the province remains largely dependent on Punjab for meeting food deficits. The list includes wheat, sugar, rice, pulses and vegetables supplies.

KP's agriculture suffers from very low productivity given the farming landscape of the province. Nearly 80pc of its population lives in rural and peri-urban areas, whereas about 85pc people directly or indirectly earn their livelihood from farming and related activities.

Farmers are locked in production of low value crops; the irrigation network is not expanding and there is a marked decline in land use intensity. The list of bottlenecks holding up agricultural progress is a long one.

An official report of the KP agriculture department sees the small landholding as one of the major hurdles in achieving higher yield growth. Over 90pc of the landholdings are below five acres. In India, China, and South Korea, the average landholding size is even smaller, but access to input-institutions, knowledge, and technology help small farmers raise crop productivity.

Almost 95pc farmers in KP have no access to new technology. As a result, the cost of production is very high compared to other provinces.

Out of the total provincial cultivable land of 2.96m ha, the area under cultivation is 1.87m ha. The remaining 1.088m ha, which is 37pc of the cultivable land, is culturable waste. If the uncultivable area is brought under plough, according to the KP official, the province could produce enough staple foods.

Several projects suggesting marginal investments with the aim of bringing these lands under cultivation have been proposed for the next year's ADP, but officials were not sure whether the provincial government will consider the proposals. Similarly, the provision of subsidised technology to farmers is needed to enhance per unit yield.

Farm productivity is also seriously hampered by the inefficient irrigation system. And crops on 0.93m ha (55pc) depend on timely rains and are exposed to weather risks. The irrigated area is 0.78m ha, while the rain-fed area is 0.876m ha. KP also lacks modern technologies to better conserve water.

Market access is another challenge. Small holdings scattered all over the province are unable to have direct access to markets. The average distance for a farmer to reach the nearest market is 10 miles.

The growers do not have accurate information about consumer prices while the middleman benefits at the cost of growers and consumers alike.

The post-harvest losses are around 40pc of the total production or at Rs12bn per annum. Some not too difficult measures can reduce these losses by Rs4bn. There is no processing facility for value addition or preserving the fruits and vegetables.

The absence of a proper system for storage of agriculture produce results in sharp seasonal fluctuations in food prices. R&D suffers from poor research planning, and weak linkages between farm and research bodies.

The current staffing of the department of agriculture is not suitable, as it is manned by a limited number of well-qualified technical staff.

In the field, the staff lacks essential technical skills as well as facilities and budgets to work effectively.

The current institutional arrangements favour large and politically influential farmers. Small growers do not have access to inputs and resources to participate in high value-added markets. While large and assured markets exist for the traditional crops like wheat, the small farmers are big losers owing to fluctuating prices.

SHORTAGE OF WATER IN SEVERAL DISTRICTS WORSENS

Dawn, May 30, 2017

KARACHI: While growers of Hyderabad, Dadu, Mirpurkhas, Sukkur, Khairpur and some other districts continued to hold protest demonstrations against an acute shortage of drinking and irrigation water in their respective areas, a complete shutdown was observed in Gulab Leghari town on Monday in response to a call given by farmers' organisations of Badin.

The call was given after the district administration and irrigation officials concerned did not pay heed to the organisations' repeated distress calls made over the past few months for release of adequate water in Murad Wah (water course) and other channels.

No business, trade and commercial concerns, as well as markets and shops, in Gulab Leghari town opened in the morning.

A large number of growers joined in a rally held on Tando Allahyar Road and raised slogans against the irrigation department for many hours.

The Gulab Leghari UC chairman, Mehboob Ali Sirewal, along with the protesting growers, spoke to local reporters at the rally. He said that the shortage had caused a crisis-like situation in the district as growers could neither cultivate their crops nor could they find a small quantity of water for drinking and cooking purposes. They urged the authorities concerned to take appropriate measures for their survival.

Growers of Ghotki, held a demonstration in front of the Khanpur Mahar press club to register their protest against unavailability of water in Bombli Wah.

The protest was led by Ali Hassan Sial, and other small growers including Umeed Ali Sial and Ghulam Hussain Bhmbro.

Speaking to local reporters, the protesters said that hundreds of acres of their fertile land was turning barren due to the dried up canal.

They said that their protests over the past few months were being ignored by the irrigation department.

In Mirpurkhas, several hundred growers having their lands in the tail-end areas of Jamrao canal held a sit-in outside the office of the Area Water Board director, Nara canal, on Monday and raised slogans against non-release of water in the Puran distributaries for more than five months.

Chaudhry Siddique, Mehboob Khero, Mir Ali Ahmed Talpur and other affected growers criticised the Nara canal director Jamrao canal executive engineer and other irrigation officials for taking no measures to ensure supply of water to 28 channels feeding tail-end areas.

They alleged that their share of water was being sold away to influential political figures and feudal lords.

The officials were not also taking action against the big landowners who were stealing water through unfair means.

They appealed to the chief minister and irrigation minister to look into their woes on an urgent basis.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1336146>

ADB PROPOSES STRATEGY FOR TAPPING SHALLOW GROUNDWATER

Dawn, May 31st, 2017

Amin Ahmed

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has proposed a strategy to the Balochistan government for tapping shallow groundwater emanating from perennial streams of the river basins of Zhob and Mula, using solar-powered systems in off-grid locations.

It was also suggested that small scale solar-powered pumping systems coupled with drip irrigation could be a suitable option in terms of sustainability.

The proposed approach for the efficient use of water was introduced by a mission of the Asian Development Bank to the Balochistan government, and it was agreed that the plan would be implemented in the proposed water resources development project in 2018.

A study for the proposed Balochistan Water Resources Development Project (BWRDP) established that conventional irrigation systems cannot address the issue of low water availability, and innovative solutions to improve productivity by maximising crop produced per unit of water are to be developed and demonstrated for resource-poor farmers.

The project for which ADB will provide \$100 million aims to increase farm income through improved land and water resources by construction and rehabilitation of canals, and sub-surface water channels in river basins of Zhob and Mula where water is extreme scarce.

The project will combine a cost-effective solar pumping system for use of shallow groundwater, and innovative drip irrigation for high-value fruits and vegetables, and enhancing farm income through value chain development.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1336452>

GROWERS PROTEST ACUTE WATER SHORTAGE

Dawn, June 1st, 2017

MITHI: A large number of growers whose lands were irrigated by Rann Minor held a demonstration and sit-in at Ghulam Ji Mori on Mithi-Hyderabad Road on Wednesday to protest against acute shortage of water in their area.

The protesters' leaders said that no amount of water had been released into the only waterway of Tharparkar district for the past many years.

The fertile land of Thar had turned into sand dunes like the rest of the desert thanks to Pakistan Peoples Party leaders who had completely stopped flow of water into the minor to punish the rival Arbab family, they said.

But this political victimisation had also hit several hundred PPP supporters and voters in the areas irrigated by the distributary, they said.

SUKKUR: Scores of farmers staged a demonstration in front of Khanpur Mahar press club in Ghotki district in protest against shortage of water in Bombli Wah.

Advocate Noor Mohammad Siyal, growers' leaders Ali Hassan Siyal, Ghulam Hussain Bhambhro and others said that farmers had prepared their land for sowing crops but there was not water in Bombli Wah to irrigate thousands of acres of land.

They said the little water that was released into the channel was taken out by influential people at RD-31 while the officials concerned of the irrigation department were not ready to listen to their complaints.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/amp/1336557>

WATER COMMISSION IRKED BY WASA'S STANCE ON SHORT-TERM TREATMENT PLAN

Dawn, June 4th, 2017

Mohammad Hussain Khan

HYDERABAD: Justice Mohammad Iqbal Kalhoro, who heads the one-man judicial commission on water quality in Sindh, on Saturday expressed his displeasure over Water and Sanitation Agency (Wasa) managing director Masood Jumani's argument regarding a short-term plan on preventing disposal of effluent into Phulelli Canal.

The judge grilled the Wasa chief and directed the Public Health Engineering (PHE) secretary that "in future, if any drainage scheme is initiated for disposal of drainage water it shall not be allowed to have outfall in any irrigation canal".

The order said that till a proper alternative was in place, such drainage schemes should necessarily have a treatment plant as well.

After passing the order during its proceedings in Karachi, the commission put off the hearing till June 17.

Earlier, Wasa MD Jumani disagreed with the proposal submitted in the commission by Aijaz Qureshi, the executive engineer of the Kalri Baghar circle, regarding treatment of effluent at Darya Khan pumping station as a short-term plan. Mr Jumani argued that a Rs915 million Public Sector Development Plan (PSDP) scheme under the Hyderabad Development Package was under way and around Rs700m had already been spent on it. He said that the cost had been revised to Rs1,800m and the scheme was supposed to be completed within the next eight months.

Expressing his displeasure over Mr Jumani's submission, Justice Kalhoro grilled the MD and observed that "Wasa is prolonging the matter unnecessarily". Irrigation Secretary Jamal Mustafa Syed came to the rescue of the MD and said that there was some legal hitch involved in the matter, perhaps on the part of Wasa, which was executing a PSDP scheme. He said that Mr Qureshi's short-term plan would cost Rs850m though, in his view, it was technically feasible.

Advocate General Zamir Ghumro interjected to assure the commission that Mr Qureshi's proposal would be sorted out at highest level and that an implementation plan would be submitted to the commission within the next four to five days.

AG Ghumro also stated that he would submit a concrete proposal containing definite outlines for re-starting the remaining work on the Right Bank Outfall Drain-II (RBOD-II).

Federal Development Secretary Shoaib Siddiqui was also present to reply to queries of the judicial commission regarding the RBOD-II, as well as the S-III and CETPs (combined effluent treatment plants).

The Sindh AG sought time on the ground that the chief minister, chief secretary and relevant officials were busy in pre-budget meetings.

The irrigation secretary, who heads the task force appointed by the apex court, said that CETP Kotri had not been made fully functional due to power breakdowns.

SITE managing director Ghulam Mujtaba submitted to the commission that a generator would be installed at the said facility to cope with the outages. Thereafter, the said treatment plant would become fully functional, he added.

Justice Kalhoro said that let such report be submitted in the coming week and all steps be taken to ensure that all components of CETP Kotri were made functional without further delay.

J.M. Syed was also told to submit a report regarding the scheme being executed at each water hydrant. "The report shall also contain all necessary details with particular reference to the quantity of water being taken from each water hydrant and matters ancillary thereto and in case some anomaly is found therein by him, he being chairman shall take all necessary steps to remove them to ensure transparency," said Justice Kalhoro.

The commission directed PHE deputy secretary Riaz Hussain Sahto to submit a report regarding water supply and drainage schemes launched in the past but were not yet completed; and cite reasons for their non-completion. He was also directed to explain the inordinate long phasing of schemes and reasons why the phasing of future schemes could not be shortened.

The local government secretary submitted a report regarding multistorey/high-rise buildings which was taken on record.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/amp/1337233>

ONLY A MONTH'S WATER LEFT IN HUB DAM FOR KARACHI

The Express Tribune, June 6, 2017

KARACHI: Hub Dam, one of the major water supply sources for Karachi, is left with water reserves sufficient for a month or so only.

After reaching the highest level of 306 feet last year, the dam's water level is now around 285 feet, just 11 feet above the dead level which is at 275 feet. The dam supplies 100 million gallons per day (MGD) of water to the city.

Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) spokesperson Rizwan Hyder told The Express Tribune the dam was currently supplying around 50MGD of water to the city.

The dam reached its dead level last year in February when supply to the city came to a halt until July 2016, when the Sindh government installed water pumps to fetch water from the dead level.

However, the dam's level rose to 306 feet after rainfall in the catchment area in July and August, enabling it to supply water to the city so far.

The KWSB official had forecast at the time the dam at 306 feet was able to supply water to the city for a year, saying it would then depend upon the rains.

The dam, Hyder added, supplies water to Lasbella district, district west of Karachi and a small chunk to the irrigation department.

He added that after dam's supply is at halt, district west is supplied with water through the northeast Karachi line which carries 80MGD of water from Pipri. It manages to fulfill water needs to district west which consist of Baldia town, Site, Orangi and Manghopir areas.

It was in 2013 when the dam reached its highest capacity of 339 feet. Last year, it could only manage to reach 306 feet to be able to supply water for at least a year.

Met officials say they do not expect they do not expect any rainfall until July in the catchment area of the hub dam which lies in the Lasbella district and Kirthar region.

Abdul Rashid, a spokesperson of the Pakistan Meteorological Department, said they were observing the climate and currently did not expect any pre-monsoon rainfall. Nonetheless, the department is certain the area will receive moderate rainfall in July.

Attempts were made by this scribe to contact senior officials of the KWSB including the chief of bulk water supply to acquire more details. However, the spokesperson said the KWSB MD had not allowed any official to respond to the media except the spokesperson.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1426490/months-water-left-karachi-hub-dam/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MAY 22ND TO MAY 28TH 2017

WATER CRISIS AGAIN HITS GWADAR

Dawn, May 22nd, 2017

GWADAR: Due to lack of rain and the resultant drought-like situation, this port city has again been hit by a severe water crisis, according to its residents.

The Akara dam, which supplies water to Gwadar city and its surrounding areas, has once again dried up. As a result, the people of the city — especially its women who have to fetch water from distant areas — have been facing serious problems.

“We have not been supplied water for over a week now,” said one of the residents.

“The port city is facing acute water shortage as the main source of supply — the Akara Kaur (river) dam — has dried up and we cannot supply drinking water from there to the city and its adjoining areas,” said Shakeel Ahmed Baloch, who works as executive engineer for the provincial Public Health Department.

He, however, added that arrangements were being made to supply water to the city from other sources.

The construction work on the Akara Kaur dam commenced in 1991 at a cost of Rs560 million and was completed in 1995.

At that time the dam was spread over 17,000 acres, but by now its area has been reduced to 6,000 acres. The population of the city and its surrounding areas, which in the mid-90s was around 83,000, has by now shot up to 283,000.

According to experts, the dam currently cannot meet water requirements of the people here for three main reasons: the construction work on Gwadar port is still under way and it consumes a lot of water; lack of rain due to climate change; and increase in the population of Gwadar.

The port city faced a similar crisis in 2012, which continued for about 175 days. The crisis eased after rains in the catchment areas of the dam.

Another water crisis hit Gwadar in December of 2015 which continued until March of 2016. In all the people had to endure the crisis for over 80 days.

A water shortage in the city began in December 2016 and ended in January this year (after continuing for 40 days). To overcome this crisis, authorities supplied water to the people through tankers at a cost of Rs1 billion.

A similar plan has been prepared to overcome the ongoing crisis. Water would be supplied to affected people in Gwadar through 500 water tankers, according to a district administration official.

Water would be supplied to people living in Jiwani and Pasni, which have also been hit by a shortage, through 150 and 200 water tankers, respectively.

Water would be supplied to Gwadar district from the Sawad and Mirani dams.

The Mirani dam is located at a distance of 280 kilometres from Gwadar and for supplying 5,000 gallons of water to the port city a tanker would be paid Rs17,000.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1334634>

‘NAWAZ MUST STEP DOWN FOR FAILING TO END POWER, GAS CUTS AND WATER SHORTAGE’
Dawn, May 22nd, 2017

SUKKUR: Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Syed Khurshid Shah on Sunday said that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and his party had demanded votes in the name of uninterrupted and low-cost electricity across the country but they miserably failed even to curtail loadshedding. Besides, Mr Sharif earned the country great embarrassment in The Hague recently and had already lost moral grounds to continue to hold the office of the prime minister, he said, adding that he must step down now.

He was addressing participants in the sit-in organised outside the local press club on Sunday by the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) as part of its Sindh-wide ‘Go Nawaz go’ campaign. PPP Sindh president Nisar Khuhro, former chief minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah, Senator Islamuddin Shaikh, MNAs Nafeesa Shah, Noman Islam Shaikh, Mehreen Bhutto, provincial ministers Manzoor Wassan, Nasir Hussan Shah, Jam Mahtab Dahar and Jam Ikramullah Dharejo, as well as several other PPP legislators and other leaders, spoke at the sit-in attended by a large number of party workers.

Khurshid Shah said that Mr Sharif had in his party’s election campaign promised to bring an end to electricity loadshedding within six months after being elected to power but he could not keep the promise even after remaining in power for four years. “It has become clear now that Mr Sharif had deceived people for his party’s victory in the 2013 election. In fact he has cheated the masses,” he said.

Mr Shah recalled that PPP in its previous tenure had added 3,500 megawatts to the national grid but the PML-N government could not produce even 1,300 megawatts more over the past four years.

The opposition leader said that the foreign policy being pursued by the PML-N government had proved unsuccessful.

Referring to the Kulbhushan Jadhav’s case in the international court, Mr Shah said that the Indian spy was caught red-handed by the Pakistan Army but this great achievement was wasted by the PML-N government. “Mr Sharif prefers his personal relations with [certain] Indians over Pakistan’s national interests because of his business interests,” said Mr Shah.

By pursuing a flawed policy, the Sharif-led government was causing great harm to the country, he added.

He said Mr Sharif should have resigned as soon as the Supreme Court’s verdict in the Panama Papers case was announced and two of the five judges found him guilty of wrongdoings.

In his speech, Mr Khuhro said that the people of Pakistan did not need a prime minister like Nawaz Sharif and now the judges had also raised questions about his eligibility. He criticised the PML-N government for denying the people of Sindh of their basic amenities and rights. “But we will not surrender our rights ... we will hold a sit-in even in Islamabad to seek our rights if the need be,” he said.

He warned the federal government against continuing with its tyrannical acts of increasing power loadshedding, denying the province of its full share in resources including water and gas and hindering development in Sindh. “We [PPP followers] never bowed to dictators like Gen Ziaul Haq and Pervez Musharraf, and will not bow to Nawaz Sharif either,” he said.

Mr Khuhro said that flawed policies of the prime minister and his government had defamed Pakistan at international level.

Former CM Syed Qaim Ali Shah, MNA Nafeesa Shah, Manzoor Wassan and others said that the masses were fed up with the PML-N government and wanted the prime minister to step down at once. They vowed to continue the ‘Go Nawaz go’ campaign until its success.

They observed that power and gas loadshedding had now exceeded beyond people’s endurance while Sindh’s lands were turning barren owing to unavailability of adequate water. Such a situation could not be tolerated any more, they added.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1334533>

IRSA RELEASES 2,53,000 CUSECS OF WATER FOR KHARIF CROPS
Business Recorder, May 22, 2017

M Rafique Goraya

LAHORE: The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) released 2,53,000 cusecs water from the dams and run of the rivers Kabul and Chenab on Sunday out of the total 3,13,000 cusecs inflow in the four live rivers for sowing and irrigating the strategic and cash Kharif crops including cotton, rice, sugarcane, maize, vegetables, fodder for livestock and other essential food crops across the country.

It is worth mentioning that the country is facing 12 percent irrigation water shortage during early Kharif period from 01 April to 10 June as only 10,248 MAF is estimated to be available against the requirement of 11.613 MAF water during this crucial period. Cotton sowing has already been delayed in south Punjab due to closure of one of the most important Muzaffargarh Canal and lesser discharges in the canals emanating from the Indus zone off Chashma and Taunsa barrages.

Punjab irrigation department experts told Business Recorder that water inflows in the rivers have improved during the past two days. 1,34,200 cusecs water is running in the mighty Indus at Tarbela, 60,600 cusecs in the river Kabul at Nowshera, 66,800 cusecs in river Jhelum at Mangla and 53,600 cusecs in the river Chenab at Marala.

They said as the water inflow in the river Kabul and Chenab has increased the water regulatory body has reduced outflow from the Mangla dam as it was much behind its annual filling schedule. IRSA is also retaining about 24,000 cusecs in the Tarbela dam out of 1,34,200 cusec inflow in the Indus river.

They said that the combined water inflow in rivers Indus and Kabul has reached the level of 1,68,000 cusecs at Jinnah barrage that is more than sufficient to meet the irrigation and drinking water needs of KPK, Punjab, Baluchistan and

Sindh provinces. However the peak of this inflow would reach the Guddu barrage in Sindh province in about a week's time.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/05/22/13-page/876845-news.html>

WATER CRISIS WORSENS IN CITY

The Express Tribune May , 25 2017

KARACHI: The water crisis worsened on Wednesday when a major pump stopped working at Karachi Water and Sewerage Board's (KWSB) Pipri plant, causing a shortfall of 13MGD.

A number of areas, including Landhi, Korangi, Gulshan-i-Iqbal, Clifton and Karsaz, were affected.

“The pump's motor burned after receiving a sudden surge in the electricity supply in the afternoon. The utility will try to replace the motor, otherwise its repair will take a week,” said KWSB spokesperson Rizwan Hyder, adding that the problem had further aggravated the water crisis.

K-Electric, he said, was carrying out “undeclared” loadshedding in the city which had affected supplies from the COD filter plant, an important KWSB installation, as well as at its distribution points in Sakhi Hassan, North Karachi and Gulshan-i-Iqbal.

“Loadshedding in these areas has caused water shortage in areas including Gulshan-i-Iqbal, Shanti Nagar, Manzoor Colony and Pir Colony,” he explained.

Asked about the total shortfall the city presently faces, he said it was difficult to measure.

http://epaper.dawn.com/DetailImage.php?StoryImage=24_05_2017_118_002

HIGH PRESENCE OF ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANT BACTERIUM DETECTED IN WATER

Z Ali

The Express Tribune, May 24, 2017

A research on microbes found in water of Hyderabad and Jamshoro has unearthed an alarming public health risk pertaining to unresponsive medical treatment or slow health recovery. A considerably high presence of antibiotic resistant bacterium has been detected in the surface, underground and tap water of the two cities.

For the people who suffer from infectious diseases or those with low immunity, the disclosure seems to portend some serious health risks. “These micro-organisms threaten the communities with new strains of infectious diseases that are difficult to cure,” said Asad Ali Laghari, a final year Master's of Science student at US-Pakistan Centre for Advanced Studies in Water (USPCASW) at Mehran University of Engineering and Technology. “I believe the situation won't be different in other parts of Sindh and even in Pakistan owing to the same poor standards of water management.”

Laghari shared findings of his research at the two-day ‘1st Young Researchers National Conference on Water and Environment’, which commenced on Monday at USPCASW, Jamshoro. He was the first student to have been given the opportunity to present his research among 52 researchers who read their papers during the two-day event.

Antibiotics are an antimicrobial drug that kill or inhibit growth of bacterial infections. But their inappropriate use is known to lead to the emergence of resistant organisms.

According to Laghari, whose research has been supervised by environmental scientist Prof Dr Rasool Bux Mahar, 62 samples of surface, subsoil and filtered tap water were collected from Hyderabad and Jamshoro for analysis. In a horde of bacterium, the researcher found seven common ones such as E Coli, Shigella, Staphylococcus Aures, Vibrio and Pseudomonas, which infect humans with a range of infections, including the fatal ones.

“In the lab tests, I applied 16 different and commonly prescribed antibiotics on each of the pathogen,” he said. “What surprised us was that a majority of the bacterium resisted these drugs [that] are meant to kill them.” Among the seven bacteria, Pseudomonas and Vibrio survived 12 antibiotics, Shigella and E Coli 10 each and Enterococci nine, he added.

Most of these strains affect the tract that involves stomach and intestines. But they also infect open wounds and can cause septicaemia – blood infection.

Release of untreated municipal and industrial waste water, improper filtration by means of chlorination and faulty water supply system in urban areas have been identified as the sources of such bacterial spread. “But the major reason for the microbial resistance is the consumption of antibiotics itself,” Laghari said, citing foreign researches. “These antibiotics ... are producing antimicrobial resistant genes and bacteria, which have caused greater risk to the health of humans and animals.”

He explained that the human and animal bodies release up to 70% of a consumed medicine through urine and defecation. And these drugs reach the microbes through the unbridled, as well as unlawful, practice of releasing municipal and industrial waste water in rivers and canals.

For the researcher, the remedy lies in the sparing prescription of antibiotics and by bringing a complete end to discharging untreated waste water in rivers and canals.

Prof Dr Rasool Bux Mahar, the centre’s director, informed at the inaugural session that as many as 105 abstracts and 72 detailed research papers were submitted for the conference. Finally, only 52 research papers and 11 posters were selected for presentation.

MUET Vice-Chancellor Dr Mohammad Aslam Uqaili said the newly established centre aims to produce 250 scholars who will contribute to extensive research on water issues. The centre is providing free Master’s of Science and Masters of Engineering Education along with Rs15,000 monthly stipend to the students. Currently, 80 students are enrolled in two separate batches.

During the session, urban planner and architect Arif Hassan delivered a talk on ‘urbanisation trends and their environmental repercussions’, especially on water supply.

Nadeem Ahmad, the manager of policy and advocacy of Water Aid Pakistan, gave a presentation on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and water.

Researchers from Karachi University, Peshawar University, Sindh University, MUET, National University of Science and Technology, Islamabad, Sindh Agriculture University and Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science and Technology, Karachi, also read their papers.

A research conducted by Maheen Saeed of USPCASW found high concentration of lead, copper and zinc in Indus River near Kotri Barrage. “... concentration in water were higher than WHO’s permissible limits,” the study noted. Other metals such as cadmium, iron and manganese were also found beyond the health standards mainly during the non-monsoon period, which lasts for a long part of a year.

Research conducted by Rubab Saher of USPCASW challenged the theory that Sindh's plain terrain is ill-suited for the hydel power production unlike the northern parts of Pakistan where dams have been built. She claimed of evaluating 3.2 megawatt (MW) generation capacity at just one point of Nara canal, which springs from Sukkur barrage.

As the government plans to increase manifold the coal power generation capacity of an existing plant near Jamshoro to 1,320 MW, a study has found already existing high level of nitrogen oxide (NO_x) and carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions. Kaleemullah Shaikh of USPCASW applied air dispersion model to assess the ground level concentration of NO_x and CO₂ in 50 kilometres radius.

Meanwhile, two separate researches revealed that despite being a technological hub, the faculty, staff and students at MUET are being supplied impure drinking water. Findings of Azizullah Gabol, who checked heavy metals like chromium, zinc, copper and iron from the KB Feeder Canal to the end distribution point in the varsity, found a high concentration of the latter.

Another study assessed the physical parameters, including temperature, turbidity, electrical conductivity, total dissolved solids, dissolved oxygen and pH level of water. "The current water treatment system doesn't offer adequate disinfection," the study concluded.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1417221/high-presence-antibiotic-resistant-bacterium-detected-water/>

MIRPURKHAS DISTRICT COUNCIL ACCUSES IRRIGATION STAFF OF SELLING WATER

Dawn, May 25th, 2017

MIRPURKHAS: Members of the Mirpurkhas District Council accused irrigation department officials on Wednesday of selling water instead of supplying it to growers.

The officials used the pretext of rotation programme to maximise profits from corruption, the members also alleged.

They said the creation of artificial shortage of water at the tail-end of waterways was nothing but 'economic murder' of farmers. Water was not even being supplied to water supply schemes of the city and resultantly, water shortage also persisted in the city of Mirpurkhas, said the members including Khadim Hussain Behrani, Yar Mohammad Baloch, Kanji Mal Bheel, Mumtaz Jarwar, Tanveer Ahmed Randhawa and Asghar Ali Shah.

They were speaking at a meeting of the district council held here in the Ghulam Nabi Shah Hall presided over by its Chairman Mir Anwer Ali Khan Talpur.

On the occasion, members complained about failure of officers in desilting of the LBOD drains in Mirpurkhas district, acute shortage of irrigation water in Nara Canal, injudicious distribution of water, sale of water by lower-grade irrigation staff, no legal action against people cultivating paddy crop despite a ban in the district, failure in recovery of abiana tax, non-supply of irrigation water at tail-end areas for drinking and weak rotation programme schedule.

About the absence of the Nara Canal director and other engineers from the meeting, the chairman and members took serious notice and expressed their anguish and disappointment. They would write to the higher authorities in this regard, they resolved.

They said 984,000 acres of agricultural land was cultivated with irrigation water of East and West Jamrao Canal which had 63 distributaries and minors and 129 direct outlets. Despite this, they regretted, the tail-end abadgars were compelled to sell their lands because they had no water for irrigation.

They alleged that over 300 water pumping machines were installed at the head of the Nara Canal for 'stealing' irrigation water.

They said that 18,000 cusecs water was designed approval of Nara Canal but due to shortage, it was taking about 13,000 cusecs. As a result acute water shortage persisted in the lower Nara Canal command area.

The members demanded setting up a committee of members of the district council to ensure judicious distribution of irrigation water, removal of buffalo ranches across Jarwary Shakh and desilting of that channel.

Speaking at the meeting, Chairman Mir Anwer Ali Khan Talpur said agriculture was the backbone of the economy of the country, but unfortunately due to continuous shortage of water, it was being broken.

A complete strike was observed in Jhuddo town, 73km from here on Wednesday, in response to a call for protest by the Tail Abadgar Association against acute shortage of water for the past three months.

All markets and bazaars remained shuttered as hundreds of growers and members of general public took out a rally in the town under the banner of Tail Abadgar Association.

The protesters led by Ismail Kambo, Khalid Arain, Abdullah Khoso and others raised slogans against executive engineer of Jamrao Canal and sub-divisional officer of Kot Ghulam Mohammad irrigation subdivision.

The protesters' leaders told journalists that the 'corrupt' irrigation officers were selling their share of water to influential landlords by tempering with watercourses and allowing them to set up direct outlets.

As a result, they said, they had not received water for the past three months and people in both rural areas and Jhuddo town had been deprived of drinking water. Besides, they were not able to sow Kharif crops.

They demanded the Sindh government immediately replace the 'corrupt' officers who were responsible for the acute shortage of water.

They warned if water was not supplied immediately they would launch a protest campaign against the officers of irrigation department in the district.

They urged the government to take notice of their protest and ensure supply of water to their areas for drinking purposes as well as for irrigating land.

A complete shutdown was observed in Pangrio town, 53km from here on Wednesday, in response to a call for protest by local chapters of political parties and farmers organisations against a nagging water crisis in the area for the past several months, adds our Badin Correspondent.

All shops, bazaars and business centres remained shuttered as enraged protesters burnt tyres on Tando Bago-Jhuddo Road and staged a sit-in outside the press club for four hours.

The protesters' leaders Raza Mohammad Khoso, Chaudhry Mohammad Aslam, Asif Ali Arain and others alleged that an executive engineer of the irrigation department was selling to influential landlords their share in the water of Shadi Small Wah, which was fed by Akram Wah and irrigated their lands.

They said their waterways had dried up and standing crops had already withered away due to acute shortage of water, leaving them unable to cultivate Kharif crops.

They demanded removal of errant officials and immediate release of their share of water.

ONLY 76% OF ALLOCATED FUNDS SPENT ON WATER PROJECTS

Zafar Bhutta

ISLAMABAD: Water supply and storage does not seem to be among top priorities of the government as despite facing acute shortages, the utilisation of funds on water projects has gone down.

In the current fiscal year 2016-17, the government has allocated Rs31.72 billion for development schemes in the water sector, but only around Rs24 billion, or 76% of the total, would be utilised by the end of June, reveals the Annual Plan 2017-18 released on Friday.

The ruling PML-N government has not only delayed the release of funds for water projects designed to enhance the country's storage capacity, but it has also cut fund allocation substantially since coming to power about four years ago.

Its focus has primarily been on road infrastructure and metro bus projects and has pushed water schemes among less priority areas.

After coming to power in mid-2013, the government earmarked Rs59 billion for fiscal year 2013-14 to be disbursed among different projects aimed at conserving and enhancing the country's water resources. However, out of the total, only Rs35 billion could be spent as the government slowed down the release of funds.

In 2015-16, the allocation for water projects was slashed by around 50% to Rs30.12 billion. However, only Rs23 billion was disbursed for injection into the schemes.

In the next fiscal year, almost a similar amount, Rs31.06 billion, was set aside for water schemes, but only Rs24 billion would be released by the end of the year.

For the upcoming fiscal year 2017-18, a slightly higher amount estimated at Rs36.7 billion has been earmarked for water projects.

Pakistan is fast becoming a water-stressed country with dearth of storages and India's plan to build more dams on rivers coming to Pakistan.

No workable water management policy has been put in place and farmers are forced to consume groundwater with the help of tube wells to irrigate their crops, which inflates power consumption bills.

In order to vent their anger, the farmers staged a protest in Islamabad on Friday before the unveiling of budget for 2017-18 to invite attention to their plight as the government seemed to have relegated the agriculture sector to less priority areas.

In the previous fiscal year, the agriculture sector did not grow, falling far short of the target, which had a negative impact on the overall national economic growth. In the current fiscal year, however, the agriculture sector grew 3.46% – its highest level in the past five years.

In the new budget, the government has increased agriculture credit target by 43% to Rs1.001 trillion and has announced loans of Rs50,000 for small farmers.

Still, it has paid more attention to the manufacturers and industrialists, which are even getting loans at low interest rates whereas the farmers are compelled to bear high interest costs.

Among the industrialists, fertiliser manufacturers and sugar millers have got billions in government subsidy, but its benefits have hardly trickled down to the farmers.

Some officials warn Pakistan will face energy and food security challenges in future as the government has scant interest in water supply projects, which are closely related with agriculture production that needs water as a major input.

Pakistan has been facing flood devastation for the past seven years, but calls for building more water reservoirs have fallen on deaf ears. At present, water storage capacity of the country is 14 million acre feet (MAF) whereas annual consumption stands at 117 MAF.

“Consumption of 1 MAF of water has a positive impact of \$1 billion on the economy; this way Pakistan has been losing billions every year because of water wastage as reservoirs are not too many,” an 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 earlier 9.4 MAF. However, Mangla’s capacity has been enhanced by 3 MAF to 7.4 MAF following a structure raising project.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1421109/76-allocated-funds-spent-water-projects/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MAY 15 TH TO MAY 21ST 2017

GOVERNMENT PLANS TO ADD 41,000MW THROUGH HYDROPOWER BY 2030

The Express Tribune, May 18th, 2017.

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly was informed on Wednesday that the government has planned to initiate several hydropower projects along River Sindh that would have a capacity of producing 41,000 megawatts (MW) of electricity by 2030.

According to Parliamentary Secretary for Planning, Development and Reform Dr Ibadullah, the projects will be completed under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor’s (CPEC) long-term plan.

During a question-hour session, Ibadullah said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) has its due share in CPEC projects; however, if the province wanted any more projects included it could approach the federal government with a proper plan.

“At least one economic zone is being constructed in each province under CPEC and there is no discrimination being done against K-P,” he said.

Additionally, he informed three energy projects under CPEC had been shelved, including China Sunec (50MW), Salt Range Coal-based power project (300MW) and Zonergy Solar Project Bahawalpur (900MW).

He said that the road infrastructure projects were targeted to be completed by fiscal year 2018-19 and energy early harvest projects were expected to be completed by the next fiscal year, except for the hydel projects which would be completed by 2021.

He added that Gwadar and railways projects were expected to commence soon, along with industrial parks and Special Economic Zones which would be established by as per decision taken in sixth Joint Coordinating Committee on CPEC.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1412554/government-plans-add-41000mw-hydropower-2030/>

OPPOSITION PROTESTS PROPOSED HIKE IN WATER TAXES

The Express Tribune, May 20th, 2017.

ISLAMABAD: With the capital already facing an acute shortage of water, plans by the local government to raise water taxes in the city ran into stiff opposition during the Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation (IMC) assembly session on Friday.

During the 13th session of IMC, held at the Pakistan-China Friendship Centre, council members deliberated over four agenda items including revision of property tax, water and conservancy charges, poor condition of playgrounds and parks, cleaning of nullahs, fencing the nullahs, problems of working women, house women and lady councillors in Islamabad.

decided that next time when an agenda item comes for discussion in the house, the relevant director of that formation would have to be present to answer members of the house.

The meeting approved the minutes of the 12th Session of the IMC while items included in the agenda of meeting such as property tax, review of water and conservancy charges were discussed at length.

The IMC unanimously decided that a committee comprising members of the house be constituted which would then submit its recommendations on the taxes before the house for further discussion.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) member Raja Khurram Nawaz criticised the local government for its failure to resolve the drinking water issue.

He asked how could water charges be raised when people are not getting drinking water in the first place. He declared that the opposition would not accept any increase in water or any other utility charges until the water issues are resolved.

At this, Deputy Mayor Javed adjourned discussion on increasing water taxes till the next meeting of the house and said that the matter would be discussed at a separate meeting in detail.

Deputy Mayor Zeeshan Naqvi suggested that the water shortage issue in the capital could be overcome by constructing small dams on different nullahs. He also suggested that a playground must be developed in every union council.

While discussing the situation of parks, grounds and nullahs, IMC members said that they were in dilapidated condition and a comprehensive strategy was required to address the issue.

IMC members also emphasised that new grounds and parks should be built, especially in the rural areas of the city.

PTI's UC Chairman Malik Rafique said that of the 202 public parks, only 12 parks were located in the rural areas, adding that in some sectors there were as many as 30 parks. This difference between parks in urban and rural areas was shameful, Rafique said.

At this, both treasury and opposition benches appreciated Rafique by thumping their desks.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1414350/opposition-protests-proposed-hike-water-taxes/>

SC WATER COMMISSION WANTS CONCRETE DETAILS ABOUT EFFLUENT TREATMENT PLANTS

Dawn, May 21, 2017

HYDERABAD: Justice Mohammad Iqbal Kalhoro, acting in his capacity as the one-man judicial commission appointed by the Supreme Court to look into supply of contaminated water to consumers in Sindh, has directed Water and Sanitation Agency (Wasa) managing director Masood Jumani to come prepared on June 3 and apprise him as to when his institution will execute the proposal — submitted to the commission by an irrigation officer — regarding treatment of effluent that falls into the Phulelli Canal.

He issued the directive during the commission's proceedings held in the Sindh High Court Karachi on Saturday.

He directed Dr Ghulam Murtaza, a member of the task force set up by the apex court, to collect water samples for analysing its quality. Such samples should be collected from hospitals, schools, public spaces etc and a report [about results of their tests] be submitted to the commission within a month so that the quality of water being provided to people from the river, canals, reverse osmosis plants, water supply schemes etc could be analysed, Dr Murtaza was told.

Task force chairman Mustafa Jamal Syed, who is the irrigation secretary, stated that the proposal submitted by irrigation department's executive engineer Aijaz Ahmed Qureshi, in respect of effluent treatment at the Darya Khan pumping station, was found feasible. He said the plan could be executed within 20 weeks. However, he mentioned that Wasa had to provide funds for the purpose.

Masood Jumani sought time to examine the plan and submit a report to the commission.

Justice Kalhoro had earlier directed that till the functioning of a treatment plant being installed under federal funding, a short-term plan be put in place to avoid contamination of Phulelli Canal that supplies water to Badin and Tando Mohammad Khan districts.

Aijaz Qureshi eventually presented the plan on May 6.

Chief Secretary Rizwan Memon during the commission's visit to the canal had stated that directives of the apex court regarding implementation of decisions had been complied with and only requisite notifications were to be issued. He sought three days' time to file compliance report along with the requisite notifications.

Sukkur Electric Supply Company (Sepco) chief executive officer Abdul Latif Anjum appeared before the commission, which had earlier issued bailable warrants against him for ignoring a call-up notice. He stated that all 109 electric connections of water supply and drainage schemes had been energised which were pending in Sepco.

In view of his submitted report, the commission ordered that sessions judges in Sindh, barring Karachi, would depute judicial officers to pay visits along with officers concerned to verify whether all water supply and drainage schemes in their jurisdictions are functioning. Such reports would be submitted to the commission within three weeks.

Karachi Water and Sewerage Board managing director and his deputy were not able to satisfy the commission as to why the TP-I and TP-III were not made functional in line with the apex court's March 16 order. They stated that quantity of chlorinated water was enhanced from 250MGD to 330MGD.

They admitted that chlorinated water was mixed with the remaining water before onward supply. The commission directed the MD to submit a report regarding mode of water collection from water hydrants and explain as to why recommendation of the commission for putting in place a new water distribution system and revamping of the old one was not complied with.

The health secretary informed the commission that incinerators were not installed in hospital but such process was under way and would be finalised soon. About private hospitals and laboratories, he assured the commission that he would take steps to ensure enforcement of the Hospital Waste Management Rules 2014. He was directed to form a committee mandated to inspect all such private facilities periodically and submit a report to the commission.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1334337/sc-water-commission-wants-concrete-details-about-effluent-treatment-plants>

JUDICIAL COMMISSION ORDERS TESTING OF WATER SUPPLIED TO CITIZENS IN SINDH

The Express Tribune, May 21, 2017

The judicial commission ordered on Saturday testing of the quality of water being supplied to people in public places from various water sources across the province.

Justice Muhammad Iqbal Kalhoro of the Sindh High Court [SHC] gave this direction while heading a Supreme Court-appointed [SC] commission to investigate the provincial authorities' failure to provide potable water and maintain sanitation conditions in Sindh.

In order to check the quality of drinking water being provided to the people of Sindh from various sources, including rivers, canals, reverse osmosis plants and water supply schemes, the commission directed Dr Ghulam Murtaza, a member of the task force, to take water samples at his convenience from all such resources and public places, such as hospitals and schools, for testing. He was directed to submit a report to the commission within a month.

The deputy attorney general assured the commission that he will submit a report on whether or not the Rangers were patrolling the designated area of the Malir River in compliance with the commission's May 5 order. The patrolling was to halt the illegal lifting of sand from the riverbed.

Justice Kalhoro observed that the managing director and deputy managing director of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board [KWSB] have not been able to satisfy the commission as to why the Treatment Plant-I and II had not been made functional in compliance with the SC's March 16 order.

They claimed the quantity of chlorinated water supplied has been increased from 250 million gallons per day [MGD] to 330 MGD. However, they admitted that the chlorinated water is mixed with the remaining water before it is supplied to people. They maintained that the rehabilitation process at all filtration plants was in full swing, adding that within a short span of time they will be able to achieve complete chlorination and filtration of water.

The commission directed the KWSB managing director to submit a report regarding the mode of obtaining water from the hydrants. He was also directed to submit a report as to why the recommendations of the commission, in respect to laying a new water distribution system and revamping the old one, have not been complied with.

A chief engineer of KWSB's KD-Civil-II moved an application to provide security to protect the board's reserved land at the high service reservoir on main Karsaz Road. The commission issued a notice to the provincial advocate general to file a report in this regard by June 3.

Earlier, the federal secretary for planning and development, Shoaib Siddiqui, informed the court that a meeting of all the stakeholders was held on May 11 to re-consider construction work on the Right Bank Outfall Drain, the development of the S-III project and implementation of a proposal to install five effluent treatment plants in Karachi. However, he said, the final decision could not be taken. He assured that within two weeks some tangible progress will be made on these issues and a report will be filed to the commission.

The secretary said that deliberations on the K-IV project, to provide additional water to Karachi, had taken place between the prime minister and chief minister. The project is likely to be constructed very soon, he maintained. Since

he did not file a report in writing nor did he file the minutes of the meeting, the commission directed him to submit the same within three days, so that further orders can be passed.

The provincial chief secretary said that the timeline given by the SC for implementation on the apex court's directions had been complied with, adding that only the requisite notifications to give them effect had to be issued. He sought three-days' time to file a compliance report along with requisite notifications.

The chairperson of the task force said the proposal made by Kalri Baghar Aijaz Executive Engineer Ahmed Qureshi, regarding treatment of the industrial effluent at Darya Khan pumping station, has been found feasible and can be executed within 20 weeks, provided the funds are made available by the Water and Sanitation Authority (WASA) Hyderabad. The authority's managing director sought time to apprise the commission about when he will execute the said proposal.

The provincial health secretary filed a report stating that incinerators had not yet been installed at the public hospitals. However, he confirmed that the process for the same was in place and will be finalised soon.

Regarding the private hospitals and laboratories, he assured that steps will be taken to ensure the Hospital Waste Management Rules, 2014 are being followed. In order to check compliance of the rules, the secretary said he will constitute a committee with a mandate to inspect periodically all such laboratories and hospitals and submit reports.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1414981/judicial-commission-orders-testing-water-supplied-citizens-sindh/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MAY 8TH TO MAY 14TH 2017

POLITICIANS URGED NOT TO POLITICISE KALABAGH DAM

Business Recorder, May 8th, 2017

MULTAN: The business community of Southern Punjab urged upon the politicians not to politicize the issue of Kalabagh dam which may bring prosperity, self sufficiency in Pakistan and Kalabagh dam should be taken as a mission by all segments of society as water shortage has become a big threat to the agro-based economy.

President of Multan Chamber of Commerce & Industry (MCCI) Khawaja Jalaluddin Roomi said that Kalabagh dam would not only irrigate the millions acres of land in Southern Punjab but also help in generating cheaper hydel electricity. The MCCI President said that such elements must be exposed who are playing the role of facilitators to the anti-Pakistan elements by opposing the Kalabagh dam. He said that country's biggest export-oriented industry textile is dependent on agriculture sector that is facing huge water deficit. He said that further delay in construction of Kalabagh dam would further aggravate water and power situation.

Jalaluddin Roomi said that refunds and adjustments of income tax and sales tax have become biggest issues and causing huge financial loss to the business community. He said that a system should be developed in this regard to facilitate businessmen. He was optimistic that government has accepted the MCCI proposals regarding double taxations and stuck-up refunds and these issues would also be resolved in Federal Budget 2017-18.

He said that tax system is complicated and burdensome which creates room for complicities between tax payers and the tax collectors. He said that number of taxes and frequency of paying taxes must be reduced. Moreover, taxes may be paid quarterly instead of every month. For that matter, all Para tariffs must be merged in the main tariffs.

<http://fp.brecorder.com/2017/05/20170508176792/>

MODERN IRRIGATION SYSTEM TO BE INTRODUCED IN PUNJAB

Business Recorder, May 8, 2017

SIALKOT: Punjab government has formulated a three year well-knitted plan for introducing modern irrigation system in agriculture sector in the province. Sources in agriculture department told Business Recorder here on Sunday that the step was being taken for tracking agriculture sector on modern production lines and to make it profitable. Sources claimed that introducing new techniques in agriculture sector to enhance per acre yield and to improve the economic conditions of farmer community in Punjab.

The government will mobilize more than Rs 2 billion for the promotion of modern agriculture in the Punjab. Under the programme, Drip Sprinkler irrigation and solar system will be installed on 10,000 acres of land while tunnel farming technology would be installed on 1500 acres of land for better and effective utilization of available water for boosting agriculture productivity across the Punjab.

The programme will pave the way for introducing modern and profitable farming, enhancing productivity, lessening the productivity expenditures, better utilization of fertilizers and pesticides and save the water.

This system will help to increase additional per acre income in the province. Special step was being taken for the promotion of mechanized agriculture and 36 hi-tech mechanization service centres would established at cost of Rs 1.2 billion in the Punjab. Under the plan Rs 2.50 billion would be spent on the construction of warehouses and upgradation of existing warehouse for the storage of agricultural produce in the Punjab, sources added.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/05/08/15-page/873474-news.html>

WATER FLOWS IN RIVERS INCREASE BY 16,000 CUSECS

Business Recorder, May 5, 2017

M Rafique Goraya

LAHORE: The water flows in the four live rivers improved by 16,000 cusecs on Sunday following increase in temperature in the upper regions to help reduce the projected 12 percent irrigation water shortage for sowing major Kharif crops including cotton, rice sugarcane and fodder for live stock in May and June.

According to May 07 water report of WAPDA the position of the river inflows and outflows at Tarbela, Mangla and Chashma along with the 7 barrages on the rivers, the water inflow in the mighty Indus has gone up from 47,900 cusecs to 55,500 cusecs during the past 24 hours, The running water in river Jhelum has increased from 52,000 cusecs to 55,200 cusecs at Mangla dam and in the river Chanab from 24,000 cusecs to 27,000 cusecs at Marala headworks, Water inflow in the river Kabul which contributes 17 percent to water resources of the country has also gone up by 2,000 cusecs at Nowshera where it merges with the mighty Indus. The running water in Kabul river was 29,800 cusecs.

It may be added that the water flow in the mighty Indus at Guddu barrage is also going up to fulfill the water indent of the Sindh Irrigation department to the level of 90,000 cusecs. The water inflow and outflow at barrages on Sunday was as under:

Barrages: Jinnah: Inflows 90200 cusecs and Outflows 83200 cusecs, Chashma: Inflows 92000 cusecs and Outflows 80000 cusecs, Taunsa: Inflows 72800 cusecs and Outflows 66200 cusecs, Panjnad: Inflows 23800 cusecs and Outflows 14800 cusecs, Guddu: Inflows 64000 cusecs and Outflows 63500 cusecs, Sukkur: Inflows 49100 cusecs and Outflows 16800 cusecs, Kotri: Inflows 8600 cusecs and Outflows Nil.

Meanwhile the weather remained hot and dry in most parts of the country on Sunday. However, rain-thunderstorm occurred at isolated places in Malakand, Hazara, Kohat, Rawalpindi, Sargodha divisions, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Maximum highest temperature was recorded at Sibbi, Moenjodaro 48 C, Dadu, Sukkur, Shaheed Benazirabad, Jacobabad, Rohri, Larkana 47 C, Bahawalnagar, Rahim yar Khan, Padidan, Turbat, Khanpur 46 C Today mainly hot and dry weather is expected in most plain areas of the country while very hot weather is likely in upper Sindh and south/central Punjab. Dust-thunderstorm/rain is expected at isolated places in Malakand, Hazara, Peshawar, Kohat, Rawalpindi divisions, FATA, Islamabad, Gilgit-Baltistan, Kashmir, while at a few places in Gujranwala, Sargodha, Bannu and Makran divisions.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/05/08/5-page/873367-news.html>

KARACHI'S WATER BEING ROBBED, CLAIMS MAYOR

Dawn, May 10th, 2017

Hasan Mansoor

KARACHI: Mayor Wasim Akhtar has claimed that water allocated for Karachi is being robbed, saying the K-IV project will not benefit the citizens, but 'others'.

"Karachi needs 1,100 million gallons per day (mgd) of water, but it hardly gets 420mgd and such situation has led to the water crisis in the city," the mayor said in a policy statement issued here on Tuesday.

He urged Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah to take notice of it and ensure uninterrupted supply of water to the provincial capital.

The mayor said that since the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) was being run by the Sindh government, it should be asked to stop the rampant theft of water allocated for Karachi and give its people their right. He said that 420mgd water provided currently to Karachi was also being supplied to them untreated, causing immense health hazards.

"Karachi is being supplied 585mgd water from Keenjhar Lake, but 70mgd of it is stolen for agriculture while low-capacity machine at Dhabeji further decreases this supply," the mayor claimed.

He accused the KWSB officers of selling water after stealing it from the bulk water supply source and the distribution system. He said that 30 per cent of the city's water was lost due to leakages in main pipelines in various areas. Besides, he added, most of the water supplied to Karachi was not treated as out of 420mgd just 50mgd got treated at the Pipri plant, 100mgd at the North-East Karachi K-2 filter plant and 80mgd at the Hub filter plant, whereas four filter plants at Gharo, Bil, Pipri and North-East Karachi with a capacity of 200mgd could not treat water due to lack of maintenance.

Mr Akhtar claimed that the stolen water was being supplied to villages and farmhouses, water parks and commercial units at Dhabeji. He said water available in Karachi was also stolen by the tanker mafia in cahoots with KWSB employees, being sold to commercial units.

He said supply of chlorine to COD and Hub filter plants had been stopped since long and germ-infested water was being given to the citizens. He said that projects like K-IV were being completed with the money collected through taxes and ironically their benefits were being denied to taxpayers while the landlords "are watering their lands and palaces from our pipelines".

The City Council on Tuesday adopted a resolution unanimously requesting the federal and provincial governments to nationalise the city's power utility.

The resolution appealed to the federal and Sindh governments to engage the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) to stop the 'excesses perpetrated by the K-Electric' against the people of Karachi.

It also requested the Chief Justice of Pakistan to take appropriate measures to give relief to the citizens because such relief had been denied by the government[s] as yet.

The City Council members sought relief for consumers in tariff and tangible reduction in the existing bills, and demanded for an end to prolonged outages as KE had matching production capability according to the needs of the city.

The members demanded that benefit of cheaper 650MW electricity being provided by the Centre to KE be transferred to consumers, overbilling be ended and consumers be treated with respect and facilitated at KE's centres. They called for posting of an officer from the federal ombudsman office at each integrated business centre of KE.

The resolution called for an immediate end to meter rent and return of money received through this head back to consumers. Excessive bills should not be issued to consumers by unfairly accusing them of power theft, etc.

The resolution suggested establishment of a tribunal to look into the complaints of overbilling and other matters and decide it in three months. It also sought job security for KE employees.

Discussing the issue, council member Junaid Makati said KE was getting Rs75bn subsidy now while it was getting only Rs5bn before its privatisation over a decade ago.

Aijaz Ahmed called for reviving union in KE to remove sense of job insecurity among its employees.

Firdaus Naqvi said the council was not against privatisation, but against thievery.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1332108>

EXPERTS URGE PAKISTAN, INDIA TO HOLD DIALOGUE TO SETTLE WATER CONFLICTS

Dawn, May 13th, 2017

HYDERABAD: Speakers at a seminar urged Pakistan and India to hold dialogue for the resolution of nagging water conflicts and said the thorny issue could be settled through amicable water governance and lead to a friendly environment between the neighbouring countries.

They were reading papers on 'Water issues in Pakistan — conflicts and resolutions' held at Gender Resource Centre, Sindh Agriculture University (SAU), Tandojam, on Friday.

The seminar was jointly organised by SAU, Indus Consortium, Centre for Social Change and Sindh Agricultural Forestry Workers Coordinating Organisation (SAFWCO).

The term water governance refers to political, social, economic and administrative systems in place that influence use of water and its management and determine who gets water, when and how, and who has the right to water and related services, and their benefits.

Harris Kuemmerele, a key speaker from Kings College, London, said the rivers entering Pakistan shared water with India and Afghanistan. Water governance might be a solution within provinces. Pakistan and India must keep talking for the resolution of their water conflicts to make a friendly environment between the neighbouring countries, he said.

He shed light on the 1991 Water Accord and said the pact had resolved the water issue within provinces. Sindh was facing water scarcity according to his understanding of surface and underground water status in the province, he said.

Zulfiqar Halepoto, social activist and researcher, said that it was the responsibility of the state to take appropriate measures and adopt a workable policy for the resolution of water conflicts at national and international level.

SAU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Mujeebuddin Memon said: “Pakistan is dependent on a single river, Indus. The river not only feeds irrigation canals and other sources but contributes to maintain wider ecosystems, wetlands and overall environment and well-being of the nation”.

This dependence on a single river system meant that it had little of the leverage that most countries enjoyed by virtue of having a multiplicity of river basins and diversity of water resources, he said.

He said that a collective approach was needed to bring together individuals and corporate citizens to stay engaged with decision-makers regarding rational and responsible use of water.

He said that industries, agriculturalists and corporations must adopt pollution control, micro-irrigation, recycling and reuse of water on a bigger scale. Once it was demonstrated on a larger scale it would surely have a trickledown effect and bring prosperity to community level, which would certainly contribute to national economy as well, he said.

SAU director Dr Mohammad Ismail Kumbhar said: “Pakistan is one of the most water-stressed countries in the world where the situation was leading to the worst water scarcity, which needs to be addressed through policy mechanism with participation of all stakeholders”.

“Presently, the Indus does not have water to save agriculture and address the growing needs of drinking of water, as growers as well as communities are protesting against water scarcity,” he said.

He hoped that this workshop would help the stakeholders come up with proper suggestions and recommendations to develop future strategies for water sector.

Abdul Ghafoor Bhatti from Badin and Kiltar Gul from Tharparkar districts also shared their knowledge and community perspective on the issue.

Towards the conclusion of the seminar, students posed questions to speakers about water availability, climate change, the causes of water scarcity and its impacts on agriculture, sources of living, ecosystems and health of wetlands, which also provided source of living to hundreds of community people of the province.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1332773>

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<https://www.dawn.com/news/1332773>

Jamal Shahid

ISLAMABAD: The residents of the capital are likely to face a further cut in the water supply from next week as the Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) takes measures to save more water until the monsoon season.

According to a source in the MCI, the supply from Simly Dam was likely to be further reduced from the current 24 million gallon per day (mgd) to 19 mgd.

‘Water level in the Simly Dam is shrinking by two inches per day. It has become necessary to save water to have sufficient supply in the summer,’ said the source, which manages water supply and controls and develops water sources. The approved water supply from the Simly Dam is about 36 mgd.

However, about a month ago the supply from the reservoir was cut to 24 mgd.

The city managers draw extra 10 to 12 mgd of water from Khanpur Dam.

Other sources of water supply to Islamabad are tubewells.

According to Chief Metropolitan Officer Asad Kiani, Islamabad’s total demand for water is around 114 mgd.

‘At present, we are supplying between 55 mgd and 60 mgd against the usual 70 mgd.

‘Cutting water supply has become necessary to save water until July when the monsoon season begins and rains fill the dams again,’ said Mr Kiani.

During the last about a decade with the urban sprawl expanding towards the GT Road and the new Islamabad airport, no steps were taken to meet the rising water demand.

‘The Chirah Dam is no longer viable and has been shelved.

However, work is underway to bring water from Ghazi Barotha to meet the rising demand in the twincities.

‘The PC-1 of the pipeline project will be ready in a month. After the project is completed, the twin cities will be getting 200 mgd for the next 15 years,’ said Mr Kiani.

Secretary Ministry of Climate Change Syed Abu Akif recently warned that Pakistan had moved from a water-affluent country to a water-stressed state due the increase in demand, and not from the effects of global warming.

Impacts of climate change would most likely also cause water shortages in the future, he added.

‘However, it is in fact the sixtime increase in the population since 1951 which now demands more water than there is available, coupled with misuse, wastage and poor management of the precious resource,’ said Mr Akif.

Pakistan Environment Protection Agency Director General Farzana Altaf Shah also suggested controlling water boring.

She proposed that it was about time the CDA started charging households for consuming underground water to prevent its wastage.

DIAMER-BHASHA DAM LAND ACQUISITION: UNREST AMONG CHILAS HOTELIERS OVER 'MEAGRE' COMPENSATION

Dawn, May 2nd, 2017

Khalid Hasnain

LAHORE: The compensation paid or being offered by the government to the hoteliers in return for acquiring their land, cost of built-up/covered areas and other business losses for 4,500MW Diامر-Bhasha hydropower project has created unrest among them and those engaged in related businesses in Chilas as they consider the amount inadequate.

The situation may further delay the land acquisition for the project as the hotel owners are not ready to leave their business premises till receipt of handsome compensation and the local tribes in Chilas have separately moved courts to order the government pay them the compensation cost for being holders of the entire Chilas, capital of district Diامر.

“The hotels affected by the Diامر-Bhasha dam, which are pivotal to tourism and jobs in the northern areas, are being forced to leave their livelihood without being handed out even the promised amount of compensation,” deplures Zeshan Aslam, managing director of a chain of hotels in northern areas, including one at Chilas.

The local authorities in Chilas and Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda); however, reject the impression, stating that compensation is being paid without any discrimination under the land acquisition act.

“The compensation package offered to the all the affected, including the hotel owners, is the best one announced by a committee,” claims Chilas Assistant Commissioner Zahoor Ali.

Mr Aslam, on the other hand, says the first evaluation of the hotels was done in February 2016 which was rejected by hotels and they had called for reassessment.

“The government agreed to reassess the compensation package and increased it by just 7pc, ignoring the land cost that escalated by 30pc,”

Recently, Section 9 of the land acquisition act was applied to all the hotels in Chilas, which meant that if the property owners had any objections to the offered compensation, they might move courts. However, we avoided it keeping in view the slow pace of the provision of justice in the country,” Mr Aslam explains.

The owners of 14 hotels were never consulted regarding assessment of the land, structure cost and business loss by revenue officials and Wapda.

“After we inquired the officials, we came to know that the compensation is being made under two categories—one for the land and trees to be paid by the Bhasha Dam Committee and the other for building constructed area and fixtures to be given by Wapda. Though a breakdown of the land evaluation was given by the committee but no detail about construction costs and fixtures was shared with us by Wapda,” Aslam claims.

He adds that the committee divided the hotels land into three categories.

“Under the category-1, the land within 200 feet of the Karakoram Highway (KKH) was declared as commercial, under category-2, the land within 200 feet of the commercially declared chunk was declared as agriculture and the third layer of the land situated within 200 feet or above the distance from the agriculture land was termed as barren.”

Under these unjustified categories, the owners were asked to receive compensation at the rate of 100pc (for commercial), 50pc of the total value of the commercial property (for agriculture) and 20pc of the total value of the agriculture land (for barren land), he adds.

Because of this classification, the hotels, including Panorama, Usman, Grace, Al-Kashmir, Shimla Hill, Pakistan, Al-Najam and Shangrila fell either in first two or the all three categories—commercial, agriculture and barren land.

“This resulted into a loss of millions of rupees to the hoteliers as their commercial land was evaluated as agricultural or barren land despite the fact it was exclusively used for commercial purposes. The rates offered were also extremely low compared to the land rates in the surrounding cities like Gilgit and Hunza. Chilas was given the lowest rate on the KKH,” Zeshan Aslam laments.

An official of the Gilgit-Baltistan government, who wants to remain anonymous, says a proposal to consider the entire hotels’ land as commercial was given to the committee.

“But the committee rejected this proposal, claiming that the compensation being given to the affectees was already on higher side.”

Another hotel owner, requesting anonymity, says the hotels’ structures in Chilas were evaluated unjustifiably according to cost of Wapda buildings which have basic construction and amenities.

“These rates are not even enough for residential buildings. The same rate was given for all hotels whether it’s a truck driver hotel or a four star hotel,” he explains.

He says the hoteliers wrote a letter in December 2015 to all the concerned, including GM Diamer-Bhasha dam, the chief minister, chief secretary and Wapda chairman but to no avail. “We urge the government to review the compensation package by considering the all hotels’ land as commercial. We should also be given a handsome cost for relocating our businesses,” he demands.

Talking to Dawn, the Chilas AC says a majority of the affectees are satisfied with the compensation under an agreement of 2010.

“None of the hoteliers has contacted. We have completed all the process according to the law and in the light of the decisions of the committee consisting of three ministers, Gilgit-Baltistan chief secretary, affectees’ representatives and other important officials,” he adds.

A senior Wapda official, who is not supposed to speak to the media, says that best ever rates were offered to the affectees. “We are also developing model colonies where we will give developed one-kanal land to each affectee,” he adds

“We have even seen all the facilities available in these hotels. And finally we calculated the structure cost according to actual value,” he concludes.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1330479/diamer-bhasha-dam-land-acquisition-unrest-among-chilas-hoteliers-over-meagre-compensation>

SINDH TO SEEK COMPENSATION FOR WATER WOES

Dawn, May 2nd, 2017

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has decided to file a compensation case with the federal government for short supply of water to Sindh right from 1991 when the Water Accord was signed.

He took the decision while presiding over a review meeting at the CM House here on Monday, which discussed a meeting of the Council of Common Interests (CCI) scheduled to be held in Islamabad on Tuesday.

The chief minister reviewed each and every agenda item related to the Sindh government and took policy decisions in consultation with the departments concerned. The items on the agenda included status review of important decisions of the CCI meeting held on Dec 16, draft bill for the establishment of National Metrology Institute of Pakistan, supply of gas to villages located within five kilometres of gas field, short supplies of water in Pat Feeder and Khirthar canals, establishment of a fiscal coordination committee, implementation of Article 154 of the Constitution, national water policy, allocation of 1,200 cusecs additional water for Karachi and senior citizens privileges.

The chief minister said Sindh had been receiving short supply of water since long. But since 1991 when the Water Accord was signed, the province has been receiving less water than its allocated share. As a result, the people of Sindh, particularly growers and the provincial government, have suffered huge losses. Therefore, Sindh government must file its claim, he added.

Mr Shah directed the province's irrigation department to work out details of the water Sindh received from 1991 to 2017 and calculate the short supply so that a vigorous case could be presented in the CCI meeting.

The chief minister expressed surprise over the claim of the Balochistan government regarding compensation of short supply of water to Pat Feeder and Kirthar canals.

Talking about the construction of two minor watercourses of cumulative discharge of 800 cusecs from Begari canal for Balochistan, Mr Shah said Begari was a non-perennial canal and was already facing water shortage. "Since the construction of two minors would deprive the rightful share to the existing users, Sindh would oppose the request of the Balochistan government," he said.

Irrigation Secretary Jamal Shah briefed the chief minister on the National Water Policy.

The chief minister said the water policy was not a CCI item. The federal government is bound to give water to the provinces according to their share in the accord. As far as the water policy is concerned, he added, it was the prerogative of the provincial government to frame its own policy in the light of its priorities, he added.

He opposed the idea inserted into the water policy of constructing new reservoirs.

The finance department briefed the chief minister on the establishment of the fiscal coordination committee. The chief minister said the provincial finance secretary and the chairman of the Sindh Revenue Board (SRB) should be included in the committee to discuss fiscal policy and issues of the federal and provincial governments.

Mr Shah said the federal government was reluctant to hand over the assets and functions of Employees Old-Age Benefit (EOBI) and Workers Welfare Board to the provincial governments.

The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) was still recovering workers welfare funds, which was illegal and against the spirit of the 18th Amendment to the Constitution, he added. He said he would write a letter to Finance Minister Ishaq Dar to stop the FBR from recovering workers funds through a notification. However, the SRB started collecting workers welfare funds and a

considerable amount had been recovered, he told the meeting.

After the meeting, Mr Shah, accompanied by Chief Secretary Rizwan Memon, flew to Islamabad to attend the CCI meeting.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1330510>

KP SEEKS \$6.9BN FOR HYDROPOWER PROJECTS

Dawn, May 2nd, 2017

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Power and Energy Department has completed feasibility studies of five mega hydropower projects with a combined capacity of 1,123 megawatt to help supplement the federal government's efforts in curtailing energy shortfall.

Officials in the provincial energy department said that seven hydropower projects (HPP) with a total capacity of 1,978MW have been presented in the Road Show held on April 17-19 in China for inclusion in the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). On the occasion, Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) were signed with different Chinese companies to fully utilise KP's energy potential, he added.

The official said at least \$6.9 billion would be required for successful completion of the seven projects that would be constructed in Chitral.

The projects proposed include the 64MW Mujigram-Shoghor HPP with a required investment of \$182m, 72MW Istaru Booni HPP with \$276m, 350MW Turen More Kari HPP with \$753m, 260MW Jamshill Tureen More HPP with \$616m and 377MW Ghrait-Swir Lasht HPP for \$1.8bn.

The official said feasibility studies of these projects were completed and these are ready for execution. Most of these projects would be built on River Chitral and adjoining water streams as the area is ideal for power generation.

The other two projects proposed for inclusion in CPEC including 409MW capacity Torcamp-Gudubar HPP, requiring an investment of \$1.5bn and 446MW Kari-Mushkur HPP needing an investment of \$1.8bn that would be completed with Chinese assistance.

The official said about 900 Chinese companies had participated in the road show and 82 MoUs against 86 prepared projects in diversified sectors were inked.

He said MoUs with a Chinese company regarding installation of a solar system in 10,000 schools and 400 hospitals of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were also inked.

To give practical shape to these projects, Chinese investors would visit KP in July this year to analyse these projects on grounds. The Chinese investors and companies are taking immense interest in the province and \$24 billion foreign investment is expected in future.

The official said four agreements have been signed with FWO for establishment of Oil Refinery in Karak, 600MW electricity project, installation of a cement plant in Haripur and Model Town in Peshawar.

To another question, the official said 1,000 acres land has been acquired for establishment of an economic zone near Rashakai Interchange in Nowshera under CPEC where industries, energy and gas projects besides technical education institutes would be setup. Chinese companies have asked for another 1,000 acres in Rashakai for future expansion needs.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1330431/kp-seeks-69bn-for-hydropower-projects>

WATER SHORTAGE IN CAPITAL LIKELY TO WORSEN

Shahzad Anwar

ISLAMABAD: As summer rolls into the capital, the acute shortage of water threatens to see tempers boil over and add to the intensity in the city. The seven sources of potable water, which feed the city, currently working at half their capacity will only exacerbate the situation.

With taps running dry in parts of the capital, a resident from Sector I-10 was compelled to approach the Islamabad High Court last week over this key issue.

Islamabad primarily draws water from the Simly Dam, over 150 tube wells, the Korang water works, the Shahdara waterworks, the Saidpur waterworks, the Noorpur waterworks and Poona Faqiran.

An official of the Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation (IMC) official said that the peak cumulative water production from these sources is around 84 million gallons (mgd) per day for urban centres. Current demand, though, stands at 105 mgd – a nascent shortfall of 21 mgd.

With demand for water ever rising – particularly in the summer, whenever supply dips below 65 mgd, it results in a crisis.

The IMC official said that currently, the water supply directorate was supplying around 56 mgd of water to the city owing to fewer water sources – a greater crisis than normal.

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The Express Tribune, May 6th, 2017.

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The IMC official said that currently, the water supply directorate was supplying around 56 mgd of water to the city owing to fewer water sources – a greater crisis than normal.

As a result, the official said that residents resort to illegal means to acquire water such as theft by puncturing the main water lines, or other means.

Usually, the shortfall of around 40-50 mgd during the summer season and pre-monsoon months is managed by rationing water supplies. But this year, the shortages seem to have hit much earlier during the winter season, placing the authorities in a fix.

The rapid expansion and increase in the capital's population have been visible over the past decade. But with space within the centre of the capital limited, much of this expansion has been in the suburbs primarily lying to the west and east of the capital.

“The urban sprawl is the highest towards the east and west of the city which is adding to the water woes of civic administrators,” an official in the planning wing of the Capital Development Authority told The Express Tribune, adding that the motorway and new Islamabad airports were the two main factors behind the rapid urbanisation to the west of the capital.

“This area naturally lacks underground water due to its geography. Currently, water shortage in this area is managed somehow by tapping available limited underground water resources,” the official added.

Despite the fact that no comprehensive water supply scheme could be developed for this area, a number of private as well as CDA-backed housing societies are fast being developed in this area.

Similarly, towards the east of the capital in Zone-IV and Zone-V, the situation is comparatively better due to the presence of major water resources such as Simly Dam, Rawal Dam, Soan River, Korang River. Further, the presence of such large water bodies means that the availability of underground water is comparatively better in these zones rather than in Zone- I and Zone-II.

“Zone-IV comprises of an area sprawling over 70,000 acres of land while Zone-V is spread over 40,000 acres of land,” a CDA official said.

Zone-I, the CDA official said, is spread over 16,000 acres of land. Of the 25 sectors in this zone, six sectors including I-14, I-15, I-16 G-13, G-14 and H-12 have been fully developed but lack water supply schemes.

Residents of these areas relying almost entirely on underground sources for water, the situation in Sectors I-10, I-9, G-10 had worsened in winter. But it is unclear whether these water sources have the capacity to fulfil the growing needs of the population in these areas in the future.

Moreover, there is no system in place whereby these water resources can be ‘recharged’.

Problems from this manifested late last year and early this year when the low levels of groundwater saw residents of the densely populated Sectors I-9, I-10 and G-10 complain of water shortages during the winter.

Located adjacent to Zone-I and Zone-II of the capital lie the suburbs of Rawalpindi.

Here, a large number of housing societies are being built at a rapid pace. Hence housing is expanding over an area of 84,000 acres – which would accommodate over three million people (more than the current population of the capital) once fully developed – in an area where there are few water sources if any.

Per a standard formula of 110 people living on each acre of land, Islamabad's population could rise to 12 million once all four zones are fully developed.

The water supply situation is such that officials now believe it is among the main obstacles to expanding residential sectors in the capital.

“The scarcity of water, especially that of potable water, remains one of the major issues and obstacles for opening new sectors in Islamabad,” an official at Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation’s (IMC) water directorate told The Express Tribune.

The issue of water in the capital, though, seems to be cyclical.

While the city’s administration has been struggling to meet existing demand for water, at the same time the population of the capital has been increasing at a rate of over five per cent per year to 1.75 million today – hence increasing the demand for water every year.

This increased population and thus demand adds to the water supply burden of the capital and hence adding to delays in opening new residential sectors to house the grown population.

“Water sources in the capital city have not been developed since 1980, except for the Kanpur Dam which was developed in 2004 and only partly shares the burden of water supply to the urban areas of Islamabad,” the official said.

To cater the growing shortfall in supplying potable water to an ever-expanding population, the federal cabinet had as far back as 2004 had decided to implement a long-term strategy whereby future water requirements would be met by developing additional water sources.

The focus was thus set on two major water sources – the Indus River from Tarbela Dam and the Jhelum River from Mangla Dam.

The CDA tasked MM Pakistan and Mott McDonald (UK) in 2005 to devise case studies.

“Tarbela lake was found to be the optimal choice to meet the current demand of 200 mgd in addition to meeting any future requirements of the twin cities,” CDA Spokesman Mazhar Hussain said.

“The Council of Common Interests in June 2011 approved water allocation of 400 cusecs for phase-I,” he said, adding that the study suggested that around \$1.2 billion would be required for implementing the project.”

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1402377/water-shortage-capital-likely-worsen/>

June 2017

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JUNE 19TH TO JUNE 25 TH 2017

KARACHI RESIDENTS TO FACE WATER SHORTAGE FOR TWO DAYS

Mudaser Kazi

KARACHI: According to Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) spokesperson, the dent in the city’s water supply is caused due to the fluctuation in K-Electric’s feeder that resulted in creating a surge in the huge pipeline at around 1:30am. The 72-inch pipeline provides 55MGD water to Karachi and is considered as one of its 10 main pipelines connected to Dhabeji pumping station.

Abdul Rehman Shaikh, the superintendent engineer of bulk water supply told The Express Tribune, “Around 150 million gallons of water (MGD) will be lost because of the bursting of the water pipeline”. Currently, the water being supplied to Karachi after the bursting of pipeline is only 450MGD, even though the demand is as high as 1,100MGD in the metropolis.

KARACHI: The entire city will be affected with a shortage of water for more than 48 hours, as a pipeline measuring 72 inches in diameter connected to the Dhabeji pumping station burst during the wee hours of Tuesday.

According to Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) spokesperson, the dent in the city's water supply is caused due to the fluctuation in K-Electric's feeder that resulted in creating a surge in the huge pipeline at around 1:30am. The 72-inch pipeline provides 55MGD water to Karachi and is considered as one of its 10 main pipelines connected to Dhabeji pumping station.

Abdul Rehman Shaikh, the superintendent engineer of bulk water supply told The Express Tribune, "Around 150 million gallons of water (MGD) will be lost because of the bursting of the water pipeline". Currently, the water being supplied to Karachi after the bursting of pipeline is only 450MGD, even though the demand is as high as 1,100MGD in the metropolis

The technical team of KWSB, along with heavy machinery, was sent to the affected area after the pipeline burst. "The repair work was initiated at 8 am on Tuesday morning. The repair work can last up to 24 hours, whereas another 24 to 36 hours will be required for charging the line," Shaikh told to The Express Tribune.

Speaking to The Express Tribune, KWSB Managing Director Hashim Raza Zaidi expressed concern over the electricity suspensions or fluctuations experienced at Dhabeji and other pumping stations. According to him, the line was laid in 1972 and gets affected on a continuous basis at weak points due to back pressure of water caused by sudden disruption at the pumping stations that pump water to 4-bay, the highest point from where the water goes by its gravity.

However, Zaidi claimed the water supply will be managed and no particular areas of the city will get affected with the shortage of water caused due to the burst of water pipeline. The distribution will be managed accordingly, as nine other pipelines have been supplying water to Karachi, he added.

"Blaming K-Electric for the bursting of water supply line is incorrect," said Sadia Dada, the power utility's communications director. However, she admitted that due to unforeseen reasons, power supply to Dhabeji pumping station was affected during the wee hours of Tuesday.

She clarified that the pumping station is exempted from load-shedding and a team of technicians have been appointed by K-Electric to overcome any fault in the area because the power utility believes that water is an important utility.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1440536/karachi-residents-face-water-shortage-two-days>

WATER SCARCITY ASSUMES ALARMING PROPORTION IN TAIL-END AREAS

Dawn, June 22nd, 2017

Hanif Samoon

BADIN: Almost all the tail-end areas fed from Akram Wah, Phuleli Canal and Naseer Canal of Sukkur Barrage have been facing nagging water crises for the past many months.

Paddy farmers even prepared their lands in various areas of the district in the hope of getting water after irrigation officials released water downstream Kotri and assured them that there would be sufficient water for the chief crop of the season. But they were disappointed.

Farmers and activists working on water issues in Badin, including Iqbal Haider of the Indus Consortium, held mismanagement, favouritism and unfair distribution of water responsible for the crises in the tail-end areas of the district.

“Situation in the coastal belt is alarming and people are suffering from various diseases after they are forced to drink the highly-contaminated water of even drains, which are meant to carry away the dirty and toxic water of sewers of the town to the sea,” he told Dawn on Wednesday.

Mr Haider observed that the Sindh Drainage and Irrigation Authority (Sida) and the irrigation department had created complications and miseries for the common farmers. None of the bodies was ready to take responsibility of the crises, he said.

He said Sida was formed to involve small growers and farmers in water management, but it promoted “corrupt practices” and created difficulties for the farming community.

He urged that the Sindh Irrigation Act be amended and the basic issue of perennial and non-perennial canals be reviewed under the current situation, when the water crises assumed alarming proportions.

Khalil Ahmed Bhurgari, a local grower and former chairman of the Area Water Board of Left Bank Canals System of Kotri Barrage, also held the irrigation and Sida officials responsible for the water crises.

He observed that whatever water was being released in the channels was either stolen by growers affiliated with the ruling party or being sold by irrigation officials to influential growers.

Mr Bhurgari deplored that paddy growers and farmers had already sustained huge losses as their seedlings could not be transplanted in the fields unless the required quantity of water was provided to them. He demanded early removal of the present chairman of the Area Water Board, because, according to him, he had created the mess by diverting water to the outlets of PPP leaders.

Meanwhile, a large number of farmers of Khairpur-Gumbho irrigation sub-division took out a rally and staged a demonstration on the Judho road for four hours in Malkani Sharif town on Wednesday to register their protest against irrigation officials of Sukkur Barrage for failing to release water in 17 outlets of their sub-division down Sangi regulator.

Addressing the enraged farmers, Pir Fayaz Hussain Rashidi, Tarique Mehmood Arain, Mohammad Younis Malkani and other leaders of the Sindh Abadgar Tanzeem and Giyan Sath said that it was grave injustice with them that despite their continuous protests and the orders of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, they were not being provided even 20 per cent of their due share.

They threatened to issue a shut-down call in their town for an indefinite period of time if the water of their share was not released in their outlets within a week.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1341020>

SHORTAGE OF WATER, CERTIFIED SEEDS MAY AFFECT RICE YIELD

Dawn, June 22nd, 2017

LARKANA: Growers complain about shortage and unavailability of certified seeds in the market as paddy sowing season draws closer and express fear a looming water shortage and government failure to carry out de-silting of waterways and distributaries may affect overall rice production.

Gada Hussain Mahesar, senior vice president of the Sindh Abadgar Board, told Dawn on Wednesday that the certified seeds of rice varieties of IRRI-6, DR-82, DR-83, DR-92, Shandar, Mehran and Sharshar developed by Tandojam

research centre were not available in enough quantity required for cultivation. Paddy was sown on 2.5 million acres in the province, he said.

He said that to meet the demand Punjab had imported about 25 hybrid varieties with which market had been flooded. These seeds were unregistered and their yield not exportable but growers preferred to use them to get higher yields, he said.

He said that another serious issue the growers were faced with was the government failure to carry out de-silting of Rice Canal, Warah branch, Khirthar Canal, Safiullah Magsi branch and most of their offshoots and tributaries which irrigated a huge area in Larkana, Shikarpur, Qambar-Shahdadkot, Jacobabad and parts of Dadu districts.

The land had been levelled and nurseries prepared for transplantation that was to start in the last week of June and first week of July but growers were reluctant to go for the transplantation as they did not know when water would arrive in canals, he said.

Ishaque Mugheri, president of Qambar-Shahdadkot chapter of the Sindh Abadgar Board, said that though enough water was available now for preparing nurseries he had doubts whether it would remain so during the paddy transplantation season. There were reports of water shortage from tail-ends of the branches like Patooja, Dhori, Imdad minor and Tanveri, he said.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1341018>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JUNE 12TH TO JUNE 18TH 2017

ISLAMABAD ONLY HAS ENOUGH WATER FOR ONE MONTH

Dawn, June 12th, 2017

Jamal Shahid | Kashif Abbasi

ISLAMABAD: The federal capital is left with only one month's water supply as both Simly and Khanpur dams continue drying up by more than two inches a day, said the Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) on Sunday.

"We have water till the second week of July. After that the shortage is likely to worsen. However, we hope sufficient rain will fill the dams," said Chief Metropolitan Officer Asad Kiani.

In April, the supply from the Simly Dam was likely to be cut further from 24 million gallon per day (mgd) to 19mgd. Mr Kiani said the water level in the dam was shrinking by two inches per day. It had become necessary to save water in order to have sufficient supply in the summer months.

However, mounting pressure and rising complaints from the residents forced the MCI to continue supplying 24mgd to the capital.

The approved water supply from Simly Dam is about 36mgd. However, in March the supply from the dam was cut to 24mgd, said Mr Kiani, adding during the last a few days the water shortage had become a serious concern.

Tahir Khan, a resident of Sector I-10, complained that there had been no water supply in the last four days. The supply was restored on Saturday and that too for an hour.

Hameed Butt of I-9 had a similar complaint that the water supply was restored for half an hour after three days.

Mr Kiani said Islamabad's total demand for water was around 114 million gallons per day. The current supply is between 55mgd and 60 mgd less than the standard 70mgd. To meet the rising demand, an extra 10 to 12 million gallons per day is drawn from Khanpur Dam.

Other sources of water supply are tubewells. But the city managers are also facing problems as nearly 50 out of the over 170 tubewells utilised to supply water to residents are out of order. The tubewells should have been repaired in January and February. Only recently, however, the MCI invited tenders for the repair of the tubewells.

In the last decade or so, with the urban sprawl stretching towards the GT Road in the south and expanding towards the new Islamabad airport, no steps were taken to meet the rising demand for water.

While the Chirah Dam project has been shelved indefinitely, work was said to be underway to lay a pipeline from Ghazi Barotha to meet the rising demand for water in Islamabad as well as Rawalpindi.

According to Mr Kiani, the PC-1 for the pipeline was expected to be ready in a month. After the project is completed, the twin cities are likely to have 200 million gallons water per day for the next 15 years, he added.

However, no major breakthrough has been made by the government to execute the project which would now cost Rs100 billion with an estimated completion time of over three years. The water supply project has been delayed for several years as the provinces were not ready to give their share of water from the Indus to Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

Earlier this year, the Capital Development Authority (CDA) decided to request the government to include the Ghazi Barotha water supply project in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project.

The suggestion was made by Islamabad Mayor Sheikh Ansar Aziz.

CDA spokesman Mazhar Hussain said the Ghazi Barotha project was important to meet the future water needs of the twin cities.

"The CDA is exploring all possible options to begin work on the project. However, no major breakthrough has been made so far. The city managers are doing their best to resolve the water shortage issue in Islamabad," said Mr Hussain.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1338955>

MPAS CRITICISE GOVT FOR LACK OF SAFE DRINKING WATER IN SINDH

The Express tribune, June 13, 2017

The issue of the provision of safe drinking water dominated the Sindh Assembly proceedings on Monday as members took up the issue and asked the government to take drastic measures to ensure its provision.

"The budget is being increased in every sector yet people living in Sindh have no potable water," accused Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) MPA Khuram Sher Zaman in his budget speech.

Zaman said taxes are being increased with each passing day but people have no tap water. He said that Karachi is the provincial capital and economic hub of Pakistan but provincial government has neglected it, allocating only Rs12 billion for the city, which is less than other divisions. "It looks like Karachi city is not on the government's priority list," he remarked. "Government ministers laud their government's efforts but no one cares that people of 13 districts of Sindh are deprived of potable water," criticised the PTI MPA.

He accused the Sindh government of violating rules of merit in government jobs and being responsible for the declining education standard in the province. “Degrees are being sold in the market. The incumbent government has done nothing in the last nine years. I fail to understand why the National Accountability Bureau is not taking action against them,” he said.

Shafi Jamote of the Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz (PML-N) drew the attention of the House towards Manchar Lake, one of the largest lakes in Asia, and asked the government to revive it. “It has turned into a poisonous lake where people living on its edges cannot even drink water,” he said, adding that the government has allocated an amount for a colony for fishermen but must also consider preserving fishermen’s livelihood. Jamote, who belongs to the Ibrahim Hyderi area of Karachi, asked the provincial government to take action against the mafia involved in lifting sand and gravel from Malir. “Section 144 has been imposed against the lifting of gravel but nothing is being done,” he accused.

Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) MPA Sharmila Faruqi appreciated the Sindh government for allocating 27% budget for education and said that opposition members just want to criticise the government. “In this budget Rs6.5 billion has been allocated for lady health workers, which is a good omen,” she said, adding that the Muttahida Qaumi Movement and its mayor are making a fuss over funds for Karachi.

“I want to inform them [the MQM] that Karachi is dear to us and we have allocated around Rs70 billion for it. They are afraid because the PPP is working for masses in Karachi,” she said, adding that the K-IV project will meet the water requirements of the citizens.

MQM’s Mohammad Zubair said development work has been started in selected areas, especially in PPP constituencies. “Hyderabad is located on the bank of the Indus River but its water is not drinkable. We have been making hue and cry about this on this very floor but government has turned a blind eye to our concerns,” he accused.

PPP leader Manzoor Wasan said that the MQM and PML-Functional are criticising the PPP government now but they had looted and plundered public funds during former president General (ret’d) Pervez Musharraf’s tenure. “They have set a precedent of corruption but now consider themselves holy cows,” Wasan said, adding that PML-F workers and local leaders have made the lives of people miserable in Khairpur Mir district where they are extort money from oil companies exploring gas and oil fields in the area. “They have encroached upon most of the forest department land,” he claimed.

PPP’s Murtaza Baloch, who won the by-election from Malir, appreciated the government for creating 49,000 jobs in the budget and said that PPP would sweep the upcoming election in entire country.

PTI MPA Dr Seema Zia raised the issue of women harassment at work places and requested the chief minister and other concerned authorities to take notice of it. “A bill against women harassment has been presented in all assemblies except Sindh, so the government should consider [passing one],” she said.

Dr Zia said people living in Karachi cannot vote for those people who only become active for photo sessions. “Recently, the government inaugurated the newly renovated Tariq Road from where it misappropriated huge sums of money by using substandard material,” she accused, adding that no street in Karachi is free of garbage but government is unwilling to give power to the mayor.

Minister for Planning and Development Mir Hazar Khan Bijarani acknowledged the opposition members’ grievances about the water crisis and said, “We are remodeling drinking water lines and funding has been allocated for the same in the upcoming budget”.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1433834/mpas-criticise-govt-lack-safe-drinking-water-sindh/>

Wasim Iqbal

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Petroleum and Natural Resources Shahid Khaqan Abbasi Monday said the import of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Qatar may be stopped in case of international sanctions and force majeure.

In a press briefing, Abbasi said that Pakistan State Oil (PSO) has commercial contract with Qatar Gas and LNG supply can be stopped in case of international sanctions and force majeure. However, he argued that the ongoing tussle in Gulf would not affect LNG imports from Qatar.

Responding to a question, the minister said that PSO is importing 600 million cubic feet per day (MMCFD) LNG which is being supplied to industry, captive power plants, independent power producers (IPPs) and CNG sector. He maintained that Pakistan was importing one million tons of fertilizer which reduced to 0.6 million tons of fertilizer this year due to supply of LNG to fertilizer industry.

Comparing the import volume of LNG to other countries, he said that Pakistan is importing 2.7 million tons of LNG, whereas neighbouring countries like India is importing 9 million tons while South Korea, Japan and China are importing 60 million tons of LNG from Qatar.

He said that Pakistan is negotiating government-to-government LNG import deals with different countries including China, Turkey, Russia, Malaysia and Oman. Besides, he said the government is now focusing on private investors which are interested to set up LNG terminals in Pakistan. He said the gas allocation policy is not applicable on LNG imports as it is open and any company or province can import it.

He announced that the nation will receive good news about expected terminal deals in the next few days.

Talking about the prices of gas, the minister said that government has no plan to increase gas prices from July 1, 2017, despite, Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) recommends an increase in gas prices. He further said that the government has planned gas supply in coming winter season and despite increase in the number of gas connections, the situation will be normal in coming winter season.

Responding to a question about Iran-Pakistan (IP) gas pipeline project, he said that Pakistan had conveyed to Iran that it could not implement gas pipeline project due to transaction dollar issue. He said that there was another issue of snap back clause and international financial institutions would not be ready to finance this project because of it. Under this clause, other sanctions which had been lifted against Tehran will be restored if Iran violates, he explained.

Dispelling the impression that the federal government is not implementing Article 158 under 18th Amendment, he contended that the federal government is distributing gas in line with the spirit of 18th Amendment and he himself offered for a debate in this regard.

The minister maintained that gas on system of SNGPL is providing gas to the consumers of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and gas supply on the system of SNGPL has dropped by 35 per cent from 1665 MMCFD to 1120 MMCFD since 2010 after implementation of the 18th Amendment.

However, he said the SSGC is providing gas to the consumers of two major gas producing provinces- Sindh and Balochistan – and gas supply on this network had increased by 3 percent from 1174 MMCFD to 2017 MMCFD since 2010, despite depletion in gas reserves.

He said that two million gas connection applications were pending with SNPGL when the present government came into power. He said the government had formulated merit based policy and those applying first are getting connections. He said that 1.5 million gas applications are pending now with the SNPGL. He said that at present the government has lifted ban on commercial gas connections.

He said that gas utility is still facing a Rs 6 billion to Rs 8 billion gas theft in KPK province but local administration has not cooperated to tackle this issue.

Talking about the latest oil and gas exploration activities in the country, he said that the oil and gas producing companies have discovered five oil and gas reserves during the last few weeks in Sindh, effecting an addition of 70 MMCFD gas and 600 barrels per day oil.

He further said that oil and gas producing companies – Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL), Mari Petroleum and OMV (Pakistan) – have made five oil and gas discoveries in Sindh province and 70 MMCFD gas would be added to the system of the SSGC to provide gas to gas producing province Sindh.

He said that oil and gas companies made 98 discoveries during the regime of present government to add 944 MMCFD of gas to the national system. However, he said that same volume of gas has depleted from the existing gas fields.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/06/13/1-page/881919-news.html>

PAKISTAN EYES 2018 START FOR CHINA-FUNDED DIAMER-BHASHA DAM

The Express Tribune, 14 June 2017

ISLAMABAD:Pakistan expects China to fund a long-delayed Indus river mega dam project in Gilgit-Baltistan with work beginning next year, Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal said in an interview with Reuters.

Pakistan has been keen for years to build a cascade of mega dams along the Indus flowing down from the Himalayas, but has struggled to raise money from international institutions amid opposition from its nuclear-armed neighbour India.

Those ambitions have been revived by China's Belt and Road infrastructure plans for Pakistan, a key cog in Beijing's creation of a modern-day Silk Road network of trade routes connecting Asia with Europe and Africa.

The \$12-\$14 billion Diamer-Bhasha dam should generate 4,500MW of electricity, and a vast new reservoir would regulate the flow of water to farmland that is vulnerable to increasingly erratic weather patterns.

Iqbal, the Islamabad lead on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), said a Chinese company from a Beijing-picked shortlist and a local partner would build the dam over a 10-year period, and work should begin in the next financial year, which begins in July.

"This water reservoir is most critical for food security in Pakistan, so is a very high priority project for Pakistan," Iqbal told Reuters in an interview late on Monday at his ministerial home in Islamabad.

China and Pakistan signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in December for Beijing to help fund and develop Pakistan's Indus Basin dams, though no timelines have been released. Pakistan estimates there is 40,000MW of hydro potential.

The Diamer-Bhasha dam and reservoir would displace more than 4,200 families in nearby areas and submerge a large section of the Karakoram Highway to China, Pakistan's Water and Power Development Authority estimates.

The federal minister also said Pakistani and Chinese engineers were also surveying other projects, including the 7,100MW Bunji hydro power project that would be the first in the cascade that stretches down to the Tarbela Dam near Islamabad.

India's foreign ministry and ministry for water resources did not respond to requests for comment.

India this year fast-tracked \$15 billion worth of dam projects in occupied Kashmir, despite fears from Islamabad that the power stations will disrupt vital Indus water flows into Pakistan.

Iqbal, a close ally of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, said India needed to "stop its myopic thinking towards CPEC" and accept the Chinese-funded project is going ahead. "Better still would be for India to become part of Beijing's Belt and Road plans," he said.

'\$20 billion plus'

Future CPEC plans are increasingly focusing on how Beijing can help build up Pakistan's ailing industries, creating special economic zones and opening up sectors from mining to agriculture to Chinese firms.

But Iqbal said infrastructure construction would not stop, with contracts set to be signed for roads and for mass rail transport systems in Quetta, Peshawar and Karachi.

He said about \$10 billion in new deals should be signed in the next year on top of Chinese pledges topping \$50 billion, and that was likely to double by 2020.

"I would say conservatively \$20 billion plus [in new investment by 2020]," Iqbal said, adding that this would also include private investment.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1434703/pakistan-eyes-2018-start-china-funded-diamer-bhasha-dam/>

WATER COMMISSION ISSUES CONTEMPT NOTICES TO OFFICIALS FOR FAILING TO COMPLY WITH SC ORDERS

Dawn 18, June 2017

Mohammad Hussain Khan

HYDERABAD: Justice Mohammad Iqbal Kalhoro, acting as the one-man judicial commission appointed by the Supreme Court, on Saturday issued notices to the chief secretary and secretaries of the health, irrigation, public health engineering and rural development departments, as well as heads of the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board and Karachi Port Trust chairman asking them to explain why contempt of court proceedings should not be initiated against them for defying the apex court's March 8, 13 and 16 orders.

The commission directed them to submit their replies and appear before it in person on July 1.

It also put the deputy attorney-general and Sindh advocate-general on notice for the next date of hearing asking them to explain why it should not pass an order for the start of pending work on the Right Bank Outfall Drain-II (RBOD-II) immediately regardless of the differences between the federal and Sindh governments over the issue.

The commission held its proceedings at the Sindh High Court in Karachi on Saturday.

It issued the notices after going through various reports submitted by government functionaries. It referred to various paragraphs of the apex court's March 8, 13 and 16 orders and noted that the Sindh chief secretary in his report dated June 14 had said that the provincial government had filed an application seeking a review of SC's March 16 order. However, the CS did not mention whether any restraining order was passed by the apex court on the application. This shows that the Sindh government failed to comply with SC's directives which prima facie is tantamount to defiance of SC directive, according to the commission.

The commission heard federal planning and development secretary Shoaib Siddiqui, the deputy attorney-general and Sindh advocate-general regarding resumption of work on the RBOD-II and noted that it appeared that federal and Sindh governments were not able to sort out their differences over commencement of the remaining construction work of the RBOD-II, which was an important project to deal with problem of saline/wastewater of Sindh. It observed that about SC's time-bound directives on the petition filed by Advocate Shahab Osto, no substantial compliance was made or any record produced before it [the commission] to confirm compliance of those directives. It referred to SC's March 8, 2017 order and observed that its para-12 showed that whole exercise to rehabilitate all water filtration plants was to be completed within a month of the passing of the said order and a compliance report was to be submitted in the apex court.

CS, three secretaries and heads of KWSB, SSWMB and KPT among those summoned on July 1

The commission noted that various reports were submitted in the commission but so far neither the treatment plant-I and III were made functional nor were the water filtration plants, including the one at Gharo, completely rehabilitated in compliance of the March 8 directives.

It said that evidently, no such compliance report was stated to have been submitted in SC and such failure was tantamount to violation of said directive.

The commission referred to para-4 of SC's March 13 order dealing with the Sindh Industrial Trading Estate (SITE) with regard to effluent. It was informed by the SITE managing director that samples of effluent from factories were analysed. It said that the MD did not confirm that compliance of the March 13 order was made in toto and no substantial evidence was produced by the SITE MD. Therefore, it said, failure on the part of the SITE MD and industries secretary was prima facie defiance of apex court order.

The commission observed that for complying with SC's March 13 order, no measures were taken by the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board (SSWMB) managing director and Karachi Port Trust (KPT) chairman to prevent pollution of harbour within the stipulated period of one month.

The SSWMB managing director and KPT chairman had, however, submitted their reports dated April 13 and 22, respectively, indicating the April 5 meeting. The commission regretted that the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) managing director had not even bothered to submit any report to show his concern in this regard. The commission considered it defiance of apex court order.

About management of the hospital waste, the commission pointed out that the health secretary had submitted some reports on different dates about efforts to comply with SC's March 13 order for rehabilitating all incinerators installed in hospitals but no material confirming this fact was produced which showed that the secretary failed to rehabilitate the same in a month's time as required.

The commission pointed out that in its March 16 order, the SC had directed the irrigation department to minimize pollution in the channels carrying clean water [for consumption of] the general public in Sindh and that a task force should take remedial steps to stop the menace [of contamination]. It noted that although the task force chairman and Sindh government submitted reports about efforts made to identify points and had found many outlets discharging waste water/effluent into the channels, probably no measure/step to check this was taken by government within a month as required.

The commission referred to para-30 of SC's March 16 order directing the provincial government to withdraw installation and maintenance work of reverse osmosis/filtration plants from the special initiative department (SID) or Sindh Coal Authority (SCA) and to assign the job to the public health engineering and rural development department as the executing agencies under the Sindh Government Rules of Business. It recalled that the Sindh chief secretary in his June 14 report, had submitted [in the commission] that in terms of the schedule-II of the Sindh Government Rules of Business, SID was mandated to construct and maintain RO/filtration plants. The CS submitted a copy of the

notification dated May 9. The commission observed that apparently the said notification amending the Rules of Business, 1986 was issued much after the apex court directives of March 16.

The commission put the chief secretary on notice asking him to explain validity of said notification and its repercussions, particularly in the backdrop of the specific SC directive on the issue.

Justice Kalhoro in his June 17 order said that the public health engineering and rural health department secretary had not submitted any report for perusal of the commission for further action or any evidence to the effect that it had undertaken responsibility for installation and maintenance of all RO plants in Sindh as directed by the SC on March 16. He observed that it was obviously a disregard to directive.

The commission noted that in response to SC's March 16 order, the Sindh government did not withdraw municipal functions from Northern Sindh Urban Services Corporation (NSUSC) and it also did not approach any other reputed audit firm for an audit of the corporation's accounts as desired by the SC.

The commission said that the apex court had not passed any stay order on the Sindh government's review application regarding the very directive.

The commission also dismissed as 'not maintainable' an application filed by the Association of Builders and Developers (ABAD) seeking suspension of the May 23 notification regarding a moratorium on the Sindh Building Control Authority.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1340156>

July 2017

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JULY 24TH TO JULY 31ST 2017

GLOBAL USE OF TRADE BARRIERS SLOWS, SAYS WTO

Dawn, July 25th, 2017

GENEVA: More steps to free up trade globally have been taken since Donald Trump was elected than measures to restrict it, the World Trade Organisation said, despite concerns his administration would introduce a raft of punitive rules to protect US jobs.

The WTO's global monitoring report, debated at a trade policy review on Monday, covers October 2016 to May 2017.

"The report shows an encouraging decrease in the rate of new trade-restrictive measures put in place hitting the lowest monthly average since the financial crisis," WTO Director-General Roberto Azevdo said in a statement.

The semi-annual report, largely coinciding with the period since the election of US President Donald Trump, showed that the 164 WTO members put 74 new restrictive measures in place, including tariffs, customs regulations and quantitative restrictions, with an impact of \$49 billion of trade.

At the same time, they took 80 steps to help trade, such as cutting tariffs or simplifying customs procedures, affecting a much bigger \$183 billion of trade.

Trade-restrictive steps peaked at 22 per month in 2011, roughly twice the level in the period of the latest report.

During the period under review, the United States introduced new restrictions including a provisional duty on Canadian softwood lumber, suspecting it of being unfairly priced.

It also brought in “Buy America” provisions to ensure that, subject to some conditions, state loan funds are not used for water infrastructure projects unless all the steel used in the project was produced in the United States, the WTO report said.

Trump had also liberalised trade by scrapping broadband privacy rules, allowing Internet service providers to commercialise user data without explicit permission from the US Federal Communications Commission, the report said.

China, routinely the WTO member most often accused of unfair pricing and illegal subsidies, had introduced new restrictions with a cybersecurity law, requiring data generated in China to be stored in China, and a film production law, requiring Chinese movies get two-thirds of the screen time at Chinese cinemas.

But it also eased approval requirements for foreign-owned banks to invest in Chinese banks and to supply some investment banking services in China, the WTO report said.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1347399>

MEETING SOUGHT: MILLERS PRESS GOVT TO ALLOW SURPLUS SUGAR EXPORT

The Express Tribune, July 25th, 2017.

LAHORE: The Pakistan Sugar Mills Association Punjab Zone (PSMA), while not agreeing with the government’s policy that does not allow further export of surplus sugar, has asked authorities to call an immediate meeting in order to address concerns of the industry.

This year, the country has recorded a sharp rise in sugar production with surplus estimated at 1.8 million tons before end of the current crushing season.

In a statement, the association argued that unless the surplus was disposed of through exports, the industry would be unable to pay sugarcane growers.

Already, protests have erupted in some parts of Punjab where mills have failed to clear their dues and the situation will worsen at the start of new crushing season in November when another bumper crop is expected.

“The government has direct control over the major cost component of production along with sugar output and for this reason the industry always depends on policies that are being framed by the authorities,” the PSMA said.

It insisted that despite permission for export of 300,000 tons – a small quantity in the face of a huge surplus, it was impossible for the industry to make shipments without subsidy, keeping in view the current world commodity prices.

The association pointed out that world sugar prices, similar to other commodities, followed a cyclical pattern and in early part of the current calendar year, prices were at a level where industry would have exported the surplus quantity without any subsidy.

However, at that time, the authorities refused to allow exports despite repeated requests by the industry.

It emphasised that not many options were available with the industry to manage the situation and the government should come up with corrective measures by either buying the surplus stock as strategic reserves or subsidising exports in order to support the industry along with thousands of farmers.

“If necessary steps are not taken, mills will not be in a position to pay sugarcane growers the price anything more than Rs120 per 40kg,” it warned.

Government officials, however, fear that if sugar export is allowed without any check, it will spark instability in the domestic market and prices will shoot up, which will not bode well for an already troubled PML-N administration ahead of general elections next year..

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1465904/meeting-sought-millers-press-govt-allow-surplus-sugar-export/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JULY 17TH TO JULY 23RD 2017

SUPPLY RESTORED AFTER RAWAL DAM WATER ‘CLEARED’

Dawn, July 17th, 2017

Aamir Yasin | Ikram Junaidi

ISLAMABAD: Water supply from the Rawal Dam was restarted on Sunday morning after clearance from three separate laboratories, a spokesperson for the Water and Sanitation Authority (Wasa) told Dawn.

According to Wasa spokesperson Mohammad Umer Farooq, residents of Rawalpindi should use the water without any fear after the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) declared the water fit for human consumption.

Mr Farooq said that samples tested by the Pakistan Environment Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) were also declared fit for consumption.

In addition, the District Water Testing Laboratory of the Public Health Engineering Department has also declared the water samples free of arsenic.

On Saturday, samples from the water were sent to the PCRWR, the National Institute of Health (NIH), and the Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (PCSIR).

Samples of the dead fish, meanwhile, were sent to the National Agriculture Research Council (NARC) and the Punjab Forensic Science laboratories in Lahore, and their results are still awaited.

Several local administration and Wasa officials, however, said that initial inquiries suggested that the fish were killed by a lack of oxygen in the water.

The Capital Development Authority’s (CDA) own labs, however, have yet to give the water samples a clean chit.

CDA Member Planning Asad Kayani told Dawn the water quality was not ‘up to the mark’ as the results of the water turbidity test were not satisfactory.

Turbidity is the measure of the relative clarity of any liquid, and in lakes and reservoirs, high turbidity can reduce the amount of light that reaches the lower depths, inhibiting the growth of aquatic plants and affecting the species of fish that are dependent on them.

But according to Punjab Environment Protection Agency (Punjab-EPA) Deputy Director Shahid Hassan, turbidity levels increased in surface water during monsoon when water from catchment areas that is rich in sediment flows into the reservoir.

When asked if the water of Rawal Dam was suitable for drinking, Mr Kayani from CDA said he could not answer that question without the results of a number of chemical and biological tests, which may take another day or two to complete.

“We are also waiting for the results of the coliform bacteria test, which plays a vital role in judging the quality of water,” he said.

But according to Wasa, raw water is cleaned at the Rawal Lake Filtration Plant and made safe for human consumption through disinfection with chlorination and lime-dosing before being transported to residents.

The Punjab government has also constituted a committee to probe the pollution of Rawal Dam to ascertain the real reason for the fishes’ death, Rawalpindi Mayor Sardar Naseem told Dawn.

He claimed the provincial government was taking steps to prevent pollution in the dam’s catchment areas and blamed the tussle between contractors and local fishermen for the recent problems, saying that the government would not spare those involved in fouling the waters.

The provincial government has also tasked Special Branch to compile a detailed report on the rumours of Rawal Lake being poisoned and how they were spread.

Islamabad Deputy Commissioner retired Capt Mushtaq Ahmed told Dawn that a team from the armed forces had also taken samples from the dam for testing. But he was also apprehensive about the cause of the problem.

“This is a local tussle between rival groups over a fishing contract, so there is a possibility that someone could have mixed some substance in the water which was harmful for the fish but not for human beings,” he said.

The Wasa spokesperson said that no water shortage was reported in any part of Rawalpindi after the administration rerouted water from Khanpur Dam and over 400 tubewells to supply the garrison city.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1345817>

SINDH’S TAIL-END FARMERS SHORT OF WATER DESPITE ADEQUATE FLOWS

Mohammad Hussain Khan

Dawn, The Business and Finance Weekly, July 17th, 2017

WATER shortage in the Kharif season has become a permanent feature for growers in the canals’ tail-end areas. Their land irrigated by Nara and Rohri canals of the Sukkur barrage on Indus left bank.

The Sukkur barrage, considered a lifeline of Sindh’s agricultural, irrigates nearly eight million acres through its seven major canals. Though canals are getting desired flows at present, farmers complain they are still short of water.

On the other hand, Sukkur barrage officials are said to have noted unusual fluctuation in discharges between Chashma and Taunsa barrages in the second week of July. They say they have taken the matter up with the Sindh irrigation department and the Indus River System Authority (Irsa), Pakistan’s top water regulatory body.

Shortages in the command area of Sindh’s barrages, mainly in the tail-end reaches, are by and large due to internal mismanagement, reluctance of irrigation field staff to ensure tail-end canal gauges, a lack of canals’ management, water theft with the backing of politicians.

The influential ones, the upper riparian in any canal system, draw water at the cost of the tail-growers. Tail-end areas are fed by Rohri and Nara canals besides Kotri barrage's three perennial canals. However, until the second week of July growers of these areas were experiencing shortages despite near adequate flows.

"It's because of our failures at different levels that we are not able to keep supplies going for tail-end areas," an official of the irrigation department said. "Currently, we are demanding more than our share of water for the Sukkur barrage to maintain its pond level. This will help us ensure supplies to barrage's right bank canals."

Since June 17, authorities have been releasing water downstream the Kotri barrage. It indicates that Sindh's 14 off-taking canals are drawing adequate water flows. Growers of lower Sindh cultivate cotton by early-March or even by end-February.

The reason behind the early sowing is that landowners at the head of canals don't need water at that time so flows are released downstream in the canals such as Nasir and Rohri canals.

"This shortage is chronic and artificial," says Fayaz Rashdi, who has been leading farmers' protest against water shortage in district Badin's Khairpur Gamboh area, the last subdivision of the Rohri canal.

"It's the result of withdrawals of excessive flows by those who own land in upper reaches of the Rohri canal. I've cultivated only 75 acres of land out of the 250," he says.

Growers even protested on Eidul Fitr. Farmers say the Rs15,000 they spent on an acre for cultivating cotton would go down the drain if monsoon rains didn't come to their rescue or water availability was not ensured as soon as possible.

The situation is similar with the Nara canal. At least half of the tail-end areas are not getting water supplies, says Khalid Sadaf, who owns land in command of the Jamrao canal, a branch of the Nara canal.

Kot Ghulam Mohammad and Digri are tail-end subdivisions of the Nara canal system. "I could cultivate cotton crop on 15 acres and chilli on five acres," he says. "Rotation programme [alternate water supplies for different canals] is usually announced when there is shortage in the system. But in our case we are slapped with permanent rotation and shortage."

Water flow statistics for Kotri barrage's canals Phuleli, Pinyari, Akram Wah and Kalri Baghar feeders showed that its four canals are withdrawing close to 42,500 cubic feet per second (cusecs) of flows until July 12 — 41,000 cusecs is sufficient enough to meet requirements of these channels. "The tail-end areas must get water when canals are drawing full discharges. But it's not the case thanks to failures and mismanagement," a former official of the Kotri barrage says.

Syed Mahmood Nawaz Shah, vice-president of the Sindh Abadgar Board, points out that not only the tail-end areas but entire distributaries remain short of water. "Only rains in June and July provided some relief to growers. Otherwise, the shortage could have been more severe."

Moreover, another major reason behind the shortage is direct outlets, which are sanctioned by the competent authority — the chief minister — as political favour. Hundreds of such outlets are allowed in main canals that were strictly prohibited, if the standard operating procedures laid down by the British are anything to go by.

Legally, a farmer could bring 27 per cent of land under cultivation for summer and 54pc for winter crops. But successive chief ministers have allowed direct outlets.

To compound the issue, the dimensions of these outlets have been tampered with by beneficiaries to get uninterrupted water supplies. Tail-end growers say it is the direct outlets that make them suffer as they remain open round the year.

These outlets, which dot the entire landscape of Rohri and Nara canals, help influential landowners to grow rice, a high delta crop, in the left bank of the Sukkur barrage, which is prohibited otherwise under the law. Flows for an acre of rice cultivation are sufficient for seven acres of cotton cultivation, farmers say.

A person applying for direct outlet argues that he does not get water from the present irrigation system and is unable to shift his land to any other command area. This contention needs to be proved, but is overlooked on political consideration.

It's time that the Sindh government, headed by Syed Murad Ali Shah who himself is an engineer and holds the irrigation portfolio as well, revisited the direct outlet regime in the province to ensure everybody gets the amount of water they need.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1345807>

MAJOR RIVERS FLOWING NORMAL: FFC

Business Recorder, 17 July 2017

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Flood Commission (FFC) Sunday said no flood situation in the country as major rivers including Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi and Sutlej are flowing normal.

According to daily FFC report on Sunday, only River Kabul in Warsak- Nowshera Reach and its tributary River Swat at Chakdara Bridge are continued to flow in Low Flood.

Sufficient space is available in our major reservoirs (Tarbela & Mangla) to absorb any unprecedented inflows and their present elevations are 1507.10 feet and 1213.95 feet respectively. Current Combined Live Storage capacity of Tarbela, Chashma & Mangla reservoirs is 9.287 MAF as compared to the last year's 10.530 MAF. This is 67.02 % of total Live Storage capacity.

As per Flood Forecasting Division (FFD), Lahore, yesterday's Well Marked

Monsoon Low today lies over Southwest Rajasthan (India) and has weakened into Monsoon Low. This is likely to weaken further. Nevertheless a fresh Monsoon Low has developed over Northwest Bay of Bengal. Besides, yesterday's trough of Westerly Wave over Northeastern Afghanistan and adjoining areas at present prevails over Northern parts of the country. Seasonal Low exists over Northern Balochistan and moist currents from Bay of Bengal were penetrating into upper parts of the country up to 5000 feet at the reporting time today.

FFD, Lahore, has predicted scattered thunderstorm/rain with isolated heavy falls over Punjab (Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Lahore, Sargodha, Bahawalpur & D.G. Khan Divisions), Southern & Southeastern Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Malakand, Hazara, Peshawar, Kohat & D.I. Khan Divisions) & Eastern Balochistan, including upper catchments of Rivers Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, and Sutlej during the next 24 hours.

Scattered thunderstorm/rain over the upper catchments of River Indus are also expected during the same period with isolated thunderstorm/ rain over Faisalabad, Sahiwal & Multan Divisions of Punjab.

FFD, Lahore has predicted decrease in the rainfall activity in Sindh, however, Moderate Rainfall with isolated heavy falls may continue to occur over the upper catchments of all major rivers, besides Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab during the next two days. Moderate Flooding in Local Nullahs of Balochistan and Hill Torrents of D.G. Khan Division is also expected during the next 2-3 days. Few significant rainfall events have been reported for the past 24 hours by FFD, Lahore. These include: Sialkot 23 mm, Thatta 19 mm, Khuzdar 18 mm, Sibbi and Zhob 17 mm each, Karachi 15 mm, Hyderabad and Shaheed Benazirabad 12 mm each and Lasbela 7 mm.—APP

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/07/17/14-page/890091-news.html>

DEAD FISH: NARC CLEARS WATER SAMPLES FROM RAWAL LAKE

The Express Tribune, July 17th, 2017.

ISLAMABAD: The National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC) has declared that no abnormalities were found in water samples obtained from the Rawal Lake.

The tests were conducted after hundreds of dead fish started floating on the surface of the lake, sparking fears of contamination in the reservoir.

With hundreds of thousands of residents of Rawalpindi drawing water from the lake, officials stopped water supply fearing that it could poison the people.

When the fish first started floating to the surface of the lake dead earlier in the week, the Fisheries department summoned NARC officials to test the waters for contaminants.

A letter was written by NARC to the Islamabad Fisheries deputy director on July 11, but which surfaced on Sunday, said that a technical team from NARC's Agriculture and Fisheries Programme had visited the lake and checked the water quality with digital meters, the DO meter and Multimeter.

"There is no issue of physical or chemical water parameters for fish culture ...," the letter read, adding, "It is concluded that there was no abnormality present in the limnological parameters of the water."

It further observed that the fish may have died after consuming some toxic chemical since the flesh and internal organs of the fish were found to be badly damaged.

NARC, though, recommended further tests of water samples to check for any toxic elements in the water.

Islamabad deputy commissioner in a statement on Saturday had also stated that NARC found no poisonous element in the water.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1459526/dead-fish-narc-clears-water-samples-rawal-lake/>

PUNJAB YET TO TAKE MEASURES TO CONTROL FLOW OF SEWAGE INTO RAWAL LAKE

Dawn, July 18, 2017

Aamir Yasin

RAWALPINDI: More than the issue of hundreds of fish drying in the Rawal Dam due to contamination, environmentalists are concerned about sewage flowing into the dam without being treated first.

Though the Capital Development Authority (CDA) plans to install a sewerage treatment plant, the Punjab government is yet to take action to stop the flow of sewage in the streams of Murree and its adjoining areas into the Korang River which discharges into Rawal Lake.

A senior official of the district administration told Dawn water in the dam was polluted by the sewage flowing into streams and nullahs which discharge into the Rawal Lake.

He said recent water quality reports had declared it fit for human consumption but only after being treated. He said Rawal Lake was vulnerable to water pollution and was facing the problem of eutrophication, which is when water becomes artificially enriched with nutrients, causing an abnormally dense plant growth.

He said sewage from nearby housing societies in Bani Gala, Bari Imam, Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU), the Diplomatic Enclave and poultry farms around Murree also drains into the lake.

There has been a mushroom growth of housing societies around the lake and builders are cutting down hills and trees to build new housing schemes. The Water and Sanitation Agency Rawalpindi alone spends Rs10 million each year on Alum, which is used to clean drinking water.

He said the Supreme Court had directed the CDA and the Punjab government last year to take measures to make Rawal Lake pollution free as it supplies drinking water to citizens.

However, he said, the Punjab government has yet to take action for stopping sewage from Murree and its adjoining areas from ending up in the lake as it wanted the federal government to install a treatment plant, claiming that the 12 kilometre area around the lake fell in the limits of the CDA.

Though billions of rupees are being spent on the development of the hill station, no steps have been taken for installing a sewage treatment plant in or around Murree, he said.

When asked, CDA Member Planning Asad Mehboob Kayani told Dawn the CDA was working on installing the sewerage treatment plant in the area that falls in its jurisdiction and that the Punjab government should stop the flow of sewage in the Korang nullah in its jurisdiction.

He said the CDA has already declared construction in Bani Gala illegal and was working on connecting Diplomatic Enclave to its main network so sewage from this area does not flow into the lake. Sewage from QAU is treated, he said.

The mushroom growth of housing societies is the main reason for the pollution in Rawal Lake and the provincial government should also take notice of the illegal settlements in its area, he said.

When contacted, Punjab Environment Protection Agency Deputy Shahid Hassan said the area around the lake falls under the CDA's limits and that the CDA should install a treatment plant.

He said the provincial government was working on stopping the discharge of sewage in streams and nullahs and that notices have been issued and action will soon be taken against violators.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1346049>

SINDH'S POLLUTED WATER

Dawn, July 18th, 2017

RECENT analysis by the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources of surface and groundwater samples from across Sindh reveals that water quality in the province has worsened — 80pc (from 75pc a few months ago) of sampled sources, including at educational institutions and tertiary-care hospitals, is now contaminated with pathogenic bacteria and unfit for human consumption.

Add to this the extent to which the creeks of the Indus delta have been polluted with heavy metals and emerging cases of multidrug-resistant typhoid, and we have before us an environmental and public health crisis of devastating

proportions. Unsafe water supply and inadequate sanitation are responsible for substantial economic and human losses.

Children are the most vulnerable to preventable water-related diseases such as cholera, typhoid, hepatitis and polio; diarrhoeal diseases are the leading cause of infant and child deaths in the country. Sindh leads with the highest number of cases of diarrhoea as well as the highest number of deaths of children under five. This has placed a tremendous burden on the province's already under-resourced public health sector.

Water pollution in Sindh appears direr than in the rest of the country, with the provincial government and administrative authorities largely responsible for the near total collapse of water and waste management systems. But this is just a microcosm of a larger issue: the state's abdication of its obligation — as mandated by its commitment to the UN's SDGs as well as the Supreme Court — to provide safe drinking water and sanitation facilities to all its citizens.

The PCRWR estimates that 84pc of the country's population lacks access to clean water. The concomitant disease burden is already more than the country can bear. Clean water is a fundamental prerequisite for Pakistan's progress; no scheme to eradicate disease, ensure food and water security, improve livelihoods and boost the economy can succeed without a multidimensional policy to address environmental degradation, particularly the contamination of our most precious natural resource.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1345973>

GWADAR'S DESALINATION PLANT SHUT DOWN

Dawn, July 21st, 2017

GWADAR: A desalination plant established at a cost of Rs1 billion to supply drinking water to Gwadar city has been closed.

The plant was shut down due to non-availability of required quantity of total dissolved solids (TDS) used for converting seawater into drinking water, officials of the Public Health and Engineering Department (PHED) said on Wednesday

“Desalination plant was closed two weeks back,” a senior official of PHED told Dawn, adding that the plant was shut down after laboratory test of water revealed the quantity of TDS less than the requirement which rendered it unfit for drinking.

The desalination plant was established in 2008 in Karwat area, some 25km away from the port city with a capacity to supply two million gallon water daily.

However, the plant mostly remained closed due to various reasons. “Many technical faults were discovered making the plant non-functional,” sources said, adding that even the National Accountability Bureau carried out an inquiry into its closure.

Authorities concerned tried to restart the plant during the current water crisis but it failed to produce the required two million gallon water daily.

It just produced just 300,000 gallon water daily till its closure.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1346641>

PROTEST AGAINST SUPPLY OF TOXIC WATER IN SINDH

HYDERABAD: Activists of the Qaumi Awami Tehreek (QAT) staged a demonstration at Pakora Chowk in Qasimabad on Thursday in protest against supply of contaminated water in Sindh.

The protest was led by party's secretary general Anwar Soomro, Sindhiani Tehreek leader Zeenat Samoon, Dr Gulzar Jumani and Dr Aziz Talpur.

They told reporters that the 'corrupt' Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) government had failed to supply clean drinking water to the people of Sindh. The Sindh chief minister and entire cabinet should resign because they had lost the moral authority to rule the province, they added.

They said that even chlorination was not being done with the result that the people of Hyderabad, Karachi, Mirpurkhas, Sukkur, Thatta, Badin, Sanghar, Larkana, Nawabshah, Shikarpur and others districts were consuming filthy water mixed with human waste.

They said the supply of such water was leading to hepatitis cases and other ailments in Sindh. Asif Ali Zardari and the Sindh chief minister, who they claimed consumed and bathed in mineral water, were not concerned about the masses, adding that they deprived people of 'roti, kapra aur makan' with their fake slogan.

They claimed that Rs600 billion were being siphoned off to foreign banks every year from Sindh. They appealed to the apex court to take notice of the corruption in Sindh.

They said the PPP rulers even did not spare Larkana in their lust for corruption where Rs90bn were swallowed in the name of development works.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1346532>

CCI NOD TO NATIONAL WATER POLICY ON THE CARDS

The Express Tribune, 21 July 2017

Zafar Bhutta

ISLAMABAD: The policy says the impact of climate change – intensification of floods, erratic monsoon rains and droughts – is already evident in Pakistan; and rising temperatures, resulting in enhanced heat and water-stress condition, particularly in arid and semi-arid regions, will lead to reduced agriculture productivity.

In this scenario, the proposed policy calls for making water delivery services economically and financially sustainable and puts emphasis on the social and economic value of water. Under the policy, the concept of affordability will be applied to social uses but water supply will be free of charge for environmental and ecological needs.

The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) provides a mechanism for water sharing with India, but the government observes that provisions for unlimited hydroelectric power development in upper catchments have the potential of threatening water availability in lower catchments during the low-flow periods.

Upstream developments on the Kabul River are also being planned and implemented while no formal agreement exists for sharing the river's water. Under the policy, a mechanism will be established for sharing trans-boundary aquifers and possibility of joint watershed management, including sharing of real-time information.

The CCI is also likely to approve allocation of 1,200 cusec additional water for Karachi. The Sindh government had demanded of the federal government to table the issue before the CCI.

Sindh claimed that it had allowed water for the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi subject to the condition that Karachi would also be given additional 1,200 cusec water for domestic use.

At present 1,200 cusec of water from River Indus is required for the K-IV project and the requirement would go up to 1,800 cusec by 2020 and 2,400 cusec by 2025.

Sindh government said fresh requirement of water should also be shared by other three provinces since Karachi has accommodated people hailing from those provinces.

The CCI will also take up the issue of supply of gas to localities and villages in 5km radius of gas producing fields. Gas companies are also encountering problems in their exploration work and gas theft is on the rise near the producing fields, especially in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P).

The Centre wants provinces to share cost to provide gas to the localities near gas producing fields. But the provinces have refused to foot the bill of new gas supply schemes planned near producing fields in order to stave off the threat of protest by local residents.

They have asked the federal government to release the entire capital.

The Ministry of Petroleum has found it impossible to undertake such projects for gas supply to the villages and localities falling within 5km radius of the producing fields because of the absence of funds. Sindh argued that Centre may pay the entire cost whereas Balochistan and K-P suggested that the cost should be borne by gas utilities.

The CCI may approve formation of a new committee – fiscal coordination committee – proposed by the finance ministry to strengthen fiscal coordination between the federal government and provinces with the objective of achieving consolidated fiscal targets as well as macroeconomic stability. The finance ministry is seeking to establish the fiscal coordination committee after consultations with the provinces.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1462733/cci-nod-national-water-policy-cards/>

IRSA STORES 10MAF WATER IN MANGLA, TARBELA RESERVOIRS

M Rafique Goraya

LAHORE: The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) has managed to store 10 MAF water in the Mangla dam on the river Jhelum and Tarbela dam on the mighty Indus till 19th July after meeting irrigation water demands of the provinces for sowing, growing and maturing of Kharif crops including strategic cotton, rice, sugarcane, maize, vegetables and fodder for livestock.

The water regulatory body has stored 5.6 MAF water in the upgraded Mangla dam against its maximum capacity of 7.4 MAF and 4.4 MAF water in the Tarbela dam on the Indus River against its full capacity of 6 MAF water. Besides it released required quantity of water to produce about 5,500 MW cheap electricity from the hydel power houses during this period.

Punjab Irrigation engineers told Business Recorder that since the flowing water in the river Chenab was sufficient to meet the irrigation requirements of the central, western and eastern Punjab in July, only 10,000 cusecs water was discharged downstream the Mangla dam to fill the reservoir as early as possible as the monsoon rains were forecast below normal in the month of August in Pakistan.

Jinnah: Inflows 255100 cusecs and Outflows 247300 cusecs, Chashma: Inflows 252000 cusecs and Outflows 250000 cusecs, Taunsa: Inflows 208600 cusecs and Outflows 188100 cusecs, Guddu: Inflows 184700 cusecs and Outflows

166600 cusecs, Sukkur: Inflows 137400 cusecs and Outflows 88900 cusecs, Kotri: Inflows 64800 cusecs and Outflows 40800

HYDROLOGICAL SITUATION: River Chenab at Khanki was in medium flood level, River Chenab at Marala & Qadirabad, River Indus at Kalabagh & Chashma and River Kabul at Nowshera were in Low flood level. On Wednesday low to medium flooding is expected in the Nullahs of Rivers Ravi & Chenab.

Synoptic Situation: Seasonal low lies over north Balochistan. Monsoon currents are penetrating southern parts of the country. A shallow westerly wave is affecting central and upper parts of the country and likely to persist during next few days. Strong monsoon currents are likely to penetrate upper parts of the country on Friday. .

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/07/20/13-page/890528-news.html>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JULY 10TH TO JULY 16TH 2017

NEELUM POWER PROJECT TO BECOME OPERATIONAL BY MARCH, PAC TOLD

Dawn, July 13th, 2017

Malik Asad

ISLAMABAD: The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) was informed on Wednesday that the 969MW Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project would become operational by March 31 next year.

Wapda chairman retired Lt Gen Muzammil Hussain briefed the committee that filling of the dam would start in October and the dry test of the turbine would be conducted in January next year, while the first unit would start power generation in February.

He said that excavation of 68-km-long tunnels had already been completed one month ahead of schedule.

He said major restructuring had been carried out in the detailed design of the project in the aftermath of the 2005 earthquake.

Mr Hussain said that the average annual water inflow in the country's rivers was 145 million cusecs, but only 14m cusecs could be stored as the country had only two major reservoirs, adding that no reservoir had been built over the past 40 years.

He said that new dams would have to be constructed to store water and such dams could be built at Diamer, Akori, Mohmond and Dasu.

The PAC was informed that Wapda had been allowed to issue bonds in 1987 for the first time and 10 bonds had been issued between 1987 and 2004.

The committee was informed that Wapda issued Sukuk bonds worth Rs8 billion for Mangla Dam Raising Project in 2005 and bonds worth Rs144bn were issued in May 2017 for the Dasu dam.

Referring to the Kachhi Canal, the Wapda chairman said that Rs57bn had been spent on the project and another Rs45bn was required for completion of its first phase.

He assured the committee that the canal would start irrigating 72,000 acres in Dera Bugti district by December.

Responding to a question, Mr Hussain said that Wapda was paying annually Rs30-35bn in interest on various loans obtained for different projects while Rs35-40bn was being paid for retiring the actual loans.

The PAC directed Wapda to complete the Noulang and Dadu dams and canal project on a priority basis.

Water and Power Secretary Yousaf Naseem Khokhar informed the PAC that power sector recovery had jumped to 93 per cent.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1344980>

WATER SUPPLY FROM HUB DAM TO INCREASE

Faiza Ilyas

Dawn, July 13, 2017

KARACHI: Water supplies to the city, particularly Baldia Town, are likely to improve in the coming days as the level of Hub Dam has risen following recent rains in its catchment area.

“The dam’s level after hitting a dead point has risen from 276 feet to 282.9 feet. This will help increase supply from the dam to 15MGD [million gallons a day],” Rizwan Hyder representing the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) told Dawn, adding that the supply might further improve depending on rain in the dam’s catchment area.

The water supply situation has worsened in the city over the years with an increasing gap between demand and supply; the current water demand is 1,200MGD while the city receives between 500MGD and 550MGD from the Indus source (Keenjhar Lake).

Water supply from the Hub Dam, however, has been erratic due to drought conditions since the dam is entirely dependent on rain. Its catchment area is spread over 3,410 square miles and comprises areas along the Khirthar National Park (Dadu, Jamshoro and parts of Larkana districts), and the Pub range (Khuzdar and Lasbela districts).

According to Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) sources, the Hub Dam has a storage capacity of 687,000 acre-feet. Since its establishment in the 1980s, the dam has been hit by drought conditions five to six times. It was last filled to its optimum level in 2007. The respective shares of Sindh (53 per cent) and Balochistan (36.7pc) were finally slashed down to 40pc last November/December owing to falling water levels.

According to government data if the dam is filled to its maximum level of 339 feet, it can supply 100MGD and 59MGD to Karachi and parts of Balochistan respectively for two and a half years without interruption.

Supplies from the dam to the city were resumed last year after a gap of three years.

Experts blame the city’s chronic water crisis on the failure of the government in initiating water projects on time. It’s almost after a decade that the government has initiated work on K-IV that will supply 260MGD after its completion of phase one in two years.

Meanwhile, managing director KWSB Syed Hashim Raza Zaidi met a group of protesters demanding sufficient water supplies for Baldia Town.

According to a press release, Mr Zaidi informed the delegation that the chief minister is taking personal interest in the matter and that the provincial government has released Rs400m to improve water supplies to the area.

“The delegation was also briefed about other government efforts in addressing the water shortage situation in Baldia Town. These steps include work on laying a pipeline from Nazimabad to Baldia Town and establishing a new water pumping station in the locality,’ the press release says.

Mr Zaidi also addressed concerns over water theft and assured the delegation of action against offenders for which the utility was hiring 40 security guards, it added.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1344914>

WATER SCARCITY POSING SERIOUS THREAT TO AGRI SECTOR, SAYS VC UAF

Business Recorder, 13 July 2017

FAISALABAD: Heavy groundwater pumping, deteriorating water quality and water scarcity are posing a serious threat to agriculture sector for which tangible measures need to be taken and promote modern technology to cope with crisis.

It was stated by Vice Chancellor, University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF), Dr. Iqrar Ahmad Khan while talking to a team of Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO) comprising of Dr Mobin Ud Din Ahmad, Dr Geoff Podger, Dr Joel Sarout, and Dr Joyce Wo. Dr Iqrar Ahmad Khan said that agriculture was facing major challenges including intensive temperatures, water scarcity and salinity. He said that excessive extraction of water by pumps was deteriorating the water quality. He said that if the trends continue, it will worsen the crisis.

He said the county can save water, more than Tarbela and Mangla dams by reusing the two, irrigation for wheat crop from five to three times, with water efficient wheat varieties and its harvesting on latest trends. He said being the largest crop in the country wheat consumes 40 million acre feet of water out of total 100 MAF being used for agriculture sector.

Dean, Agri Engineering, Allah Buksh said that we have to make the rational use of water and we are exploiting our resources with our own hands. He said inter-disciplinary approaches are need of hour to fight modern challenges including agriculture, climate change and eco system. He said that hi efficient irrigation system would pave a way to reduce the water wastage Dr. Jehanzeb Cheema said that we have to adopt the mitigating measures keeping climate changes in view which was playing havoc with the water resources also. He said that there is need to create the awareness among the people about the rational usage of water.

Dr Mobin Ud Din Ahmad said that Australian government was funding CSIRO for Sustainable Development Investment Portfolio to respond to major regional development challenges in Pakistan for improving the water resources management, increasing agricultural productivity, farm incomes, under changing climate and promoting gender equality and improving women livelihood. Dr Geoff Podger said CSIRO is also working to build capacity of the Pakistani experts to do reverse system and cropping system modeling.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/07/13/13-page/888585-news.html>

OVER 80PC WATER SAMPLES IN 14 DISTRICTS OF SINDH FOUND UNFIT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION: REPORT

Dawn, July 16th, 2017

Faiza Ilyas

KARACHI: More than 80 per cent of water samples collected from surface and groundwater sources in 14 districts of Sindh for an analysis have shown that water quality in these areas has worsened over the past few months, it emerged on Saturday.

Earlier, 75pc drinking water samples collected from 13 districts were found unfit for human consumption.

The Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) had conducted a bacterial and chemical analysis of water samples collected in Karachi, Thatta, Hyderabad, Jamshoro, Tando Mohammad Khan, Tando Allahyar, Badin, Mirpurkhas, Tharparkar, Nawabshah, Khairpur, Sukkur, Shikarpur and Larkana districts.

Of the 460 samples, 232 were collected from surface water sources (canals, water supply schemes, pumping stations), 46 from reverse osmosis/filtration plants and three from mixed (ground plus surface water) sources.

Collection spots for water samples included educational institutions, public points and tertiary care hospitals. The results were analysed in the light of World Health Organisation (WHO) and Sindh Environmental Quality Standards on drinking water.

A total of 118 drinking water samples were collected from Karachi, of which 99 samples were collected from surface water sources, including water supply system, filtration plants and pumping stations and 13 samples from reverse osmosis plants.

According to the report, 107 (90.7pc) of the 118 samples were found unsafe for human consumption, which means only 11 samples were suitable for drinking.

Around 104 samples had bacterial contamination. Of them, 40pc samples had faecal contamination. High turbidity and higher levels of sulphate, nitrate-nitrogen, total hardness, calcium, magnesium and potassium were also found in water.

In comparison, of the 28 samples collected from Tharparkar district, 10 samples (35.7pc) were found unfit for human consumption.

“Most samples were found safe from bacteriological contamination when collected directly from the reverse osmosis plant. Samples collected from community storage tanks/ponds, however, were found severely contaminated with coliforms and E.coli,” the report says.

The study team observed the same situation at the Misri Shah reverse osmosis plant in Mithi and another plant installed in Islamkot.

The water quality situation was found poorer in Larkana district where only three of 25 samples were found fit for human consumption.

Sixteen samples were collected from Thatta district, of which 14 were found unfit for human consumption. Out of a total of 40 samples collected in Hyderabad, 35 were found unfit for human consumption.

Tando Allahyar and Jamshoro districts had only one sample fit for human consumption out of 11 and 30 samples collected, respectively. Similar results were reported from Tando Mohammad Khan district where 17 of 20 samples were found contaminated.

In Badin district, 29 of 36 samples were found unfit for human consumption. Samples collected from underground water sources had a high content of salts as well as bacterial contamination whereas surface water had high turbidity with the presence of E.coli and coliform, indicating mixing of sewage with supply line water. Eighteen of 20 samples were found unsafe in Mirpurkhas. Underground water was also found contaminated with sewage in the district.

Overall data of Nawabshah district shows that 11 of 26 samples were found safe for drinking purposes. In comparison, however, Khairpur had only eight samples out of 28 that were safe.

Five of 30 samples collected from Sukkur district were found safe. Severe bacterial contamination was detected in half of the samples. Shikarpur had seven of 32 samples safe.

The PCRWR team collected 87 samples from 71 hospitals in 14 districts and found 68 (78pc) unfit for human consumption.

“Overall analytical data shows that out of 460 water samples, 384 (83.5pc) were found unsafe and 76 (16.5pc) safe,” the study concludes.

Reasons for unsafe results were improper or the absence of filtration and chlorination, mixing of sewage with supply line water and silting of pumping stations and water tanks.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1345659/over-80pc-water-samples-in-14-districts-of-sindh-found-unfit-for-human-consumption-report>

HUMAN WASTE FOUND IN DRINKING WATER

Business Recorder, 16 July 2016

KARACHI: The potable water being supplied to Karachi has been revealed to contain particles of human waste, according to the outrageous findings of a commission under Justice Iqbal Kalhoro.

The Water Commission voiced indignation and serious reservations over the grave contamination of water as pipelines of potable water are receiving the sewage from the sewers.—NNI

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/07/16/2-page/889175-news.html>

PINDI'S WATER SUPPLY FROM RAWAL LAKE HALTED

Mudassir Raja

Rawalpindi: Supply of water to the garrison city from the Rawal Dam Lake was suspended on Saturday after reports emerged that the water may be poisoned.

Water supply is expected to resume as soon as different laboratories test and clear the water for human consumption.

A senior official at the Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) said that the Small Dams Organisation (SDO) Punjab had discontinued water supply to the agency after reports about the fish mortality in the lake appeared in a section of the media.

He added that the taps were closed at 12 pm. However, he added that WASA had made alternate arrangements to supply water to residents of Rawalpindi.

According to media reports, a large number of dead fish floated to the surface of the dam on Friday.

Reports further suggested that initial tests of the water had confirmed that the large aquifer had become poisonous, possibly owing to effluents from nearby poultry farms and agriculture fields in the catchment areas of the dam measuring around 10 square miles.

The fisheries department in Islamabad also registered an FIR against unidentified mafia living around the lake for allegedly poisoning the water.

The WASA official further said that preliminary reports from the Regional Research Laboratory Public Healthcare had found no arsenic in the lake's water, however, water samples had been dispatched to the Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (PCSIR) and the Punjab Forensic Laboratory for further tests.

WASA spokesperson Umer Farooq confirmed that the SDO had stopped water supply from the Rawal Lake.

About alternate supply plans, he said that the 400 tube wells in and around the city would be operated to ensure the continuous supply of water to the city.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1458941/pindis-water-supply-rawal-lake-halted/>

'90PC OF KARACHI'S DRINKING WATER UNFIT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION'

The News, 16 July 2017

The judicial commission, formed by the apex court to probe the Sindh government's alleged failure to provide clean drinking water and proper sanitation facilities to the citizens in the province, was informed on Saturday that the people were being provided water mixed with human waste.

The Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) told Justice Muhammad Iqbal Kalhoro, a Sindh High Court judge who is heading the one-man commission, that water supplied to the people of the province for drinking was found contaminated with human waste.

It said 90 per cent of the drinking water provided to the residents of Karachi was not fit for consumption and could be hazardous to health.

The council said in a report that 88 per cent of water in Larkana was contaminated and contained 60 per cent of human waste, water in Hyderabad contained 42 per cent of human waste, Jamshoro 75 per cent, Tando Allahyar 36 per cent, Badin 23 per cent and Tharparkar's water had 28 per cent of human waste.

Water samples had been collected from 71 hospitals of 14 districts of the province, and they contained 33 harmful elements for human life.

The report, which shows a deplorable condition of drinking water in hospitals, has been submitted to the health secretary, who stated that it was the responsibility of the local councils to provide water to the hospitals, and the health department was concerned only with ensuring that the water tanks in the hospitals were duly clean.

However, the health secretary complained that since he could not take action against medical superintendents who actually looked after the affairs of the hospitals, his directions for providing clean drinking water were falling on deaf ears and were not being implemented.

The advocate general, however, stated that the health secretary was fully empowered to take action against delinquent officials and could recommend action against them.

The judicial commission directed the medical superintendents of all hospitals to make substantial arrangements to provide clean drinking water immediately to the people in their jurisdictions.

They were also directed to submit compliance reports at the next hearing and then subsequently periodical reports every month about the quality of water in their respective hospitals.

The local government secretary was also directed to submit a compliance report.–PPI

The report came a few days after the water utility's chief chemist claimed that water in the city not only contained chemical impurities but also lethal bacteria, including E coli and coliforms, found in sewage, News Desk adds.

The Karachi Water & Sewerage Board (KWSB) had collected water samples from six different parts of the city after two locals died of a Naegleria fowleri (brain-eating amoeba) infection last month.

When the samples were analysed for chemical and microbiological contamination at the KWSB's own lab, they were found extremely tainted and unfit for human consumption, reveal the analysis reports obtained by The News.

N fowleri had claimed the life of 55-year-old Suhail Tabassum, a resident of Al-Noor Society in Federal B Area's Block 19, on June 26, while 29-year-old Ali Amjad, a resident of KDA Scheme No 1, died on June 28.

Following the two deaths, the KWSB was criticised by different quarters for providing contaminated water to the city and not chlorinating it at the utility's pumping stations. Chlorination is the only effective method to disinfect water supplied in bulk quantities.

The censure compelled the water board to conduct an immediate analysis of the quality of water it was supplying to the unsuspecting citizens of Karachi. Water samples were collected from two mosques in KDA Scheme No 1, where Amjad used to go for prayers, a lawn and the man's neighbourhood.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/216778-90pc-of-Karachis-drinking-water-unfit-for-human-consumption>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JULY 2ND TO JULY 9TH 2017

NCHR TAKES NOTICE OF CONTAMINATED WATER SUPPLY TO ISLAMABAD

Dawn, July 3rd, 2017

Ikram Junaidi

ISLAMABAD: The National Commission on Human Rights (NCHR) has taken notice of the shortage of water, the supply of contaminated water and the lack of a water policy for the federal capital.

The commission has also decided to call all stakeholders to find a long term solution for the shortage of water in the capital city.

Last week, the National Institute of Health (NIH) issued an advisory urging concerned authorities to take timely preventative measures to minimise the chances of disease outbreaks before monsoon.

The advisory called for the repair of damaged water lines and the chlorination of water.

In the advisory, the institute said sewerage and water supply lines run side-by-side and are damaged, leading to sewerage water getting mixed with clean water.

“Water-borne diseases, attributed to the consumption of unsafe water and non-observance of proper sanitation and preventative measures, may pose a serious challenge for the health and water and sanitation authorities,” it said.

The institute has suggested careful watch on water supply systems, repair of damaged water pipes, sewerage lines and systems without delay.

Talking to Dawn, NCHR member Chaudhry Mohammad Shafique said due to the shortage of water in the city, it has been decided to call concerned departments within two weeks and ask them to devise a strategy and analyse how the commission can help them make a policy for providing citizens of the city with clean drinking water.

The departments called include the Municipal Corporation, Capital Development Authority (CDA), Islamabad District Administration, the managements of Simly and Khanpur dams and the Water and Power Development Authority.

“Everyone has the right to be supplied clean drinking water but the government does not have a policy for this. The CDA has been dealing with water related issues in the urban areas of Islamabad and the Islamabad Capital Territory administration deals with these issues in rural areas but they do not coordinate with one another for this,” he said.

A proposal for bringing water in from the Indus River to Islamabad via a pipeline was made in 2004, Mr Shafique said, and that the proposal was also put forward to the cabinet. The project did not materialise which is why the availability of clean drinking water has become a big problem.

“We need to devise a long term solution and not stop gag arrangements, for which we will play our role,” he said.

The availability of water has become a major issue across the city, especially in the G and I sectors, leading a Jamaat-i-Islami leader and former MNA Mian Mohammad Aslam, to display a number of posters across the city demanding the water problem to be addressed.

Residents of the federal capital have on many occasions held protests against the CDA due to the unavailability of water and though there is a ban on boring, a large number of people have bored as they do not have another option. The CDA also largely ignored complaints of boring as it is aware that the water crisis has become huge.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1342896>

WATER SHORTAGE: MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

Dawn, The Business and Finance Weekly, July 3rd, 2017

Ahmad Fraz Khan

In its annual report, ‘The State of Economy: Agriculture and Water’, Shahid Javed Burki Institute of Public Policy explains how water constraints and its management issues have impacted, are impacting and would continue to impact the agricultural growth in the country.

Setting the context, the report tells that the River Indus and its tributaries carry just over 150m acre feet (MAF) of water: three western rivers contributing 142MAF and three eastern river chipping in with 8.4MAF.

About 104MAF is diverted for irrigation and the rest flows to the sea. Three reservoirs, 80 small dams, 19 barrages, 12 inter river link canals, 45 canals systems and more than 107,000 water-courses manage and carry the supplies.

The World Bank has estimated the replacement cost of this infrastructure at \$60bn. The system also avails an estimated 41.60MAF of groundwater pumped through over 600,000 tubewells, mostly private.

The report counts five challenges for Pakistan on the supply side, which are: greater scarcity resulting from higher demand and the diminishing capacity of reservoirs, excessive (nearly 60pc) conveyance losses, deteriorating infrastructure, high operation costs and an excessive ground water use.

On the demand side, it says that productive and allocative efficiency are key concepts. The first concept is captured by the idea of ‘more crop per drop’ and second by the idea of ‘more value per drop’. The first one applies to choices of crops. And the second one focuses on competing water uses regardless of the product.

Tracing challenges to demand side management, the report claims that flood irrigation is the method used by most farmers and it is generally accepted that its efficiency in this case is only 50pc.

That is why, there is a lag in water efficiency and regional averages in almost entire range of crops. In wheat, water efficiency in Pakistan is 24pc lower than the world average. In rice, it is 55pc lower than Asian average. In cereals, it is even lower than India.

One way to deter this kind of wastage is rationalising water pricing. With more investment, management of irrigation infrastructure can also improve. In its current settings, the canal irrigation system is unsustainable as it recovers only 24pc of the operation and maintenance cost.

In absolute terms, the government has provided Rs38bn in the last seven years, (at an average of Rs5.4bn annually) to fill the gap between O&M cost and abiana (service charges) recovery.

The farmers have to pay a higher cost for water which is evident from the groundwater market, where they pay Rs300/hour — or only one-inch per acre — for private tubewell operations.

To the government, they don't pay even one hour water costs for the entire season of water guzzlers like, rice and sugarcane. Pakistan thus has to rationalise its water pricing system for not only making its use rational but also to raise money for operation and maintenance.

About ground water, the report, quoting a USAID study, says that the excessive use of ground water has pushed the levels down by 12 metres in the last 50 years. The increasing salt concentration of groundwater reduces 1.25pc agricultural benefits annually.

“The study reveals that that as a result of declining water table and salt concentration, net benefits fall by Rs50bn. This shows the high cost of institutional failure in regulating groundwater use.”

The report stresses that ‘enhancing storage capacity, improving governance and management of water institution and effective water use are the most critical areas for action’.

About the institutional chaos, the report says that at present “too many institutions (estimated at 18) have been created to manage and develop water. For this reason, recent efforts to formulate water policy have largely failed as different institutions look at the policy issues from their own vantage point.”

For example, there is hardly any connect between two critical institutions; the ministries in-charge of agriculture and water.

“The irrigation institutions have not made the transition from the era of development and construction to the era of where management of resources and service becomes the primary challenge.

Pakistan has a large but inefficient and poorly managed irrigation system. The system loses about 60pc of water during conveyance from canal head works to farm gates. Maintenance is inadequate and no asset management plan is in place.

A sustainable financing plan is not available either and the system continues to rely on budgetary transfers from various levels of the government.”

Suggesting the way forward, the report concludes “if there is little scope for enhancing water supply, there is considerable policy space to save it. Since 95pc water is used for agriculture, it is where the biggest saving can occur. Better pricing mechanism for water and energy could help rationalise use of these inputs among different crops and

promote sustainability. Rationalisation of water usage in agriculture (beginning with rice and sugarcane) is the key factor.”

“Climate change is already affecting water and agriculture in Pakistan. As water needs for agriculture and domestic use are largely met with groundwater, the connection between water, energy and the food nexus is becoming more important.

In this context, mainstreaming climate change concerns should help achieve sustainable development, including ecosystem preservation and rational management and utilisation of water.”

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1342849>

LOWER BARI DOAB CANAL PROJECT OPERATIONAL

Dawn, The Business and Finance Weekly, July 3rd, 2017

Amjad Mahmood

THE Punjab Irrigated Agriculture Investment Programme Project-1 on the Lower Bari Doab command area on River Ravi will be completed on June 30.

“At least 275,000 rural households deriving their livelihood from crops grown in the Lower Bari Doab command area (LBDC) command area will be beneficiaries of the remodeling, up-gradation and rehabilitation of the barrage, the LBDC canal and its distributaries,” says a senior consultant of Punjab’s irrigation department overseeing execution of the Punjab Irrigated Agriculture Investment Programme (PIAIP).

“As 201km of main canal and 2,264km of distribution channels will be widened and rehabilitated along with upgrading the barrage, the initiative will result in an 18pc increase in water availability boosting the agricultural produce by 15pc in Okara, Pakpattan, Sahiwal and Khanewal districts.”

The Punjab irrigation network is 100-150 years old. Its designed annual cropping intensity was kept low at 60-80pc with canals diversion capacity aimed at spreading the water thinly over a large area equitably with minimum maintenance and repair costs to meet the needs of a small population at that time. The population growth over time pushed the cropping intensity up to 130-150pc overstressing the irrigation infrastructure.

For a major overhaul and improved capacity to meet the present day requirements, the government secured more than \$233m loan facility from the Asian Development Bank in 2007, as first tranche of the PIAIP project.

The project will improve the Balloki Barrage and the LBDC system that supply irrigation water to more than 700,000ha of the aforementioned districts.

“The Balloki Barrage was suffering from insufficient flood capacity, sediment management problems, causing masking upstream of the barrage, and a deteriorating condition of its civil and mechanical appurtenants,” says an official of the Strategic Planning and Reform Unit (SPRU).

The Lower Bari Doab Canal was also experiencing a number of functional and safety issues like an inadequate capacity to carry authorised discharge of 9,841 cusecs; age-old and weakened structures and banks that have eroded over the past 100 years. The distribution system was also facing operational problems.

Officials also revealed that the flood discharge capacity of the barrage has been enhanced from 225,000 cusecs to 260,000 cusecs. Besides a new flood spillway has been constructed with a 120,000 cusecs capacity, increasing the barrage’s capacity to 100-year record flood of 380,000 cusecs.

He says the LBDC canal operated at 8,500 cusecs at head against its designed discharge of 9,841 cusecs. After remodelling, the canal has so far been safely operated at 9,300 cusecs while in the kharif season it will be operated at its original capacity of 9,841 cusecs.

The Montgomery-Pakpattan (MP) Link off-taking from LBDC has also been remodelled and up-graded and now it can operate with 1,000 cusecs instead of the earlier designed capacity of 300 cusecs. The up-graded capacity was safely tested up to 700 cusecs during the previous kharif season.

Similarly, Gugera Branch and Gugera distributary with a total length of 308 RDs has been rehabilitated and operating at the authorised discharge of 850 cusecs. A new BS Link Head regulator with a capacity of 10,000 cusecs has been constructed to help transfer more water to Suleimanki Barrage for Bahawalpur Zone after remodeling of BS Link.

“The canals’ capacity was improved by removing the old concrete structures like bridges and falls to widen its narrow openings,” explains an official involved with the designing of the project.

He said that the concrete lining of distributaries with up to 50 cusecs capacity (tail portions of the water channels) has been done to improve water flow and lower maintenance costs as well as reduced efforts to de-silt the channels. The slope of the lining disallows buffaloes to sit in the channels and obstruct the water flow.

The bricked mogas (water outlets) have been replaced with concrete ones for better water flow and to check water theft, he adds.

Zahoor Ahmed, a progressive wheat and cotton grower from Sahiwal, is one of the beneficiaries of the improved water flows in Gugera distributary. According to him, the distributary was earlier run on a perennial basis i.e. water was supplied every alternate week. But, now there is no interruption in water supply for irrigation purposes.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1342851>

August 2017

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM AUGUST 21ST TO AUGUST 27 Th 2017

POISONED WATER

Dawn, August 25th, 2017

FOR decades it has been known that the drinking water of large populations across South Asia contains dangerous levels of arsenic, but now a new study has established that even in Pakistan the number of people exposed could be as high as 60m. Arsenic is a naturally occurring element, but many deeper aquifers are free from it, and much of the clay that forms the surface across many parts of South Asia has been naturally cleansed of it over a long period of time due to the passage of large amounts of water across the subcontinent every year.

The fact that it is now being found in dangerous quantities could well be connected to the growing amount of effluent that vents its own way into informal industrial clusters around the country. Whether found in agricultural chemicals or leather tanneries or dyes, arsenic once in the water supply will naturally leach into ground water. The deadliest avenue for its entry into the human body is through drinking water, which can carry it in quantities large enough to do serious health damage.

Now scientists from the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology tell us that after testing water from 1,200 wells around the country, from depths ranging from three to 70 metres, they found that almost two-thirds of them contained arsenic beyond 10 micrograms per litre, which WHO has recommended as the maximum permissible level. In many areas along the Indus, they found people consuming water with almost 200 micrograms of arsenic, while 50m to 60m people could be drinking water containing 50 micrograms of the deadly element. Arsenic poisoning can lead to skin lesions, cardiovascular disease and cancer.

It can also interfere with cognitive development. In short, the problem is vast and the public health risks it poses are serious. The good news is that it is relatively easy these days to treat water to remove arsenic. Usually a simple reverse osmosis filter can do the job, even the ones that are attached to individual taps at home. But for this to be a proper solution, the provincial governments need to pay more attention to water contamination from industrial and agricultural chemicals, and then ensure that filters are regularly replaced in treatment plants. This is by no means a difficult target, and the authorities must make it a priority.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1353809>

WATER MANAGEMENT, CONSERVATION: OVER 18,000 FARMERS ACQUIRE MODERN TECHNOLOGY
Business Recorder, August 23, 2017

ISLAMABAD: Speakers on Tuesday stressed the need for disseminating practices and technologies that could educate farmers about efficient use and storage of water for irrigation, contamination issues and loss of water.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony of water quality workshop, jointly organised by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), they said that such kind of events would play a vital role in creating awareness regarding efficient use of water by using modern technologies.

The workshop is also aimed to provide participants with an overview of water contamination issues, assessment and solution of low resources areas. Three experts from the United States Department of Agriculture and 85 senior officials and technical experts from the federal and provincial ministries, universities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are attending the events, which are organized by USDA and ICARDA.

David Williams, the US Embassy Agriculture Counsellor, while speaking on the occasion said that the Pakistan Water Dialogue Project helps farmers capture, store and use water more efficiently for agriculture. Under the project over 18,000 farmers have been trained regarding modern technologies and over 1,500 farmers have adopted these technologies, he said.

He said that water management, water conservation and the efficient use of water are very important. Chairman Pakistan Agricultural Research Centre, Dr Yousaf Zafar said the Ministry of National Food Security and Research (MNFS&R) will soon give a briefing to Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi on the whole gambit of agriculture sector.

He further said that the creation of the Ministry of Water Resources Development, which is separated from the Ministry of Water and Power, is a fundamental change brought by the government. The government considers agriculture as the backbone of the economy but funds allocated for this sector are very small which could not fulfil requirements, he said.

The USDA experts leading the workshops are Michael Kucera, an agronomist at USA Natural Resources Conservation Services, Jon Fripp, a stream mechanics civil engineer at USDA's Construction and Soil management Center, and Hilary Landfried, a programme manager with the US Foreign Agriculture Services Office of Capacity Building and Development.

For six years now, USDA with support from the United States Agency for International Development has worked to improve watershed rehabilitation and irrigation by promoting practices and technologies that assist in water and soil conservation.

USDA's work began in 2011 in partnership with ICARDA with a five-year programme to help rural farmers. The project established over 40 demonstration sites, published 150,000 brochures, held 240 farmers field days, and reached 14,000 farmers. Due to these efforts more than 1,500 farmers have already adopted one or more of the promoted technologies.

<http://fp.brecorder.com/2017/08/20170823211638/>

PTI'S MOTION AGAINST 'GRAFT' IN SAAF PANI PLAN

Dawn, August 24, 2017

LAHORE: The Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf on Wednesday submitted an adjournment motion to the Punjab Assembly seeking investigation into the Rs7 billion alleged misappropriation in the provincial government's SaafPani project.

In the motion, PTI MPA Shoaib Siddiqui stated that the Punjab government had suspended 12 SaafPani project officials after the corruption was reported. He said the government had decided to proceed against those officials and added that one of them had flown out of Pakistan.

With the beginning of the project, he said, the PTI leadership had objected to non-transparent working of the officials, besides payments to consultants and contractors beyond justification.

In his motion, Mr Siddiqui said the government also facilitated its 'blue-eyed' officers by offering jobs on lucrative packages making a dent in the provincial kitty. He demanded that the adjournment motion be taken up in the house for debate and all those found guilty of corruption be held accountable.

ELECTORAL REFORMS: PTI central Punjab president Abdul Aleem Khan has said the upcoming by-election in NA-120 and general elections 2018 cannot be held in a free, fair and transparent manner without the introduction of biometric system.

Speaking to media persons here on Wednesday, Mr Khan said the government seemed least interested in bringing about electoral reforms as the matter could not go beyond constituting committees and submitting recommendations.

Stating that India has already started biometric voting system, he said the Pakistan government had also got biometric verification for millions of mobile phone SIMS in a matter of few months.

Alleging that the PML-N has starting pre-poll rigging, Mr Khan, who is election campaign in-charge in NA-120, said the PML-N was using public resources for its candidate.

He claimed: "There is a severe loadshedding across the country but the uninterrupted power supply to the constituency has not only surprised PTI but the PML-N workers too."

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1353553>

COMMISSION SEEKS FINAL REPORT TO CURB WATER THEFT BY INDUSTRIES

The Express Tribune, August 27, 2017

NaeemSahoutara

KARACHI : The judicial commission sought on Saturday the final report regarding theft of water by industries in SITE area, due to which the domestic consumers are suffering.

Headed by Justice Muhammad Iqbal Kalhoro of the Sindh High Court, the commission also issued a notice to the provincial advocate-general to assist the court in passing appropriate order to root out the menace of water theft.

The commission was constituted by the Supreme Court (SC) to probe into the allegations regarding non-provision of clean drinking water, sanitation and its impact on the environment in the province.

On the last hearing, the commission had issued notices to the authorities and chairperson of the task force for their replies to the allegations made in a private complaint regarding theft of the water by the industries in SITE.

During Saturday's proceedings, the task force's chairperson, Jamal Mustafa Syed, filed a preliminary report in which he confirmed the theft of water in the SITE area. He requested for time to submit final proposal to curb the said menace.

Calling final report and proposal on the ways to curb this menace, the commission also put the Sindh advocate-general on notice to assist the commission in passing appropriate order to root out the menace from the SITE area, as it had been generally complained that due to pilferage of water by the industries, the people of the area were suffering for want of drinking water.

Earlier, the commission reserved its verdict after hearing arguments from the petitioner and the provincial advocate-general on the point whether or not the commission had jurisdictions to issue contempt of court notices to the government officers, who had, prima facie, failed to comply with the orders passed by the SC.

Appearing on the commission's notice, Dr Siraj Ahmed Abbasi, the director of the LINAR Cancer Hospital, Larkana, informed the court that the new incinerator to dispose of infectious waste has been purchased and will be installed within 10 to 15 days.

Dr Shahid, the director of NIMRA, Jamshoro, also told the court that presently they were disposing of the nuclear and other waste through the incinerator installed at the Liaquat University Hospital, Jamshoro. However, he assured that within a short span of time they will purchase their own incinerator.

The officers claimed that the water provided to the people in their hospitals was clean and drinkable, which could be verified in order to check the quality of drinking water in the federally administered hospitals in Sindh.

The commission tasked a senior researcher, Dr Ghulam Murtaza, who is a member of the task force, to visit all the federally administered hospitals and after verifying the quality of water there, submit his report to the commission within 15 days.

The focal person to the provincial chief secretary, Dr Saeed Ahmed Qureshy, said he will file a report in the coming week for implementing the master plan to plug the points discharging untreated municipal and other infectious effluent into the watery bodies.

The representatives of the Sukkur and Hyderabad electric power supply companies claimed that they had supplied electricity to all the water and drainage related schemes as per the list provided by the provincial public health engineering department (PHED). But since there was a dispute between the department concerned and local people on 10 schemes, the Hyderabad Electric Supply Company could not energise their connections, a representative said. The Sukkur Electric Power Company's representative also made the same statement in respect of one connection.

The commission asked the chief engineer to confirm the claim of the two power supply companies. The engineer undertook that within a short time, all the non-functional rural water supply scheme will be made fully functional to provide their fruits to the people. He also sought time to submit report regarding the current status of rural water

supply schemes, including the amount incurred in the annual development project on their rehabilitation and work done in this connection.

Justice Kalhoro also directed the PHED's secretary to submit a report on the current status of the treatment plant-I and II Shaheed Benazirabad and whether or not they had been operationalised in compliance with the commission's order. He also directed the district judge of Shaheed Benazirabad to visit the treatment plant and submit report on its current status.

The secretary of the provincial industries' department informed the commission that they had finalised a list categorising the industries into different classes, according to the level and volume of the effluent they were producing. According to him, within due time all such units will be notified by an action to control such effluent.

In terms of the commission's order dated August 12, Muhammad Waris, the project director Muhammad Yasir and Hussain Ismail, the deputy general-manager of the M/s Siemens, which is a contractor, informed the court that the filter plant at Golarchi was completed and had been handed over to the PHED. They agreed PHED Badin will take over the filter plant on August 28.

Justice Kalhoro directed them to ensure this was done in the presence of some representatives of the local government department, as it was informed that ultimately the said filter plant was to be run by the department.

The chief engineer also sought time to consider enhancing the capacity of four reverse osmosis plants installed in Badin, as it had been reported that due to a small storage tank on these points, they were not working according to their full capacity.

Justice Kalhoro noted that no progress report had so far been filed on tabling of the proposed law for regulating the water hydrants in Karachi or elsewhere.

The assistant advocate-general, Ghulam Mustafa Mahesar, said the proposed law had been submitted to the secretary law for final deliberations, however, yet it had not been placed before the Sindh Assembly.

The commission directed Sindh advocate-general to come prepared on the next date of hearing to reply to the queries of the commission on the issue that despite issuance of specific directions, the said law had not been tabled in the assembly for approval so far.

The health secretary also filed a report regarding supply of clean drinking water and management of the hospital waste in the hospitals of Sindh. However, he informed the court that the purchasing process of new incinerators was going on and within short time it was going to be finalised.

The commission directed the secretary to supervise quality of drinking water being supplied to the people in the hospitals and keep close liaison with the medical superintendents of the public health facilities for this purpose.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1491877/commission-seeks-final-report-curb-water-theft-industries/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM AUGUST 14TH TO AUGUST 20TH 2017
COURTING DISASTER

Dawn, August 18, 2017

Imaduddin Ahmed

The writer is pursuing a PhD in the economics of rural infrastructure.

SIXTEEN million people in Pakistan lack access to safe water. Scarcity of clean water and poor sanitation claim 19,000 children under five years of age in Pakistan annually, according to WaterAid. Per FAO/World Bank data, Pakistan's internal renewable freshwater per capita is less than that in Syria, whose civil war has in part been attributed to water scarcity.

The Pakistan Council for Research in Water Resources forecasts worsening scarcity. The way in which new hydroelectric plants on the Chenab and upstream Jhelum are operated by India could further exacerbate shortages.

Besides taking the legal action that the government is against India, Pakistan needs to reduce water wastage to prevent worsening scarcity; it must also widen access to potable water. Agriculture accounts for 97 per cent of Pakistan's water consumption, making it the natural place to look first for waste reduction.

To start, the government can minimise distribution losses along irrigation canals. Samplings by researchers at the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, suggest losses as high as two-thirds among unlined watercourses; lining seems to reduce losses by a fifth. Maintenance can also reduce residual losses. Despite being categorised as water scarce in 2005, rice-growers over-irrigate their fields, limiting productivity. Pakistan exports almost a quarter of its extracted groundwater through rice exports, which account for 7pc of the country's exports monetarily.

Unless the government starts taking steps to curb the over-tapping of groundwater for water-intensive crops such as rice, sugarcane and wheat, farmers will eventually be forced by a low water table and increased costs of extraction to find more sustainable ways of farming.

Given the right balance, strands of rice would not draw so heavily from groundwater. Our ancestors along the Indus had reason to farm it 4,500 years ago: it is resistant to monsoon floods. Poly-cropped in the summer alongside drought-resistant millet as well as protein-filled beans, rice strengthened the flood resistance of millet, now largely perceived as birdseed, but a cereal worth the government's time to market for human consumption once again. As a cover-crop, it increases rainfall infiltration and retention.

Waste reduction alone, however, will not increase access to potable water to those currently without. This is where technological innovation should play a role.

Farmers in the dry hills above Lima, Peru, harvest their morning fog using nets. Nets stretched vertically between poles catch 200 to 400 litres of non-precipitating droplets per day, which are then carried by gutters to storage containers. As in the case of Lima, Karachi, which is home to perhaps a tenth of the total population of the country, sits on the coast and is humid year-round, but the bulk of precipitation is confined to just three months. The water is not potable, but given the low cost of erecting nets in open spaces and on rooftops, it is worth seeing whether yields would be sufficient to wash and cook with.

Desalination plants can cater to household demand for water in coastal Karachi and Gwadar. There are challenges. For instance, the fault, given the unhappy experience in Gwadar, probably lies with the public administration and concerns technical assets, because a private plant has been selling water to the government using a desalination plant.

Atmospheric water generators can provide cost-effective drinking water to isolated communities in humid climates. The devices condense water from the air by one of three methods: cooling the air below its dew point, exposing it to desiccants, or pressurising it. The condensed water can be disinfected by oxidation and exposure to ultraviolet light, and rendered potable by adding minerals.

Commercial units that cost \$55,000 produce up to 40 litres an hour of drinking water in ideal conditions. Consuming 8-12kW of power per hour, the units could be solar powered, which would make them suitable for catering to rural

communities without electricity, but would also add considerably to capital costs. Until the Pakistani market sees proof of atmospheric water generators' commercial viability, Wapda would do well to demonstrate it.

Recent findings by paleoclimatologists have identified the same beginning of the end for the Indus Valley Civilisation as Bronze Age civilisations in Egypt, Greece and Mesopotamia: drought. The government must coordinate a response to prevent this. It must maintain its own water distribution channels and penalise heavily private parties who do not maintain theirs, regulate groundwater use and look to the sea and skies. Water is in the air. It offers more than a drop to drink.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1352187>

COUNTRY BRACES FOR WATER SHORTAGE AGAIN THIS YEAR

The Express Tribune, August 18, 2017

SehrishWasif

ISLAMABAD: After claiming over 120 lives across Pakistan, monsoon season has now entered its weaker phase. This year Pakistan has received below normal rains during the monsoon season and it is expected that in the coming days the amount and intensity of rainfall will decline further, triggering water scarcity in the country by the end of this year.

According to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) so far 126 people have reportedly been killed, 158 have suffered injuries while 401 houses have been damaged in different rain-related incidents across Pakistan since June 26 to August 17 this year. Out of the total number of people killed, 33 were children and 15 were women.

Highest number of casualties was reported from Punjab where the death toll has reached 33, followed by K-P 28, Balochistan 26, Fata 18, G-B eight, Sindh six, AJK four and ICT three.

Director General Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) Dr Ghulam Rasul told The Express Tribune that "After mid of August, monsoon season has entered a weaker phase and few rain spells are expected till the season ends next month."

He said that this year climate change has had major impact on monsoon season in Pakistan and an opposite trend was witnessed during the last two months.

"Mostly monsoon season gets active in August in Pakistan but this year it was highly active in July and in this month it has entered a weaker phase," he said.

Sharing the overall progress of monsoon this year he said that during the July 1 and August 15 period rainfall in the country as a whole remained below its normal level.

Meanwhile during the past two weeks, on regional scale, rainfall has been observed below normal over almost all regions except G-B and K-P where it remained above and close to normal respectively, according to the Met office.

He further said that a few spells of rain are expected in the coming days and it might not be enough to accumulate water that will last till the end of the year.

"Last year in September there were not enough rains in Pakistan due to which the country faced severe water crisis which continued till January this year," said Rasul.

This year no doubt, two main water reservoirs reached their maximum level but now the water inflow in both of these water reservoirs has started declining because temperatures in northern areas have started to drop, he said.

“The stored water will be used in huge quantity for irrigation and power generation, leaving behind little amount to be used for other purposes,” he added.

This year the country has not yet experienced any massive riverine flooding so far.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1484343/country-braces-water-shortage-year/>

IRSA RELEASES 60,000 CUSECS WATER FROM DAMS

Business Recorder, August 19, 2017

M Rafique Goraya

LAHORE: As the monsoon has entered in a weaker phase after mid-August in Pakistan the water flows in four rivers have sharply dropped forcing the Indus River System Authority to release 60,000 cusecs water from the dams to meet urgent irrigation water needs for growing/maturing the strategic cash Kharif crops that are at a critical stage of their maturity across the country.

Sounding a bit worried, Punjab Irrigation Engineers told Business Recorder on Friday that flow in the mighty Indus river has dropped to 1,57,700 from the expected 2,36,000 cusecs, in river Kabul from 47,000 cusecs to 26,800 cusecs, in river Jhelum from 38,000 cusecs to 18,800 cusecs and in the river Chenab from 85,000 cusecs to 58,000 cusecs.

They said that instead of keeping the reservoirs filled for sowing the Rabbi crops in October / November, the national water regulatory body has decided to give priority to the growth / maturity of summer crops including cotton, rice, sugarcane, maize, fodder crops for livestock, vegetables, fruit orchards etc and meet water indents of the provinces.

IRSA is thus releasing 53,000 cusecs water from the Tarbela dam and 5,000 cusecs from the Mangla dam on the Jhelum river to meet the shortfall. Mangla reservoir is still 7 ft below its maximum conservation level of 1242 ft above the sea level.

They said Punjab has put up an indent of 34,000 cusecs of water and Sindh province has sent its indent of 1,70,000 cusecs to be drawn from the Indus river downstream the Guddu barrage in upper Sindh.

However, in view of unexpected drop of flows in the four live rivers, Sindh province will reduce its indent to the minimum level, they hoped.

According to the Pakistan Meteorological department rainfall update till 15th August, during the period 1st July to 15th August, rainfall over the country as whole has been below to its normal value (-27 percent)

During past two weeks, on regional scale, rainfall has been observed below normal over almost all regions except GB & KPK where it has been above and close to normal respectively.

In month of July, on regional scale, rainfall was observed below normal over almost all regions except Sindh where it was close to normal.

Weather Forecast for today: Mainly hot and humid weather is expected in most part of the country. However, rain-thunderstorm is expected at isolated places in Malakand, Hazara, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala divisions, Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir.

WATER RESOURCES, TAX POLICY SHOULD BE AMONG TOP PRIORITIES

The Express Tribune, August 21, 2017

Dr Manzoor Ahmad

ISLAMABAD: Immediately after assuming his office, Prime Minister ShahidKhaqanAbbasi assured the nation that he was not there to merely keep the seat warm, but would do the work of months in the number of days available.

Early signs are that he is keeping his word. His immediate decisions to create the Ministry of Energy by merging petroleum and power, merging textiles with commerce and creating a Ministry for Water Resources were much needed and widely welcomed.

Also by not getting involved with minor issues such as granting permission to government officials to travel abroad would mean that he would be able to focus on bigger issues facing the country.

Some of these larger issues are well known and have been priority areas of PML-N since the party assumed power in 2013. These include the energy crisis, overcoming terrorism and setting the economy on a growth path.

In each of these areas, there has been a considerable progress, although it will be a while before these are satisfactorily resolved to allow us to lower our guard.

However, there were some other important areas where either the government did not focus or has not been able to make any progress. These include worsening water scarcity, repressive tax policy and consequential dwindling exports, standstill of privatisation and archaic bureaucracy.

Numerous consultants and others have studied these issues in depth and submitted their reports. These reports have been reviewed several times, but no decisions have been taken for their implementation.

Even if these decisions cannot be implemented within the short time before the coming elections, setting of the right direction would be a big step forward. Here are four priority areas and suggested course of action.

Water scarcity in Pakistan is one of the most serious issues, but has received very little attention.

According to International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates, demand for water is projected to reach 274 million acre-feet (MAF) by 2025, while supply is expected to remain stagnant at 191 MAF, resulting in a demand-supply gap of approximately 83 MAF.

Such a scenario could threaten all aspects of the national economy and unity. Experts have been urging successive governments to urgently develop an integrated approach to water resource management to cope with the impending crisis.

The current government has been deliberating on a national water policy for the last four years, but has not been able to finalise it. Now that we have a dedicated Ministry of Water Resources, it should be able to give a forward-looking national policy within a matter of weeks.

Pakistan has one of the poorest tax systems in the world. It is complex, non-transparent, unjust and anti-growth.

Despite having the highest tax rates in the world, the country's tax revenue as a proportion of gross domestic product (GDP) of around 11% is among the lowest.

Due to various regulatory duties and surcharges, Pakistan has become one of the least competitive countries with a very high anti-export bias.

Similarly, the cost of exports/imports exceeds 15% of the value of goods. This is far more than the tariffs we pay in other markets.

If we can simplify the systems and make them more transparent, this could considerably improve our doing business ranking, revive exports and attract higher foreign direct investment.

In its previous tenures, the PML-N government had a good track record of privatization, but this time around it failed to deliver much.

At the beginning of the year, the government made a firm commitment to privatise at least three major public sector entities ie Pakistan Steel Mills (PSM), Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) and the Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) by June 2017. All the groundwork was done, but with no result.

If the current government is able to sell any of these or other state-owned enterprises, it could bring the budget deficit down and add much-needed resources to the government exchequer.

The current working of the government is seriously outdated and a major hindrance to development.

A National Commission for Government Reforms, headed by DrIshrat Husain, had carried out extensive studies and consultations with various stakeholders over a period of almost 10 years. An action plan is ready for implementation.

According to authors of the report, the reform recommendations can be implemented without much difficulty. These reforms could greatly help bring in professionalism, improve delivery of services and accountability.

While there are many other areas in need of reforms, these four are comparatively low hanging fruits, but with the greatest impact. Since considerable spadework has already been done in all these areas, no further studies are needed.

What is required is a final review of the recommendations and their implementation.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1486800/water-resources-tax-policy-among-top-priorities/>

15 PROJECTS WORTH RS43BN APPROVED

Dawn, August 22, 2017

KhaleeqKiani

ISLAMABAD: The Central Development Working Party (CDWP) on Monday cleared a total of 15 development projects at an estimated cost of Rs42.7 billion.

Presided over by the Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission, Sartaj Aziz, the meeting formally approved 13 projects with a total cost of Rs12.3bn. Because of limitations of financial powers, the CDWP also recommended to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec) to approve three more projects involving a total cost of Rs30.6bn.

Under the current financial powers rules, the CDWP can itself approve projects costing no more than Rs3bn while projects of higher estimated costs are approved by the Ecneec on the clearance of the CDWP on technical grounds.

The meeting gave a concept clearance of Rs892.5 million for the establishment of Pakistan Glacier Monitoring Network, proposed by the water and power division and Rs15.750bn towards a technical study, to assess the commercial potential of coal in Harnai, Balochistan.

The CDWP recommended a Rs12.8bn project for upgradation and extension of supervisory control and data acquisition for approval to the Ecneec. It also requested Ecneec approve a Rs19.5bn project for rehabilitation of provincial roads under an Asian Development Bank funded programme for the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government. The KP government would meet partial funding requirements through its own annual development plan.

The CDWP referred a Rs5.857bn project to Ecneec for Defence Production Division for infrastructure upgradation of Karachi Shipyard and Engineering Works. The project is expected to be completed in 36 months and help underwater repair of ships and submarines and rehabilitation of two dry docks. The project is also expected to improve security and control system and underwater surveillance technology.

In the energy sector, the CDWP approved an Rs835.9m project for detailed exploration of uranium resources in Bannu Basin and Kohat Plateau Phase-III. The project will also involve a foreign exchange component of Rs165m. The project is aimed at a detailed examination of uranium resources by Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) in the areas of Kaisur and Marwat ranges of Bannu and Kohat.

The meeting also approved another PAEC project for National Tokamak Fusion Programme worth Rs423.5m.

In the food and agriculture sectors, the CDWP approved a PAEC project of Rs422m for the extension of Nuclear Institute of Agriculture. The project is aimed at improving the living standards of farmers by improving their technical skills and inputs.

The CDWP approved a Rs1.720 billion Ministry of Railways project for the complete track renewal by replacing metal sleepers in connection with signaling project on Lodhran-Shahdra section, near Lahore. The project is expected to revive the basic structure of the track and installation of modern signaling system.

The meeting approved four projects in the Higher Education system at a cumulative cost of Rs5.257bn. These included an Rs524.26m project for the provision of an academic block at Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak with a foreign exchange component of Rs223m.

Another Rs894m project was approved for establishment of women sub campus of Swat University in Mingoro while Rs1.6bn project for development and improvement of academic facilities at Ghazi University of Dera Ghazi Khan was also approved. This would also involve Rs205m of foreign funding.

A Rs2.2bn project for the Higher Education Commission was approved by the CDWP for setting up of Women University Campus at Pishin and Khuzdar, Balochistan.

Four projects with a total cost of Rs3.546bn were approved for Physical Planning and Housing Sector. This included a Rs2.2bn project for construction of accommodation of Frontier Corps Headquarters KP South at Dera Ismail Khan and a Rs1.067bn worth of construction of accommodation for three wings at UrsoonChitral, TrippamanDir and Angoor Ada South Waziristan Agency.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1353010>

PROPOSED FISCAL PANEL, WATER POLICY TOP AGENDA

Business Recorder, August

Mushtaq Ghumman

The Council of Common Interests (CCI) will approve the establishment of the long-proposed Inter-provincial Fiscal Coordination Committee and discuss the national water policy with an integrated water resource management regime next Monday.

According to a summary sent by then federal secretary finance, Dr Waqar Masood, on July 14, 2016 fiscal consolidation is an important prerequisite for achieving macrocosmic stability and promoting growth in the country. However, in a federation, federal government alone cannot achieve fiscal goals. Fiscal policies of both the federal and provincial governments should complement each other.

Finance Ministry argued that to ensure consistency and harmony in the fiscal policies of the federal and provincial government, there is a need to have close coordination amongst them.

In order to institute appropriate coordination mechanism, Finance Ministry has proposed a Fiscal Coordination Committee (FCC) with the following composition and Terms of Reference (ToR): (i) Federal Finance Secretary-Chairman; (ii) Chairman FBR-Member; (iii) Special Secretary Finance-Member; (iv) Director General (Debt)-Member; (v) Finance Secretaries of all provinces-Members and; (vi) Joint Secretary (PF)-Member/Convener.

Terms and Reference of the FCC will be: (a) to review and discuss fiscal policy of the federal and provincial governments and suggest suggestions; (b) to monitor current and development expenditure of federal and provincial governments; (c) to discuss the issue relating to FBR; (d) to review debt stock of the federal and provincial governments in the respective FRDL Act; (e) to discuss the position of provincial own receipts and suggest measures for enhancement of the provincial revenues and; (f) to review cash balances of the federal and provincial governments. The committee shall meet at least on quarterly basis or as and when required.

National Water Policy: Pakistan is an agrarian economy that is heavily dependent on the water of its rivers, mainly for agriculture (95 percent) and hydropower generation. It has the largest contiguous irrigation system in the world which commands an area of 42 Million Acre Feet (MAF) of water annually and the average annual canal withdrawal is 104 MAF. The system also utilizes an estimated 50 MAF of ground water pumped through more than 600,000 tube wells (mostly private) to supplement the canal supplies.

Water is, however, a finite resource, progressively becoming scarcer due to persistent increases in its competing demands. Pakistan is now ranked as a water scarce country with annual water availability less than 1,000 cubic meters per person as compared to 5,260 cubic meters per year at the time of independence. Because of growing population, per capita water availability is likely to further decline to 860 cubic meters per year in 2025, representing acute water shortage conditions. In such a scenario it becomes imperative to ensure water security in the country through a consensus policy document that outlines an integrated water management strategy for implementing appropriate adaptation measures to ensure water, food and energy security for the country as well as for minimizing the impact of natural disasters.

In order to take cognizance of the existing situation and to provide guidelines for future plan of actions a comprehensive National Water Policy (NWP) has been prepared after extensive consultations and deliberations with all key stakeholders. The policy prescribes an Integrated Water Resources Management Regime, its prime objectives.

Initial draft of Pakistan's National Water Policy was prepared in 2005 which could not get approval at that time. Later on, in the aftermath of 2010 floods, it was decided to update NWP by taking stock of the latest developments in the water sector, especially climate change and its impact on water resources. The Policy document was accordingly updated after detailed consultations and deliberations with key stakeholders and was sent to Ministry of Law & Justice in October 2012 for vetting and advice. Ministry of Law & Justice, in December 2012, advised to finalize the Policy in consultation with the provinces through Ministry of Inter Provincial Coordination.

The draft NWP was circulated to all major stakeholders in July 2015. After a series of consultative sessions, organized in Islamabad and all the provincial capitals, and on the basis of the inputs received from the stakeholders on various occasions, necessary refinements were made in the policy document after thorough analysis by the relevant experts.

A final consultative seminar on draft NWP was organized by Ministry of Water & Power on November 28, 2016, at Islamabad. The seminar was attended by representatives of federal and provincial governments/Gilgit-Baltistan, AJ&K, FATA and other concerned stakeholders. Views/comments offered by the participants were discussed in detail with the team of water and policy experts and agreed amendments/refinements were duly incorporated in the Policy document.

Water and Power Ministry has reiterated that the objective of the National Water Policy is to provide guidelines and a road map for development and management of the precious national water resource. The policy document will, in fact, encourage and guide the provinces to align their water use and management practices with the national perspective. The CCI will consider the finalized document of National Water Policy

<http://fp.brecorder.com/2017/08/20170822211388/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM AUGUST 7TH TO AUGUST 13 Th 2017

SINDH GOVT'S CONTROL OF DARAWAT DAM NOT IN SIGHT

Dawn, The Business and Finance Weekly, August 7th, 2017

Mohammad Hussain Khan

RAINFALL last year and this monsoon has filled Darawat Dam to a level where water flows could be released for irrigating the command area spread over 25,000 acres.

Since this command area is not connected with off-taking canal of the dam through watercourses, an ad-hoc arrangement has been made to ensure water supply at least to small farmers to enable them cultivate winter and summer crops. Farmers are using pipes to lift water downstream of the dam.

The dam, a federally funded project, was completed in August 2014 by a Chinese company. Its construction started during the previous government's tenure in January 2010. It is located some 135 kilometres north-east of Karachi and 70km west of Hyderabad, and is built on Nai Baran, a hill torrent in Jamshoro district.

Spread over 10,500 acres, the dam's reservoir area upstream lies in Jamshoro district with a storage capacity of 121,600 acre-feet.

At present, 33,000 acre-feet of water is available in the reservoir. The level, which was 50,800 acre-feet in August 2016, has dropped after flows were ensured for cultivation of onion and wheat crops during the last year. Presently, farmers are getting water for cotton and vegetable sowing.

Zahid Sheikh, superintending engineer at the Sindh irrigation department, says a study on the topography of the dam's command area is under way to assess which kind of high efficiency system — sprinkler or drip — suits this rain-fed area considering the fact how water travels in the hilly terrain.

While the Sindh government has to build an irrigation system, the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) is also in the process of bidding two pilot projects on 10 acres each to be connected with drip and sprinkler systems on farmers' land to see results of per-acre productivity.

The dam's project director, Iqbal Sheikh, says bidding is already under way for this purpose but it is not part of the whole project which stands completed. The pilot projects would be completed in one and a half years and would be monitored by Wapda.

The project is reported have hit by cost overruns, and Wapda is seeking a second revision of its PC-I, a project document which covers almost all aspects of the project.

The first revision of the PC-I was approved at Rs9.3 billion by the federal government after it was conceived at Rs3.175bn in September 2009. PC-I would now be revised at Rs11.67bn by the Executive Committee of National Economic Council.

An amount of Rs6.37 billion has been paid to the dam's Chinese contractor whose liabilities have now accumulated. Sources say the federal government has earmarked Rs800m for the project under the current fiscal year's Public Sector Development Programme.

Wapda has set up 73 outlets with a main line canal and three distributaries that can irrigate 25,000 acres on the right and left banks of the canal that has a designed discharge of 156 cubic feet per second (cusecs) and stretches over nearly 46km.

The entire command area is to be connected with watercourses to be built by the irrigation department. Smallholders say that with the current storage they are able to grow wheat and onion since October 2016.

Dasrat Kumar, a farmer of the area, says that presently more than 1,500 acres of land is being cultivated and the farmers' produce finds its way to Karachi, mostly through the middleman as farmers get payment in advance to buy inputs.

Another elderly farmer, Noor Ahmed, says that the "rate of evaporation and water losses remains very high as our land in this hilly tract remains dry most of the year".

Irrigation officials say the department does not seem to take control of the dam even by early next year as it lacks expertise to operate a dam like Darawat.

The provincial irrigation department has built small dams in Karachi, Jamshoro, Dadu and Tharparkar. With monsoon rains in their catchment, small dams always help recharge groundwater aquifer, enabling growers to pump water for crop cultivation and livestock rearing in rain-dependent areas.

According to the original PC-I of the dam, Wapda would be establishing pilot projects of high efficiency system on 10 acres each for orchard and vegetables cultivation. Farmers would provide land and Wapda would bear the cost of inputs while its produce would be given to framers.

Sources say that even if Wapda met pending targets of pilot projects of sprinkler and drip, the irrigation department would not be in a position to get control of Darawat Dam unless a full-fledged division, with both staff and officers, was established in the department to run the dam on a permanent basis.

This can only be done through the approval of a summary of new establishment by the Sindh government, which is not likely until early next year, they say.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1350114>

SECURITY THREATS BY INDIAN BORDER TEAM: WORK ON GULPUR HYDROPOWER PROJECT HALTED

Mushtaq Ghumman

ISLAMABAD: The Engineering, Procurement & Construction Contractor for 102MW Gulpur Hydropower Project has stopped construction activities and evacuated the project site due to recent security threats posed by Indian Border Action Team.

Daelim Industrial Co Ltd of South Korea leading the joint venture for the construction left the project site Sunday morning by evacuating all the foreigners and local employees for their safety and security.

The 102MW Gulpur Hydropower Project is located in district Kotli of Azad Jammu & Kashmir and so far forty percent of the project progress has been achieved. The project is being implemented by Mira Power Limited a subsidiary of KOEN, Daelim and Lotte.

Despite the efforts of concerned law enforcement agencies to beef up the security of the Project, the contractor decided to evacuate project site as the safety of his employees was paramount and any mishap may lead to divestment of the efforts made by Daelim to secure other projects in Azad Jammu & Kashmir.

An unconventional threat where Indian BAT is planning to target Gulpur Hydropower Project by planting IEDs has never been received before nor has any development project been the target of such a threat. Concerns escalated when Indian print and electronic media launched a propaganda campaign maintaining that Daelim has backed out from the ongoing projects as IFC, ADB and KEXIM Bank expressed their inability to finance the project in disputed area of Jammu & Kashmir.

Korean investors also feel discriminated against as projects under CPEC are being looked after by special security force/division of armed forces formulated under CPEC agreement between Pakistan and China whereas Koreans are left at the mercy of untrained policemen. The dilemma is Korean investors are also forced to pay the salaries and perks to the policemen deployed to provide security whereas in case of CPEC projects NEPRA has recently approved security cost for CPEC projects.

Daelim along with other South Korean companies are determined to harvest the hydropower potential in Azad Jammu & Kashmir for which due diligence study of 500MW Chakothi Hattian Hydropower Project located in district Hattian has been completed and issuance of LOS is under process. The estimated project cost would be 1.3 billion dollars and project is expected to be completed in 6 years.

Daelim along with Korea Hydro & Nuclear Power Company and Lotte Engineering and Construction Company has been awarded LOI for 350MW Authmuqam Hydropower Project located in district Authmuqam of Azad Jammu & Kashmir. The feasibility study is underway and consortium is determined to implement the project on fast track basis. The estimated project cost is 875 million dollars and the project is expected to be completed in 5 years.

When contacted one of the members working on the project confirmed that the contractor has left the site after receiving the threat alert.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/08/07/1-page/896979-news.html>

BUSINESS COMMUNITY REJECTS RAISE IN WATER TARIFFS
Business Recorder, 7 August 2017

PESHAWAR: Business community has rejected the increase in water bills and refused to pay the fee to water and sanitation services Peshawar (WSSP) and asked for immediate withdrawal of increase in water fee.

Peshawar Chamber of Small Traders and Industries President Haji Shakeel Ahmed Khan, Vice President Haji Ihtesham Haleem, Anjuman-e-Tajiran provincial President Malik Mehr Ilahi in a joint statement said that the water rate had increased 600 percent.

They said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf provincial government had claimed that change would be brought in fate of the people but it brought the only change that increased water rate and increased financial burden on the poor people.

Sharing details with newsmen, Malik Mehr Ilashi said that till now the consumers were paying Rs1320 for per connection of water for six months which was increased up to Rs8820 for six months from August 2017. He said that the water rate had been increased last month but traders had protested and thus the decision was withdrawn.

He said that Chief Minister Pervez Khattak and Local Government Minister Inayatullah Khan should take notice of the problems and reservations of the poor consumers and withdraw the increase otherwise the consumers would not pay the fee.

Malik said that the business community had the option to protest if government failed to accept the demands. Criticizing role of WSSP had failed to serve the citizens despite spending billions of rupees. He said the merger of Peshawar Municipal Corporation in the WSSP was a blunder on part of the government as it spent billions of rupees but no change was felt in the cleanliness, water supply system in the city.

Besides, he also pointed out that the water supplied to consumers was contaminated and causing various fatal diseases. He said most of the pipelines were leaked and had posed serious threat to lives of the people.

The traders' leader urged the government to implement the water supply plan which had been decided some years ago so that the people would get clean drinking water from Warsak canal on reasonable rate.

He said that if the government did not take practical steps for provision of clean drinking water then the people would not pay the water bill and in case of any protest the WSSP would be held responsible.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/08/07/5-page/896821-news.html>

TWO SIBLINGS DIE AFTER DRINKING CONTAMINATED SPRING WATER

Dawn, August 9th, 2017

MANSEHRA: Two siblings died and three more were hospitalised after they drank contaminated water from a spring in Khabal village of Oghi tehsil here on Tuesday.

“We declared emergency in local hospitals following the death of two siblings over the consumption of a spring’s contaminated water as suggested by preliminary investigation,” district health officer Dr Shahzad Ali Khan told reporters.

Five children of Gulab Khan had fetched water from a spring close to their Khabal village. They all fell ill after consuming that water and were shifted the Charbagh basic health unit, where two, including Sadia, 11, and Mohammad Safdar, 3, died.

The rest, including Mohammad Akhtar, Gul Nawaz and Maimoona, were referred to the King Abdullah Teaching Hospital, Mansehra, where the condition of Gul Nawaz was reported to be critical.

The DHO said following the deaths, villagers used mosque loudspeakers to warn others against using the spring’s water.

He said the department had begun investigation to ascertain the cause of the deaths.

“Besides other possibilities, we are also investigating if something poisonous was added to the spring,” he said.

Dr Shahzad said a team of sanitation workers and medics had been dispatched to the village, while an extra supply of medicines had been sent to the hospitals.

He said the department had collected samples of the spring’s water, which would be sent to the National Institute of Health, Islamabad, for detailed laboratory examination.

The DHO said the people of Khabal and adjoining villages were being educated on the ways to maintain hygiene to prevent outbreak of gastroenteritis.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1350519>

VILLAGERS ALLOW CHINESE FIRM TO WORK ON DASU DAM

Dawn, August 10th, 2017

MANSEHRA: A delegation of the district administration, local elders and Wapda on Wednesday persuaded the people of Barseen Pain area to allow a Chinese company to carry out work on Dasu dam in their village.

The villagers had stopped the company’s engineers and labourers from working on the 4200 megawatt hydropower project earlier in the year to claim better price for their land and employment for local residents.

A delegation led by Dasu assistant commissioner Mohammad Ayaz and consisting of Chinese engineers and local committee members Ghulab Khan, Shamur Rehman and Abdul Rasheed, visited Barseen Pain village and met local elders.

Mr Ayaz told villagers that the government was seriously considering their demands, especially about better price for their land to be acquired for the project, and jobs for locals in the dam project, and therefore, they shouldn’t create hurdles to the project.

The villagers welcomed the visit and said they won’t hamper the project’s execution by the Chinese company.

POWER CUTS PROTESTED: The people on Wednesday took to the streets against the prolonged and unscheduled power cuts in Ichrian area here.

The protesters shouted slogans against the Pesco and federal government and demanded smooth electric supply and end to low voltage.

Councillor Fayaz Ahmad Khan, who was in attendance, said the excessive power cuts had paralysed life in the region.

He said the electricity’s suspension lasted more than 14 hours daily and once the electric supply was restored, voltage was low damaging electric appliances.

The councillor warned the people would block the Karakoram Highway for indefinite period if the Pesco didn’t end prolonged power outages.

The protesters later dispersed peacefully after station house officer of Baffa Shafique Rehman told them he would speak to the Pesco executive engineer for corrective measures.

Meanwhile, the visitors to the open forum organised here by the police complained about the poor performance of the policemen. Haq Nawaz alleged that the local police supported the killers of his sister, who had kidnapped his brother, too, to pressure the family for out-of-court settlement.

Another resident, Inayatur Rehman, complained about high incidence of robberies, while Bashir Ahmad insisted that the Butdarian refugee camp, which was recently abandoned by repatriating Afghans, was occupied by criminals showing the police's inefficiency.

District police officer Ahsan Saifullah told participants that he had ordered the holding of the event to know the people's opinion about the performance of the police to ensure corrective steps.

He said he would hold such open forums in the jurisdictions of all police stations.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1350679>

PM ORDERS TIMELY COMPLETION OF HYDROELECTRIC POWER PROJECTS

The Express Tribune August 12, 2017

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi directed on Friday the recently created Ministry of Water Resources to focus on ongoing development projects and ensure their timely completion.

Chairing a meeting on the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) affairs at the PM Office, he said the new ministry has been constituted to resolve issues related to water storage and supply more efficiently.

“We must make the Ministry of Water Resources productive and renew our efforts in this regard,” the prime minister said, noting that water security has been neglected in the past with hydroelectric power generation gaining the entire focus.

Wapda Chairman Lt General (Retired) Muzammil Hussain presented an overview of current operations and briefed the prime minister on the ongoing water and power projects.

He also informed the PM on the status of planned projects with special focus on water resource management. Hussain assured him that all the strategic projects conceived by the present government are on targets in terms of timelines.

The meeting was informed that among the ongoing projects, Kachhi Canal was ready for inauguration. The government plans to irrigate 72,000 acres of land in Dera Bugti through the canal, whose construction cost has increased over the past 15 years.

The prime minister expressed satisfaction over the project and said the entire demography of Dera Bugti and other regions of Balochistan would improve once virgin lands are irrigated.

The Wapda chairman also briefed the meeting on the 969-megawatt (MW) Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project and said the first unit of the plant would be commissioned on schedule in February 2018.

Regarding the 1,410MW Tarbela IV Extension, the chairman informed the premier that its first unit would be ready for generation by February 2018, second by April 2018 and the third by May 2018.

The meeting was also briefed on the progress of other planned projects including Dasu Hydropower Project and Diamer-Basha Dam project. The prime minister directed Wapda to prevent frequent cost escalations without compromising on the quality of projects.

He also directed the officials to constantly monitor the progress of planned projects and ensure discussion on the projects during the next meeting of the Council of Common Interests to thrash out consensus on the outstanding issues.

“Our focus on Diamer-Bhasha must be renewed and all the bottlenecks must be removed,” the prime minister said, adding that indecision is out of the option.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1479488/pm-orders-timely-completion-hydroelectric-power-projects/>

KACHHI CANAL PROJECT TO BE COMMISSIONED BY END-AUGUST

Business Recorder, 13 August 2017

LAHORE: Following the delay of more than a decade, the construction of Kachhi Canal Project will finally be completed by the third week of August followed by filling of water to test the main canal and its structures.

A formal commissioning of Kachhi Canal is scheduled by the end of August 2017 with release of water into the distribution system for irrigation of 72,000 acres of virgin land in Dera Bugti district of Balochistan province.

This was informed to the Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) Chairman Lt Gen Muzammil Hussain (retd) in a meeting held Saturday to review progress on the project.

Speaking on the occasion, WAPDA Chairman said that it is a matter of great satisfaction that Kachhi Canal, started 15 years ago, was almost an abandoned project owing to certain reasons, gross cost overrun and long delays being the major contributing factors. However, the project was revitalized due to active support of the incumbent Federal Government and commitment of WAPDA team, the engineers in particular. It is indeed heartening to note that the project is finally going to see light of the day after a long period of 15 years, the Chairman added.

It is worth mentioning that Kachhi Canal project is of immense importance for development of water infrastructure and irrigated agriculture in Balochistan. Kachhi Canal Project is being completed with a cost of about Rs.80 billion. The 363-Kilometer long main canal (out of which 351-Kilometer is lined canal) takes off from Taunsa Barrage in Muzaffar Garh district of Punjab province and ends at Dera Bugti district in Balochistan province. Discharge capacity of the main canal is 6000 cusecs. As many as 914 structures have been constructed at or over the main canal including head and cross regulators, road and railways bridges, cross drainage and escape structures and watercourse crossings etc.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/08/13/2-page/898450-news.html>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM AUGUST 1ST TO AUGUST 6TH 2017

WATER CHANNEL COST REVISED AFTER STUDY, PA TOLD

Dawn, August 1st, 2017

KARACHI: A scheme for the construction of water channel from Left-Bank Outfall Drain to Nabisar for Thar Coal Power Generation Unit was approved by the federal government at an initial cost of Rs5 billion without any detailed survey or site study of the project.

The scheme, which was prepared by the Thar Coal and Energy Board of the provincial energy department, was transferred to the irrigation department that engaged consultants and got it revised though the cost reached Rs12.472bn.

This was stated by Senior Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Nisar Ahmad Khuhro while responding to the question of MQM lawmaker Heer Soho during the Question Hour in the Sindh Assembly on Monday.

Mr Khuhro said this scheme was necessary for power generation from Thar coal. It was transferred to the irrigation department that engaged consultants who after a field survey prepared the revised PC-I as per directive of the Sindh government. The revised PC-I after examination by the provincial, central working party and ECNEC was cleared for execution.

In reply to another question of Ms Soho, the minister said there was no solar energy scheme costing Rs90 million under execution in Larkana.

Responding to the question of Nusrat Abbasi of the PML-F, Mr Khuhro said the issue raised by some claimants of land at the Bhit gas field-1 in Dadu district had been settled. He said that M/s ENI Pakistan had approached Hyderabad commissioner for assistance in the removal of impediment. The claims were proved false, as the wells were drilled on government land, he added.

Many members, through supplementary questions, asked about the use of the royalty from the oil fields. Mr Khuhro said the Sindh government had prepared a resettlement framework for the affectees of Thar coal with Rs670m, while Rs530m was paid for 2,800 acres and quarters were being built for each affected family for their rehabilitation.

In a proposed residential colony, schools, hospital, roads, markets, community centres, mosques, temples, reverse osmosis plants and other facilities would also be provided. The minister added that most of the affected families were from Thar Coal block II.

In response to the question of MQM lawmaker Kamran Akhtar, the minister said that no appointment was made during year 2016-17.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1348876>

PAKISTAN, INDIA CONCLUDE WATER TALKS IN WASHINGTON

Dawn, August 02, 2017

Anwar Iqbal

WASHINGTON: Pakistan and India concluded the much-delayed water talks in the US capital on Tuesday, raising hopes that they would avoid further tensions over an issue that has far-reaching consequences for both.

Secretary Water and Power Yousaf Naseem Khokhar led the Pakistani delegation, which included technical experts from his ministry.

Ambassador Aizaz Ahmed Chaudhary also attended the two-day talks held at the World Bank headquarters in Washington.

Secretary Ministry of Water Resources Dr Amarjit Singh headed the Indian delegation, which also included representatives of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

The Washington meeting was part of the World Bank's efforts to resolve a dispute over Kishanganga and Ratle hydroelectricity projects that India is building in the occupied Kashmir. Pakistan opposes the two projects, saying that the plans violate the 1960 Indus Water Treaty that distributes waters of the river Indus and its tributaries between India and Pakistan.

The two countries last held talks over the two projects in March this year during the meeting of Permanent Indus Commission in Pakistan.

The last round of the World Bank-supervised talks was held in November 2016, and the World Bank intended to hold another round in April this year but could not do so, as India refused to accept its arbitration.

Since 2013, India had been refusing to hold direct talks with Pakistan and also rejected Islamabad's efforts to restart the dialogue.

Earlier this week, an Indian official in New Delhi told journalists that the Indian position had not changed and "talks under the Indus Water Treaty do not amount to bilateral talks".

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said last year that India would not share the Indus water with Pakistan until Islamabad prevented militants from launching attacks inside India.

Pakistan rejected the Indian charge, saying that it never allowed any group to carry out cross-border attacks and the uprising in Kashmir was indigenous and independent.

Pakistan approached the World Bank last year, raising concerns over the designs of the two projects after India indicated that it wanted to review the Indus Water Treaty, linking it to the situation in Kashmir.

The projects will allow India to use water of three Indus tributaries to irrigate 912,000 acres of land, up from 800,000 acres, and to produce 18,600MW of electricity.

Pakistan argues that the two projects would lessen its share granted in the treaty and urges the World Bank to play a mediatory role between the two countries, as laid out in the 57-year-old water distribution pact.

While the Pakistani side has so far not held any briefing for the media, the Indian Embassy in Washington shared with the Indian media a statement from a senior World Bank official, assuring New Delhi that it will continue to "be a neutral and impartial" player in helping the two countries find an "amicable way forward".

In a letter to India's Ambassador to the US, Navtej Sarna, senior World Bank official Annette Dixon said: "We are pleased both parties have confirmed their participation in the meeting hosted by the World Bank in Washington, DC".

"The World Bank welcomes the spirit of goodwill and cooperation," she said, and assured Ambassador Sarna of its "continued neutrality and impartiality in helping the parties find an amicable way forward".

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1349072>

Ibrahim Hyderi residents decry non-availability of water
The Express Tribune, August 2, 2017

KARACHI: Promises made by various government officials with the residents of Ibrahim Hyderi have not been fulfilled.

This was stated by Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum Chairperson Muhammad Ali Shah who was addressing a protest against non-availability of water Tuesday afternoon. "Residents in several goths are still deprived of potable water," said Muhammad Ali.

The residents of Ibrahim Hyderi, one of the oldest fishing neighbourhoods in Karachi, held a protest rally in wake of absence of line water for months. Hundreds of protesters of the area, among which many were women, participated in the rally from the Ibrahim Hyderi union council office to water pump stop, which was headed by Muhammad Ali and union council chairman Asif Ali Shah.

The residents carried mud pitchers and water utensils on their heads along with banners and placards demanding the officials to end water scarcity in the area. After reaching water pump bus stop, the protesters held a sit-in, blocked the road for three hours and torched tyres.

“In case we don’t get water within a week, we will protest in front of district council chairperson,” Muhammad Ali gave the ultimatum. “If our demands are not met, we will organise a march to CM House from Ibrahim Hyderi,” he warned.

The residents complained that the area has been facing an acute shortage of water for past many months due to water mafia. ‘Ibrahim Hyderi has become Karbala’, ‘have some shame’, ‘stop stealing water of poor people’, ‘give water to drink’, were some of the few slogans written on the placards and banners.

“The water mafia has been selling water of the area to fish processing companies and factories through illegal connections,” alleged Muhammad Ali. Due to the corrupt officials, poor people have not been getting a single drop of water, he added.

Activist Mai Bhanan told The Express Tribune that the government has turned the entire area into a desert. “We are unable to cook in our homes. Even small kids in the area have been deprived of a basic necessity like water,” she decried.

Among others who addressed the protest were Haji Babu Sholani, Haji Ahmed Batani and Ghulam Muhammad Mirbahar.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1471960/ibrahim-hyderi-residents-decry-non-availability-water/>

WATER CRISIS MAY SOON HIT MAJOR PAKISTAN CITIES

Sehrish Wasif

The Express Tribune, August 4, 2017

ISLAMABAD: Rapid depletion of ground water may soon create worsening water crisis in Pakistan’s major cities, causing a drought-like situation, said chief of the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) Muhammad Ashraf on Thursday.

Stressing the need for urgent steps to avert such a crisis, he said: “Such measures need to be taken on a war footing ... otherwise, a large section of Pakistan’s population, especially those living in Karachi, Quetta, Lahore and Islamabad, will face severe water shortages,” Ashraf told The Express Tribune after the concluding session of a sub-regional meeting of experts on groundwater management here.

The meeting was organised by PCRWR in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and ECO Science Foundation (ECOSF) to discuss the alarming water situation not only in Pakistan but elsewhere in the region and its potential impacts.

The meeting focused on the UNESCO Tehran Cluster, mainly covering Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Turkmenistan.

Experts attending the meeting will try to outline strategies for sustainable groundwater management in the region, particularly in Pakistan.

“In Pakistan, the water quality as well as its quantity are major issues, especially in major cities such as Karachi, Quetta, Lahore and even in Islamabad,” said Ashraf, adding that rapid population growth, urbanisation, deforestation and lack of awareness about the importance of water are major causes for the emergence of this crisis.

Experts expressed concern over the alarming water situation in the region and agreed that if even a single town in any of these countries was facing an acute water shortage, it was a major threat to the entire region.

Dr Shahbaz Khan, the Regional Director of UNESCO's Jakarta office, stressed the need for a plan for development, devising new policies and regulations for net recharge management, for enhancing water productivity by doubling crop yields and halving input of groundwater, making Pakistan a regional agricultural power.

Vibeke Jensen, the Director of UNESCO Islamabad, said that an ineffective groundwater management in the regional context was crucial for Agenda 2030.

Fazal Abbas Maken, Secretary of the Ministry of Science and Technology, said that availability, accessibility and affordability of clean water on sustainable basis were essential for the region.

"Water management is a trans-disciplinary issue and can be solved by involving all stakeholders and also by educating the end users," he added.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1473558/water-crisis-may-soon-hit-major-pakistan-cities/>

DEEPENING WATER CRISIS CAN CREATE A CIVIL WAR-LIKE SITUATION, WARNS MAYOR
Dawn, August 6th, 2017

Hasan Mansoor <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1473558/water-crisis-may-soon-hit-major-pakistan-cities/>

KARACHI: Mayor Wasim Akhtar has said that 95 per cent of drinking water being supplied to the metropolis is contaminated, expressing the fear that the deepening water crisis could create a civil war-like situation if the issue is not tackled forthwith.

"The city is getting water much less than the share it deserves; and, what makes the situation even worse is that 95pc of that drinking water is contaminated and poisonous, which is tantamount to playing with the health of millions of people," said Mayor Akhtar while addressing a meeting organised by the Association of Builders and Developers (ABAD) at its office on Saturday.

"I have reasons to fear that people may possibly fight with each other on the issue of water, because we all know water is the basic need for human beings."

He said the entire water supply system of the city was defective and needed far-reaching changes to make citizens' life easier. It was time to raise voice for the rights of the city, he added.

"I want to see everyone in Karachi get basic facilities; the city should be adorned with beautiful tall buildings offering a Dubai-like sight; and, traffic laws [should be] obeyed like elsewhere in the world. But this dream is hard to materialise for many reasons," said the mayor.

He said he was happy to see that Lahore and Islamabad were becoming more beautiful and modern, but he found himself a lone warrior who was fighting for the rights of Karachi.

"Everyone will have to take responsibility for making Karachi a truly cosmopolitan city," he added.

Mayor Akhtar said he had been a minister for local government and housing, thus, he understood the city keeping all its nuances and dimensions in mind.

"We know who is involved in China-cutting," he said, using the locally popular term for slicing amenity plots and converting them into residential and commercial property that is sold off for huge profits.

"Here people divide a 1,000-yard plot into eight without considering how badly it affects the amenities like water, power and gas etc. It seems I am the only one who is thinking [about] all these issues."

He complained that every step he intended to take for the betterment of the city faced great obstacles. He said he was the one who had woken up the Sindh Building Control Authority from deep slumber to take care of endangered buildings.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1349786>

September 2017

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM SEPTEMBER 25 TH TO SEPTEMBER 30 Th 2017

IRSA'S DECISION: PUNJAB AND SINDH'S SHARE OF IRRIGATION WATER REDUCED

Zafar Bhutta

The Express Tribune, September 30, 2017

ISLAMABAD: Already a water-stressed country, Pakistan may face food security issues as the Indus River System Authority (IRSA) has projected 20% water shortage due to lack of storage facilities for Rabi crops including wheat.

The country's two major crop producing provinces, Punjab and Sindh, are facing low availability of irrigation water as the government announced on Friday a reduction of 20% water for the provinces in the upcoming Rabi season (Oct-Mar).

This could have an adverse impact on the production of wheat and other crops, which could lead to food security issues.

IRSA – that regulates and monitors distribution of water sources of the Indus river among all four provinces – held its advisory meeting on Friday, where it announced a cut in the share of Punjab and Sindh, while Balochistan and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa were exempted from short supply.

Presiding over the meeting, IRSA Chairman Mazhar Ali Shah noted that climate change played a major role in water shortage in rivers, as the country had received less rainfall than normal.

During the Rabi season, which will commence from October 1, 29.5 million acre feet (maf) of water will be available to all provinces for agriculture purposes. Of this, Punjab's share is 15.72maf, Sindh's is 11.86maf, K-P will get 0.70maf and Balochistan will get 1.2maf of water. It was also noted that there will be a chance of losing 2.24maf of water of the system.

During the meeting, a Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) official suggested increasing the dead level of Tarbela Dam by six feet to 1,386 feet and Mangla Dam by 22 feet to 1,062 feet.

It is worth mentioning that Pakistan has also expressed serious concern over India's violation of the Indus Water Treaty 1960 by building dozens of hydropower projects on Pakistani rivers that could potentially damage the water security of the country.

In this regard, Pakistan has also approached the World Bank who was the broker of the treaty between these two Asian rival countries.

Twice a year IRSA determines the water availability to provinces for Rabi and Kharif seasons under the Water Apportionment Accord agreed among provinces in 1991.

In Pakistan, Kharif cropping season starts from April 1 and ends on September 31 and its crops includes sugarcane, cotton, maize and rice, while Rabi season starts on October 1 and ends on March 31 that have major crops of wheat and barley etc.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1519685/irsas-decision-punjab-sindhs-share-irrigation-water-reduced/>

KHATTAK HINTS AT FORMULATION OF WATER POLICY

Dawn, September 26th, 2017

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Pervez Khattak has said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government formulate its own water policy.

Addressing a ceremony here on Monday, he said that the policy would help to better manage and preserve water resources of the province. The ceremony was organised by Hisaar Foundation to launch its recommendations for Pakistan's Water Policy Framework.

The foundation urged Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to formulate and adopt a water policy to encourage rational use of water in the province.

Speaking on the occasion, Hisaar Foundation convener Simi Kamal said that the framework was prepared and already launched at federal level by the Karachi-based think tank comprising volunteers as experts from all over the country.

She said that they were a group of volunteers, who as citizens, could only raise voice for the rational use of water in the country and urge governments to consider their recommendations.

Chief Minister Pervez Khattak, who was chief guest on the occasion, agreed to the idea to start work on a provincial water policy with the consultation of the think tank.

He said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government was grappling with so many problems, however, it would be in the forefront to work on formulation of a water policy to better manage and preserve water resources of the province.

Provincial Minister for Water and Power Atif Khan also stressed the need for formulation of a water policy in the province, faced with irrational use of water for irrigation and domestic use.

He said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would be the first province of the country to adopt a water policy.

Hisaar Foundation, a foundation for water, food and livelihood security, in its recommendations mentions that Pakistan's economy is water economy.

It says that 60 per cent of the population is directly engaged in agriculture and livestock and 80 per cent export of the country is based on these sectors.

It says that approximately 95 per cent of the surface water and almost all fresh groundwater in the country is currently used in agriculture. That's why the country needs a long term plan for its water requirements and federal and provincial government need to have a roadmap, it added.

Experts called for utilising the water resources to generate electricity keeping in view rational use of water and protecting rivers from contamination.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1360137/khattak-hints-at-formulation-of-water-policy>

SENATE PANEL BRIEFED ON PAKISTAN-INDIA WATER TALKS

Dawn, September 26th, 2017

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Water Resources was informed on Monday about an inflexible stance adopted by India in the latest round of secretary-level talks, violating the water treaty between the two countries.

A meeting of the committee, presided over by Sardar Mohammad Yaqoob Khan, was given a briefing on the Pak-India talks held on Sept 14-15, 2017 at the World Bank headquarters in Washington.

The committee was informed by Indus Water Commissioner Mirza Asif Beg and Mehar Ali Shah of the Ministry of Water Resources that the Pakistani side had objected to the storage capacity of water projects in India.

The meeting was informed about the design of Kishenganga and Ratle hydroelectric plants.

The committee was informed that the Pakistani side noted that the design of projects should be carried out considering the limitations set in the Indus Water Treaty, including un-gated spillways, so that the spillway provided no control over the water stored in the reservoir.

The meeting was informed that the Indian delegation was told that if gated spillway was necessary then its design should be shared with Pakistan.

The other objection to the design was that the Indus Water Treaty allowed establishment of the spillway at the highest level, and the level of water to be stored in these reservoirs too was shared with the Senate committee.

“However, India’s design approach was in the reverse order in which the designs are made first and then those are justified to satisfy the Treaty’s constraints,” the Indus Water Commissioner told the committee.

The committee chairman said the government should ensure that the spillways were established at the highest level and noted that any non-serious attitude could lead to a serious water issue for Pakistan in future.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1360007>

WASTE DISPOSAL IN RICE CANAL DEPRIVES LARKANA RESIDENTS OF POTABLE WATER

The Express Tribune, September 26, 2017

Hafeez Tunio

LARKANA: Around 5,000 years ago, the people of Mohen Jo Daro had an underground sewerage system with proper disposal of solid waste but today we deal with waste by flinging it out into a sweet water canal.

This was stated by Prof Ameer Ali, a teacher of agriculture at Dokri College, who was pointing his finger at Rice Canal, which flows through Larkana city, the hometown of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Founder Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, whose party has been ruling the province for the last nine years.

For many historical and geographical reasons, Larkana is a privileged city. It is located near Mohen Jo Daro, which was the home of the ancient Indus Valley civilisation. The city stands out for its archaeological sites, political history, rich culture and booming agriculture. Among such praise-worthy attributes, there was a stream of sweet drinking water running through the city, called Rice Canal. However, today, water in the canal is no longer potable owing to the disposal of waste in it over the years. People throwing garbage into the canal and buffaloes swimming in it is a frequent sight these days.

“Now, the water [available to the residents] is not fit for human consumption. One of the reasons for this is this contaminated canal whose water also penetrates underground and makes underground water impure. It is causing harmful impact on our health and we all are victims of it,” Prof Ali bemoaned.

Despite spending of billions of rupees under the Larkana package, no solution has been reached to stop waste disposal in the Rice Canal. According to an estimate, around 22 million gallons per day (MGD) of waste of the city is being disposed in the canal.

Local journalist Hanif Suhaq said not only human waste, but hospital and animal waste is also being released into it. “Whenever we raise this issue before PPP ministers, they blame General (retired) Musharraf’s tenure for the start of this practice. No one tries to stop it,” he said.

Abdul Rasool Abro, a government teacher, has bored around five hand pumps in various locations in Sacchal Colony in order to get freshwater, but all in vain.

“The water that poured out of the hand pumps in the summer was not only fresh but also cold. Whether you believe or not, on scorching hot days we were not able to take baths because of its coldness. Now, the water smells whenever we push the hand pump,” Abro said, recalling his childhood days.

“There are 28 pumping stations in the city that release their waste into this canal. Apart from this, the waste of Chandka Teaching Hospital is also being released into the canal without any treatment,” local councillor Khan Muhammad Panhwar said, adding that the Supreme Court’s judicial commission was also informed about the situation and it expressed dismay over it but no tangible result has been seen so far.

Lahori Mahallah, Peoples Colony, Shaikh Zaid Colony and Sacchal Colony are the worst-affected areas in terms of the polluted underground water.

In a petition, a resident of Larkana, Bashir Ahmed, has alleged that the PPP government spent around Rs90 billion from 2008 but most of the funds were bungled. “There was a provision to divert the city’s waste somewhere else where the government had to install treatment plants [so that the water could be treated] before its release for agriculture, but the funds were misappropriated,” he claimed, adding that four oxidation plants in the city were set up in late 1990s but all of them are either non-functional or occupied by influential people.

While defending his government, Larkana Municipal Corporation Mayor Mohammad Aslam Shaikh said the waste of 24 pumping stations has been diverted to other stations located outside the city where artificial methods are being used to filter sewage water. “We have set up a few ponds near Aqil, Pir Shah Road, Mahar Wada and Mashori Sharif where using traditional procedure, physical particles are separated and then the water is released for agriculture,” the mayor said, adding that since there was no industrial waste, there was no need for treatment plants.

Deputy Commissioner Kashif Ali Tipu refuted the reports that Rs90 billion was spent in Larkana. “People have exaggerated the figures. The government has hardly spent Rs23 billion in the last nine years,” he said, adding that the entire drainage system of Larkana is being revamped and most of the sewage water is not being released into the Rice Canal.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1515983/waste-disposal-rice-canal-deprives-larkana-residents-potable-water//>

RABI SEASON: COUNTRY LIKELY TO FACE 20-24PC WATER SHORTAGE

Business Recorder, 26 September 2017

ISLAMAABD: The country is expected to face 20-24 percent water shortage during Rabi season (October-March) 2017 calculated on Monday at a meeting of the technical committee.

However, the final figures of shortage in Rabi season will be finalised at a meeting of Irsa’s Advisory Committee to be held on September 29.

The technical committee meeting was attended by Director Operations (Irsa) Rana Khalid and attended by Directors Regulation Punjab and Sindh, Chief Engineer Balochistan and SE Headquarters KPK.

The technical committee discussed three items i.e. approval of Rabi, water allocation for Kachhi canal for Rabi season and implementing of new rating table for Balochistan canals.—

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/09/26/22-page/673066-news.html>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM SEPTEMBER 18 TH TO SEPTEMBER 24 Th 2017

DELAYED WATER POLICY

Dawn, September 20th, 2017

THE fact that the country is awaiting the approval of the water policy a decade and a half since it was first drafted speaks volumes for our lack of priorities. From its inception, Pakistan's water resources in the form of the Indus river system were identified as the country's biggest natural endowment upon which the first generation of the power infrastructure was to be built and the agrarian economy nourished. The building of the two large dams, as well as their attendant canal management infrastructure and associated power houses, gave the economy the great leap it needed to kick-start industrialisation and attain food security. But then, we saw wastage through poor farm water management, failure to build further storages and unregulated extraction of groundwater.

At the root of all this wastage is the absence of a pricing regime for water. Around the world, authorities have learned that the best way to signal the preciousness of water to its consumers, as well as manage its allocation among different categories of consumers, is through pricing. At the moment, water is perceived as a free resource by most agrarian communities, except for those who have to run tube wells to extract it. Even the latter realise only the cost of running the tube well, which itself benefits from a subsidy on power, and not that of the water itself. The country badly needs a water policy, and given the rapid approach of the consequences of climate change, this requirement is becoming more and more urgent.

Yet, for several years, successive governments have been deliberating over a draft water policy, without any result. Then when matters were finally moving and a national water policy had finally been agreed upon by the four provinces and the federal government, the new prime minister decided to send it back to his newly formed Ministry of Water Resources for further input. It is true that important policies should receive wide input before being finalised, but given that we have been deliberating this matter for over a decade, and the provincial and federal governments had reached an agreement, one is left puzzled as to what the new ministry with old faces is going to add to it. The process of its passage should not be delayed any further.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1358841>

25PC WATER SHORTAGE PREDICTED FOR RABI CROPS

Business Recorder, 20,September, 2017

LAHORE: As the running water in the four live rivers has fallen to a historic low in the second half of September, the Punjab Irrigation Department (PID) forecasted 25 percent shortage of water for sowing the Rabi crops including staple food of the nation wheat, grams, oat, barley, oil-seeds, vegetables peas, chickpea, onion, tomato, potato, fodder for livestock and fruit orchards. The sowing of Rabi crops starts in mid-October in Pakistan.

Talking to Business Recorder here on Tuesday, Punjab Canal regulators said that the Indus River System Authority (IRSA) wanted to provide required water to the provinces for maturing and harvesting the Kharif crops including rice, sugarcane, maize and cotton that are main source of foreign exchange earnings.

They said that the national water regulatory body is releasing 115,000 cusecs additional water from the Tarbela and Mangla dams along with 110,000 cusecs running water in the rivers i.e. river Indus, 66,200 cusecs, river Kabul 11,000 cusecs, river Jhelum 11,100 cusecs and river Chenab 22,000 cusecs water.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/09/20/13-page/671884-news.html>

SINDH SEEKS BRITISH GOVT'S HELP TO REHABILITATE SUKKUR BARRAGE

The Express Tribune, September 21, 2017

KARACHI: Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah has urged the British government to locate the engineers and firm that constructed the Sukkur Barrage.

He said this during a meeting with British Minister of State for Trade and Investment Greg Hands. He was accompanied by British High Commissioner Thomas Drew, Acting Deputy High Commissioner in Karachi Steve Crossman and other officials.

Shah was accompanied by Excise and Taxation Minister Mukesh Chawla, Planning and Development Board Chairperson Mohammad Waseem, Principal Secretary to the CM Sohail Rajput, Finance Secretary Hassan Naqvi and Board of Investment Chairperson Naheed Memon.

The chief minister said that the government had conducted a survey by World Bank experts to rehabilitate and reconstruct the barrage. He added that the construction of a new barrage is a big task, however, the Sukkur Barrage can be given a new life if rehabilitated by the same firm and experts who had originally constructed it.

“Even if the British government does not extend financial support, it should help locate the firm and experts who constructed it so that their expertise could be obtained to rehabilitate it,” he said.

Shah, who also holds the portfolio of the irrigation department, said that the barrage was constructed in 1932 and has completed its logical life but the Sindh government has been carrying out its repair and maintenance work, therefore it still irrigates the land and provides for the people and animals living within its command area.

Other avenues of investment were also discussed during the meeting. Shah said that Sindh is rich in resources and its wind and solar corridors have the capacity to generate 50,000 megawatts of electricity if proper investment is made. He talked about the investment opportunities in the transport sector and said that his government has initiated a public-private partnership mode of investment. “This is successfully working in Sindh and our model is being replicated by other provinces as well,” he added.

The British state minister took note of the issues raised by the chief minister and assured him to explore ways and means to open avenues of investment in Sindh.

Hands showed a keen interest in investing in the tourism sector, especially Mohen Jo Daro, in order to make it one of the largest tourist sites.

Shah nominated Waseem to coordinate with the British High Commission to carry forward various proposals discussed during the meeting.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1511765/sindh-seeks-british-govts-help-rehabilitate-sukkur-barrage/>

MICROBIAL CONTAMINATION OF DRINKING WATER IN ISLAMABAD HAS INTENSIFIED, CLAIMS REPORT

The Express Tribune, September 24th, 2017.

Sehrish Wasif

The microbial contamination of drinking water in Islamabad has intensified due to lack of proper disposal of municipal waste, posing serious health hazards to the residents of the capital.

Since 2,000 till date no improvement has been witnessed in the water quality of Islamabad, according to the results of latest water quality analysis of major cities of Pakistan-2015-16.

The report compiled by Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) –a copy of which is available with The Express Tribune — reveals that 68% water sources were found unfit for drinking purpose in Islamabad and 62% in Rawalpindi. Water quality of Rawalpindi city has been found better and improved then of Islamabad.

A total of 25 predetermined locations were monitored for the drinking water quality of Islamabad, out of them 17 sources were found unfit for drinking purpose.

The major contaminant found in the drinking water was bacteria, as 68% of the water samples were found contaminated with Coliforms. However the surface run-off, increased concentrations of nutrients and municipal waste are major contributing sources for higher bacterial contamination in drinking water, according to the report.

When contacted Capital Development Authority (CDA) spokesperson Mazhar Hussian, he said, that CDA is making all out efforts to ensure provision of clean drinking water to the residents of the capital.

He said that around 37 filtration plants are installed at different locations in the capital meanwhile water purification plant is installed at Simly Dam in order to provide clean drinking water to the people of Islamabad.

According to PCRWR the water samples from Rawalpindi were collected from 13 sources, out of 15 predetermined locations, two were found non-functional and eight sources which is around 62% were found unsafe for drinking purpose. The major contaminants were nitrate and bacteria as 23% samples were found contaminated with high level of nitrate, whereas 46% of the water samples were found contaminated with bacteria.

The report further shows a significant improvement in the water quality of Rawalpindi city since 2002 as safe water sources has increased from 27% in 2002 to 43% in 2016.

While commenting on the consumption of contaminated water for drinking purpose, a senior gastroenterologist, Dr Waseem Khawaja, working at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims), said, “no-doubt there has been a significant increase in the number of people suffering from water-borne diseases in Islamabad.”

He said that majority of the people, who visits hospitals are suffering from diarrhoea, hepatitis –A, E, typhoid, gastroenteritis, stomach ache, cholera among others.

“This year, since June over 50,000 patients suffering from water-borne disease were treated alone in the emergency department of the hospital,” he said.

Dr Khawaja further said that mostly people believe that mineral water is safe for drinking but they do not know that there are several brands are also contaminated.

On the other hand an official in the water sector who wished not to be named while expressing grave concern over poor quality of drinking water in Islamabad said, “It is shocking and surprising to see that the quality of drinking water in the capital city of Pakistan is unsafe than what should we say about the other cities of the country.”

He said that unfortunately improving water quality and its access is not on the priority list of the government.

“Several filtration plant installed in Islamabad are either non-functional or one could find them un-cleaned or unhygienic,” he said.

The city managers get ample funds for proper disposal of municipal waste but no wonder where it goes, he said.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1514640/microbial-contamination-drinking-water-islamabad-intensified-claims-report/>

PUNJAB ASSEMBLY: MP CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE CONSTRUCTION OF KALABAGH DAM

Dawn, September 24, 2017

LAHORE:

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) MPA Hina Pervaiz Butt has said the construction of Kalabagh Dam is crucial in the backdrop of increasing electricity tariffs.

She submitted a resolution in the Punjab Assembly on Saturday and demanded the immediate construction of the dam. In the resolution, she suggested that an all parties conference should be called to raise consensus among different political party over this critically important mega project.

She said that India has recently inaugurated the world's second largest water reservoir but in Pakistan, all political parties were doing politics on an extremely important project. Butt underlined that if Pakistan constructed big water reservoirs, including Kalabagh Dam, there would be a green revolution in the country, otherwise the country would face a huge water shortage by 2025. She asked all political parties to develop consensus on the immediate construction of Kalabagh, Diamir, Bhasha, Mahmand, Akhori, Bonji, Kuram Tangi, Munda, Dasu and other small dams in the country.

In her resolution, she said that as all political parties were brought on the same page against terrorism in the country the government should call an all parties conference for an immediate construction of these water reservoirs.

According to an estimate if the dam is constructed it will produce 3,600 megawatts or 31.5 billion watts of electricity that would cost only Rs2.50 per unit and the country would save \$4 billion every year on account of electricity generation just after five years of the dam's construction.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1514450/punjab-assembly-mp-calls-immediate-construction-kalabagh-dam/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM SEPTEMBER 11TH TO SEPTEMBER 17TH 2017

DRINKING WATER QUALITY AT FEDERAL HOSPITALS BELOW WHO STANDARDS, COMMISSION TOLD

Mohammad Hussain Khan

Dawn, September 17, 2017

HYDERABAD: The judicial commission on water quality in Sindh was on Saturday informed that the water being supplied to federal government hospitals in the province contained coliform bacteria beyond the guidelines set by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

An analysis report was submitted to the one-man commission, headed by Justice Mohammed Iqbal Kalhoro, by Dr Ghulam Murtaza, a member of the task force formed by the Supreme Court.

The report was brought on record by the commission, which held its proceedings in Karachi on Saturday. Dr Murtaza suggested that bacteria could be controlled by changing cartridge filters and ensuring regular chlorination of water storage tanks.

The commission provided a copy of the report to Deputy Attorney General Asim Mansoor with directives to ensure that the suggestions were followed in letter and spirit. It also asked administrators of the federal government-run hospitals to ensure provision of clean drinking water to people.

The commission ordered that water quality be analysed by third party and such reports be submitted in the commission regularly.

Dr Murtaza said that unhygienic conditions prevailed in the Karachi Institute of Radiotherapy and Nuclear Medicine (KIRAN). He had collected 16 samples from KIRAN and two other hospitals — Nuclear Institute of Medicine and Radiotherapy (NIMRA) and Atomic Energy Medical Centre (AEMC) of the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC) — and stated that the analysis of these samples showed that six (38 per cent) of them were unfit for human consumption. Varying ranges of coliform bacteria (24cfu-70cfu) were found in the samples, he stated.

Dr Saeed Ahmed Qureshi, the focal person of the Sindh chief secretary, submitted his report regarding implementation of a master plan prepared by the task force to plug the points from where waste water was drained into freshwater bodies. A copy of the report is to be provided to petitioner advocate Shahab Usto.

The commission expressed the hope that the stakeholders supposed to implement the master plan would actively coordinate with the task force chairman, Jamal Mustafa Syed.

The task force chairman and the Sindh Industrial Trading Estate (SITE) managing director informed the commission that the Combined Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP) had been made fully functional and the industrial waste was being tested at a laboratory before its release into the Kalri Baghar Feeder (KB Feeder). The commission asked Dr Murtaza to visit the plant and submit a report about an analysis of the treated effluent.

The commission was informed that the effluent treatment plant in Shaheed Benazirabad district had not been made functional yet although the public health engineer department (PHED) secretary had made a statement about it.

Justice Kalhoro observed that the department was continuously making misstatements regarding improvement in quality of water and treatment of effluent while it had not achieved any tangible progress on both counts. It directed the PHED secretary to come prepared on the next date of hearing to reply to the commission's queries about his department's failure. Dr Murtaza was directed to visit the plant and submit his recommendations.

About a dispute with regard to the Golarchi filter plant, the commission directed the Badin deputy commissioner to submit a comprehensive report showing the receipt and spending of federal funds. The DC was directed to personally appear in the commission. The local government (LG) secretary informed the commission that the filter plant was not functional. A representative of a private company stated that the firm had completed the plant but the PHED did not take its administrative control and, therefore, its machinery got rusty and now needed an overhaul.

The commission asked the PHED, local government and the company to sit together and sort out the issue within a month and then the two departments submit a report about functioning of the plant.

The commission issued a notice for October 7 to the advocate general to explain why the proposed law to regulate water hydrants in Karachi was not tabled in the Sindh Assembly despite specific directives issued by the commission. It also directed the AG to ensure approval of a law about installation of treatment plants at industries. The industries secretary informed the commission that progress on five CETPs in Karachi had stopped because of financial constraints as the expenditure was to be shared by the federal government.

In view of a controversy over supply of electricity to water supply and sewerage installations, the commission directed the PHED secretary to nominate an officer to settle issues with the Hyderabad and Sukkur power utilities.

The health secretary submitted to the commission that incinerators were installed at the Ghulam Mohammed Mahar Medical College Hospital, Sindh Government Lyari General Hospital, JPMC and Civil Hospital Karachi. An order for 17 new incinerators had been placed, he claimed, adding that he was personally monitoring quality of water being provided to people at government hospitals but conceded that no third party evaluation of water analysis was done.

The commission directed him to get drinking water samples tested from a third party once in a month and submit a report in the commission. It directed medical superintendents of government hospitals in Sindh to maintain water quality by getting water analysed once in a month and ensure hygienic conditions.

Hyderabad Water and Sanitation Agency managing director Masood Jumani briefed the commission about its filtration plant saying that it was now fully functional. He said that the industrial effluent at Darya Khan pumping station was being chemically processed before its release into the Akram Wah (irrigation channel). Dr Ghulam Murtaza was directed to visit the plant and the pumping station.

The judge directed the education secretary to appear in person before him to brief the commission about quality of drinking water and sanitary conditions at schools and colleges across Sindh which, according to reports, were very poor.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1358092/drinking-water-quality-at-federal-hospitals-below-who-standards-commission-told>

PAKISTAN SEEKS ARBITRATION COURT AS WATER TALKS FAIL

Anwar Iqbal

Dawn, September 17, 2017

WASHINGTON: Pakistan has asked the World Bank to constitute a court of arbitration to settle its water dispute with India after the latest round of talks ended without an agreement.

Dawn has learned that India and Pakistan failed to break the impasse on choice of a forum for settling the dispute. “India not only refused to accept any of the amendments proposed by Pakistan but also refused to agree to any of the dispute settlement options proposed by the World Bank,” an official source told Dawn.

“While acknowledging the Bank’s continued efforts, Pakistan has now requested the World Bank to fulfil its duties under the (Indus Waters) Treaty by empanelling the Court of Arbitration,” the source added.

The World Bank, which was hosting the talks, issued a statement on Saturday, which underlines its commitment to help find a solution.

“While an agreement has not been reached at the conclusion of the meetings, the bank will continue to work with both countries to resolve the issue in an amicable manner and in line with the Treaty provisions,” the bank said.

The World Bank noted that both countries “reconfirmed their commitment to the preservation of the Treaty”.

The bank “remains committed to act in good faith and with complete impartiality and transparency in fulfilling its responsibilities under the Treaty, while continuing to assist the countries”, the statement added.

The secretary-level talks took place on Sept 14-15 at the World Bank headquarters in Washington, within the framework of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT). Concluded in 1960 with the World Bank’s support, the treaty recognises the bank as a mediator.

In the last two months, the World Bank hosted two rounds of IWT talks. In the first round, which concluded on Aug 1, India and Pakistan exchanged proposals.

They returned to Washington this week for the second round, which focused on the technical issues of two hydroelectric plants — Kishanganga and Ratle — that India is building on the tributaries of the Jhelum and Chenab rivers.

Pakistan believes the construction violates the Indus Waters Treaty which gives Islamabad right of “unrestricted use” of the waters of these two western rivers in the Indus system.

India, however, argues that the Treaty also allows “other uses”, including the construction of hydroelectric plants. India interprets “other uses” as meaning that it can not only construct the Kishanganga and Ratle dams, but also several other projects.

Pakistan disagrees with the Indian interpretation and has asked the World Bank to set up a court of arbitration; saying that India was not fulfilling its obligations as an upper riparian state.

India opposes the court of arbitration and has instead asked the World Bank to appoint a neutral expert to look into the matter.

In the latest talks, the two sides were expected to present proposals that could lead to a mutually acceptable definition of the “other uses” clause in the Treaty but they failed to do so.

Both sides then urged the World Bank to play its role in ending the impasse. But they further complicated the issue by telling the bank how they expect it to resolve this dispute: Pakistan demanding a court of arbitration and India insisting on a neutral expert.

The Treaty also has a mechanism – the Permanent Indus Commission – for resolving such disputes and Pakistan went to the commission more than 10 years ago, underlining its objections to India’s plans.

After the process failed to produce any results, on Aug 19, 2016, Pakistan asked the World Bank to set up a court of arbitration as provided in Treaty.

On Oct 4, 2016, India asked for a neutral expert to adjudicate the same dispute.

The World Bank initially agreed to setting up both fora but later ‘paused’ both processes, saying that two forums carry the potential for conflicting rulings.

The World Bank then invited the secretaries for ministries of water resources of both countries to consultations for resolution of the impasse. In the first round of consultations, Pakistan proposed amendments to Indian designs that would make the project IWT-compliant. India agreed to study those designs and the parties decided to meet again in September 2017.

But the second meeting also ended without an agreement.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1358186/pakistan-seeks-arbitration-court-as-water-talks-fail>

MAMNOON URGES TIMELY COMPLETION OF TAPI GAS PROJECT

Dawn, September 17th, 2017

ASHGABAT: Terming the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (Tapi) gas pipeline project an important trade and transit corridor, President Mamnoon Hussain on Saturday called for its timely completion for the benefit of the region.

Mr Hussain expressed these views during a meeting with his Turkmen counterpart Gurbanguly Malikgulyevich Berdimuhamedov at the Presidential Palace. The meeting was held on the sidelines of the 5th Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games being held in Ashgabat.

President Hussain said the Tapi project had huge prospects in the field of road, electricity transmission and fibre optic lines, and in establishment of economic zones.

He welcomed Turkmenistan's offer to export 1,000MW of electricity to Pakistan through Afghanistan and emphasised on both the countries to work towards materialising the project. He said Pakistan was ready to negotiate with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) for financial support.

He stressed on cooperation between Pakistan and Turkmenistan in trade, energy, agriculture, education, science and technology, infrastructure and transportation, besides mutual support for each other at regional and international level. In view of immense opportunities in exploration and production of oil and gas sector, Mamnoon Hussain said the state-owned companies in both the countries should negotiate the possibility of joint ventures.

He said that Pakistan had formally declared of joining the Ashgabat Agreement (Central Asia-Middle East Corridor) and the Lapis Lazuli Corridor.

Pakistan and Turkmenistan, he said, enjoyed fraternal ties rooted in common culture and history which were further strengthened by shared goals of peace, prosperity and progress of the two countries.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1358195/mamnoon-urges-timely-completion-of-tapi-gas-project>

DANGEROUS WATERS

Dawn, September 12, 2017

IT is a tragedy that has sadly become so ubiquitous that at least in the public consciousness, it barely registers anymore, the numbers simply adding up on the grim stats sheet. The past one month has been particularly bad, with upwards of 30 people drowning in the stormy waters off Karachi's beaches. The latest incident occurred on Saturday evening on Sandspit beach, when a total of 12 people died after going into the deep while attempting to save a child who had been sucked into a whirlpool.

According to the police, the picnickers had repeatedly been asked by police and lifeguards to not swim so far. And the city mayor, Waseem Akhtar, said that at least 30 lifeguards jumped in to go to the swimmers' rescue, but were unsuccessful in their attempts. He added that Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code, under which swimming in the sea in this rough monsoon season is banned, was already in place but the administration faced difficulties in implementing it.

The situation is indicative of how law enforcers and even rescue workers often find themselves stuck between a rock and a hard place where issues of public safety are concerned. It is their job to make sure that citizens don't put themselves or others in danger. But when they resort to the high-handed measures that often become necessary given the people's propensity to indulge in risky pursuits, the guardians expose themselves to criticism and admonishment. Recent experience has shown that, realistically, the only way to prevent people from entering the water during the dangerous season is to prevent large numbers from getting to the beaches in the first place. When this has been done, however, there has been justified resentment, for healthy recreational opportunities are also a right. The only answer lies in a cross-media, mass-scale public awareness campaign so that the hive mind is flooded with the knowledge of just how dangerous the sea can be. Citizens must be educated on how to protect themselves too.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1357040>

69% WATER SUPPLIERS FAIL KEY QUALITY TEST

Sehrish Wasif

Dawn, September 13, 2017

ISLAMABAD: An estimated 69 per cent of water suppliers do not meet the National Standards for Drinking Water Quality, putting millions of lives at risk, a key survey has found.

According to Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources' (PCRWR) latest survey, there has only been an increase of ten per cent in the quality of water provided for drinking since 2006.

These numbers clearly indicate that achieving Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG) Target 6.1 – the provision of 100 per cent clean water – will be challenging.

PCRWR's National Water Quality Monitoring Program (NWQMP) conducted detailed testing of water in Islamabad, Bahawalpur, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Kasur, Lahore, Multan, Rawalpindi, Sargodha, Sheikhpura, Sialkot, Mingora, Abbottabad, Mardan, Peshawar, Loralai, Quetta, Ziarat, Hyderabad, Karachi, Sukkur, Muzafarabad, Gilgit and Badin.

Out of the 369 sources that were selected for testing, 114 or 31 per cent sources were found safe as opposed to 255 (69 per cent) that were not. The study showed that 57 per cent of the water samples were microbiologically contaminated, while other contaminants included arsenic (6%), turbidity (8%), chloride (15%), nitrate (6%), TDS (11%), hardness (6%) and iron (10%).

During the first water quality survey, conducted from 2002 to 2006, data had shown that 84 per cent of the samples collected were contaminated.

Contaminants were present in the following percentages: bacteria (69%), arsenic (24%), nitrate (14%) and fluoride (5%). The analytical findings were compared with standards set out by World Health Organisation.

“Although the latest data is not promising, it is at least better than the data we collected ten years ago. We need to pick up the pace because at this rate we will never be able to provide 100 per cent clean drinking water by 2030.” a senior official from PCRWR told The Express Tribune.

He further said that Sindh had the worst of the water contamination problem, followed closely by Balochistan. The water quality was better in Khyber-Pakhtunkha and the best in Punjab, as compared to the other provinces. “Despite there being many directives to improve water quality in Sindh, the provincial government has done little to improve the situation,” said the official.

He also lamented the lack of effort and focus on the provision of clean drinking water, adding “These things require substantial infrastructure and human resources on the part of the provincial governments, as after the 18th amendment, it is their responsibility to provide citizens with good quality drinking water.”

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1504861/69-water-suppliers-fail-key-quality-test/>

MAN-MADE WATER CRISIS

The Express Tribune, 12 September 2017

The spectre of a severe drought looms in sparsely-populated Balochistan and nearly half of the province which constitutes 43 per cent of the country's total landmass is at risk. The drought threat is largely man made and is believed to have been caused by deep well pumping in western parts of the province over the last few decades. Four districts — Naushki, Chaghi, Kharan and Makran — are counted among those prone to drought which has affected land, water resources, animals and plants. Scanty rainfall and moisture stress are also responsible.

The western parts of Balochistan receive less than one-third of the rainfall seen elsewhere in the province. Experts blame poor management for the sad state of affairs rather than the steady increase in water deficiency, estimated to be almost 60% in certain areas.

Quetta has experienced an alarming drop in the water table that some say could be as much as three-and-a-half feet every year. Similarly, the average groundwater level in the city is 180 feet. The water level has fallen because of deep-dug tube wells which though officially banned have crossed the figure of 2,200. Of these, only 450 are registered and legal in the eyes of the authorities.

Little effort has been made to revive the province's centuries-old irrigation water supply system or karez. Fewer than 100 karezat are currently working in the province with thousands of traditional water supply systems either dysfunctional or permanently dried up. Lands have therefore begun to sink in several parts of the province.

In these circumstances dams are the only viable option to stave off water shortages. And in this area the provincial authorities have proved thoroughly incompetent. The province loses as much as 8.57 billion cubic metres of water out of 10.693 billion cubic metres every year. Even the water that comes into Balochistan from Sindh is squandered. It is time that the authorities took action to mitigate the suffering of the people.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1503506/man-made-water-crisis/>

October 2017

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 23rd TO OCTOBER 29th 2017

CEMENT PRODUCTION MAY CAUSE WATER SHORTAGE

Dawn, October 23rd, 2017

Intikhab Hanif

LAHORE: Cement plants in Punjab's Salt Range are expanding their production lines and their possible extensive ground water usage may lead to water shortage for the locals.

The apprehension was expressed at a recent meeting held to review progress on a project entitled "Delineation of negative and positive mining areas for installation of cement plants in the Salt Range."

According to the minutes of the meeting obtained by Dawn, the chief secretary who was in the chair observed that the installed cement plants were expanding their production lines without seeking any prior approval from the government which was a matter of grave concern.

He noticed that a cement plant required extensive amount of water and in the current situation the installed cement plants were exploiting ground water. Therefore, expansion in the established cement plants meant extensive exploitation of ground water which might lead to water scarcity for locals. Consequently, governance issues would arise if a uniform policy was not adopted, he reportedly said.

The chair also observed that a huge area of raw material had been granted to the cement plants in the past and at the rate of their current installed capacities, the reserves in these leased areas might last for more than 200 years. "This requires scrutiny and rationalisation," he said.

The project consultant, Mr Patrick O'Brien, gave a detailed presentation regarding the status update. He said data streams regarding surface water sources, land use, transportation network and location of existing and proposed cement plants had been prepared by Nespak.

And the underground water studies of the three existing cement plants, along with socio-economic survey of the project area, was in progress.

He explained that identification of the negative and positive areas with respect to installation of new plants was dependent on multiple factors like water resource availability, environmental pollution, traffic congestion and socio-economic conditions, which were being studied through data collection and would form the basis of the final report.

However, as per the preliminary understanding, the industrial undertakings should be spread to other resource rich areas through a master plan and the existing plants must comply with planning, environmental and all related regulations.

The consultant committed that he would soon submit the final report encompassing the negative and positive mining areas for installation of more cement plants in the Salt Range.

The chief secretary highlighted the importance of completion of the exercise at the earliest as, he said, a dozen new cement sector entrepreneurs had submitted applications for establishing plants in the Salt Range, and for acquiring mining rights.

“This translates into an approximate investment of Rs300 billion,” he said, reiterating that such a huge investment in the province was linked to timely completion of the project.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1365638>

ZERO WATER DISCHARGE HALTS POWER GENERATION AT MANGLA DAM

Dawn, October 24th, 2017

Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: In a rare move, the water discharges from the country’s largest reservoir — Mangla — were stopped with immediate effect on Monday, bringing generation from its power station to zero, as water shortages appeared going beyond previous estimates.

“With immediate effect, Mangla power house indent is reduced to ‘nil’ as demanded by the Punjab Irrigation Department,” announced Indus River System Authority (Irsa). The decision was intended to salvage upcoming crops through better management of scarce water resources.

This is the second time in 50-year operations of the Mangla dam that its outflows were brought down to zero. The water releases from the dam were last stopped for 10 days in January 2010 also due to water scarcity. A senior Irsa official explained that Punjab had drastically reduced its indent to 7,000 cusec from 50,000 cusec following water regulator’s advice for a contingency plan to cope with emerging water scarcity. As a result, Punjab conveyed to the regulator that it would not draw its share from Mangla for the time being until it starts wheat sowing in November.

The provincial government also closed all perennial and non-perennial canals. Except for drawing 6,000 cusec from Thal and 1,000 cusec from Chashma Right Bank Canal (CRBC), it would not draw its water share at least for the next 10 days.

Sindh government also followed suit even though it was already in wheat sowing process. It has also reduced its indent from 55,000 cusec to 40,000 cusec as part of the contingency plan.

Irsa is expected to shortly convene a meeting of its advisory committee to firm up future plans to meet the emerging situation in consultation with stakeholders and the provincial governments.

“This is unprecedented situation where water shortages appear to be higher than previously feared. Storage in the reservoirs and river flows are at 10-year low,” an official said. Flows in river Kabul dropped to 4,000 cusec and those in Jhelum to 5,000-6,000 cusec. “Flows in all the four rivers were 21 per cent down in first 22 days of current month when compared to last year,” he added.

For example, Kabul and Jhelum had a combined flow of about 65,000 cusec last year on October last year compared to just 53,000 cusec on Monday. Total river flows last year amounted to 3.7 million acre-feet (MAF) on Oct 22 last year while these were down 2.9 MAF this year — the lowest in last 10 years.

Likewise, storage in two reservoirs currently stood at about 6MAF compared to more than 8MAF the same day last year.

The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has also forecast lower than normal rainfalls over the next three to four months and the irrigation authorities were totally at a loss about the plunging flows. It was feared that in case of slippage on usual westerly waves carrying winter rain system could further aggravate the water shortage.

Ironically, as the country was facing acute water shortage for the upcoming Rabi season, more than 9MAF of water went down the sea during just concluded Kharif season in the absence of sufficient storage capacity.

On Oct 11, Irsa had conveyed to the provinces that it was fearing unusually acute water shortages of up to 30pc for Rabi season and hence contingent plans should be put in place for wheat sowing to avoid major loss to upcoming crops. The provinces have been warned that due to atypical prevailing weather conditions river flows were not showing promising trend and the phenomenon may lead extension in shortages during the ongoing Rabi season.

On Sept 28, Irsa had estimated about 20pc water shortage for Rabi season and flagged falling storage capacity as a serious concern and asked the provincial leadership to start building dams on a war-footing.

The Rabi season begins in October-December and ends in April-May. Wheat is the largest crop in Rabi season. Gram, lentil, tobacco, rapeseed, barley and mustard are some of the other Rabi crops.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1365897>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 16 Th TO OCTOBER 22nd 2017

MAKLI RESIDENTS MADE TO DRINK CONTAMINATED WATER

Dawn, 16 October 2017

THATTA: About 150,000 residents of Makli and its adjoining villages are forced to consume highly contaminated water as the pipeline supplying water to the town has developed ruptures at a number of places and its water gets mixed up with sewage, Dawn learnt on Sunday.

The pipeline laid from K.B. Feeder Lower to Allah Bux Gandhro reservoir has developed leaks near Makli-Thatta bypass where it runs parallel to main sewer of Thatta draining out sewage to the town's outskirts.

The water gushing out of the pipeline gets mixed up with sewage and creates a large pond near Noor Foundation School at the Makli-Thatta bypass. This pond has become a favourite hangout for buffalos, donkeys and other animals, which are often seen taking a dip in it.

The same water then continues its travel to the main reservoir in Makli from where it is supplied to residents who have no other recourse but to consume use this highly contaminated water.

Members of civil society and social activists Syed Rizwan Shah, Azhar Shah, Sami Qureshi and others said that Makli residents would launch a protest campaign if they were not supplied clean drinking water.

They demanded a permanent ban on animals` sitting in the pond, de-weeding and de-silting of Ghar Massan tributary within a month and a thorough inquiry into the pipeline laid down by the public health engineering deparment.

They urged Chief Justice of Supreme Coud, water commission, chief minister and Thatta deputy commissioner to take notice of the issue.

https://epaper.dawn.com/DetailImage.php?StoryImage=16_10_2017_117_008

WATER SUSTAINABILITY IN PAKISTAN – II

Business Recorder, October, 16th, 2017

Waste discharge into drains and rivers has resulted into deteriorating water quality According to a study, 50 million people in the country are at risk of arsenic poisoning from contaminated groundwater.^{30, 31} Specifically, the underground water samples had arsenic level of over 200 micrograms per liter, which was considerably higher than the WHO's recommendation of 10 micrograms and the Government's limit of 50 micrograms.

Another source of pollution stems from direct discharge of waste from households and industries into nearby rivers, drains, streams and ponds and the unregulated and heavy use of chemical, fertilisers, and pesticides in agriculture. For example, around 90 percent of industrial and municipal waste, which is largely untreated and toxic, is dumped into open drains and filtrated into aquifers.³² The waste water does not stay in fresh water bodies but is also seeped into the groundwater aquifers. Hence, this pollution is directly affecting the quality of drinking water, and in turn adding to health concerns.³³ There is absence of monitoring of adequate waste disposal to water bodies or facilities to treat waste water. Finally, the overexploitation of groundwater has also resulted in an increase in arsenic content in areas where groundwater pumping is a source of clean drinking water.³⁴

The overall governing structure of the water sector in Pakistan is characterised by multiple authorities with overlapping responsibilities and duplication of work. Such a structure is mainly the result of unsuccessful reform in the past. For example, as part of a major institutional reform in water, the new Provincial Irrigation and Drainage Authorities (PIDA) were setup. The broader aim was to replace the provincial irrigation departments and decentralise the irrigation system management through public and private partnership. The private participation was ensured through the establishment of the Farmer Organisation and Water Area Board.

Besides other responsibilities, PIDA was tasked with assessing and collecting water charge (abiana) – a function previously performed by provincial irrigation departments. Furthermore, as the implementation of reforms remained incomplete, provinces could not phase out their irrigation departments. As a result, at the moment, two irrigation management bodies exist simultaneously, with overlapping responsibilities and unclear demarcation of areas of management. Punjab offers an interesting case where the irrigation department assesses abiana in certain areas but other areas are managed by the Punjab Irrigation and Drainage Authority.

Interprovincial disputes continue to dominate the policy debate on water reforms. Although the Water Accord 1991 divides water among provinces as per a given formula, the disagreement prevails on sharing shortages.³⁵ Indus River System Authority (IRSA), the implementing body for the accord, lacks its own telemetry system to gauge surface flows on continuous basis and hence has to rely on provinces for information regarding river flows. This absence of own monitoring system erodes IRSA's ability to act as a mediator between provinces in the event of water-related disputes.³⁶ Hence, grievances among provinces have persisted over time and even postponed the development of new major water storages on the Indus River.³⁷

Besides this, the management of domestic and industrial water supply also faces shortcomings. The issue in fact is not of the availability of water rather the system of governance. One such example of a major city facing erratic supplies is Karachi, where at least half the population relies on tankers for water supply. The issue is less of availability and more of water management and governance.

Governance issues are also widespread in the domestic sector, particularly in major urban centers. For example, Karachi, the biggest metropolitan city of the country, faces serious issues related to water supply and quality. In fact, the outdated and deficient supply infrastructure, weak administration, and limited financial resources, have led to a situation where shortages are common. Unfortunately, these shortages are often plugged by supplies from illegal hydrants, which charge exorbitant rates from the end-consumers. As a result, the underprivileged suffer the most, as they are unable to get adequate and affordable water due to limited financial and infrastructure support.

Finally, the weak governance also results in the poor quality of water being supplied to the masses.

The long-term water sustainability in Pakistan is also vulnerable to shifts in the weather pattern. According to the task force on climate change in Pakistan, the average temperature has risen by 0.6 0C over the period 1901-2000. Similarly, mean precipitation has also increased by 25 percent over the previous century. More importantly, the pace of warming is increasing with each passing year, further going forward in line with the global trends.³⁸ In addition, climate change will increase the variability of monsoon rains and enhance the incidence and severity of extreme events such as floods and droughts.

Keeping in view the country's vulnerability to climate change, the Global Climate Risk Index of 2017 ranked Pakistan at 7th out of 181 countries (in 2015, the country ranked 11th).³⁹ Similarly, Maplecroft Index of Climate Change Vulnerability (2017) has placed Pakistan in the extreme risk category by ranking it at 16th out of 170 countries (in 2010, Pakistan ranked at 29th position).

The climate change will impact the water situation in the country through multiple channels. For example:

— Climate change will enhance the demand for water: while a number of factors (eg, rising population, rapid urbanization, increase in income, etc) will push up the demand for water in the country, a strong impetus would come from the climate change. Specifically, the rise in temperature would require more water for irrigation due to prolonged dry and warmer season; for farm animals to meet their hydration needs; for individuals to cope with higher atmospheric temperature; for industries to take care of increased cooling requirements; and for discharge into the sea so that intrusion of saline water into delta regions could be prevented.

— Climate change is expected to affect the ice and snow accumulation patterns in the zones that supply Indus basin with its flows. The overall river supplies would come under pressure as rising temperatures would increase evaporation losses in the system. At the same time, the climate change would shift the peak flow points in time.⁴⁰ Rising mercury levels in the upper Indus basin would result in earlier seasonal melting of the glacial ice sheet. This effect would lead to a shift in peak river runoff towards winter and early spring.⁴¹

— Another impact of climate change is the unpredictable future water outcomes in the Upper Indus Basin due to precipitation variability.⁴² Specifically for South Asia, El Nino-Southern Oscillation (ENSO) events are likely to disrupt monsoon patterns and may cause extreme weather events.⁴³ El Nino events of 1997-98 triggered heavy rainfalls throughout Pakistan followed by extreme dry condition in its later phase. The 2014-16 El Nino episode triggered similar effects. These oscillations have become more frequent and intense in recent history.

— Heightened rainfall variability in the catchment areas of the Indus Basin is expected to affect groundwater resources ^{44,45} Variability in spatial distribution and intensity of precipitation under rising mercury levels will alter the recharge and discharge patterns. This will affect the quality of the water due to salt intrusion in Indus Basin

Aquifer.⁴⁶ For example, in times of low surface flows, there would be less recharge available which would increase the demand for ground water, creating an imbalance.

Net discharge would deteriorate quality of water through intrusion of saltwater into freshwater areas.

Water resource management requires policies to ensure more productive, equitable, and sustainable uses through reallocation across sectors. However, Pakistan is still awaiting its first National Water Policy despite the fact that its draft was formulated in 2003. The task of structuring a policy became more complicated after the 18th amendment when water distribution for agriculture, domestic and industrial purposes became a provincial subject.

Accordingly, the draft water policy is awaiting approval from the Council of Common Interest. In comparison, neighbouring countries such as India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka all have water policy in place for more than a decade, which defines the goals regarding water conservation, storage and distribution at the federal and other levels.

The delay in announcing this policy is a major setback as the current policies are inadequate in addressing the upcoming water challenges. Further delays would only damage the long-term growth prospects of the economy. Any policy on water should focus on measures to augment supplies and manage demand. This would require reforms in multiple directions, eg, to revamp the pricing mechanism; to develop institutional capacity; and or invest in infrastructure.

— Raising water rates to bring at par with the operation and maintenance cost: Within the pricing structure, focus needs to be on raising abiana rates within agriculture and tariffs within domestic and industrial sector to bring them at par with the cost required to operate and maintain the water supply system. Besides, it would help in encouraging a more rationale use of water. At the same time, regulatory policies are needed to ensure sustainability of underground aquifers.

— Developing supply infrastructure through metering and ensuring connections so as to charge volumetric pricing:

— Urgent lining, repair and maintenance of canals are required to minimise the most extensive source of water losses in the system.

— There is a need to charge volumetric pricing that is to charge each crop and area as per the unit of water consumed. This would be possible through separating the charge of water from the land area and connecting it to the quantity of water consumed.

— Within the domestic and industrial sectors, proper provision of water connections to households and industrial units, along with metering devices, is also crucial to regulate the quantity consumed and charge rates accordingly. This would also regulate the use of water and reduce issues of equity between households. In addition, the unregulated use of groundwater needs to be contained.

— Revamping the system of water rights (Warabandi): A system of water rights should be introduced which allows for trading of water rights, as a result head end farmers could sell their right to tail end farmers and increase productivity and efficiency.

— Strengthening the role of IRSA as a mediator to ensure development of storages: The role of IRSA as a mediator between provinces needs to be strengthened through provision of proper telemetry system to the organisation and enhance its conflict resolution capacities. Conflict resolution is compulsory for development of future storages.

— Proper waste management and regulation: Focus on proper disposal of household, industrial and agriculture waste is crucial to ensure adequate quality of water. Penalties and fines shall be imposed for non-compliance.

— Disseminate awareness regarding the rising stress on water resources: Since water is a sensitive issue in the country, there is a need to focus on raising awareness about the importance of conservation.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2017/10/20171016226613/>

SATPARA DAM TO BE HANDED OVER TO GB GOVERNMENT IN SIX MONTHS

Business Recorder, 17 October 2017

A parliamentary panel was informed on Monday that all issues pertaining to construction of Satpara Dam, a medium-sized multipurpose concrete-faced earth-filled dam located in Skardu, have amicably been resolved and it will be handed over to Gilgit-Baltistan government within six months. The National Assembly Standing Committee on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan which met here with MNA Malik Abrar Ahmed discussed the issues pertaining to Satpara Dam, a project of Wapda and Gilgit-Baltistan.

The secretary water and power Gilgit-Baltistan said that all the issues have been resolved by Wapda and GB government and the project will be handed over the GB government which will be a great relief for the local people who had suffered due to delay in the project.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2017/10/20171017226846/>

WATER FILLING BEGINS AT NEELUM-JHELUM PROJECT

The Express Tribune, October 18th, 2017.

MUZAFFARABAD / ISLAMABAD:

The strategically important 969-megawatt Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project achieved a major milestone as water filling in the reservoir began on Tuesday following completion of substantial work on the dam.

The Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project is being constructed on Neelum River in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). The project is an engineering marvel with 90% being underground in high mountainous areas.

The project consists of four units with installed capacity of 242.25MW each. First unit is scheduled to come online by the end of February 2018 followed by the second unit in mid-March and third and fourth units in April.

“Almost 96% of work has been completed and finishing touches to be given within two days,” Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project Chief Engineer Nayyar Allauddin said.

Briefing journalist, he said, “All the civil work including tunnel boring, installation of generators and turbines have been completed and we are prepared to fill the dam to put it on test within two days.”

On its completion, the project will contribute about five billion units of electricity to the national grid annually. Annual revenue of the project is estimated at Rs50 billion. The project has entered its final stage with the completion of dam structure across the Neelum River. The dam is 160-metre-long and 60-metre-high. Its storage capacity is 8,207 acre feet of water.

The filling of the reservoir, which will take about a month, will not affect water requirements downstream of the dam. As much as 15 cusecs of water will always be released downstream to cater to population needs and sustain aquatic ecosystem dependent on the Neelum River.

Highlighting salient features of the project, Allauddin said the dam had been constructed underground at intake point Nauseri and had the capacity to store 10 million cubic feet of water.

Completed at a cost of Rs404.321 billion, revenues from the supply of 5.5 billion units of electricity annually at a cost of approximately Rs7 per unit will be spent on the repayment of loans acquired to meet the cost of the project.

The project official said the project would be run by Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Company with AJK chief secretary being one of the members of its board of directors.

An agreement between the AJK government and Wapda had yet to be inked as it was under consideration of the ministry, Allauddin said. Allauddin, who is also the project director, said clauses of the agreement had been approved by the AJK government and Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Company was working within the framework of the draft agreement as far as construction and implementation were concerned.

He rejected the impression that after diversion of the river, Muzaffarabad and adjoining areas would face environmental hazards and cited a number of environmental mitigation measures taken to address concerns.

A sum of Rs5.56 billion has been allocated in PC-I of Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project including water supply schemes for Muzaffarabad, Chattar Kalas and Komi Kot in addition to a number of other such schemes, which will be undertaken by the government of AJ&K.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1534015/water-filling-begins-neelum-jhelum-project/>

AS PEOPLE CRAVE FOR WATER, SECOND HEAT SPELL APPROACHES KARACHI

The Express Tribune, 18 October 2017

While the water crisis in Karachi persisted for the second consecutive day, the Meteorological department forecast on Tuesday another heat spell in the coming days.

According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), a deep depression is forming up over the Bay of Bengal which is likely to intensify into a tropical storm or possibly a Category 1 cyclone in the next 24 to 48 hours.

The system is likely to move towards central Indian region and will dissipate there. However, it may again cut off sea breeze in the coastal belt of Pakistan, resulting increase in temperature of up to 41°C from tomorrow (October 19) to October 22. The heatwave will be lesser in intensity than one experienced in the city a week ago.

PMD Spokesperson Dr Abdul Rashid said the new system developing over the Bay of Bengal will have no effects on any other part of Pakistan and will not result in rainfall in the country.

The Met office has advised the citizens to avoid direct sunlight and refrain from going out unnecessarily during the coming heatwave.

In the meantime, fog engulfed the city in the wee hours of Tuesday. Explaining its reason, Dr Rashid said that it was a sign of the changing weather.

Most parts of the city are still not receiving water as the effects of the power shutdown at the Dhabeji, Gharo and Pipri pumping stations continue.

Upon request of the National Transmission and Dispatch Company (NTDC), the K-Electric had turned off power supply to the areas where pumping stations are located. Both the companies had taken the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) in confidence for the 12-hour power halt.

KWSB spokesperson Rizwan Hyder had earlier said that the water board had only allowed the power companies to suspend the power supply for 12 hours. However, when contacted later, he informed that the power supply to the main pumping station in Dhabeji, which should have been resumed by 6pm Monday evening, was not restored until 10pm as the NTDC delayed the work.

Hyder added that at Gharo pumping station, the power supply was restored on Tuesday after 12 additional hours.

Hyder explained that after pumping starts, it takes at least 36 hours for the water to reach the tail areas of the city which include North Karachi and Surjani Town. This is the reason many areas have still not started receiving water, he said.

The KWSB spokesperson added that since the Gharo pumping station had started operating on Tuesday, areas such as Shah Faisal Colony, Karsaz and their adjoining localities will start receiving water in the late hours of Wednesday.

Most parts of the city will have received water by today (Wednesday) morning, Hyder maintained.

Meanwhile, it has been reported that exploiting the situation, water tankers have increased their charges for supplying water to the residents. Water tankers carrying 3,000 gallons, which charged Rs4,000 earlier, were demanding Rs6,000 to Rs7,000, it was reported.

A resident of Muhammad Ali Society, Mumtaz Siddiqui, complained that the people had no choice but to afford expensive water tankers as the water supply was at halt.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1534085/people-crave-water-second-heat-spell-approaches-city/>

SHC SEEKS REPORT ON NAB INQUIRIES INTO WATER SUPPLY SCHEMES' FUNDS MISAPPROPRIATION

The Express Tribune, 18 October, 2017

The Sindh High Court (SHC) directed on Tuesday the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) authorities to submit a progress report on an inquiry into the alleged misappropriation of Rs340 million in the foreign-loan funded water supply schemes in several districts, including former chief minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah's constituency.

A two-judge bench, headed by SHC Chief Justice Ahmed Ali M Sheikh, directed the NAB special prosecutor to submit the report by November 15, when the identical matters will be taken up again. The judges were hearing bail applications filed by an accused to avoid arrest by NAB in connection with the inquiries into development funds' misappropriation.

A private contractor, Mir Shaukat Ali, had sought bail in a scam relating to the alleged misappropriation in connection with an inquiry into water supply development scheme in Khairpur district, the former CM's constituency.

The applicant's lawyer alleged that the anti-graft watchdog had nominated 112 persons in the inquiry, including the petitioner.

The lawyer claimed that his client, Ali, was a mentally handicapped person, who was malafidely implicated in the scam by NAB authorities despite not being mentally sound.

The proceedings took an interesting turn when Sheikh inquired about the total value of the contract allegedly obtained by the petitioner for the development work. He also inquired how many kids the petitioner had.

To this, the petitioner, Mir Shaukat, quickly replied that the value of the contract was Rs10,000. He added that he had a minor son.

The SHC chief justice told the lawyer that his client was acting very cleverly, as he did not sound like a ‘mentally-challenged’ person.

The judges directed the NAB prosecutor to produce in court complete details relating to funds meant for 613 development schemes launched in Khairpur district till November 15.

Meanwhile, the NAB prosecutor informed the bench that an amount of Rs340 million funds had been misappropriated in water supply and sanitation development schemes launched under the defunct North Sindh Urban Services Corporation (NSUSC) with a loan from the Asian Development Bank.

The prosecutor informed that three major schemes were launched in Larkana, Shikarpur, Sukkur and Khairpur districts. He told the judges that the actual amount that had been misappropriated could run into billions of rupees after further inquiry.

Sheikh observed that from the value of the funds, it appeared as if the authorities were going to develop upper Sindh on very modern lines.

The top judge expressed his dismay over the state-of-affairs, observing that even the funds meant for the supply of potable water, which were meant to benefit the accused persons’ own children, were being misappropriated.

The bench directed the prosecutor to complete the inquiry and submit a report into the alleged scam by November 28.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1533885/shc-seeks-report-nab-inquiries-water-supply-schemes-funds-misappropriation/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 9 Th TO OCTOBER 15Th 2017

MURAD EXPRESSES RESERVATIONS OVER SC COMMISSION’S HANDLING OF WATER ISSUES

Dawn, October 10th, 2017

Mohammad Hussain Khan

HYDERABAD: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said the provincial government is complying with directives of the Supreme Court-appointed water commission but he has reservations over the way the commission is handling the issue.

“Let judiciary take care of its own job. If it interfered in administration it will not work. I can’t be a journalist and a cricketer can’t be a politician, so let everyone take care of his own job,” he said, adding the government was complying with all courts’ decisions.

Mr Shah was speaking to journalists and addressing a seminar on ‘Government College Hyderabad: past, present and future’ which was held to mark centennial celebrations of the college at the institution’s assembly hall on Monday night.

About National Finance Commission (NFC) award, he said that he had written a letter to the prime minister only three days back and requested him to convene a meeting personally. “Because I believe the federal finance minister has remained unsuccessful in evolving consensus among all stakeholders over the issue,” he said.

He disclosed that Sindh government had received last year's dues from the Centre only two days back. "We get funds now which had been collected last year. I had earlier stated in NFC meeting that instead of bi-monthly transfer of funds, the transfers should be made to provinces on a daily basis," he said.

He said that Sindh government had formed a technical committee on census which had held a meeting with functionaries concerned of the federal government. "If people don't accept census then it is of no use," he said.

He said that Sindh government would submit a bill in the assembly to get charter of Government College University approved.

About PM's outburst against Sindh government in Naushahro Feroze, he smilingly said: "The prime minister had visited the area for first time and he was supposed to say something at least but the very next day he approved Karachi Circular Railway."

He said: "Our investment in Tharparkar is equal to Orange Line's in Lahore." The federal government should provide the same facility to Sindh which was given to Punjab for Orange Line project.

Earlier, in his speech at the seminar the chief minister announced university status for Government College and said that work on the college's infrastructure would be completed during the current year.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1362732/murad-expresses-reservations-over-sc-commissions-handling-of-water-issues>

BODY OF TEENAGE GIRL FOUND FROM WATER TANK

Dawn, October 11, 2017

KARACHI: A teenage girl, who was the only eyewitness to her mother's killing last year, was found dead in an underground water tank of her house in Machhar Colony on Tuesday with her hands and legs tied with rope.

Police said the body of 16-year-old Reema was found in the tank upon return of her elder sisters from work.

The victim used to live alone at home during the day since the murder of her mother last year as her elder sisters left for jobs early in the morning.

"When her sisters returned from their jobs, they didn't find Reema at home," said Inspector Qaiser Khan, the Docks police station SHO.

"They looked for her in the neighbourhood and other possible places but in vain. Finally, they noticed the home's underground water tank [was] uncovered, which led them to look inside it.

"It's obviously a murder and we are probing it from all possible angles. According to initial findings of the medico-legal examination, there were no torture marks on the body."

The Docks SHO confirmed that the victim's mother was also shot dead last year inside her house by unknown armed men and Reema was the only eyewitness to that murder.

"Involvement of the same individual or group behind the girl's murder could not be ruled out," he added.

In another incident, a 40-year-old woman was axed to death by her husband in Baldia Town on Tuesday.

Police said Shamim Begum, who was a mother of seven, suffered multiple axe strikes inside her house in Sector 'A' of Baldia Town that proved fatal.

The alleged killer, Mohammad Bux, was later arrested by police.

"The suspect is a labourer," said Inspector Abdul Ghaffar Korai, the Baldia Town SHO.

"The exact motive behind the murder is not yet clear but we have reasons to believe after the initial statement of the suspect that it took place due to some dispute within the family and is not a case of honour killing.

"The siblings of the victim and other family members are out of the city and we are also waiting for their response to determine the exact motive," he concluded.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1362961>

IRSA FEARS UNUSUAL WATER SHORTAGE FOR RABI CROP

Dawn, October 13th, 2017

Khaleeq Kiani

ISLAMABAD: The Indus River System Authority (Irsa) on Thursday expressed fears of unusually acute water shortage during the current Rabi season and asked the provincial governments to make contingent plans for wheat sowing to avoid major losses to upcoming crops.

In letters to provinces, Irsa said the water shortage could go up to 30 per cent instead of up to 20pc forecast on Sept 29 in view of lower than anticipated river flows in the first 10 days of October and depleted resources in storages. "It is requested that contingent plants may be prepared based on 25-30 per cent shortages in the Indus Basin System to cope with the situation in case of the any eventuality," wrote water regulator's Director of Operations Khalid Idrees Rana to the provincial governments.

The provinces were told that due to atypical prevailing weather conditions in the country river flows were not showing promising trend and the phenomenon may lead to more water shortage in the ongoing Rabi season.

Mr Rana told Dawn that predicting water availability and weather systems had become very difficult now due to climate change conditions and not only Irsa, but Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) also had to change their forecasts.

"We are witnessing changed weather patterns and foreseeing problems," he said. He said that the PMD had also withdrawn its forecast for the rain system in October and has now predicted no rains till December.

Irsa has also noted dry weather behaviour to continue at least for the entire October. He said that hot weather still persisted in almost all the provinces and yet flows in rivers was 10-15pc lower than usual.

The water storage in dams at present was almost two million acres feet, lower than the last year's because the provinces were given water discharges from reservoirs according to their demands because no shortage had been anticipated in September.

He said Irsa would watch the situation carefully till Oct 31 and would continue to release agreed water shares to the provinces with a request to them to make contingent plans after that. He said Irsa would also call another meeting of the advisory committee in the first week of November where the provincial contingent plans would also be discussed for future planning.

Informed sources said that the water shortage issue was also discussed at a meeting of the Federal Committee on Agriculture (FCA) where Federal Minister Sikandar Hayat Bosan enquired about the withdrawal of an advisory made by the PMD for the rain system a week ago. The PMD confirmed to have changed its forecast saying that climate conditions were abnormal and forecasting had become difficult.

The FCA has set 26.46 million tonnes of wheat output target for the current crop against the last year's output of 26.38 million tonnes.

Separately, Irsa also warned the Punjab government that its ongoing water withdrawal pattern would exhaust its share on the Indus zone within November because of its continuously higher reliance on non-perennial canals.

The Punjab has been advised to plan its wheat sowing in accordance with higher water shortages.

Strangely, the provincial governments have indicated that they were increasing area under cultivation for sugarcane, wheat and cotton crops on a regular basis even though water availability has been on the decline. This showed the farming community was heavily relying on the underground water exploitation that can have a lasting stress on the water table.

On Sept 28, Irsa estimated about 20pc water shortage for the Rabi season and flagged falling storage capacity as a serious concern and asked the provincial leaders to start building dams on a war-footing.

The Rabi season begins in October-December and ends in April-May. Wheat is the largest crop in the Rabi season. Gram, lentil, tobacco, rapeseed, barley and mustard are some of the other Rabi crops.

Wapda has already warned that silting was taking a heavy toll on two major reservoirs and is seeking a change in the storage criteria. Water experts have been raising the issue of declining water storage year after year.

On Thursday, the total river flows at rim stations were noted at about 68,000 cusecs against 122,000 cusecs of outflows which meant the discharges from dams were taking place at double the pace of inflows.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1363474>

WATER SUSTAINABILITY IN PAKISTAN – I

Business Recorder Oct 15th, 2017

The following are excerpts from State Bank of Pakistan's annual report "The State of Pakistan's Economy" 2016-17: Water is a crucial resource for the livelihood of people and sustained development of any economy. For Pakistan, it takes on more significance, as the economy is agrarian in nature and depends on a single source, the Indus basin, to meet most of its water needs. Hence, water availability and its efficient utilization lie at the heart of any strategy aimed at ensuring food security and achieving a sustained long-term economic growth.

In this backdrop, this chapter provides an overview of water availability in Pakistan; identifies key issues and constraints to efficient water management; and highlights future challenges to water sustainability. In our view, the widening gap between water demand and supply has now become a major social and economic concern that requires a comprehensive national policy, formed with the consensus of all provinces and the federal government. The focus of reforms should be on improving efficiency in water consumption and management, and building the capacity of relevant regulatory institutions.

Undoubtedly, designing a reform agenda that is acceptable to all stakeholders may appear challenging, as people are generally sensitive to any forced change in their water usage rights. However, any delay in reforms would only

compound the concerns, as the water deficit would expand on account of growing demand (stemming from population growth, urbanization, and economic development) and a decline in available supplies (owing to pollution and climate change).

The current water supply in Pakistan is not only limited, but also quite erratic in nature. More importantly, the overall availability faces significant risks from increasing pollution and climate change. The water demand, on the other hand, is rising rapidly on account of growing population and urbanization. Thus, the resulting imbalance is pushing the country towards severe water shortage.

Water supplies are vulnerable and suffer from extensive losses

Being a semi-arid country, Pakistan relies heavily on the Indus River and its tributaries (Kabul, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, and Sutlej) for water supplies, which together contribute over 140 million acre feet (MAF) per annum (Table 7.1).¹ This reflects the country's vulnerability to a single basin, which itself is subject to insecurity due to continuing water disputes with India. The high dependence compares unfavorably with other regional countries that either rely on multiple basins or receive sufficient rainfall (Box 7.1).

Vulnerability to erratic water supplies is further compounded as variation in rainfall and melting of snow result in wide seasonal changes in river runoff during the year. Indeed, more than 80 percent of the annual inflow is realized during the April-September period. Another important factor adding to the uncertainty in river inflows is the multi-year cyclical weather pattern, which affects the intensity of wet and dry seasons.

These patterns, which are quite significant for Pakistan, explain a very large gap between the minimum river inflow of 98.6 MAF (realized in 2001-02) and the maximum inflow of 186.8 MAF (in 1959-60).² The concerns on water flows have recently increased due to climate change, which has exacerbated the seasonal river fluctuations, and may even reduce the overall supply of water to the country in the future.

A comparison with South Asian countries reveals that Pakistan, being an arid country, derives most of its water supplies from river flows. Other South Asian countries are comforted with tropical monsoon climate, receiving average annual rainfall exceeding 1,000 mm. Pakistan, on the other hand, receives rainfall of less than 500 mm per annum.

To add to Pakistan's water constraints, the country solely relies on the Indus River and its tributaries. In comparison, India relies on several river basins, such as the Ganges River, Godavari River, included in the 12 major river basins and hence has a comfortable annual river flow supply. Similarly, Bangladesh's river flow supplies are derived from three major basins.

Data source: Human Development in South Asia 2013 – Issue of Water from the Perspective of Human Development (MHHDC 2013)

The challenge to water resource management becomes more difficult, as not all of the water supply is available for consumption. Besides inevitable evaporation losses and the required flows into the Arabian Sea (to prevent intrusion into the delta region), there are extensive system leakages due to limited storage and weak irrigation infrastructure.

Groundwater pumping, another crucial source that contributes 40 percent to total supplies at farm gate, also faces sustainability concerns. A greater control on timing and the available amount has encouraged reliance on extraction of groundwater. While this is beneficial where fields are waterlogged or salinized, the over-exploitation in certain areas has led to depletion of this valuable resource. In a few areas, the excessive use has resulted in the intrusion of saline (brackish) groundwater into the fresh aquifers, thereby making it then unusable.^{3,4}

Stress on water resources is high, and going to worsen

The extent of stress on water resources in the country is evident from the high pressure on its renewable freshwater resources and the low number of people with access to drinking water and sanitation facilities (Table 7.2). According to a more broad-based indicator, Pakistan is categorized as being close to water scarcity, level with per capita availability of 1017 cubic meters.⁵ In comparison, India is in the group of water stress countries with water availability of 1,600 cubic meters per capita.

Data source: FAO-AQUASTAT database, March 2013; and WHO/ UNICEF Joint Monitoring Program (JMP) for Water Supply and Sanitation (<http://www.wssinfo.org/>)

1. Proportion of total actual renewable freshwater resources withdrawn;
2. Dependency ratio is the share of water originating outside the country;
3. Safely managed water services accessible on premises, available when needed, and free from contamination.

More importantly, the stress is going to increase further due to growing demand, mainly coming from rising population, rapid urbanization, and adverse impact of climate change, and the continuing degradation of water quality. This pressure will push the country very close to the threshold for absolute water scarcity. According to The World Resource Institute, Pakistan is going to face a high level of water stress by 2020.⁶ By 2030, the ranking will worsen further to extremely high level, thus pushing Pakistan to the list of top 33 countries under extreme water stress.

Limited storage capacity resulting into canal water shortages and excessive losses to the Arabian Sea

The current storage capacity is inadequate as the three major water reservoirs in Pakistan, ie, Mangla (1967), Tarbela (1978) and Chashma (1971), have a total designed capacity of 15.75 MAF, which has been reduced to 13.1 MAF due to sedimentation. These reservoirs can store water equivalent to 30 days of consumption, whereas the standard minimum requirement is 120 days; most of the advanced countries have capacities of 1-2 years.⁷ Furthermore, Pakistan's live storage capacity is 150 cubic meters per person, with Ethiopia the only country that has a lower per person live storage (Figure 7.3).⁸ The storage capacity is also low in terms of available water, as the country's reservoirs can store less than 10 percent of the annual river average flows against the standard of 40 percent.

The continued excess flows to the Arabian Sea also suggest that the country requires additional storage capacity. The below Kotri escapages averaged around 28 MAF during 1978-2015, which is considerably higher than the downstream Kotri requirement of 8.6 MAF (5,000 cusecs year around) Figure 7.4.9 The key reason for such high flows in the sea is the limited storage capacity and seasonality in river flows, as around 80 percent of the flow in the upper Indus occurs July to September. The average flows to sea increase significantly during floods.¹⁰ The water losses are likely to increase further as climate change may hasten the glacial melting.

The current storage capacity is also inadequate to provide provincial canal diversions in line with the Water Apportionment Accord 1991, which assumed average annual water availability of 114.35 million acre feet. This included 10 MAF of water to be derived from future construction of storage dams. While the additional storage did not materialize, the continuing sedimentation, as mentioned earlier, continued to eat into the existing capacity. As a result, the canal withdrawal that reached 106 million acre feet after construction of Tarbela is now averaging 99.58 MAF. Thus, additional storage is needed to ensure canal withdrawal, in accordance with The Indus Water Apportionment Accord 1991.

Trans-boundary disputes intensifying river supply vulnerability

The Indus System Rivers flowing into Pakistan originate in India;¹¹ hence, for peaceful water management, the Indus Water Treaty of 1960 prevails between the two countries. According to the treaty, the western rivers (Indus, Jhelum,

Chenab) are reserved for Pakistan, whereas the eastern rivers are reserved for India. Despite its sole dependence on The Indus basin, Pakistan was allocated 75 percent of Indus water. Moreover, the treaty allows India some limited use of water in western rivers for irrigation, storage and for generating hydroelectric power, but under a condition that the use would neither affect the quantity of water in rivers, nor alter the natural timing of flows.

However, in the past disputes have emerged over the treaty when India started developing a number of power projects on the western rivers, eg, Baglihar dam and Ratle Project on the Chenab, and Kishanganga Project, on tributary of Jhelum.¹² Pakistan claims that these projects do not follow the specifications and criteria provided in the treaty, and would therefore affect the hydrology and ecology of western rivers flowing into Pakistan. For example, the Kishanganga dam is expected to divert 10-33 percent of river flows from Neelum River and hence affect water availability for the Neelum-Jhelum hydropower plant. Pakistan has been pursuing its legitimate objections to a number of such Indian projects on western rivers at platforms defined under the treaty.

As for Afghanistan, (Pakistan also derives water from the Kabul River), the construction of hydropower projects on the river has also raised concerns. Being the lower riparian state in this case, Pakistan reserves certain rights; however, no such water sharing agreement exists between the two neighbors. Construction of storages and hydropower projects is expected to lead to decrease of around 17 percent in the annual river flows.¹³ Hence, there is a need for an official agreement between the two countries that defines the terms of sharing and construction of hydropower and other water storing facilities on the Kabul River.

Outdated distribution system results in low productivity and inequitable distribution of water

The inefficient distribution system (also known as warabandi) has resulted into low water productivity in Pakistan. For instance, over 90 percent of total annual water available in the country goes to agriculture. Furthermore, the supply of water is linked to the canal command area, and farmers are required to consume water even when it is not required. Thus, the output produced against a unit of water remains extremely low.¹⁴

This unreliable and rigid water distribution system also explains the low productivity of water (defined as the average crop product per unit of water consumed). According to a study, water productivity for cereal crops in Pakistan is almost one-third of that in India, and one-sixth of the productivity realized in China.

Data source: Kumar, M. D. (2003). Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture In India: The Water Management Challenge. Colombo, International Water Management Institute (Working Paper 60); and International Water Management Institute (2000), Water Issues for 2025, A Research Perspective. Colombo Sri Lanka.

Furthermore, in the current irrigation system, the proximity of the land to the water course is crucial for adequate supply of water. Thus, farmers at the tail-end remain at a disadvantage, whereas those at the head benefit. The growers near the canal- head sometimes apply water 4-5 times each season as compared to tail-end farmers.^{15,16} This places tail-end farmers at a disadvantage, adversely affecting the crop quality and yields. Hence, such inequity leads to reliance on groundwater pumped through private tube-wells, which is costly. As a result, tail-end farmers pay up to 30 times more for water access.

Domestic water distribution is also characterized by inequity and several inefficiencies. In the country's largest province, Punjab, only 18 percent of the population in rural areas relies on tap water as source of water and rest utilizes groundwater, as compared to 51 percent of urban population with access to tap water.¹⁷ This indicates that a large number of households have to rely on other expensive sources of water, such as underground water and tankers.

Groundwater resource depleting rapidly due to over-pumping

Due to the unpredictability associated with canal water supplies, farmers have turned to groundwater pumping. Thus, the number of tubewells installed has increased sharply over the years (Figure 7.5), and groundwater has now become

a significant source of water, as its contribution to irrigated agriculture has doubled in the last 40 years from (25.6 to 50.2 MAF). This is equivalent to 50 percent of overall canal water withdrawal for irrigation. Industries and domestic sector also relies on groundwater resources for water supply.

Even in the domestic sector, unmonitored groundwater exploitation is on the rise due to improper water provision. In Faisalabad for instance, households have turned to groundwater due to inefficient supplies and non-monitoring by local WASA.¹⁸

It is true that precipitation and river flows constantly recharge most of these groundwater aquifers – a process that enables people to have reliable access to this key water resource even for a very long period. However, no matter how large these aquifers may be, excessive pumping would also deplete this valuable resource. This is what is happening in many regions across Pakistan, where unregulated and excessive use of groundwater is leading to falling water tables and reduced quality. For instance, Lahore has seen reduction in water tables at 0.5 meters annually for past 30 years (Table 7.4).¹⁹ This is despite the fact that Lahore is provided water by the river Ravi and has an extensive canal system. The situation is a lot worse in Balochistan where there are no major rivers or canals to recharge the water table. Thus, water tables in Pishin district have receded down to 1,000 feet.²⁰ In Sindh, cities like Hyderabad and Benazirabad are also facing decline in groundwater levels on a similar scale.²¹

Data source: S.Kanwal, H.F. Gabriel, K. Mahmood, R.Ali, A.Haider, T.Tehseen. Lahore's Groundwater Depletion-A Review of Aquifer Susceptibility to Degradation and its Consequences, Technical Journal UET Taxila Pakistan, Vol.20 No.I-2015

The unsustainable pumping rate has even led to intrusion of brackish water into fresh water resources, thereby reducing the availability of quality ground water as per the standards of World Health Organization (WHO). In KP, Kohat, Bannu and D.I Khan are some regions where over pumping has lowered water tables and resulted in contamination from deep saline groundwater. In Balochistan, there are reports of intrusion of saline water into aquifer zones in coastal areas.

Extremely low water tariffs are distorting incentives for water conservation

Ideally, water prices should reflect the value that users generally place on their consumption. In this way, a proper pricing strategy can be used as a tool not only to recover the cost of operation and maintenance of the system, but also to contain water losses and promote conservation.

In Pakistan, canal water charges, also called abiana, are very low, as the canal irrigation cost stands negligible when compared to its close alternate, say tube well irrigation.²² Furthermore, abiana rates have no link with the amount of water being consumed. Currently, provincial governments charge a flat rate as abiana on the basis of cropped area. As a result, once the cropped area has been determined, the incremental cost of applying extra water falls to zero. Similarly, the tariffs are unreflective of the water intensity of various crops. For example, rice and cotton on average are charged at Rs 85 per acre; even though rice consumes 60 percent more water than cotton.

The prevailing pricing structure, which has no link with consumption, discourages water conservation. Thus, in agriculture, where farmers do not have an incentive to invest in simple and cheap technology (eg, laser leveling of land and bed-furrowing), the use of more advanced technologies (eg, drip irrigation and sprinkler) becomes out of question.²³ Thus, large quantities of water are allowed to flow in the fields allowing for wastages through evapo-transpiration.²⁴

Low recovery and underfunded water infrastructure contributing to high water losses

Water tariffs are also extremely insufficient to maintain the water infrastructure, which is already in precarious condition.²⁵ To put this in perspective, even if we assume the maintenance cost at around one percent of the value of

the stock of infrastructure, this would translate into water charges of Rs 1,800 per hectare. In comparison, the abiana rate varies in the range of Rs 85 per hectare in Punjab to Rs 617.8 in KP.^{26,27}

More importantly, the recovery remains considerably short of the assessed amount (Table 7.5). One reason is the absence of any legislation to penalize defaulters. The revenue recovered also remained lower than the cost of operation and maintenance (O&M) of the irrigation system, which led to its heavy dependence on government support for its functioning.²⁸ Often the budgetary constraints resulted in maintenance delays; sometimes maintenance work suffered as a large share of O&M expenditure was made on operational heads such as salaries.²⁹

Data source: Canal Water Pricing for Irrigation in Pakistan: Assessment, Issues, and Options; Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan June 2012.

The gradual crumbling of water infrastructure contributes to extensive conveyance losses. According to estimates, canal conveyance efficiency is 78 percent, ie, over one-fifth of canal water is lost before reaching the farm gate; an additional one-fourth of the water is wasted during its application in the field.

An almost similar situation prevails in water delivery to households, where the operating cost is significantly higher than the revenue. For example, operating expenses of The Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) in Karachi were 13 percent higher than its revenue. The revenue bill collection is also very dismal: the average recovery is around 64 percent, and it ranges between 21 percent for Quetta and 98 percent for Lahore.

This situation results in a vicious circle where insufficient funds deteriorate the quality of water delivery service, which means that users are less willing to pay, and leading to fewer funds being available for maintenance. Large investment to upgrade the water infrastructure and recovering its maintenance cost from users is one of the possible options. It may be noted that farmers already pay exorbitant amounts on diesel pump for tubewells, as this ensures them reliable supplies of water and results in higher productivity.

1. Approximately 90 percent of Pakistan's land area is classified as semi-arid. The overall volume of rainfall is low, with large seasonal and regional variations. While the average rainfall remained at 494 mm per annum for the period 1962-2014, it varied from less than 150 mm in Sindh and Balochistan to 1,500 mm in Gilgit-Baltistan. In addition, around two-thirds of the annual rainfall is concentrated in the three summer months, ie, July to September.

2. The Water Resource Institute computes inter-annual variability indicator, which is the standard deviation of annual total water divided by the mean of total water from 1950 to 2010. This index ranges from 0-5, where 0 represents the lowest variability and 5 the highest. The index for Pakistan is 2.37, which is considerably higher than that for China (1.97), India (1.72), Sri Lanka (1.59) and Bangladesh (0.07).

3. The withdrawals from groundwater account for 83 percent of total renewable groundwater available.

4. Under normal situation, intrusion of saltwater to inland areas is limited due to pressure from higher level of freshwater. However, lowering of freshwater levels due to its excessive abstraction allows denser saltwater to move into inland aquifers.

5. Prof Malin Falkenmark, who proposed the indicator, defined three thresholds for per capita water availability on the basis of consumptive needs for an economy with decent growth; ie, water stress (less than 1,700 cubic meter per capita); water scarcity (less than 1,000); and absolute water scarcity (less than 500).

6. The World Resource Institute has ranked countries after considering a wide range of variables (such as temperature, precipitation, and wind speed and soil moisture absorption from supply side; and water withdrawals from municipal, industrial and agricultural sources from demand side). For details, see World Resources Institute

<http://www.wri.org/publication/aaeduct-proiected-water-stress-countrv-rankings>

7. In comparison, India has a capacity for over 120 days, whereas Egypt has the capacity of 1000 days.
8. Source: Pakistan Water Resources Sector Strategy (2006) by World Bank. The data is based on comparison of Semi-arid countries.
9. Source: Fernando J Gonzalez, Thinus Basson, Bart Schultz (2005), "Final Report by International Panel of Experts, For Review of Studies on Water Escapages Below Kotri Barrage".
10. Human Development in South Asia 2013, Issue of Water for the perspective of Human Development; published by Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre Lahore; available at <http://mhhdc.org/?p=40>
11. Indus and Sutlej originate in China and flow through India, whereas Ravi, Jehlum, Chenab and Beas originate in India.
12. Shaheen Akhtar, "Emerging Challenges to Indus Waters Treaty: Issues of Compliance and Transboundary Impacts of Indian Hydropower Projects on the Western River," Institute of Regional Studies Islamabad, Focus 28, no. 3 (2010).
13. Iffat Pervaz & Dr. M. Sheharyar Khan (2014), "Brewing Conflict over Kabul River; Policy Options for Legal Framework", Institute for Strategic Studies and Research Analysis Papers (The Journal of Governance and Public Policy), Volume VI, Issue No. II.
14. Under this system, irrigation department officials record the cultivable command area, and the water is then provided to one-third of this area during a year. A farmer receives and utilizes water for 10 days before yielding flow to the next grower. As mentioned in the Canal and Drainage Act 1873, this provides key legal framework for distribution of water at canal level and allocates a fixed rotational period of distribution.
15. Latif, Muhammad (2007), "Spatial Productivity along a Canal Irrigation System in Pakistan", Irrigation and Drainage 56 (5): 509-521.
16. World Bank (2005), "Pakistan Country Water Resources Assistance Strategy-Water Economy: Running Dry", South Asia Region, Agriculture and Rural Development Unit, Report No. 34081-PK.
17. Asif M. Bhatti and Seigo Nasu (2010) "Domestic Water Demand Forecasting and Management Under Changing SocioEconomic Scenario", Society for Social Management System.
18. Shabbir Ahmed, Saleem H. Ali, M.Usman Mirza and Hina Lotia (2017), "The Limits of Water Pricing in Developing Country Metropolis: Empirical Lessons from an Industrial City of Pakistan", International Growth Center,
19. World Bank (2005), "Pakistan Country Water Resources Assistance Strategy-Water Economy: Running Dry". South Asia Region, Agriculture and Rural Development Unit Report No. 34081-PK. Washington, DC: The World Bank
20. Pakistan Water Resources Sector Strategy (2004)
21. The depletion in groundwater also increases the abstraction cost to users.
22. The canal cost in Sindh in FY16 was Rs 181.9 per acre whereas tubewell cost was Rs 1,837.5 per acre. Similarly in KP, the canal cost was Rs 836 per acre and private tubewell cost was Rs 1,827 per acre.
23. Drip irrigation is the application of small amounts of water at the base of plants (surface drips) or directly at the roots. This is an efficient method for water application which reduces labor, saves water, involves less soil erosion, and results in increased productivity.

24. Even in the domestic and industrial sector, there is unplanned water exploitation. Water is generally not saved and used inefficiently in cooking, cleaning and sanitation uses.

25. In most developing economies, water charges hardly recover operation & maintenance (O&M) costs, whereas in advanced economies (eg, Austria, Denmark, Finland, and New Zealand), water charges cover capital costs besides the interest on capital.

26. Canal Water Pricing for Irrigation in Pakistan: Assessment, Issues and Options. A report by Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan, June 2012

27. In Punjab, a full recovery in water charges of Rs 135 annually would generate revenues equivalent to less than 45 percent of the O&M costs of the system.

28. Abiana revenue as percentage of O&M cost hovers at an average of 20 percent in Punjab, 36 percent in Sindh for the period from 2000-2001 to 2009-2010.

29. For example, in Punjab, only 33 percent of O&M spending was used for maintenance; a large part was spent on salaries.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2017/10/20171015226409/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 1ST TO OCTOBER 8 Th 2017

CCI INAUGURATES 24TH WATER FILTRATION PLANT UNDER PAANI PROJECT

Business Recorder, 1 October 2017

ISLAMABAD: CCI Pakistan has inaugurated 24th Water Filtration Plant under its PAANI project for providing safe drinking water to various local communities of the country under the company's social responsibility program.

According to an announcement of the company here on Saturday, the plant having a processing capacity of 2000 litres per hour, has been inaugurated by Col Mubashir Javed (ret'd), the Lord Mayor of Lahore at Baghban Pura area. The plant can serve over 20,000 people every day. CCI has so far installed these kinds of plants in various cities of Pakistan including Karachi, Rahim Yar Khan and Lahore, in partnership with WWF and other organizations.

The Mayor commended the efforts of CCI and appreciated that as a responsible corporate citizen, it has contributed to the community welfare by providing access to safe drinking water.

Speaking at the occasion, Country Manager CCI Pakistan, John Galvin said, "In our pursuit of protecting the water resources that sustain communities, this water filtration plant has been built with the humble contribution of CCI in partnership with World Wide Life Fund (WWF) to provide clean and healthy drinking water to the community of Baghban Pura." Keeping alive the mission of CCI, 24 water filtration plants have been installed in various parts of the country and being sustained via communities and partner organizations support. He added that CCI places the issue of water usage, as the main focus of its environment policy.

Hammad Naqi Khan, DG WWF-Pakistan said that Pakistan is water stressed country and is nearing the threshold of water scarcity. Access to safe drinking water in rural and urban areas is declining and provision of potable water is a key issue that people are facing now. WWF-Pakistan is committed to protecting the freshwater resources of the country and improving water access, efficiency, and allocation for people and the environment. 'We support such programmes and partnerships which aim to address this massive challenge', he added. He hoped that with these filter plants providing safe potable water access to about 750,000 persons and more people will have access to safe drinking water that would contribute to improve health standards in local communities.—PR

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/10/01/2-page/909714-news.html>

WATER SCARCITY

Business Recorder, 4 October, 2017

India and Pakistan have held a second round of talks on September 14-15 under World Bank (WB) auspices in Washington on differences regarding two hydropower projects under construction by India on tributaries of the Jhelum and Chenab rivers in Indian Held Kashmir (IHK). Like the first round on July 31-August 1, 2017, the two sides, however, failed to agree, this time too. An earlier Indus Water Commission meeting in Islamabad in March 2017 had produced a similar deadlock, after which Pakistan turned to the WB as the arbiter of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT). While it soon became clear that the two sides were still poles apart, with Pakistan asking the WB to appoint a Court of Arbitration and India countering with a proposal for the WB to appoint a neutral expert, the WB's statement after the latest round of talks appreciated the goodwill and cooperative atmosphere in which these talks were held.

The dispute concerns two hydropower projects, the 330MW Kishanganga and the 850MW Ratle hydropower projects that Pakistan objects to on the grounds that their designs violate the provisions of the IWT. These provisions include a clause dividing the Indus Basin waters between the two countries on the basis of one-fifth to India and four-fifths to Pakistan.

Pakistan complains that India's designs as the upper riparian will unfairly and against the spirit and letter of the IWT deprive it of its rightful share of the rivers flowing through IHK. It may be relevant to mention here that the IWT is one of the most successful international treaties, having withstood the ups and downs in the relationship between Pakistan and India, and even the subsequent wars between them.

However, contrary to the IWT, there is a lobby in India that objects per se to the arbitration role of the WB, wanting no third party involved and for Pakistan and India to settle these and all other matters bilaterally. This is a self-serving argument, since the track record of bilateral negotiations on this and other matters is nothing to write home about. One does not know at this point what the next step on the part of the WB, Pakistan and India will be, but perhaps the best that can be hoped for is a continuation of talks to try and find ways and means to resolve the dispute.

The IWT was signed in 1960 after nine years of negotiations brokered by the WB, which is also a signatory and has a mediatory role in setting up dispute resolution mechanisms, but only with the consensus of both state parties. Despite its weathering the storms that have buffeted Pakistan-India relations since it was brought into existence, the IWT dispute resolution regime now seems stalled, perhaps partly because of the current tensions between the two countries.

Unfortunately, however, the track record of Pakistan's engagement bilaterally with India and multilaterally under the auspices of the WB on issues afflicting the IWT does not inspire confidence. One cannot escape the conclusion that Pakistan has seldom prepared its case on disputes in a timely or well thought out fashion.

Being the upper riparian, India can stall resolution of disputes almost indefinitely by hiding behind the technicalities of the IWT and its dispute resolution process, while continuing in certain instances to continue to create new facts on the ground. This may be informed by the wisdom that the WB or any other international arbitration forum is unlikely to ask a country to demolish a dam.

While Pakistan and India will now continue internal discussions in their respective capitals after the talks remained deadlocked, Pakistan has been hit by the news that a 20 percent water shortage looms over the Rabi season. The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) has revealed this while asking for building more dams on a war footing. The reasons adduced for treating this development as an emergency can be listed as sparse rainfall in recent years, silting up of existing water reservoirs, providing Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with their full quotas under the Water Apportionment Accord of 1991 and the additional off-take by the recently inaugurated Kachhi Canal in Balochistan.

Punjab and Sindh being the two affected provinces by the water shortage, food security now seems under strain if not threatened. Pakistan is considered to be a water-stressed country by now, and the portents, under the impact of climate change and potential and existing disputes between our internal upper and lower riparians, are increasingly grim.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/10/04/22-page/674395-news.html>

RABI CROPS: PUNJAB CHALKS OUT PLAN FOR UTILISING WATER JUDICIOUSLY

Business Recorder, 6 October 2017

LAHORE: Punjab Irrigation department and Agriculture department have jointly prepared a plan to prudently use the available water for sowing, growing and maturing the strategic Rabi crops over 22 million acres of land from October 01, 2017 to March 31, 2018.

These crops included wheat, barley, pulses, tomato, tobacco, fodder for livestock, winter vegetables, potato, onion, linseed (Alsee), garlic, coriander, radish, cauliflower, sweet potato, turnip, green beans, methi, carrot, cabbage, lady finger and other crops.

It may be added that though Punjab produces 70 to 80 percent of the Rabi crops to ensure food security its normal availability of water for six monthly Rabi crops has been cut by 20 percent this year that could adversely affect wheat and other crops production and food security of the country.

IRSA Chairman Mazhar Ali Shah said that the climate change played a major role in water shortage in rivers, as the country has received less rainfall than normal this year.

Punjab Irrigation engineers told Business Recorder here on Thursday that according to national water regulatory body's estimates, there will be only 29.5 million acre feet of water available to all provinces for agriculture purpose during winter, of which Punjab will get 15.72 MAF water besides there will be a loss of 2.24 MAF running water in the system during the course of distribution.

They said the Irrigation department will run all the perennial and non-perennial canals in the province for irrigating the standing Kharif crops including rice, sugarcane, cotton, maize, vegetables and fodder for livestock and fruit orchards till October 15. However on the advice of the Agriculture department, it would keep some of the non-perennial canals open for sowing winter crops for some time.

Muhammad Riaz, Chief Meteorologist Flood Forecasting Division Lahore told Business Recorder that rainfall has been below normal this summer. Only 52.9 MAF water passed through the Tarbela dam on the river Indus and about 15.1 MAF water reached Mangla dam on the river Jhelum while water flows Kabul and Chenab rivers were also below the department's expectations this year.

He said that IRSA started drawing additional water from the Tarbela and Mangla dams during last week of August to meet water demands of the provinces as the water inflow in the rivers was not sufficient to irrigate Kharif crops that were at a critical stage of their maturity. He said out of the 68 MAF only 7.5 MAF water has now been left in the two reservoirs to meet requirements of hydel power generation and watering the Rabi crops till March 31, 2018.

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/10/06/8-page/674672-news.html>

PLAN TO PROTECT WATER RESOURCES UNVEILED

Business Recorder, 7 October, 2017

LAHORE: Nestlé Pakistan with Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) on Wednesday unveiled a 'Water Plan' at LUMS with the aim to bring together multiple partners to preserve and protect water resources by leveraging research and technology to reduce and recycle water, introduce sustainable agricultural techniques to reduce water use vis-à-vis increase yield and provide access to clean and safe water within communities.

The water plan has been launched by the Nestle in collaboration with the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), WWF Pakistan, Department of Agriculture, Government of Punjab and Pakistan Agriculture Research Centre (PARC).

One of the major threats Pakistan faces today is water scarcity. We are the third most water stressed country in the world, with our current per capita annual water availability 1,017 cubic meters (down from 1,500 cubic meters in 2009). There are scientific guesstimates that the country may run dry by 2025 if we do not take immediate, collective action.

Speaking on this occasion, Nestlé Pakistan's MD Bruno Olierhoek declared Nestlé Pakistan's commitments to the water cause in the coming few years. He said "Our Shiekhupura factory was alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) certified in 2017 and we aim to get the remaining three factories certified by AWS standards by the end of 2019. We will increase the number of drinking water facilities to seven in 2018 with a new installation in Kabirwala. Furthermore, we want to promote drip irrigation amongst other water efficient initiatives. By the end of 2017, drip irrigation will be implemented on 68 acres leading to water saving of 147 mio litres which will be further extended to 185 acres resulting in savings of over 400 mio litres by the end of 2019."

Dr. Syed Sohail Hussain Naqvi said, "LUMS is proud to play a role in addressing the water scarcity issue as it is imperative that we come together to resolve this for our present and future generations"

Dr. Abid Qaiyum Sulehri Executive Director of SDPI said," There was time when we thought we would never run out of natural gas and today it's the same dire situation with water. Water is imperative for us both in addressing our energy and food security concerns."

Secretary Agriculture Department Captain Muhammad Mahmood (retd) said, "Water is life. Currently, Pakistan has a water storage capacity for just 30 day. We have been struggling to maintain adequate surface water supply for the past 3 decades."

Hammad Naqi Khan CEO WWF Pakistan said, "WWF Pakistan is proud to have played an important role in facilitating Nestlé Sheikhpura factory achieve alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) certification and become the first factory in Pakistan and the first factory in the Nestlé World to do so."

<http://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/10/07/12-page/674916-news.html>

November 2017

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM NOVEMBER 27th TO DECEMBER 3R D

GOVT SET TO LAUNCH NEELUM-JHELUM POWER PROJECT DESPITE WAPDA'S LACK OF PLANNING

Khaleeq Kiani

Dawn, November 27, 2017

ISLAMABAD: The government is ready to launch the Rs515 billion Neelum-Jhelum hydropower project in February next year, even though the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) is far from completing its basic requirements.

This has unnerved the key government institutions directly or indirectly which fear that technically and legally ill-planned launch of the strategic project could lead to an embarrassing repeat of the Nandipur power project.

Informed sources said the executing agency of the project — Wapda — had still not applied to the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Neptra) for tariff setting — a process that can consume at least one month. In fact, it has yet to be decided whether Wapda as an authority should apply for the tariff as an umbrella organisation of many other projects or the Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project Company (NJC) — a special purpose vehicle (SPV) — should file the tariff petition.

On top of that, Wapda and NJC have also not concluded or entered into talks with the Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA) for signing of the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) — a prerequisite for sale of electricity from any plant and its payment by the power purchaser.

The filing of tariff by Wapda or NJC involves a separate regulatory process and entails different treatments but tariff approval by Neptra is a basic requirement for the project to send out units to the grid against a price.

In the absence of a PPA, Neptra cannot even take up the petition. In case Wapda opts for tariff petition on behalf of the SPV, the NJC would also need a generation licence that would also consume at least three to four months.

Interestingly, a project that has consumed almost 15 years under implementation also lacks a formal mandatory tripartite agreement between three major stakeholders — the Azad Kashmir government, Wapda and the federal government — to cover past and future arrangements over rights and responsibilities.

On the technical side, the Wapda authorities, project contractors of China and the National Transmission and Dispatch Company (NTDC) are far from being prepared on a series of issues like completion of a 525kV transmission line, energising 525kV switchyard, third party testing validation, revenue metering and protection relay setting.

A meeting of Chinese contractor CMEC, Wapda, NJC and NTDC on Nov 14 noted a total of six incomplete tasks on part of various parties.

Informed sources said the 525kV switchyard required to operationalise first unit of the plant was not yet ready. The switchyard has to receive electricity from the generation unit and send it to the national grid. But to do that the authorities have to secure a third party certification to confirm that the switchyard and transmission lines are accurately synchronised and safe and would not harm the grid spanning across the country in case of a back-feed.

An official, who attended the Nov 14 meeting, told Dawn that having been leading Wapda for more than a year, its chairman was surprised to know that a third party validation for the switchyard was also mandatory. The switchyard completion could consume another two to three months, while its testing and third party certification process requires another two to three months.

It was also noted during the meeting that the NTDC was still working on three lots of transmission lines, but promised to deliver them by Dec 15. The meeting noted with concern that in the absence of PPA, a tariff petition could not be filed or tariff approved but then energy meters were still not installed to monitor electricity units produced and sent out.

As if that is not enough, Wapda has given a commitment to the federal government to bring into operation 242.5MW first unit of the plant by the end of February next year.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1373102>

WHY LINING SINDH CANALS IS NECESSARY

Dawn, The Business and Finance Weekly, November 27th, 2017

Mohammad Hussain Khan

SINDH is located at the tail end of the Indus river system, and is vulnerable to frequent water shortages, which remain moderate to severe.

The factors that undermine conservation of water in the provincial irrigation system include inter-provincial discord over water distribution and bad governance.

Another major factor is the unlined irrigation network. The Sindh government has lately started paying heed to it. Apart from foreign-funded lining projects, a provincial-level initiative is also under way to ensure lining of channels and canals.

Irrigation and water experts agree that climate change makes it all the more important that the lining of irrigation network should be given preference to ensure optimal use of available water resources.

Lining certainly needs to be linked with other advanced methods of cultivation like laser land levelling. A piece of farmland levelled with laser techniques gets uniform distribution of irrigation water, improving per-acre productivity.

Sindh's 80 per cent of groundwater is brackish. The aquifer of shallow water table, which is fit for drinking, is scattered across the province and therefore should be used wisely, says Dr Bukhshal Lashari, a water expert at the Mehran University of Engineering and Technology (MUET).

Ahmed Zeeshan Bhatti, a water researcher in Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources, Islamabad, says, "Lining should be a matter of life and death for Sindh in view of report of International Waterlogging and Salinity Research Institute. The report says that 60pc of the province's irrigated area faces threat of waterlogging."

If remedial measures are not taken immediately, Sindh would have to bear more waterlogged land in the next five years or so, he says. Seepage in major canals is always massive and it always occurs at a particular location around the canal whereas seepage or losses at field level remain higher but scattered.

"Generally, 60pc of water losses take place right from the canal head to water-course level and 40pc of water is used actually by a crop," he says.

Sindh's farmland is mostly fed by two major perennial irrigation canals, ie Rohri and Nara, which emanate from the left side of colonial era's Sukkur barrage, considered lifeline for Sindh's farm sector. The 350km-long Nara and 330km-long Rohri canal irrigate large swatches of land. The left bank of the Indus river is considered breadbasket of Sindh's farm sector where crops like cotton, sugarcane and wheat are grown or horticulture activity is seen on a large scale.

Cumulatively, these canals irrigate around 5.3 million acres of land and therefore get preference in terms of water provision by irrigation authorities as compared to remaining 12 canals of all three barrages of Sindh. Both these canals are unlined. It indeed requires a huge expenditure if these canals are to be lined from head to tail.

The Sindh government has given some thought to lining. It was in 2015 when a 10km strip of Rohri canal, considered mini-Indus and passing through Benazirabad district, was lined at a cost of Rs3.1bn. The lining of another 20km strip is in the pipeline at a total cost of Rs14bn.

Similarly, Jamrao's west branch — a system that takes off from main Nara canal — has been recently lined in Mirpurkhas district. Reports indicate it has improved agriculture land around the canal that had become saline.

Dr Lashari of the MUET observes that seepage in the irrigation system has remained uncontrollable.

He says the injudicious distribution of water has remained a menace, as landowners in the upper Sindh use water first while tail-end growers end up facing severe shortage. Salinity in such tail-end regions is always bound to increase owing to capillary action, he says.

To make matters worse, the drainage system that is vital to control waterlogging exists in 40pc to 50pc of the command area. "The lining of watercourses and distributaries is a must for bringing more area under cultivation or improving soil fertility."

Around eight years ago, the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) initiated a feasibility study of lining of three major canals of Sindh, including Rice, Dadu and Rohri, but the plan has yet to materialise. Currently, lining of a considerable number of watercourses is under way in Sindh under a foreign-funded programme. In addition, the provincial government, through its annual development programme, plans to spend Rs15bn in a block allocation to line 20km strip of Rohri canal. Feasibility study of Nusrat branch's lining was also being carried out, official sources says.

A federal funded-programme to line distributaries and minors in Sindh has been halted in the wake of the 18th constitutional amendment under which irrigation department was devolved to provinces.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1373060/why-lining-sindh-canals-is-necessary>

MOOT CALLS FOR CHANGE IN WATER MANAGEMENT

Dawn, November 30th, 2017

Amin Ahmed

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) country representative Mina Dowlatchahi said on Wednesday the transformation of water management and agriculture was needed to halt deterioration of natural resources and the contribution they made to the livelihoods of farmers and Pakistan's economy at large.

She said at a workshop on water sector management in Karachi that it was no longer an option to work on water in isolation from agricultural production and food systems.

World Bank task team leader of the Sindh Water Sector Improvement Project (WSIP) Toru Konishi said: "Water sector management is in a crisis with regard to water security. Therefore, it is essential to determine opportunities for water saving and how water can be distributed."

The Khipro Canal of Nara Canal Area Water Board was selected for the workshop due to its recent rehabilitation under the WSIP, a World Bank-funded project.

Sindh Irrigation Secretary Jamal Mustafa Syed said the irrigation department could not solve all problems unless it worked in close collaboration with the department of agriculture.

He appreciated FAO, the World Bank and the irrigation staff of the Khipro Canal system for coordinating for this training and field visits.

The purpose of the workshop was to train irrigation sector managers and engineers in "rapid appraisal procedure" and provide insights into the performance of large irrigation systems.

The workshop afforded an opportunity to irrigation and agriculture staff to work in collaboration to address issues of water service delivery and canal system performance and support WSIP.

The workshop was informed that the World Bank was preparing to fund another project in synergy with the Green Climate Fund led by FAO for transforming the Indus Basin with Climate Resilience Agriculture and Climate Smart Water Management.

The WSIP was based on the Sindh Water Vision Paper prepared by FAO. During preparation of the strategy paper, FAO conducted rapid appraisal procedure studies on Nara Canal Area Water Board, Ghotki Feeder Canal Area Water Board and Left Bank Canal Area Water Board, which contributed to the formulation of WSIP.

The rapid appraisal process is a scientifically designed procedure, which allows qualified personnel to systematically and quickly determine key indicators to assess performance of irrigation projects and systems.

The training focused on the first step of a larger step-wise methodology developed by FAO to audit irrigation system performance and plan irrigation modernisation: mapping system and services for canal operation techniques.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1373671>

SENATE DEPUTY CHIEF SHOCKED AT WATER CRISIS IN GWADAR

Abdul Wahid Shahwani

Dawn, December 01, 2017

KHUZDAR: Deputy Chairman of the Senate Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri has voiced concern at water crisis in Gwadar saying the government has done nothing so far to resolve the issue despite its claim that the port city will be developed on the pattern of Hong Kong.

Speaking at a seminar in the industrial town of Hub on Thursday, he deplored that the livelihood of Gwadar's fishermen was being snatched.

“Due to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the whole world is eying Balochistan in particular and Pakistan in general, as this multi-billion project will bring economic benefits to the entire region,” he said. “This is why we want the CPEC to be completed successfully.”

Mr Haideri, who is a leader of the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam (Fazl), said the federal government had to change its attitude towards Balochistan because people of the province still lacked basic amenities, including drinking water and health and education facilities.

He also lashed out at the provincial government for its failure to set up vocational training centres to meet requirement of manpower to be created by the CPEC. “How many students from Balochistan have been sent to China to pursue studies there?” he asked.

“If we are making the world our enemy because of the CPEC, then why are we keeping our people away from its benefits?” was another question raised by the Senate's deputy chief.

“Development and progress is our basic right, and we will attain it at any cost”, he further said. “India's anger (at the CPEC) will make no difference, and we will attain what we think is better for our people.”

“The federation is still treating Balochistan as its stepson. This has to be stopped,” Maulana Haideri said.

About Balochistan's seats in the National Assembly, he said that in the Census-2017, population of Balochistan had increased by around 40 per cent, but authorities concerned were not ready to increase the province's seats in the assembly.

He said Balochistan had only 14 seats in the National Assembly, a number lower than that of the seats of Faisalabad division.

He demanded that Balochistan's National Assembly seats be increased according to its population.

Referring to the recent political developments in the country, the JUI-F leader said had the federal government not withdrawn the controversial constitutional amendment about election candidates' declaration about their faith in the finality of prophethood of Muhammad (peace be upon him), "we would have parted our ways with the government and taken to the streets". "But thankfully, the government realised the seriousness of the issue and prevented the situation from further deteriorating."

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1373977>

WB APPROVES \$130M FOR WATER EFFICIENCY PROJECT

Dawn, December 3rd, 2017

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank has approved an additional financing of \$130 million to continue supporting farmers in Punjab to use water more efficiently.

The new financing will help in adopting drip and sprinkler systems that will significantly reduce widespread wasteful irrigation techniques.

The loan amount represents additional financing for the first phase of the Punjab Irrigated Agriculture Productivity Improvement Programme (PIAPP), which had an original investment of \$250m.

The project has contributed to increased agricultural production, employment and pay, higher living standards and improvements in the environment.

he project supports an initiative by the Punjab government called High-Efficiency Irrigation Systems that more than doubles the efficiency of water use. It is also promoting private-sector participation through the manufacturing and supply of materials.

To get more out of a drop of water in agriculture production, the project aims to raise crop yields, encourage farmers to shift to high-value crops, such as fruits and vegetables and cut the amount of money paid by farmers on fertiliser, pesticides or other costs, the World Bank said.

On approval of the project, World Bank Country Director Illango Patchamuthu said, "A vibrant farm sector can help end poverty in Pakistan. Our support to the Punjab government will spur new opportunities in climate-smart agriculture that bring more money for farmers".

Under the project, drip irrigation systems have already been installed on about 26,000 acres, and 5,000 laser levelling units have been provided.

The additional financing will ensure the completion of 120,000 acres with ponds in saline areas and for rainwater harvesting, and filtration systems for drinking water where possible.

“The high-efficiency irrigation systems have been critical for making farmers more productive and for creating jobs in installing and maintaining the systems,” said World Bank Lead Water Specialist Masood Ahmad. “A big impact of these technologies is how it gives jobs to women farmers as irrigation becomes a daytime-only activity that is much easier to manage,” he added.

The agriculture sector in Pakistan is heavily depended on irrigation. However, the per capita availability of useable water is decreasing with population growth, pollution and inefficient use of water.

An estimated 40 per cent of water is lost in the unlined watercourses due to seepage, spillage, side leakage and evapotranspiration. In Punjab, out of 59,500 watercourses, about 43,700 were improved in various projects and the government’s national programme for improvement of watercourses.

Under PIAPP, 5,500 new watercourses are being improved, leaving about 10,300 that still need improvements.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1374139>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM NOVEMBER 20 Th TO NOVEMBER 26 Th 2017

MINISTER CONCERNED OVER POOR QUALITY OF DRINKING WATER

Dawn, November 22nd, 2017

HYDERABAD: Unless healthy environment is ensured, people would keep suffering from different ailments. This was stated by Sindh Minister for Environment, Livestock and Fisheries Mohammad Ali Malkani on Tuesday.

Everyone should play his/her role for a clean environment, he said while speaking at a seminar organised by the Sindh Environmental Protection Agency (Sepa) at a local hotel here. He said Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari was a young and educated leader, and was aware of the issues confronting the environment. Bilawal was taking keen interest in those issues and the PPP would keep playing its due role for making Pakistan prosperous and healthy, he added.

The minister said the government was making all-out efforts to overcome environmental pollution, but the entire civil society should also come forward to play its role.

It’s an irony that people were concerned about cleanliness of their houses, but they threw garbage out on the streets, which needed to be given serious attention. If the environmental issues were not taken seriously, problems would increase, he warned.

He said people should ensure that environment in and around their localities was clean and free of all kinds of pollution. Such seminars, he said, would be organised in schools, colleges and rural areas to disseminate information about environmental issues and to educate people about them.

He said rural population usually depended on groundwater for drinking purposes, but analysis of such water revealed that it carried higher values of lead, which was harmful for health.

The government was analysing water samples and creating awareness about it, he said.

One thing was clear that the government alone could not do anything and society as a whole would have to play its role in the larger interest of the community, he observed.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1371999/minister-concerned-over-poor-quality-of-drinking-water>

EXPERTS CAUTION AGAINST WASTAGE OF WATER

Business Recorder, 22 November, 2017

KARACHI: Speakers at the Third International Water Conference on Tuesday said that Pakistan must reserve its water reservoirs in order to avoid a severe shortage of water in future.

Pakistan is at a critical crossroads in terms of its water resources, they warned, and methods through which it manages its fast decreasing per capita water availability and takes effective measures to correct its erratic river flows will determine how it deals with its changing water regime.

The three-day conference opened with a plenary session on “The Future of Water in a Politically Challenged New World Order,” with the keynote address delivered by one of the world’s leading authorities on water, Professor David Grey, a visiting professor at Oxford University.

In his speech, Sindh governor Mohammad Zubair said that Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi would be inaugurating another Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal after his return from Saudi Arabia, where he is now on a visit.

The governor said the federal government has now created a separate Water Ministry, an important department which had previously been clubbed with the Ministry of Energy.

But the governor said terrorism is a far bigger issue in Pakistan than the country’s water crisis.

In his comments the governor touched on all important issues facing the country but the issue at hand. He raised eyebrows when he appeared to play down the threat to Pakistan’s water security.

Zubair said he appreciated the efforts of citizens-based organizations such as Hisaar Foundation, which sponsored the event, to take steps to overcome some of the challenges.

In his speech, the CEO of Engro Corporation Ghias Khan, said “not only citizens, but industries are facing regulatory, physical and reputational risks due to lack of a conservation policy and a water regulatory framework.”

Simi Kamal, founder of Hisaar Foundation said she spoke to the Panjwani Hisaar Water Institute at NED University of Engineering and Technology. The water institute will be the first of its kind in Pakistan and the region.

Rudolph Cleveringa, executive secretary of the Global Water Partnership, Hungarian ambassador Istvan Szabo, Engro Corporation’s CEO Ghias Khan, Simi Kamal and Zohair Ashir were leading presenters at the opening session.

The opening plenary was followed by a series of sessions exploring issues such as water economy and water stewardship.

Vice chancellors of several Pakistani universities, including Dr Sarosh Lodi of NEDUET, also discussed methods to promote water-related studies within their respective universities.

At another session notable speakers such as Dr Marianne Kjellen, the UNDP’s senior water advisor, and Shamsuddin Sheikh, CEO of Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company, explored ways in which water economy can be leveraged for poverty alleviation. Another session had Dr Zaigham Habib, Dr Lubna Ghazal, Ms Daanika Kamal and Zulfiqar Halepoto exploring the visible impacts of climate change.

WATER CRISIS ATTRIBUTED TO FAILURE OF GOVERNANCE

Bashaar Husain

The Express Tribune, : November 22, 2017

KARACHI: We cannot look at the issue of water in isolation, said former governor of State Bank of Pakistan at the 3rd Karachi International Water Conference – The Future of Water, organised by the Hisaar Foundation on Tuesday. “We do not have a water crisis; we have a failure of governance with regard to water issues.”

In a session, titled, ‘The architects of water economy in Pakistan’, wherein stakeholders, such as government institutions, commercial banks and international players shared their understanding and analysis, Dr Hussain said that the demand for water is changing from cereal purposes to meat, poultry and fish, adding that meat demands a lot more water.

He complained that the strategies to tackle the issue are present, but there is a huge gap between the policies and their implementation. “Feudal lords are given direct access to water from canals, which is against any policy laid down in the Sindh irrigation department,” he said, adding that these landlords need to be charged the market price for the water they consume.

Echoing Dr Hussain’s sentiment, Pakistan Business Council (PBC) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Ehsan Malik said that in order to manage something as valuable as water, it needs to be measurable and in order to value something as essential as water, it needs to have a price tag.

He disclosed that PBC conducted a study where it was learnt that \$23 billion worth of economic activity is lost as canals are only 33% efficient. “A \$2 billion food trade deficit for an agrarian economy is absolutely ridiculous,” he said expressing his dismay at the findings.

“Wherever there is water, there is light; wherever there is light, there is life,” said Dr Salman Shah, former finance minister, adding that there are more ‘water black holes’ than there are areas without electricity. “Water black holes are areas where we have failed to provide viable irrigation systems, which are directly linked to poverty since a lack of irrigation means a lack of agricultural output,” he explained.

Another panelist, a former quality engineer at the Budapest Waterworks in Hungary, Genoveva Frank said that in his brief time in Pakistan, he has seen people using the most expensive and most water-consuming systems.

He advised that there are mobile water purification and packaging systems available that should be used instead. “We are here to help so please learn from us and adopt the changes discussed in order to preserve water for the future,” he added.

In conclusion, a question was posed to the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) Chairperson Lieutenant General (retd) Muzammil Hussain, relating to hydro-electric projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. “The Chinese did show an interest in such projects but they spoke of ownership, which is unacceptable to Wapda and Pakistan,” he replied.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1564733/1-water-crisis-attributed-failure-governance/>

NEED FOR FORMAL WATER POLICY AT NATIONAL LEVEL STRESSED

Bilal Ahmed

The Express Tribune, November 23, 2017

The absence of a formal water policy in the country was lamented by speakers at the session, 'Pakistan Water Policy – Time is Now', on the second and last day of the third Karachi International Water Conference on Wednesday..

Representing the planning and development department of Punjab, Malik Mukhtar Ahmed Noul, however, informed the audience that Punjab had drafted its water policy which was expected to be presented in the Punjab Assembly for approval soon.

According to Noul, the two biggest challenges faced by the Punjab government regarding water were the depletion of underground water and wastage of water in urban areas. In Lahore, the underground water level is decreasing at a rate of one metre per year, which is alarming, he said.

The Punjab government representative said 95% of water resources in Punjab are used in agriculture, 2% used in industries and 3% used in other domains, including human consumption. He, however, added that it has been forecast that with the passage of time, the share of water for agricultural use would decrease and, by 2025, it would come down to 85%.

Hisaar Foundation Think Tank Convener Seemi Kamal shared some of the recommendations made by the foundation for the water policy of the country. She called for measures to extend irrigation to desert areas which could make five million acres of land cultivable.

Later, commenting on the conflicts over river water between Sindh, which is a low riparian province, and Punjab, which is high riparian province, Kamal said all rivers in the world have upper and lower riparian areas but the areas resolve their conflicts.

Member of the Sindh planning and development department Fateh Marri urged the need for integrated management, which in turn required coordination among various departments while dealing with water.

The water infrastructure in the country is more than a century old and our barrages are also aging, Marri said, calling for the modernisation of the infrastructure and use of modern technology. He also urged the need for tapping into under-utilised water resources, such as hill torrents.

Replying to a question from the audience regarding the need for a new water accord between the provinces, Marri said the equitable distribution of water was accepted in the accord of 1991 and no new accord was needed after that.

There was no authority in Sindh which was acting as the custodian of the water resource, said World Bank (WB) representative Toru Knoshi. The absence of any legal framework or policy regarding water in the province made matters complex, he added.

Sindh had to shift from irrigation-centric water management to a broader style of management, the WB representative said. The economy of Sindh is not entirely based on agriculture and is diversifying, hence, water resources should be managed after taking into account factors other than agriculture, he maintained.

It is high time for Sindh to acknowledge the need for urgent steps for the water issue as the water crisis is expected to hit the province in five to 10 years, the WB representative warned.

Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) Women Commission Chairperson Neelum Toru emphasised on encompassing gender-related issues while formulating any policy regarding water. Many female students in K-P drop out of school because there are no toilets or water available in toilets at schools, she claimed.

No explicit mention of the need for the construction of new dams was made by any speaker in the session on water policy.

Concluding the session, one of the moderators, University of Oxford visiting professor Dr David Grey said the issue of water in Pakistan merited emergency measures by the government. He also discussed rift among the provinces over water which hindered national consensus on water. The provinces should sit together to resolve their disputes over water, Dr Grey concluded.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1565699/1-need-formal-water-policy-national-level-stressed/>

TACKLING WATER SECURITY: WHO OWNS THE RIGHT TO GROUNDWATER?

Muhammad Wajeeh

The Express Tribune, November 23, 2017

There are two recommendations for a federal water policy lying with the Centre that have yet to be implemented and if such a policy is not coming then the provinces should devise their own policy, urged Pakistan Water Partnership (PWP) Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Sardar Muhammad Tariq.

The former Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) board member made this suggestion during a panel discussion on water security on the second day of the Third Karachi International Water Conference on Wednesday.

Tariq said that to understand water security there is a need to understand water scarcity. He explained, “The global yardstick for water scarcity is that if you have 1,700 cubic metres per person, per year then you are in a very comfortable water regime.”

He added that the moment this amount reduces, you start getting into water stress situations, water shortages and water scarcity.

“The surplus water available for Pakistan doesn’t last for more than 30 days.” He elaborated that for the rest of the 335 days, Pakistan is in a semi-drought or drought-like condition.

The PWP CEO said that for an arid country like Pakistan there is a need to have 40% surface water storage. However, he deplored that the country has only 7% storage to counter the problem. He added that this is also reducing due to sedimentation, which leaves a big question mark on the country’s water security.

While speaking about how fragile the country’s water security is, Tariq also told the audience that 85% of the country’s water is transboundary. He said that India has at multiple times threatened to cut off the water coming from Indian occupied areas.

The last issue, in his view point, on which Pakistan’s water security depends on, is climate change. “The glaciers right up to the Chinese border are receding, which in turn is reducing the water flow.”

Talking about what the provinces should do, the water expert advised Sindh to look towards the ocean instead of depending on northern Pakistan. To Punjab, Tariq suggested that it needs more private sector involvement and to address the trans body pollution with India.

Another issue taken up was of water pricing. It was discussed at length by Dr Sanval Nasim, an assistant professor at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (Lums), and panel chair Nisar Memon.

Both panelists stressed the need to introduce a water pricing scheme to better manage the water resources of the country.

Nasim said, “When we look at the other assets we consume, we are paying a price over and above the extraction of resources. However, when it comes to a precious resource like groundwater, we only consider the extraction cost and the actual value of the resource, in terms of scarcity, is completely ignored.”

He said policy interventions are required to address the unsustainable use of groundwater. Another issue he highlighted was of who owns the resource, lamenting that Pakistan has not figured out who collectively owns the right to groundwater.

When asked about how water pricing would be introduced since it may not be a politically viable option and taking into account the small number of people paying taxes, Memon suggested that in bigger cities the levy could be charged directly on societies, such as the Karachi Development Authority and cantonment boards.

He also suggested that for the agriculture sector, the Indus River System Authority (IRSA) could be used. He added that the government could cut supply to the fields or districts if they are not paying the water price. Memon also suggested that the district commissioners could implement the policy.

Meanwhile, Nasim said the key to translating water pricing into policy would require advocacy and reaching out. “If people are made to realise that groundwater is a basic right and all should own it, then it would work.” He added that there should be an equitable mechanism where water use for small units should be free but if it is being used to generate income or profit then they should be asked to pay.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1565667/1-tackling-water-security-owns-right-groundwater/>

SALINE WATER MADE USABLE FOR AGRICULTURE IN THAR

The Express Tribune, November 23, 2017

The Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company (SECMC), which has been defending the construction of a saline water reservoir in Tharparkar, has claimed that brackish water has been made usable for agriculture.

According to a press statement issued on Wednesday by the company’s spokesperson, Mohsin Babbar, cotton, millet, cluster beans, okra, apple gourd, watermelon, fodder and few other local crops have been grown under two pilot projects using saline water.

SECMC executed the pilot crop cultivation in collaboration with China’s Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography, Karachi University’s (KU) Institute of Sustainable Halophyte Utilisation and Sindh Agriculture University, Tando Jam. The experts made water with a level of 5,000 to 6,000 total dissolved solids (TDS) usable for bio-saline agriculture.

“The fodder has been given to [livestock] animals on trial and [fodder] was taken as the regular grass,” the spokesperson claimed.

SECMC chief Shamsuddin A Shaikh said in the statement that the breakthrough will unfold a paradigm shift in the way Tharparkar region’s people grow crops. “The scope of agriculture using brackish water will be expanded further soon.”

He believed that bio-saline agriculture is a reality and scientific advancements have made the technique applicable in water-scarce areas like Tharparkar. “Luckily, we have a huge quantity of [saline] water available in the subsoil aquifers, which can revolutionise the agriculture sector in the region, he hoped.

Dr Muhammad Ajmal Khan of KU said the fodder's properties match maize. "The difference being that you can take only two crops per year [through conventional cultivation with rainwater]. Whereas, you can take 14 to 15 yearly crops of our fodder." According to him, the per hectare fodder production stood at an impressive 60 kilogrammes.

"[This development] may cause a reverse cycle of migration," Sindh Agriculture University Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr Mujeebuddin Sehrai hoped. During the dry season, the people of Thar migrate to other districts to find jobs. They return to their hometown only after monsoon rains to cultivate the rain-fed crops.

"Sindh and specifically, Thar has no other choice but to opt for bio-saline agriculture," Dr Sehrai believed.

According to the spokesperson, SECMC has dug 27 drilling wells around the coal mine to extract water. Each of the wells has a capacity of 1.5 cusecs to 2 cusecs of water. The water pumped out from the well is carried through a 27 kilometre-long pipeline to Ghorano reservoir.

The residents of the Ghorano area, fearful of the 1,500-acre reservoir's effects on the environment, have been protesting against the project. Some residents also filed a petition in the Sindh High Court, praying that it order relocation of the site.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1565693/1-saline-water-made-usable-agriculture-thar/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM NOVEMBER 13 Th TO NOVEMBER 19 Th 2017

PAKISTAN STOPS BID TO INCLUDE DIAMER-BHASHA DAM IN CPEC

The Express Tribune, November 15th, 2017.

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has withdrawn its request to include the \$14-billion Diamer-Bhasha Dam in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) framework after Beijing placed strict conditions including ownership of the project, said Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) Chairman Muzammil Hussain on Tuesday.

"Chinese conditions for financing the Diamer-Bhasha Dam were not doable and against our interests," said Hussain while briefing the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) on the status of the mega water and power project.

He said the Chinese conditions were about taking ownership of the project, operation and maintenance cost and securitisation of the Diamer-Bhasha project by pledging another operational dam.

These conditions were unacceptable, therefore, Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi approved a summary to finance the dam from the country's own resources, he said.

The issue of excluding the Diamer-Bhasha Dam from the CPEC framework also featured in the Cabinet Committee on CPEC which met last week.

The Wapda chairman and the water resources secretary informed the premier that the only way out was to fund the much-delayed project from domestic resources.

The sixth meeting of the Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) – the highest decision-making body of CPEC – had agreed to establish a mechanism to develop hydroelectric power projects along the northern side of the Indus River including the Diamer-Bhasha project, according to minutes of the deliberations.

Pakistan decided to take the dam off the table just days before the seventh JCC meeting, which is scheduled for November 21 in Islamabad. The JCC will review progress on the implementation of already approved projects and decide the fate of new schemes.

Currently, about 15 prioritised energy projects valuing at \$22.4 billion and having 11,110-megawatt generation capacity are part of the CPEC framework. Among these, only two are hydroelectric power projects with cumulative capacity of 1,590MW. Most of the CPEC energy projects are based on coal.

Pakistan has been struggling to raise money from international institutions amid Indian opposition to the project. There were hopes that Pakistan may finally complete the project after including it in the CPEC framework whose worth has already swelled to \$60 billion.

Ground-breaking of the Diamer-Bhasha Dam has been performed five times in the past 15 years.

Neither the World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB) nor China would finance the dam, therefore, the government decided to construct the reservoir from its own resources, said Water Resources Secretary Shumail Khawaja.

The Wapda chairman blamed the ADB for the delay, saying the bank first destroyed the project and later declined to provide loan. The ADB was of the view that the project was located in a disputed territory, he said.

The project will have the capacity to generate 4,500MW of electricity in addition to the storage capacity for six million acre feet of water, which the country desperately needs due to shrinking storages.

The Wapda chairman said the project cost would hover around \$14 billion and the prime minister had agreed to split the scheme into dam storage and power generation.

According to the new financing plan, he said, the federal government would provide Rs30 billion per annum over the next nine years from the Public Sector Development Programme, taking total federal contribution to Rs270 billion.

Hussain said Wapda would generate 20% of equity from its own resources whereas financing for constructing power plants would be arranged from commercial sources.

Construction work on the dam site would begin next year and the government would complete it in nine years, he said. Work on the power generation site will begin two and a half years after the start of work on the dam.

The Wapda chairman said 969MW Neelum-Jhelum and 1,410MW Tarbela extension projects would be commissioned in February next year.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1558475/2-pakistan-stops-bid-include-diamer-bhasha-dam-cpec/>

RS220M SCHEME IN JEOPARDY AS WATER TABLE DIPS IN LANDI KOTAL

Dawn, November 13th, 2017

Ibrahim Shinwari

LANDI KOTAL: The Rs220 million scheme to supply water to Landi Kotal is in jeopardy as the survey conducted for exploration of water sources has revealed considerable depletion of underground water table and drying up of decades-old natural wells in the region due to prolonged dry spell.

The political administration announced the scheme in May 2016 after getting an amount of Rs220 million from United States Agency for International Development (USAID) following prolonged deliberations and persuasions.

Official sources said that initially the task to explore underground water reservoirs and surface channels was assigned to the public health department of Khyber Agency.

The survey report compiled by the public health department was, however, rejected by officials of the USAID owing to 'unrealistic and exaggerated figures' about underground and surface water channels, they said. They added that the survey findings discredited the public health department.

Officials said that a technical team of USAID then conducted its own survey by using modern technology to obtain accurate results. "The amount pledged by USAID is too big and it does not want the amount to go down the drain while relying on a faulty survey report," they said.

Sources said that the USAID technical team was so far unable to track down permanent sources of both underground and surface water channels. The survey revealed that the underground water table had considerably depleted while the quantity of water running in natural springs on ground surface had also narrowed down over the years.

"Prolonged dry spell has also contributed to drying up of decades-old wells, dug out by locals over the years, that were also major sources of continued supply of drinking water to most parts of Landi Kotal," said officials.

Official sources said that pumping of water from Ali Masjid water spring to Landi Kotal, that was about nine kilometres away, was not feasible as it would require round the clock electricity supply whereas Tesco was carrying out 18 hours loadshedding in Landi Kotal and surrounding areas on daily basis.

They said that the two pumping machines at Landi Khana water reservoir near Torkham had developed technical fault in May but the public health department failed so far to either replace or repair the faulty machines.

The prolonged outages of power supply also badly affected the running of tubewells in Zakhakhel area of Landi Kotal. Local residents said that public health staff was not paying proper attention to the maintenance of tubewells and only two out of the seven were operational that too for a limited timing due to excessive loadshedding.

With no immediate relief in sight, local residents are now relying mostly on free water supply by the local political administration through tankers. Officials said that the monthly bill for supply of free water reached Rs2 million.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1370223/rs220m-scheme-in-jeopardy-as-water-table-dips-in-landi-kotal>

SINDH'S 50PC POPULATION DEPRIVED OF DRINKING WATER, SAYS QAIM

Dawn, November 14th, 2017

KHAIRPUR: The delta of Sindh is facing a severe shortage of water owing to ecological problems and climate change.

This was stated by former Sindh chief minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah at the 'International Conference on Literature and Ecological Challenges (Pakistani and international perspective)' organised by the department of Urdu, Faculty of Arts and Languages, Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission on Monday.

The former CM earlier inaugurated the moot. He said 50 per cent of Sindh's population was deprived of drinking water and it was due to low intensity of rain that the drought in Thar had intensified.

Sindh was facing ecological challenges and there was an acute shortage of irrigation water, he said.

From downstream Kotri Barrage, the sea level was rising and as a result, the sea had devoured more than 2.5 million acres of agricultural land, he observed.

He said the Sindh government supplied food to more than 1.6 million people in Thar desert and also provided fodder to animals. He lamented that the districts of Badin, Tando Mohammad Khan and lower areas of Umerkot were also facing acute shortage of water.

Mr Shah said the Indus water accord might be implemented in letter and spirit to provide an equitable and need-based share of water to the province.

Talking about literature, he said Sindhi language was rich in literature. He also praised the intellectual and literary works of Ghalib and Allama Iqbal.

Making her presidential speech, Salu Khairpur Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Parveen Shah said the department of Urdu had provided a platform to the international and national scholars to share their valuable literary research on the burning issue of modern times.

She said literature in the contemporary age provided awareness about beauty, human dignity and justice.

Dr Thomas Stemmer of Germany said literature was a diversified field.

Dr Heinz Werner Wessler of Sweden delivered his keynote speech on ‘The Garden, the Wilderness and the Self: Eco-Critical Readings in the Age of Deep Environmental Challenges’.

Author and columnist Ms Zahida Hina said: “We are living in a devastated world where bloody and violent clashes between different countries and communities [are] going on unabated.”

She said exodus of millions of people from their ancestral cities had created disastrous environmental and ecological situation.

These great tragedies had left a deep imprint on the world of literature. She narrated the plight of wars of Vietnam and Iraq, which created ecological and environmental problems.

Wars were fought for acquiring resources and these wars created devastation and catastrophe for environment and human beings.

Prof Dr Mohammad Yousuf Khushk, dean Faculty of Arts and Languages, said the earth was facing immense ecological challenges; humanity was under threat; smog, pollution etc, were increasing day by day. He said from 1850 to 2015, two degrees Celsius temperature increased.

Dr Sofia Yousuf, chairperson of the department of Urdu, conducted the proceedings of the conference.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1370355>

PM ASKED TO SOLVE GWADAR’S WATER PROBLEM

Dawn, November 15, 2017

QUETTA: Chief Minister Nawab Sanaullah Zehri has sought help of the federal government for solving permanently the water problem persisting in Gwadar and other areas by way of laying down pipelines from the Mirani Dam.

During a meeting on Tuesday with Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and other cabinet members, Mr Zehri said that Gwadar was facing acute water shortage although the provincial government had allocated funds for laying down pipelines from Mirani Dam to Gwadar.

It was also making efforts to utilise desalinated water for easing the crisis.

The permanent solution, he said, was to supply water to Gwadar from the Mirani Dam through pipelines and the provincial government needed the federal government's assistance to implement the project.

Regarding the provision of LPG gas to districts headquarters, he said, the gas facility should also be extended to far-flung areas. He informed the prime minister that the LPG plants were feasible for every area of the province while the provincial government would provide land for the establishment LPG plants.

Nawab Zehri also took up the issue of increasing Balochistan's seats in National and provincial assemblies.

He thanked Mr Abbasi for paying three visits to Balochistan during three months.

Provincial Minister for Revenue and Transport Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhel also demanded that the capacity of LPG plant should be increased in view of requirement of gas in Balochistan.

Other ministers present in the meeting apprised the prime minister about the issues of their constituencies.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1370589/pm-asked-to-solve-gwadars-water-problem>

WATER INSECURITY

Dawn, November 15, 2017

FOR many, climate change conjures up images of forsaken polar bears floating on icebergs made from melting ice caps, or hurricanes in the Caribbean turning island paradises into island hells. But the ones who are most affected worldwide are those with the least resources in fragile environments — including people in places like Pakistan.

For people in Pakistan, perhaps the most immediate and serious impact is on water availability. According to a report by the World Resources Institute, Pakistan is on track to become the most water-stressed country in the region, and 23rd in the world, by the year 2040. No person in Pakistan, whether from the north with its more than 5,000 glaciers, or from the south with its 'hyper deserts', will be immune to this.

Pakistan's economy is the most water-intensive worldwide, according to an IMF report. According to the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources, Pakistan may run dry by 2025 if the present conditions continue. They claim that the country touched the 'water stress line' in 1990, and crossed the 'water scarcity line' in 2005, more than a decade ago, and that in relation to the scale of the problem relatively little has been done to improve the use or supply of water.

The UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation measures the pressure on national water resources by calculating water withdrawal as a percentage of total renewable water resources (TRWR). Stresses are considered high if the TRWR value is above 25 per cent. Pakistan's water pressure amounts to a staggering 74pc. This level of pressure is high, even when compared with neighbouring countries, such as Iran at 67pc, India at 40pc, Afghanistan at 31pc, and China at 19.5pc.

With new challenges in trans-boundary water talks, understandably much focus is directed towards Pakistan's interstate water issues with India and Afghanistan. But international experience shows that water scarcity can

exacerbate internal tensions. According to the UN Peace Institute, evidence from Pakistan shows that water scarcity, droughts, floods and domestic mismanagement can prompt tensions locally and this can escalate intrastate water disputes.

As with other diverse and larger countries, Pakistan has defused these tensions — but with current signs pointing towards greater water scarcity these tensions are likely to increase, making improved water management an economic, environmental and political imperative.

Crafting sustainable solutions will require an integrated approach to supply and demand management. In the long-term planning, coming up with strategic conservation strategies is key. Both surface and groundwater resources are being used at capacity, and current methods of extraction and uses are not only unsustainable, they are also damaging to the economy and human security today and in the future.

With the population growing even faster than projected, and the intensity of water use remaining high, if no remedial actions are taken now the water needs of the estimated 208 million Pakistanis will continue to escalate dramatically. While more reservoirs and dams may be a part of the answer, they are just one part. So, apart from building more dams and reservoirs, it is essential that Pakistan diversifies its water resources to ensure water availability. We have examples from many countries that can be adapted to Pakistan.

For instance, Singapore follows The Four Taps Strategy to tackle water shortages, and Japan has invested heavily in water-saving technologies. Similarly, we have plenty of rainwater year-round that can be recycled and stored as is being done in the Maldives.

In all those countries, a price is put on water use, so it's important to note that for a country like Pakistan water is almost a free commodity. Unlike electricity, there are no water meters in houses where people pay according to usage. Thus, there is enormous, unmeasured water wastage. To sensitise the public on water wastage it is critical that water usage is metered. Public outreach campaigns have worked elsewhere for helping put a value on water; and decreasing the intensity of water used.

Current irrigation practices are largely inefficient, and water productivity is lowest in the Indus basin's irrigated agriculture. According to UNDP, the development of laser levelling technology and furrow-bed irrigation has resulted in saving 30pc of water and has led to an increase in productivity by 25pc in Punjab's Okara district. Such a model should be replicated in other areas, as well as other methods, such as expanded drip irrigation farming systems.

Delaying efforts to address Pakistan's water scarcities will intensify tensions between different stakeholders. If more Pakistanis are not to be left behind and the SDGs are to be met rapidly, reducing 'water stress' is crucial. Water management needs to become a top priority for Pakistan.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1370550>

FLOOD-AFFECTED AREAS OF CHITRAL GET CLEAN DRINKING WATER

The Express Tribune, November 16th, 2017.

With natural disasters including earthquakes, floods and landslides ravaging parts of the remote valley of Chitral over the past few years, efforts by a UN agency have helped fortify the community and provide clean drinking water.

In this regard, a water supply scheme for flood-affected areas of the area was inaugurated in Chitral on Wednesday.

“Around 53,000 children die each year from consuming contaminated water in the rural and urban areas of the country,” said United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Chief of Office Charles Nzuki while inaugurating the scheme.

He added that water plays a pivotal role in every healthy, clean society. However, he said it was unfortunate that in the rural areas of Pakistan, only a fraction of the society has access to clean drinkable water.

But, he said, they were working with the local community and the government in Chitral, which has suffered from floods and earthquakes, by allocating funds for the reconstruction of water channels and roads to affected areas.

“We have constructed around 2,000 feet of protection wall to guard against soil erosion and further devastation of the community’s land and property and have provided over Rs40 million for the reconstruction of Angarghoon water supply scheme in the flood-affected area,” Nzuki said.

While talking to the media, Dr Inamullah Khan said that they had initiated a “WASH project” to raise awareness among the flood-affected community about the importance of hygiene and had trained midwives along with lady health workers for improving the environment at local health facilities.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1559572/1-flood-affected-areas-chitral-get-clean-drinking-water/>

WATER WOES

Business Recorder, 16 November, 2017

Chairman Indus River System Authority (Irsa) during an emergency meeting to review the water availability revised Pakistan’s water shortage estimate upward by 36 percent from 20 percent for the rabi season 2017. This implies Punjab would get 12.6 million acre feet (instead of 15.72) and Sindh 9.5 MAF (instead of 11.86) with no change in the water share in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

Punjab continues to be the major producer of most crops, including wheat, rice, sugarcane and cotton followed by Sindh and needless to add the decline in availability of water would have negative implications on total farm output. Agriculture, in turn, accounts for around 20 percent of the country’s Gross Domestic Product though this estimate is clearly an understatement given that our manufacturing sector is mainly agro-based.

This decline in water availability should surprise no one as sector experts have been predicting for decades now that unless appropriate mitigating measures are taken on an emergent basis, Pakistan would become a water-scarce country. In 2009, a report by the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars predicted that Pakistan would face water scarcity by 2035 – an estimate revised to 2025 by the International Monetary Fund, which in its report, noted a dismal supply of 191 MAF, with a projected demand of 274 MAF by 2025, culminating into a deficit of 83 MAF.

The IMF report further claims that Pakistan has the world’s fourth highest rate of water use and is already the third most water-stressed country in the world – statistics that should be a source of shame to the Musharraf, Zardari, Nawaz Sharif and the Abbasi administrations given their lack of focus on constructing reservoirs as well as taking other appropriate measures to deal with the situation that is assuming crisis proportions.

Pakistan’s water resources, according to readily available research, are being degraded due to pollution, atrophy, overuse of surface water and over-exploitation of groundwater and “large tracts of land have been rendered uncultivable due to water logging and salinity, direct results of mismanaged irrigation. Unsafe drinking water is responsible for numerous diseases including dysentery, diarrhoea, typhoid, cholera, malaria and gastroenteritis. UNICEF estimates that 200,000 children in Pakistan die annually due to diarrhoeal diseases alone”.

During a recent Public Accounts Committee meeting, Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) Chairman Lt-Gen Muzamil Hussain (retd) acknowledged that Pakistan wastes 25 billion rupee worth of water every year and that while we receive 145 MAF each year we preserve only 14 MAF.

He further contended that soil collection at the base of Tarbela Dam has compromised its storage capacity by 36 percent and noted that the construction of Diamer Bhasha dam was therefore critical. Mention was also made of the

controversial Kalabagh dam plan as a means to deal with the water shortage, which understandably accounted for considerable anger amongst those from the smaller provinces who argued that only non-controversial projects should be supported.

Dr Young, lead water resource specialist at the World Bank, during a recent presentation maintained that “being water-scarce does not mean you cannot be water secure... and more important is how we use and manage water and is it being used most productively in the economy.”

In other words, there are measures that can be supported by the government designed to ensure productive use of water. Unfortunately, like other sectors suffering from maladministration, the water sector too has been subjected to poor governance: there is visible massive water wastage by the rich and influential, with no punitive fine imposed, while the poor are unable to access clean drinking water.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/11/16/20-page/682513-news.html>

KARAK TO GET SIX FILTRATION PLANTS

Dawn, November 17th, 2017

KARAK: The Public Health Engineering Department has started survey for construction of six water filtration plants in Karak city to resolve the problem of drinking water shortage. The project would cost Rs100 million.

This was stated by local PHED official Mushtaq Khan while talking to mediapersons here on Thursday. He said that the main filtration plant would be established near Karak Sar and five other small plants would be set up in Karak city to ensure availability of drinking water to the residents.

He said that solar systems were being installed on eight supply schemes to provide sufficient drinking water to the residents of Karak city. He said that the main filtration plant would filter 100,000 gallons water in an hour.

Mr Mushtaq said that the drinking water problem of the Karak residents would be resolved once and for all.

Meanwhile, residents of Rehmatabad, Surdag and other adjacent localities demanded reconstruction of Karak-Bannu road, saying it was dangerous and unfit for use. A group of people led by former district president of Khattak Ittehad told a press conference here on Thursday that it was the main trade route between Karak and Bannu districts.

They said that the road had been uprooted and could not be used for traffic anymore. They threatened agitation if the government did not announce a project for reconstruction of the road within a week.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1371058>

EXPERTS REGRET COLLECTIVE APATHY TOWARDS CONTAMINATED WATER ISSUE

Dawn, November 18th, 2017

KARACHI: What other calamity are we waiting for? Millions of people in this province are compelled to drink and use highly contaminated water. The government knows all facts but is not ready to act whereas the media and civil society haven't taken a strong stance on the issue.

Shahab Usto, senior advocate whose petition led to the formation of a judicial commission on drinking water, voiced his frustration in these words at a discussion held on Friday at a local hotel.

The dialogue on the report submitted by the commission to the Supreme Court this year in February was organised by Shehri-Citizens for a Better Environment.

Mr Usto's presentation on the subject followed a short documentary titled Killer Water based on the facts collected during the commission's detailed visits to a number of cities, looking into the causes of government failure in providing safe drinking water and clean environment to people in Sindh.

The evidence collected by the commission showed that the whole province didn't have a mechanism to safely dispose of its domestic as well as its hazardous medical and industrial waste. Untreated waste was discharged into rivers, canals and other channels, which also served as sources of drinking water.

"The data submitted by the irrigation department shows that there are 800 points in the province where effluent is discharged into water bodies whereas more than 80 per cent of water samples collected by Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources from all over Sindh were found to be unsafe for drinking," he told the audience.

The commission, Mr Usto pointed out, had submitted two reports so far, the latest one showed that the government had demonstrated no sense of urgency over the public health disaster exposed by the commission's findings and was non-compliant so far [to the court directives], though no one had contested the reports of water and sewage testing results.

"In fact, water quality in Karachi has further deteriorated after the court gave directives to the government after reviewing commission's report.

"Early this year, 80pc samples in Karachi were found to be contaminated but this number rose to 91.7pc in July," he said, adding that overall 460 samples were collected from underground and surface water sources in the province which were found to be contaminated with harmful bacteria and toxic chemicals.

The commission, he said, visited a number of waste treatment plants in the province and all were found non-functional. Similar conditions prevailed at the filter plants.

"Hospitals and educational institutions in a number of districts presented an equally horrifying picture and most were found to be supplying contaminated water," he said, questioning the governance in Sindh.

"The government hasn't yet submitted compliance report to the court, which had directed it to take a number of steps. This included immediate rehabilitation and functioning of waste treatment plants and dissolving the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board and transferring their functions back to the local councils," he said.

Expressing his disappointment over media and civil society's response, he said that the media "didn't take the issue seriously" whereas civil society hadn't realised the gravity of the problem.

Sharing his opinion on the situation, Farhan Anwar, seasoned urban planner, said that positive expectations from government departments plagued by political interference, lacking autonomy and facing financial and technical bankruptcy would be unrealistic.

"We need to redefine the role of government to an entity limited to policymaking, planning and acting as a regulator. There is a need to explore innovative options, such as public-private partnerships and formalising informal practices," he said, citing examples from other countries where such reforms worked.

Later, replying to a question, Mr Usto said that the state of civic conditions were better in Punjab because the province had a competitive culture and strong political opposition.

"In contrast, there is no opposition in Sindh and the PPP has gotten a walkover," he said, regretting that though Karachi was the most educated city in the country, its people couldn't effectively raise their voice on basic issues.

On the waste treatment plants in Karachi, he said even if all were made functional, they could only treat 150MGD of effluent whereas 350MGD waste would still go into the sea.

Earlier, engineer Pervaiz Sadiq, an avid scuba diver, spoke about how Karachi's pristine beaches and marine environment had degraded owing to continued discharge of toxic waste into the sea.

“The habitat of Churna Island is also being destroyed due to increased pollution,” he said, calling for steps to regulate recreational activities there and declaring the site as officially protected.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1371270>

18,000 SCHOOLS SANS POTABLE WATER IN SINDH

Business Recorder, 18 November 2017

MOHAMMAD BILAL TAHIR

KARACHI: About 18,000 schools in Sindh have almost no access to potable drinking water, in a province where a huge percentage of the population is compelled to consume untreated water.

The main reason of this is lack of laboratories and trained staff, Advocate Shahab Usto told a seminar on “Water Issues in Sindh: Findings of Water Commission.” The event was sponsored by Shehri-CBE on Friday. In response to Usto’s petition, a commission was set up by the Sindh government to find reasons for the contaminated water supply. It presented two reports on the issue. During commission hearings, 14 orders were passed to improve water quality, of which but none was acted upon by the Sindh government, he said.

Jamshoro tops the bad water list, with 97 percent of supplied water was found to be contaminated. The city of Hyderabad follows closely, with 93 percent of the supplied water contaminated. Next come Karachi and Tando Allah Yar, with 91 percent. Larkana’s figure is 88 percent, Shikarpur 87 percent, Sukkur 83 percent and Tharparkar 64 percent, he said.

The commission reports say: The multibillion RO plants failed to ensure an adequate quality of water to supply wherever they are installed in the province. These RO plants are installed by a private company approved by the Sindh government.

There is no integrated water supply system in Karachi for its population of 16.6 million. The city’s 500 mgd water spills into the sea every day, posing a threat to the marine life, including fish and shrimp, and particularly to its mangroves.

The KMC’s three effluent plants are long dysfunctional, causing a permanent threat to the seacoast.

Hyderabad’s population of three million is forced to consume 87 percent “highly contaminated” water with no treatment plants operational. All of the toxic industrial waste is discharged into the Indus River, rendering 83 percent of water unworthy for Sukkur’s one million population.

Jacobabad’s 170,000 population is faced with deplorable sanitation crisis.

The Sindh government set up a treatment plant for the city at a cost of Rs1.5 billion but is not working. Toxic water plagues the public with waterborne diseases in Kotri. “Multibillions project in Tharparkar, only five out 60 RO plants are properly working to provide water to the public in Mithi.” Asia’s largest solar RO plant is also unable to supply potable water to the town. The government’s departments cannot deliver the service for lack of autonomy, political interference, and technical and financial bankruptcy, engineer Farhan Anwar said.

The commission’s reports further recommend accountability of the departments’ staff to ensure smooth dispensation of services. An initiative from the citizens resulted in the setting up of a commission of inquiry by the chief justice of the Sindh High Court, which was notified on Dec 29, 2016. A judge, Justice Muhammad Iqbal Kalhor, was appointed to report its findings.

The commission submitted its first report on Feb. 25, but regular hearings and reports in the media show that there is little progress.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/11/18/5-page/682771-news.htm>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM NOVEMBER 6 Th TO NOVEMBER 12 Th 2017

GOING WITHOUT A WATER POLICY

Dawn, The Business and Finance Weekly, November 6th, 2017

Mohiuddin Aazim

AS Pakistan heads towards water scarcity, promoting economic use of water has become as important as boosting renewable resources.

In agriculture, the concept of economising the usage of water gained currency about a decade ago. But in the absence of a national water policy, efforts made for conserving water have so far not made a major impact.

By 2014, Pakistan had withdrawn 94 per cent of its total renewable water resources. Water withdrawal for agriculture had also reached 94pc of the total available resources for this sector, according to the 2015 yearbook of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

Gauged by the production index of 100 (with base year 2004-06), net food availability stood at 94 and net output of crops at 107, according to the FAO. The gap indicates the level of post-harvest losses and weaknesses in value-addition chain of food crops.

The measuring of net output of crops at 107 at an index of 100 despite 94pc water withdrawal for agriculture means “we are producing less food with more water”, says an official of the Ministry of National Food Security and Research. This highlights the need for economising water use on the one hand and boosting crops’ yield on the other.

On farms and fields that get water from canal networks, efficient water management depends largely on improving water courses, using laser land levelling, bed and furrow irrigation, gated pipe irrigation, pressurised irrigation, and acquiring best practices for groundwater extraction and distribution.

Things have improved in the past decade, chiefly due to increased governmental spending, but also because of some investment made by large farm owners, such as in gated pipe irrigation and pressurised irrigation.

In deserts and in areas not fed by canals, water efficiency can be achieved through water harvesting and on-farm storage, pressurised irrigation, tunnel farming, and plasticulture, i.e. the use of plastic materials in the irrigation system and other agriculture applications.

This is where Pakistan is lagging far behind others, mainly due to the absence or dearth of government funding and coordinated investment by the private sector.

During the past 10 years, a number of tunnel farms have sprung up in Punjab and in Sindh, but promoting tunnel farming on a large scale requires policy vision and kick-starting public-private partnership projects, experts say.

Last month, the Punjab government initiated a programme to provide 50pc subsidy on the installation of tunnel farming infrastructure on 3,000 acres of land. The provincial government is already giving a subsidy of up to 60pc on the installation of drip irrigation systems.

In August, the Sindh government unveiled a massive \$185m World Bank-funded Sindh Irrigated Agricultural Productivity Enhancement project to promote drip irrigation across the province over a period of six years.

In Balochistan a \$100m, ADB-funded water resource development project is under way. It will be used not only for constructing new dams, but also for flood irrigation or spate system of water supply, officials say.

The spate system is useful in the areas where farmers don't have access to ordinary canal water and, instead, manipulate water flows of seasonal floods in rivers and streams to temporary canals or water ways to use in farms and fields.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, authorities have been trying to use the gravity flow of irrigation system with financial help from the federal government to divert rainwater and store it at a higher altitude area and then channel it back to lower altitude areas for use on farms and fields.

Pakistan needs more of the above-cited initiatives to bridge the gap between growing demand and scarce supply of water for agriculture. For this year's Rabi crop, a water emergency has already been declared after authorities came to know that shortage of water can shoot up to 40pc, double the initial estimate of 20pc, recent media reports suggest.

Meanwhile, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) wants the government to come up with the much-awaited national water policy to ensure efficient water management in the future. The central bank recently suggested that there is a need to connect water pricing to the actual amount of water consumed by a crop or an area.

The SBP's annual report for the 2016-17 fiscal year contains a comprehensive special report on water management that suggests various other measures.

The report laments the fact that Pakistan is still awaiting its first national water policy despite the fact that its draft was formulated in 2003, whereas India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka all have their water policies in place for more than a decade.

The task of structuring our national water policy became more complicated after the 18th Amendment to the Constitution under which water distribution for agriculture, domestic and industrial purposes became a provincial subject. The draft water policy now awaits approval from the Council of Common Interests.

A delay in announcing the water policy "is a major setback as the current policies are inadequate in addressing the upcoming water challenges", warns the SBP report. "Further delays would only damage the long-term growth prospects of the economy."

The report also calls for introducing water rights system wherein head-end farmers — the ones who are entitled to use a certain amount of water but their needs are low at a particular time of the year — could sell their water rights to tail-end farmers, who at that time need more water than their quota.

This should help improve the most efficient use of water and boost agricultural output.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1368724>

GOVT ENSURES QUALITY OF SUBSOIL WATER BEFORE IMPLEMENTING SCHEMES, PA TOLD
Dawn November 08, 2017

Bhagwandas

KARACHI: The Sindh Assembly was informed on Tuesday that subsoil water in many parts of the province contained arsenic and the public health engineering department always tested water before implementing schemes relating to tube wells and hand pumps' installation.

Public Health Engineering Minister Fayaz Butt was responding to queries of lawmakers during the assembly's Question Hour, which pertained to public health engineering, information, science and technology departments.

Muttahida Qaumi Movement legislator Zafar Kamali said that since subsoil water in many places in Sindh contained arsenic, did the department check it before supplying it to the people.

The minister replied that the department always tested the water and when it was found safe then it implemented the schemes relating to tube wells/hand pumps so that people got safe water.

To another question by MQM's Zubair Khan who wanted to know whether the department's water-testing laboratories were operational, the minister said that mobile laboratories were functional and routinely carried out tests at different places.

Responding to a question by Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf legislator Khurram Sherzaman about the report of a Supreme Court-appointed water commission that said quality of water at many places in Sindh was not good and unfit for human consumption, the minister said that quality of water being provide in Juhi [district Dadu] was good, but if the legislator could provide data suggesting otherwise the department would look into it.

He said that the department would also ensure that the commission's recommendations relating to the issue, if any, were followed.

Responding to a question by Pakistan Muslim League-Functional legislator Nusrat Sahar Abbasi as to why the work on a drainage scheme in Larkana that began in 2010-11 was still pending, the minister said that it was an old question and the department had provided the status of the scheme at that time in the written reply circulated in the house on Tuesday.

He said the work had been completed and the scheme was operational.

Ms Abbasi said that the water supply scheme in Matli was not functional. However, the minister did not agree with her and said that the scheme was fully functional. He said the scheme was an old one and designed for 40,000 people but the population had increased so the water might not be sufficient for everyone.

He said that a new scheme for around 165,000 people was being implemented and soon it would be completed.

Question Hour began amid demand by some legislators that issues relating to sugar mills be taken up first. The soft-spoken Sohrab Sarki, who was chairing the session at that time, found it challenging to maintain order in the assembly. He said that first the business of the house would be completed then other issues would be taken up.

Soon Deputy Speaker Shehla Raza came and took the chair. After exchanging some strong words, she managed to bring the house to order.

Later, some legislators, including MQM's Heer Soho, urged the chair to maintain order in the house and ensure that decorum was observed during the session.

MQM legislator Dilawar Qureshi pointed out that the house was being misled by providing outdated information in the form of written answers. The chair agreed with him and asked the minister to always bring updated information.

She also asked the department officials sitting in the gallery to provide updated information to their ministers so that they were fully prepared during Question Hour and provided satisfactory answers to legislators.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1369079>

GOVT APPROVES CONSTRUCTION OF LONGEST BRIDGE ON INDUS RIVER

Dawn, November 9th, 2017

KARACHI: The Sindh government on Wednesday approved construction of the longest bridge on the Indus River, a two-kilometre long structure, to link Ghotki and Kandhkot.

Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said while presiding over a high-profile meeting that the bridge, a four-lane project, would be built on the basis of public-private partnership and was scheduled to be completed in three years.

The meeting also approved construction of a 3.5-km-long bypass for the traffic coming from Ghotki to Thull, Jacobabad and Balochistan.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Planning and Development Mir Hazar Khan Bijarani, Sardar Saleem Jan Mazari and other officers concerned of works and services and irrigation departments.

The chief minister directed floating proposal for the bypass within a week so that its foundation stone could be laid by the end of next month. "This is one of the most important projects for smooth flow of vehicular traffic to Punjab and Balochistan," he said.

The chief minister said at a separate meeting of office-bearers of four industrial areas of Karachi at the CM House that the industries department should start reconstruction of infrastructure of the industrial areas within 20 days.

He said the government had released around Rs1 billion for the development of infrastructure in NKI area, FITE, KITE and LITE. "But, the work has not been started yet for one or the other reason," he said.

He said the purpose of giving funds to SIIDB was to develop infrastructure within the shortest possible time but the board failed to do it.

The chief minister constituted a committee under commissioner Karachi to monitor quality and pace of work and keep accounts audited from time to time. The other members of the committee included representatives of P&D, finance, industry and deputy commissioners concerned.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1369252/govt-approves-construction-of-longest-bridge-on-indus-river>

WITH WATERSHED MANAGEMENT, MANGLA'S LIFE RISES TO 269 YEARS

The Express Tribune, November 9th, 2017.

Effective watershed management techniques to slow down the accumulation of sediment and an increase in dam's height have enhanced the life of Mangla reservoir from 115 to 269 years, said Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) in a statement.

Wapda Chairman Lieutenant General (Retired) Muzammil Hussain on Wednesday visited the Mangla watershed management project site to review progress on various measures being taken for implementation of the scheme.

Speaking on the occasion, Hussain said watershed management played a pivotal role in increasing the life of water reservoirs by controlling soil erosion and reducing sediment flow.

Therefore, he said, implementation of the measures under watershed management was also important like that of constructing dams for water storage. He directed the officials concerned to remain focused on achieving their targets.

He was briefed that Wapda had been implementing the Mangla watershed management programme since 1960 in the reservoir's catchment area spread over 5,710 square miles in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan to control soil erosion and reduce the pace of sedimentation.

Some of the measures taken under the project from 1966 to 2017 include developing about 130 million plants in nurseries, afforestation over 166,653 acres of catchment area and construction of 3,746 engineering structures in addition to building numerous soil conservation structures.

Consultants of the Mangla Dam in their project design way back in 1960 had put the life of the reservoir in the range of 100 to 115 years with estimated sediment load at the rate of 42,000 acre feet per annum.

However, due to the effective measures taken under the watershed management project, the assessed rate of sediment load has remained lower at 27,747 acre feet annually. The effective watershed management techniques and completion of the Mangla Dam raising project have increased the life of the reservoir from 115 to 269 years. "Mangla's enhanced life could be better assessed with the fact that benefits equivalent to billions of rupees are accrued every year from the dam," the statement said.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1553525/2-watershed-management-manglas-life-rises-269-years/>

SINDH ASSEMBLY BERATES FEDERAL MINISTER FOR CALL TO BUILD KALABAGH DAM

Dawn, November 10th, 2017

Habib Khan Ghori

KARACHI: The Sindh Assembly on Thursday termed the call by a federal minister to construct Kalabagh dam and dubbing its opponents as 'Indian agents' a "mischievous" move and demanded an unconditional apology for injuring sentiments of the people of Sindh and other provinces who had already passed resolutions against the construction of the dam.

This demand was made in a resolution tabled by PPP parliamentary leader and Senior Minister Nisar Ahmad Khuhro jointly with Health Minister Dr Sikandar Mandhro. After a brief speech by its mover when the resolution was put to vote, it was adopted unanimously. The resolution reads: "This assembly strongly reiterates its principled stand, time and again, totally rejecting the construction of Kalabagh dam. This mischievous move in the Senate by Jawed Shah to whip the dead horse to life is highly condemnable.

"His remarks calling opponents of Kalabagh dam as Indian agents exposes the ailing mentality of the federal minister and this assembly censures the highly objectionable attitude of Jawed Shah and demands an unconditional apology for injuring the sentiments of the people of Sindh and other provinces who have already passed unanimously resolutions against construction of the Kalabagh dam many a time."

Before its adoption by the house, speaking on the resolution Mr Khuhro said that some people had learnt no lesson from the breakup of Pakistan. He asked why those calling opponents of Kalabagh dam Indian agents did not call Nawaz Sharif an Indian agent, who not only invited Narendra Modi but also did not talk against Kalbhushan Jhadav.

The minister recalled that it was an international law that no dam could be built without the consent of the people living at the tail end of the river. "As such, without taking permission from us, one should not even think of building the dam".

He recalled that three provincial assemblies of the country, including Sindh, had rejected the dam many a time and also had passed resolutions against it. The remarks of Jawed Shah had hurt sentiments of the people of the three provinces. He should extend an unconditional apology.

After the adoption of the resolution, the house was adjourned at 2.45pm till Friday for reassembling at 10am.

Earlier during other business of the day from the agenda, the house also passed two more resolutions with consensus pertaining to the demise of iconic writer, teacher and scholar Mohammad Ibrahim Joyo, paying rich tributes to his scholarly services to the country, for Sindh and its people in particular.

In another resolution rich tributes were paid to visionary poet Allama Mohammad Iqbal, who gave the concept of an independent Muslim homeland in the subcontinent, resulting in the creation of Pakistan.

The resolution on the demise of great scholar Joyo was read out by Senior Minister Nisar Khuhro, Health Minister Dr Sikandar Mandhro, Cultural and Antiquities Minister Sardar Ahmad and PML-F lawmaker Nusrat Sahar Abbasi.

The entire house was keen to speak to pay tributes to the outstanding literary personality, but only a couple of lawmakers could make it. They include Sorath Thebo of the PML-N, Heer Ismail Soho, Waqar Hussain Shah and Dewan Chand Chawla of the MQM; Ghazala Siyal, Khurshid Junejo, Minister Jam Khan Shoro, Imdad Pitafi and Dr Sikander Shoro of the PPP.

After the Question Hour, Khurram Sherzaman of the PTI took up a calling-attention notice pertaining to the suffering of thousands of citizens whose bikes were being picked up in Saddar areas daily without displaying 'No parking' signs by the traffic police.

Responding to the notice, Home Minister Sohail Anwar Siyal said displaying 'No parking' signs was the responsibility of the KMC and cantonment and not that of the traffic police, whose duty was only to remove vehicles from areas where parking was not allowed.

Presiding chairman Dr Sohrab Sarki said that whoever may be responsible for display of 'No parking' board, it must be displayed and in case the vehicles were picked up, the affected persons should be informed about their vehicle by the police.

Heer Soho of the MQM by her calling-attention notice asked about the annual fee in addition to the tuition fees being collected by private schools. Education Minister Mehtab Dahar informed the house that private schools under a law of 2005 were entitled to collect one month tuition fees from the students yearly as annual charges for extracurricular activities.

At the start of the day's proceedings, PTI MPAs Samar Ali Khan and Dr Seema Zia informed the chair about the change of their parliamentary leader from Samar Ali Khan to Khurram Sherzaman.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1369507/sindh-assembly-berates-federal-minister-for-call-to-build-kalabagh-dam>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 30TH TO NOVEMBER 5 Th 2017

TWO HYDRO-POWER PROJECTS TO BE GIVEN TO SPONSORS
Dawn, November 1st, 2017

Khalid Hasnain

LAHORE: The government plans to award two run-of-the-river hydro-power projects to the sponsors under Build, Own, Operate, Transfer (BOOT) mode for a period of 30 years.

After 30 years, the respective provincial government will take over the administrative and functional control of the projects by paying Rs1 token money to the sponsors for each scheme, Dawn has learnt.

The projects being planned to be marketed within next 15 days are 80 to 100 MW Neckerdim-Pauer in Chitral and 132MW Rajhdani on Punch river in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). The Neckerdim-Pauer project had earlier been advertised some years ago. But no one expressed interest in it, forcing the government (Private Power Infrastructure Board) to put the process on hold for some time.

Similarly, the Rajdhani hydro-power scheme was envisaged 10 years ago by the AJK government. But the sponsor couldn't start the work, forcing the government to cancel the project. And later the scheme was handed over to the PPIB from the AJK in order to restart the process to find new sponsors to execute this to be launched in the downstream reaches of the Punch River, in Northern Pakistan (about 12km upstream of the Mangla Reservoir and 3km from Rajdhani village, district Kotli, AJK).

“The PPIB has been directed by its Board of Directors (BoD) to present these projects before the financially sound and experienced sponsors that could complete them fast within a stipulated time,” a senior official of the Ministry of Energy (Power Division) told Dawn on Tuesday.

“After completion, the sponsors would own and operate the project for a period of 30 years. And finally after completion of the 30-year period, they would hand over these schemes to the respective government without any cost by paying just Rs1 (for each project) as a token money,” the official said.

The official said the projects would roughly cost US \$250 million and \$350 million to \$400 million.

Under the procedure and terms and conditions, the sponsor would be liable to share 20 to 30 per cent of the total cost (equity), while rest of the amount would be financed by the banks as loan. In the first 10 years (after completion of the project), the bank loan would be paid back through power selling.

“The whole process to repay the bank loan and sponsors' equity will complete in 30 years and later the schemes would be handed over to the respective governments,” he said.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1367613/two-hydro-power-projects-to-be-given-to-sponsors>

PAKISTAN DUMPS WATER WORTH \$22 BILLION INTO THE SEA EVERY YEAR

The Express Tribune, 3 November 2017

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan dumps water worth \$22 billion into the sea every year mainly because of lack of storage capacity and poor conservation practices, Indus River System Authority (Irsa) Chairman Sher Zaman Khan said on Thursday.

Briefing the participants of the Senate Forum for Policy Research, Khan warned if the current water crisis continued, it would aggravate food security situation as the country would not be able to produce major crops.

“If dams are not constructed on a war footing, in the near future Pakistan will not be able to produce major crops like wheat, rice, sugarcane, cotton and maize due to the acute water shortage,” Khan told the forum meeting.

The Irsa chief informed the forum – chaired by Senator Nayyar Husain Bokhari – that the water regulator had already informed the provinces they might face 36% irrigation water shortage during the Rabbi season (October-March).

According to Khan, about 500,000 tonnes of silt deposits in the Terbela dam and the Mangla dam every day. “Because of this, [our] two major water reservoirs have already lost 12% of their storage capacity,” he added.

The forum unanimously agreed to the need for construction of more dams, especially the Kalabagh dam, on an urgent basis to help improve the water conservation system.

The meeting was informed that monsoon rains are a major source of water in Pakistan.

Khan said 80% of water comes from monsoon rains and the rest from other sources. However, he added, due to shortage of storages, huge quantity of water is dumped into the sea which otherwise could be stored.

At the forum, Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) Chairman Dr Muhammad Ashraf underscored the importance of dams. He expressed serious reservation to the absence of a national water policy.

“Kalabagh dam can easily be completed in five years,” he said, adding that the Akhoori dam could also be constructed as an alternative to Kalabagh dam within a few years. He warned that out of the 43 lakes in Pakistan, levels of 26 have dropped drastically in the past few years.

He also spoke about the depleting quality of drinking as well as ground water. “The analyses of the water quality in major cities of Pakistan in 2015-16 are eye-opener and call for measures on a war footing to save as many lives as possible,” he said.

An emergency meeting of the Irsa Advisory committee reviewed the water availability situation. The meeting was chaired by Irsa Chairman Sher Zaman and attended by Irsa members and officials of the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) and the provincial irrigation department.

Irsa spokesperson Khalid Rana told reporters the committee anticipated that the country would receive 23.96 million acre feet (MAF) water instead of 29.48 MAF estimated earlier. Irsa had anticipated 20% water shortage for during Rabi season but now it expected 36% shortage.

“Sindh, Punjab and Wapda submitted their working paper regarding the water availability in the reservoirs and rivers. The advisory committee reviewed the data and forecast that the water shortage for the Rabi season will be 36%,” Rana said.

Earlier the total water availability was estimated of 29.48 MAF – 24 MAF from river flows and about 7.8 MAF currently stored in two reservoirs. In October, however, the rivers received 4.1 MAF water – 17% less than anticipated 4.9 MAF.

Since Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) are exempted from any cut in their water share, they will get their full share of 1.9 MAF. The shortage would be distributed between Sindh and Punjab.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1548420/1-pakistan-dumps-water-worth-22-billion-sea-every-year/>

December 2017

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 25th TO DECEMBER 31st 2017

ZEHRI PROMISES TO BUILD WATER RESERVOIRS

Dawn, December 25, 2017

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Nawab Sanaullah Zehri has vowed to construct more dams and water reservoirs in the province to provide water for irrigation and make clean drinking water available to everyone.

He said this during a visit to the site of a dam being built by the provincial government. Officials from the irrigation department and others briefed the chief minister about the project, its benefits and how it would promote the agriculture sector and primary products.

“With the construction of more dams and completing the ones on which work has started, there will be more water available for irrigating barren land in the area and solve the issue of clean drinking water,” he said, during a one-day visit to Anjera, Kalat, on Sunday. “In the absence of dams and water reservoirs in Balochistan most of the flash floods flow into the Indian Ocean and we are unable to store it,” said Mr Zehri, adding that the government was committed to establishing more schools in the area to provide good quality education and healthcare centres.

“The government has prepared a list of public welfare projects which will be completed on time and handed over to institutions for the service of the people of this province,” he said.

“Efforts are being made by the provincial government to serve the people of Balochistan and solve their problems. For example, in the development area efforts have been accelerated to meet the growing demand of the people,” he added. According to the chief minister, the provincial government was struggling to combat illiteracy and backwardness while trying to boost the education sector.

He said that similar efforts were being made in the health and communication sectors. “More emphasis is being laid on extending the stable power supply to all the regions in this province,” he said, adding that the government had also prioritised sports, setting up grounds and complexes in all parts of Balochistan for the younger generation.

During his visit, Nawab Zehri was received by senior officials of the administration and elders of the community. They discussed several issues of mutual interest.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1378729>

SC PUTS OFFICIALS ON THEIR TOES TO COMPLETE WATER AND SANITATION PROJECTS

Syed Ashraf Ali

The Express Tribune, 26 December, 2017

The Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) has reportedly been dumping 450 million gallons household and industrial effluent into the sea for the past 10 years. The unchecked disposal of pollutants poses a threat to marine life and will take at least four years to resolve. Barring any delays in the release of funds, the water board expects to complete its household sewage and industrial waste management projects S-III and Combine Effluent Treatment Plants by 2022. The deadlines have been set according to the Supreme Court ruling, however, the projects might face delays due to bureaucratic bottlenecks, political interference and corruption.

Completion of the S-III project has been delayed for the past 10 years due to lack of interest of the provincial and federal governments, keeping one of the biggest water and sewage management projects out of the board’s reach. After approval in 2007, KWSB engineers hastily devised feasibility reports and a PC-I for the project. It was agreed that the Rs8 billion cost would be borne equally by the provincial and federal governments.

Intimating the government about the expiry and suspension of all of its three treatment plants, the Water Board had requested an immediate release of funds. However, neither the provincial nor the federal government paid any heed to the projects until 2013 when the funds were finally released. However, when a newly-appointed consultant firm carried out a review of the projects, the cost soared to Rs36 billion, inviting a great deal of criticism and reservations from the federal government. The Centre chose to release funds as per the previously approved PC-I, according to which it had to release Rs4 billion between 2013 and 2017. The provincial government has already paid its Rs4 billion share but so far the federal government has only released Rs2 billion.

According to sources in the KWSB, the S-III project which was to be completed by 2016 is nowhere near completion at the end of 2017. In the past four years, the project has only seen 90% completion of the conduit between Mauripur and Yaseenabad passing along the Lyari River, whereas construction of the conduit between Yaseenabad and Surjani Town has not begun due to lack of funds.

The shortage of funds has also affected the extension and development of the TP-I and TP-II treatment plants in Haroonabad and Mauripur. Progress on these plants is dismal, as just 15% of the work has been completed. However, this is still better than the progress on TP-III Mehmoodabad and TP-IV Korangi plants, which have not even been started.

“The provincial government has failed miserably to clear the encroachments built around TP-II,” said sources in KWSB. They added that following a review after four years, the federal government’s Central Development Working Party (CDWP) finally approved the revised PC-I of the project with an estimated cost of Rs36 billion and an endorsement from the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) is awaited. ECNEC reportedly approved a budget of Rs11.7 billion for an industrial waste management project – Combined Effluent Treatment Plant – last month, after years of delay.

Project director Imtiaz Magsi told Express News that after going through the revised PC-I, the federal government no longer holds any reservations over the S-III project and a go-ahead is awaited for the revised cost of Rs36 billion. The CDWP has also approved the revised PC-I and an approval from ECNEC is also expected. “If the funds are released on time, phase I of the S-III, covering the transmission line in the Lyari River and TP-I and TP-III, will be completed by the end of 2018,” Magsi explained. “Phase II of the project, covering the Malir River transmission line and TP-IV, will take another three years.”

According to the feasibility report, the daily management capacities of TP-I and TP-III are 100 million gallons and 180 million gallons respectively, while TP-IV will be able to treat 180 million gallons of sewage every day. If the provincial government hands over the site for TP-II, the treatment capacity can go up by another 25 million gallons a day. Put together, the treatment plants under the S-III project will have a combined capacity to process, clear and dispose of 460 million gallons of Karachi’s sewage every day.

The reason why the KWSB and provincial and federal governments are in such a rush to complete the mega projects is because the Supreme Court took notice of the inordinate delays and initiated proceedings on the lack of potable water and poor sanitation conditions in Sindh.

The court taking cognisance of the situation has led to many sleepless nights for the officials.

The provincial government is trying to ensure that work on these projects is initiated.

Government officials have been working late hours and holding meetings to set their plans into motion as soon as possible. KWSB officials have also been directed to submit on-ground progress instead of merely submitting paper reports to the SC this time around.

The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) has approved development of five Combined Effluent Treatment Plants (CETPs) in Karachi. The plants will have a sewage processing capacity of 94 million gallons per day and will be developed at a cost of Rs11.7 billion, of which the federal government will provide 33% of the funds while the remainder will be borne by provincial government. The project is expected to be completed by 2022.

The industrial sewage management CETPs will be established in five zones of Karachi, four of which will be completed in Phase I. CETP-I, with a processing capacity of 19 million gallons per day, will be constructed in SITE industrial zone, while CETP-II will be established in Trans-Lyari and will be able to process 27 million gallons a day. CETP-III will process 12 million gallons a day and will be established for industrial zones of North Karachi and Federal B Area, while CETP-IV will be developed for Landhi and Korangi Industrial areas with a 26 million gallon per day capacity. Phase II of the project will see the completion of a 10 million gallon treatment plant CETP-V for SITE industrial zone on the Super Highway.

Project director Zaheer Abbas confirmed that the CETPs have been approved by ECNEC. The cost of the project will be split between the federal and provincial governments in the agreed amounts of Rs3.8 billion and Rs7.9 billion respectively.

Work on the project will commence once administrative approval of the provincial government is given. A consultant firm will be hired for the development and finalisation of the project design, after which construction contracts will be awarded through tenders.

Confirming that the project deadline is 2022, the director said a memo instructing development and extension of localised sewerage lines up to the treatment plants has already been sent to the industries secretary.

Once connected to the treatment plants, waste from all five industrial zones will be cleared before being dumped into the sea, keeping the marine life safe from hazardous from toxic and hazardous pollutants.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1592645/1-sc-puts-officials-toes-complete-water-sanitation-projects/>

AHSAN URGES OFFICIALS TO EXPEDITE GWADAR'S WATER & POWER SUPPLY PROJECTS
Business Recorder, 27 December 2017

Naveed Butt

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms, Ahsan Iqbal has directed for expediting work on fresh water supply and power projects in Gwadar under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), besides issuing orders for making immediate alternate arrangements to address the problems of water and power in the port city on war footing.

The minister expressed these views while presiding over a high-level meeting on Gwadar projects here at Planning Commission on Tuesday. The meeting was attended by Secretary Planning Shoab Ahmad Saddiqui, Chief Secretary Balochistan Aurangzeb Haque, and senior officials from line ministries, government of Balochistan and Chinese Embassy.

The participants further discussed in detail the issues of water and power supply in Gwadar city.

The officials of Gwadar Development Authority and Ministry of Energy briefed the participants about the Gwadar Master City Plan, power projects and water supply issues of Gwadar.

The minister said the people of Gwadar were at the top priority regarding CPEC projects and instructed for immediate resolution of water and power supply issues in the port city. He said those projects would meet the power and water demands of local community and the modern expanding port city of Gwadar.

Currently, the CPEC projects of necessary facilities of fresh water treatment, water supply and distribution at the cost of US \$130 million and 300MW coal-based power project at the cost of US \$600 million are under implementation in Gwadar. These projects will meet the power and water demands of local community.

Gwadar Smart Port City Master Plan, a one year project at the cost of US \$4 million (Chinese Grant), was launched in August 2017. It envisages preparation of a detailed master plan including city planning and urban design, city transportation planning and design, energy, technology and connectivity infrastructure and policies, economic planning of the port city, community participation and empowerment, disaster risk management and integrated business development plan for city and port, etc.

Ahsan Iqbal also directed that mushroom growth of private sector residential societies be discouraged prior to completion of Gwadar City Master Plan.

He said the plan for Gwadar city must be a comprehensive document, including all aspects of a modern port city in line with requirements of the CPEC. He instructed that the plan should ensure provision of an integrated rail, road and air transport infrastructure system. He highlighted that the Gwadar Master City Plan must cover the present and future maritime trends and assessment of other regional ports.

“To make Gwadar a competitive port, the plan should come up with solutions,” the minister remarked while commenting on the briefing by the GDA. He also instructed to induct a senior and qualified expert on regional and urban planning in the review committee made for this project.

The minister maintained that people of Gwadar were the top priority, and instructed that maximum benefits be offered to the local community under the CPEC. He directed that besides expediting CPEC projects of Water and Power Plant, alternate arrangements should be made to address the problem on war footing.

Meanwhile, Ahsan Iqbal said that over Rs6.6 billion had been saved through rationalization of projects during the last four years. He said this on the inauguration of ‘Planning Commission-1 Automation System’ here on Tuesday.

Iqbal said in the past, the storage and processing of the projects was difficult and a lot of stationery was used for printing several copies of the projects. He said the PC-I Automation System would help reduce the cost of stationery use.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/12/27/9-page/690189-news.html>

NEELUM-JHELUM PROJECT ENTERS FINAL STAGE

The Express Tribune, December 29th, 2017.

The 969-megawatt (MW) Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project – a hydel power generating scheme of strategic importance – is in its final stage of completion, a press release issued by the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) said on Friday.

It further listed completion of dam and start of water filling in the reservoir, completion of water way system comprising 51.5-kilometre long tunnels, installation of turbines, generators, transformers and other electro-mechanical equipment in the powerhouse, and dry testing of electro-mechanical equipment, as the infrastructural operational ‘milestones’ achieved.

“The transmission line by the NTDC is expected to be completed by the end of this month, while water filling (pressurisation) of water way system will commence during first week of January 2018,” the release said.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1595472/2-neelum-jhelum-enters-final-stage/>

DIAMER-BHASHA DAM: CHINA REFUSES TO FINANCE PROJECT

Business Recorder, Dec 30th, 2017

Mushtaq Ghumman

China has reportedly refused to finance \$14 billion Diamer-Bhasha Dam power project due to transboundary dispute between Pakistan and India, citing the stance already taken by the World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB), well informed sources told Business Recorder. This has been informed by Secretary Water Resources Shamail Ahmad Khawaja at a meeting of Cabinet Committee on CPEC presided over by Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi. This update was also placed before the federal cabinet a couple of days ago.

The secretary Water Division briefed the meeting about the status of proposal of inclusion of 4500MW Diamer-Bhasha Dam (DBD) in the CPEC program. He stated that the Chinese side had carried out a detailed study to assess feasibility of DBD project. The assessment report was shared with Pakistan wherein some issues were raised regarding: (i) seismic hazard; (ii) logistics; (iii) technical aspects of construction and equipment; (iv) social and environmental impact and; (v) geo-political aspect.

According to the secretary Water Resources, the Chinese side had raised transboundary matter and pointed out that India had refused to give No Objection Certificate (NOC) to the World Bank and Asian Development Bank (ADB) for financing the project, adding that this response had seriously hampered the inclusion of Diamer-Bhasha Dam power project in CPEC and resultantly Chinese assistance could not be materialized.

The sources said the secretary Power Division proposed that in view of the Chinese response, dam part may be constructed through indigenous resources through combination of PSDP grant, commercial financing and Wapda equity. He also suggested that the power generation facility may be started 2-3 years after work is started. He further informed the meeting that 85 per cent land of the project had already been acquired by spending Rs 86 billion and resettlement was underway. The Prime Minister agreed to the proposal.

The Cabinet Committee on CPEC approved the proposal of Water Resources Division for construction of the dam part through indigenous resources. On November 14, 2017, the chairman Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) had informed the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) that Chinese conditions for financing the Diamer-Bhasha Dam were not doable and against Pakistan's interests, adding that Chinese conditions were about taking ownership of the project, operation and maintenance cost and securitization of the Diamer-Bhasha project by pledging another operational dam.

The Wapda chairman and the water resources secretary informed the Premier that the only way out was to fund the much-delayed project through domestic resources. In 2012, the Ministry of Water and Power had accused Asian Development Bank (ADB) of causing a \$2 billion (Rs 190 billion) loss to Pakistan in four years because of its dilly-dallying on the 4,500-megawatt Diamer-Bhasha dam.

<http://fp.brecorder.com/2017/12/20171230331333/>

SENATE BODY VOICES CONCERN OVER SHORTAGE OF WATER IN GWADAR

Naveed Butt

Business Recorder, December, 30th, 2017

The Senate Standing Committee on Planning, Development and Reform has expressed resentment over shortage of clean drinking water in port city Gwadar as well as slackness and impassive attitude of the government of Balochistan in delaying water supply projects.

The committee met with Senator Colonel (ret'd) Syed Tahir Hussain Mashhadi in the chair here at the Parliament House on Friday. The committee discussed Gwadar projects under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and clean drinking water issues there.

The committee expressed concern over shortage of clean drinking water as well as lack of other basic facilities to the people of Gwadar.

The committee was informed that master plan of Gwadar would be finalised by August 2018, but at the same time, the local authorities are issuing no objection certificates (NOCs) to commercial and housing schemes for Gwadar. It was informed that mushroom growth of housing schemes is being made in Gwadar city without any master plan, adding that it remains unchecked from the relevant authority of the provincial government.

The members of the committee said the current requirement of fresh water in Gwadar is around 6.5 million gallons daily (MGD), but the availability is only 2 MGD, adding that by the year 2022 it is expected that requirement of fresh water would reach 13 MGD.

After severe criticism of the federal government, Secretary Planning Shoaib Siddiqui said, "We all have heard that you can take horse to the water but you cannot make the horse drink."

He said there were four options but the files had been on the table of chief secretary Balochistan for months.

"The provincial government has to take the decision, we need to establish desalination plants, the port operator wants to establish one plant, another company wants to establish one plant on commercial basis, there is another proposal by a joint venture of a foreign company and FWO – besides the Prime Minister in his recent visit to Balochistan offered to execute water projects through development programmes – but what we need is the consent of the province," he said. The secretary planning said that the federal or provincial governments cannot operate these desalination plants and only a commercial operator can manage and maintain it, otherwise, the machines and system become nonfunctional in a few months.

He said the Senate committee should call the chief secretary in the next meeting to expedite the process and it was decided to form a subcommittee headed by Senator Agha Shahzaib Durrani in this regard.

The committee chairman said that future of people of Balochistan depends on Gwadar port but the locals are deprived of clean drinking water. The chairman summoned the chief secretary Balochistan and other senior officials in this regard.

Senator Usman Khan Kakar said that water in Balochistan is a major issue. He said the supply of water is essential and basic need of people but the government is not paying any attention in this regard.

Senator Mohsin Leghari said the situation and tradition of urban development in the country show that the implementation of master plan will be a challenge in Gwadar.

Later briefing the committee about the CPEC projects and Gwadar development, Siddiqui said the master plan of Gwadar will be prepared by August 2018 and requested the committee to restrict the province from issuing NOCs for housing schemes in the area. The committee was briefed about the implementation phases of CPEC and chairman of the committee inquired about the social impact of cross-border road development in the remote areas of Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh and Gilgit-Baltistan.

However, Senator Karim Khawaja said the cultural and social change after interaction with the Chinese will be positive on the society. "We will be less extremist and become more liberal and secular – which is needed, besides we

all will learn many things from them too,” he said, adding, “The policy of the establishment of not having good relations with neighbors including Iran and Afghanistan will also weaken along with the feudalism in the country.”

The secretary planning said the CPEC cannot become East India Company as long as decision-makers know what the interests of Pakistan are.

The secretary planning told the committee that a total of 20,000 Pakistani students are studying in China.

<http://fp.brecorder.com/2017/12/20171230331426/>

PAKISTAN ANNOUNCES \$1.5B HYDROPOWER PROJECT IN AJK

The Express Tribune, December 30th, 2017.

Pakistan is set to increase the share of hydropower production in the total energy mix by adding a new project of over 700 megawatts in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) through foreign financing at an estimated cost of \$1.51 billion by 2022.

Authorities have sought an import tariff at Rs8.05 per kilowatts (US cents 8.1032/kWh) for the project.

“The project (Azad Pattan Hydropower Project) is an initiative of the government of Pakistan being developed in the private sector under the Policy for Power Generation 2002,” according to the project documents available at National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Neptra).

The Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA-G) has proposed a reference levelised tariff of Rs8.50 per unit (kWh) for import of the electricity from the project under NEPRA Import of Power Regulations, 2017.

Neptra announced on Friday to admit CPPA-G application for consideration. It would conduct a hearing in the matter on January 11, 2018 at Islamabad. Any interested and/or affected person may participate in the proceedings through a process and/or file comments to Neptra in one-week time.

“The 700.7MW project ... adds much-needed capacity to the inventory of hydropower projects in the country and will generate 3,258 GWh, around 3% of the country’s annual generation,” the document said.

The estimated cost would be a mix of 75% debt (\$1.13 billion) and 25% equity (\$379 million). The debt part includes foreign debt, it added.

The foreign and local debt financing is in the proportion of 80:20 bearing interest rate (6 month LIBOR +4.2%).

Debt repayment period has been assumed as 18 years including a six-year grace period. The repayments would be made semi-annually.

Return on equity has been claimed as 17% IRR (Internal Rate of Return) and withholding tax has been assumed as 10% on foreign debt interest.

The construction period has been assumed as 5.75 years from the date of financial closing and notice to proceed.

The Azad Pattan Hydropower Project (APHP) is a run of river hydropower scheme located on Jhelum River roughly seven kilometres upstream of Azad Pattan Bridge in the Sudhanoti District of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and 90 kilometres from Islamabad.

“Hydropower contributes about 16% of global electricity and Pakistan is fortunate that it has 28% hydropower in its energy mix; however, it still has significant unexploited hydel resources of which only about 12% have been developed and made operational.

“The declining trend in hydropower over the years has been caused by rapidly growing thermal capacity compared with hydropower growth and hydropower, which was at one time one-third, now accounts for only 28 % of the total installed capacity of Pakistan,” it said.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1596352/2-pakistan-announces-1-5b-hydropower-project-ajk/>

WATER AND SANITATION: 28 TREATMENT PLANTS IN NINE DISTRICTS APPROVED

The Express Tribune. 31 December 2017

KARACHI: The provincial government will install 28 treatment plants to treat industrial waste in nine districts of Sindh.

This was decided in the third meeting in recent weeks on water and sanitation in Sindh, presided over by Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah on Saturday.

Briefing the meeting, the Planning and Development Board Chairperson Mohammad Waseem said 21 districts of Sindh, which did not include Karachi, generated 100.45 million gallons of municipal, industrial and hospital sewage per day and discharged it from 755 points into clean water sources.

The meeting was informed that 0.38MGD of sewage was discharged through Jacobabad district into water bodies through 10 points, 5.82MGD from Kashmore through 10 points, 5.15MGD from Kamber-Shahdadkot through 87 points, 3MGD from Larkana through 135 points, 0.53MGD from Shikarpur through 35 points, 3.05MGD from Ghotki through eight points, 5.84MGD from Khairpur through 76 points and 29.5MGD from Sukkur through 100 points. Apart from this, 6.62MGD will be discharged from Badin through 19 points, 0.19MGD from Dadu through 30 points, 10MGD from Hyderabad through 70 points, 3.7MGD from Jamshoro through nine points, 1.09MGD from Matiari through eight points, 0.06MGD from Sujawal through two points, 4.8MGD from Tando Allahyar through 18 points, 3.91MGD from Tando Muhammad Khan through nine points, 0.22MGD from Thatta through six points, 0.22MGD from Mirpurkhas through 20 points, 7.02MGD from Sanghar through 10 points, 6.44MGD from Naushero Feroz through 43 locations while 2.9MGD of sewage was discharged from Shaheed Benazirabad district through 50 locations.

It was decided during the meeting that 28 treatment plants would be installed for treating industrial effluent in Sukkur, Kotri, Hyderabad, Nawabshah, Thatta, Sujawal, Jamshoro and other locations. The plants would cost around Rs9.61 billion, the meeting was informed.

The CM was told that treatment plants in Ghotki and Hyderabad were not included in the amount because the plants in both the districts had already been approved under the Annual Development Programme.

Shah said he wanted the treatment plants to be completed by mid 2019.

Speaking about the Greater Karachi Sewerage Plan (S-III), Waseem said it was a Rs36.12 billion scheme that would treat 460MGD of waste water. The PC-I for the project had been cleared by the Capital Development Working Party and later the Executive Committee of National Economic Council also approved its revised PC-I, he said.

The meeting was informed that 460MGD of sewage was discharged from Karachi, which included 363MGD of municipal sewage, 3MGD of hospital sewage and 94MGD industrial sewage.

Discussing the K-IV project, Local Government Minister Jam Khan Shoro said the population of Karachi was 16.05 million, including 14.91 million urban and 1.14 rural population. Total water requirement of Karachi was 802.6MGD, the local government minister said, adding that the existing supply was 650MGD. The financial progress of the K-IV project was 27% and physical progress was 30%, Shoro said.

The CM directed Karachi Water and Sewerage Board Managing Director Hashim Raza Zaidi to start working on the construction of a 100-megawatt power plant. He also directed him to start negotiating for acquiring a rental power plant so that the K-IV project could start in 2019.

Shah was informed that five treatment plants in Hyderabad were being rehabilitated at a cost of Rs1.52 billion to treat 62MGD of sewage. The projects included the rehabilitation of a new treatment plant of 30MGD at a cost of Rs154.53 million, rehabilitation of an old 10MGD treatment plant at a cost of Rs195.04 million, rehabilitation of the Hala Naka treatment plant of 8MGD at a cost of Rs185.09 million and rehabilitation of the 8MGD Preetabad Treatment Plant at a cost of Rs189.78 million. The projects would be completed by December 2018, Shah was told, while the Hussainabad Treatment Plant of 6MGD would start operations in June 2020.

The meeting was also attended by Public Health Engineering Minister Fayaz Ali Butt, Chief Secretary Rizwan Memon, Principal Secretary to the CM Sohail Rajput, Health Secretary Dr Fazlullah Pechuho, Irrigation Secretary Jamal Shah, Industries Secretary Rahim Soomro, Sindh Environmental Protection Agency Director-General Baqaullah Unar and others.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1597044/1-water-sanitation-28-treatment-plants-nine-districts-approved/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 18th TO DECEMBER 24th 2017
INITIATIVE TO PROVIDE SAFE WATER TO AREAS IN NEED
Dawn, December 20th, 2017

LAHORE: Strengthening Participatory Organisation (SPO) on Tuesday announced its partnership with Rainmaker Worldwide Inc. technology to bring safe drinking water to the marginalised communities in needy areas of Pakistan.

According to a press release issued here, as per the terms of the agreement, SPO will facilitate identification of national and international organisations to participate in this programme. To pilot the technology, SPO has identified areas in Sindh — Tharparkar, Sujawal, Thatta, Badin, Malir, Jamshoro, Tando Muhammad Khan and the areas of Abbottabad — Dubran, Kholrian, Bandi Phulan and Bhattian. A new potential site in Gawadar, Balochistan, will also be included for discussions with Rainmaker Inc.

Based on current projections, the first implementation and fresh water delivery would take place in 2018. After field studies by SPO and Rainmaker, both water-to-water and air-to-water units were selected for implementation.

Each water-to-water unit will provide up to 150,000 liters of drinking water per day, while each air-to-water unit will deliver up to 20,000 liters per day. All will be powered by a combination of wind and solar energy to provide energy-efficient and cost-effective solutions for delivering affordable water.

Recently, the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) issued a grave warning that if the government did not take action, the country would face severe water stress by 2025.

Severe water scarcity is already having a negative impact on the country's public health and the economy.

SPO chief executive officer Saleem Malik said, "SPO has been working with communities in over 75 districts in all the four provinces to promote access to basic services and facilities. We are helping solve the crisis of water and

reduce the high costs when drinking water does become available. After thorough evaluation, we are confident that Rainmaker technology will provide the much-needed, consistent supplies of safe drinking water to these communities. We are also pleased that Rainmaker uses clean energy sources to deliver affordable water.”

Michael O’Connor, CEO of Rainmaker Worldwide Inc said, “We thank SPO for choosing Rainmaker technology and we will work closely with the entire SPO team to meet Pakistan’s pressing water needs. We look forward to a long-term relationship with SPO and collaboration in many future projects.”

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1377749>

WATER PIPELINES IN KARACHI TO BE REPLACED

The Express Tribune 20 December, 2017

Chief Minister (CM) Murad Ali Shah has directed the departments concerned to devise a plan for the replacement of water distribution infrastructure in Karachi.

Presiding over a meeting on water shortage in Karachi on Tuesday, the CM expressed concern over inefficiency of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB). He pointed out that water theft and an 80-year-old distribution network were two major contributors to the shortage of water in Karachi.

“Old infrastructure and water being illegally distributed to industrial areas are the main reasons behind water shortage in the city,” Shah said, adding that the water shortage in Karachi, however, was not as acute as it was being propagated.

Sources privy to the meeting told The Express Tribune that the CM questioned why politicians, industrialists and other influential persons living in the city were getting water through illegal connections for commercial and other purposes. “The bureaucracy has always misguided former governments and chief ministers, but I am a professional engineer. You cannot misguide me,” the CM said, expressing his annoyance over the theft of water. Shah warned the KWSB officials that action would be taken against them if they did not give up appeasing influential and rich people by allowing them illegal water connections.

Referring to the dilapidated water infrastructure, the CM pointed out that the water pipelines were rusted, defective and old due to which water could not be effectively distributed in the city.

The CM calculated the water requirement of Karachi in the meeting. “According to the new census, the population of Karachi is 16 million. As per the water board standard, the water requirement of one person is 50 gallons per day. If the 16 million population is multiplied by 50, the water requirement of the city would be 800 million gallons per day [MGD],” he said, adding that the water crisis in the city could be managed easily.

Shah went on to say that currently, Karachi received 650 MGD, including 550 MGD from Keenjhar and 100 MGD from Hub, and by the end of 2018, the K-IV project would be providing 260 MGD while the city would also receive 65 MGD from another small scheme. “[The addition of water supply] would be 325 MGD. If [it is added to] the available supply of 650 MGD, the available water in the city would be 975 MGD against the requirement of 800 MGD,” Shah maintained. “This water would be enough for another three to four years.”

Local Government Minister Jam Khan Shoro informed the meeting that his department had planned to replace the entire 1,200 kilometre water supply network in Karachi at an estimated cost of Rs200 billion.

After receiving a briefing from the KWSB and local government officials about the replacement of water and sewerage infrastructure in the city, the CM directed the local government minister to share with him a final plan for the replacement of the old water distribution system. “I would suggest that you collect area-wise data of the water

supply lines and start replacing the oldest ones in the first phase,” Shah said. The CM added that he would ensure that the project received the funds it required.

The meeting was attended by provincial ministers Manzoor Wassan, Dr Sikandar Mandhro, Shoro and Fayaz Butt, along with Chief Secretary Rizwan Memon, Advocate-General Zamir Ghumro, Planning and Development Board Chairperson Mohammad Waseem, Principal Secretary to CM Sohail Rajput, KWSB managing director, World Bank representatives and provincial secretaries.

Shoro informed the CM that the Hyderabad Electric Supply Company (Hesco) had demanded the KWSB to pay Rs6 billion for the supply of 50MW electricity to the pumping stations of K-IV project at Keenjhar Lake. To this Shah said, “Instead of paying Rs6 billion for 50MW power and transmission line, why the water board should not install its own LNG-based or wind power plant of 50 MW”.

Suggesting KWSB to install its own power plant for K-IV project, Shah directed Shoro to utilise Rs2 billion as equity and seek a private partner for the remaining funds for the construction of the power plant and transmission line. “It must be installed within one year,” the CM said. He assigned Energy Secretary Agha Wasif the task to work out the plan for the power plant with the local government minister and the KWSB MD.

The meeting was also informed that three kinds of wastewater – originating from municipal, hospital and industrial sources – were being released into Lyari and Malir rivers.

The CM also directed Public Health Engineering Secretary Tamizuddin Khoro to work out a detailed plan for the construction of drainage system for major villages of 22 districts. “The drainage system should be designed as per population figures of the new census,” he said.

Shah also issued directives to divisional commissioners to provide him water testing reports of their respective areas. “I want you [divisional commissioners] to take necessary measures to ensure that municipal wastewater is released into drains instead of rivers,” he said, adding that this practice must be maintained till the installation of waste treatment plants in every district headquarters in the first phase and taluka headquarters in the second phase.

The chief minister said he would hold a meeting on December 28 to review the progress on his directives to improve water and sanitation situation in the province.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1588094/1-water-pipelines-karachi-replaced/>

KARACHI'S WATER WOES

Dawn, December 21st, 2017

THE problem of water supply in Karachi is two-fold: firstly, there is not enough water — for various reasons — flowing through everyone's taps; secondly, the quality of water that citizens receive across Sindh is highly questionable. A Supreme Court-appointed commission has dilated on the latter issue in great detail over the past year. In fact, were it not for the apex court's constant perusal of the matter, the provincial authorities would have continued to ignore it. As the chief justice of Pakistan remarked in Lahore on Tuesday, “we have taken notice of the poor ... amenities in Karachi and now it is Punjab's turn”.

However, the administration in Sindh, rather than admitting it has failed to provide potable water to Karachi in sufficient quantities, has shifted the blame to the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board. During a meeting on Tuesday Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah said that the water board had been “misguiding” successive governments on Karachi's water needs, adding that the real problem was not the lack of sufficient quantity, but a decrepit water distribution system.

Shah sahib is only partially right. While the KWSB is indeed an overstaffed and inefficient organisation and water pipelines in the metropolis need replacement, there is a water shortage, part of it due to theft and wastage. The chief minister said Karachi's requirements were around 800 MGD, yet some independent experts have argued the megacity needs over a billion MGD. The fact is, passing the buck will not solve the problem, especially since the water board functions under the provincial government.

What is required is a thorough study and action plan — backed by independent experts — that can pinpoint Karachi's water needs and suggest ways to plug the holes, including the thriving water rackets in the metropolis. Either the provincial government should overhaul the water board and ensure steps are taken to scientifically address Karachi's water problem, or it should hand over the KWSB to the municipal administration.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1377959/karachis-water-woes>

STUDENTS EXPOSED TO UNSAFE DRINKING WATER IN KARACHI: REPORT

The Express Tribune, December 21, 2017

Saba Naz

KARACHI: Many public sector colleges of Karachi are being supplied contaminated water, making students prone to various diseases. Many students bring drinking water from home.

The issue of supply of unsafe water to colleges emerged after the education department conducted laboratory tests of water samples collected from 136 government colleges in Karachi.

Reports of the water samples from 73 colleges indicate that 15 colleges in District East, including Government National College No 1, Government National College No 2, Khatoon-e-Pakistan Government Degree College for Women, Government Girls College PIB and Government Degree Boys and Girls College Stadium Road, are being supplied unclean water.

Among the colleges of District Central, Government College of Education FB Area Block 15, Government Delhi Inter Science College Hussainabad, APWA Government College for Women, Government College for Men Nazimabad and Government Degree Science College Liaquatabad have been found to be devoid of safe drinking water.

Similarly, 11 colleges of District South, including Aisha Bawany Government College No 1, SM Government Arts and Commerce College No 1, Government Degree Commerce and Economics College No 1 and SMB Fatima Jinnah Government Girls Degree College, have no potable water for students or teachers.

In District Malir and District Korangi, Government Degree College for Women Ibrahim Hyderi, Government Degree Boys College Konkar Village and Government Degree College Razzaqabad are among colleges where contaminated water is supplied for drinking.

According to sources, 57 government colleges have yet to send their samples for laboratory tests. The education department has instructed them to submit their samples as soon as possible.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1588892/1-students-exposed-unsafe-drinking-water-karachi-report/>

UNSAFE POTABLE WATER

The Express Tribune, December 22nd, 2017.

It does not come as a surprise anymore that the state of drinking water in the country is deplorable. A study released in August highlighted the alarmingly high levels of arsenic — way above the WHO recommended level of 10 microgammas per litre — in the country's groundwater putting lives of over 60 million people at risk. Add to that the mismanagement of the authorities concerned, such as the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB). Potable water is contaminated to the extent that consuming it leads to a number of diseases, such as cholera and polio — a virus the country is failing at completely eradicating.

Vulnerable to these debilitating viruses are hundreds of government colleges' children in Karachi alone, who are at the receiving end of unsafe drinking water. A report published on Dec 21st in this paper states that over 30 public-sector colleges are being supplied unsafe potable water. The issue surfaced after laboratory tests of water samples collected from 136 government colleges in the metropolis were conducted by the education department.

While the chief minister of Sindh has expressed his dissatisfaction over the matter and ordered to replace water lines in Karachi, it is going to take a considerable amount of time before the system is completely overhauled along with ensuring the efficiency of the KWSB. Karachi's water emergency has been an ongoing issue that successive governments have been unable to solve, as theft and wastage are major reasons for the city's water woes coupled with dumping of industrial and solid waste in fresh water sources and mixing of sewage and clean water due to poor infrastructure. These issues only lead to further widening the divide in the country's social structures, where government college students are left with unsafe potable water.

In the wake of these, it is important that pragmatic steps are taken to cater to the emergency in the short term as well as long term. This could be done by providing public-sector colleges with safe potable bottled water in the short term and involve independent experts to work with the government to solve the issue in the long term with a thorough action plan.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1589641/6-unsafe-potable-water/>

SAVE WATER, SAVE LIFE

The Express Tribune, December 23rd, 2017.

Iftekhhar A Khan

The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) has disclosed that Pakistan wastes away about \$21 billion worth of water into the sea each year because of lack of a water storage system in the country. And that the country presently faces 36 per cent shortage of water. IRSA members reminded that the country needs three Mangla-sized dams to store water that is dumped into the sea every year. Three water dams of the size of Mangla Dam? Isn't it a tall order for a nation whose politicians have remained divided over the issue of building the most viable Kalabagh dam on a gorge gifted by nature?

Reportedly, three provinces oppose the construction of Kalabagh dam. Why? The arguments in favour of building the dam are technically sound while the arguments against its construction are based on unfounded emotions and heresy. While conceiving the construction of large projects, two most important factors to consider are the national interest in the long run and technical feasibility of the undertaking.

If both indicators are in favour of building it and the arguments against its construction are based on myths, we must go ahead with its construction. A regional group thinks the construction of Kalabagh dam will submerge Nowshera

during a super high flood. The argument is fallacious as the dam site is located 120 miles downstream of Attock Bridge and maximum upstream level will only reach up to 90 miles, according to the design.

Our two large dams, Mangla and Tarbella, are gradually losing their capacity of water storage because of the silt deposits. Even Taunsa Barrage located on the River Indus is suffering from the same malady. Its originally designed capacity of a million cusecs has reduced to about 0.6 to 0.7 million cusecs because of the gradual silting up of its upstream pond area. As a result, during heavy rains in upstream areas of Taunsa Barrage, the water discharge into the River Indus touches dangerous levels, often breaching the protective bunds and inundating the surrounding areas. The construction of Kalabagh dam could easily control floods in its downstream basin. Let's keep in mind that the River Indus is the only dependable source of water for sustaining life and for agricultural purposes. The Chenab, once a raging river, now looks like a stream.

The existing water situation is indeed scary. We didn't expect from the PPP government that ruled for five years to build new dams, let alone build the most feasible Kalabagh dam. Neither did the Nawaz Sharif government talk about it in the last four years that it has been in power. However, in recent times it was only Gen Musharraf, who single-handedly ruled the country for about a decade, could have built Kalabagh dam if he had the will to do it. Unfortunately, he contented himself with showing his punches and Pakistan First mantra. Things mess up when dictators want to act democrats. They remain neither dictators nor democrats and finally end up in Dubai. Had Musharraf built Kalabagh dam, he would have been living in his Islamabad farmhouse.

The subsoil water level in Lahore is going down at the rate of about two feet a year. With the population of the mega city growing in geometrical progression, the drop in the subsoil water may experience a sharp increase in proportion with the increase in the population. Some years ago, there was a proposal to build a dam on the River Ravi near Shahdara for the specific purpose of recharging the underground aquifers for human consumption. The proposal never materialised. It's quite likely that residents of Lahore might have to meet their requirement of drinking water by the tanker service as it's done in Karachi.

In some parts of the city, the water level has gone so low that what is drawn out from underground is contaminated with high percentage of arsenic, making the water unfit for human consumption. The River Ravi, in any case, has reduced to a slimy pond to serve as an outlet for the sprawling city's sewage. Instead of planning ahead of time, our governments seem to run on a day-to-day basis.

The Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources warns that the country touched 'water-stress line' in 1990 and it may face an alarming situation of 'water scarcity' by the year 2025. Population and water scarcity bombs have begun ticking together. The population impact is evident by the fresh census. And a drought-like situation, as result of water scarcity, is just around the corner. Meanwhile, we are busy washing our cars and homes with potable water. A public awareness drive to save water — our lifeline, is the need of time.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1590692/6-save-water-save-life/>

SPADEWORK BEGINS AS PM OKAYS PC-I FOR DIAMER-BASHA DAM

Dawn, December 22, 2017

Khalid Hasnain

LAHORE: Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has approved a summary relating to PC-I, financial arrangements and the proposed plan for launching civil work on 4,500MW Diamer Basha dam project, claims Wapda chairman.

After getting the final approval, Wapda has started the required paperwork before initiating the bidding process and launching civil work on the project in August next year.

“We had recently sent a summary to the effect and the prime minister approved it. Since we will require next three to six months in completing the bidding process for hiring consultants and contractors, I am keen on launching civil work in August next year,” Wapda Chairman Muzammil Hussain told Dawn on Thursday.

The project continued to be delayed for the last many years due to funding and land acquisition issues. The groundbreaking [ceremony] of the project had been performed in 2006 by the then president Pervez Musharraf.

“Funding and land acquisition delayed the project. We faced a delay of almost 11 years because of Asian Development Bank (ADB) regarding the funding arrangement of \$14 billion. And finally the ADB wrote a letter to us last year, stating that the project cannot be launched in the disputed territory,” he said. Hussain said Wapda briefed the ADB team that \$14bn was not a big issue since the authority would require funds (approximately) \$7bn for the dam portion alone.

“We told them that we will be requiring just a billion dollars a year from the ADB. And rest of the money, including \$4bn for power house, can be arranged by us through other resources including commercial financing and equity. Since they were unable to understand our point of view, we finally got rid of them after China assured us to fund the project under CPEC,” he said.

Later, China imposed harsh conditions and Wapda refused to accept them.

“I refused to give ownership and operation & maintenance (O&M) of the project to the Chinese. So we have now decided to launch and complete a major part of the project on our own,” the chairman said.

He said 85 per cent of land acquisition for Basha dam had been completed. “The remaining 15pc relates to the resettlement of the affectees. But the issue is that there is no land available further. So Wapda has decided to give them sufficient money instead of the land so that they could live wherever they want.”

Talking about Mohmand dam, he said the authority was all set to launch civil work on the \$3bn project by June or July next year. “It is a very important dam in terms of availability of 1.2MAF water storage, 800MW hydel power generation, availability of water for Peshawar and irrigation of 30,000 acre agriculture land in the area. Moreover, the dam would mitigate the flood chances in Nowshera and Charsadda forever,” he claimed.

Furthermore, the project involved minimum land acquisition. “The bidding process for hiring consultants has been initiated, as about 15 companies have applied for this. I have planned to get 50 to 55pc of the total cost of the dam from the government. And the rest we will arrange through our resources and commercial financing,” he said.

The chairman claimed that stage-1 of Dasu Hydropower Project would complete in 2022. Similarly, he claimed that Wapda would surely be able to commission three mega projects – Neelum-Jhelum, Tarbela-4 and Golen Gol – in next two months.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1378137/spadework-begins-as-pm-okays-pc-i-for-diamer-basha-dam>

WATER AVAILABLE AT MANY SINDH HOSPITALS FOUND UNFIT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION

Dawn, December 24th, 2017

HYDERABAD: A report on drinking water quality in Sindh government hospitals (secondary and tertiary care) was submitted to the one-man judicial commission headed by Justice Mohammad Iqbal Kalhoro of the Sindh High Court on Saturday.

According to the report, 74 per cent of the 116 samples collected from 30 hospitals were tested and found unfit for human consumption due to physiochemical or microbiological contamination.

The report compiled by Dr Ghulam Murtaza, a senior research officer at the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR), was prepared in line with the Oct 7 order of the commission, which was appointed by the Supreme Court.

Dr Murtaza, who is also a member of the task force set up by the commission, was directed to visit Umerkot and Jati (Thatta) filtration plants and other water supply schemes of the public health engineering department (PHED) which, according to the department's claim, had been energised and made functional.

The report noted that reverse osmosis (RO) plants were installed in view of higher values of saltish content in groundwater source being used in hospitals of Shahdadpur, Sanghar, Larkana, Tando Allahyar. It suggested that connections from the plants should be directly given to each ward of hospitals.

It revealed that the tests of underground water being used by hospital in Tando Allahyar showed presence of arsenic content.

It mentioned that surface water was available in 80 per cent cases of these 30 hospitals but there was a dire need for providing ultra-filtration technology so that all kinds of viruses and bacteria were eliminated.

The report concluded that in most of the hospitals, availability of water appeared to be the main problem rather than the quality. It said that cleansing of water storage sources, maintenance of water coolers, filtration plants and replacement of filters within the safe use time were not the norm.

It said the hospitals from where the samples were collected were located in Karachi, Kotri, Tando Allahyar, Latifabad, Qasimabad, Hyderabad, Jamshoro, Sukkur, Khairpur, Larkana, Umerkot, Sanghar, Shaheed Benazirabad and Shahdadpur.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1378411>

WORKSHOP INFORMED: 'PAKISTAN MAY FACE ACUTE WATER SHORTAGE IN 2025'

Business Recorder, December 24th, 2017

Professor Dr Abdul Latif Qureshi said that Pakistan has to face acute shortage of water in year 2025 in the consequences of continuously decreasing of water on per capita availability. Speaking to the local farmers and Agriculture Service Providers (ASPs) in the workshop organised by Institute of Water Resources Engineering and Management (IWREM) at US-Pakistan Center for Advanced Studies in Water (USPCAS-W) Mehran University of Engineering and Technology (MUET) Jamshoro on Saturday,

Dr Qureshi said, "With the support of the government and international agencies, the local farmers were being sensitized to adopt the modern best irrigation practices like drip, sprinkler, pipe and furrow". He said that use of water has been increased in the daily life for various purposes, including domestic, agriculture, and industrial, energy, power generation and also for recreational activities. Due to increase use of water and the rapid growth of population, Dr Qureshi said, "Per capita availability of water will be decreased up to 858 in 2025". Dr Qureshi said that under the funding of the World Bank, and Sindh has to irrigate 35, 000 acres whereas Punjab has to irrigate one 1,10, 000 acres of un-irrigated land through the drip irrigation system. He further said that not only the modern irrigation methods but the modern cropping have to be adopted like raised bed planting and zero tillage.

Niaz Sial, a community development specialist of Research and Development Foundation (RDF), while speaking at the workshop sponsored by International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) said that ASPs

were trained through South Asian Conservation Network (SACAN) under the project of Diffusion and Adoption Through Partnerships and Action Of The Best Watershed Rehabilitation and Irrigation Practices and Technologies To Help Rural Farmers-Phase II. ASPs including Raza Mohammad Khoso, Muhammad Bux Khoso, Wazir Ali Burfat and others while sharing their training feedback and experiences which they got through SACAN, said that they came to know through the training that plants need water rather than the land so the modern irrigation practices like drip paves the way to irrigate the plants properly and also water could be save through this method. Soil scientist of USPCAS-W MUET Muneer Memon informed the participants that by adding organic materials in soil and adopting mulching agriculture technique, water holding capacity of the soil can be enhanced which will ultimately save the water for further irrigation purposes.

Later on, the workshop participants belonging to Jamshoro and Dadu districts visited the demonstration site of Drip Irrigation system designed and installed by the students of Hydraulics Irrigation and Drainage (HID) under the supervision of Head of HID Department Dr Abdul Latif Qureshi at the premises of USPCAS-W MUET Jamshoro. MS students of HID, including Aqeel Ahmed Sahito, Nageena Makhdoom, Azeem Ahmed, Uroosa and Summaiya briefed the farmers and ASPs about the design, installation, water flow and control of Drip Irrigation system at the demonstration site.

There were about 30 farmers and ASPs participated in the workshop and shared their experiences and ideas for the future planning of water saving. The participants were also given the application forms to adopt the drip irrigation method which subsidized by the Sindh Government up to 60 per cent, and farmers are facilitated through Sindh Irrigated Agriculture Productivity Enhancement Project (SIAPEP), Agriculture Information and Extension and RDF.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2017/12/20171224329916/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 11th TO DECEMBER 17th 2017

CM WANTS MASTER PLAN FOR WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE PREPARED WITHIN 21 DAYS

Dawn, December 12th, 2017

Habib Khan Ghori

KARACHI: Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Monday directed the local government and other departments concerned to work out a master plan for water supply and sewerage with treatment facilities and submit it to his secretariat within the next 21 days.

He also directed them to prepare a detailed plan with a deadline and estimated cost for the provision of safe drinking water and treatment of drinking and waste water all over Sindh.

“I want people to open their tap at home, take water, boil and drink it — this must be so safe,” he said and warned that inefficiency would not be tolerated.

The CM issued this directive while presiding over a meeting held at the Chief Minister House to carry out directives of the Supreme Court to provide safe drinking water to everyone in the province and to stop releasing untreated effluent into water bodies.

The meeting was attended by provincial ministers Manzoor Wassan, Dr Sikandar Mandhro, Jam Khan Shoro, Mohammad Ali Malkani, Fayaz Butt, Chief Secretary Rizwan Memon, Advocate General Zamir Ghumro, P&D chairman Mohammad Waseem and health secretary Fazal Pechuho.

Recalling that the apex court was helping the provincial government in the provision of safe drinking water and disposal of treated waste water, the CM said: “It is our prime duty to take necessary measures so that people right from Kashmore to Karachi drink safe water”.

He added: “There are two different targets for each and every city. The first one is to work out a detailed plan to rehabilitate the existing water supply and drainage system with the installation of treatment plants with deadlines for the implementation and an estimated cost so that funds could be made available. This working must be completed within a week and next week I’ll hold another meeting in which district-wise plans would be discussed and timeline would be set to start and complete the work,” he said.

“The other assignment is the preparation of water supply and drainage master plan for each and every district. This must be completed within next 15 days.”

Local Government Minister Jam Khan Shoro said there were three phases of the K-IV water supply project. The first phase is of 260mgd of water, which would be completed by 2018, while the second and third phases of 260mgd and 130mgd were scheduled to be completed by 2020 and 2022, respectively.

He said the existing water distribution system was poor, and directed the water board to pursue the World Bank to study the feasibility. “This can be done by replacing the old distribution system with a new one by selecting areas such as Gulshan-i-Iqbal, Water Pump, Malir, North Nazimabad, Nazimabad and then the areas which are not in the net of the water board and start installing a distribution system there.”

He told KWSB managing director Hashim Raza Zaidi to prepare a proper work plan and improve the defective billing system of the water board for bulk purchasers.

The CM said the Sindh government had provided Rs446 million for chlorination and lab equipment, Rs58m for the rehabilitation of existing filter plants and Rs3,500m for the construction of new filter plants at Gharo, Pipri, Dumlotee, NEK, COD and Hub.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1376004>

MALKANI SHARIF SHUT OVER IRRIGATION WATER CRISIS

Dawn, December 12th, 2017

BADIN: Businessmen, traders and shopkeepers of Malkani Sharif town observed a complete shutdown on Monday to express solidarity with growers agitating against unavailability of irrigation water for several months.

A large number of growers took out a rally and held a sit-in on a section of Pangrio-Jhudo Road in the town for five hours. They kept raising slogans against the irrigation department and other authorities for not paying any attention to their woes.

Speaking to local reporters, the protesters said thousands of people of this area depended on farming to earn their livelihood but unavailability of water for many months had created a crisis-like situation across this part of the province.

Representing the protesters, Pir Fayyaz Hussain Rashidi, Tariq Mehmood Arain, Lutuf Malkani and others belonging to various organisations of growers including the Sindh Abadgar Tanzeem (SAT) described the situation as “an artificial crisis caused by irrigation officials and other functionaries of the government”.

They said water was not being released into the channels of Khairpur Gumbo subdivision. They condemned the government for not even complying with the Supreme Court order given in favour of affected growers, who had waged a years-long struggle for water supply.

They said they had moved the apex court to plead that their share was being stolen by influential landowners through tampered modules in connivance with the local irrigation officials.

Leaders of the town's businessmen and traders said they shared the concern with growers because the situation was directly and indirectly affecting the overall economy of the area and buying power of the local population.

The business activities in this town had declined to the extent that businessmen, traders and shopkeepers had started shifting to other areas in quest of livelihood, they said.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1376012/malkani-sharif-shut-over-irrigation-water-crisis>

EXPERTS SUGGEST WATER TESTING LABORATORIES IN EACH DISTRICT

The Express Tribune, 14 December 2017

A two-day conference on water and energy held at Mehran University of Engineering and Technology (MUET) has recommended that the government establish water testing laboratories in each district of Sindh. The conference, which concluded on Wednesday, also suggested upgrading filtration plants and the construction of new plants in the province.

Prof Dr Muhammad Aslam Uqaili, vice-chancellor of MUET, told the conference's participants that the Sindh government, during a recent meeting, sought recommendations from the academia about the supply of clean drinking water. According to him, under the Supreme Court's order the government wanted to establish models of clean water supply in all districts.

The conference also recommended the formulation of a policy to implement recycling of water at mosques and car wash stations. Experts also proposed the construction of small dams and barrages.

Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company Chief Operating Officer Syed Abul Fazal Rizvi said that by December, 2018, his company's power plants will begin supply of coal produced electricity to the national grid. He spoke about the economic and social improvement that the coal energy project has brought for the desert region, adding that 40% of the company's workforce belonged to Tharparkar.

Director of the Office of Research, Innovation and Commercialisation Dr Inamullah Bhatti said that 46 research papers were presented at the conference, including 36 on energy and 10 on water. The researchers called for promotion of solar-based technologies, introducing smart transmission systems and smart grids and energy conservation through smart buildings.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1583253/1-experts-suggest-water-testing-laboratories-district/>

CS DIRECTS KW&SB TO SUPPLY POTABLE WATER TO ALL HOUSEHOLDS

Business Recorder, 16 December 2017

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Secretary, Rizwan Memon on Friday directed Karachi Water and Sewerage Board management to ensure enough supply of clean potable water to all the households.

He emphasized KWSB to boost the monitoring system. According to an official statement, the Chief Secretary visited the head office of KWSB in the morning.

Managing Director KWSB Hashim Raza Zaidi briefed him about the water supply mechanism including functioning of S-III and K-IV projects with the help of charts and maps.

He informed that computerized complaint receipt and disposal system was operational, under which at least 700 complaints are disposed off every month.

Rizwan Memon was also informed that old machines were being replaced under 30-month replacement programme comprising the period, from December 2016 to June 2019.

The Chief Secretary maintained that strict and timely compliance of the court orders must be ensured without any delay.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2017/12/16/3-page/687949-news.html>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 4th TO DECEMBER 10th 2017
DISSATISFIED WITH GOVT REPLY, SC SUMMONS CM ON PLEA FOR CLEAN DRINKING WATER
Dawn, December 5th, 2017

Tahir Siddiqui

KARACHI: The Supreme Court on Monday directed Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah to appear in court on Wednesday as the provincial government's "satisfactory reply" on the issue of provision of clean drinking water and safe environment was not forthcoming.

Headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Mian Saqib Nisar, a three-judge bench was hearing the constitutional petition of Shahab Usto, a concerned citizen and lawyer, against the provincial government's failure to provide potable water, better sanitation, environment and associated issues.

The bench also comprised Justice Faisal Arab and Justice Sajjad Ali Shah.

At the outset of the hearing, the CJP paid compliments to petitioner Usto for moving the court on the water issue and observed that air and water were the two biggest blessings of Almighty God and the state was under constitutional obligation to ensure provision of clean drinking water and safe environment as "no one can live without them".

"This is a matter of people's lives, it cannot be ignored", the CJP said, adding that the chief minister would be asked to spell out all the steps he had taken in this regard.

He said that it must not be thought that the apex court was conducting any adverse proceedings against the authorities. "The judiciary must intervene when the government fails to fulfil its responsibilities."

Former Karachi mayor Mustafa Kamal also told to appear in court tomorrow

CJP Nisar remarked that there would be no compromise on air and water pollution, adding "the high officials will also be summoned in the case if necessary."

He said that air and water pollution was giving rise to diseases such as cancer, among others.

The bench had earlier constituted a judicial commission, headed by Justice Iqbal Kalhoro of the Sindh High Court, to probe the government's failure in providing safe water to the people of the province.

When the bench asked the petitioner to give a history of the water-related issues, Advocate Usto informed the judges that the people in 29 districts across the province were drinking contaminated water which was absolutely not fit for human consumption.

“Ninety-one per cent water in Karachi, 85pc in Hyderabad, 88pc in Larkana and 78pc in Shikarpur is contaminated,” he said, while quoting the reports of the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources.

The petitioner also informed the judges of a video made by the judicial commission and requested them to watch it.

“Why shouldn’t we order Pemra [Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority] to show the video on television channels,” the chief justice observed.

Advocate Usto stated that the people were being supplied with unfiltered, untreated water across the province. Responding to this, the chief justice remarked: “We grew up drinking unfiltered water but during those days that water was beneficial.”

He said that there were four water filter plants in the city which got 650 million gallons water daily. “However, none of these plants is functional,” he added.

He said that waste from hospitals, industries and municipalities was disposed of in rivers across Sindh without proper treatment as the three treatment plants were also not functional.

“Those who are responsible for this, why aren’t they doing anything,” questioned the CJP. He asked that those who went to people and promised them that they would do this and that, why they turned a blind eye towards this.

“Such people make big claims but they cannot supply clean water to the nation. Is there anyone who can solve the problems of the nation?”

“We are not the people who bear any grudge against anyone,” the CJP said and added that the judges only wanted solution to the problem.

Adjourning the matter initially to Tuesday, the CJP ordered that the Sindh chief minister be present during the hearing.

Sindh Advocate General Zamir Ghumro requested the court to give time to clarify the issue before summoning the CM.

However, the bench declined his request observing that the judges wanted the person who was responsible for the projects to appear before the court.

The CJP observed: “Supreme Court is a constitutional institution which is hearing a case pertaining to human rights. If the CM appears before the court then we can move towards solving the issues.”

Addressing the AG, the chief justice asked him why he was getting worried. “We just want to meet the CM and he should come here and solve the issue,” he added.

CJP Nisar said if the issue was not resolved this way, then the court would issue orders. “We can’t stay quiet over the prevailing danger to human lives,” he remarked.

Later, the AG informed the court that the CM was not in the city on Tuesday. The bench put off the hearing to Wednesday directing the CM to ensure his presence during the next hearing.

When the petitioner informed that one of the city’s former mayors had leased out 50 acres of a treatment plant to some displaced people, the court asked him why he was not taking the name of the mayor.

To this, the petitioner said: “I am not scared of anyone. Former mayor Mustafa Kamal illegally allotted the land for the Mehmoodabad treatment plant.”

The court directed Mr Kamal, who was the mayor from 2005 to 2010, to appear in court on Wednesday to inform who did he ask before allotting the 50 acres reserved for the Mehmoodabad treatment plant.

Plea against ban on high-rise buildings Later, the bench took up different miscellaneous applications of builders and others against the order of a judicial commission that clamped a total ban on the grant of permission for the construction of high-rise buildings in Karachi.

During the hearing, the CJP observed that public interest would prevail over individual interest.

“Why aren’t new cities set up instead of high-rise buildings?” asked the CJP.

He remarked that the CM would also be asked about this matter.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1374549>

SINDH CM UNDER FIRE IN SC OVER WATER CONTAMINATION

Dawn, December 7th, 2017

Tahir Siddiqui

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah suffered uneasy moments when a short film about contaminated water in the province was played before a three-judge Supreme Court bench on Wednesday and Chief Justice of Pakistan Mian Saqib Nisar remarked that he was saddened to see the situation.

The CM was summoned by the SC bench headed by CJP Nisar to explain his government’s position on a petition pertaining to supply of potable water and better sanitation across the province at the Karachi registry.

“After watching the video, we do feel very sorry for the inhabitants of Sindh. Don’t you?” the CJP asked the CM.

When CM Shah claimed that the situation was not as bad as had been shown in the video which he termed one-sided, CJP Nisar told him: “We both can travel wherever you say in the province and drink one bottle each of that contaminated water”.

The CJP observed that human waste was being deliberately released into the sea without treatment, which was affecting underground water as well, besides playing havoc with marine life. “I am saddened after seeing this situation of the province,” he said.

The CJP said they would not interfere in administrative affairs; however, they would also not allow anyone, be it the chief minister or the prime minister, to act against the Constitution.

He asked the CM to just leave the video and consider the findings of the judicial commission on the same issue. “Let’s move forward to resolve the citizens’ issues on the basis of those findings,” he advised.

The SC directed the CM to submit in court a time frame for resolving the issues.

The CJP asked him when would be the issues resolved making it clear that the provincial government was constitutionally bound to provide safe water and better sanitation to the people.

“Even if we have to come to Karachi every week and summon you, we would do that,” the CJP told CM Shah.

At the outset, the CJP observed that the CM was summoned with full respect and dignity, adding that “the main reason for calling him before the court is to find the solutions of the problems being faced by the people”.

The chief justice observed that the water and sanitation situation in the province was “miserable”, adding that the CM was summoned so they can resolve the situation together.

During the proceedings, he said that Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari was like his child, wishing he could be here to see the situation himself.

The CJP asked the CM to rid people of Karachi water tankers, adding that it was the government’s responsibility to provide clean water to its people.

The bench gave a patient hearing to the CM as he informed the judges the efforts taken by his government.

While the CM talked about the ongoing and proposed water and sanitation schemes across the province, the bench time and again reminded him that it was only concerned with two issues — safe drinking water and better sanitation.

The CM submitted that the water crisis was not as extreme as shown by the petitioner, adding that “if I get an opportunity I will show my video to the court”.

He said that the provincial government was working to resolve the issue, but it was facing shortage of funds.

Quoting figures from a report, he claimed that 100 per cent water supplied to Lahore, 73pc in Sheikhpura and 88pc in Sargodha is not fit for human consumption and said that the court proceedings appeared to only single-out Sindh.

Kamal denies land allotment Former Karachi mayor and Pak Sarzameen Party chairman Mustafa Kamal denied that he had leased out 50 out of 129 acres of land reserved for a water treatment plant in Mehmoodabad during his tenure.

Earlier on Monday, the court had summoned Mr Kamal and directed him to explain his position as to how and under what authority the land was allotted or leased out by him.

Mr Kamal informed the judges that the allotment and leasing powers were not with him, adding that that the land was allotted with the approval of the City Council.

“Even the City Council had no authority to allot the land meant for treatment plant,” the chief justice told him.

He further told the former mayor not to worry if he had not done anything illegal.

The bench also directed the local government secretary to file a detail and comprehensive report as to how the land was allotted. “The report should consist of names of the responsible persons and the one who was allotted water treatment plant Mehmoodabad land,” the CJP ordered.

The hearing was adjourned to a date to be later pronounced by the court’s office.’

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1375087>

SINDH IS BEING SINGLED OUT ON CONTAMINATED WATER ISSUE THAT PERSISTS THROUGHOUT COUNTRY, SAYS CM

Dawn, December 7th, 2017

Habib Khan Ghori

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that he intends to resolve the issue of contaminated water all over Sindh within minimum period of time by installing plants on 726 major points to treat domestic waste and effluent before its release into water bodies.

The chief minister stated this while speaking to media during his visit to Jahangir Park on Wednesday evening.

Accompanied by Local Government Minister Jam Khan Shoro and Senator Murtaza Wahab, the chief minister said that besides water treatment plants, water testing laboratories were also being established in 23 districts for which an amount of Rs105 million was already approved.

Murad Ali Shah said that Sindh could not be singled out since the predicament of contaminated drinking water and insanitary system were more or less the same across Pakistan.

He quoted Pakistan Social and Living Standards Measurement (PSLM) Survey of 2014-15, which showed percentage distribution of source water by household.

In Sindh, 41 per cent of people use tap water, 33pc hand pump, 11pc motor pump and four per cent use well water while in Punjab 18pc households use tap water, 28pc hand pump, 45pc motor pump and one per cent use well water, he added.

Murad Ali Shah said that the report showed that the condition in Sindh was not as bad as being painted.

He went on saying that “unfortunately Sindh is at the lower end, receiving river water contaminated with all kinds of effluent from the province upstream.

“Studies show that several industrial cities, including Faisalabad unleash untreated effluent in the Indus,” he said.

Talking about water quality status of major cities of the country, Murad Ali Shah said he told the court that 69pc people of Pakistan drank unsafe water.

He quoted Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources, Ministry of Science report which says that Punjab drinks 69pc unsafe water, KP 47pc, Balochistan 81pc and Sindh 81pc.

“It means it is a national issue and must be solved holistically.”

The chief minister, replying to another question, said that his government was committed to resolving the contaminated water issue for which work with sincerity and commitment was in progress.

During the briefing to journalists recalling further details of the measures being taken by his government for ensuring potable water supply to the people, the chief minister said that there were 953 non-functional water supply and reverse osmosis plants at present.

“I have approved an amount of Rs4.9 billion to make them functional. The work on most of the non-functional schemes has already been started,” he said.

“We have already identified 726 major points all over the province from where domestic waste and effluent is released into distributaries and canals.

“We have made schemes of installing treatment plants to treat the domestic waste and effluent before its release into the water bodies and this will cost Rs3.586bn,” he said and went on saying that in the first phase treatment work would be started at 221 points for Rs800m and added that he had allocated Rs400m which was 50pc of the allocation.

In reply to a question, the chief minister said although he as chief minister had exemption from appearing before the court, “I thought the Supreme Court is working hard to resolve the issue of contaminated water in Sindh and it is the issue of our people, therefore I must appear in court and I did.”

In reply to yet another question, he said that a documentary shown in the courtroom of the Supreme Court on untreated effluent being released into water bodies and canals was a “one-sided production”.

“It was an old documentary and now the situation is quite different,” he claimed.

He added that he told the honourable court that a drainage scheme for Shikarpur city of Rs505m was in full swing. The drainage system in Shikarpur had improved.

Another drainage scheme of Rs1,406m was also in progress in Larkana so that untreated waste water could not be released into the canal.

A similar scheme was also in progress in Mirpurkhas. “We are working hard to stop release of waste water, industrial waste and effluent into canals, but it would take some time to resolve the issue properly because a lot of funds are required for the purpose,” he said.

Replying to another question, Mr Shah said that the Supreme Court had ordered him to institute an inquiry against a former city nazim for illegal allotment of land belonging to Treatment Plant-II. “Just after returning from the court I have directed chief secretary to issue an inquiry order,” he said.

The chief minister said that the Supreme Court took up the issue of water being released downstream Kotri and said it was waste of water.

He added that he told the court that the release of water downstream Kotri was necessary to stop sea intrusion. “The sea has already encroached upon the sweet land of Thatta and Badin. We still feel essential quantity of water is not being released to save the delta and stop sea encroachment,” he said.

The chief minister talking about K-IV water project said that the federal government had agreed to share 50pc cost of Rs25bn project and so far it had released only Rs3bn. As a matter of fact, the cost of the project had gone up to Rs33bn, including Rs5bn of land acquisition.

After briefing the media, the chief minister went around Empress Market, Bohri Bazaar and other areas of Saddar, where he mingled with shopkeepers, vendors and common people.

Besides listening to their problems, he allowed them to take selfies with him.

The chief minister could not resist the aroma of biryani coming from a nearby biryani shop; he grabbed a plate and enjoyed a few morsels along with other people.

Replying to a question, he said that the Supreme Court appreciated the services of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto for making the 1973 Constitution. “I am quite satisfied and relieved that the court [Supreme Court] that had sent Shaheed Bhutto to gallows has appreciated him today for giving a best Constitution to the country,” he said.

‘WATER STORAGE CAPACITY FAR BELOW GLOBAL CAPACITY’

Business Recorder, 7 December 2017

ISLAMABAD: The country needs to establish sufficient water storage reservoirs as Pakistan’s current water storage capacity of 10% is far below the global water storage capacity of 40%.

This was stated by Yousaf Naseem Khokhar, Federal Secretary Ministry of Energy, Power Division, while briefing the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) which met here Wednesday under the chairmanship of Syed Khursheed Ahmad Shah.

Khokhar further said that over the years the country has not built notable water reservoirs as a result the water storage capacity of the existing dams depleted by 50 percent, adding if appropriate and timely steps are not taken to cope with the issue, the country will face immense water shortages in coming years.

He further said that on Friday (December 8) a delegation of World Bank is landing in Pakistan to discuss the matters related to Indus Waters Treaty. He said that before going into talks with World Bank an inter-ministerial meeting is scheduled which will be attended by the officials of the Foreign Ministry, Water and Power Divisions, Ministry of Energy, and Attorney General of Pakistan.

Shah said that water inflow in Indus River from Guddu Barrage to Sukkur Barrage has reduced to all time low level, adding that 24 cusecs water was inflowing at present in the area of Guddu and Sukkur. He said that it is feared that people of Karachi may be searching for water in the next six days.

Shah said that the country is facing all the current problems due to prolonged military rules which didn’t allowed elected governments to carry out projects of national importance.

The secretary water resources said that currently water storage capacity in Tarbela, Mangla and Chashma stands at 13.8 million cusec feet, adding that at present total water inflows in Pakistani rivers is standing at 237 million acre feet. He said that water inflows in Indus River have reduced by 11,000 cusec feet. He said that water shortages for Rabbi cropping season is a matter of grave concern, saying if the country doesn’t receive sufficient rains, Rabbi crops will badly hit. At present 32,000 cusec feet of water is being discharged from Tarbela, 30,000 from Mangla and 35,000 from Chashma barrage, Khokhar said and added that during the same period of the last year water inflows were double in quantity.

Shah while showing grave concern on water shortage in Balochistan and Sindh provinces asked the Ministry of Energy, Power Division, to give a detailed briefing to the panel in next meeting, especially about Guddu and Sukkur barrages.

It was further informed that the live storage capacity of Tarbela which once was at 11.95BCM in 1974 has eroded to 7.82BCM and it might further plummet to 6.49BCM in 2025. Likewise, storage capacity in Mangla Dam has gone down to 5.50BCM of water from 6.58BCM in 1967 and is prone to reduce more to 4.93BCM in 2025. And in Chashma Barrage, the live storage capacity has gone down to 0.55BCM from 1972 and is also feared to reduce to 0.55BCM.

So much so, India has planned to construct additional 2,500 dams by 2050 to add 180BCM of storage. India currently has the water carry over capacity of 220 days, Egypt 1,000 days on the Nile River only, America 900 days, Australia 600 days, while South Africa has carry over capacity of 500 days on the Orange River.

PM URGED TO LAUNCH WATER PROJECT FOR PINDI

Dawn, December 8th, 2017

RAWALPINDI: A local lawmaker on Thursday urged the federal government to launch work on a project to supply 200 million gallon daily (MGD) water to Rawalpindi from the Ghazi Barotha Dam on the Indus River.

The demand was made by MPA Raja Hanif Advocate during a meeting with Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi.

Four issues faced by the residents of Rawalpindi were put up before the prime minister who promised to solve them on a priority basis. "I requested the prime minister to resolve the issue of water shortage by launching the Ghazi Barotha project," the MPA told Dawn.

He said the prime minister was also informed that more than 400 tubewells had been installed in the city but most of them had gone dry due to the depleting water table.

Under the Indus Water Supply project, Rawalpindi and Islamabad will get 200 MGD of water.

Rawalpindi city's daily water requirement is 55 MGD but at present 50 MGD water is supplied to the city areas from Rawal and Khanpur dams and tubewells leaving a shortage of five MGD.

The prime minister directed the Sui Northern Gas Pipelines (SNGPL) to solve the issue of gas loadshedding in the city, said the MPA.

He said he also raised the issue of faulty electricity transformers and hanging high voltage wires in the city areas. The prime minister asked the ministry of water and power to tackle the issue.

"The issuance of non-objection certificates by the CDA for the installation of electricity and gas connections in PWD, Police Foundation and adjoining societies was also raised in the meeting and the prime minister issued directives to the CDA in this regard, he said.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1375296>

MENACE OF ILLEGAL WATER HYDRANTS WON'T BE TOLERATED AT ANY COST: SC

Dawn, December 8th, 2017

Tahir Siddiqui

KARACHI: While dismissing 24 applications seeking the operation of illegal water hydrants, the Supreme Court on Thursday observed that the menace would not be tolerated at any cost.

Headed by the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Mian Saqib Nisar, a three-judge bench heard a human rights complaint against the failure of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) to remove water hydrants operating illegally in the city.

Justice Faisal Arab and Justice Sajjad Ali Shah, the other two members of the bench, heard the case at the Karachi registry of the apex court.

At the outset of the hearing KWSB Managing Director Hashim Raza Zaidi submitted a report which claimed that 187 hydrants were demolished with the assistance of the Rangers and police on the court's directives.

The KWSB report said that the water utility had disconnected 2,130 illegal water connections in different parts of Karachi.

It added that 137 cases were lodged since January 2017 out of which 44 were registered at the Saeedabad police station, 37 at the Manghopir police station and 27 at the Pirabad police station.

The report further added that as many as 265 suspects were arrested on charges of water theft out of which four were convicted and 14 had been acquitted.

The chief justice asked Mr Zaidi about the action taken against the board's employee, Rashid Siddique, who was involved in allowing the illegal hydrants to operate. The KWSB chief said that the employee had been demoted.

"It is your responsibility to remove illegal water hydrants in the city," the CJP told Mr Zaidi, directing him to submit a written statement which said that action would be taken against the officers responsible.

The court also directed the KWSB chief to remove all the connections granted illegally to factories.

It further directed the chief of the water utility to file a complete list of factories and industrial units granted illegal water connections.

Meanwhile, another apex court bench headed by Justice Asif Saeed Khosa upheld the death penalty of a man convicted of killing his former wife.

The husband, Mohammed Ismail, was handed down capital punishment by a district and sessions court after he was found guilty of killing his former wife, Nadia.

Mr Ismail shot his ex-wife a few days after their separation within the limits of the Liaquatabad police station in 2011.

After his conviction from the trial court, the convict filed an appeal against the judgment in the Sindh High Court (SHC), which was also turned down.

Subsequently, he moved the apex court against the rejection of his appeal by the SHC and prayed to the court to set aside the judgment of the trial court and to pass his release order.

After hearing arguments from the prosecution and the appellant's counsel, the SC bench upheld the judgment of the trial court and ruled that he should be hanged after all legal procedures were fulfilled.

The bench, that also comprised Justices Mushir Alam and Maqbool Baqar, observed that they found no reason to reduce the appellant's sentence from death to life imprisonment.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1375221>

SC WANTS TIME FRAME FOR RESOLUTION OF POTABLE WATER, SEWERAGE ISSUES

Tahir Siddiqui

Dawn, December 10, 2017

KARACHI: The Supreme Court has told Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah to submit by the first week of January next year his report specifying cut-off dates for ensuring supply of potable water and management of proper sewerage system, it emerged on Saturday when the SC's order on the water pollution case was released for publication.

Headed by Chief Justice Mian Saqib Nisar, a three-judge bench had on Dec 6 heard the chief minister at length and asked him to inform the court about the steps his government intended to take to resolve the issues of potable water and management of municipal, industrial and hospital waste in the province.

The bench ordered: “In the circumstances, we feel that this sensitive issue of supplying potable water and discharge of sewerage throughout the province into a proper developed sewerage system could only be managed once the chief minister of Sindh places on record detailing the targeted dates for addressing the following issues:

- i) District-wise report specifying a cut-off date on which all points from where municipal, hospital and industrial sewerage is discharged in the ultimate source of clean water, may it be river Indus, its canals or any other source, are plugged;
- ii) A district-wise report with a cut-off date as to when a proper sewerage system along with treatment plants will be installed/made operational in all the districts of Sindh, including a proper source for discharge of treated sewerage. All projects planned by the government in that pursuit shall be stated district-wise with their cut-off dates for completion;
- iii) A cut-off date by which all existing treatment plants are made functional to their full capacity to ensure discharge of treated sewerage from the city of Karachi into the sea;
- iv) A fresh report in respect of K-4, S-III and the extent of work completed so far in percentage and the expected date of completion.
- v) A district-wise report showing the plans with their cut-off date for ensuring sufficient uncontaminated water for every district according to its population.”

The bench ordered the CM to submit his report within four weeks and adjourned the matter to a date in the fourth week of January 2018.

During the hearing, the bench told the CM that the present proceedings were undertaken to ensure supply of clean drinking water to the inhabitants of the province and the disposal of municipal, hospital and industrial waste after proper treatment.

The CM was informed that failure to provide safe water and disposal of waste without treatment had polluted subsoil water and led to outbreaks of several waterborne diseases such as hepatitis C, skin diseases and other related ailments.

A documentary prepared by the petitioner regarding a survey showed the discharge of sewage into the Indus contaminating its various canals and tributaries which were the source of clean water.

After seeing the video, the chief minister presented the provincial government’s version and the efforts made by him to ensure measures to improve the supply of potable water.

The CM said the state of affairs depicted in the video was not a true reflection of the present state of affairs, as a lot of improvements had been made since then.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1375572/sc-wants-time-frame-for-resolution-of-potable-water-sewerage-issues>