

January 2019

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JAN 21st TO JAN 27th 2019

EXPERTS TEAM TO LEAVE FOR INDIA TODAY TO INSPECT HYDEL PROJECTS

Khalid Hasnain Updated January 27, 2019

LAHORE: A three-member delegation of experts headed by the Pakistan's commissioner for Indus Waters Syed Mehr Ali Shah will leave for India today (Sunday) to inspect hydro-power projects at Chenab basin, mainly the 1,000MW Pakal Dul and 48MW Lower Kalnai.

"We are going to India on Sunday (today) via Wahga border where we will reach around 9:30am and enter India around 10am," Commissioner Mr Shah told Dawn on Saturday.

The general tour for inspection of Indian hydro-power projects by Pakistan experts was finally confirmed by the India's commissioner for Indus Waters Pradeep Kumar Saxena through a letter during second week of January.

New Delhi has agreed to allow Islamabad to inspect the projects on Chenab basin from Jan 28 to Jan 31.

After completing the tour on January 31, the delegation would return home on Feb 1.

The six-day tour includes four days for inspections and the remaining two (Jan 27 and Feb 1) for travelling.

The tour is not limited to to Pakal Dul and Lower Kalnai alone, as the experts may also visit Ratle and other hydro-power projects.

Earlier, as a result of the 115th meeting of the Permanent Commission for Indus Waters (PCIW) held in Lahore in August last, India had scheduled inspection of the projects by Pakistani experts first in September and then in October. But, later it postponed the inspections on the pretext of local bodies' elections in the concerned areas.

Through the letter the Indian authorities clarified that though the tour by Pakistani experts was first scheduled for September and then October, it couldn't be made possible because of local Panchayat elections in the area and then winter session of the Indian parliament.

Published in Dawn, January 27th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1460030/experts-team-to-leave-for-india-today-to-inspect-hydel-projects>

PAKISTAN, INDIA TO RESUME WATER TALKS TODAY

INP January 27, 2019

LAHORE: A Pakistani delegation will travel today (Sunday) to India and hold talks on resolving the thorny water issues between the two countries under the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) signed by them in 1960.

A three member delegation led by Indus Water Commissioner Mehr Ali Shah will visit India through the Wagah border for inspection of Indian hydroelectric projects construction in the Chenab basin as mandated by the IWT. It will be the first official engagement with India on water issues since the new government of Prime Minister Imran Khan came to power in August last year.

The Pakistan delegation is set to inspect the Lower Kulnai and Pakal Dal projects being constructed over the Chenab River. Syed Mehr Ali Shah said the Indian authorities have also hinted at allowing the inspection of other controversial projects during the January 27 to February 1 visit.

He said that Initially India was not ready for the talks but "we kept in touch with them under the Indus Water Treaty," adding that India agreed to the visit by the Pakistan delegation after Pakistan forcefully raised the issue on Indian violating the treaty.

He said that an Indian delegation led by its water commissioner PK Sexena visited Pakistan in August and it was agreed between the two countries that all the issues between the two countries would be resolved under the IWT.

Earlier Pakistan had raised serious concerns over the designs particularly 1 000MW Pakal Dul and 48MW Lower Kalnai projects on the River Chenab and termed them as the violation of Indus Water Treaty.

Pakistan argued that India could use these reservoirs to create artificial water shortage or flooding in Pakistan demanding India to allow inspection of various hydroelectric projects.

The Indus the Jhelum and the Chenab rivers are reserved for Pakistan and the Ravi the Beas and the Sutlej Rivers are reserved for India under the IWT signed between the neighbouring states in 1960. According to the treaty India cannot divert the water flows of rivers reserved for Pakistan.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/423953-pakistan-india-to-resume-water-talks-today>

CHINIOT DAM TO MEET NEEDS OF FAISALABAD INDUSTRIES

By Imran Rana Published: January 26, 2019

FAISALABAD: The interest expressed by the federal government in building five new dams, including the Chiniot dam, is a positive sign which will help overcome the impending water crisis in the country, said Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCI) President Syed Zia Alumdar Hussain.

He recalled that the Faisalabad Chamber had extended a proposal for constructing the Chiniot dam about a decade ago.

“Following that, the previous government stepped up efforts to construct the dam while the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) conducted a comprehensive feasibility study,” he said, according to a statement issued by the FCCI.

Hussain pointed out that the dam would have storage capacity of 0.85 million acre feet, which could be utilised for irrigation during drought-like conditions.

Suggesting that it might assist the government avoid flood-induced losses, he noted that water availability was necessary to meet industrial needs of Faisalabad, a rapidly growing city.

The FCCI president was of the view that location of the Chiniot dam was ideal for the construction of a water reservoir at a minimum cost.

Discussing the feasibility report, he revealed that it would be an earth-filled dam with a height of 60 feet. “It can also generate 80 megawatts of cheap electricity,” he said. “The estimated cost is approximately Rs146.3 million and hence, there is no need of foreign aid for construction.”

He pointed out that new canals could also be dug on the right and left banks for irrigating huge terrains of unclaimed land in the Faisalabad Division. Hussain asked the government to immediately initiate construction work as any unnecessary delay would escalate the construction cost.

He will also meet the Wapda chairman to discuss the preliminary formalities required for the construction of the dam. “The issue of upgrading the Wapda Engineering Academy into a full-fledged university will also be discussed,” he said, adding that spade work had already been completed in that regard.

Published in The Express Tribune, January 26th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1896931/2-chiniot-dam-meet-needs-faisalabad-industries/>

MURAD PINS HOPES ON CCI TO HAVE WATER SHORTAGE RESOLVED

Tahir Siddiqui January 25, 2019

KARACHI: Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said on Thursday that he hoped Prime Minister Imran Khan would soon convene a meeting of the Council of Common Interests (CCI) so that he could raise the issue of acute shortage of water in the province.

Water shortage in the province was anticipated to be 38 per cent in Rabi season during current fiscal year, said the chief minister during Question Hour in the Sindh Assembly session.

He said in reply to lawmakers' queries said Sindh's share was expected to be 9.291 million acre feet (MAF) against the allocation of 14.82 MAF under the water accord apportioned by the Indus River System Authority (Irsa).

“To manage the feared acute shortage of water during Rabi season, the irrigation department has worked out a contingency plan by prioritising supply of water,” he added.

Mr Shah said that water was prioritised for provision for drinking purposes and for late-sown Kharif crops during wheat-sowing season.

Water would be supplied to canals by rotation, he said.

He said in reply to a question that RBOD-II project was scheduled to be completed by November this year under revised PC-I.

But, he added, the task not could be accomplished without provision of funds by the federal government.

The chief minister said in answer to a question regarding salinity levels in the Manchhar Lake that the provincial government had planned to recharge the lake with fresh water from escape channels of Rice Canal and Dadu Canal (Rawat escape from Rice Canal, Dhamrao escape from Rice Canal and Prechard escape from Dadu Canal).

He informed that fresh water was now being released into MNV drain through these channels which would ultimately discharge water into Manchhar Lake, mitigating the problem of pollution.

Mr Shah said, the traditional feeding canals Aral Wah and Danister Wah were also functional but were subject to adequate release into the Indus.

He said in answer to another query that a project for construction of fall structures on Nara Canal and strengthening of NIP of Jamrao Canal at Mile 17 to 49 would be completed during 2020 but it was subject to release of funds from both provincial and federal governments.

“The original cost of the project was Rs1,086.15 million that was fully funded by the federal government but the revised PC-I cost Rs2,274.449m with 75/25 share of the Centre and province,” he said.

Published in Dawn, January 25th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1459537/murad-pins-hopes-on-cci-to-have-water-shortage-resolved>

K-IV WATER PROJECT UNLIKELY TO MEET DEADLINE, PA TOLD

Tahir Siddiqui January 23, 2019

KARACHI: People of the city will have to wait for an unspecified period to get smooth supply of potable water as the Sindh Assembly was informed on Tuesday that the Greater Karachi Bulk Water Supply Scheme, also known as K-IV project, may not be completed by June this year due to financial and technical snags.

Besides, the provincial lawmakers were also informed that the project, which was to be completed by June last year, would cost over Rs70 billion upon its completion against its initial cost of Rs25.55bn.

While furnishing statement and answering questions during the Question Hour of the provincial assembly, Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani said the project had been considerably delayed “due to major issues in planning and execution stages”.

He recalled that the initial cost of the project was Rs25.551bn to be shared by the federal and provincial governments on a 50-50 basis.

However, later the project was awarded to the Frontier Works Organisation for Rs28.186bn and it was bifurcated into Packages A and B.

The minister said that the original completion date of Package A was June 2018, while completion date of Package B was June 2019.

He said that the project was delayed mainly due to route realignments and subsequent litigation on the issue.

Besides, the minister said, frequent changes were made in the design and there were several missing essential components which were not included in the original PC-1 of the project such as roads, pedestrian bridges and staff colonies.

He said that essential supplementary components such as augmentation project and power supply projects were missing in the original project.

The minister informed the house that it was inefficiency probably on the part of the project’s consultant that no funds were allocated for augmentation project and power supply project.

“The chief minister has already ordered an inquiry in this connection,” he added.

Responding to a supplementary question, Mr Ghani said that the province had so far contributed funds in the project more than its 50pc share and urged the federal government to release funds of its share as soon as possible.

He justified the delay in progress and said that it was due to missing of several essential components in the PC-I which was not made in the Pakistan Peoples Party tenure.

“The provincial government is committed [to] K-IV as it already has spent Rs19.1bn on the project. We would complete this project even if the Centre does not fulfil its commitment and give its 50pc share.”

Replying to another question, the minister said that a project of Greater Karachi Sewerage Plan, known as S-III, would get completed by August 2020 against its earlier date of completion by June 2018.

“Competent forum, Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecneec) has approved the revised PC-I of S-III with a cost of more than Rs36,117 million with federal share capped to Rs3,991m which may increase upon the project process,” he said.

That first stage of S-III was inaugurated under which 77 MGD sewage was treated before being disposed of into the sea.

Replying to another question, the minister said as many as 13 major hospitals were being run by the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation. They are: Abbasi Shaheed Hospital, Karachi Institute of Heart Diseases, Sobhraj Maternity Hospital, Sarfaraz Rafique Shaheed Hospital, Leprosy Hospital, Landhi Medical Complex, Spencer Eye Hospital, Gizri Maternity Hospital, Gazdarabad General Hospital, Landhi Cardiac Emergency Centre, Shah Faisal Colony Cardiac Emergency Centre, Homeopathic Hospital Nazimabad and Primary Health Care Centre Lyari.

He further submitted that in response to the city mayor’s request, the provincial government released an amount of Rs177m as special grant-in-aid for the purchase of medicines and allied items for these hospitals.

The minister said that the KMC had purchased medicines and allied items for its hospitals through tenders as per SPPRA Rules and they were distributed among all hospitals as per their respective requirements.

Published in Dawn, January 23rd, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1459151/k-iv-water-project-unlikely-to-meet-deadline-pa-told>

WATER SECURITY

Ali Tauqeer Sheikh January 22, 2019

PAKISTAN depends heavily on its neighbours for most of its surface water. Many of our rivers originate in other countries; yet relations with most water neighbours are estranged. And we have yet to develop a coherent narrative and consistent policy to protect our long-term water interests. Instead of laying a foundation for sound water relations, we are allowing our water interests to become subservient to temperamental political relations.

It is imperative for Pakistan to have mechanisms in place to discuss the development of neighbouring countries’ water infrastructure, with or without formal treaties. We need regular, ongoing discussions with our neighbours on infrastructural development, surface water flows and diversions. This includes Afghanistan that is planning feasibility studies of about a dozen dams; China for developments in Tibet where the Indus originates; and India that is home to the upper reaches of Indus and its numerous tributaries. An exchange of information and increased cooperation on water issues, therefore, needs to become a standing item in our bilateral agendas with our neighbours as well as with other development partners (Australia, the EU, UK and US).

It is for Pakistan to initiate water negotiations with all our water neighbours in order to respond to the growing population, projected economic growth, receding glaciers and water flows — now made uncertain by climate change. For a water-secure Pakistan, domestic water-sector reforms must be complimented with a new regional diplomacy. A fresh and simple approach is needed for a policy that is based on three basic principles. First, have a clear policy for water security. Since water is the lifeline of our economy and ecology, ensure it is at no point hostage to volatile political interests. In fact, we need to use water relations to build and improve political and economic relations. Our present policy is lopsided. We ignore water relations with Iran, thinking that water quantities shared with it are too small or seasonal, but forget that Iran and Afghanistan have been in discussions over the Helmand River for almost 100 years.

Pakistan must secure its interests through regional diplomacy.

Likewise, as an upper riparian, China has a strong bearing in future water flows downstream in the Indus and Brahmaputra. In fact, given evolving data-sharing mechanisms between India and China on Brahmaputra, China may assume a unique position in shaping, if not brokering, Pakistan-India water relations. But water is not a formal agenda item between China and Pakistan, notwithstanding some preliminary explorations of the Indus Cascade. This project in the upper reaches of Gilgit-Baltistan is potentially larger and more important than CPEC.

With India, we have reduced water relations to only conflicting interpretations of the Indus Waters Treaty, compromising our interests on many old and emerging issues not directly covered in the treaty: transboundary water pollution loads; information on aquifer movement; climate-induced cloudbursts and cross-border flooding; joint management of early warning systems; and changing patterns of monsoon and precipitation that influence regular and seasonal flows. This growing list offers opportunities for enhanced bilateral collaboration.

Second, invest in research and development. Articulating policies based on perceived instead of evidence-based interests has made negotiating positions zero-sum. Our interest lies in equitable benefit sharing, which requires research and policy engagement. We recently damaged our case in the international court primarily because we cited little scientific information to back our claims. As we move to implement our National Water Policy, experts and thought leaders must be brought together to undertake collaborative research and analysis. Scores of experiences of transboundary negotiations and agreements need to be analysed for their relevance to our complex contexts.

Third, find friends and takers for our policy. Though detrimental to our interests, and adding to mistrust and information gaps, Pakistan has unnecessarily shied from engagement. Proactive regional engagement to win friends will help us develop the social capital necessary for exercising soft power. We can still initiate the process by picking some of the threads from the Friends of Democratic Pakistan report, shelved almost a decade ago. It is time to assess how best to re-engage those nations, the World Bank and institutions that have traditionally taken a keen interest in regional water diplomacy, investments and institution-building.

In all, we need to focus on developing a new generation of leadership in water by investing in a cadre of decision makers from across the provinces, sectors and disciplines. They need to be trained and capacitated for reimagining and re-envisioning regional water diplomacy.

The writer is CEO of LEAD Pakistan, an Islamabad-based think tank specialising in environment and development issues.

Published in Dawn, January 22nd, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1459061/water-security>

EU, IUCN TO INVEST €40M FOR WATER CONSERVATION

By Our Correspondent Published: January 22, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Climate Change, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and European Union will invest 40 million euros in Balochistan for water conservation.

European Union Ambassador to Pakistan Jean-Francois Cautain and IUCN Country Representative Mahmood Akhtar Cheema expressed this resolve during a meeting with Adviser to Prime Minister on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam.

The adviser briefed the delegation about the ministry's performance in environmental protection and conservation.

The delegation was also apprised about the "Recharge Pakistan Project" which aims at building the underground water table by conserving floodwater in the right and left bank of Indus River reservoirs.

Aslam highlighted that the core objective of Conference of Parties (COP24) was to adopt a universal rulebook wherein all countries will follow the standard operating procedures for conservation of nature and mitigating the catastrophic natural disasters.

The water could be utilised for domestic as well as horticulture purposes, the envoy said, "The IUCN, EU will invest 40 million euros for water conservation project in Balochistan".

The project will increase water reservoirs, programme for community awareness in utilising minimum water, using alternative methods in irrigation and farming and promoting livestock investment, he added.

The IUCN country representative said that union is working in natural resource management, water resource management and community awareness and involvement in water conservation.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1893710/1-eu-iucn-invest-e14m-water-conservation/>

END THE DAM FUND

Editorial Updated January 21, 2019

WITH the Supreme Court under a new chief justice, one hopes that the utility of the so-called dam fund will be reassessed.

When the initiative was first launched in July last year, there was a sense that it fell outside the normal boundaries of jurisprudence, and there were questions regarding whether the then chief justice of the apex court should oversee a donation campaign to raise funds for a mega dam.

Still, it appeared a harmless enough endeavour; after all, donations were being solicited and people were not being forced to contribute.

But then, the salaries of government servants and army personnel were subjected to deductions for the dam fund, contributions that could be described as involuntary. In some instances, the donations were also criticised for being linked to the outcome of legal proceedings.

Apart from this, we saw a massive media campaign advertise donations in language that invoked the future of our children as well as salvation in the hereafter — depending on whether contributing towards the dam figured on our list of priorities.

The attorney general told the court that the media, at the goading of Pemra, had given Rs13bn worth of free airtime to the fund — for which the total contribution has come to around Rs9bn.

The public also witnessed the former chief justice appear in televised marathons asking for money, with the prime minister putting his weight behind the effort — meanwhile, there were also strong suggestions that any criticism of the dam or the fund could be construed as treason.

In fact, many of the questions asked by the public went unanswered. For instance, which authority would be responsible for monitoring the people's donations?

The list of all that has happened — including the effort put into cajoling and coercing the people to give money — in the name of the dam fund is astonishing.

Only days before his retirement, the former chief justice gave a TV interview in which he said that the poor, the pensioners, and the infirm had also contributed to the fund. “Sick people cut back on their medicines to be able to contribute,” he said, in an apparent salute to the valour of those who gave their money. Efforts were also made to reach out to expat Pakistanis.

But at the end of the day, the amount collected has been dismal: there are only Rs9bn in the dam coffers, less than 1pc of the project cost — the amount is too large to leave lying around, and yet it is nowhere near substantial to even help the project along.

This is hardly surprising, considering the initiative, rather than being based on a sound plan, was driven more by emotions.

Crowd-sourcing has not worked, and the whole affair has reached absurd proportions. The new chief justice should now bring it all to a dignified end.

Published in Dawn, January 21st, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1458849/end-the-dam-fund>

MOHAMAND TRIBESMEN REITERATE DAM ROYALTY DEMAND

By Mureeb Mohmand Published: January 21, 2019

SHABQADAR: With Mohmand Dam inauguration, twice delayed, is set to be held in the first week of February, tribal people of the area have again demanded clear word on payment of royalty and other compensation for their land that would be lost to the project.

The demand was raised at a Jirga held at Shaheed Banda an area in the proximity of the Mohmand Dam site.

The Jirga held in Mohmand tribal district, where apart from MNAs Sajjid Mohmand and advocate Anwar Taj tribal elders of Essa Khel, Burhan Khel, Utman Khel and Malagori, political parties' leadership and a large number of local also participated.

Addressing the Jirga ANP leader Nisar Khan, PPP leader Shah Sawar Khan, and JUI-F leader Maulana Muhammad Arif and tribal elder Itbar Gul and Iqrar Khan while welcoming the construction of Mohmand Dam on their soil which will produce 700 megawatt electricity and irrigate thousands of acres of barren land in Mohmand and Charsadda demanded of the elected representative to ensure the rights of the people of the area

They also criticised the land acquisition process and demanded the rate of the land should be equal to that of the Basha Dam as well as the demarcation of dam land and land acquired for security purpose.

They pointed out that these mountains are natural grazing field of their cattle which is the main source of their income and livelihood while their labourers will be directly affected as most the Burhan khel tribesmen business is related to construction stones, produced from the mountains.

They contended that after construction of the dam these two businesses will be completely finished as no alternate business is available for them. So the Jirga demanded that an industrial estate be established in the area and electricity be made available at the production rate , pure drinking water for the entire tribal district and all non-technical employment in the dam.

MNA advocate Anwar Taj told the Jirga that they have been in close contact with the dam officials and in a meeting with them they have conveyed the demands of the tribesmen regarding land rate, electricity at low rate and establishment of industrial estate, and employment of all non-technical staff in the dam.

He added that he will try to construct separate grid station for the lower Mohmand to ensure full voltage electricity. MNAs Sajid Mohmand of Mohmand tribal district also addressed the Jirga and told the Mohmand tribesmen that they were fortunate that next month PM Imran Khan will inaugurate Mohmand dam on their soil.

He cautioned that some elements wanted to disrupt the construction of Mohmand Dam and we the Mohmands should be aware of it and foil all such attempts of those who want to disrupt the dam project.

He told that Mohmands have rendered sacrifices for the country in past and today we are proving our patriotism by selling our land comparatively at low rate for the dam. He said that they had put forward all rightful demands of the Mohmands to the right forum of concerned officials.

All demands including electricity at subsidised rates, establishment of industrial estate, employment till grade 15 to locals, development of health, education and communication works, provision of pure drinking water to entire Mohmand district had been duly made.

He added that with construction of the dam the Mohmand district will see development and they will not only receive Mohmand dam royalty but will also receive Warsak dam royalty too.

Published in The Express Tribune, January 21st, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1893006/1-mohmand-tribesmen-reiterate-dam-royalty-demand/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JAN 14th TO JAN 20th 2019

WATER TABLE IN LAHORE DEPLETES 2-3 FEET ANNUALLY: MINISTER

RECORDER REPORT | JAN 19TH, 2019 | LAHORE

Provincial Irrigation Minister Mohsin Leghari has said that the water table in Lahore is depleting at an alarming rate of 2-3 feet annually due to unabated extraction and Pakistan is among the most profligate water users in the world as our water productivity is one of the lowest.

“Due to our inefficient irrigation methods and wastefulness in urban water use, our water resources are seriously stressed. The water situation in the country is a serious cause of concern for the whole nation,” the Minister said while talking to media during a de-siltation inspection visit of the Lahore Canal on Friday. He urged the media to raise awareness on prevailing water situation in Punjab and highlight the need for adopting efficient water use methods including rainwater harvesting, efficient irrigation and water recycling.

Leghari also said that the de-siltation campaign in Mangla Command canals has been extended to January 31 due to recent rains which slowed down the works. “The draft of provincial water act is ready and the law department is fine-tuning it. This act is one of the key initiatives of the PTI government in ensuring sustainable management of the province’s water resources.”

He said the Punjab irrigation department’s infrastructure has been valued at over Rs 2500 billion and over Rs 50 billion are needed annually for the maintenance of this system. He said recurring maintenance expenditures of irrigation system necessitate a revisit of the abiana rates in the province. Abiana was fixed at Rs 135 per year per acre in 2002 and since then it has not been revised whereas the maintenance cost has gone up considerably.

He informed the media that over 40 per cent work on de-siltation of perennial canals has been completed and the rest will be completed by the end of January.

He said in this phase of de-siltation campaign 316 perennial channels will be de-silted in the province and it will be followed by de-siltation in 304 non-perennial channels which will be completed by the end of April. De-siltation plays a key role in ensuring water supplies to the tail-end reaches of the system, said the minister.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/01/20190119440753/>

SHEHBAZ DEMANDS NA PROBE INTO MOHMAND DAM CONTRACT

By Our Correspondent Published: January 18, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Shehbaz Sharif on Friday demanded a probe into the award of Mohmand dam contract to the company of a government adviser, saying that the people of Pakistan had the right to know where their money was being spent by the government.

Speaking in the house, Sharif said that the awarding of contract to the company of Abdul Razzak Dawood, the adviser to the Prime Minister on Commerce, through a single bid was against the rules of the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA).

Raising a point of order, Shehbaz Sharif requested Speaker Asad Qaiser to discuss the issue in the house. "I have no personal grudges against Dawood but the nation deserves to know how the government is spending the nation's money," he said.

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) president recalled that the previous parliament had discussed the construction of the Mohmand dam under the PPRA rules and pointed out that any single-bid for a tender was against the PPRA rules.

"Contract worth Rs300 billion was awarded on a single bid besides awarding contract to a sitting government official is a conflict of interest," Sharif said. "Thus, I demand that a parliamentary committee is immediately formed on this matter," he added.

"Nation's and borrowed money is being spent blindly. The nation has a right to know where their money is being spent," he said. "A committee should be formed to review the [Mohmand dam contract] process and submit a report within a week," he told the house.

During the session, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Ali Muhammad Khan presented a resolution for the constitution of an ethics committee to amend National Assembly Rules, 2007. The committee, to be headed by the speaker, will be tasked to take action against any 'unethical' attitude of any legislator.

Through another resolution, Khan demanded of the government to declare drought-stricken districts of Balochistan and Sindh as calamity-hit areas. Speaking on the resolution, the minister said 18 districts of Balochistan and eight districts of Sindh were in the grip of severe drought.

"Some people have lost their lives due to the drought," said the resolution, adding that the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and provincial disaster management authorities were providing relief items to the people in the affected areas.

Khan said a national consultative workshop was being organised to provide assistance to the people of drought-hit areas of Balochistan and Sindh. The international donors were being invited to attend the workshop, he added. The resolution was passed unanimously.

Speaking on the resolution, Inter-Provincial Coordination Minister Dr Fehmida Mirza said that the lower house should follow in the example of the Senate and constitute a committee on the poor conditions in the backward areas of the country.

Meanwhile, Speaker Asad Qaiser apologised to PML-N's Ahsan Iqbal for barring him from attending the assembly session on Thursday. Iqbal had been asked to leave the hall when asked to show his membership restoration notification.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had suspended membership of 332 parliamentarians, including Iqbal, for failing to submit details of assets. However, Iqbal said that the ECP had cleared his name. The speaker said that he received the ECP notification later.

During the question hour earlier, Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs Andleeb Abbas blasted the opposition, when questions were asked about the government's performance. "Those asking us about the last five months first tell us what their foreign policy was during the last five years," she said.

"They [PML-N government] did not even have a foreign minister," she went on. "The Nawaz League government left for us a dowry of Rs30,000 billion debt. Our policy is trade, not aid," she said, adding that the agreements with Saudi Arabia are open to everybody."

Abbas said that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government strengthened relations with the Middle Eastern countries.

"China is cooperating with us not just on building highways but also in the field of science and technology," she

added. The house was also informed that during the last five years, Pakistan earned \$1.6 million through the export of human hair.

At the outset of the session, Abdul Akbar Chitrali staged a walkout in protest against low attendance of the members in the house. Later, during the Question Hour, Shaikh Fayyazud Din pointed towards lack of quorum, forcing the speaker to briefly suspend the proceedings. The house will now meet on Monday.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1891274/1-shehbaz-demands-committee-probe-mohmand-dam-contract/>

DEPLETING FAST: MPAS IN AGREEMENT OVER TALKS ON WATER LEVELS

By Rana Yasif Published: January 19, 2019

LAHORE: Although all lawmakers, including the panel chairman presiding over the house, were in agreement to hold a one-day discussion on the alarming underground water deficiency, the talks soon got sidetracked in Friday's Punjab Assembly session.

The legislators spent more than 30 minutes discussing the deficiency of water in their areas. They reached a consensus that there should be a general discussion on this sensitive issue. However, panel chairman Mian Shafi Muhammad's statement that the law minister would decide the day for the discussion threw a spanner in the works.

MPAs of both sides said it was the job of the panel chairman, who was presiding over the house, to pass a ruling for general discussions rather than law minister Raja Basharat. They said that since Shafi was presiding over the house, he should pass a ruling on which day to hold the discussion. However, their efforts bore no fruit.

During the question-answer session, minister Sardar Mohsin Laghari said Pakistan falls in the list of countries where the water table was decreasing rapidly. "We are still on the same irrigation system that has been used since ancient times," he said. The minister added no new techniques had been introduced through which water could be saved. PPP's Hassan Murtaza, PMLN's Waris Shad, Chaudhary Mazhar Iqbal, PTI's Saeed Akbar Khan and others shed light over the water deficiency. They asked the minister about the government's policies and the measures being taken to preserve water.

"We have no empathy when it comes to extracting water. We also have limited water reserves and need to adopt proper techniques for irrigation rather than crudely extracting it," the minister said. "We install tube wells and start extracting water without even bothering how much levels have decreased."

PTI's Saeed Akbar asked the minister if the provincial government had devised any policy through which the limited amount of water could be used to gain maximum irrigation results. The minister replied by saying the agriculture department was working on the matter. He pointed out that farmers had been given sprinklers, drip irrigation equipment and other utilities at subsidised rates.

House proceedings started at 11:00am despite a scheduled time of 9am. Panel Chairman Mian Shafi Muhammad presided over the House. PML-N's Rana Mannan Khan, on a point of order, asked the chairman under which law ministers, whose membership has been suspended by the Election Commission for not submitting asset declarations, were holding meetings of their concerned departments. At first Shafi was silent, but later replied "as members, they cannot function".

PML-N's Samiullah also expressed dismay over the conduct of ministers. According to him, these elected officials were not following the decorum of the house. He said ministers directly addressed lawmakers rather than addressing the chair. He said some ministers did not even stand up before speaking and remained seated. Minister for Prosecution Chaudhry Zaheeruddin defended the ministers saying PML-N had launched a propaganda against PTI's ministers.

PTI legislator Zainab Umair, in her speech on the discussion over the annual report of the Punjab Public Service Commission for the year 2016, gave her proposals. She said doctors and engineers should be restrained from participation in public service commission exams. The MPA said most of the competent doctors and engineers participated and joined other departments like the police or other sector. She added that as a result, they ignored their actual field of expertise for which they had academic degrees. Finally, the panel chairman adjourned house proceedings till 3pm on Monday.

Published in The Express Tribune, January 19th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1891532/1-depleting-fast-mpas-agreement-talks-water-levels/>

IRSA ASKED TO ENSURE FAIR DISTRIBUTION OF WATER AMONG PROVINCES

Hasan Mansoor Updated January 17, 2019

KARACHI: Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Wednesday spoke on the issues afflicting Sindh because of persistent water shortages as the provincial assembly passed a motion asking the Sindh government to approach the Centre for judicious water distribution among all federating units.

An extensive debate was held during the Sindh Assembly session, chaired by Speaker Agha Siraj Durrani, on an adjournment motion moved by Pakistan Peoples Party's Heer Soho to discuss the role of the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) in distributing water among the provinces in the light of the 1991 Accord — an agreement signed by then chief minister Jam Sadiq Ali.

A number of members of the opposition Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf, which rules Islamabad, were present in the house, but they opted not to participate in the debate.

Murad Ali Shah questions PTI lawmakers' sincerity with Sindh

Chief Minister Shah did not hide his anguish on the silence of the PTI members who sat idle while everyone else spoke and expressed their anger against Irsa's attitude towards Sindh.

"Not a single member of a big political party took part in this debate, which reflects how sincere they are with Sindh," said a displeased Shah. "They should have spoken here; no matter against or for our stance. But, they vanished from the scene on such an important issue for Sindh."

He also indicated the absence of the parliamentary party leader of the PTI who spoke extensively earlier during a calling-attention notice, but preferred not to be in the house today.

Mr Shah gave a detailed background about the water woes of Sindh, which, according to him originally begin in 1859. He said it was not just the Indus, but Sindh would get water from five other rivers as well.

He said the colonial rulers rejected the Greater Thal Canal scheme twice; yet, it was constructed during a dictator's regime.

Despite British rulers' actions against Sindh, he added, they chalked out and enforced an agreement after the construction of the Sukkur Barrage in which Sindh's share was 48.74 million acre feet, which was still greater than Punjab's 48.33MAF share then.

He said everyone had technically approved that agreement. However, after Partition, India stopped water to the then western wing of Pakistan forcing the newly created state to get its water by payment to India.

He said no expert was taken from Sindh and all of them belonged to the neighbouring province when Pakistan signed the Indus Basin Water Treaty in September 1960 and "sold" three of its rivers to India.

"Such a treaty soon created problems; then, those at the helm decided why just Sindh take benefit from Indus and dams were constructed on the river. That was the time when problems for Sindh in getting its share of water got worse."

He said instead of minimum 10MAF, just 2MAF water was allowed downstream Kotri this season. "Do you want to make the people of the lower riparian die of hunger and thirst?"

Mr Shah said even the 1991 Accord promised a separate share of water for Karachi, yet it was not being given.

He said Sindh was the province whose share was negligibly increased in contrast to Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan in the 1991 Accord. However, that share was never given to the province, he added.

He appreciated Balochistan for supporting Sindh's case, saying he had contacted the chief ministers of Punjab and KP requesting them to help Sindh in getting justice.

Mr Shah said upon his efforts, the Council of Common Interests had formed a committee to resolve the water issue. The committee had met twice and its report was still awaited, he said.

He said Sindh was concentrating on the theme of conservation of water by lining the canals to make best use of the water available to the province.

He said there was a deficit of trust regarding the issue of the Kalabagh dam and appreciated an opposition member for highlighting conspiracies to give a new lease of life to the "dead horse" as the project was generally termed.

Ms Soho said Sindh was enduring agonising water shortages for years while the federal government was not ready to discuss the issue with the provincial government.

She accused Irsa of not making judicious distribution of water and demanded that the existing Irsa committee be dissolved and the federal nominee on the authority be taken from Sindh for being lower riparian in the new set-up.

Grand Democratic Alliance's Nand Kumar said instead of passing resolutions and motions the government should evolve a mechanism, which can ensure that the issue gets resolved.

He said he smelled a conspiracy behind creation of water problems with Sindh by which "they try to revive the dead horse. But, I make it clear here that we'll not allow you to construct the Kalabagh dam".

PPP's Aziz Narejo said shortage of water was 50 per cent at Sindh's barrages, which multiplied miserably as water flowed downstream.

GDA's Nusrat Sehar Abbasi said Sindh had not presented its case effectively. She echoed her colleague that conspiracies were on to revive the Kalabagh dam.

Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal's Abdul Rasheed said instead of resolving such important issues, federal ministers were visiting Sindh only for engineering the provincial government's collapse.

Mohammad Qasim of Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan said: "It is not failure, but it is planned ignorance and hooliganism on the part of Irsa for not giving Sindh's due share of water".

Muttahida Qaumi Movement's Jawed Hanif said Irsa distributed what it had in the system. He said it was time to stop wastage of water and make irrigation system efficient.

PPP's Hina Dastagir said the federal government was taking measures to open gates for the Kalabagh dam. She said Punjab had never protested on the water issue because it had always benefited from the formula. She said Sindh's deltaic region had been destroyed immensely.

Later, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mukesh Chawla tabled a motion in the house asking the provincial government to approach the Centre for getting Irsa to fairly regulate water distribution among the provinces.

Published in Dawn, January 17th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1457957/irsa-asked-to-ensure-fair-distribution-of-water-among-provinces>

MURAD COMPLAINS OF GETTING LESS SHARE OF WATER FROM INDUS

RECORDER REPORT | JAN 17TH, 2019 | KARACHI

Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah on Wednesday cried foul during the Sindh Assembly session for his province is not receiving the allocated share of water, saying Indus River System Authority (Irsa) has an unjust mechanism.

Discussing an adjournment motion tabled by ruling PPP's legislator, Heer Ismail Soho that was against Irsa for not ensuring water share to Sindh, Murad said that the province was handed with least increase in allocation in 1991 accord. He said that Sindh had protested against the water accord that took away a sizeable share from it. Despite, the unjust water accord, the government should at least step up to implement it.

The Irsa's immoderation obvious, he told the house, saying that at the time of water shortage Punjab's allocation has been increased unlike Sindh. Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa stand exempt amid water dearth, he said, adding that like the past federal government, the present one is also ignoring Sindh. He urged that the water conservation is more important.

Heer Soho, the mover, said that Sindh is faced with multiple problems as neither it gets water and gas nor NFC. She blamed the federal government for not having a remedy to solve general public's problems. "Sindh needs water," she said and added that this is her party's demand.

MMA's legislator, Syed Abdul Rasheed slammed both Sindh and federal governments for failing to provide water to the urban centres and for irrigation to the rural parts of the province, saying that "people of Sindh needs water not chicks and eggs". He said that the agriculture land in Sindh is turning barren for want of water.

He said that water is the backbone of economy since it helps generate electric power and produce crops. "Without water the entire economy stands collapsed," he pointed out, asking the legislators to get united for the main purpose of their being elected to the house and that is to serve the nation indiscriminately.

Water crisis even in rural parts creates law and order situation, he said, adding that the committee heading the Irsa should be revisited with a guaranteed supply of water share to Sindh. He also demanded for increase in water share to Sindh to ensure tail-end supply to remote parts of Karachi. He criticised the Sindh government for not having a capacity to complete its all incomplete projects, saying the ruling party should respond as to what steps it has taken to end starvation in Thar.

“Sindh will have to be given its rights whether it is gas, electricity or water,” he said, adding that “I have deep feelings for the miserable people of Sindh and I will talk for their rights no matter whose vested interest is hurt”. He also addressed the opposition benches for being its integral part regardless they believe it or not. He also asked the treasury and opposition to end shrugging off responsibility from all the issues a common man is faced with. Latter, the house approved the adjournment motion.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/01/20190117440204/>

20 SMALL DAMS PLANNED FOR BALOCHISTAN SHELVED

ABDUL RASHEED AZAD | JAN 16TH, 2019 | ISLAMABAD

The government has reduced number of small dams projects planned to be constructed in Balochistan for storing drinking water and irrigation from 83 to 63 and is likely to further reduce the number in upcoming mini-budget. This was stated by the Federal Secretary Water Resources Shamaail Ahmad Khawaja while briefing the Senate Standing Committee on Water Resources here on Wednesday, which met under the chairmanship of Senator Shamim Afridi.

The chairman committee said that most of the planned dams in Balochistan are for the storage of drinking water and the committee will not let the government stop funding for these projects. The committee members said that the federal government and other concerned authorities must take water shortage issues in Balochistan seriously. They said that the committee will draft recommendations on the subject of water shortage in Balochistan province and will forward to the federal government to add these projects in Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) on priority basis.

The panel directed the Ministry of Energy Water and Power Division to incorporate the projects dropped from current financial year’s PSDP in the next financial year on priority basis. Senator Shamim Afridi and other members decided to visit the site of Chiniot Dam being built on River Chenab with a cost of Rs 60 billion to get the firsthand knowledge about the latest situation.

The officials of Irrigation Department Balochistan briefed the committee about the construction of Halak Dam, saying that the project was part of the PSDP in Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) government’s presented budget for financial year 2018-19 but later new government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf presented a mini-budget and dropped it from PSDP. The officials said now the project could only be included in the PSDP with the approval of the Central Development Working Party (CDWP).

The committee also expressed serious anger over the absence of the officials of the Punjab Irrigation Department from the meeting and directed the concerned officials to send senior officials of the Punjab Irrigation Department in the next committee meeting. The committee summoned chief secretary Punjab and secretary irrigation Punjab to attend the next meeting of the committee.

The committee was told that the officials of Punjab Irrigation Department were summoned to brief the committee about Chiniot Dam but they did not turn up. The members protested and demanded the summoning of high ranking officers of Punjab Irrigation Department to explain their position. They complained that the committee was not being taken seriously.

The committee also summoned the officers of Ministry of Planning and Development and Ministry of Finance to brief the committee about development projects. The committee also decided to convene another meeting soon on the issue of Mohmand Dam.

A representative of Water and Power Development Authority (WAPA) told the committee that the bidding process of Mohmand Dam has already been completed and financial issues are being discussed currently which obviously take time.

The officers of Engineering Services briefed the committee about Gawalien Dam, saying that 98 percent work on the dam has already been completed. The age of dam is 74 years. Senator Sabir Shah said that the dam becomes empty within two days period after filling, which indicates some seepage.

The officials of Irrigation Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, told the committee that the seepage could be controlled within a period of six to seven years. The members decided to visit the site of the dam to inspect the prevailing situation and get a detailed briefing from the quarters concerned.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/01/20190116439928/>

DESALINATION PRODUCES MORE TOXIC WASTE THAN CLEAN WATER: STUDY

AFP January 15, 2019

PARIS: More than 16,000 desalination plants scattered across the globe produce far more toxic sludge than fresh water, according to a first global assessment of the sector's industrial waste, published on Monday.

For every litre of fresh water extracted from the sea or brackish waterways, a litre-and-a-half of salty slurry, called brine, is dumped directly back into the ocean or the ground.

The super-salty substance is made even more toxic by the chemicals used in the desalination process, researchers reported in the journal *Science of the Total Environment*.

Copper and chlorine, for example, are both commonly used.

The amount of brine produced worldwide every year — more than 50 billion cubic metres — is enough to cover the state of Florida, or England and Wales combined, in a 30-centimetre (one-foot) layer of salty slime, they calculated.

“The world produces less desalinated water than brine,” co-author Manzoor Qadir, a scientist at the Institute for Water, Environment and Health at United Nations University in Ontario, Canada, said.

“Almost all the brine goes back into the environment, mostly in the ocean.” All that extra salt raises the temperature of coastal waters, and decreases the level of oxygen, which can create “dead zones”.

“It is difficult for aquatic organisms to breathe in these conditions — they need O₂ to survive,” said Qadir.

More than half of the brine comes from only four countries: Saudi Arabia (22 per cent), United Arab Emirates (20.2 per cent), Kuwait (6 per cent) and Qatar (5.8 per cent).

North Africa, the Middle East, and water-starved small island states in the Pacific and elsewhere also rely heavily on desalination to provide safe drinking water, which accounts for nearly two-thirds of consumption.

The rest is used in industry, as a coolant in energy production, and in agriculture.

Around one in four people live in regions where water resources are insufficient during part of the year, and half-a-billion experience water scarcity year round, according to the United Nations.

Since 2015, the World Economic Forum's annual Global Risk Report has consistently ranked “water crises” as among the global threats — above natural disasters, mass migration and cyber-attacks.

Water scarcity is caused by many things, starting with a global population closing in on eight billion.

Major rivers no longer reach the sea, aquifers are being sucked dry, and pollution is tainting water above ground and below.

With climate change, the situation will get worse.

For each degree of global warming, about seven percent of the world's population — half-a-billion people — will have 20 per cent less freshwater, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

“Desalination technology has benefited a large number of people,” said Qadir. “But we cannot ignore the production of brine, which is going to become an even greater problem in the future.” Industrial-scale technology for removing salt from water has been around since the 1960s. By 1990, there were already 3,000 plants in operation around the globe.

On current trends, the sector will see a total of at least 17,500 plants by 2025, Qadir said, noting that one large plant can produce as much fresh water — and brine — as 200 or 300 small ones.

More than 90 per cent of desalination plants are in wealthy economies. This reflects the fact that the technology remains expensive, especially in energy costs.

But it also means that rich nations have the capacity to develop ways to dispose of toxic brine that are less harmful to ocean and land environments, he added.

Some pilot projects have even shown that modified brine can boost yields of certain fish species in aquaculture.

Published in Dawn, January 15th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1457654/desalination-produces-more-toxic-waste-than-clean-water-study>

MOHMAND DAM'S LAUNCH SHELVED AGAIN AMID ROW

Syed Irfan Raza January 14, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Controversy surrounding the award of the much-awaited Rs309 billion Mohmand dam project contract to a firm founded by an adviser to the prime minister deepened on Sunday when its inauguration was shelved for a second time in two weeks.

The groundbreaking ceremony, which had been rescheduled for the day, was postponed due to the unavailability of Chief Justice of Pakistan Mian Saqib Nisar, said Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry.

The construction of the project, which was to be inaugurated jointly by Prime Minister Imran Khan and the CJP, was deferred earlier on Jan 2 amid the controversy that its contract was being awarded to a consortium of firms led by Descon, which is reportedly owned by Adviser to PM on Commerce Abdul Razak Dawood.

Fawad says ceremony has been cancelled due to CJP's unavailability

Expressing dissatisfaction over the postponement of the previous ceremony, the chief justice had lamented that he had not been informed about the development, according to media reports.

While confirming to Dawn that the ceremony this time was cancelled due to unavailability of the chief justice, Mr Chaudhry said the next date of the event had not been finalised so far.

"The next date of the inauguration ceremony will be decided within three to four days," said the information minister without elaborating on the point that the chief justice is going to doff his robes on Thursday.

However, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Media Iftikhar Durrani said a new date would be announced only after consultation with Chief Justice Mian Saqib Nisar who he said would attend the inauguration ceremony.

The government move to award the Rs309bn contract to the Descon joint venture has already been challenged by Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), one of the major opposition parties in parliament, which filed a complaint with the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). The party petitioned the anti-graft watchdog against the award of such a mega development contract to a consortium led by the company in which a sitting cabinet member and his family have ownership stakes. The NAB was informed that the contract awarded to the firm founded by the PM's adviser would be a "conflict of interest".

So far, the NAB has not declared if it has taken notice of the issue on the complaint filed on Jan 4. The anti-graft watchdog has yet to announce if it has served any notice to the relevant minister and departments.

The information minister said PM Khan and the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf government did not see any irregularity in the matter.

Mr Durrani rejected the impression that the project's inauguration had been delayed due to any controversies.

He said the incumbent government had no role in the matter. The tender for the project was processed by the previous government, he added.

The 54-year-old project had been revived last year by the chief justice and the prime minister.

CJP Nisar had taken the initiative to raise fund for two big dams — Mohmand and Diamer-Bhasha — in view of acute water scarcity that the country may face in future if immediate measures are not taken to build the dams.

Later, the CJP's fund and PM fund for the same cause were merged.

According to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), a total of Rs8.46bn had been deposited by locals and overseas Pakistanis in the dams fund till December 2018.

The award of the bid to the Descon-led consortium raised questions about the process of the award and a possible conflict of interest.

Two consortiums each comprising three firms were in the run to win the project. One of the consortia consists of Descon, China Gazooka and Voith Hydro while the other comprises Frontier Works Organisation (FWO), Andritz Hydro and Power China.

Sources said "higher authorities" had also intervened in the matter and directed the authorities concerned for fair play after which some reshuffle was made in the hierarchy of Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda).

Terming it an "international conspiracy", federal Minister for Water Resources Faisal Vawda said Mr Dawood had already resigned from the company before the bidding process began. The bidding was held on July 18 before the PTI government came to power, he said, claiming that the commerce adviser had nothing to do with the contract and had no way to influence the bidding process.

Mr Vawda insisted that Descon only held 30pc of shares in the consortium and the bids were evaluated by technical experts comprising Nespak, an Australian company, and another foreign firm.

Mr Dawood in a statement also explained that he had founded and headed Descon like several other business ventures. He said he had disclosed all his business associations in writing to the prime minister and "resigned from those positions" before joining the government to "ensure transparency and avoid conflict of interest".

A sum of Rs2bn has been allocated for the project in the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) 2018-19.

Mr Vawda addressing a recent press conference along with Wapda chairman retired lieutenant general Muzammil Hussain had said the dam would be constructed through local funding. He also had told the media that around Rs17bn to Rs18bn would be spent from the annual allotment of the PSDP over the next five years.

The proposed Mohmand dam is expected to store 1.2 million-acre-foot water and generate 800 megawatts power besides irrigating 18,000 acres land. The project will also help protect Mardan, Charsadda, Peshawar and other areas from floods during monsoon season.

Published in Dawn, January 14th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1457452/mohmand-dams-launch-shelved-again-amid-row>

COMMISSION ON WATER, SANITATION ASKED TO CONTINUE WORKING

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter Updated January 14, 2019

KARACHI: The chief provincial law officer said on Saturday that the Supreme Court-mandated commission on water and sanitation in Sindh needed to continue till its objectives were completely accomplished.

When the commission, which is set to complete its tenure on Jan 15, resumed its sitting, Advocate General, Sindh, Salman Talibuddin made a statement on the behalf of the provincial government.

He appreciated the working of the commission and said that its tenure should be extended since many ongoing schemes would be better monitored by the commission while a number of other schemes were in a formative stage.

The AG also tendered an apology regarding the comments of an additional advocate general made about the commission last week before the Supreme Court when its final report was submitted in the apex court.

He further said that when the same matter would be taken up for hearing by the apex court on Monday, the law officer of Sindh will record "no objection" to the commission's final report.

Shahab Usto, who had petitioned the apex court regarding water and sanitation issues in Sindh, also endorsed the proposal of the advocate general regarding continuation of the commission.

However, the commission, headed by retired Justice Amir Hani Muslim, said that it was the sole domain of the Supreme Court to consider such a request independently.

Justice Muslim had already requested the apex court that he was stepping down upon the completion of his tenure on Jan 15 due to personal reasons and the Supreme Court had also allowed it.

Published in Dawn, January 14th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1457331/commission-on-water-sanitation-asked-to-continue-working>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JAN 7th TO JAN 13th 2019

SINDH GOVT SEEKS EXTENSION IN WATER COMMISSION'S MANDATE

By Our Correspondent Published: January 13, 2019

HYDERABAD: As the Supreme Court-mandated Water Commission approaches its expiry on January 15, Sindh Advocate-General (AG) Salman Talibuddin has requested for continuation of the commission. "The commission needs to continue working till the objectives are completely accomplished," the AG said during a hearing of the commission in Karachi on Saturday, conducted by its outgoing chairman Justice (r) Amir Hani Muslim.

He said that the commission can ensure better monitoring of the water supply, drainage, solid waste disposal and other projects which have been initiated on its orders. "In addition there may be other schemes in the formative stages which will also be better monitored by the commission."

Talibuddin pointed out several projects which were still in the assessment level and required commission's oversight. "Continuation of the commission would be in the interest of larger public good."

Advocate Shuhab Usto, on whose petition the Supreme Court had formed the commission over two years ago, also made a similar plea at the hearing. He seconded the AG to request that the commission should continue.

Justice (r) Muslim said only the Supreme Court could consider their request. He told that he had already written to the court that he wanted to step down due to personal reasons after completion of his one-year tenure. The court has already accepted his submission.

Meanwhile, on the issue of objection raised by Sindh additional advocate-general during submission of the commission's final report in the apex court on January 9, the AG Talibuddin tendered an apology. He informed that on instructions of the provincial government, the province's law officer will record 'no objection' over the report during the upcoming hearing in Islamabad on January 14. "The statement made [in the court] by additional AG was without instructions."

Published in The Express Tribune, January 13th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1887068/1-sindh-govt-seeks-extension-water-commissions-mandate/>

INDIA STOPS UNUSED WATER FROM ENTERING PAKISTAN

By News Desk Published: January 12, 2019

Water allotted to India under the Indus Water Treaty that remains unused by India and flows into Pakistan instead will be kept in India, Union minister Nitin Gadkari said, according to NDTV.

Several Indian ministers signed a memorandum of understanding for the construction of a dam on the Upper Yamuna Basin.

"We have done one thing. The rivers awarded to India under the Indus Waters Treaty... (some portion of) our share still goes to Pakistan. The first thing we did was to arrest the (excess) water and we will take it to Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan and Delhi will benefit from it," said Gadkari.

India utilises up to 94 per cent of the water allotted to it under the Indus Water Treaty and the remainder flows into Pakistan.

This article originally appeared on NDTV.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1886659/9-india-stops-unused-water-entering-pakistan/>

INDIA FINALLY ALLOWS PAKISTAN TO INSPECT ITS POWER PROJECTS

Khalid Hasnain | Khaleeq Kiani January 12, 2019

LAHORE/ISLAMABAD: India finally agreed on Friday to allow Pakistani experts to inspect its hydropower projects at the Chenab basin — 1,000MW Pakal Dul and 48MW Lower Kalnai — from Jan 28 to 31. India has formally confirmed this through a letter to Pakistan's office of Indus Waters.

"We have received a letter from Indian Commissioner for Indus Waters Pradeep Kumar Saxena. They have arranged a general tour of inspection for our three-member delegation of experts. Under the schedule, a three-member delegation headed by me will leave for India on Jan 27 and return home on Feb 1," Commissioner for Indus Waters Syed Mehr Ali Shah told Dawn on Friday.

"The six-day tour includes four days for inspection (Jan 28 to 31) and two days (Jan 27 and Feb 1) for travelling (Pakistan-India-Pakistan)," he said.

Minister hopes New Delhi will show the same spirit in resolving other outstanding issues

The Pakistani delegation will leave for India on Jan 27 via Wagah border. After crossing the border, the experts will proceed to Amritsar for onward travelling to the disputed projects' areas. They will start inspecting the projects on Jan 28.

"The general tour of inspection is not limited to Pakal Dul and Lower Kalnai; we may also visit Ratle hydropower and other projects at the Chenab basin," Mr Shah said.

As a result of the 115th meeting of the Permanent Commission for Indus Waters (PCIW) held in Lahore in August last year, India had earlier scheduled inspection of the projects at the Chenab basin by Pakistani experts from Oct 7 to 11. But later it postponed the inspection on the pretext of local bodies' elections in the respective areas.

The Pakistani commissioner had in the last week of October telephoned his Indian counterpart and urged him to give a schedule for the tour of experts in November or first week of December. However, the Indian commissioner was

reported to have said it wouldn't be possible during the first or second week of December due to local Panchayat elections in India-held Kashmir — the area where these projects are located.

But the Pakistani commissioner kept on reminding his Indian counterpart of fulfilling the promise made at the 115th PCIW meeting held on Aug 29-30 last year in Lahore. During the meeting, India had not only agreed to allow Pakistani experts to inspect the two hydropower projects in September, but also the Kishanganga project at Jhelum basin at a later stage.

Reciprocally, Pakistan had also agreed to allow India to carry out inspection of Kotri Barrage over the Indus after September.

In its letter, India's office for Indus Waters has justified the delay behind the agreed schedule of inspection by the Pakistani experts. "They have clarified that the tour was first scheduled in September and then October. However, it couldn't be made possible due to local Panchayat elections in the area and then winter session of Indian parliament," the Pakistani commissioner said.

He termed the scheduling of general tour for inspection of the projects a good sign towards following the Indus Water Treaty signed by the two countries.

Talking to Dawn in Islamabad, Water Resources Minister Faisal Vawda said: "We welcome this gesture from India. This is a major breakthrough that India has finally agreed to our request for inspection of Indian projects at Chenab basin."

He said he believed that the issues could be resolved without raising egos and by taking care of each other's respect and expressed the hope that India would also show same spirit in resolving other outstanding issues.

The Pakistani water commissioner has been demanding for years the inspection of Pakal Dul and Lower Kalnai hydropower projects, disputing their designs.

Separately, Pakistan has been struggling for almost three years to convince the World Bank to form a court of arbitration to resolve its dispute with India over construction of the 330MW Kishanganga storage and hydroelectric project on River Jhelum and the 850MW Rattle hydroelectric project on Chenab in violation of the Indus Waters Treaty to its disadvantage after exhausting all bilateral options.

Mehr Ali Shah said the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 envisaged annual visits by Pakistani water commissioner to inspect water and hydroelectric projects on the western rivers, but the process had been stalled since September 2014. Pakistan had indicated last month to invoke Article 9 of the treaty that empowered any party to seek intervention of the World Bank for appointment of a neutral expert or an arbitration court in case of breach of the treaty. That stage did not come as New Delhi agreed to reschedule the inspection tour.

The treaty requires the water commissioners of Pakistan and India to meet twice a year and exchange technical visits to projects' sites and critical river head works, but Pakistan had been facing a lot of problems in timely meetings and visits.

Pakistan has objections to pondage and freeboard of the Lower Kalnai project and pondage, filling criteria and spillway of the Pakal Dul project.

Pakal Dul is a storage-cum-power project and can have gross storage of about 108,000 acres feet of water. The project design envisages its filling in 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 water treaty.

On the Lower Kalnai project, Pakistan has raised objections to its freeboard, pondage and intake and is of the view that the depth of bridge girder and provision of freeboard should be close to one metre and considers two-metre freeboard as 'excessive'.

Published in Dawn, January 12th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1456986/india-finally-allows-pakistan-to-inspect-its-power-projects>

SC IMPOSES RE1 PER LITRE CHARGE ON MINERAL WATER, BEVERAGE FIRMS

Nasir Iqbal Updated January 12, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has imposed a levy on companies selling mineral water and beverages at a rate of Re1 for every litre of surface water extracted by them. The revenue so collected will go to the Diamer-Bhasha and Mohmand dams fund.

Authored by Chief Justice Mian Saqib Nisar, the judgement also required the provincial governments as well as the Islamabad Capital Territory administration to set up separate and distinct accounts to receive the amounts collected under the water charges. The amounts will then be deposited in the SC-created dams fund.

The judgement was issued on a suo motu case pertaining to selling by the companies of water extracted from underground sources without any charge as well as the quality and fitness of the same for human consumption. The apex court made it clear that the funds so collected would not be diverted in any circumstances to any other purpose other than construction of dams and water-related activities. However, once the dams are constructed, the provincial governments, subject to the order of the apex court, will be at a liberty to utilise the funds collected in the accounts, the judgement said.

The apex court also constituted a special committee, headed by Prof Dr Mohammad Ahsan Siddiqui and comprising representatives of the provincial chief secretaries, director generals of the federal and provincial environmental protection agencies (EPAs) and others, to devise a mechanism for calculation, collection and monitoring of the recovery of water charges from all major industries consuming surface or groundwater. The industries include the energy sector, pulp and paper, cement, sugar, ethanol refineries, textiles, garments, tanneries, petroleum refineries, petrochemical industries and fertilisers.

Amount collected under the water charges to be deposited in the SC-created dams fund

A similar levy has already been imposed on the cement industry.

The committee after consultations will suggest imposing water tariff on these industries, the SC order said.

The apex court directed the federal and provincial governments to ensure installation of foolproof and state-of-the-art metering mechanism at every extraction unit within a period of 30 days. Close-circuit cameras will also be installed at the respective premises of the companies involved in the extraction of groundwater or utilisation of surface water for their business. The extraction will be monitored closely by the respective EPA on a daily basis, the verdict said.

In order to counter environmental impact, the Supreme Court ordered the mineral water and beverage companies to start tree plantation programmes to fulfil their corporate social responsibility. “We expect each company to plant/arrange the plantation of 10,000 trees per annum,” the court said, adding that a comprehensive programme would also be put in place to gradually phase out plastic bottles.

In the meantime, it said, it would be ensured that the plastic used for making bottles was certified by competent laboratories as being fit for human consumption.

The bottled water companies are also required to provide a chart highlighting milestones for meeting all the objectives spelt out in the order and will furnish monthly compliance/progress reports with the implementation bench being constituted under the judgement for its perusal and appropriate orders.

“The respective food authorities and the special committee also enjoy the authority to conduct surprise inspections at any time of the factory premises and water bottling/beverage facilities to ensure strict and faithful compliance of this order,” the Supreme Court said.

The implementation bench will take up the matter on Jan 31.

Published in Dawn, January 12th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1457080/sc-imposes-re1-per-litre-charge-on-mineral-water-beverage-firms>

SOLAR POWERED TUBE-WELLS, SMALL DAMS SOLVING WATER SCARCITY

By Mureeb Mohmand Published: January 12, 2019

SHABQADAR: Solar powered tube-wells and small dams have been termed as best solutions for overcoming water and power shortage in Mohmand tribal district.

Climate change, like other parts of Pakistan, has badly affected the tribal districts, including Mohmand.

In the past few years, most of the mountainous water springs bringing down clean potable water have dried up due to low rainfall.

Groundwater resources are also depleting due to low precipitation. In some areas, water level has fallen below 100 metres.

Sajid Khan, a resident of Ghallanai, told The Express Tribune that due water scarcity in Ghallanai a water tanker of 1,000 litres sells for Rs2,000 or more in summer.

In past, FATA Development Authority (FDA) conducted survey in various parts of tribal districts and chalked strategy for conservation of water resources, and replenishing groundwater level in these area, an FDA official told The Express Tribune when asked about how to overcome the water scarcity.

For this purpose small dams were made while programme for solarisation of tube-wells was also initiated.

Only in Mohmand tribal district, about nine small dams have been constructed or are under constructions by FATA Development Authority.

Alamzeb Safi, a business management graduate, told The Express Tribune that in far-flung mountainous areas women had to walk long distances to fetch water. Schoolgirls instead of attending classes carry canisters of water for the household, fulfilling a centuries old obligation of water bearer.

Last year, on the request of Senator Hilal Rehman, the federal government released funds for the solarisation of about 500 tube-wells in the district, Safi said.

The areas where solar-powered tube-wells were drawing water, at least the women folk have been relieved of hauling home cans from far off places.

Published in The Express Tribune, January 12th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1886381/1-solar-powered-tube-wells-small-dams-solving-water-scarcity/>

COMMITTEE SET UP TO SCALE DOWN NAI GAJ DAM COST

Khaleeq Kiani Updated January 11, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The federal and Sindh governments on Thursday disagreed on shared financing of the Rs46.5 billion Nai Gaj dam but formed a committee to further scale down its estimated cost.

A meeting of the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) constituted a committee comprising senior representatives of the government of Sindh and the federal ministries of planning and water resources to further rationalise the cost of the Nai Gaj dam and submit a report within three days. Federal Minister for Planning Khusro Bakhtyar presided over the meeting.

The forum had returned the dam project to the relevant agencies with the instructions to address technical issues, rationalise estimated cost and ensure a road map for its financing and get back for clearance within a week.

CDWP refers the Rs17.5bn Punjab police project to Ecneec for approval

Officials said the project cost was reduced from Rs47.73bn to Rs46.5bn but the CDWP was not satisfied with it. A representative of the Sindh government told the meeting that his province was already facing reduced fiscal flows from the centre than budgeted and would not take additional burden.

The meeting noted that the estimated cost was still on the higher side and required further rationalisation. The committee should come back with another cost revision and the matter of its financing would be taken up at an appropriate level.

The federal government has taken the stance that since the Nai Gaj Dam would overcome water shortages and irrigate an area of 28,000 acres in Sindh, its financing should be jointly met by the provincial and the federal governments.

Because of fiscal constraints, the federal government alone could not bear the entire cost of a project of purely provincial nature.

An official statement said the meeting formally referred the \$986 million Emergency Plan for Polio Eradication to the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec) for approval after removal of certain observations.

The meeting also recommended for Ecneec approval the Rs17.520bn Punjab police integrated command, control and communication project.

Officials said the CDWP meeting on January 3 had agreed in principle to refer the polio eradication project to Ecneec with certain conditions, including an identifiable and traceable execution plan and the update on the achievements of the project so far. The relevant agencies had submitted a report that led to clearance of the project.

The official statement quoted the planning minister as saying that polio eradication was a national priority so a fast monitoring mechanism should be made to ensure its smooth implementation. He instructed the federal and the provincial governments to work closely to eradicate the core reservoirs where sewerage water was contaminated with poliovirus.

The project for improvement of Punjab police involved an integrated command and control centre envisaging modernisation of infrastructure system and capabilities of police to proactively manage the security situation and to professionalise the response to incidents by moving towards mission-focused deployment of resources.

Under the current financial powers, the CDWP can itself approve projects costing no more than Rs3bn while the projects of higher costs are approved by Ecnec on technical grounds.

Published in Dawn, January 11th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1456848/committee-set-up-to-scale-down-nai-gaj-dam-cost>

‘IMPLEMENTATION’ BENCH ON DAMS FORMED

TERENCE J SIGAMONY | JAN 10TH, 2019 | ISLAMABAD

The Supreme Court Wednesday constituted an ‘implementation’ bench for supervision of progress on the dams’ construction. A special committee, comprising two directors of State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and an official of the Supreme Court, is formed to look after the affairs related to the Dam Fund and the investment of amount collected for dams’ project. The Chief Justice said money would not be withdrawn without permission of the committee.

The bench appointed two amici curiae (friends of the court) Makhdoom Ali Khan and Dr Pervaiz Hassan to assist regarding Dam funds utilisation. Chairman Federal Board of Revenue Jehanzeb Khan was directed to give proposal if instead of imposing withholding tax on mobile phone money recharge, any surcharge can be imposed on it.

They were directed to submit reports in the first week of February. They have been also directed to submit a monthly report before the implementation bench.

A five-member bench, headed by Chief Justice Mian Saqib Nisar heard the case related to the progress on dams’ construction.

The governor SBP stated that so far Rs 9.1 billion have been collected in Dam Funds. He said that Rs 1.7 billion was sent from abroad, adding the overseas Pakistanis from about 50 countries have sent money. He said the amount will be invested in treasury bills as there is no risk in it.

The chairman FBR informed the court that the collection on the mobile phone charge and the money received from the bottling and beverage companies shall go to the Consolidated Funds under the Article 78 of Constitution. He said there is a judgement of the Supreme Court in this regard and according to that, tax or cess could only be levied through the Parliament.

He said if the Parliament passes law that the financial raising from any head will be for the purpose of the Dams, it will go to the Consolidated Funds, adding that the government would then be bound to pay every money collected for dams construction to the Dam project.

The court noted that for Neelum-Jhelum project money is collected in the name of Neelum-Jhelum surcharge and goes to the Consolidated Funds and from there the money is used for the same project.

The Chief Justice proposed to exclude withholding tax on mobile phone money recharge and impose Dams surcharge on mobile phone cards, asking if the money can be utilised for the Dams fund. The chairman said for that purpose, the Parliament has to make a law.

Chairman Wapda, Lt Gen Muzammil Hussain (retd) said that they have decided to engage 40% local and 60% foreign consultants for the project. He complained that media is questioning local-foreign consultants ratio.

He said that a detailed financial plan for the Mohmand Dam has been prepared; the contractor mobilisation will start in March 2019, while all work on the Mohmand Dam will be completed by June 2024.

He said a Chinese company has assured to get some money from the Bank of China and for that the company has given letter of credit. The government would provide Rs 114 billion under the PSDP allocation, Rs 29 billion would be Wapda’s equity and Rs 41 billion would be taken from local banks. He said, “We need Rs 90 to 95 billion and out of the amount Rs 72 billion has come in the form of letter of credit by the Chinese company. He requested the court to direct the government to put dams on the priority list in the PSDP allocation. The Chief Justice asked from the attorney general to ask the government about the PSDP allocation for the dams. AGP Anwar Mansoor Khan replied that he has to seek instructions from the Ministry of Finance.

He said that 844 acres of land has been acquired for Mohmand Dam and Wapda from its own resources has disbursed Rs 684 million among the private people from whom the land is acquired.

The Chief Justice directed the chairman to submit periodic reports every month.

At the outset of proceedings, the AGP informed the court that according to PEMRA report, 23 TV channels held 76 talk shows regarding the dams’ construction and the Dams Funds. Most of the programmes were in favour of dams and promoted the cause.

“The media played a vital role in the campaign for dams’ funds and construction,” the Chief Justice said.

However, Justice Ijazul Ahsan said that there are some media persons who are maligning the Dams' Funds, adding; "Malicious programmes are run and there is a mechanism to target some personalities related to the construction of dams."

The bench criticised G News anchor Gharida Farooqi for 'maligning' the Wapda chairman and dams. The court accepting her apology asked her to be careful in future.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/01/20190110438400/>

USTA DONATES RS1.2M TO DIAMER-BHASHA AND MOHMAND DAM FUND

By Our Correspondent Published: January 10, 2019

University of Science and Technology Abbottabad (USTA) has donated Rs1.2 million for Diamer-Bhasha and Mohmand Dam Fund.

USTA Vice Chancellor Iftikhar Ahmad handed over the cheque to Chief Minister Mahmood Khan here at CM Secretariat on Wednesday.

CM Mahmood thanked the USTA vice chancellor, students, faculty and staff for making the donation, which shows the social responsibility and patriotism of the donors. He said water conservation is very necessary for meeting the future challenge of water scarcity. "Water is symbol of life; we should ensure conservation of water to save lives." He also appreciated Chief Justice Saqib Nisar and Prime Minister Imran Khan for launching a campaign for such good cause and said the whole nation will support this cause.

"Our aim is to save the present water resources and to explore new water resources and that will be our collective responsibility," he said.

Published in The Express Tribune, January 10th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1884967/1-usta-donates-rs1-2m-diamer-bhasha-mohmand-dam-fund/>

GROK DAM GETS GREEN SIGNAL AFTER LONG WAIT

By Mohammad Zafar Published: January 10, 2019

QUETTA: The government of Balochistan has removed all hurdles in the construction of the Grok Dam in the Kharan district and has announced that work on the new dam will start in the near future.

According to a government statement released on Wednesday, construction of the dam has delayed since 2009 and if built earlier it could have resolved the water crisis in the Rakshan Division.

The total cost of this project has been estimated at Rs 10 billion, out of which the federal government has pledged to fund 90 per cent and the provincial government will pay the remaining 10 per cent.

Last week, the provincial government and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a \$107 million project deal to improve irrigation infrastructure and water resource management in the province.

Balochistan Additional Chief Secretary for Planning and Development Sajjad Ahmed Bhutta and ADB Country Director for Pakistan Xiaohong Yang inked the accord.

Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Kamal Khan and provincial ministers Nawabzada Tariq Magsi and Zahoor Ahmed Buledi were also present.

"Agriculture remains the backbone of Balochistan's economy," said Yang. "This project will introduce efficient water usage system and help farmers improve productivity and income from farms."

Buledi said the agreement was part of the provincial government's long-term plan to counter droughts.

Moreover, in his tweet, the minister said, "Five districts, including Khuzdar, Kalat, Sikandarabad, Zhob and Sherani, will get benefits. Sara Thoi Dam will be built under this project. This initiative will irrigate 50,000 acres land."

The Balochistan Water Resources Development Sector Project would focus on improving irrigation infrastructure and water resource management in Zhob and Mula river basins. The two rivers irrigate vast areas of farmland in Balochistan.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1885028/1-grok-dam-gets-green-signal-long-wait/>

IRRIGATION DEPT AGREES TO GIVE CANAL WATER FOR BATAPUR TREATMENT PLANT

Khalid Hasnain Updated January 09, 2019

LAHORE: The irrigation department's willingness to provide 100 cusecs to the Water and Sanitation Agency (Wasa) from the Bambawala-Ravi-Bedian (BRB) Canal's Batapur point has finally paved the way for launching a mega water treatment project for clean drinking water.

The project was stalled since long as the authorities thought its cost could be reduced if Wasa was provided with water from the canal at Batapur rather than its point situated across the river Ravi, it is learnt.

"The irrigation department has now agreed to allow Wasa to get the canal water from the Batapur (GT Road) which will reduce the cost of laying of pipes for 10 to 12km. The department had earlier selected the canal's point that comes after crossing of the river Ravi but the experts went against it and suggested Batapur point," a senior Wasa official told Dawn on Tuesday.

The agency plans to set up a huge water treatment plant near the canal. The plant would make the canal water drinkable after treatment and provide it to the Lahorites through underground pipes. The objective of launching the project is to avoid fast depletion of the water table due to public and private sectors' tube wells, domestic pumps etc. In an effort to resolve the issue, Wasa had decided to launch the project and complete it on a fast track.

"The irrigation department would provide Wasa with 100 cusecs of canal water daily that would first be made drinkable through treatment and then supplied to the citizens. Initially, the areas in north-east Lahore will get the supply of this treated water," the official explained.

He said the provincial government would release funds for the project after its approval.

Talking about other mega projects, the official said Wasa had a plan to establish initially three wastewater treatment plants to treat wastewater (rain and sewer water) and discharge it into the Ravi.

"This scheme is also under the approval phase these days and we have already assured the Supreme Court to establish three wastewater plants at Mehmood Booti, Shadbagh and Shahdara. Three more such plants would be established at various city points at a later stage," he said.

HOUSING SCHEMES: The Lahore Development Authority (LDA) dismantled the entire infrastructure of seven illegally developed housing schemes. The schemes where the teams launched operation were Capital City, Gulshan-e-Mehrab, GC Garden, Gulshan-e-Haidar, Al-Wahab Garden, Satellite Town and Rachna Town, according to a spokesman.

ENCROACHMENTS: The City administration continued its anti-encroachment operation, demolishing illegal structures and sealing six shops for displaying goods outside their premises.

"The operation is going on indiscriminately without any pause and assistant commissioners are observing all roads and areas," said a spokesman for the city admin.

He said the anti-quackery drive was also in full swing and health officials sealed City Medical Centre at Garhi Shahu being run by a quack, Azeem Khan. "A case was also registered against the quack," he added.

APPROVED: The Provincial Development Working Party approved various development schemes, including Rehabilitation of 662 Dysfunctional Rural Water Supply Schemes (Revised), worth Rs8.195bn.

Published in Dawn, January 9th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1456355/irrigation-dept-agrees-to-give-canal-water-for-batapur-treatment-plant>

SC IRKED BY SLOW PROGRESS ON DAMS

RECORDER REPORT | JAN 8TH, 2019 | ISLAMABAD

The Supreme Court on Monday expressed its dismay over slow progress on construction of Diamer-Bhasha and Mohammad Dams. "The government's pace in relation to the construction of dams is very slow and seems to be unsatisfactory," noted the Chief Justice. He was offended for not being informed about the rescheduling of the Mohmand Dam groundbreaking ceremony.

A five-member bench, headed by Chief Justice Mian Saqib Nisar, hearing the progress of the dams, complained that the chairman Wapda has not contacted them about the development on dams' project. "We have made the commitment with people and not with Wapda or Ministry of Water," he said.

The bench directed the chairman Federal Bureau of Revenue to appear before the court and inform it whether withholding charges on mobile cards and the money generated through levying tax on water bottling and the beverage companies could be used as donations for Dams Fund.

The court said that disputes related to the dams should be brought only before the apex court. "We would not allow anyone to create hindrance in the construction of dams."

The chairman PEMRA was ordered to appear before the court regarding a malicious campaign against chairman Wapda. "We would see whether such campaigns are in accordance with the law of the land," the Chief Justice said. Attorney General for Pakistan Anwar Mansoor Khan earlier told the bench that a meeting was held on the construction of Babu Sir Top Tunnel. He said that mobilisation on Diamer-Bhasha Dam will start in June 2019 and the conclusion date is September 2027. He said that Rs 1 billion per kilometre will be spent on the Babu Sir Tunnel.

Chairman Wapda Lt Gen Muzammil Hussain (ret'd) briefed the bench about the steps taken right from the concept of establishing the dams, which also include the financial aspects and the timeframe for their completion. The Chief Justice directed him to file the assertions made in the verbal presentation in the form of an undertaking.

The work on Mohammad Dam project will start in mid-March 2019 and it will be completed in September 2023. It will cost Rs 310 billion. He said the federal government has vowed to provide Rs 17 billion every year over the next six years, while 63% funds would be arranged through Wapda equity. "We have also planned to issue Sukuk and other bonds."

The Chief Justice questioned what would be the price of bonds and when and how they would be issued. The Chief Justice also questioned about the foreign guarantee.

Justice Ijazul Ahsan proposed that Wapda should associate financial experts that can talk to banks and international donors for arranging money. Ideally, the consultant would be the bank, he said.

Lt Gen Muzammil (ret'd) said that the only issue they are facing is malicious and insidious campaign against them launched on the TV and print media. He said that no contract of dams' project has been given on a single bidding.

The bench told him that there is no need to be frightened by any media campaign and propaganda. The Chief Justice said that the dams' related issues will be brought before the Supreme Court as they wanted to monitor this project.

Justice Ijaz said when these issues would come before them only then will they see them.

Governor State Bank of Pakistan Tariq Bajwa said that within Pakistan bank charges on the donations for the Dams funds have been abolished, but the SBP can't abolish the charges of foreign banks for people who are abroad and send money through those banks.

The Chief Justice said they are considering withdrawing the withholding tax on the mobile phone cards and load charging, as it would generate Rs 3 billion per month and Rs 36 billion a year. He said that it is estimated that Rs 10 billion could also be generated through levying tax on bottling and beverage companies.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/01/20190108437878/>

WORK ON MEGA DAMS TO START THIS YEAR, SC TOLD

By Our Correspondent Published: January 8, 2019

ISLAMABAD.: A larger bench of the Supreme Court, headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Mian Saqib Nisar, was informed on Monday that the construction of the Mohmand Dam would begin by end of the this year and it would complete by 2027 at a cost of Rs1,450 billion.

Responding to a query from the CJP, the Attorney General for Pakistan (AGP) Anwar Mansoor Khan informed the court that mobilisation for Diamer-Bhasha Dam will start from June this year and the work will begin in December.

"Its first part will complete in April 2022 and the project will complete in 2027."

Earlier, the CJP asked what the government has done for the dams and how much funds it has collected for them. "Has the government done lip service only? Is the government serious in the construction of the dams? We want the policy of the government," he noted.

The CJP also asked if the prime minister had set up any coordination committee on the issue. The court wants to know when the construction will start and when it will complete, he added.

He said the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) had not appeared in the court since long and thinks that it is above all. Wapda chairman appeared before the court and said Wapda is being maligned.

“Allegations are being levelled about the contract of Mohmand dam and a campaign is being run apparently to cause delay in the construction,” he said. The CJP said propaganda is being done against dams in the name of freedom of expression.

“Anyone who feels uncomfortable should come to court and the court will review it,” he said.

Wapda chairman said Rs309 billion will be required for Mohmand dam. The government will provide Rs14 billion in six years. Wapda will generate 63 per cent resources on its own and will issue bonds for fund raising.

He said the government will release Rs17 billion in two weeks. A company will be made for the construction of Diamer-Bhasha dam. “The work on Mohmand dam will start next week,” he added.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1883591/1-work-mega-dams-start-year-sc-told/>

RO PLANT WORKERS IN THAR PROTEST FOR SALARIES

By Our Correspondent Published: January 8, 2019

HYDERABAD: The operators of the reverse osmosis (RO) plants in the drought-hit Thar district locked the RO plants on Monday and staged a protest in Mithi taluka demanding payment of their salaries. Led by Babu Mehranpoto, Irfan Bajeer, Mohan Meghwadh and others, the protesters claimed that the Pak Oasis Company, outside whose office they held the demonstration, has not paid them salaries for the last five months.

Their token sit-in blocked the roads connecting parts of Thar with Badin and Umerkot districts. “In this drought situation our families have been forced to starve,” claimed Meghwadh, while talking to the local media. The protesters said that they have locked the RO plants in protest as a last resort as repeated assurance of the authorities have not been fulfilled. Bajeer warned that if their salaries were not released they may continue the strike indefinitely.

The protesters dispersed later as neither the district administration nor the company approached them for negotiations. According to a report compiled by the Supreme Court-mandated Water Commission, there are some 589 RO plants scattered in the rural towns and villages of the desert district. Protests have sporadically been held over the last three months. The district has been dealing with the drought. The district administration claims more than 250,000 families have been given 50 kilogrammes of wheat bags for free.

Published in The Express Tribune, January 8th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1883516/1-ro-plant-workers-thar-protest-salaries/>

DESILTING OF CANALS APACE

By Our Staff Reporter | 1/7/2019 12:00:00 AM

LAHORE: The Punjab irrigation department has stashed desilting perennial canals of the Mangla Command canals in the province but repons pouring in from different places indicated on Sunday that the activity had not been staned. Department spokesman Asad Rabbani said the desilting was continuing in phases. It was being conducted in canals whose beds had been dried.

https://epaper.dawn.com/DetailImage.php?StoryImage=07_01_2019_002_004

K-P PLANS RS9B PROJECT TO CONSERVE WATER

By APP Published: January 7, 2019

PESHAWAR: In a bid to meet the growing food needs of the province and the scarce water resources available, the provincial government is mulling an Rs9 billion plan to conserve water and soil in the province over the next five years while using the maximum cultivable area to produce wheat, rice and others crops besides vegetables and fruits. This was disclosed by the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) Agriculture and Livestock Minister Mohibullah Khan who noted that the conservation of water and soil, especially in areas which receive the most rain, will be prioritised by the government for development.

The ultimate aim, Mohibullah stated, was to strengthen these sectors to make the province self-sufficient in wheat, rice and other agriculture production.

Speaking to APP, he said that all arid and semi-arid areas of the province, apart from waterlogged areas, would be included in this mega project.

He said that the K-P government has chalked out a comprehensive plan for the pavement of 20,000 watercourses over the next five years to provide uninterrupted water supply to farmers, especially at the tail-end in the province.

In the first 100-days of the provincial government, he said that the incumbent Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government had devised an inclusive strategy to pave around 12,000 to 20,000 watercourses in the province by 2023. This, he hoped, would address the problem of water wastage while irrigating lands.

This project, he said, would cost an estimated Rs15 billion to complete.

Once complete, however, it would only constitute a fourth of all the 76,000 watercourses in the province.

Mohibullah said that agriculture remains the economic backbone of the country with as many as 85 per cent of the population and industries relying directly or indirectly on the agriculture sector.

Over the next five years, the agriculture minister said that their prime focus would be on strengthening agriculture research and extension services, livestock animals health disease control, breeding and genetic resource conservation programmes, veterinary and agriculture education, human resource development, provision of special incentives in terms of seeds and fertilisers to farmers.

He said that they have already launched a conservation programme to save the rare breed of Azakheli buffaloes in the Malakand division keeping in view the high potential of its milk's production and meat.

Mainly found in Khwazakhella and the Madyan areas of Swat, the population of these buffaloes had witnessed a fall in the aftermath of the devastation wrought by the militancy in Swat from 2008-2009 and then by the 2010 floods.

Mohibullah further said that the department is also working on a plan to conserve and protect the endangered sheep of Damani in Dera Ismail Khan, the Waziri sheep and the Saanen goat.

K-P, he said, was blessed with both cold and warm water resources and offers immense opportunities for fish farming in the 6,100 kilometre-long rivers and streams and some 6,400 hectares of natural lakes and 54,600 hectares of dams and reservoirs.

To tap this water resource potential, the livestock and fisheries minister said that they will set up trout villages in the Malakand and Hazara divisions given their climatic conditions for conservation and breeding of this precious aquatic species.

Before the PTI took over, he claimed, there were only 15 fish farms which reared the coveted trout fish. Over the past five years when PTI ruled K-P, he said that this number had increased to 200.

Over the course of their incumbent government, he said that they plan to establish a further 200 model fish farms and hatcheries to boost fish farming and its production.

Mohibullah said that the government was also cognizant of the single greatest threat to river life, the dumping of raw sewerage into watercourses, canals and rivers. In this regard, he said that they were working on bringing a holistic approach, especially one which sees the cooperation of the community to curb this practice.

The minister said that the agriculture department's scientists had prepared 19 new seed varieties for different crops, including fruits and vegetables, which had been approved by the provincial seeds council. These seeds, he said, would facilitate farmers apart from enhancing their per-acre-yield and effectively combat various diseases.

Moreover, he said that special awareness and educational programmes for farmers were being launched through a myriad of 'field days', seminars, workshops to inform farmers about new seeds, changing climatic conditions and others issues by agri experts. The government is also employing the use of short messaging systems (SMS) on regular basis to get the word out to farmers.

The Minister urged farmers, horticulturists and fruits growers to take full advantage of these facilities and adopt the latest technologies to achieve autarky in food.

Published in The Express Tribune, January 7th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1882943/1-k-p-plans-rs9b-project-conserve-water/>

BALUCHISTAN CABINET COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS SCALING UP OF 100-DAM PROJECT TO 500

Shoaib Ur Rehman January 7, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Baluchistan cabinet committee recommended to the ministry of planning, development and reform to increase the number of small dams to be constructed in the province from current 100 dams to 500 dams.

According to the provincial government spokesperson, the committee opined, "Baluchistan neither has canal system nor underground resources of water, therefore the number of small dams across the province must be increased."

The committee also recommended that the ministry should immediately release the required Rs 1200 million for building the remaining small dams of the 100 small dams project being developed, he said.

He said the meeting was informed that the 100 dam project in Balochistan consisted of five packages whereas in the first package 20 dams had already been completed at a cost of Rs 2.4 billion, while in the second package, 22 out of 26 dams had been completed at a cost of Rs 4.4 billion.

“In the third package, 20 more dams are scheduled to be completed by 2020 at a cost of Rs 7.6 billion. In the fourth and fifth packages, 23 and 11 dams will be built by 2026,” he added.

The meeting was further informed that total area of 66 dams of three packages was 2,154 million acres whereas total storage capacity of these dams was around 2467 million acre feet, he said.

<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/01/07/463645/balochistan-cabinet-committee-recommends-scaling-up-of-100-dam-project-to-500/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM DEC 31st TO JAN 6th 2019

SAB ALARMED OVER WATER SHORTAGE

The Newspaper's Staff Correspondent January 06, 2019

HYDERABAD: Sindh Abadgar Board has criticised water shortage during Rabi season which has hit standing crops and said though annual closure of barrages is to start on Jan 6 there has been no water flows in canals and distributaries since Dec 20.

The board which met here on Saturday with its president Abdul Majeed Nizamani in the chair regretted supply of low voltage to tube-wells, which had rendered them unable to pump out underground water.

The meeting urged Nepra to take notice of the issue and act against those responsible for the nuisance. Despite regular annual closures of barrages, desilting of canals did not take place and millions of rupees allocated for the purpose were stomached by corrupt officers, it said.

The meeting condemned water theft through pipes by influential landowners in collusion with irrigation department employees and demanded removal of all illegal pipes.

The meeting made an offer to the department to participate in the desilting process and called for repairing all regulators of canals and restoring inspection paths along irrigation channels.

The meeting demanded installation of telemetry system in the irrigation network on the pattern of Punjab to ensure judicious distribution of water.

The meeting was attended by Mehmood Nawaz Shah, Dr Bashir Nizamani, Zain Shah, Imran Bozdar and others.

Published in Dawn, January 6th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1455671/sab-alarmed-over-water-shortage>

DIVERT DAM FUND COLLECTIONS TO SOLVE BALOCHISTAN'S WATER CRISIS, DEMANDS SENATE BODY

Khaleeq Kiani Updated January 04, 2019

ISLAMABAD: A Senate Panel on Thursday demanded Rs9 billion collected for construction of multi-billion dollar Diamer-Bhasha and Mohmand dams to be diverted for development of a series of small dams in Balochistan to support agriculture and livestock sectors and create job opportunities.

A meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Planning, Development and Reforms presided over by Senator Agha Shahzaib Durrani also asked the federal government to increase the number of small and medium dams in Balochistan from 100 to 500.

The senators from Balochistan pleaded that Diamer-Bhasha dam worth over Rs1.4 trillion and Rs310bn Mohmand dam could not be built with just Rs7-8 billion collected through fund-raising campaigns but the amount could be used to construct many small and medium capacity dams in Balochistan and address its water challenges to a great extent.

“You cannot build a large dam with Rs7-8bn donated by the people but it can make a big contribution towards addressing water challenges in Balochistan”, said Senator Usman Kakar. Other senators from the province supported his demand and asked the Planning Commission to take up the matter at the relevant forums.

It was explained that about Rs9.2bn had so far been collected through donations on the fund raising campaigns of the Chief Justice of Pakistan Saqib Nisar and Prime Minister Imran Khan.

The meeting was informed that the construction of 100 small dams in Balochistan involved five packages. In the first package (2008-2013) 20 dams were completed at a cost of Rs2.4bn, while in the second package (2013-18), 22 out of 26 dams have been completed at a cost of Rs4.4bn whereas in the third package 20 more dams are scheduled to be completed by 2020 at a cost of Rs7.6bn. In the fourth and fifth packages, 23 and 11 dams respectively, would be built by 2026.

The meeting was further informed that total irrigated area of 66 dams — built under the first three packages — was 2,154 million acres whereas total storage capacity of these dams was around 2,467m acre feet.

The committee was informed that the release of funds for the small dams was very slow. The committee asked the planning ministry to consider increasing the number of small dams in Balochistan from current 100 dams to 500 dams in five years.

Senator Mir Kabeer said that there used to be 309 Karaizes — an indigenous method of irrigation — in Balochistan but now only one was functional. He said that the solution of Balochistan water crises lied in the construction of small and medium size dams.

Agha Shahzaib Durrani said Balochistan neither had canal system nor underground resources of water, therefore, the number of small dams across the province must be increased. The committee also recommended the planning ministry to immediately release the required Rs1.2bn for building the remaining of the 100 small dams' project.

The committee referred an inquiry report of the Ministry of Planning regarding dysfunctional desalination plant at Gwadar to National Accountability Bureau for further inquiry. The report was prepared by the planning ministry on recommendation of the senate committee.

The meeting was informed that the ministry had dispatched a team to Gwadar to ascertain the current status of desalination plant and to inquire the concerned stakeholders responsible for building and maintaining the plant. The report said the plant was totally shut down and not filtering a single drop of water.

Senator Kauda Babar said billions were spent on the project but due to the negligence of concerned authorities, the plant could not get functional. He said the local people had to spend thousands of rupees daily for purchasing water from tankers for their daily use. He deplored that authorities were talking about developing Gwadar into an international business hub but basic facilities were still missing there.

Senator Ahmad Khan said Descon Engineering was nominated by the federal government for Rs309bn Mohmand Hydro project even though it was disqualified by the government of Baluchistan for a small dam project called Garuk Dam located in Kharan with estimated cost of only Rs10bn.

An official of the Balochistan government, however, explained that it was a joint venture of National Logistic Cell and Descon and the later was disqualified because of the former. Under Public Procurement Regulatory Authority rules, if one company in joint venture is disqualified it means both will stand disqualified. Since the case is sub judice, therefore, it cannot be discussed in detail, he added.

Published in Dawn, January 4th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1455336>

BALOCHISTAN GOVT, ADB SIGN \$107M AGREEMENT

By Mohammad Zafar Published: January 6, 2019

QUETTA : The Balochistan government and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Saturday signed a \$107 million project to improve irrigation infrastructure and water resource management in the province.

Balochistan Additional Chief Secretary for Planning and Development Sajjad Ahmed Bhutta and ADB Country Director for Pakistan Xiaohong Yang inked the accord.

Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Kamal Khan and provincial ministers Nawabzada Tariq Magsi and Zahoor Ahmed Buledi were present.

“Agriculture remains the backbone of Balochistan’s economy,” said Yang. “This project will introduce efficient water usage system and help farmers improve productivity and farm income.”

Buledi said the agreement was part of the provincial government’s long-term plan to counter droughts in the province. Moreover, in his tweet, the minister said, “Five districts, including Khuzdar, Kalat, Sikandarabad, Zhob and Sherani, will get benefits. Sara Thoi Dam will be built under this project. This initiative will irrigate 50,000 acres land.”

The Balochistan Water Resources Development Sector Project would focus on improving irrigation infrastructure and water resource management in Zhob and Mula river basins. The two rivers irrigate vast areas of farmland in Balochistan.

Salient features of the project are; building watershed protection, dam and command area able to hold 36 million cubic metres of water; 276 kilometres of irrigation channels and drainage canals; and facilities that will make it easier for people, especially women, to access water for domestic use.

In total, about 16,592 hectares (ha) of land will be added or improved for irrigation.

The project will protect watersheds through extensive land and water conservation efforts, including planting trees on 4,145 ha of barren land to combat soil erosion.

Its output includes pilot testing of technologies like solar-powered drip irrigation systems on 130 ha of agricultural land, improving crop yields and water usage on 160 fruit and vegetable farms, and demonstrating high-value agriculture development.

“The project will also establish a water resources information system that will use high-level technology such as satellite and remote sensing to conduct river basin modelling and identify degraded land for rehabilitation,” said Yang. The ADB will also administer two grants for the project, including \$3 million from the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction and \$2 million from the High-Level Technology Fund.

In addition, a \$2 million technical assistance will help Balochistan’s provincial government improve its institutional capacity to address the risks and potential impact of climate change in the agriculture sector, as well as build a climate-resilient and sustainable water resources management mechanism in the province.

Agriculture accounts for almost two-third of Balochistan’s economic output and employs 60 per cent of the province’s 13 million population, but frequent drought and poor water management has put the industry, and those who rely on it, at risk. Poverty rate in the province is almost double the national average.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1882439/1-balochistan-govt-adb-sign-107m-agreement/>

FARMERS DECRY WATER SHORTAGE

APP January 6, 2019

HYDERABAD: The Sindh Abadgar Board (SAB) has expressed grave concern over the harmful effect of water shortage on the winter crops.

Abdul Majeed Nizamani, president of SAB, said there exists a shortfall of canal supplied water on one hand and power outages and low voltage leaves tube wells redundant on the other.

Nizamani, at a meeting, said wheat crop would particularly be affected by the shortage. Hyderabad Electric Supply Company is carrying out unnecessary power outages. He asked the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority to take notice of frequent disruption of the power supply to the tube wells.

Though the canals are annually closed for repair and maintenance but no proper desilting and repair are done, which results in water loss and shortage of water in the tail-end areas.

The meeting demanded of the Sindh government to rehabilitate the gates of the regulators of canals and distributaries across the province and also to restore the inspection paths along the canals.

Farmers also called for installation of telemetry system, which has been successfully done in the Punjab to ensure transparent and fair distribution of water.

The SAB said the trees planted on the inspection path have mostly been chopped off during the last few decades and demanded tree plantation on the path.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/415162-farmers-decry-water-shortage>

USE OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY URGED TO STORE FLOODWATER

Munawar Hasan January 6, 2019

LAHORE: Pakistan should use modern technology to store floodwater in plains to meet requirements of irrigation and drinking and recharge groundwater, an expert said.

Khalid Jafri, a California-based engineer of Pakistani origin termed water shortage as one of the biggest challenges facing the country.

“It is an existential threat for the country,” Jafri said. “We need to expedite work on water storing dams with a view to increasing availability of water for drinking, irrigation and other purposes.”

Jafri worked with the state of California, helping it with water preservation by lining the canals and building reservoirs that hold water during the rainy season. He was also involved in California’s energy projects like wind, solar and thermal energy.

He is a member of the Farm Bureau of California and has an access to all agriculture related research and development in universities and research facilities.

“Special measures should be taken on urgent basis for reviving dwindling water table,” he said. “The role of apex judiciary and present government is in right direction and should be followed in letter and spirit.”

Jafri said Pakistan should harness river water abundantly available during rainy season while storing it in specially-built small reservoirs along rivers in plains.

Such reservoirs having storage capacity of about 50,000 acres feet of floodwater, drawn from main river through gravity based flows, can irrigate crops in summer season and provide nearby population with drinking water round-the-year besides recharging groundwater.

“We need to build scores of these reservoirs on both sides of Indus, Jhelum and Chenab rivers,” the engineer said. “The cost of building these reservoirs are negligible especially if compared with its benefits.”

Jafri said the country should construct 100 such reservoirs along rivers for storing floodwater. Through management techniques, silt can be minimised in these reservoirs while accumulated silt can be removed with the help of latest affordable technology.

“These reservoirs can lead to gradually increase water storage capacity in plains where water requirement used to touch peaks in summer season,” he added. “Provincial governments can start work on these water bodies in order to utilise their respective floodwater share under 1991 Water Apportionment Accord.”

The expert floated an idea of drilling holes in lakes of barrages for directly injecting water into aquifer. “Latest technology enables us to recharge water by digging specially designed wells in water bodies that would substantially contribute in recharging groundwater,” he said. “Unfortunately, nothing concrete is being done to monitor groundwater that is depleting at fast pace.”

Jafri’s brothers, all Aitchisonians of 50s and 60s offer their services and experience in different fields of engineering and technology for the betterment of the country’s future. By way of background, all four brothers graduated from University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore. Amjad is a civil engineer, Sajid is mechanical, Jafri electrical, and Vajid civil/environmental.

Jafri owns and operates more than 200 acres of agriculture farmland in California. In 1995, the then president of Pakistan Farooq Leghari visited the farms and asked him to bring high-yielding seeds for field crops and orchards to Pakistan.

In line with the request, 100 tons each of high-yielding wheat and potato seeds were shipped to Pakistan from California. Also 20,000 high-yielding sugarcane plants were shipped from New Orleans. All expenses were borne by Jafri brothers to help the agriculture-based economy.

Jafri said he and his brothers look forward to help Pakistan solve the challenges faced by the country, such as high rate of unemployment, construction of low cost houses, water shortage, lack of clean drinking water, shortage of energy, primary and middle school education for all children, women empowerment education in villages, basic health facilities at the village level, public health facilities, including roads, sewage system, water, electricity and gas in villages.

“We can help farmers get higher yields from their crops and get the best price in the market for their crops.”

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/415166-use-of-modern-technology-urged-to-store-floodwater>

ADB PROVIDES \$107 MILLION TO BALOCHISTAN FOR IRRIGATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Our Correspondent January 6, 2019

KARACHI: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Saturday agreed to disburse \$107 million in loan and grants to help Balochistan upgrade its irrigation infrastructure.

Manila-based lender and provincial government signed the project agreement of a \$107 million loan and grants to improve irrigation infrastructure and water resource management in the country's largest yet economically-poor province.

Chief Minister of Balochistan Jam Kamal Khan witnessed the signing of the project agreement by Additional Chief Secretary for Development Sajjad Ahmed Bhutta and ADB Country Director for Pakistan Xiaohong Yang in Quetta. "Agriculture remains the backbone of Balochistan's economy," a statement quoted Yang as saying.

"This project will introduce efficient water usage systems and practices to help farmers improve productivity and farm incomes."

The Balochistan water resources development sector project will focus on improving irrigation infrastructure and water resource management in the Zhob and Mula river basins.

The two rivers irrigate vast areas of farm land in the province.

Agriculture accounts for almost two-thirds of the province's economic output and employs 60 percent of its 13 million population, but frequent drought and poor water management has put the industry, and those who rely on it, at risk. Poverty rates in the province almost double the national average.

Among the infrastructure that will be upgraded or built for the project are watershed protection, dam and command area able to hold 36 million cubic meters of water; 276 kilometers of irrigation channels and drainage canals; and facilities that will make it easier for people, especially women, to access water for domestic use. In total, about 16,592 hectares of land will be added or improved for irrigation.

The project will protect watersheds through extensive land and water conservation efforts, including planting trees on 4,145 hectares of barren land to combat soil erosion. Its output includes pilot testing of technologies like solar-powered drip irrigation systems on 130 hectares of agricultural land, improving crop yields and water usage on 160 fruit and vegetable farms, and demonstrating high-value agriculture development.

"The project will also establish a water resources information system that will use high-level technology such as satellite and remote sensing to conduct river basin modeling and identify degraded land for rehabilitation," Yang said. ADB will also administer two grants for the project, including \$3 million from the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction and \$2 million from the high-level technology fund.

In addition, a \$2 million technical assistance will help the provincial government improve its institutional capacity to address the risks and potential impact of climate change in the agriculture sector, as well as build a climate-resilient and sustainable water resources management mechanism in the province.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/415147-adb-provides-107-million-to-balochistan-for-irrigation-infrastructure>

CJP URGED TO DIVERT DAM FUND TO BALOCHISTAN

By Our Correspondent Published: January 4, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Senator Usman Kakar has said that the donations received in the Diamer-Bhasha and Mohmand Dam Fund "are not enough" to construct the big reservoirs; therefore the chief justice of Pakistan should divert the funds for the construction of small dams in Balochistan.

He was speaking at a meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Planning on Thursday. "Around Rs1,500 billion is needed for Bhasha Dam," the senator said and called upon CJP Saqib Nisar to render the collected Rs7-8 billion in the dams fund to Balochistan, so that the people can be provided clean drinking water.

Meanwhile, the committee referred the inquiry report of the Ministry of Planning regarding Rs890 million desalination plant in Gwadar to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) for further inquiry. The report was prepared on the recommendations of the committee.

Senator Agha Shahzaib Durrani, who chaired the meeting, was informed that the ministry had dispatched a team comprising senior officials to Gwadar to personally witness the status of desalination plant and to inquire the stakeholders responsible for building and maintaining the plant.

The report said the plant was shut down and not filtering a single drop of water. According to the report, there was a fault in the design of the plant that's why it was closed down after running for a few days.

Senator Kauda Babar said billions of rupees were spent on the project but due to the negligence of authorities concerned, the plant could not become functional. He said the local people had to spend thousands of rupees daily for purchasing water from tankers for their daily use.

The Balochistan Development Authority chairman said the plant was installed in April 2016 and it remained functional for over a month and produced 700,000 gallons of water per day. However, he said that due to high ratio of silt in the intake water, the plant broke down.

Meanwhile, the committee recommended that the planning ministry should consider increasing the number of small dams in Balochistan from current 100 to 500.

“Balochistan neither has canal system nor underground resources of water; therefore the number of small dams across the province must be increased,” Agha Shahzaib Durrani said.

The committee also recommended that the ministry should immediately release the required Rs1,200 million for building the remaining small dams of the 100 small dams project. The meeting was informed that the 100 dam project in Balochistan consisted of five packages.

In the first package 20 dams had already been completed at a cost of Rs2.4 billion, while in the second package, 22 out of 26 dams had been completed at a cost of Rs4.4 billion whereas in the third package 20 more dams are scheduled to be completed by 2020 at a cost of Rs7.6 billion. In the fourth and fifth packages, 23 and 11 dams would be built by 2026.

The meeting was further informed that total area of 66 dams of three packages was 2,154 million acres whereas total storage capacity of these dams was around 2467 million acre feet.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1881162/1-cjp-urged-divert-dam-fund-balochistan/>

GOVT DEFENDS AWARD OF MOHMAND DAM CONTRACT

Khaleeq Kiani Updated January 03, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Defending the contract of the Rs309 billion Mohmand dam awarded to a Descon-led consortium on a single bid basis, the government on Wednesday announced rescheduling the groundbreaking of the project for Jan 13. Speaking at a news conference marred by boycott by media persons, Minister for Water Resources Faisal Vawda said the government was going to launch the project on Jan 13 that was earlier scheduled for the first week of this month. He said the controversies being generated around the project on the agenda of international powers by linking it with Descon Engineering and Adviser to the Prime Minister on Commerce Abdul Razak Dawood were totally incorrect. The minister said the country had not been able to build a dam over the past 50-60 years because some people always created problems, adding that the systems put in place by the government did not allow a minister or its subordinate institution to award contracts.

He said he was accountable to the prime minister and the Supreme Court on the legal side but none else and did not like to comment on some social media or newspaper reports. He said Mr Dawood had nothing to do with the contract, nor could he influence the bidding process; he had already resigned from the company and the bidding for the project was held on July 18 even before the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf came to power.

Vawda says PM's aide Razak Dawood has no link with Descon-led consortium that got contract

Mr Vawda said Descon had only 30 per cent shares in the consortium, adding that bids were evaluated by technical experts comprising Nespak, an Australian company and another foreign firm and the qualified bidder had secured the contract.

“We are independent in this country. The prime minister is independent, the ministry is independent, but even Wapda was not authorised to award a contract,” he said. He said the government would launch and complete the project before the deadline unlike the previous governments that held repeated inaugurations.

Mr Vawda said he was not answerable to an accused or a convict and would not let him to use the Public Accounts Committee for political point scoring. Without naming PAC chairman Shahbaz Sharif, the minister said he was not anyone's servant or slave to appear before the committee on short notice issued by an accused coming from jail. He said rules required a 15- or 20-day advance notice, but it was unfair to call a minister or a ministry on Monday for a meeting on Tuesday.

The media persons boycotted the presser when he attacked Dawn for asking a question he did not like. He was asked his party (PTI) had been critical of LNG terminal contracts on a single bid basis awarded during the term of the previous government, then how could the same be justified during the PTI government.

“I could have expected such a question from Dawn only. I am not responsible for something that happened before my birth. My government was not in power when the bidding took place,” he said, adding: “If you find a controversy or want to concoct one, then this is open. You can investigate this as you like it. Because you are my elder I am

answering this question, but if this was someone else from your organisation, I would have not answered and also set aside the mic.”

The journalists protested the aggressive tone and choice of words by the minister and boycotted the presser without asking a second question.

Earlier, Wapda Chairman retired Gen Muzzamil Hussain said at a separate press conference that it was just a coincidence that the single bidder's bid price was almost the same as estimated by the government and insisted there was no conflict of interest in the award of the contract to a company having links with a sitting cabinet member. He disagreed when asked it appeared the bidding process was designed for the successful bidder as the estimated cost and bid price was almost the same as Rs309bn. He said the reason behind the disqualification of the second bidder comprising Frontier Works Organisation, China Power and Andritz Hydro was that the FWO had completed a Rs10bn project in the past and was taking 60pc shares in the consortium.

On the other hand, Mr Hussain added, Descon had completed relatively bigger projects and had 30pc shares in the consortium for Mohmand dam, while the remaining 70pc had been allocated to China Gezhouba and Voith Hydro. He said that preparations for the construction of the dam would be finalised within the next two weeks as all legal, financial and technical impediments had been overcome.

Mr Hussain agreed that Descon Engineering was related to Razak Dawood, but said this had nothing to do with the bidding conducted by Wapda. He said there was also no truth in aspersions that he or Wapda faced pressures on the issue of groundbreaking of the project.

Meanwhile, Mr Dawood explained in a statement that he had founded and headed Descon Engineering Limited like several other business ventures but disclosed all his business associations in writing to the prime minister and resigned from these positions before joining the government to ensure transparency and avoid conflict of interest.

“The disclosure had also identified the Mohmand dam project for which Descon had already bid”, but the prime minister felt the pending project should not prevent him from joining the cabinet, the adviser said.

“On joining the cabinet, the adviser has totally distanced himself from his former business interests and has scrupulously observed and implemented all requirements of transparency and avoidance of conflict of interest. There has been no departure whatsoever from this ethic,” he said.

Mr Dawood said the bids for Mohmand dam construction were floated by Wapda on Nov 23, 2017 in accordance with international competitive bid (ICB) pre-qualification, single stage and two-envelope procedures. Descon submitted its bid in joint venture with China Gezhouba Group Company (CGGC) with 30pc participating interest on June 26, 2018.

As per rules, technically qualified bidders are entitled for the financial bid opening and CGGC- Descon JV was the qualified bidder. He said the bids arranged by Wapda were processed as fully compliant with national and internationally accepted ICB procedures.

Published in Dawn, January 3rd, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1455167/govt-defends-award-of-mohmand-dam-contract>

BALUCHISTAN'S WATER SECTOR OUTLAY SLASHED BY 48 BILLION

NAVEED BUTT | JAN 3RD, 2019 | ISLAMABAD

Imran Khan administration has reduced the outlay for the water sector of Balochistan by Rs 48 billion in the five-year plan (2018-23) compared to what was prepared by the previous administration – from the original proposed amount of Rs 100 billion to Rs 52 billion, documents available with this correspondent reveal.

Former Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Sartaj Aziz told Business Recorder that the reduction was made in all likelihood after a careful review of the outlay in the five year plan; and the expected limitation on expenditure by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as and when the government procures the bail-out package.

However allocation for water projects for other provinces was unchanged: Punjab Rs 268 billion, Sindh Rs 225 billion and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rs 150 billion.

The PTI government reduced the proposed amount from Rs 1,304.617 billion to 1,256.617 billion (federal govt Rs 561.617 billion and provincial govts Rs 695 billion) in the five year plan.

Documents of the five year development plan (original and revised), available with Business Recorder, reveal an allocation of Rs 1,256.617 for the construction of large and small dams and other water development projects with the

help of private investment during the next five years – Rs 561.617 billion from the federal government and Rs 695 billion from provincial governments.

Projects would be prepared and offered for private investment through mechanisms such as Build Operate and Transfer (BOT), Build Own Operate (BOO) and Build Own Operate and Transfer (BOOT). Direct investment in the form of loans as well as equity will be supported and establishment of Special Purpose Vehicles would be encouraged to attract financing through bonds/debentures.

Water shortage has emerged as an extremely serious issue for the country, and as per the five year plan the government will make available additional funds with support from multilateral banks and other international development agencies, as well as bilateral donors. Levying additional charges on consumers to fund capital investment on the pattern of the Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower project will be replicated for other projects. Innovative financing options will be explored for the Diamer-Bhasha Dam and other similar projects. Public-private sector partnership will be pursued as the preferred mode of financing.

According to the National Finance Commission (NFC) award, provinces are receiving a higher share from the divisible pool therefore provincial governments would be required to provide financing for irrigation projects through Annual Development Programme (ADP). The private sector may take technology based commercial projects such as high efficiency irrigation. The farmers would take over rehabilitation of water courses.

The Plan envisages Rs 561.62 billion for major on-going and future interventions in water resources development of federal program for the next five years including Rs 223.68 billion for Bhasha Dam, Rs 108.798 billion for medium/small dams, Rs 64.75 billion for canals, Rs 49.656 billion for drainage system, Rs 48.962 billion for irrigation system improvement, Rs 14.2 billion for flood protection program, Rs 40.080 billion for new initiative (canals and research) and Rs 13 billion for miscellaneous scheme.

The documents further revealed that Punjab province would be required to finance Rs 268 billion to meet major water sector's challenges including: (i) integrated water resources management through IWRM framework and operation and up-keep of the irrigation system of the province; (ii) sustainable management of water resources and optimal use of water resources through equitable distribution of irrigation water supplies; (iii) flood management and promoting the participation beneficiaries in the management of irrigation and drainage system; and (iv) climate change and transboundary water issues.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would contribute Rs 150 billion for water strategies of water management and major water sector's challenges including: (i) irrigation system sustainability, (ii) management of flood water and harnessing of hill torrents, (iii) ground water regulation and water pricing, (iv) flood drought management, (v) public private partnership and (vi) institutional strengthening and capacity building.

Sindh would provide Rs 225 billion to overcome the water sector's challenges including: (i) tackling water scarcity issue through both augmentation and conservation i.e. by construction medium and large dams, making more efficient and sustainable use of water and existing irrigated areas, (ii) climate change and inter-provincial issues, (iii) control the impact of water logging, salinity and floods hazards, and (iv) managing (in terms of quantity) drainage, municipal and industrial effluent in an environmentally safe manner.

According to the documents, Balochistan would finance Rs 52 billion for (i) tackling water scarcity issues through both augmentation and conservation i.e. by constructing medium/large dams and improving water use efficiency through agricultural engineering measures, (ii) regulating ground water pumpage and its management, (iii) ensuring sustainable water supply, particularly to urban hub of Quetta and costal area e.g. Gwadar and (iv) enhancing public sector investment including public-private partnership (PPP) for construction of small and medium size dams and coping water scarcity through all possible means.

The total current water use for domestic and municipal purpose in both urban and rural areas is estimated at 4.5 Million Acre Feet (MAF). By 2025 requirements for water supply, potable water and sanitation requirements are estimated to be 10.5 MAF resulting in shortfall of 6 MAF.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/01/20190103436842/>

LAND ACQUISITION TALKS FAIL: TRIBESMEN WARN OF RESISTING KURRAM TANGI DAM PHASE II CONSTRUCTION

By Our Correspondent Published: January 3, 2019

MIRANMSHAH: Kabalkhel tribe of North Waziristan has announced to resist the construction of Kurram Tangi Dam Phase II following failure of talks between the government representatives and the tribal elders.

The meeting of tribesmen on Wednesday said that they do not trust the official assurances and will launch protests against the construction of dam which will inundate their land.

The Jirga observed that the government authorities have offered no alternative land to over 0.3 million people who will be affected by the dam, besides they have also not announced any compensation packages.

Earlier on Monday, a grand Jirga on Kurram Tangi Dam Phase II concluded without any breakthrough.

The Jirga between Kabalkhel elders and district administration was held in the Shawa Tehsil of North Waziristan tribal district in which scores of notable, district administration and also from the dam administration took part.

The notables after the failures of talks told the media that neither the district administration nor the Wapda team took the locals into confidence about the social, economic and environmental impact of the dam.

The elders of Kabalkhel tribe alleged that the government was violating the law and appealed to Prime Minister Imran Khan to take notice of the matter. They said they will also stage sit-ins in Peshawar and Islamabad in protest against construction of Phase-2 of Kurram-Tangi Dam.

Mir Ali Assistant Commissioner Yousaf Karim Kundi while addressing the Jirga on Monday had said work on Phase-2 of the dam hasn't been launched yet. He assured that the tribesmen will be taken into confidence before initiation of work on the project.

"We will take the elders of the Kabalkhel into confidence before starting any construction work," Kundi said.

He said the government will compensate the tribesmen and allot them alternative lands as well.

However, the Kabalkhel elders doubt the government officials will keep their promises.

Published in The Express Tribune, January 3rd, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1880231/1-land-acquisition-talks-fail-tribesmen-warn-resisting-kurram-tangi-dam-phase-ii-construction/>

BIDDING PROCESS FOR MOHMAND DAM PROJECT SPARKS CONTROVERSY

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter Updated January 02, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Tuesday met Federal Minister for Water Resources Faisal Vawda and chairman of the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) retired Lt Gen Muzamil Hussain and discussed with them the Rs300 billion Mohmand dam project that has now become controversial, according to sources.

Talking to Dawn, some top-ranking national contractors said the government had made the project controversial when it considered "single" financial bid of a consortium comprising three firms — Descon, the company owned by the Prime Minister's Adviser on Commerce and Industry Razzaq Daud, China Gezhouba and Voith Hydro — as the second contestant — a consortium consisting of the Frontier Works Organisation (FWO), Andritz Hydro and Power China — was technically disqualified and its financial bid was not considered.

On the other hand, Wapda claimed that no "illegality" was committed in the process of award of the project despite the fact that the financial bid of Rs309 billion of the only consortium in the run was opened on Monday.

Financial bid of only one consortium having adviser's firm has been opened

The top contractors, who did not participate in the bidding and observed the process as silent spectators, said the award of the contract would raise questions on the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf's claim of transparency and fair play as it was an example of "clash of interests" because the firm of the PM's adviser had participated in the bidding process.

They asked how the second consortium was knocked out on technical grounds though the firms in it were also experienced and had executed multi-billion rupees mega projects in the recent past.

They said once the second consortium had been removed from the process, the government should have invited more bids to compete with the remaining one consortium and to ensure transparency and healthy competition.

Talking to Dawn, Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry said there was nothing wrong in the award of the contract and added: "Is there any firm in the country which is bigger than Descon?"

He said he would advise Mr Daud to come up in the media and give a detailed statement on the issue.

When contacted, a Wapda spokesman said the contract had so far not been awarded formally as only financial bid of the consortium having Descon in it was opened on Monday. "Now the bid will be evaluated thoroughly and then it will be decided to award the contract or not," he added.

He said Wapda had called two bids — technical and financial — from both consortiums and the technical bid of the consortium having the FWO in it was rejected in July last year. “Once the technical bid is rejected the financial bid of the same firm or consortium is not opened,” he said. “Therefore, the financial bid of remaining consortium was opened.”

The spokesman claimed that Wapda had completely followed prescribed rules and procedures in the bidding process. Interestingly, the government had shelved inauguration ceremony of much-awaited Mohmand dam project which was to be held on Jan 2.

The spokesman said no new date has been finalised for the inauguration.

The construction of Mohmand dam is said to be imperative to overcome the problems of water shortage and electricity shortfall in the country. A sum of Rs2bn has already been allocated for the dam project in the Public Sector Development Programme 2018-19.

The Supreme Court, while issuing a detailed verdict in the case pertaining to acute water scarcity in Pakistan, said “the need for water reservoirs is not only expedient but also sine qua non (an essential condition) for the survival of the people and economy of Pakistan”.

It has been learnt that the inauguration ceremony of Mohmand hydro power dam was shelved due to the controversy on the issue of award of the contract of project.

The minister for water resources could not be contacted for comments despite attempts.

The 54-year-old Mohmand dam project is being materialised with the collective efforts of the PTI government led by Prime Minister Imran Khan and Chief Justice Mian Saqib Nisar.

The chief justice has taken personal interest in the project and helped remove obstacles in the way of its execution. No mega project has been undertaken in water sector in the country after the construction of Tarbela dam in 1967, resulting in the energy and water crisis in Pakistan.

It has been reported that Mohmand dam will store 1.2 million acre feet water and generate 800MW hydel electricity besides irrigating 18,000 acres land. The project will also help protect Mardan, Charsadda, Peshawar and other areas from floods during monsoon season.

Published in Dawn, January 2nd, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1455011/bidding-process-for-mohmand-dam-project-sparks-controversy>

GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY OF MOHMAND DAM POSTPONED

By Mureeb Mohmand Published: December 30, 2018

PESHAWAR: The groundbreaking ceremony of Mohmand dam, scheduled for January 2, has been postponed for an indefinite period, the Ministry of Water and Power confirmed on Sunday.

Mohmand tribal District administration official concerned with the project told The Express Tribune that preparations for the groundbreaking ceremony were almost completed and even invitation cards were distributed with the ceremony inaugural board erected on the dam site.

The Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) officials informed about the postponement of the ceremony, which was to be attended among others by Prime Minister Imran Khan, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Qamar Javed Bajwa, and Chief Justice of Pakistan Mian Saqib Nisar.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) MNA Sajjid Khan Mohmand from the Mohmand tribal district said that despite the ceremony being postponed for an indefinite time, with no such reason shown, there was still hope that the ceremony will be held in January, 2019.

He further added that most of the paperwork for the dam including the land acquisition process is almost completed and a list of demands have been handed over to the concerned officials so that PM Imran can announce a special package for the district.

PTI MNA Malik Anwar Taj Advocate said that Mohmand tribesmen have rendered sacrifices for the larger interest of state while selling their lands at comparatively low rates compared to those at the Diamir Basha dam site.

He hoped that this project will help in the much-needed development for the area, as well as providing new employment opportunities for the locals.

On the other hand, local tribesmen in Mohmand have shown concerns over the delay in inauguration and demanded that PM Imran should inaugurate the dam with a special package for the area that must include affordable electricity, drinking water, healthcare and education for the locals.

February 2019

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM FEB 18th TO FEB 24th 2019

MOHMAND DAM PROJECT COST REDUCED TO RS291BN

Kalbe Ali Updated February 24, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) will upload the evaluation report on bids for of Mohmand dam project at its website as a public document on Monday and the cost of the project has been reduced to Rs291 billion, according to a senior official of Wapda.

The lowest bid at Rs309bn for the project was offered by a consortium led by the Descon Engineering, a firm founded by adviser to the prime minister on commerce Abdul Razzak Dawood.

However, the official told Dawn that after technical evaluation of the bids, the project cost had been reduced by Rs18bn by the executing agency — Wapda — and the total cost of the project now stood at Rs291bn.

The uploading of the evaluation report at PPRA website for public will be the first major step towards the award of the contract for the multi-billion rupees project. After that, Wapda is expected to issue letter of commencement to the consortium comprising the Descon Engineering, China Gezhouba and Voith Hydro in the second week of March.

PPRA to place evaluation report on bids for project at its website

All relevant documents will be uploaded at PPRA website as the law requires that all documents related to a public contract costing more than Rs50 million are to be made public.

Section 47 of the PPRA Rules states “As soon as a contract has been awarded the procuring agency shall make all documents related to the evaluation of the bid and award of contract public.”

However, there is exemption for certain information where the disclosure can be against public interest, but Mohmand dam does not fall in this category.

The Wapda official said that the evaluation of technical bids had resulted in the reduction of cost of the project by Rs18bn, which included omission of duplicate works and deduction of the price from errors in the tender documents etc.

“Building a large dam is a serious construction work as more than one million cubic feet of concrete is required. This is why the cost is high too as compared to other infrastructure development works,” the official said.

On the other hand, a member of Senate Standing Committee on Water Resources has written to the ministry of water resources that the cost of Mohmand dam project could be reduced by around Rs50bn.

Senator Ahmed Khan said that the project cost could be negotiated and reduced if various components and segments of the construction were taken up separately.

“The basic principal is to unbundle the project and get the negotiated rates separately for each segment,” Senator Khan said in the letter.

Significant cost reduction could be negotiated, particularly in earthworks, he added.

However, the Wapda official said that the PPRA rules did not allow the procuring agency to negotiate any financial bid.

Mohmand dam would have a gross storage capacity to store 1.9 million acre feet (MAF) water with power generation potential of 800MW and it will irrigate around 17,000 acres of land.

The execution of the project has been delayed for about five decades due to various reasons.

Published in Dawn, February 24th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1465662/mohmand-dam-project-cost-reduced-to-rs291bn>

DAM FUND MEANT TO EDUCATE PEOPLE: EX-CJP

Amjad Mahmood February 23, 2019

LAHORE: Former chief justice of Pakistan Saqib Nisar says forming an implementation bench of the Supreme Court by him on the construction of Bhasha and Mohmand dams was aimed at guarding the water reservoir project.

“I’m ready to physically sit at the dam construction site if need be. But what I meant by standing guard on the Bhasha and Mohmand dams [fund] was that I formed an implementation bench of which two succeeding chief justices would

be the members. Through the judgment [on the dams project] Wapda was bound to submit monthly progress report and seek the court's help in case of obstacles in the project. Moreover, the verdict declared that the dam fund cannot be used for any other purpose."

The former top judge was responding to a query from the audience during a session of the three-day Lahore Literary Festival on 'Securing Pakistan's Water Future' here on Friday.

Rina Saeed Khan moderated the session while expert on trans-boundary water sharing Erum Khalid Sattar and former member (water) Wapda Ahmed Khan Bhatti besides Justice Nisar were on the panel.

Answering another question, the former CJP said the basic objective behind creation of the dam fund was to educate the masses about the importance of the issue as well as infusing a spirit among them for working for a national cause and not collecting 100pc financing through donations for the project.

He told a questioner that he had preferred national unity over the construction of the Kalabagh Dam and personally he believed that not a single moment should be wasted if and when a consensus is developed on the controversial water reservoir.

Justice Nisar played down the Indian threat of blocking Pakistan's water supplies and revoking the Indus Water Treaty saying it's easier said than done and that international court were there to solve any such issue.

He called for educating the people about worth of water and not wasting it.

Ms Sattar opposed creating a uniform law for the whole country governing water resources as it would be against ground realities of different federating units. She advocated for leaving it up to the provinces to decide on usage of sub-soil and other water resources.

She also stressed on setting up a water centre out of the control of the government in the private sector, preferably by any educational institution, to debate water issues and find their solutions.

Mr Bhatti urged the ex-CJP to work for including foreign experts in the consultation for the Bhasha dam, saying the region was a difficult tract because of being prone to earthquakes and land-sliding and needed utmost care from public safety point of view.

Published in Dawn, February 23rd, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1465502/dam-fund-meant-to-educate-people-ex-cjp>

WAPDA APPROVES GRANT OF DAM'S CONTRACT TO FIRM LINKED TO PM AIDE

Khalid Hasnain Updated February 23, 2019

LAHORE: Even though a controversy over the bidding process persisted, the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) on Friday granted approval to award of contract for the 800MW Mohmand dam project to a joint venture of China Gezhouba Group Company (CGGC) and Descon Engineering.

Wapda also instructed the project authorities to issue a letter of acceptance as per the rules, seeking mobilisation of the contractor by next month, consequent upon signing of an agreement.

"Since no contract for such a mega-hydropower project was signed during the last 50 years, thank God finally we have awarded the contract for the construction of the Mohmand dam to CGGC-Descon JV," Wapda chairman retired Lt Gen Muzammil Hussain told Dawn.

"The JV [joint venture], after being asked to rationalise the cost, has deducted Rs18 billion from the total cost," he claimed.

Wapda says the JV had earlier bid about Rs201bn for the project's civil, electrical and mechanical works. However, during technical negotiations the JV rationalised the cost, reducing it to Rs183bn.

Upon completion, the project will store about 1.2 million acre feet of water and generate 800MW of low-cost electricity

The civil, electrical and mechanical works include construction of the dam, other related works, and installation and successful operation of the turbines. "Actually the PPRA rules don't allow us to go into financial negotiations regarding cost of the project. However, the JV rationalised the prices during technical negotiations and finally reduced the total cost," Lt Gen Hussain said.

The controversy over the bidding process of the project, meanwhile, continues as the media have revealed that Descon has close links to the prime minister's adviser on commerce, Abdul Razak Dawood.

Leaders of the opposition parties, including PML-N president Shahbaz Sharif, termed the government's act of cancelling the project's second bidding on technical grounds "a bid to facilitate the company of the adviser". They also demanded of the government to review the bidding and conduct the same afresh. On the other hand, the government defended its decision, which was based on a single bid, saying the process was lawful.

Wapda said the contract was awarded at a meeting held at the Wapda House. "Following a comprehensive bidding and evaluation process and exhaustive technical negotiations, Wapda at a meeting held here on Friday, accorded approval to award [of] contract to CGGC-Descon Joint Venture for civil and electro-mechanical works of the Mohmand Dam Hydropower Project," reads a press release issued by a spokesperson for the authority.

Although under the PC-1 of the project its completion period is 68 months, Wapda pledges to complete it within a period of less than five years.

"If all is well [proper cash flows, enabling environment, etc], we can complete it within a period of five years or even less than that. Though the contractor will mobilise to the site next month, we have already started various preliminary works — construction of the access road, geo-tech, seismic stations, etc. There is also no issue with land acquisition since we have already acquired the priority land," the Wapda chief maintained.

"They [landowners] are ready to surrender their land for the project. And according to them, we can start construction at any time,"

Lt Gen Hussain said the operation and maintenance of the project would be the sole responsibility of Wapda. "We will not give O&M work to anyone, as Wapda will do it on its own since it is a national property," he said.

"The project will be considered to have been awarded to the JV when the contract will be signed in the near future," said an official source.

The project is historic and unique as it will be constructed on Swat river in the Mohmand tribal district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Upon completion, the project will store about 1.2 million acre feet of water, generate 800MW of low-cost electricity and help mitigate floods in Peshawar, Charsadda and Nowshera.

Published in Dawn, February 23rd, 2019
<https://www.dawn.com/news/1465523/wapda-approves-grant-of-dams-contract-to-firm-linked-to-pm-aide>

EFFECTIVE USE OF IRRIGATION WATER, NOT DAMS, CAN MITIGATE WATER SCARCITY, SAYS EXPERT

By Press Release Published: February 23, 2019

KARACHI: Dr Hassan Abbas, an expert in hydrology and water resources, underlined the need to restore the ecological integrity of the Indus River, while speaking at a meeting of Pakistan Institute of Labour Education and Research (PILER) on Friday.

He said that the Indus Basin Treaty with India was against the interests of Pakistan, adding that military dictators had sold the three eastern rivers to India for their petty interests and to earn commissions from construction of Tarbela Dam.

"Had we gone to the International Court of Justice against the construction of dams by India before signing the Indus Basin Treaty, Pakistan would have stopped construction of all Indian dams". He added that it was unprecedented in the history of the world that three rivers were sold out to a country.

According to Dr Abbas, the construction of dams on rivers had proven to be destructive for the ecology and environment and thus has become an obsolete practice around the world.

He added that Western countries had started dismantling their dams. Dr Abbas said that with the technological advancements, dams had become useless and a wastage of money.

"We are working on technologies for effective use of irrigation water," he said adding that there is a need to create awareness among people for changing pattern of use of water in agriculture sector. "We are using 6,000-year-old irrigation system, which was initiated by the Pharaohs of Egypt," he said. Currently, 104 million acre-feet (maf) water is taken from river system for agricultural purposes. "We can grow the same agriculture products using only 15 to 20 maf water," he added.

He said that Pakistan was seeking hundreds of billions of dollars for the construction of dams, but by spending some money on new technologies the water problem could be solved.

Published in The Express Tribune, February 23rd, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1916551/1-effective-use-irrigation-water-not-dams-can-mitigate-water-scarcity-says-expert/>

PAKISTAN SAYS IT HAS NO CONCERN IF INDIA DIVERTS WATER

Khalid Hasnain Updated February 22, 2019

LAHORE: In response to an Indian minister's statement that his country has decided to stop the flow of water to Pakistan from its share in the rivers under the Indus Water Treaty (IWT), Pakistan says it has no concern if India diverts water of eastern rivers (Ravi, Sutlej and Beas).

Talking to Dawn on Thursday, secretary of Pakistan's Ministry of Water Resources Khawaja Shumail said: "We have neither concern nor objection if India diverts water of eastern rivers and supplies it to its people or uses it for other purposes, as the IWT allows it do so."

As issuance of harsh statements by Indian authorities continues after the terrorist attack in Pulwama, Nitin Gadkari, India's transport and water resources minister, said in a Twitter message earlier on Thursday: "Under the leadership of Honourable PM Sri Narendra Modi, our Government has decided to stop our share of water which used to flow to Pakistan. We will divert water from Eastern Rivers and supply it to our people in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab." Mr Shumail said Pakistan did not see Mr Gadkari's tweet as worrisome in context with the IWT. "Actually India wants to construct Shahpurkandi dam at the Ravi basin. This project is abandoned since 1995. Now they (India) want to construct this in a bid to use its own share of water that goes unutilised and finally flows to Pakistan. So if they want to use this whether through storing it through construction of this dam or any other way for their people, they can do as we have nothing to do with it," he added.

"But we will definitely express our concerns and raise objections strongly if they use or divert waters of western rivers (Chenab, Indus, Jhelum) on which our right to use prevails," he maintained.

According to Pakistan's Commissioner for Indus Waters Syed Mehr Ali Shah, as the IWT has already given a right to India in 1960 to use the water of eastern rivers it is now up to it to do so or not. "Whether they diverted and used their unutilised share of eastern rivers' waters in 1960, we had no problem. They want to do it now, we have no problem. And if they don't want to use this, we have no issue," Mr Shah said.

He said the planned Shahpurkandi dam was actually the stage-2 of the Ranjit Sagar dam. "Though this project will also generate power, it will be used for irrigation purposes," he added.

While commenting about the proposed visit of Indian experts (India's commissioner for Indus waters) to Kotri Barrage (Sindh, Pakistan) keeping in view the tension between the two countries after the Pulwama terrorists attack, the commissioner said: "Let's see what happens in this regard. But we hope for the best."

It may be mentioned that a three-member delegation of Pakistani experts headed by Syed Mehr Ali Shah completed its general tour of inspection (from Jan 28 to Feb 1) to various hydropower projects — 1,000MW Pakal Dul, 48MW Lower Kalnai, 850MW Ratlay and 900MW Baglihar dam at Chenab Basin in India. Besides this, India, a couple of days before Pulwama attack, also shared the design data of its three planned run-of-the-river hydropower schemes with Pakistan under the IWT. These included Balti Kalan, Kalaroos and Tamasha hydropower projects which are planned to be constructed at Balti Kalan Nullah and Kalaroos Nullah at the Jhelum basin and Tamasha, a sub-tributary of the Indus river, respectively.

Published in Dawn, February 22nd, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1465324/pakistan-says-it-has-no-concern-if-india-diverts-water>

AFTER WARMONGERING, INDIA THREATENS TO CHOKE PAKISTAN'S VITAL WATER SUPPLY

By News Desk Published: February 21, 2019

In a pursuance of belligerence, India has threatened to block the water supply to Pakistan in light of the Pulwama attack, Times Now News, reported.

The warning comes on the backdrop of the February 14 suicide attack in occupied Kashmir's Pulwama district in which 44 Indian paramilitary forces were killed.

Addressing a gathering in Uttar Pradesh on Wednesday, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said that the water from three rivers entering Pakistan would be directed towards river Yamuna.

He also wrote on Twitter, saying: “Our government has decided to stop our share of water which used to flow to Pakistan.”

A day earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi formally revoked the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status granted to Pakistan.

The union minister also said that a project is being worked upon to connect the three rivers to further explore the possibilities of transportation in these water channels.

“Three of our rivers have been flowing into Pakistan. So water which we rightfully owned was going into Pakistan. Now we are planning to create a project and divert the waters of these three rivers to the Yamuna. So you can understand that there will be enough water in the Yamuna,” he said while inaugurating several water projects in Uttar Pradesh.

Amid relentless sabre-rattling from New Delhi Prime Minister Imran Khan on Thursday authorised the armed forces of Pakistan to respond “decisively and comprehensively” to any aggression or misadventure by India.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1915632/9-india-threatens-block-pakistans-water-amid-pulwama-attack/>

GROWERS IN SEVERAL TOWNS OF BADIN DISTRICT TAKE TO STREETS OVER WATER CRISIS

Dawn Report February 20, 2019

BADIN: Growers from across Badin district and its adjoining areas travelled to Shaheed Fazil Rahu (formerly Golarchi) town on Tuesday and took out a rally before converging on the local press club to draw the provincial government’s attention to the water crisis which, they said, was deepening with each passing day.

Demonstrations by the crisis-hit growers were also held at several other places in the district.

Leaders of the protesting growers repeated their claim that unscrupulous elements within the irrigation department were continuing with their practice of diverting whatever quantity of water was available in the Indus and canals to the lands of influential political figures. However, Irrigation Minister Ismail Rahu attributed the crisis entirely to 30 per cent lesser flows from Punjab into the Indus than Sindh’s actual share.

Led by Maulana Fateh Mohammad Mehri, Azizullah Dero, Abdul Salam Arain, Mehmood Shaikh and others who represented their respective political parties and growers’ organisations, the protesting growers started their march from Shaheed Fazal Rahu Chowk and held a sit-in at Ahmed Rajo Road.

People from all walks of life — perturbed over unavailability of clean drinking water and having been made to depend on subsoil source — joined them in a large number. They also remained with the growers when the march was resumed to take the participants to the press club.

Speaking to them, the leaders expressed their serious concern over the deepening water crisis in Sindh and wondered why nothing was being done on the part of the federal and provincial authorities to overcome it.

They said growers did realise that Sindh had been receiving lesser than its actual share, but influential figures were also taking away other growers’ share in connivance with unscrupulous elements sitting within the irrigation department.

They said small growers were devastated due to the unfair distribution of canal water, especially in Badin district.

They said people of coastal districts were not even getting water for drinking and cooking purposes.

They demanded dismantling of all direct outlets (DOs). They also called for a halt to the construction of new water channels, arguing that there was no logic behind such things when the existing channels had been lying dry for months.

Meanwhile, a complete shutdown was observed in the towns of Tarai and Khorwah on Monday against unavailability of water in Imam Wah Jageer (irrigation channel) for several months. Local farmers along with their children took to the streets and proceeded to the dry bed of the watercourse to hold a demonstration.

The growers said that they had been raising a hue and cry for long over the situation but their desperate calls had fallen on deaf ears so far.

Activists of various political parties and nationalist groups joined in the protest demonstrations held in the two towns. The growers whose lands are fed through the canals of Khairpur Gumbo irrigation sub-divisions also resumed their protest against unavailability of water in Malkani Sharif town.

They had run a sustained campaign on the issue and had to put it off a few months back on certain assurances held out by the authorities concerned.

Separately, a delegation comprising MNA Ghulam Ali Talpur, MPAs Tanzeela Qambrani, Taj Mohammed Mallah and Mir Allah Bakhsh Talpur and former chairman of the Sindh Irrigation Drainage Authority (SIDA) Nawaz Chandio called on Irrigation Minister Mohammed Ismail Rahu at the Sindh Secretariat on Tuesday and discussed the issue with him.

Similar protest demonstrations were held in Talhar, Tando Bago, Gulab Leghari and other towns of the district.

They told the minister that the crisis had ruined the agriculture sector in the province.

Mr Rahu maintained that Sindh was currently getting around 30pc lesser water than its share from Punjab. He held the federal government responsible for the situation. He hoped that he would be able to manage 3,000 cusec from Sukkur Barrage for Badin district.

Speaking to Dawn, Mr Rahu said he did realise the grievance of Badin growers because he himself was a grower and hailed from the same district.

However, he added, water crisis had equally hit most districts of the province.

He said lawmakers from the worst-hit areas were told to help ensure a judicious distribution of available water among growers, especially those receiving it from Kotri Barrage.

He said the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) and Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) should also ensure an equitable distribution of water among all federating units.

Published in Dawn, February 20th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1464888/growers-in-several-towns-of-badin-district-take-to-streets-over-water-crisis>

FARMERS BLAME WAPDA FOR 22,000 CUSECS WATER LOSS, THEFT

By Our Correspondent Published: February 18, 2019

HYDERABAD: The Sindh Chamber of Agriculture (SCA) has claimed that 22,000 cusecs water, which is enough to irrigate over 43,000 acres of land per day, goes missing due to leakages and theft between Besham, a city in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP), and the Tarbela Dam. The SCA, which lobbies for farmers' rights, on Sunday held the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) responsible for the loss and asked the federal government to take action against the relevant officials.

“The WAPDA officials have deliberately made the telemetry system [which records the quantum of water] installed at Besham dysfunctional,” alleged SCA President Qabool Muhammad Khatian, who chaired a meeting of the chamber at its Hyderabad office. The office bearers and members of the SCA from Karachi, Sukkur, Sanghar and other districts attended through the video link.

“The defected system helps them cover the stealing of water,” he said, adding that the officials involved in the theft should be fired from their jobs and, simultaneously, the government should also conduct an inquiry over their corruption.

The SCA also asked the Sindh government to raise the issue with the Centre. “The Thal Canal [in Punjab which is a flood-season fed canal] is getting 4,000 cusecs water whereas Sindh's Kotri barrage [which supplies water to 11 districts including Karachi division] is receiving 2,640 cusecs,” he pointed out, deploring injustice in the water distribution in the country.

The SCA demanded that the water discharge at Sindh's Guddu Barrage be increased to 45,000 cusecs and in Nara Canal and Rohri Canal to 13,000 cusecs before the Kharif sowing starts from early March. The chamber also asked Sindh government to conduct a survey for assessing losses due to the acute water shortage during 2018 in six districts of Sindh and to waive taxes and dues of the affected farmers for three years.

According to the SCA, less than 50% of cultivable land was brought under cultivation last year owing to the shortage. The farmers also asked the provincial government to increase the official wheat procurement rate from Rs1,300 per 40 kilograms to Rs1,500 because the open market iwa paying around Rs1,400 to the wheat growers.

The SCA General Secretary Zahid Hussain Bhurgari, Kamal Khan Noonari, Ghulam Hussain Khan Chachar, Muhammad Khan Sarejo, Ghulam Mujtaba Unar and other office bearers and members of the chamber attended the meeting.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1912758/1-farmers-blame-wapda-22000-cusecs-water-loss-theft/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM FEB 11th TO FEB 17th 2019

WAPDA IN TALKS WITH ‘DISPUTED’ BIDDER OVER MOHMAND DAM

Khaleeq Kiani Updated February 12, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Amid the ongoing Mohmand dam controversy over its bidding process and conflict of interest, the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) is negotiating the Rs309bn bid offered by a consortium led by Descon Engineering, a firm founded by adviser to the prime minister on commerce Abdul Razak Dawood, for a price cut.

Wapda chairman retired Lt Gen Muzammil Hussain told the Senate Standing Committee on Water Resources on Monday that Wapda had been engaged with the consortium — comprising Descon, China Gezhouba and Voith Hydro — for the past one-and-a-half months and the contract had not been formally awarded so far.

Senator Ahmad Khan told the committee that proper negotiations between the client and the contractor could result in a 15-20pc discount because the dam construction mainly required steel, cement and earthwork. “You can bring down bid price by Rs50 billion when you go item by item,” he said.

Official says contract for Mohmand dam not awarded yet; evaluation of proposals by March 7

He said there were a lot of deficiencies in the bidding mechanism of Wapda and other public sector organisations, even though they claimed to strictly follow procurement rules in a transparent way. Giving an example, he said a contractor won the lowest bid of Rs27bn for Naulong Dam in Balochistan that became controversial. Wapda went for a rebid and his (Senator Khan’s) company made Rs18bn bid yet the previous successful bidder won the project again with its revised bid of Rs17bn for exactly the same job a year later. “This is a big question mark,” he remarked.

A Wapda official attending the meeting confirmed the Naulong bidding results as reported by Senator Khan but said the final bid was perhaps Rs19bn and not Rs17bn. The Senate committee, headed by Senator Shamim Afridi, then decided to hold a special meeting on the Naulong dam and asked Senator Khan and Wapda chairman to come up with complete record.

Responding to queries raised by senators at the meeting, the Wapda chairman said Pakistan had been trapped by a couple of Chinese companies, as reputed international firms including those from Europe, had long exited while the country’s local capacity could not be developed over the years to take up mega projects.

Lt Gen Hussain said Descon, despite being the country’s biggest engineering company, was not capable of handling such a large project alone and had to pool in China Gezhouba. “Let me add with a pinch of salt that two to three Chinese companies are playing games with us. You are trapped,” he said, adding that China Gezhouba offered \$114 million for a project for which Europeans offered \$235m to \$250m.

The signature of European companies in Pakistan had come to an end long ago and Ghazi Barotha was the last project completed in 2002 in which an Italian firm participated. He said Wapda was trying to engage 2,000-3,000 Pakistani engineers in the construction of Diamer-Bhasha and Mohmand dams, while the monthly remuneration of Pakistani engineers had already increased from Rs45,000 to Rs200,000-Rs300,000.

Overall around 6,000 Pakistanis would work for Mohmand dam and about 15,000 in Diamer-Bhasha. Ultimately this would improve local capacity, he said, adding China Gezhouba through the same process had trained its 20,000 engineers who were then able to develop 20,000 dams with local enterprises.

The Wapda chairman said the Mohmand dam would be completed within five years with the induction of modern technology instead of original plans of about six years. One of his aides told the Senate committee that evaluation of proposals would be completed by March 7 and the contract would be formally awarded by March 30. The mobilization of consultants would also begin in March, the committee was informed.

Lt Gen Hussain lamented that work on the project had not been started for the past 50 years though all the nine cases against the government on the issue of Mohmand dam had been settled positively.

About the project, he said the dam would have a gross storage capacity of 1.9 million acre feet (MAF), live capacity 0.67 MAF with power generation potential of 800MW and irrigation capacity of about 17,000 acres.

Deploring a campaign against Wapda and the bidding process, he contested that it was not a single-bid contract.

However, he confirmed that one of the two bidders – FWO, China Power and Andritz Hydro – was not pre-qualified and financial bids not opened.

He said the bidding process was completed over a period of eight months – from November 23, 2017 to June 26, 2018 – for which 23 firms purchased bidding documents, 15 attended the pre-bid meeting, 10 visited the dam site and only two joint ventures submitted bids for the project.

The senators, however, reminded him that media should not be blamed for controversies when projects took decades to move from files to ground and benchmarks kept changing. “There is always some truth in controversies when projects are not handled transparently,” Senator Dr Jehanzeb Jamaldini remarked.

Published in Dawn, February 12th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1463335/wapda-in-talks-with-disputed-bidder-over-mohmand-dam>

CS FOR DATA COLLECTION OF SURFACE WATER USED BY HOTELS, INDUSTRY

RECORDER REPORT | FEB 12TH, 2019 | KARACHI

Chief Secretary Sindh, Syed Mumtaz Ali Shah has directed Secretary Industries to collect the data of utilisation of surface water by the 3, 4 and 5 star hotels and big and small industrial units in the province.

Presiding over an important meeting regarding Supreme Court’s order of charging one Rupee per litre from mineral water companies on the water they are extracting from the ground, he said that as per directives of the Supreme Court a mechanism will be devised for calculation, collection and monitoring of the recovery of water charges from all major industries consuming surface or groundwater. Secretary local government Khalid Hyder Shah has been nominated as focal person in this regard.

He also directed concerned authorities to install water flow meters and close-circuit cameras will also be installed at the respective premises of the companies involved in the extraction of groundwater or utilisation of surface water for their business. The extraction will be monitored closely by the Environment Protection Agency (EPA).

Syed Mumtaz Ali Shah said that these companies are using very huge amount of water and are paying nothing for it. He stated that collecting 1 rupee per litter will help Sindh government to collect huge amount on water tariff. He said that provincial government’s aim is to strengthen the provincial food authority so that it could perform its functions in the best of manner.

He said that a central laboratory of Sindh Food Authority will be established in Karachi.

Professor Dr Muhammad Ahsan Siddique, the convener of committee made by Supreme Court and officers of Sindh Food Authority briefed the meeting regarding water extraction by the various mineral water and beverage companies. He informed the meeting that 29,961,452 litres of water per day is being extracted by the 10 companies from their 14 plants in Karachi, Hyderabad and Sukkur.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/02/20190212446389/>

‘MOHMAND DAM TO BE COMPLETED IN 6 YEARS’

By Our Correspondent Published: February 12, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) Chairman Lt-Gen (retd) Muzammil Hussain on Monday informed the Senate Standing Committee on Water Resources that the Mohmand Dam would be completed in five years and eight months.

The Wapda chief said the proposed time could be reduced with the use of modern technology. “Unfortunately, the project has been halted for past 50 years and nine cases were registered against the government of Pakistan for constructing the dam,” he said, adding all of these cases have finally been decided with verdicts in favour of the government.

The dam will have the gross capacity of 1.9 million acre-feet (MAF) and live capacity of 0.67 MAF with power generation potential of 800 megawatts (MW) and the annual energy production of 2862 GWh, Hussain told the lawmakers.

The dam will have the command area of 16,737 acres, the chairman Wapda added. Referring to propaganda against the dam in the media, he said it was falsely reported Wapda issued tender of the project through a single bidding process. “Wapda clearly went for open competitive bidding,” he affirmed.

During the presentation, it was also revealed the bidding process was held from November 23, 2017 to June 26, 2018. Almost 23 firms purchased bidding documents, 15 attended a pre-bid meeting, 10 firms visited the dam site and only two joint ventures submitted bids for the project.

“The tribespeople of the Mohmand Agency deserve great applause and appreciation for their cooperation and enthusiasm for the dam. They asked the officials to start work at the project as soon as possible and even proposed they do not want compensation for their lands,” the Wapda chief.

He also informed the committee that 40% of the engineers, working on the dam would be the locals. “The foreign engineers will help in capacity building of our skilled youth — fresh engineers and graduates of local universities — and assist in fortifying indigenous technical manpower,” he remarked.

Other Wapda officials also briefed the committee. They said that Chiniot dam was proposed at an ideal location on Chenab River for flood mitigation. “The main objective of the dam is to cope with inundation occurring at the upstream areas,” one official said.

The Wapda officials informed that three alternative sites were under consideration as its concept paper has been approved. They added that the process would be expedited to get the project initiated without any further delay. On the PSDP releases for Noulong dam, Ichar dam and Machura dam, they said that the allocated and released funds were not enough for the timely development of the projects which should be assisted by the Planning Commission.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1908557/1-mohmand-dam-completed-6-years/>

ENOUGH WATER IN RAWAL, KHANPUR DAMS FOR EIGHT MONTHS

The Newspaper’s Staff Reporter Updated February 11, 2019

RAWALPINDI: There is enough water in the Rawal and Khanpur dams to meet the city’s water requirements for the next eight months, Water and Sanitation Agency (Wasa) Managing Director Raja Shaukat Mehmood said on Sunday. Rawalpindi city receives water from both dams and 421 tubewells. There is currently 1,750.5 feet of water in Rawal Dam and 1,954ft of water in Khanpur Dam – enough water to last until September.

Mr Mehmood said the Rawalpindi Cantonment Board receives 9 million gallons of water daily (MGD) Khanpur, Wasa receives 6 MGD and the Capital Development Authority (CDA) receives 10 MGD.

The twin cities are supplied a total of 25 MGD.

He added that more rainfall in the coming days will only increase the water level further, and the upcoming monsoon will improve the water situation in the city areas as well.

The agency has also been paying attention to improving the city’s water distribution system, he said, and has finished replacing old and rusting water lines. New connections are being provided to consumers, which will reduce the chances of contaminated water.

The agency has chalked out a comprehensive plan to overcome the water shortage in the city, he said. Wasa has water bowsers, a water district system in Commercial Market, Satellite Town, to register water complaints and resolve them and emergency repair teams to replace and repair leaks in water lines.

He believed more dams needed to be built in and around the city to overcome the water shortage, adding that while recent rainfall had increased the level of water in reservoirs, groundwater had not been recharged.

“The excessive drawing of water through tube wells causes groundwater to recede. There is need to install recharging wells in and around the city.

“The mushrooming of urbanisation in and around the garrison city is responsible for the receding underground water level,” he said.

Mr Mehmood said Wasa has a plan to clean Leh Nullah and has sought Rs25 million in financial assistance. However, he said, if the Leh Nullah project begins before the monsoon, Wasa will devise another plan.

He added that the Leh Nullah Expressway and Flood Channel project will likely solve flooding during the monsoon.

Published in Dawn, February 11th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1463019/enough-water-in-rawal-khanpur-dams-for-eight-months>

NO WATER FOR KARACHI EVEN AS HUB DAM LEVEL RISES

By Ashraf Ali Published: February 11, 2019

KARACHI: The recent spell of rainfall in Karachi and its surrounding areas has raised the water level at the Hub Dam, which supplies water to a significant part of the port city. However, citizens have been deprived of this basic amenity, with officials of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) pointing to leaks in the Hub Canal, saying that water supply would only be resumed after it is repaired.

At its current level, the Hub Dam can provide 40 million gallons of water per day (mgd) to Karachi. Saleem Ahmed, the chief engineer of the KWSB's main trunk line, however, has a different take. "The Hub Canal is in a very bad state and a lot of water would be wasted through the leakages," he told The Express Tribune.

According to Ahmed, the KWSB has decided to start the repair work from now so that, come monsoon season when the Hub Dam is filled to capacity, they can start supplying the optimal 100mgd of water. He added that tenders have been sought for the repair work of the Hub Canal and the KWSB is trying its best to get the repairs completed before the monsoon rains.

At its optimal, the Hub Dam supplies 63% of its capacity, which comes to 100mgd, to Karachi's District West, as well as North Karachi and New Karachi which fall in District Central. The remaining 37% of the water is supplied to Lasbella.

Muhammad Ahtesham, who is the project director of the Water and Power Development Authority at the Hub Dam, told The Express Tribune that the recent rainfall had raised the dam's water level by three feet, which in turn had increased the water level in its reservoir to 279 feet. At its present level, Karachi and Lasbella could be supplied water on a limited scale for some time, said Ahtesham.

He added, however, that the KWSB had refused to take water due to leaks in the canal, which is why WAPDA was supplying 22mgd of water to Lasbella, which would continue for the next 102 days at the current pace.

Before the recent rain spell, water at the Hub Dam had reached the dead level at 276 feet and water supply to Karachi had been stopped for the past three months. Now that the reservoir's level has reached 279 feet, after a good spell of rain in the catchment areas, it was expected that Karachi's supply would be restored, mitigating the shortfall in the water supply to its designated areas in District West and District Central. However, residents of these areas have yet again been left yearning for the basic amenity on account of the poor planning of the KWSB.

When The Express Tribune reached out to other engineers associated with the KWSB, they all agreed that areas of District West, New Karachi and North Karachi were facing acute shortage of water for the past three months.

Currently, the KWSB is supplying 30mgd of water to the affected areas by routing it from the Indus River. Areas of District West are supplied water on 10 days a month, while those in District Central are given water on only five days. All these areas, which include Baldia Town, Orangi Town and SITE are densely populated and also comprise large industrial complexes, for which the water supply is inadequate. One engineer, speaking to The Express Tribune on condition of anonymity, lamented that had the KWSB repaired the Hub Canal in time, water could have been supplied to these areas from the Hub Dam.

For his part, Pakistan Meteorological Department Director Abdur Rasheed told The Express Tribune that there was little possibility of further winter rainfall in Karachi or other parts of lower Sindh. He added, however, that rainfall was expected in Upper Sindh and different areas of Balochistan. "The Hub Dam has a vast catchment area, therefore it is possible that the reservoir's water level would be further increased after the expected rainfall," he added.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1907624/1-no-water-karachi-even-hub-dam-level-rises/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM FEB 4th TO FEB 10th 2019

FLOW OF WATER IN CHENAB RISES TO 67,000 CUSECS

M RAFIQUE GORAYA | FEB 9TH, 2019 | LAHORE

Due to wide spread rains and snowfall in the upper catchments mountainous ranges of the rivers, the water flow in the river Chinab rose to 67,000 cusecs at Marala head works near Sialkot on Friday off setting much of the water shortage for Rabbi crops in central and south Punjab.

This unexpected abundant running water in the river during winter has enabled Punjab Irrigation engineers to put 20,000 cusecs water in the two big canals i.e. Upper Chinab and Marala Ravi Link canals emanating from river

Chinab to supplement water availability in the river Ravi near Lahore for drinking and irrigating water deficit crops in the districts of Sialkot, Narowal, Gujranwala, Sheikhupura, Kasur, Lahore, Okara, Sahiwal, Pakpattan and Khanewal. According to 8th February rivers flows report of Water and Power Development Authority, water flows have also increased marginally in the other rivers, i.e., river Indus at Tarbela: Inflows 19500 cusecs and Outflows 30000 cusecs, Kabul at Nowshera: Inflows 9500 cusecs and Outflows 9500 cusecs, Jhelum at Mangla: Inflows 17300 cusecs and Outflows 15000 cusecs.

Commenting on the latest position of running water in the rivers, Convener Punjab Water Council Farooque Bajwa suggested to the national regulatory body to stop total outflow from the Mangla dam and conserve the water inflow in river Jhelum for releases next month for last and crucial watering of Rabi crops before their harvesting. Meanwhile the precious water resource in river Chinab be judiciously used for maturing the crops wheat the nation's staple food, he added.

Meanwhile, Westerly wave is affecting Kashmir and its adjoining areas. Weather remained cold and dry in most parts of the country during past 24 hours. However, rain thunderstorm with snowfall over the hills occurred at isolated places in Malakand, Hazara, Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Gujranwala, Lahore, and Sargodha divisions, Islamabad, Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir

Punjab: Jhelum 43, Murree 23, Mangla 21, Hafizabad 17, Mandi Bahauddin, Chakwal 16, Joharabad 10, Sialkot City 03, Lahore 07, Islamabad (ZP, Saidpur, IIAP 06, Golra 03, Bokra 02), Sargodha, Gujrat 04, Noorpurthal, Gujranwala 02, Rawalpindi 03, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Malamjabba 18, Balakot 09, Pattan 08, Kakul 07, Dir 06, Risalpur, Saidu Sharif 04, Peshawar, Kalam, Cherat 01, Kashmir: Kotli 07, Muzaffarabad 05, Garidupatta 04, Rawalakot 03, Gilgit Baltistan: Hunza 01. Snowfall (inch): Murree 08, Malamjabba 03, Astore, Rawalakot 02.

Mainly cold and dry weather is expected in most parts of the country. However, rain thunderstorm (with snowfall over the hills) is expected at isolated places in Gujranwala, Lahore divisions and Kashmir.

Mainly cold and dry weather is expected in most parts of the country. Foggy conditions are expected in plain areas of Punjab and upper Sindh during night/morning hours.

Friday's lowest Minimum Temperatures:

Ziarat -10°C, Kalam, Kalat, Bagrote -07°C, Malamjabba, Skardu -05°C, Gupis, Murree, Drosh, Astore, Parachinar, Quetta -04°C, Zhob, Hunza -03°C, Dir, Dalbandin -02°C, Rawalakot, Khuzdar -01°C., Islamabad 06, Peshawar 04°C, Muzaffarabad 02°C, Chitral 00°C, Lahore 08°C, Karachi 13°C and Hyderabad 09°C.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/02/20190209445847/>

CM ORDERS FAST-TRACKING OF WATER SUPPLY PROJECTS

By Mohammad Zafar Published: February 9, 2019

QUETTA : Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Kamal Khan has directed the Public Health Engineering (PHE) Department to expedite work on all water supply projects across the province.

“The provincial government is committed to providing clean water to the masses in Balochistan and for the purpose the PHE Department needs to enhance its capabilities,” said the chief minister while presiding over a meeting held to review the department's progress on various development projects.

Provincial PHE Minister Noor Muhammad Dummar, PHE Secretary Abdul Fatah Bhangar and other department officials were present.

CM Kamal was briefed regarding the departmental affairs, functional and non-functional water schemes, Quetta Electric Supply Company's dues and Gwadar dam projects.

Expressing concern over the unnecessary use of water by the public, Kamal directed the PHE Department to launch awareness campaigns highlighting importance of water and payment of monthly Water and Sanitation Agency (Wasa) bills.

The CM also directed the PHE Department to complete survey regarding new dams, take quick steps to address water issues in Bhag, and functionalise the desalination plant in Gwadar and Kachi water project.

“Functionalisation of Water Treatment Plants in Quetta will be helpful in construction work, parks and service stations,” said Kamal.

On the occasion, Kamal also directed Wasa to digitalise its billing system.

CM Kamal has urged National Assembly Deputy Speaker Qasim Suri to play his due role in allocating funds for major development projects of Balochistan in the next Public Sector Development Programme.

The CM met Suri at the CM Secretariat where they discussed provincial matters.

Provincial ministers Zia Langove, Sarfaraz Khan Domki, Zahoor Buledi and Tor Utmankhail were present.

Kamal and Suri expressed satisfaction over the political alliance between the Balochistan Awami Party and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, saying both the coalition parties have been working for the development of the province. “Prime Minister Imran Khan is giving importance to the development work in Balochistan and has lauded your [CM Kamal’s] performance on many occasions,” said Suri.

The deputy speaker also lauded the CM’s efforts in resolving the issues of the province, saying: “Kamal is leading Balochistan towards development.”

CM Kamal has announced increasing the annual grant of Balochistan Girls Guide Association from Rs15 million to Rs50 million.

“The provincial government will support all of the association’s volunteers taking part in social and development activities as it will help develop their personality,” said CM Kamal during a meeting with Balochistan Girls Guide Association President Begum Hassan Baloch.

Kamal said “We will expand the network of the association across the province as the provincial government seeks more girls to take part in social and development activities in Balochistan and we are ready to lead the volunteers.” Begum Hassan thanked the CM for increasing the association’s annual grant and invited him to visit the headquarters in Quetta.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1906677/1-cm-orders-fast-tracking-water-supply-projects/>

WATER, WATER, EVERYWHERE...

By M Ziauddin Published: February 9, 2019

Pakistan is fast becoming a water-stressed country. Perhaps it is already one. But then perhaps we could still sidestep the looming disaster. A latest Report on Water Management, Floods, Transport & Aquatic Tourism prepared by a committee constituted by the FPCCI shows a way out. Submitted to the FPCCI in Dec 2018, the committee which was headed by a former senior Pakistan Navy officer, Naeem Sarfraz, has come up with what can only be described as hope against hope in the backdrop of the impending crisis. According to statistics quoted by the report, Pakistan receives about 145MAF of water annually from the three major rivers — Indus, Jhelum and Chenab and their tributaries, including the Kabul River. Out of this, only 103MAF reach canal heads for irrigation while the remainder flows down to the sea.

And out of the 103MAF at the canal heads, only 26MAF are used for crop cultivation while the remainder is lost through seepage, evaporation, escape below Kotri, leakage from the outmoded infrastructure, mismanagement and corruption. Unlevelled fields, old water distribution system (warabandi) and outdated irrigation methods (flooding) also contribute to water losses.

The report claims there is no water shortage, only a crisis of its proper usage and management and goes on to suggest that all water courses, canal minors and distributaries have to be lined to stop unproductive seepage of water. The report estimates the lining of canal minors and water courses can save 23MAF and increase crop productivity.

The report suggests that old methods of field irrigation need to be changed. ‘Flooding’ needs to be replaced by improved water saving techniques such as ‘Bed & Farrow method’, ‘Dry Direct Seeding of Rice’, ‘Alternate Wetting & Drying’, ‘Laser Land Levelling’ and ‘Drip’ or ‘Sprinkler Irrigation System’. This is expected to cause water saving of 30-35% which is equal to 20MAF, substantially more than the storage capacity of Tarbela and Mangla dams combined. Rampant corruption in the Irrigation Department also needs to be curbed, says the report.

Stating that water is a precious commodity, the report talks about its cost. Being virtually free, a great amount, according to the report, gets lost through wastage. Therefore, it suggests that the price of water has to be based on its cost of delivery to the consumer. Farmers in Punjab pay only Rs135 per acre per year, while those in K-P pay Rs625, whereas cost of maintaining and operating the distribution system is Rs875 per acre. Moreover, recovery of water charges (abiana) in all the provinces is low, from 12% in Balochistan to 44% in Punjab. Hence, the report maintains abiana rates need to be increased and improving its recovery system which it believes would lead to reduction in wastage and also generate funds for maintenance of the water distribution system. Similarly, in urban areas, installing meters and charging the correct price would reduce wastage.

The report says adequate water is available for domestic use of rural and urban communities throughout the country, except in isolated pockets of deserts. Enough water reaches every city but does not reach the consumers because of

outmoded and badly damaged distribution systems within the cities. The report suggests the first priority should be replacement of or upgradation of the distribution system inside every city. Water received from pristine glaciers and rainfall is clean and pure. It is contaminated by people throwing sewage, garbage and industrial and commercial waste into drains, canals and rivers. Drains, built during the 1960s for lowering the water table in waterlogged districts, are now carrying black water and dumping it in the QB Link Canal or the River Ravi. The first responsibility of society is to stop polluting the waterways and the ground water. Implementing laws and extensive installation of water-treatment systems will stop water-borne diseases. Then there will be no reason why every citizen cannot get clean water from a tap.

The report also makes suggestions on how best to meet the challenges of floods and using waterways for transport as well as promoting aquatic tourism.

Published in The Express Tribune, February 9th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1906540/6-water-water-everywhere-2/>

WATER: MORE A GOVERNANCE ISSUE

By Editorial Published: February 8, 2019

It is mostly mismanagement that creates scarcity in the midst of plenty. Two recent World Bank reports bring this point home with regard to Pakistan's water sector. The latest report says Pakistan needs urgent reforms to improve water use efficiency and its efficient delivery to get more economic, social and environmental benefits from its water. It says Pakistan is well endowed with water but water availability per person is comparatively low, water wastage is high and agricultural yields are low. Climate change and transboundary issues are significant hindrance for Pakistan's water sector, but the greatest challenges and opportunities are internal and not external. The report says "water security in Pakistan is reaching a critical point that demands urgent attention and reform." It recommends a judicious use of irrigation water to increase agricultural productivity and says paying more attention to social and environmental aspects of water management is critical. While irrigation dominates water use in the country, the four major crops — rice, wheat, sugar cane, and cotton — that use 80 per cent of water contribute only five per cent of GDP. Poor water management is conservatively estimated to cost four per cent of GDP or around Rs12 billion. Causes resulting from climate change and mismanagement of water resources have severely degraded rivers, lakes and the extensive Indus Delta undermining important ecosystem services. It says issues related to water security require strong collaboration between federal and provincial governments and other stakeholders. The objective must be to strengthen water governance and strategic water planning to build resilience in the face of changing climate and growing water demands.

The report says building new dams can help improve water security but will not address the pressing water problems. It recommends modernising the irrigation system, expansion of hydromet system and investment in recycling of wastewater. The earlier report also mostly pointed to predominance of wastage and governance issues in the country's water sector.

Published in The Express Tribune, February 8th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1905805/6-water-governance-issue/>

CONTAMINATED WATER

Editorial February 07, 2019

THERE seems to be no end to Balochistan's water-related woes. Not only is its capital city experiencing some of the worst water shortages, a report in this paper has now shed light on the high levels of contamination in the water being used for growing vegetables there. Facing challenges of a growing population and insufficient infrastructure to support it, high levels of industrial and medical waste find their way into rainwater drains that farmers then use to water their produce — which eventually creeps into the local populace's diet. But there is limited research and data on the topic. Prof Zahoor Ahmad Bazai from Balochistan University conducted lab tests on seed germination and seedling growth of lettuce from three locations in the city and published a paper on his findings. He claims that farmers pay off the government authorities in order to continue with the unhygienic practice.

On the same day, another report in the paper carried a photograph of the visibly polluted Malir River in Karachi: vegetables were being grown on the banks of the river with sewage water. Sindh only recently inaugurated a province-

wide food regulatory authority to maintain quality control, carry out lab tests and enforce the writ of law. But Balochistan does not have a food regulatory body yet, unlike the other provinces. Anecdotal evidence suggests there are also high levels of adulteration in milk, soft drinks, sweets and cooking oil. Yet these ill practices continue with no checks and balances. It is said time and again that Balochistan is the most neglected province, to the point it seems to have become a complacently accepted reality. Where is the will of the provincial and federal ministers to change that? Where are the agitation and organisation and vision to improve? The prime minister of Pakistan has always placed health and health infrastructure high on his list of priorities — even before the general elections. The creation of a food inspection body in Balochistan is the need of the hour.

Published in Dawn, February 7th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1462349/contaminated-water>

RAHU BLAMES SCANT RAINFALL, IRSA FOR DROUGHT-LIKE CONDITIONS IN SINDH

A Correspondent February 07, 2019

BADIN: Sindh Minister for Agriculture Mohammad Ismail Rahu has blamed scant rainfall and uneven distribution of water by federal organisations like Indus River System Authority (Irsa) for drought-like conditions in the province. Mr Rahu said in a press statement on Wednesday that the federal government was responsible for current severe water shortage in the canals of the province.

He said the Sindh government would set up wheat procurement centres across the province to purchase the commodity after consulting with farmers and leaders of different growers' organisations.

He said the Sindh government was planning to improve agriculture sector by taking challenges of climate change head on and coping with threats to food security. In several areas, farmers could not get enough water for cultivation of wheat hence they could not get a bumper crop this year thanks to indifferent attitude of the bodies responsible for judicious water distribution among provinces.

However, they distributed equally among farmers the little irrigation water they were getting from the Indus, he added. Mr Rahu urged the federal government to step in to save agriculture sector of Sindh by releasing the province's share. The recent rainfall had somewhat improved the situation with regard to water, he said.

He said the Sindh government would set up wheat procurement centres after consulting with farmers and leaders of different growers' organisations and gunny bags would be provided to farmers without any discrimination as per actual demand.

He said that he had personally handed over a letter to Prime Minister Imran Khan during a meeting a few days back, requesting him to ask State Bank of Pakistan to order banks to either waive off or suspend recovery of agricultural loans in the districts which had been declared as drought-hit by Sindh government.

He hoped the premier would make a wise decision in the light of aggravating situation in most parts of the province. People in the entire province were facing great hardships to get water even for drinking while crops sown by farmers in several parts of Sindh had either dried up or were fast withering away due to unavailability of water.

He claimed that sugar cane growers were getting reasonable rates for their commodity because of "sincere" efforts of Sindh government. Despite alarming situation "we are keeping a close watch on the distribution of water from the canals of Kotri Barrage and other areas of the province."

Published in Dawn, February 7th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1462210/rahu-blames-scant-rainfall-irsa-for-drought-like-conditions-in-sindh>

POOR WATER MANAGEMENT ANNUALLY COSTS \$12BN TO GDP: WB STUDY

RECORDER REPORT 2019/02/07

KARACHI: Poor water management is conservatively estimated to cost 4 percent or around \$12 billion per year to national GDP, indicates of World Bank report on Pakistan: Getting More from Water.

Sindh Water Sector Improvement Project, Government of Sindh in collaboration of World Bank organized an event for launch of this report here on Wednesday.

The session was chaired by Engr Ashfaq Ahmed Memon, Special Assistant to Chief Minister Sindh on irrigation, and the Panelists included Dr Naeem Zafar, Chief Economist, Planning & Development Department, Government of Sindh, Dr Bakhshal Khan Lashari, Director, Centre for Advance Studies on Water, Mehran University Jamshoro, Kabool Muhammad Khatian, Sindh Chamber of Agriculture, Syed Mahmood Nawaz Shah, Sindh Abadgar Board, Mahmood Cheema, Country Representative, IUCN and Simi Kamal, Founder Hissar Foundation, Think Tank on Water Issues.

The report stated that while Pakistan, the sixth most populous country in the world, is well-endowed with water, water availability per person is comparatively low. Water wastage is an issue and agricultural yields are low compared to most countries.

Although climate change and trans-boundary issues are a significant hindrance for Pakistan's water sector, the greatest challenges and opportunities are internal, not external, to Pakistan, it identified.

Improving water-use efficiency and productivity, delivery of water services in cities and in irrigation, and addressing environmental sustainability are the most pressing needs, according to this new analysis, it said.

While irrigation dominates water use in the country, the four major crops (rice, wheat, sugarcane and cotton) that use 80 percent of water contribute only 5 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

These costs are dominated by inadequate domestic water supply and sanitation, but also include the costs of floods and droughts. Poor sanitation and a lack of wastewater treatment cause water-borne diseases that kill 40,000 children each year. Rivers, lakes and the extensive Indus Delta are severely degraded undermining important ecosystem services.

The report mentioned that reaching upper-middle income status by 2047 is an ambitious goal for Pakistan and will require significant change in the structure of the economy. However, water scarcity need not to limit growth.

Irrigation water use can increase to meet growing food demands if efficiency improvements are made. Changes in diet with increasing wealth will have significant impacts on commodity demands and crop choices.

Agricultural subsidies must be reformed to reflect real value of commodity exports and of water. Without reform, irrigation water use will limit water access by industry and services sectors, constraining economic growth. Attention must be given to increasing flows below Kotri Barrage both for the health of the delta and for Karachi water supply, the report stated.

Dr Fateh Marri, Project Coordinator, WSIP, P&D Department in his opening remarks said that water is critical for the economy, environment and society in Pakistan, therefore we, together; have to address the issues & challenges to this sector.

He further said that the provincial government is in process of formulating Sindh water policy which is expected to contribute to the sustainable growth of the economy of Sindh and Pakistan.

Dr William Young, author of the report, said that new dams can help improve water security but will not address the most pressing water problems that Pakistan faces. He further added that Irrigation systems need modernizing; hydromet systems should be expanded; and urban water infrastructure, especially for wastewater, requires major investment.

Ashfaq Memon, Advisor to Chief Minister, said that "Sindh province which is at tail end of River Indus, face chronic water deficits and suffer frequently from droughts.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2019/02/07/5-page/762114-news.html>

IRSA STORES SUFFICIENT WATER IN DAMS FOR RABI CROPS

M RAFIQUE GORAYA | FEB 5TH, 2019 | LAHORE

Aided by prolonged closure of irrigation canal network and three good spells of widespread winter rains in the months of December and January, the Indus River System Authority has stored sufficient water in the Tarbela dam on the mighty Indus and Mangla dam on the river Jhelum to supply water for irrigation of Rabi crops including the nation's staple food wheat till their maturity by the end of March and middle of April when crops are ripe for harvesting across the country.

Punjab Irrigation engineers told Business Recorder here on Monday that the national water regulatory body has stored about two Million Acre Feet (MAF) water in the two reservoirs while the water inflows in the rivers are also picking up to meet immediate water needs of the strategic crops.

They said that after one and half months closure of canals for desilting and repairs purposes, the department has started opening of perennial canals to irrigate crops dependent on canal water.

They said that IRSA is releasing 25,000 cusecs water from the Tarbela dam and 10,000 cusecs from the Mangla dam to meet water indents of the provinces. River Chenab is contributing 11,500 cusecs and River Kabul 8,700 cusecs precious water to the sprawling irrigation network.

Punjab Irrigation department has re-opened the Marala Ravi link canal with a flow of 8,000 cusecs from river Chenab to supplement water supply to areas under the command of river Ravi including districts of Kasur, Okara, Sahiwal, and Pakpatton. The department has discharged 3,500 cusecs water in the Upper Chenab that feeds large areas of districts Gujranwala, Sialkot, Narowal, Sheikhpura and Lahore,

The position of inflow and outflow of water at barrages from Jinnah barrage to the last Kotri barrage on the river Indus on 4th February was as under:

Barrages: Jinnah: Inflows 35100 cusecs and Outflows 35100 cusecs, Chashma: Inflows 32800 cusecs and Outflows 39000 cusecs, Taunsa: Inflows 23500 cusecs and Outflows 23200 cusecs, Panjnad: Inflows 11900 cusecs and Outflows 7900 cusecs, Guddu: Inflows 24300 cusecs and Outflows 21000 cusecs, Sukkur: Inflows 19600 cusecs and Outflows 4100 cusecs, Kotri: Inflows 3600 cusecs and Outflows Nil cusecs.

Tarbela: Minimum operating level 1386 feet, present level 1433.26 feet, maximum conservation level 1550 feet, live storage today 0.887 million acre feet (MAF).

Mangla: Minimum operating level 1050 feet, present level 1124.80 feet, maximum conservation level 1242 feet, live storage today 0.920 MAF.

Chashma: Minimum operating level 638.15 feet, present level 640.80 feet, maximum conservation level 649 feet, live storage today 0.037 MAF.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/02/20190205444807/>

POOR WATER MANAGEMENT COSTS PAKISTAN DEARLY

By Shahbaz Rana Published: February 4, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Poor water management is costing Pakistan \$12 billion annually, as its water security that is already at risk is also facing a new challenge because of reduction in inflows in eastern tributaries due to increased water use in India, says a new World Bank report.

‘Pakistan: Getting More from Water’ report that the lender formally launched in Islamabad on Monday highlights the challenges arising from mismanagement of water resources. The report also offers solutions that include water pricing and phasing out subsidies to discourage use of water in four crops.

The report says large storage reservoirs can help improve some aspects of water security but do not address the most pressing water security issues. The findings come amid a national drive to build mega dams to preserve water.

Up to a quarter of the population may be at risk from arsenic contamination of drinking water. Floods and droughts also have significant social impacts, again affecting women and children the most.

The economic costs to Pakistan from poor water and sanitation, floods, and droughts are conservatively estimated to be 4% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or around \$12 billion per year.

The report also mentions that there has also been a small but important reduction in inflow from the eastern tributaries of the Indus because of development in India, which is permitted under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT). The small but significant decrease in total Indus inflows appears to be largely a result of the increased water use in India on the eastern tributaries.

The report says only 16 countries have more water than Pakistan but because it is the world’s sixth most populous country, water availability per person is comparatively low. There are 32 states with less water per person than Pakistan. Across these countries the average per capita GDP is 10 times that of Pakistan.

The report says Pakistan does not make the best use of its water endowment and water use is heavily dominated by agriculture. The four major crops, wheat, rice, sugarcane, and cotton that represent nearly 80% of all water use generate less than 5% of the GDP.

Scant attention is paid to environmental outcomes from water in Pakistan and water-dependent ecosystems—rivers, lakes, wetlands, and the Indus Delta—are in rapid decline.

Water security in Pakistan is undermined by poor water resource management and poor water service delivery – including irrigation and drainage services – and domestic water supply and sanitation services.

It says no formal mechanisms exist within provinces for reallocating water between sectors to match shifting demands or to cope with extreme drought.

Domestic water supply coverage is high—especially for urban households, but coverage is declining because of rapid urbanisation. And although the coverage is high, the quality of supply services is poor—especially in terms of water quality and reliability.

The report says climate change is the biggest longer-term and currently unmitigated external risk to Pakistan's water sector. The climate warming is expected to increase water demands by 5% to 15% by 2047, in addition to the demand increases from population and economic growth.

It underlines that there is no single simple solution to address water security in Pakistan. It will take concerted effort on many fronts by all governments and water users over many years.

Large infrastructure gaps must be addressed, which require significant financial resources. Provincial-level water sector financing has increased in recent years, but federal financing has declined significantly in proportional terms. In the upper Indus Basin, accelerated glacial melting will increase the risks of dangerous glacial lake outburst floods. In the lower Indus Basin, sea level rise and increases in the frequency and severity of coastal storms will exacerbate seawater intrusion into the delta and into coastal groundwater.

It said a second overlooked risk is change in basin-scale river sediment dynamics.

The report said new reservoirs would deliver relatively modest additional yield, and the water supply benefits would not justify the significant financial costs. But new reservoirs will help mitigate floods and seasonal flow variations, both of which are expected to increase with climate change.

Although population growth is slowing, projections suggest Pakistan's population will exceed 300 million by 2047 and water demands will increase significantly.

The World Bank has given a dozen recommendations to address water scarcity and mismanagement issues. Half a dozen recommendations relate to improved water resource management, three to improved service delivery, and three are related to improved risk mitigation.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1903612/2-poor-water-management-costs-pakistan-dearly/>

40PC WATER SHORTAGE BODES ILL FOR WHEAT

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter Updated February 04, 2019

LAHORE: The agriculture sector which uses around 90 per cent of the available water resources, is facing over 40 per cent water shortage during the ongoing Rabi season and it will particularly hit the wheat crop.

Experts warn that the issue will become graver in the absence of a coordinated effort to conserve the available water resources and putting them under better effective use as Pakistan is on its way to become a water-stressed country by 2025.

Punjab Agriculture Secretary Wasif Khurshid says the department is promoting high-efficiency irrigation systems besides improving the water channels to minimise the wastage of water during flow from canals to fields.

For installation of high-efficiency irrigation systems like sprinklers and drip-irrigation, he says the government is offering 60 per cent subsidy. However, no plan has been devised yet to replace the crops that need too much water with the drought-tolerant ones.

Govt says judicious use of technology to help farmers

By adopting modern farming techniques the water use may be cut down by almost 50 per cent without compromising the yield, says Zahid Saleem, head of Pepsico Pakistan's agronomy wing.

In Deepalpur, a visit to fields in Kasur corroborates the statement of Mr Saleem as potato growers are reaping 20 per cent more yield despite cutting down on the water use by half.

"We used to irrigate the crop every eighth day. But thanks to the Sustainable Farming Project, we adopted modern technology, installed devices to measure soil moisture and increased the irrigation duration from eight to eighteen days," says Asim Dogar, a farmer who is partnering in the project.

"This helped us not only save water but also cut down our [irrigation] costs."

Mr Saleem says they are also offering advice on best and rationalised use of fertilizers as well as training growers who wish to adopt the good agriculture practices as so far almost 600 acres of land have come under the Sustainable Farming Project.

Published in Dawn, February 4th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1461742/40pc-water-shortage-bodes-ill-for-wheat>

SCBA PRESIDENT CALLS FOR ADDRESSING GWADAR WATER ISSUES

By Mohammad Zafar Published: February 4, 2019

QUETTA: Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) President Amanullah Kanrani has urged the authorities to take serious steps to address the water crisis in Gwadar.

He was chairing a meeting held to review the water issues in the port city on Sunday. MNA Aslam Bhotani, MPA Mir Hamal Almati, Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Waseem and officials of the Gwadar Development Authority attended the meeting.

Briefing the participants, Public Health Engineering Chief Engineer Muhammad Imran Aliyani said 1.2 million gallons of water was being supplied daily to the residents of Gwadar from Mirani Dam, along with 1.5 million gallons each from Chinese and Frontier Works Organisation plants.

He added Rs5 billion have been spent to overcome water shortage in the city.

Kanrani, who heads a commission formed to look into the water crisis, stressed the need for making functional a desalination plant, saying it would provide a permanent solution instead of taking short-term measures.

The meeting was told that the provincial government had been taking steps to end the water crisis in the city. It was also informed that the Sod and Shadi Kaur dams were on the outskirts of Gwadar.

Kanrani visited the Sarbandan Plant and took a tour of the port city. He urged all institutions to launch joint efforts to address the water crisis.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1903116/1-scba-president-calls-addressing-gwadar-water-issues/>

PUNJAB GOVT DRAFTS PLAN TO PROVIDE CLEAN DRINKING WATER

By Imran Adnan Published: February 4, 2019

LAHORE: The provincial government has prepared a policy draft with an aim to reduce morbidity and mortality caused by water-borne diseases, through the provision of and potable water for the citizens in an efficient, equitable and sustainable manner.

The policy draft available with The Express Tribune highlights that the key principles of the policy include recognition of safe drinking water as a fundamental right (implicit under Article 9 of the Constitution of Pakistan) of the entire population of the province. The policy focuses equitable access to water and aims at addressing all kinds of disparities in accessing safe drinking water, besides prioritisation of the allocation of water for drinking purposes over other uses, like agriculture, industry, etc.

It warrants appropriate resource allocation for safely managed drinking water services with a delegation of responsibilities and accountabilities to local bodies. The policy will encourage the development and adoption of cost-effective technologies that are easy to operate and maintain for scaling up in the province. It will seek a multi-sectoral approach, involving different government departments and other stakeholders, for ensuring the provision of safely managed drinking water.

The draft also focuses on involving and engaging women and other vulnerable groups in the planning, implementation, monitoring, operation, and maintenance of safely managed water services. It underpins the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with key emphasis on SDG-6 (water and sanitation for all) along with contributing to other goals: no poverty; good health and well-being; gender equality; reduced inequalities; sustainable cities and communities; responsible consumption and production; climate action; and life on land.

The objectives and targets set under the policy show that the government has set a target to create universal coverage and access to safely managed drinking services across the province in line with SDGs by 2030. By 2020, the province will introduce legislative measures and regulations to create an enabling framework for safely managed drinking water services. It will also, devise and implement a need-based criterion for equitable distribution of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) resources in the districts, cities and rural settlements. The government aims by the end of the next 10 years, develop standardised service delivery models for urban and rural areas to improve efficiency, access, performance, and sustainability of safely managed water services. It will develop regular drinking water quality monitoring and surveillance mechanisms in line with national drinking water quality standards and SDGs. By 2020, it

will also ensure that a minimum 30% of local development funds are transferred to local councils for WASH-related intervention

Another major objective of the policy is to increase public awareness about waterborne and water-related diseases (including polio), nutrition and hygiene, and water safety, including safe water treatment and storage.

A target for 2022 is developing and instituting the capacity development standards and initiatives for implementing, operation and maintenance of safely managed water services. By 2025, it aims to develop and implement mechanisms for reuse, recycle and recharge of wastewater for other municipal and productive uses in all major cities and towns.

The policy document highlights that as per the Punjab Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2014, about 94% of the population uses an ‘improved’ source of drinking water – 89% in urban areas and 97% in rural.

Furthermore, 19.2% population of the province has access to tap water, 41.7% to water from a motorised pump and 30.6% from hand-pumps. The proportion of the population using tap water as the main supply of drinking water is higher in urban areas (39.2%) compared to rural areas (9.6%). Only 2.1% among the household that do not have access to improved drinking water sources were using an appropriate water treatment method, slightly higher in urban (2.4%) than rural areas (1.6%).

As per draft National Water Quality Monitoring Report 2015-16, only 35% water sources in Punjab are safe for drinking, free from microbiological and chemical contamination (iron, fluoride, nitrates) and physical characteristics (turbidity, hardness, total dissolved solids) compared to 31% overall in Pakistan.

Moreover, a Water Quality Survey conducted by Punjab Saaf Pani Company in rural areas of selected districts in 2015 indicates the prevalence of arsenic contamination in almost 40% water sources. The government has been addressing water quality issues through the installation of filtration plants.

The Punjab MICS 2014 found an Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) of 76 per 1,000 live births and Under 5 Mortality Rate (U5MR) of 96 per 1,000 live births. Evidence suggests that pneumonia, diarrhoea, and malaria cause about 50% of all deaths among children in the country.

In Pakistan, 53,000 children die every year from diarrhoea. An estimated 25 million children and 50 million adults suffer from diarrhoeal morbidity annually. According to the Vision 2025 document of federal government, contamination and poor water quality have a direct and very significant impact on the nation’s health with waterborne infections accounting for 70% of all common diseases that impact national health. The economic cost of poor water and sanitation services is estimated to be around 3.94% of GDP of Pakistan.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1903182/1-govt-prepares-draft-provide-clean-drinking-water/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JAN 28th TO FEB 3rd 2019

INEFFICIENT USE OF WATER RESOURCES

RECORDER REPORT | FEB 3RD, 2019 | EDITORIAL

A World Bank report has accused Pakistan of making poor use of “significant” water resources. The economic costs from poor water and sanitation, floods and droughts are conservatively estimated to be 4 percent of GDP or around \$12 billion per year, says the report. The question whether or not Pakistan has significant water resources, or it is “highly water-stressed”, has generated a variety of opinions. While to some the glass is half full, the others say it is half empty. According to one school of thought, Pakistan is a water-rich country – only 35 countries have more renewable water. Instead of raising the alarm of water scarcity Pakistan is being told to ‘shift its focus from scarcity to managing water demand, producing more from each drop of water’. From the national perspective, Pakistan is water-rich but only if it significantly improves its water-management. Otherwise, the water scarcity is rapidly on the rise, both because of the climate change and the hostile neighbour’s design to steal Pakistan’s share.

Irrespective of the broader context of the debate on supply and use of water what merits immediate attention is follow-up on the World Bank take on the use of water in Pakistan, and its plausible economic consequences. The said report deals in some depth with the outmoded irrigation system, lack of attention to environmental outcomes from water and water-dependent ecosystems, inadequate monitoring and data management and declining share of water in the GDP. The report is spot on by pointing out that in our so-called agricultural country its four major crops – wheat, rice, cotton and sugarcane-that consume nearly 80 percent of all available water generate less than 5 percent of GDP. As to what causes this imbalance the report lists poor water resource management right from its release to the field. There are many a leak on its way to the field. Not only is the work on brick-lining main canals far behind the targets, there is also extensive incidence of seepage from the drains and wasteful method of flood-irrigation. Efficient use of water by

adopting new techniques like drip-irrigation or spray from above is not yet common either. Then there is also the paucity of high-yield seeds as well as expensive use of tractors. The fertilizers, which are now inescapable need for the tired fields, are beyond the reach of small farmers. And what that small farmer gets in return is ridiculously low prices offered for his produce. A case in point is a recent protest of potato growers in front of the Punjab Assembly, who were being forced to sell their output at the rate of Rs 5 per kilo. The hard fact is that for the small farmers agriculture is no more economically viable. Not only are the required inputs beyond their reach, there is no mechanism in place to ensure that get fair prices. The task before the government should be to see to it that they don't give up farming and move to the city in search of so-called greener pastures.

There are also quite a few interesting observations in the World Bank report that deserve to be noted by the concerned departments of the government. According to the report, the climate change is no doubt the biggest long-term and currently unmitigated external risk to the water sector, but it is not going to 'alter average water availability over coming decades'. But there is no clear vision of the issue on the part of the concerned authorities, laments the World Bank; it also believes that water sector financing is below the recommended levels. The biggest challenges, it says, are ones of governance especially regarding irrigation and urban water supplies. One may argue that given the fact that inflow of water from natural resources is almost synchronous to its outflow for the seasonal cropping, the demand for big storage dams should be subjected to an intensive study. But the irony is that in a country, whose agricultural potential is critical in terms of food security and employment, should be asked to sit on the back benches. To sum up, water is life for Pakistan; this gift of God should not be trivialized. Its usage must be properly managed.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/02/20190203444447/>

EXPERTS RETURN AFTER INSPECTING INDIAN HYDROPOWER PROJECTS

Khalid Hasnain Updated February 02, 2019

LAHORE: A three-member delegation of Pakistani experts returned home on Friday after inspecting various hydropower projects at Chenab basin in India. The delegation during its six-day visit inspected the projects under the Indus Water Treaty on the invitation of New Delhi-based office of the Indian commissioner for Indus waters.

"Our visit remained successful, as we inspected four hydropower projects at Chenab basin in India, including 1,000MW Pakal Dul, 48MW Lower Kalnai, 850MW Ratlay and 900MW Baglihar dam," Pakistan's commissioner for Indus waters Syed Mehr Ali Shah, who led the delegation, told Dawn after returning home from India. He said the construction work on Pakal Dul dam, which was earlier stopped, had resumed. Though access roads had been constructed, civil work on the dam was yet to begin, he added.

Mr Shah said no work had started on Lower Kalnai and Ratlay projects, as the contractor, who was mobilised earlier, had left the work.

"We witnessed that the contractor camp was abandoned, as there was no construction activity. We also visited the areas of these projects in detail, by going up to the river site," he added.

He said the delegation also inspected the Baglihar dam, which was generating 150MW of power on the day due to low water flows in the river during the ongoing winter.

"There we, under the decision of the neutral experts, had to see whether or not the operation of this plant was according to the project design. So after the visit, we found operation of the plant according to its design," he explained.

Mr Shah said the visit provided Pakistan an opportunity to devise its next strategies. However, observations and concerns noted by the Pakistani experts during the visit would not be made public before conveying these to their counterparts formally.

"We cannot make our observations, concerns public, as we will convey these to our counterpart in India either through a letter or meeting," he added.

Mr Shah appreciated the Indian authorities for rendering full cooperation in carrying out the inspection of the projects by the Pakistani experts. "Though they [Indians] had planned our visits to various sites, we visited even the sites (up/down streams) we desired. They also provided us foolproof security," he said.

According to Water Resources Secretary Khawaja Shumail, the Pakistani experts' visit to India was very successful. He said Pakistan had also invited the Indian experts to visit Kotri barrage whenever they desired.

“Our delegation has invited them to visit Pakistan, as their visit, under decisions of the two-day meeting of the Permanent Commission for Indus Waters (PCIW) held in Lahore in August last year, is scheduled after the end of the visit of Pakistani experts. So now it is up to them when they visit Kotri barrage,” he said, adding that they wanted the Indian experts to visit Kotri barrage by March.

It may be recalled that as a result of the 115th meeting of the PCIW in Lahore, India had scheduled inspection of its projects by the Pakistani experts in September last year, but later scheduled it for October. However, India again postponed the inspection at a later stage due to local bodies’ elections in the areas where the projects are located. Finally, India through a letter scheduled the visit from Jan 28 to Feb 1. While scheduling the visit (Jan 28 to Feb 1), they also clarified that though the tour by the Pakistani experts was first scheduled for September and then October, it couldn’t be made possible because of local Panchayat elections in the area and then the winter session of Indian parliament.

Published in Dawn, February 2nd, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1461333/experts-return-after-inspecting-indian-hydropower-projects>

PAD PLANS TO BUILD SMALL DAMS UNDER PIPIP

RECORDER REPORT | FEB 1ST, 2019 | LAHORE

The Punjab Agriculture Department (PAD) will level 150,000 acres of land in Chakwal, Jhelum, Rawalpindi and other areas so as to construct small dams with the aim of improving water availability for the agriculture under the Punjab Irrigated Agriculture Productivity Improvement Project (PIPIP). This was stated by the Special Secretary (Marketing) Ehsan Bhutta while chairing a meeting here on Thursday to review the progress on this Rs 67 billion project being carried out by the provincial government in collaboration with the World Bank.

The project is aimed at improving supply of irrigation water by efficient conveyance and its effective farm level use, production of more profitable crops through High Efficiency Irrigation System (HEIS), strengthening the private sector service delivery and capacity building of stakeholders in better managing irrigation water.

The Department is helping the farmers to install drip/sprinkle irrigation system, leveling land by use of laser land levelers, restoration of barren lands, pavement of water courses, tunnel farming and solar panel installation for tube-wells. The department is extending subsidy to the growers for all these projects.

The Special Secretary Agriculture directed the regional managers attending the meeting to ensure achievement of all the goals under this project. He said that the growers are being given 60 percent subsidy on installation of drip irrigation system in their land besides leveling land in Potohari, desert or land which are not level, he concluded.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/02/20190201443930/>

SENATE PANEL SEEKS RELEASE OF FUNDS FOR SMALL DAMS

By Our Correspondent Published: February 1, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Finance on Thursday directed the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms to ensure appropriate release of funds allocated for the construction of small dams and water conservation projects in Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) for the financial year 2018-19.

With Senator Farooq Hamid Naek in the chair, the committee discussed at length the recommendations on the Finance Supplementary (Second Amendment) Bill, 2019. While the standing committee agreed to most of the recommendations, some of them were declined.

It also unanimously proposed for 10 percent increase in the salaries of government employees due to increasing inflationary impact on an ordinary person. Suggested by Senator Khanzada Khan, it was supported by Senator Ayesha Raza Khan. However, officials of the ministry of finance opposed the suggestion due to increasing fiscal deficit. Meanwhile, recommendations pertaining to provinces were forwarded by the committee to the concerned provincial departments.

Senator Kulsoom Parveen’s recommendations for cutting tax rate on coal extracted from Balochistan and release of Rs5 billion funds for construction of dams in the same province were approved as well as another proposal for setting up a cancer hospital in Quetta.

The committee also took up Senator Sirajul Haq’s recommendation for eradicating interest from the country’s economy. Officials from the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) said that the country was seeing an increase in Islamic

banking with 2,850 branches and 22 institutions offering Shariah-compliant financing products. The committee returned the recommendation after SBP officials convinced it that the matter was being addressed.

Senator Muhammad Usman Kakar's proposal to issue air travel allowance to senators in the form of cash rather than 25 air tickets was also approved by a majority while recommendation of the Senate Deputy Chairman Saleem Mandviwalla relating to exemption of sales tax on locally supplied soya bean oil was declined.

Recommendation for continuing regulatory duty on export of recycled material and for inclusion of Pakistani items in the FTA contract with China were also approved.

The committee also approved the recommendation for expediting construction and expansion works of infrastructure projects including the Taxila-Haripur Road and Hawelian to Abbotabad road. The committee was told that road between Shah Maqsood to Mansehra will be completed by December.

It accepted recommendations for expediting distribution of compensation funds for victims affected by land procured for Bhasha and Dasu dams. A recommendation regarding construction of low-capacity hydel projects in KPK was also approved.

The committee was also informed that tobacco growers and industry in the country were facing problems as Federal Excise Duty (FED) of Rs300 per kg was imposed on tobacco, which had forced the industrialists to shut down their businesses. The tobacco sector was contributing about Rs4.5 billion in terms of revenue and each unit was also providing livelihood facility to 100 to 150 people, she said, adding that tax burden was adversely impacting the sector. Senator Dilawar Khan asked the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to rationalise the SRO 1149 to protect the local industry and attract the foreign investment as well as facilitating the tobacco growers across the country.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1901317/1-senate-panel-seeks-release-funds-small-dams/>

VAWDA DIRECTS LAND ACQUISITION FOR DASU HYDROPOWER PROJECT

RECORDER REPORT | JAN 31ST, 2019 | ISLAMABAD

Faisal Vawda, Federal Minister for Water Resources has directed that land acquisition for Dasu Hydropower Project must be completed quickly and resolved to remove all road blocks impeding progress on the project. He was chairing the 12th Steering Committee Meeting of Dasu Dam Hydropower Project on Wednesday in Ministry of Water Resources. Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan also attended the meeting, says a press release issued here. Progress update on the project subsequent to the last meeting was shared with the steering committee. Minister directed the project team to speed up land acquisition for hydropower project and showed full support to remove all hurdles therein. He said that building of dams is among top priorities of the current government contrary to the last 50 years where no government took this matter seriously. Dasu Hydropower project will have total installed capacity of 4,320 megawatts of electricity with 12 generating units and is among the priority projects under the National Water Policy.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/01/20190131443656/>

WATER ECONOMICS

Editorial January 30, 2019

PAKISTAN is getting very poor economic returns from its large water resources, and when we add in the costs of environmental degradation due to misuse of water, the returns are pushed even further down. This is the finding of a new World Bank report Pakistan: Getting More from Water that takes a close look at the country's water endowment, and how well the water is used for productive purposes. Some of the findings are so counter-intuitive as to merit a more spirited debate. For example, the authors say that irrigation, which consumes the lion's share of total water resources, only contributes \$22bn to the annual GDP. The four major crops — cotton, wheat, sugarcane and rice — consume 80pc of the water in the system, while they generate less than 5pc of the total GDP. This is a startling perspective because laypersons are used to thinking of Pakistan as an agrarian country, and the gross asymmetry in the water allocations between industry and agriculture, as well as city and country, is almost considered normal under the shadow of this assumption.

The figures point to massive waste as the primary problem in the water sector of Pakistan, not quantity. Proponents of the argument that dams are the only solution to our water woes need to reflect on some of the findings of the report. The amount of water that goes into the cultivation of major crops is far out of proportion to what is needed. Wasteful practices such as flood irrigation will remain in place so long as our water conversation continues to be dominated by the talk of dams. The simple fact brought out by the report is that improvements in water utilisation can do far more to ensure the water security of future generations than any number of dams will. Besides waste, the other main cost that poor utilisation practices impose upon society is through environmental degradation, a fact that is unfortunately absent altogether from the country's water conversation. This degradation is made possible by the poor state of water data and monitoring, the authors note. One is reminded of the sorry end that the telemetry system installed in the early 2000s met with; it was supposed to measure the streamflow down to the watercourse level. Without data and monitoring, and a woefully outdated pricing regime, Pakistan's water security will remain on shaky foundations regardless of how many dams the country builds.

Published in Dawn, January 30th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1460708/water-economics>

HEC TO FORM CENTRE FOR RESEARCHING WATER RESOURCES

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter January 30, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) will be establishing a Centre for Water Resources in Balochistan to take up research, innovation and capacity building to help mitigate water shortage in the province. A statement issued by the commission says proposals have been sought from research groups in recognised public and research-active private universities and degree awarding institutions in Balochistan by Feb 22.

The centre will consist of a series of affiliated laboratories in universities in the province and will be selected on the basis of demonstrated capability, track record of accomplishment and partnerships with leading national institutions and private sector stakeholders.

The statement says other universities, organisations and development partners may also collaborate and submit joint proposals for the establishment of the centre.

The initiative is part of HEC's efforts for resolving the water crisis in Balochistan. The HEC statement says that according to reports, 62pc of the province lacks safe drinking water and over half the area has become uncultivable due to the shortage of water, causing a great setback to the agriculture sector.

"The situation is feared to lead to a serious drought in the coming years. Prompt measures are required to bring improvement to irrigation infrastructure and water resource management," it says.

Published in Dawn, January 30th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1460600/hec-to-form-centre-for-researching-water-resources>

BIG CITIES: PROVISION OF CLEAN DRINKING WATER WILL BE PART OF STRATEGY: MINISTER

RECORDER REPORT | JAN 29TH, 2019 | ISLAMABAD

Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reform, Khusro Bakhtyar has said that providing clean drinking water to major urban cities will be made a part of development strategy to address the needs of the people in view of fast urban growth. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government is committed to according priority to the major urban transport projects of Karachi to cater to public transport requirements of the cosmopolitan city.

The minister was chairing a meeting held to review foreign funded projects here on Monday. Advisor to Prime Minister on Institutional Reforms Dr Ishrat Hussain, Secretary Planning Zafar Hasan and senior officials of the ministry were also present in the meeting. The minister said that Karachi is a major commercial hub of the country and a vital engine of growth. The minister called for according priority to major transport projects of the city including Karachi Sustainable Bus Rapid Transit, Red Transit, Green Line and Karachi Circular Railway.

He further stated that the government knows that major urban centres like Karachi and Quetta are facing issues of safe drinking water as well as sewerage treatment and disposal, adding that the measures will be taken to ensure improved drinking water availability.

The meeting discussed and took an overall view of various foreign-financed projects relating to environment, transport, water and power, and urban development being funded by different funding agencies like World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Islamic Development Bank, JICA and Asian Infrastructure Development Bank. The minister called for reaping benefits from the donors' funding for the welfare of the people and improvement of socio-economic indicators of the country as well.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/01/20190129443066/>

POOR USE OF WATER RESOURCES

By Editorial Published: January 29, 2019

Our national life is characterised by long years of complacency and unconcern and then anxiety following wake-up calls. The authorities are being repeatedly warned by experts on water issues. Water scarcity has been increasing in the country with the passage of time due to shortage of storage capacity. Most of the rainwater flows to the sea as no new dam has been built after 1968.

Now the World Bank says Pakistan gets a poor economic return from its significant water resources. The economic costs from poor water and sanitation, floods and droughts are estimated to be 4pc of GDP, or Rs12 billion a year. The economic costs of degradation of the Indus delta are estimated to be around Rs2 billion. Taken together all this puts the country's economic managers in a bad light. The report says little attention is paid to the environmental outcomes from water and water-dependent ecosystems – rivers, lakes, wetlands and the Indus delta. They are in rapid decline. This is causing biodiversity loss, greatly reduced stock of freshwater and reduced protection from storms provided by coastal mangrove forests. Excessive water withdrawals and widespread pollution are the main causes of decline. It says water security is undermined by poor water resource management and poor water service delivery—including irrigation and drainage services – domestic water supply and sanitation services. Some growing long-term water-related risks are poorly mitigated. It says there is no proper system of data collection, analysis of data and action based on analysis. It warns that climate change will make water inflows more variable between and within years, increasing the severity of floods and droughts. The biggest challenges pertain to governance, especially in irrigation and urban water supply. These challenges mainly relate to inadequate legal frameworks and the inadequacy of policy implementation.

Published in The Express Tribune, January 29th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1898906/6-poor-use-water-resources/>

PAKISTAN MAKES POOR USE OF ITS WATER RESOURCES: REPORT

Amin Ahmed Updated January 28, 2019

ISLAMABAD: A new report of the World Bank says Pakistan gets a poor economic return from its significant water resources, observing that the best use of water endowment is not made in the country.

The economic costs from poor water and sanitation, floods and droughts are conservatively estimated to be four per cent of the GDP, or around \$12 billion per year. These costs are dominated by the costs of poor water supply and sanitation, says the report titled "Pakistan Getting More from Water".

The economic costs of degradation of the Indus delta are estimated to be around \$2 billion per year, while the costs of pollution and other environmental degradation have not been assessed. These estimates of economic benefits and costs cannot be directly compared or aggregated, but they demonstrate that the country gets a poor economic return from its significant water resource.

The country does not make the best use of its water endowment and the water use is heavily dominated by agriculture, which contributes around one-fifth of the national GDP, but less than half of this is from irrigated cropping. Irrigation contributes around \$22 billion to annual GDP.

The four major crops — wheat, rice, cotton and sugarcane — that represent nearly 80pc of all water use generate less than 5pc of the GDP — around \$14 billion per year. Other economic contributions from water are difficult to accurately assess, but hydropower generation is economically significant, with a current market value of \$1 billion to \$2 billion.

World Bank says ecosystems like rivers, lakes, wetlands and Indus delta are in rapid decline

The report says scant attention is paid to the environmental outcomes from water and water-dependent ecosystems — rivers, lakes, wetlands and the Indus delta — are in rapid decline. This decline is characterised by biodiversity loss, greatly reduced stocks of freshwater and estuarine fish stocks, and a loss of other ecosystem services, including the storm protection afforded by coastal mangrove forests. Excessive water withdrawals and widespread pollution are the main causes of decline, but river fragmentation by infrastructure and changed sediment regimes contribute.

Water security is undermined by poor water resource management and poor water service delivery — including irrigation and drainage services — and domestic water supply and sanitation services. In addition, some growing, long-term water-related risks are not adequately recognised and are poorly mitigated.

Water resource management is compromised by poor water data, information, and analysis; weak processes for water resources planning and allocation; environmentally unsustainable levels of water withdrawal; widespread pollution; and low water productivity in agriculture.

Inadequate monitoring and data management prevent robust water resource assessments and accounting to guide water planning and management and prevents reliable flood and drought forecasting.

Water resources planning has historically focused on supply augmentation and has not addressed sustainable resource use or been linked adequately to broader economic planning. Although provincial water shares have been formally defined, they have been demonstrated to be economically suboptimal, and there is insufficient clarity on risk sharing during times of acute scarcity.

These deficiencies are expected to become starker with increasing water demands and climate change. Water resources management does little to protect water-dependent ecosystems either by way of environmental flows or pollution control.

The report points out that no formal mechanisms exist within provinces for reallocating water between sectors to match shifting demands or to cope with extreme drought. Irrigation water allocation is suboptimal in terms of efficiency, equity, and transparency, contributing to the low productivity of irrigated agriculture and causing a lack of trust between farmers and service providers.

Irrigation service delivery is poor and contributes to low productivity. Hydraulic efficiency of water distribution is very low, and water delivery across command areas is inequitable. Irrigation services are not financially sustainable and financial performance is declining. Service tariffs are set too low and are decoupled from service quality, and the operational costs of service providers are far too high.

Climate change is the biggest longer-term and currently unmitigated external risk to water sector. Climate change is not expected to greatly alter average water availability over coming decades, but inflows will become more variable between and within years, increasing the severity of floods and droughts. Climate warming is expected to drive water demands up by 5pc to 15pc by 2047, in addition to the demand increases from population and economic growth.

In the upper Indus Basin, accelerated glacial melting will increase the risks of dangerous glacial lake outburst floods. In the lower Indus Basin, sea level rise and increases in the frequency and severity of coastal storms will exacerbate seawater intrusion into the delta and into coastal groundwater. In coastal Sindh, this will further degrade groundwater quality, ground water dependent ecosystems, and irrigation productivity.

A careful assessment of all water resources, drawing on a range of data and past studies, suggests that the current total average annual renewable resource is 229 billion cubic metres (BCM). Only 4pc of this is outside of the Indus Basin. There is no single simple solution to address water security. It will take concerted effort on many fronts by all governments and water users over many years. Large infrastructure gaps must be addressed, which require significant financial resources. Provincial-level water sector financing has increased in recent years, but federal financing has declined significantly in proportional terms.

Collectively, sector financing is well below the recommended levels. This is the case for major infrastructure, reforms, and institutional strengthening; urban services; flood mitigation; and environmental management. The biggest challenges, however, are ones of governance, especially regarding irrigation and urban water. The governance challenges relate to inadequate legal frameworks for water at federal and provincial levels, and the incompleteness of policy frameworks and the inadequacy of policy implementation. The policy deficiencies stem from institutional problems, including unclear, incomplete, or overlapping institutional mandates, and a lack of capacity in water institutions at all levels.

Published in Dawn, January 28th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1460217/pakistan-makes-poor-use-of-its-water-resources-report>

March 2019

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MARCH 18th TO MARCH 24th 2019

MAJORITY OF RATODERO'S RESIDENTS DEPRIVED OF CLEAN DRINKING WATER

By PPI Published: March 24, 2019

RATODERO: In the growing town of Ratodero, Larkana, 75% of the residents have been deprived of safe drinking water as the subsoil water is salty and unworthy of human consumption. The population of this town is estimated to be over 150,000.

Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Faryal Talpur is the MPA from this town and was elected as an MNA twice before she was replaced by PPP Chairperson Bilawal Bhutto Zardari but nothing has been done so far to provide potable water to their voters.

The residents have been forced to procure water daily at Rs20 per gallon. Safe drinking water is procured like groceries and other essential food items. For large families the daily expenditure for potable water is Rs120 or more. Those who cannot afford to pay for water such as labourers are forced to use contaminated water which leaves them susceptible to deadly stomach ailments, kidney failures and diseases like Hepatitis leaving their lives endangered. A water supply scheme was approved during PPP's first term, at the cost of Rs120 million, and was inaugurated by Faryal Talpur but it could not be made functional for a single day.

It is alleged that there was corruption on a massive scale in the water supply scheme which was executed by the Sindh public health engineering department.

A substandard pipeline was used which broke when the water was released and flooded the roads. Two years later, another Rs20m were released for the scheme but instead of replacing the pipes, the relevant authorities repaired the pipes but the repairs did not work.

Besides, eight motors and a turbine were installed at the water supply scheme, established on Naudero-Ratodero Road, but soon four of those motors were stolen. Due to the lax attitude of the relevant authorities neither the motors nor the two pole mounted transformers which were also stolen from there have been recovered as yet. The cost of each motor was Rs500,000.

After repeated complaints and numerous media reports, the relevant authorities have recently taken notice and have reportedly released an amount of Rs5m to the Ratodero municipal committee to procure new motors and repair the pipelines. However, according to sources, the amount has been withdrawn but the work has not begun and the water scheme remains non-functional.

It is further alleged that water tanks, painted with the colours of the PPP flag, were constructed in ten localities of Ratodero on the advice of local PPP leaders. However, those tanks also remain dysfunctional and the majority of Ratodero's residents remain deprived of potable water.

Published in The Express Tribune, March 24th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1936034/1-majority-ratoderos-residents-deprived-clean-drinking-water/>

WATER CONSERVATION TERMED COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

By Our Correspondent Published: March 24, 2019

PESHAWAR: Experts have expressed concerns over the looming water crisis in the country and called for collective efforts to conserve depleting water resources.

They said water conservation was the collective responsibility of everyone and stressed on involving all stakeholders at every stage or else there would be no water if practices to waste water continued.

They expressed these views at an event organised here by Association of Water and Sanitation Services Companies (AWSC) Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa on eve of World Water Day.

Among the speakers were Secretary Local Government, Elections and Rural Development Department Zahir Shah, Chairman AWSC Nasir Ghafoor Khan, former VC of University of Engineering and Technology Imtiaz Gillani, Prof Dr Sagheer Aslam and heads of all water and sanitation services companies in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa.

Zahir Shah, while speaking on the occasion, said people were the biggest stakeholder who should realise importance of water and save it.

“Though the government is taking steps on multiple fronts to conserve water but it would not bear fruits unless people play their due role,” he said.

To conserve water, he said, the Government of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa has started charging Rs1 per liter from water companies in light of the Supreme Court judgement.

He said that CCTV cameras will soon be installed on commercial utilities, adding that legislation was underway to charge consumers for extraction of ground water.

“The provincial government has too constituted a task force led by minister for LGE and RDD that will make strategy to conserve water and ensure everyone’s access to it,” he said.

Chief Executive Officer WSSP, Syed Zafar Ali Shah informed the participants about steps being taken to provide potable water to residents of Peshawar and water conservation.

He said that WSSP has replaced 284 kilometers rusted water pipeline and conducted 2000 water quality tests jointly with UET Peshawar and Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (PCSIR) to check contamination.

On conservation, he said that all car wash centers, wedding halls and bottled water companies being registered and installation of meters on them are underway.

WSSP CEO said that over 10,000 water illegal connections have been registered during the ongoing campaign.

Published in The Express Tribune, March 24th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1935965/1-water-conservation-termed-collective-responsibility/>

WATER USAGE REFORMS TO FIGHT ITS SCARCITY IN PAKISTAN

Shahzada Irfan Ahmed March 24, 2019

This week the world celebrated the World Water Day on March 22 with a resolve to make water accessible to every individual inhabiting this earth. This year’s theme was “Leaving no one behind”.

It was a clear expression of how important it is to ensure access to water, without any discrimination, in order to bring improvements in their lives.

There is no denying the fact that water is life. It is crucial for one’s survival and also fuels economic growth besides ensuring food security for the masses.

As access to water is a basic human right, there is a stress on taking everyone along and making strategic plans that do not leave any individual uncovered.

With global population growing fast, the world is facing water scarcity and a consistent decrease in its availability per capita. It is feared that water reserves will be depleting faster now leaving little for the coming generations to depend on.

Due to this situation, there is a realisation that proper management and judicious use of the existing water resources, both in the rural and urban areas, is crucial for preservation of this finite resource for times to follow.

Over the years, the nations of the world have come up with water policies that advise minimal use of water for different purposes to achieve same results and stopping wastage.

Similarly, there are calls to recycle water used in industry and commercial activities, introduce seed varieties that reduce dependence on water, adopt innovative irrigation techniques, do away with flood irrigation methods, avoid sowing water-intensive crops, put limits and conditions on ground water extraction, improve water governance and so on.

The situation in Pakistan is quite alarming that calls for announcement of a water emergency and strict adherence to well-devised plan which must be workable as well.

A good thing is that country has come up with a National Water Policy 2018 that describes desired actions. However, its success depends primarily on the seriousness of the ruling set up to enforce decisions, even the unpopular ones, provinces’ support, reforming the government departments responsible for governance etc.

In this context two reports “Pakistan Getting More from Water” by the World Bank and “Beneath the Surface: The State of World’s Water in 2019” by Water Aid are very relevant and give a picture of what exists on ground.

The World Bank report points out that Pakistan does not make the best use of its water endowment and uses it in a manner which is far from ideal. Addressing these concerns will be a must to improve the situation. Some observations from the report follow:

* Water use is heavily dominated by agriculture, which contributes around one-fifth of national GDP, but less than half of this is from irrigated cropping. Irrigation contributes around \$22 billion to annual GDP. The four major crops (wheat, rice, sugarcane, and cotton) that represent nearly 80 percent of all water use generate less than five percent of GDP—around \$14 billion per year.

* The economic costs to Pakistan from poor water and sanitation, floods, and droughts are conservatively estimated to be four percent of GDP, or around \$12 billion per year.

* Although population growth is slowing, projections suggest Pakistan's population will exceed 300 million by 2047, driving water demands much higher. Without serious demand management and reform, and if the climate warms rapidly, water demand could increase by nearly 60 percent by 2047.

* The largest increases in demand will be for irrigation. Population and economic growth are the main drivers, but climate warming will contribute significantly. The fastest rates of demand growth will be for domestic and industrial supply.

* Productivity improvements (in agriculture) will require better control of water delivery, better on-farm water management, increased input quality (eg, seeds), crop diversification, and better pest control.

* Biodiversity loss, declining fish stocks, and degradation of the ecosystems of the Indus Delta, which offer valuable ecosystem services, are increasing, with little effort to monitor or mitigate this damage.

The second report "Beneath the Surface: The State of the World's Water 2019" by Water Aid points out another factor leading to excessive use of water in Pakistan. This is called use of virtual water—the water included in the production of everything we eat, buy and wear. The amount of water needed to create a product is its water footprint.

An example the report gives is of a lunchtime hamburger of about 110 grams. It might not appear to contain much water, but, on average, it took 1,700 litres of water, or 85 jerry cans, to get it to your plate. Similarly, average water footprint of rice is 2,500 litres of water per kilogramme and that of asparagus, which is a thirsty vegetable, 2,150 litres per kilogramme. Similarly, manufacturing of cloth etc consumes heavy volumes of water.

It is a fact that many developed nations import huge stock of products with high water footprint from less developed countries and save their own water resources by not producing these goods locally. The country will also have to rethink which products it produces for export and how it can bring down its water footprint in those sectors through innovation.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/447890-water-usage-reforms-to-fight-its-scarcity-in-pakistan>

ENGRO PLEDGES TO CONSERVE WATER ON 'WORLD WATER DAY'

RECORDER REPORT | MAR 23RD, 2019 | KARACHI

Engro has reaffirmed its commitment to support the Sustainable Development Goal 6 which is crystal clear on conserving water so that the same can be provided to all by 2030.

On the World Water Day, Engro conducted a graceful campaign at the plant site advocating the Sustainable Development Goal # 6 which helped creating awareness among the employees, stakeholders and guests to make sure that we take adequate steps at all levels and all places.

Speaking on the occasion, Zarkhez plant manager Wajid Hussain Junejo unveiled the strategy and plans to support the SDG6 to ensure availability of water for all by 2030. Most the population in Pakistan especially in rural areas has no access to safe drinking water and their lands, agriculture, households, schools, workplaces, farms and plants seem struggling to survive.

Junejo said at Engro Zarkhez plant we continue to find new ways to conserve water so that the same can be available elsewhere for economic as well as social needs.

Engro is able to reduce our water consumption at the plant by a massive 45 percent by making our internal processes more efficient and using sprinkler irrigation system for the green patches.

"We launched pitcher irrigation system at site instead of flood irrigation and recycled the waste water ensuring nothing leaves our premises. We revamped our drinking water systems at site and established clean drinking water stations at various locations where quality of water is maintained on global standards frequently checking the set parameters", he added.-PR

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/03/20190323457873/>

UET HOLDS SEMINAR TO MARK WORLD WATER DAY

RECORDER REPORT | MAR 23RD, 2018 | PESHAWAR

University of Engineering and Technology (UET) Peshawar in collaboration with UNICEF, Watsan Cell and WSSP, organised an awareness seminar to commemorate the World Water Day with a theme on “Nature for Water” here on Thursday. The chief guest was Vice Chancellor Professor Dr Iftikhar Hussain. He said, “Every year, March 22 is being marked as the World Water Day with the objective to focus on the importance of access to clean water, sanitation, hygiene (WASH) and advocacy for the sustainable management of freshwater resources. This year theme is “Nature for Water” aimed at exploring nature-based solutions (NBS) to the water challenges that the world is facing.” Dr Rashid Rehan, Director National Institute of Urban Infrastructure Planning UET Peshawar said on the occasion that with a gradual and consistent increase for global demand at 1 pc, according to the world water report 2018, the vast majority of the growing demand will occur in countries with developing or emerging economies. To handle this challenge, the UN Sustainable Development Goals have primarily focused to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all by 2030 as its goal 6, he added.

The speakers highlighted that Pakistan needs drastic steps to improve the practices for better water management resources. A number of researches, reports, and observations support the evidence that Pakistan may run dry soon therefore remedial actions are required at all levels.

They highlighted the efforts of government, NGOs and urged academia and industry to work jointly in resolving this challenge. At the end, a video competition was held amongst university students presented their thoughts about the event and brainstormed ideas on how to spread the important messages to the wider community. The winners were given cash prizes. Secretary Energy and Power Department KP, Naeem Khan, Chief Engineer, Public Health Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Bahramand, UNICEF’s WASH Specialist Sajad Akbar and Khen Zeb, CEO WSSP were also present on the occasion.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2018/03/20180323353988/>

‘OVERPOPULATION, URBANISATION IMPACT WATER SECURITY’

By Our Correspondent Published: March 23, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Even as the population of the country continues to increase along with its thirst for water, they should not expect any considerable change in water inflows in the Indus Basin in the near future, experts warned on Friday. They further pointed out that population growth, growing urbanisation and economic growth could significantly impact water availability and test our water management and governance skills. Amid these challenges, poor water and sanitation services could lead to grave health challenge.

This was stated by speakers during a public seminar on “World Water Day 2019: Leaving No One Behind.” The seminar had been organised by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) on Friday.

SDPI Research Fellow Dr Imran Khalid said that water was critical for human life and progress. In Pakistan, however, he said that millions remain without access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities, including in large metropolitan cities.

Dr Khalid termed this poor situation as injustice towards women, children, the elderly and the invalid and suggested that concrete policy provisions should be undertaken to manage water.

World Bank Water Resources Specialist Basharat Saeed, while highlighting issues of water access, said that the government claim that 90% of Pakistanis have access to water is technically incorrect.

He explained that around 60% of the population has self-access to water while only 30% of the population has been provided water through government-sponsored municipal schemes.

“So technically, around 70% population of this country is left behind by the government in terms of access to safe and clean water,” he said.

To counter multiple challenges such as access to water, water contamination, poor sanitation, water-borne diseases, malnutrition and stunted growth, there is a need for integrated and holistic master plans and interventions.

Civil Society Coalition for Climate Change (CSCCC) Senior Research Manager Anam Zeb took aim at the Dam Fund introduced by the former chief justice of Pakistan Mian Saqib Nisar, noting that the country has a history of failed crowdfunding efforts.

Published in The Express Tribune, March 23rd, 2019.

WORLD WATER DAY: WAPDA PLANS TO ADD 10MAF WATER STORAGE CAPACITY BY 2030

RECORDER REPORT | MAR 22ND, 2019 | LAHORE

As the comity of nations is all set to celebrate 'World Water Day' today (March 22) to create awareness about conservation and prudent use of water, Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) has been expeditiously working on a number of projects to improve water situation in order to avert looming water crisis in the country.

For optimal utilization of water resources, Wapda has devised a comprehensive strategy, through which various projects will be completed in a phased manner under short, medium and long-term plans.

Wapda plans to add two million acre feet (MAF) to water storage capacity up to 2025 in short term, another eight MAF up to 2030 in medium term and 28 MAF up to 2050 in long term with completion of its projects. The construction work on Mohmand Dam is about to start in couple of weeks, while construction of Diamer Basha Dam will also commence this year.

According to the details, the water storage projects to be completed by 2025 under short term plan include Mohmand Dam, Nai Gaj Dam, Naulong Dam and Kurram Tangi Dam (Stage-I). Diamer Basha Dam, Kurram Tangi Dam (Stage-II), Chiniot Dam, Bara Dam and Hingol Dam are a few to be implemented by 2030 under medium term plan. Shyok Dam, Skardu Dam, Akhori Dam and Rohtas Dam are among the projects which are planned to be completed by 2050 under long term plan.

Prompt decision making by all the stakeholders and timely availability of funds are key to implementing short, medium and long term projects in accordance with their timelines. It is pertinent to mention that water situation in Pakistan is alarming by any standards because of the varied reasons, hence, needs to be improved through effective water management and construction of dams.

The per capita water availability in Pakistan has gone down from 5260 cubic meter in 1951 to an alarming level of 908 cubic meters per annum due to rapid growth in population and depleting water storage capacity of the reservoirs because of the natural phenomenon of sedimentation. The per capita availability of water has pushed Pakistan to the stage of water-scarce country and if nothing is done, we will become a water starved country.

Pakistan can store only 10 percent of its annual river flows, whereas the average water storage capacity world over stands at 40 percent. Instead of increasing our storage capacity, we have lost more than one-fourth of the storage capacity of our dams, which were completed 40 to 50 years ago. The live water storage capacity that was 16.26MAF in 1976 has decreased to 13.68MAF, which equals to a meager 30 days carry over capacity.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/03/20190322457679/>

EXPERTS WARN OF INCREASE IN WATER SCARCITY

By Our Staff Correspondent | 3/21/2019 12:00:00 AM

HYDERABAD: Experts have warned of increasing water scarcity in the world in future and urged communities in both rural and urban areas to use water in a wise and sustainable manner to help conserve it for upcoming generations. They were speaking at a programme organised by Strengthening Participatory Organisation (SPO) in collaboration with Oxfam Pakistan in connection with World Water Day at the Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (Sida) office here on Wednesday. This year's theme of the day is 'Leaving no one behind, water for all! .

Oxfam project coordinator Shahid Khan talked about the state of water in Pakistan, linking it with human life, agriculture, livestock and overall ecosystem. There could be more shortage of water in future, therefore the community should use it sustainably to avoid any crisis in coming days, he advised. He said that only locals, farmers and herders, could realise difficulties of water scarcity in their villages and called for collaborative efforts to deal with the issue and make serious efforts to manage it at every level.

He said: 'We want to ensure participation of community women and we have to take up the issue at policy level'.

He gave credit to Sindh government for making efforts to pass a bill to ensure participation of women in area water boards, watercourses associations and farmers organisations, 'which presently are male-dominated and there is no role of women in these major bodies.

Sida chairman Abdul Basit Soomro asked women to use water wisely at home because even underground water resources were shrinking. Sida planned to arrange awareness sessions at village level to stop wastage of water at home because women could play a significant role in this regard, he said.

About prevailing water crisis in Badin district and subsequent protests, he said that many illegal pipes which were being used for stealing water had been removed and FIRs had been lodged against violators over growers' complaints. A committee had been formed to resolve nagging water shortage issue in Badin, he said.

Mohammad Ali Nizamani, a researcher associated with Mehran University of Engineering and Technology, who had conducted study on Akram Canal command area, shared with the audience his findings on water governance, supply and demand, perception of farmers and gender empowerment.

'Water scarcity issue exists and we have to resolve it together. We have to adapt modern technology to manage water and increase crop productivity. There are some countries, which do not have natural water resources but they survive through cultivating crops in their barren and desert lands. When these nations can do it without natural water resources, why can't we do the same with our fertile land [and] natural resources of water?' he said.

PPP MPA Tanzeela Qambrani, who belongs to Badin, called for legislation to ensure role of women in water management bodies.

She also highlighted sea intrusion and the situation caused by water scarcity.

Sida managing director Wali Mohammad Naich said that climate change had taken a heavy toll on water resources. Local people would have to leave traditional practices and adopt modern techniques to use water sustainably as Pakistan was one of the waterstressed countries of the world.

SPO's Pirbhu Satyani briefed the audience about coordination with all stakeholders including community women and others.

A large number of women from Badin, Tando Mohammad Khan and Hyderabad the districts which depended on perennial Akram Canal participated in the seminar.

https://epaper.dawn.com/DetailImage.php?StoryImage=21_03_2019_117_002

GROWERS' BODY SAYS WATER SHORTAGE CAUSING MIGRATION

By Our Staff Correspondent | 3/20/2019 12:00:00 AM

HYDERABAD: Expressing grave concern over water shortage in Badin district, the Sindh Abadgar Ittehad (SAI) has said that farmers and domestic consumers were suffering equally.

A meeting of the SAI, presided over by Nawab Zubair Talpur, noted that those having livestock were forced to migrate to other areas in search of water. All the distributaries, the only source of water supply to Badin, were lying dry for the past six months.

The meeting noted that the present situation had made things difficult for human and animal population. There was no water in Badin district.

The SAI said that standing crops on thousands of acres were facing destruction and it might cause millions of rupees losses to farmers.

It said migration of people with livestock holdings was being reported from Badin district.

The SAI urged the Sindh government to take steps on war footings in this regard and ensure supply of water.

The meeting regretted that a sit-in was being staged outside Naudero Sugar Mill for payment of liabilities, but the mill management was not ready to clear the dues.

The meeting asserted that not only Naudero, but most of Sindh's sugar mills had not cleared liabilities of farmers of the last crushing season.

It demanded that the mills should be bound to clear liabilities of farmers. It also called for opening of wheat procurement centres.

https://epaper.dawn.com/DetailImage.php?StoryImage=20_03_2019_117_005

ALLIANCE AGAINST RIVERS' DIVERSION TO RESUME PROTEST FROM 25TH

Tariq Naqash March 19, 2019

MUZAFFARABAD: An alliance of civil society activists averse to the diversion of Neelum and Jhelum rivers for power generation projects on Monday announced the resumption of its 'peaceful protest' from March 25 after the "failure of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider to live up to his words."

The alliance, Save River, Save Muzaffarabad (SRSM) Committee, has been persistently organising different events such as sit-ins, rallies and shutter-down strikes, to draw attention towards "serious environmental issues" in the aftermath of the diversion of Neelum River through a tunnel system for the Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project (NJHP).

It has vowed to resist a similar diversion of Jhelum River for the proposed Kohala Hydropower Project (KHP). While NJHP was executed by the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) in the public sector, KHP is being built by a Chinese state-owned hydropower developer in the private sector.

Protesters say the way tunnels have affected local water sources is 'water terrorism'

However, following the controversy over diversion the company has stopped its operations for the time being.

The SRSM committee had given a call for a wheel-jam strike on Jan 29 in connection with its demands, which was deferred after Prime Minister Haider had assured committee members at a meeting and later in the presence of media on Jan 24 that he would get all of their concerns addressed at the hands of the federal authorities.

Otherwise, the premier had maintained, he would also join the ranks of the committee.

"Over the past eight or so weeks, we have not seen any concrete step on the part of the prime minister in connection with his commitment, which has forced us to revert to our protest programme," declared senior lawyer Raja Amjad Ali Khan at a press conference here.

He was flanked by Shaukat Nawaz Mir and Abdul Razzaq Khan, leaders of the two major but rival groups of traders, and a large number of other traders, political and social activists and lawyers.

"On March 25, we will stage a dharna in Muzaffarabad," Mr Khan said, but did not disclose the exact venue of the activity.

He said the UK chapter of SRSM committee, which had also suspended its activities following Mr Haider's commitment, was also planning to hold a peaceful demonstration in front of Pakistan High Commission in London on April 21.

"We earnestly wish that the London demonstration should not take place which is why we have given enough time to the authorities concerned to meet our demands," he said.

"For us, river diversion is the issue of life and death. If we will be pushed to the wall, we will exercise all possible options. There will not be any compromise," said Mr Khan.

He said the committee would also send its demands to the Communist Party of China.

Mr Khan clarified that they were not averse to launching of projects.

"All we oppose, and rightly so, is diversion through tunnel systems. The way tunnels have affected our water sources is nothing but water terrorism," he remarked.

Mr Khan said the committee was open to dialogue because its members believed that every issue was ultimately settled on the negotiating table.

"But we want the authorities to realise our agony that inhuman projects have been causing to us and then take right decisions."

He clarified that the committee had no intentions to resort to violence.

Published in Dawn, March 19th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1470459/alliance-against-rivers-diversion-to-resume-protest-from-25th>

SINDH GOVERNMENT URGED TO BEAR COST OF NAI GAJ DAM PROJECT

RECORDER REPORT | MAR 19TH, 2019 | ISLAMABAD

The Senate Standing Committee on Planning, Development and Reform has recommended the Sindh government to bear the cost of Nai Gaj Dam project over and above the first revision of 2012 from its own resources. The committee met with Senator Agha Shahzaib Durrani in the chair here at Parliament House on Monday and discussed Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) releases at the end of second quarter (2018-19) and status of Nai Gaj dam project.

During the briefing, it was informed to the committee that Nai Gaj Dam was considered by the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) during a meeting held on January 25, 2019. The project was deferred for being a single province project. The committee recommended that the Sindh government should bear the cost of the project

The Government of Sindh committed that an area of 28,800 acres of land will be developed by it in synchronization with main dam over two years. It was revealed that regarding clause (iii) of the decision, advice/opinion of Law and Justice Division will be solicited accordingly.

While deliberating upon the issue, the chairman committee asked the reason for delay. The committee was informed that the main reason for the delay was design change due to a consultancy error. The committee stressed the need to investigate the matter thoroughly and determine the entity at fault along with their intentions and submit a report to the committee.

While discussing the K-IV Water Supply Scheme, the committee was informed that it is a 121-km long system from Thatta to Karachi. This was to provide alternate water supply scheme from Keenjhar Lake to Karachi. Conceived in 2007, the project stands still incomplete in 2019.

It was further informed to the committee that any exemptions made were according to Sindh Public Procurement Rules (SPPRA). Numerous revisions in design, bridge, fencing and ancillary work will be made, the committee was told.

Senator Engr Rukhsana Zuberi was of the view that all details of the project must be sent to Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) for scrutiny as it is an autonomous body.

While deliberating upon the PSDP releases at the end of second quarter 2018-19, the committee showed dismay over nominal PSDP releases for social projects, including health and education. Rukhsana Zuberi showed apprehensions on the allocation of Rs 27 billion for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and said that it must be increased. Senator Muhammad Usman Khan Kakar who was chairing the last part of the meeting said that at least 50 percent releases must be made for all educational institutions in Balochistan and other parts of the country.

The meeting was attended by senators including Muhammad Usman Khan Kakar, Engr Rukhsana Zuberi, Kauda Babar and Dr Asad Ashraf, besides the senior officers of the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform and others.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/03/20190319456638/>

GROWERS HOLD MARCH IN BADIN AGAINST ‘ARTIFICIAL’ WATER SHORTAGE

Dawn Report Updated March 25, 2019

BADIN: Traders observed a complete shutdown strike in Kadhan town in solidarity with farmers who staged a 25-kilometre long march on foot from the town to Badin on Sunday to register protest against ‘artificial’ shortage of water in the tail-end district.

The farmers’ leaders Khalil Ahmed Bhurgari, Azizullah Dero, Mir Noor Ahmed Talpur and others told journalists during the daylong march and demonstration they staged after reaching Badin Press Club that Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (Sida) and irrigation department officials were directly involved in the crisis since they had erected blockages in canals to divert water to flood canals which irrigated lands of influential persons.

They said the officials helped steal water at the expense of over a million population living in tail-end and coastal areas. Sindh government had turned a blind eye to the people who were forced to drink highly contaminated water and the farmers’ plight despite their continuous protests, they said.

They demanded immediate removal of Sida director Mir Ghulam Ali Talpur and other officials, who had committed ‘robbery’ on their share of water. “It is sheer callousness that influential people are getting ample water while we do not even have water for drinking,” they said.

They warned they would expand their protest if their demands were not met immediately. The committee formed for investigating diversions in canals and resolving farmers' problems was just an attempt on the part of Sida and irrigation department officials to buy time, they said.

MIRPURKHAS: The ongoing water shortage, particularly in the command area of Lower Nara canal, has severely hit sowing of cotton and chili crops in Mirpurkhas, Sanghar, Umerkot and parts of Tharparkar.

Sources in the irrigation department said that chief engineer had reduced water supply into Nara canal from 6,500 cusec to 5,600 cusec, which would further add to farmers' difficulties.

The sources said that irrigation engineers were planning to extend duration of rotation programme from one week to two weeks.

Farmer organisations' office-bearers blamed the irrigation department for creating artificial shortage in the tail-end areas and demanded Sindh chief minister, governor and other authorities concerned take notice of nagging water shortage in Nara canal to ensure sowing of cotton and chili crops in the tail-end areas.

KHAIRPUR: Members of Sindhi Hari Committee and a large number of growers took out a rally here on Sunday, demanding increase in support price of wheat crop.

Mir Munawwar Talpur, Ashiq Qureshi, comrade Mohammad Saleh and others, who led the rally, said that official rate of wheat had not been raised for the past 10 years while prices of seed, pesticides, fertilisers and agricultural implements had gone through the roof. Besides, the grain traders were not paying adequate price for wheat to growers, they said.

They demanded the chief minister review the support price and raise it from Rs1,300 per 40 kg to Rs1,600.

Published in Dawn, March 25th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1471626/growers-hold-march-in-badin-against-artificial-water-shortage>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MARCH 11th TO MARCH 17th 2019

TARBELA 5TH EXTENSION PROJECT: WAPDA LIKELY TO SIGN CONSULTANCY AGREEMENT

Nasir Jamal March 17, 2019

LAHORE: Wapda is expecting to sign a consultancy agreement for the Rs80 billion Tarbela 5th extension project in the next several weeks once the World Bank issues it the No Objection Letter (NOL), senior officials told Dawn here on Saturday.

"Five firms had submitted their bids for the contract and the lowest responsive bid has been accepted and sent to the World Bank for issuance of NOL. We expect the civil works on the project to start some time during this year," an official said. He refused to give the name of the selected firm, saying it could not be made public unless the bank gave its consent.

The Tarbela 5th extension project can be completed in four years and its completion is estimated to generate additional revenues of \$200 million a year for Wapda. The project will be financed by loans of \$390 million from the World Bank and \$300 million from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

"After the success of Tarbela 4th Extension project, the World Bank is now pushing ahead with the next phase of its renewable energy plans for Pakistan or Tarbela 5th Extension. By using Tarbela 4 as a benchmark, the bank is confident that Tarbela 5 can also be put into operation in four years," the official said, requesting anonymity because he is not authorised to give public statement.

A World Bank mission led by Dr Rikard Lidenhad had recently concluded its meetings with Wapda management. The mission, according to the official, had described Tarbela 4, which will add 3,000 GWh of electricity worth \$350 million to the national grid every year as one of the rare projects completed on time and below cost.

Globally, the official said, hydropower averages around 90 per cent cost overruns and 70 per cent project duration delay. "Tarbela 4 has encouraged international donors like AIIB to finance such projects in future," the official said.

In the AIIB annual infrastructure report for 2019, the bank has reaffirmed its commitment for the upcoming Tarbela 5 project and its head of communications is quoted to have said that the bank's focus will remain on projects that can be carried out on a sound economic basis and contribute towards Pakistan's long-term economic development.

The completion of Tarbela 5 will increase the generation capacity of Tarbela from 4,888 megawatts to 6,298 megawatts, ranking it among the top 10 hydropower stations of the world. It would also significantly enhance

Wapda's financial capability, allowing it to invest the significant proceeds from Tarbela 4 and 5 towards the expansion of the Indus cascade, the officials hope.

Published in Dawn, March 17th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1470074/tarbela-5th-extension-project-wapda-likely-to-sign-consultancy-agreement>

FARMERS BLAME 'FLAWED' SILL LEVEL IN PHULELI FOR WATER SHORTAGE IN BADIN

Mohammad Hussain Khan March 16, 2019

HYDERABAD: The Sindh government has agreed to form a committee to determine whether flaws in sill levels in Phuleli Canal are the cause behind a persisting water shortage in Badin district as is being argued by protesting farmers, but ruled out dismantling the structures built under World Bank-funded Water Sector Improvement Project (WISP).

Adviser to Chief Minister on Irrigation Ashfaq Memon agreed in a meeting with growers in Badin on Friday to formation of a committee to look into complaints of protesting growers about flaws in sill levels, which they argued were the major cause of water shortage in the district.

"The committee which will have representation of farmers will take final decision. Consultants will be there to explain everything to farmers. We can't take a unilateral decision to dismantle the structures," he said.

Mr Memon, who is also a former irrigation secretary, told Dawn over phone that consultants of WISP had entirely different opinion on sill levels and growers had been asked to put forward names of their trusted leaders who could understand technical aspects of the issue so that a decision could be taken about it.

He ruled out removal of director of Left Bank Area Water Board, Mir Ghulam Ali Talpur, whom the growers held responsible for water shortage.

Mr Memon disclosed that Akram Wah (lined channel) would be remodelled and a survey was being conducted for desilting of channels across Sindh. A policy would be framed for water distribution at all three barrages and a committee would be formed for equal distribution of water, he said.

The Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (Sida) said in a press release that prevailing water shortage in Badin was caused by inadequate flows in the river and the impact of shortage was being reduced with efficient use of available water, quoting Sida chairman Abdul Basit Soomro.

He said at the meeting with protesting growers that directives had been issued to managing director of Sida about negligent irrigation officials. Growers were using their democratic right to protest against shortage of water.

He vowed if growers' problems were not resolved then he himself would join their protest. The meeting discussed issues of sill level, water shortage, mismanagement and water theft and except for sill level the two sides had agreed on all other points.

MPA Taj Mohammad Mallah said that water should be provided to command area of Sukkur Barrage that had been shifted to Kotri Barrage. Irrigation officials did not perform their duties and all rules and regulations were enforced on tail-end growers alone, he said.

Mir Ghulam Rasool Talpur of Badin Bachayo Committee said that change in sill level benefited only upper riparian at the expense of tail-end growers.

Mohammad Nawaz Memon, a growers' leader, said that the little water available in canals was being stolen whereas groundwater had turned brackish, forcing people to migrate to urban areas. Action should be taken against the officers who failed to ensure supply of water to tail-end areas.

Khuda Dino Shah, a leader of Zila Bachayo Committee, said that water flows in Phulelli Canal were a lifeline for Badin district and demanded that Sida director Mir Ghulam Ali Talpur should be removed.

Published in Dawn, March 16th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1469862/farmers-blame-flawed-sill-level-in-phuleli-for-water-shortage-in-badin>

ACTIVISTS DEMAND 'FREE FLOWING OF RIVER INDUS' ON WORLD RIVERS DAY

By Our Correspondent Published: March 15, 2019

KARACHI : Representatives of the fishermen community and social activists demanded “free flowing rivers and personhood rights of Indus River and its delta” on Thursday at an event organised to commemorate World Rivers Day. The event was organised by Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF) at the Arts Council of Pakistan, Karachi. A large number of people, especially from the coastal belt of Karachi, Badin, Thatta and Balochistan, attended the event. The event was also attended by victims of the Indus Delta, who were once rich because of abundant agriculture, but the shortage of river water has forced them to leave their ancestral abodes and migrate to safer places.

“We will soon launch a movement for the free flow of River Indus,” PFF Chairperson Mohammad Ali Shah said in his address. “We are celebrating World Rivers Day from March 1 with different activities in various districts of Sindh. All our events including rallies, marches and seminars concluded today with today’s event,” said Shah, adding that the Indus River was one of the mighty rivers in the world, but people in upstream and successive governments had caged it by building dams and carving out canals.

Environment expert Nasir Panhwar expressed serious concern over the degradation of the Indus Delta and said, “Water is the basic human right of people. We are fortunate that we have such a rich delta, which is unfortunately dying now because of the government’s negligence.”

Gulab Shah, one of the landlords who has lost many acres of farming land due to sea intrusion in Thatta district said, “The worst situation can be gauged from the fact that we don’t even have water to bathe the deceased before their burials.”

Writer Ayoub Shaikh, Gul Hassan Kalmati, a researcher who has also worked on Indus Delta and its islands, political activist Khalid Junejo, and water expert Zulfiqar Halepoto also spoke on the occasion.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1929529/1-activists-demand-free-flowing-river-indus-world-rivers-day/>

PROJECT WORTH OVER RS180BN PLANNED FOR WATER CONSERVATION

By Haseeb Hanif Published: March 14, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has given final shape to 13 developmental projects costing over Rs200 billion in the wake of an agricultural emergency.

As per the plan, a water conservation project costing over Rs180 billion will be built by the federal government while mega projects aimed at increasing crop yield, livestock, and fisheries production will also be undertaken.

According to sources, the Ministry of Food Security and Research has given final shape to 13 projects with costs in excess of Rs200 billion to overcome food shortage across the country and promote agricultural exports.

Soon after coming into power, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government had included the agriculture sector in its priorities and a task force was set up for the purpose. The task force prepared its recommendations based on opinions from experts in the private and the public sector and sent its proposals to the prime minister.

The recommendations were aimed at the promotion of exports and resolution of issues faced by the agricultural sector. Based on the proposals, the government has directed the ministry to chalk out a plan after consultation with provinces.

As per the plan, the government will start three water conservation projects with estimated costs in excess of Rs180 billion. The recommendation includes extension of command areas for small and mini dams in Barani areas.

The proposal also includes water conservation projects based on lining watercourses, sources said, adding that the combined water storage capacity of the projects is almost the same as Diamer Bhasha dam, or between 7 and 8 million cubic feet.

In addition, the government will start two projects costing Rs2.6 billion for livestock farmers operating on small and medium levels.

As per the plan, the government will give Rs4,000 to farmers to help them increase meat production and rear buffaloes. Similarly, the poultry programme of Punjab based on the provision of one cock and five hens will be expanded and reach over 5 million households in the next fiscal year.

The government plans to increase per acre yield of wheat and rice by 400 kilograms and 8,000 kilograms of sugarcane.

Similarly, production of oil seed will also be boosted. In order to boost the fisheries sector, the government will start cage fish farming, shrimp farming projects in various cities as well as trout farming projects in northern areas. The projects will be presented for approval in the next year’s development budget in line with the agricultural emergency program of the federal government.

IN PPP HEARTLAND, NOT A DROP OF WATER TO DRINK

By Hafeez Tunio Published: March 14, 2019

NAWABSHAH: It may have been the home of Sindh's first family for the last 30 years, but the common citizenry of Nawabshah still cannot even get a glass of clean drinking water.

"The government might have spent billions on the construction of buildings or roads, but drinking water is still a distant dream for us," said Abdul Majid Soomro, a resident of Nawabshah, the hometown of the Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP) top leadership. Soomro was not alone in his longing for clean, potable water. Thousands of other people living in the hometown of PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari suffer from the same dilemma.

The PPP has allocated billions of rupees in provincial budgets and special packages since coming back to power in 2008, but drinking water and sanitation schemes are still nowhere to be seen.

"My wife has been admitted in the civil hospital for the last two weeks. I have had to pay Rs3,000 just for bottled water for her and attendants like myself. There is no potable water for patients in the entire hospital," said Nawaz Dahri, a middle-aged man sitting at the medical facility – one of the largest teaching hospitals in Sindh.

During a visit to the areas, it was found that almost all water filtration plants established by the then-district nazim Faryal Talpur – Zardari's sister – during the General Pervez Musharraf era are out of order. However, two newer filtration plants, which cost Rs1.5 billion and were inaugurated by Bilawal in 2012, are partially operational.

"These plants have the capacity to filter around one million gallons of water every day, but hardly 100,000 to 200,000 gallons are being filtered," said local journalist Ismail Domki, adding that after inaugurating both the plants, the government did not make any effort to extend the water network to provide water to houses.

"The government has built universities, roads and upgraded hospitals, but it is lagging behind as far as drinking water is concerned. People are compelled to fetch potable water from hand pumps installed in various areas," he remarked. Azeem Colony, Sanghar Road, Taj Colony, Gharibabad, Police Headquarters, Katchery Road, and Manwabad are among the worst-affected areas, where people have not had access to potable water for years.

The Sindh government's budget books show that billions of rupees have been allocated and spent on various initiatives in Shaheed Benazirabad district, but water and sanitation have been a low priority for the ruling party and its leadership. According to the finance department, Rs18 billion was allocated in 2017-18, Rs5.2 billion in 2016-17, Rs17 billion in 2015, and Rs2 billion in 2013 under special packages separate from the routine budget for the division. In the evenings, huge crowds rush to hand pumps outside the town adjacent to freshwater canals. "Every day after work, I come here to fill three to four jerry cans of water for my household use," said Hussain Panhwar, who lives in Taj Colony.

Not only men, but large numbers of children are also seen waiting for their turns to fill their jerry cans. "The water in the city is undrinkable, so most people who can't afford bottled water come here," Panhwar said.

District government water supply schemes are in abject condition.

A few ponds, built many years ago, are linked from Rohri Canal, but they are in a pathetic condition. Stray animals roam around them and garbage lines the ponds, indicating the apathy of local authorities.

"Since filtration plants are not working, the ponds are useless," said Arshad Khaskheli, a social activist who runs the Shah Sachal Saami Foundation. Referring to a UNDP survey, he said, "Over 95 per cent of underground water is not fit for human consumption. Arsenic is found in the water." He added that no sincere effort was made in redressing this important issue.

"The teaching hospital's administration, in their expenditure, has shown bills of Rs20 million in a year for bottled water, but patients have suffered from water scarcity for years. I don't know to whom they provided water," he said. He referred to the judicial water commission's visit last year, saying, "Justice (ret'd) Amir Hani Muslim took strong exception to the condition of the hospital, which is deprived of drinking water facilities for patients," he said.

An official privy to the development told The Express Tribune that Justice Muslim expressed concern over Rs860 million being spent by the hospital administration in just two days and asked, "Please provide me with the original record showing how you spent this huge amount in two days...and why you have failed to provide water despite having so much funding available."

Public Health Engineering Department Executive Engineer Sajjad Saeed, whose department is responsible for running the ponds and filtration plants, held the high-ups responsible. “The filter plants are not working properly because of membranes which need to be replaced,” he said, adding that they have written to senior officials, but with no result. Talking about the ponds, he said, “The expected life of these ponds will also end by 2020.” He said that three years back, they submitted a scheme to revamp the ponds and lay down a pipeline network in the city. “Now, we have received some funds and started work on it.”

Zardari and his sister, Azra Pechuho, are the incumbent MNA and MPA from the areas. Despite many attempts, neither was available for comment.

Published in The Express Tribune, March 14th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1928877/1-ppp-heartland-not-drop-water-drink/>

COLLECTION IN DAMS FUND HITS RS10BN MARK

Syed Irfan Raza March 13, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Tuesday congratulated the nation for “generously” contributing to the dams fund as the amount collected so far has hit the Rs10 billion mark.

In a message on Twitter, he said: “I would like to pay tribute to the generosity of the people of Pakistan for raising Rs10 billion for the Dams’ Fund.”

The estimated amount required for construction of two dams is Rs1,700bn, of which Rs1,450bn will be spent on the construction of the Diamer-Bhasha dam and Rs300bn on the Mohmand dam.

The initiative for collection of funds for construction of new dams in the country was taken by former chief justice of Pakistan Mian Saqib Nisar in July, 2018. However, it was later joined by PM Khan and the joint move was given an official name ‘The Supreme Court of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of Pakistan Diamer-Bhasha and Mohmand Dams Fund’.

PM congratulates nation for generously giving donations for construction of new water reservoirs

While the government sees the amount collected for construction of new dams so far as a success, opposition parties in the country claim that the government has failed to attract people, especially overseas Pakistanis. They see the amount collected so far as ‘peanuts’, saying that the estimated amount required for the construction of two dams is much higher. They also claim that the government has spent over Rs12bn on advertisement campaigns of the dams fund.

PM Khan has appealed to the nation many times to contribute to the dams fund. He has asked the estimated nine million overseas Pakistanis, particularly those living in European countries and the United States, to contribute at least \$1,000 per head to the noble cause. He is of the view that if the two dams are not constructed, the country can face a famine-like situation by 2025.

Mr Khan on many occasions has appreciated efforts of former CJP Nisar for collecting funds for dams’ construction. On Feb 22, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) called for recovery of Rs13 billion spent on what it said “advertisement campaign” of the Diamer-Bhasha dam fund from former CJP Nisar.

In a joint press conference with former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and former defence minister Khawaja Mohammad Asif, PML-N organising committee chairman Ahsan Iqbal said that the former chief justice had tried to fool the nation in the name of the dams’ fund.

He said at that time Rs9 billion had been collected for the dams’ fund while Rs13 billion spent on advertisement campaigns for it, adding that the amount spent on the advertisement campaigns must be recovered from the former chief justice.

However, the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra) chairman had told the apex court during a hearing of a case that although the cost of advertisements run by the media was over Rs20 billion, the media houses run them free of cost to contribute their share in the fund.

Mr Iqbal had said that it had been claimed at the time of the launching of the dams’ fund drive that overseas Pakistanis would send \$200 billion, but the share of expatriates in the amount collected for the dams’ construction was just Rs1.25 billion. “The rest of the amount had been forcibly deducted from salaries of government employees, including Rs2 billion from salaries of the armed forces,” he added.

The opposition party claimed that the Diamer-Bhasha dam was a Rs1,100bn project and the PML-N government had already spent Rs122bn on acquisition of land and allocated another Rs24bn for the project, without collecting any donation.

Published in Dawn, March 13th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1469316/collection-in-dams-fund-hits-rs10bn-mark>

WORLD BANK READY TO START TARBELA 5TH EXTENSION PROJECT

By Our Correspondent Published: March 13, 2019

LAHORE: After riding on the success of Tarbela fourth extension hydroelectric power project, the World Bank and the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) foresee the completion of Tarbela fifth extension project by 2023.

After successful completion of the fourth extension project with capacity of 1,410 megawatts, the World Bank is moving forward to start the next phase of its renewable energy plan for Pakistan, namely the Tarbela fifth extension project.

The international lender is confident that the fifth extension project can be “put into operation in four years”, generating \$200 million worth of additional revenue for Wapda per annum.

The World Bank recently concluded its Pakistan mission meeting, which was attended by the Wapda management, World Bank team leader Dr Rikard Liden and Adviser to the World Bank on Hydropower Masood Ahmad.

The World Bank team praised Wapda and other stakeholders, concluding that “the Tarbela fourth extension was one of the rare projects completed on time and below cost. It will add 3,000 gigawatt-hours (GWh) of electricity annually worth about \$350 million and save foreign exchange”.

This is an important milestone as global statistics for hydroelectric power show an average of around 90% cost overrun and 70% delay in project duration.

The success of Tarbela fourth extension has also encouraged other international donors including the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).

In its Annual Infrastructure Report for 2019, the AIIB reaffirmed its commitment to the upcoming Tarbela fifth extension. Its Head of Communications said, “Our focus will remain on projects that can be carried out on a sound economic basis and contribute towards Pakistan’s long-term economic development.”

According to officials, the completion of Tarbela fifth extension will increase the capacity of overall Tarbela project from 4,888MW to 6,298MW, making it amongst the top 10 hydroelectric power stations in the world. It will also significantly enhance Wapda’s financial capability, allowing it to invest significant proceeds from Tarbela-4 and 5 in the expansion of Indus cascade.

Tarbela Dam is located on the Indus River 110 km from Islamabad in Swabi district and Haripur, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. The left bank irrigation tunnel, T-5, was constructed under the Tarbela dam project to provide a low-level outlet for additional irrigation supplies, when Tarbela reservoir is at a low level.

Published in The Express Tribune, March 13th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1928126/2-world-bank-ready-start-tarbela-5th-extension-project/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MARCH 4th TO MARCH 10th 2019

SINDH CHIEF MINISTER SEEKS EXPERTS’ HELP TO RESOLVE WATER ISSUES

By Our Correspondent Published: March 9, 2019

HYDERABAD: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has identified contaminated water, sea intrusion and destruction of Pakistan’s biggest freshwater reservoir, Manchar Lake, as three grave water-related challenges for the province.

Speaking at the convocation of US-Pakistan Center for Advanced Studies in Water (USPCAS-W) at Mehran University of Engineering and Technology (MUET) in Jamshoro district on Friday, he requested the academia to submit a set of holistic recommendations to address the challenges. He also spoke to the media.

He said that the country faces very serious water and environmental problems. “The Sindh government needs [the experts’] recommendations to work out the issues of clean drinking water, shortage of water and irrigation related problems,” he added.

While congratulating the graduates who completed their Master of Science degree at USPCAS-W, he asked them to realise their responsibility of conducting further research and suggesting solutions to problems. He said that the provincial government will provide funds for the centre and acknowledge its research endeavours.

Criticising the federal government, Shah said if the Centre is unable to collect taxes it should hand over that responsibility to the provinces. He said that the share of the provinces in the federally collected taxes is 57.5% and if the collection remained low, the provinces will receive less consequently.

He reiterated that the withheld funds of Sindh, which amount to over Rs100 billion, have been affecting several development projects. “The situation in other provinces is also not different. Punjab spent Rs245 billion on development schemes last year and this year the allocation has plummeted to Rs87 billion.” He contended that the federal government’s inability in the tax collection besides inflation and the drop in value of rupee is the root cause of many problems.

He warned that the charity organisations and projects are also likely to suffer from the prevailing financial situation in the country because the well-off people have reduced funding projects. “This may pave way for a new crisis,” he cautioned while pointing out that the National Institute of Child Health (NICH), which was being successfully run through charity, is now seeking the provincial government’s financial help.

The US Consul-General JoAnne Wagner expressed hope that the graduates can help Pakistan in dealing with the challenges of climate change and water related issues. She said that USPCAS-W was being funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under a \$127 million project for setting up and financing research centres in Pakistani universities. The centres conduct research on water, energy, agriculture and food security.

MUET Vice Chancellor Dr Muhammad Aslman Uqaili informed that USAID’s funding will end in 2019. He requested the federal and provincial governments, in addition to USAID, to provide funds for the centre for the coming years. “The centre is helping produce research scholars who follow the international standards of research”.

Published in The Express Tribune, March 9th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1925849/1-sindh-chief-minister-seeks-experts-help-resolve-water-issues/>

IMPOSITION OF WATER CESS NOT AIMED AT HURTING INDUSTRIAL UNITS: SC

The Newspaper’s Staff Reporter Updated March 08, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Justice Umar Ata Bandial of the Supreme Court on Wednesday reiterated that the real purpose of levying Re1 per litre on extracted ground water was not intended to close down or hurt industrial establishments, but to discourage waste of precious and fast depleting water resources.

The observation came during the hearing of a suo motu case relating to selling of bottled water extracted from underground sources without paying any charge and its quality and fitness for human consumption, as well as a number of review petitions against the court order to impose water cess.

Justice Bandial asked different beverages and bottling companies to come up with a workable solution by finding out answers on how to conserve the precious resources and yet increasing the production at the same time.

The judge made it clear that the levy of Re1 per litre was imposed by the Supreme Court by arriving at a consensus after involving all stakeholders. “We need each others’ cooperation,” Justice Bandial highlighted, while making it clear that the court would ensure that the funds so generated with the imposition of water levy would go straight to developing water projects.

The judge regretted that commercial entities were guzzling water. They recover only 35 per cent of the water extracted after the reverse osmosis process, while the rest go to waste when the same can be recycled.

Justice Bandial says purpose of levying Re1 per litre on ground water is to discourage waste of depleting resources

Justice Bandial feared that Pakistan might run dry by 2025. While citing the example of Lahore, he deplored that the water table in the city had dropped so low that the water quality had been deteriorated. "In few years the entire aquifer in the city will be gone forever, leaving us with nothing."

During the hearing Prof Dr Mohammad Ahsan Siddiqui, an environmental scientist who was appointed head of a special committee on water, told the court that the committee had issued water bills to 45 different bottling and beverages companies, adding that these bills would help reduce the wastage of water by 40 per cent.

At the outset, representatives of the provincial governments told the court that notifications had been issued and put on enforcement for monitoring and metering and the installation of close circuit cameras on the consumption of water by bottling companies as well as registration of filtration plants.

But the court regretted that confusion had been created by WASA (Water and Sanitation Agency) by issuing notices to certain bottlers which were getting water supplied by the authority by billing Rs1.5 per litre as a result of which certain companies got stay orders from the Lahore High Court.

The court ordered WASA to clarify the issue as well as the order of the apex court before the high court when the matter would be taken up on March 14.

The court appreciated Balochistan for drafting a proper law on the extraction of water which was under the process of enactment by the provincial assembly.

The court asked the provincial governments as well as the Islamabad Capital Territory to take steps for the implementation of its judgement and said that the notification levying the water cess under the local government laws must have bore approval of the competent authority or the provincial government enact separate legislation in this regard.

The court ordered inspection of the filtration plants and existing resources by the Punjab and Sindh governments and installation of laboratories for checking the quality of water.

The court noted that different companies also pointed out that excessive bills had been issued on a presumption basis instead of readings of the metering system. It allowed the industrial units to raise objections to the excessive billing within 15 days of the issuance of bills.

During the hearing, Advocate Khalid Jawed Khan, representing a number of bottling companies, regretted that they had received a bill of Rs60 million for 90 days of water extraction.

He was of the view that instead of levying Re1 per litre on the extracted ground water, a new consensus formula should be worked out.

Published in Dawn, March 8th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1468235/imposition-of-water-cess-not-aimed-at-hurting-industrial-units-sc>

PROTESTERS HOLD MARCH, VOW TO BESIEGE CM HOUSE OVER WATER SHORTAGE

A Correspondent March 05, 2019

BADIN: Hundreds of farmers and their supporters, who culminated the 21-kilometre march they had started a day ago from Tando Bago in a demonstration outside the local press club on Monday, warned they would besiege the office of the director of Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority and then Chief Minister House in Karachi if they did not get water within a fortnight.

The charged protesters raised slogans against officers of the irrigation department and Sida as they marched on different roads and streets before converging on Quaid-i-Azam Road outside the press club.

Azizullah Dero, Khalil Ahmed Bhurgari, Mir Ghulam Rasool Talpur and other leaders of growers' organisations and Save Badin Action Committee held the irrigation department and Sida officials responsible for the severe water shortage in the district.

They demanded removal of director of Sida and his officials, who they alleged were involved in diverting flow of Akram Wah and Phuleli Canal near Matli town to the lands owned by influential people associated with PPP.

They said the nagging water crisis had turned fertile land parched and forced people to drink highly contaminated water of wells and lakes. Despite great improvement in water flows at Kotri and Sukkur barrages not only the tail-ends of channels but main canals in four talukas of the district were also being deprived of water, they said.

They made it clear that unless blockages in canals were dismantled and illegal watercourses were removed, more than 90 per cent farmers and residents of the district would never be able to get their due share in water.

They lashed out at lawmakers elected from Badin for ignoring the peaceful protests of farmers and warned of besieging the office of director of Sida and then CM House if the situation did not improve within a fortnight. When assistant commissioner and other officials concerned tried to convey message of their high-ups to the protesters on the directives of Badin Deputy Commissioner Dr Abdul Hafeez Siyal they did not allow them to talk to their leaders and turned them away.

Published in Dawn, March 5th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1467616/protesters-hold-march-vow-to-besiege-cm-house-over-water-shortage>

HUB DAM'S REVIVAL TO ALLAY CITY'S WATER WOES

Hasan Mansoor Updated March 04, 2019

KARACHI: The city's thirsting western and central neighbourhoods will have a better summer after Hub Dam, they have been hooked up to, has started receiving ample rain and floodwater from its catchment areas to offer for the next two years at least, officials said on Sunday.

They said torrential rains in the catchment area of the dam, which falls in Balochistan and is located on the fringes of Sindh, had substantially increased the water level of the reservoir that had been offering dust for the past two years. Hub Dam had witnessed no rains for years and its catchment areas were part of the years-long drought endured by the two provinces separated by the reservoir, which is key to solve the water woes of the city's most populous western district and parts of Karachi central district.

Officials in the Sindh local government ministry said the floodwater had substantially raised the reservoir level by 70 feet to reach at 348 feet till Sunday. Hub Dam's peak level is 396ft.

Officials at the LG ministry and the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board said a tangible increase in Hub Dam was enough to provide the required water to the city's areas, which were hooked up to it and had been facing grave water shortages for the past many years.

The officials said the dam, with the maximum capacity of supplying 100mgd water to Karachi, could offer a continuous city-ward stream for at least next two years.

Officials at the meteorological office said various districts of Balochistan had received intense rains in the past many days that played havoc with the routine life and caused damage to human life and property and livestock were killed. Hub Dam is also the main source of water for irrigation and industrial and domestic uses in Lasbella district.

The officials said the dam supplied 100mgd to Karachi and around 66mgd to Lasbella's industrial town of Hub when it was filled with water.

"If it is fully filled it [the dam] can provide water to Karachi and Lasbella for three years," said an official.

Officials said the reservoir's level had dropped to 276ft until the recent downpour lashed the region.

The concerned authorities were using suction pumps to provide water to the areas hooked up to it for drinking water supply.

The officials in the Sindh government said households in the two districts of Karachi had been dependent on the rationed water supplies that had been carved out from other parts of the city because of a dead source at Hub.

"With the revival of this source, the areas, which had not been getting water for weeks, will get it on daily basis," an official said.

He added the situation would also benefit the rest of the city, which would get back its water from going into West and Central districts.

"Overall, it will add up to 60mgd to our system, which is half of the city's requirement."

Published in Dawn, March 4th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1467492/hub-dams-revival-to-allay-citys-water-woes>

PTI GOVT COMPLETED 265 MINI MACRO-HYDEL POWER PROJECTS IN K-P

By APP Published: March 4, 2019

PESHAWAR: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) has completed 265 mini macro-hydel power projects (MMHPPs) in 11 different districts aimed at providing inexpensive electricity to people of remote areas of the province

“Till January 30 last, we have completed 265 MMHPPs out of total 356 identified MMHPPs in 11 different districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, while work on 67 others is in progress and would soon be completed,” a senior official of K-P’s energy department told APP on Sunday.

Initially, 356 MMHPPs were identified in 2014 against which feasibility studies of 332 projects were approved and 24 sites were dropped due to various reasons.

Out of the 265 completed projects so far, as many as 15 MMHPPs were completed in Abbottabad, 52 in Battagram, 50 in Chitral, 40 in Swat, 28 in Kohistan and 21 in Shangla.

Likewise, 37 MMHPPs were completed in Upper Dir district, four in Lower Dir, 13 in Buner, one in Mansehra and four in Torghar district. All these projects were completed with the help of different NGOs.

The official said work on 67 MMHPPs is underway in 11 districts of K-P with direction to implementing NOGs and departments to complete it within stipulated time without compromising on quality.

Out of these under-construction projects, the official said six are being constructed in Battagram, five each in Chitral and Swat, seven in Kohistan, four in Shangla, 12 in Upper Dir, five in Buner, 18 in Mansehra and five in Torghar district.

“The unpleasant weather conditions including heavy snowfall, litigations, and shifting of heavy machinery to mountainous areas were major factors behind the delay of these under construction projects,” the official said.

He said electricity transmission from most of these MMHPPs had been started already to communities living near these mini dams with a positive socio-economic change being witnessed in their lifestyle.

“The completion scores of water, energy and hydro power projects during the tenure of PTI government is a clear manifestation of fulfillment of the promises made by PTI leadership with people of Pakistan,” said Shakeel Ahmed Khan, Provincial Minister for Revenue.

He said opponents had started baseless criticism after PTI Chairman announced the construction of 356MMHPPs in KP while addressing a public meeting in Swat in 2014, he said, while adding that successful construction of 265 projects has proved all criticism of political opponents as totally wrong.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1922513/1-pti-govt-completed-265-mini-macro-hydel-power-projects-k-p/>

April 2019

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM APRIL 1st TO APRIL 7th 2019

VILLAGERS HOLD 23-KM MARCH OVER WATER CRISIS

A Correspondent April 07, 2019

BADIN: A large number of farmers and residents of coastal villages staged a 23-kilometre march on foot from Seerani town to Badin on Saturday to register protest against months-long water crisis, which had crippled routine life and devastated agriculture.

The protesters, after covering the distance in two hours, gathered outside Badin Press Club where they staged a demonstration and listened to their leaders’ speeches.

Syed Nawaz Shah Bhadai, Mohammad Bux Warar and other leaders of the Save Badin Action Committee, who led the march, told journalists that large-scale and unabated theft of water by influential persons through illegal waterways and flood canals was responsible for the worst water crisis and drought-like conditions in coastal areas.

They demanded fair distribution of water after dismantling diversions and blockages erected in canals to divert water flows to lands of influential persons and called for stern action against those who were involved in depriving them of their due share of water for the past nine months. They vowed to continue peaceful protest till their demands were met.

They said that they were compelled to drink highly contaminated water but the provincial government had kept a criminal silence over their plight. In spite of protests, sit-ins, hunger strikes and long marches no one was ready to take notice of an aggravating human tragedy, they said.

They appealed to Supreme Court to take suo motu notice of the water crisis as the provincial government was not listening to their hue and cry.

Meanwhile, Grand Democratic Alliance's parliamentary leader in Sindh Assembly Barrister Hasnain Mirza has urged Sindh government to immediately provide water to the protesting farmers and residents of coastal areas.

He told this reporter that continuous protests by farmers, traders and members of civil society were an indicator that peoples' patience was fast wearing thin and they could now go to any length to get their due share of water.

"The water crisis has made conditions so pathetic that traders in more than 15 big and small towns voluntarily keep their shutters down to show solidarity with protesting farmers and growers of the district," he said.

He said that Sindh government's functionaries should read the writing on the wall and deplored that after finding no recourse to the worsening water crisis and callous and indifferent attitude of the officials concerned to their problems, people were forced to migrate to cities and other areas, leaving behind their hearths, homes and fertile lands.

He said that it was sheer injustice that blockages and diversions had been built in Akram Wah by spending a huge amount of Rs6 billion without taking farming community into confidence, probably because it had been done to divert their water.

He said that until and unless the blockages had been dismantled more than one million people living in four talukas of the district would never be able to get their share of water. It was cruel to release water into flood canals when there was not a drop of water in most of the tail-end areas and coastal belt, he said.

The GDA leader lashed out at Pakistan Peoples Party rulers for their failure to provide basic amenities of life to people. They were busy only in causing man-made disasters like water shortage in Badin and other areas because it served their interests, he said.

He warned officials of both Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority and irrigation department to stop watering lands of influential persons by diverting flows of canals to their lands and assured leaders of the Save Badin Action Committee of his full support in their struggle against what he termed banditry on their water share.

Published in Dawn, April 7th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1474368/villagers-hold-23-km-march-over-water-crisis>

BALUCHISTAN ASSURES WORLD BANK OF ADDRESSING CONCERNS

By Mohammad Zafar Published: April 7, 2019

QUETTA : World Bank (WB) officials were informed on Friday that Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Kamal has ordered an inquiry to unveil negligence that led to the suspension of a multi-million dollar water project in Balochistan.

On March 30, the WB announced suspension of the Balochistan Integrated Water Resources Management and Development Project over lack of progress in management and funds disbursement.

To address the WB's concerns, Balochistan Additional Chief Secretary for Planning and Development Sajjad Ahmed Bhutta met the WB country director and other officials on Friday in Islamabad.

The meeting was told that on directives of CM Kamal, the planning and development secretary has been appointed as inquiry officer to unveil negligence that led to suspension of the project.

The meeting agreed to review the flaws and weakness in the project, while a mission of the WB would visit the province and review progress in implementation of irrigation projects. The WB officials assured the provincial government of continuing their cooperation in this and other projects.

During the visit, the WB mission will also participate in joint meetings with the provincial irrigation department.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1945170/1-balochistan-assures-world-bank-addressing-concerns/>

WATER USAGE CHARGES FOR AJK GOVERNMENT INCREASED: VAWDA

RECORDER REPORT | APR 4TH, 2019 | ISLAMABAD

Federal Minister for Water Resources Faisal Vawda has said that water usage charges for AJK government have been increased from 25 paise per unit to Rs 1.10 per unit and this will increase its revenue. Speaking at a new conference here on Wednesday, the minister stated that previous government had increased Net Hydle Profit (NHP) for the provinces in 2016 but this increase was not allowed to the AJK.

The minister claimed that present government made the NHP for AJK comparable to other provinces and stated that Neelum-Jhelum Hydro project is generating more than installed capacity (103 percent) electricity, which reflects success of the project and it will be earning Rs 50 billion per year.

Replying to a question, Vawda said that water usage charges for AJK government are increased from 25 paisas per unit to Rs 1.10 per unit and this will increase its revenue to Rs 11 billion.

In reply to a question about water shortage in Sindh, he said that he would not comment on the issue because it is a provincial subject subsequent to the 18th amendment. However, he stated that he received some complaints about water theft from Hub Dam that provides water to Karachi and on the issue of illegal hydrants, a list of illegal hydrants was compiled to take up the matter with the provincial government.

When asked about Pakistan Indus Water Commission delegation's recent visit to India, Vawda stated it was successful as team visited the dam site. The minister said that after the 18th amendment super flood warning is the provincial subject while the federal government has done preparations in this regard. He said work on Mohamand Dam has been started; however, its official groundbreaking is linked to availability of the Prime Minister.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/04/20190404460942/>

TOXIC WATER

Editorial April 04, 2019

ACCORDING to a recent report in this paper, samples of chicken feed and water collected from various poultry farms across Karachi for lab testing at the Karachi University were found to have traces of heavy metals in them. The amount of lead, nickel, copper, iron and chromium found in poultry feed exceeded the WHO guidelines. Meanwhile, the water sample contained significant amounts of iron, lead and nickel, along with arsenic. According to the researchers, the source of the contamination was linked to the untreated industrial waste being dumped into the rivers, lakes and sea, and the mixing of sewerage lines with water lines. This revelation should not come as a surprise to even those who give the headlines only a cursory glance. Words upon words — and warnings — have been written in these pages about the damage caused to the environment and public health due to untreated industrial waste, sewage and plastics directly entering water bodies. In case it bears any repeating, our water is toxic. And not only does this impact marine life, but the poison finds its way into the bodies of land mammals and birds. Exposure to metals, for instance, leads to a range of health problems that include damage to the lungs and kidneys, as well as the central nervous, respiratory, cardiovascular and reproductive systems.

Rarely is food and water tested in labs, and food authorities struggle to find the required human resources and capital to tackle the enormous challenges before them. But the problem of contaminated food and water is too large for a single authority to tackle. In fact, it is the failure of the state to effectively govern and one of the discontents of unchecked capitalism devoid of any social consciousness or a sense of responsibility towards the public's welfare that must primarily be blamed. The natural law is: what goes around, comes around.

Published in Dawn, April 4th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1473801/toxic-water>

WATER WARS

F.S. Aijazuddin April 04, 2019

THE pins have been removed from live grenades held by both India and Pakistan. Only experts know when they will explode. None of us innocents knows where.

The spectre of war has remained a permanent resident in the subcontinent since 1947. It has bunkered itself so deep in our sub-consciousness that now confrontation comes more naturally to us than conciliation, argument before agreement.

On both sides of the border that connects Himalayan heights to Sindh's shores, jingoists demand armed conflict while peaceniks want an 'uninterrupted, unintermittible' dialogue. Both are unaware that national belligerence and pacifism are in fact conditioned by topography.

Roads can be halted at the border, but who owns flowing water?

The Westphalian concept of nation states is tested whenever territorial boundaries have to contend with nature. Who owns a mountain that straddles an international border? Who owns a river that flows through one or more countries?

Who has the right to use that water, and more vexatiously, should one upper riparian country have the power of denial over a lower riparian one?

In 1947, Cyril Radcliffe did not apply his mind to such niggling questions. So when Viceroy Mountbatten suggested he should continue as governor general of both India and Pakistan as a conciliator, Quaid-i-Azam refused. He did not want Mountbatten acting the guilt-ridden surgeon, offering to rectify a botched amputation. Mountbatten did remain in New Delhi as India's G-G until June 1948, but he did little to prevent sores from festering — contentious issues such as Hyderabad, Jammu & Kashmir, Junagadh, and most critically, the ownership and the use of the waters of the Punjab.

Within two years of Independence of each other, the new countries came near to blows over water. Our foreign minister, Chaudhry Zafrulla, warned India that any “diminution in that flow or even a threat of interruption would have the effect of converting millions of acres of fertile lands into arid wastes”. Pakistan, he hinted, would be prepared to go to war to protect its right to water.

A recent scholar Daniel Haines in his book *Indus Divided* (2017) has drawn a distinction between sovereign territory and sovereignty over resources that pass through that territory. Roads and railways can be halted at the border, but who owns flowing water? It recognises no check-post or customs barriers, only dams and canals.

It took India and Pakistan 13 years of raucous recrimination over the sharing of the Indus rivers before they agreed to mediation by the World Bank. An experienced US water manager David E. Lilienthal was put to rectify the damage caused by Radcliffe. The resultant Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) of 1960, in working order even today, never resolved the basic conundrum: “The dispute was not simply an engineering question with a technical answer [...] Access to, and the ability to manipulate river water formed a key plank of state power in the region.”

Sixty years later, the Indian government still clings to its position that, under the IWT, it can allow water to flow into Pakistan but refuse to relinquish its claim to sovereignty over the Indus basin rivers.

In 1960, China was on the far, inaccessible side of the Himalayas. Today, China's declared interest in the modernisation of agriculture in Pakistan has brought China into the Indus basin. Access to river water is a sine qua non for the success of the CPEC's agricultural projects. An arid Pakistan is of no use to China. The malevolent twist of an upstream valve by India could well be viewed by China as an unacceptable provocation.

China's seed-pearl port Gwadar gives it more than a view of the Indian Ocean. It is a lighthouse of China's maritime ambitions. President Xi Jinping has declared China will take an “interest in the sea, understand the sea, and strategically manage the sea, and continually do more to promote China's efforts to become a maritime power”.

To achieve this, the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) intends by 2030 to commission “ninety-nine submarines, four aircraft carriers, 102 destroyers and frigates, twenty-six corvettes, seventy-three amphibious ships and 111 missile craft”. Ten years from now, China with 415 ships will have the world's largest navy. It will do more than patrol the Indian Ocean. It might rename it.

For centuries, India has luxuriated in a landlocked mentality. Only now has it realised that in addition to its 3,323-kilometre north-western border, it has an equally vulnerable 7,516-km. coastline. The Indian Navy's recent Exercise Sea Vigil — the ‘first ever’ on such a large scale — boasts of India's preparedness to defend any assault by sea. India has cause to be vigilant. It has a pendulous peninsula of states south of Mumbai to defend.

Will the next war be over access to water from the Himalayas? And will its outcome be decided by nuclear missile-bearing submarines lurking below the surface of the Sino-Indian Ocean?

Published in Dawn, April 4th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1473805/water-wars>

HALF-DAY SHUTDOWN OBSERVED IN BADIN AGAINST WATER SHORTAGE

DAWN REPORT April 3, 2019

BADIN: A complete half-day shutdown was observed in most towns and villages of Badin district on Tuesday in response to a call given by the ‘Save Badin Action Committee’ against an unending water crisis in the area.

All markets, bazaars, commercial streets, business and trade establishments and retail outlets remained closed in the first half of the day in Badin city, Golarchi, Tando Bago, Pangrio, Talhar, Khoski, Tarai, Rajo Khanani, Shadi Large, Dei, Kadhan, Kario Ghanwar, Malkani Sharif, Seerani, Khorwah and other small towns. Main thoroughfares wore a deserted look as vehicles, commuters, traders and shoppers stayed indoors.

In several towns, people led by action committee activists held demonstrations against the provincial government for not doing the needful to ensure supply of drinking and irrigation water to the district. They held local irrigation department and Sida (Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority) officials responsible for the drought-like situation persisting in Badin district for nine months.

They alleged that the officials had created an “artificial water shortage” in connivance with influential figures. They said farmers and small growers were facing starvation due to their “corrupt and cruel practices”.

Published in Dawn, April 3rd, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1473496/half-day-shutdown-observed-in-badin-against-water-shortage>

14PC WATER SHORTAGE ANTICIPATED IN EARLY KHARIF

The Newspaper’s Staff Reporter Updated April 03, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The authorities anticipated better water availability after a long time during kharif season that began on April 1, however inter-provincial disagreement over distribution principles remained unresolved.

At a meeting of the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) advisory committee, presided over by Irsa Chairman Sher Zaman Khan on Tuesday, federal and provincial authorities worked out total water flows at rim stations at 108.67 million acre feet (MAF) are 23 per cent higher when compared to 88.04MAF last year. The inflows at rim stations are also estimated to be higher when compared to the 10-year average of 106.88MAF.

After accounting for expected conveyance losses, the total water availability for irrigation is anticipated at 80MAF, more than 30pc higher than last year’s 61.37MAF. The total water availability would also be slightly higher than 10-year average of 79.29MAF.

The meeting discussed and approved anticipated water availability criteria for ensuing kharif season 2019 (April-Sept) and other related agenda items.

The meeting was attended by all Irsa members, chief engineering adviser, representatives of Wapda members (water and power) as well as officials of provincial irrigation and agriculture departments.

The committee discussed in detail the likely water availability for kharif 2019. It noted that all relevant agencies are anticipating better water situation for the current season compared to previous one due to better hydro-meteorological scenario forecast by the Pakistan Meteorological Department.

Based on the forecast, the committee anticipates a shortfall of 14pc in early kharif and 6pc shortfall in later season while mid-term season (July-August) would see no shortage at all. The meeting decided that indicated shortage would be equally shared between Punjab and Sindh, whereas Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) would remain exempted from shortages as per existing arrangements.

As such, Punjab is expected to receive water quantity of 33.11MAF during kharif season compared to 29.19MAF of last year and slightly better than 10-year average of 33.02MAF.

Sindh is anticipated to get 30.17MAF compared to 27.75MAF of same period last year and much better than 10-year average of 28.32MAF.

KP would get about 820,000 acre feet compared to 990,000 acre feet of same period last year and even worse than 91,000 acre feet of 10 year average.

Balochistan is expected to receive 2.81MAF compared to 1.69MAF of last year and significantly better than 10-year average of 1.76MAF.

Sindh demanded that since better water availability is anticipated, distribution among the provinces should be made as per para-2 of the Water Apportionment Accord 1991, while Punjab argued that the present 3-tier arrangements by Irsa were very much within the ambit of the accord.

The Irsa chairman noted that the issue is pending with the Office of the Attorney General for Pakistan for recommendation. The outcome is awaited which is ultimately to be discussed and decided by the Council of Common Interests.

Published in Dawn, April 3rd, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1473594/14pc-water-shortage-anticipated-in-early-kharif>

‘DRIED UP’ BADIN OBSERVES SHUTTER DOWN STRIKE TO PROTEST WATER SHORTAGE

By Hafeez Tunio Published: April 3, 2019

KARACHI: After several months of isolated protests, Badin district witnessed on Tuesday a rare show of unity and observed a shutter down and wheel jam strike in various towns to protest the acute water shortage that has persisted in the region.

Citizens, irrespective of their political affiliation, kept their businesses shut and vehicles remained off the roads. Major markets and roads in Badin Town, Golarchi, Kario Gahnwar, Seerani, Kadhan, Talhar, Rajo Khanani, wore a deserted look as people showed their anger at what they termed an “artificial” water shortage.

“We have been witnessing the worst situation due to the severe water crisis that has persisted for the last ten months,” said Suleman Mandhro, a journalist based in Badin. “The strikes and protests have continued for the last two months, but no one listens to us,” he lamented.

Mandho, who recently travelled across five union councils of the district, said, “Mass migration has started from tail end areas of Badin. People are unable to cultivate their crops and even drinking water is not there.” He said that sunflower and wheat crops are badly affected due to the shortage of water.

The situation has even compelled political opponents to come together and raise their voice over the issue. Family members of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) MPA Taj Mohammad Mallah and PPP Badin information secretary Hanif Khaskheli were among those who joined the protest organised by local activists, and civil society members.

Noor Ahmed Talpur, a member of the Badin district council, blamed PPP lawmakers for what he claimed to be an ‘artificial shortage’. “They have diverted the water from main canals, creating a man-made crisis,” he said, adding, “Water comes from Akram Wah and Goni wah of Kotri Barrage, but these influential persons have created problems by blocking water and diverting it to irrigate their lands.”

Reports pouring in from various sources suggest that Badin and Golarchi Tehsil are among the worst-hit areas where a drought-like situation persists. People from many villages, including Gul Hassan Lakho, Punho Pali, Ahmed Rajho, Dodo Soomro, Golo Mandhro, Haji Hajam and Ahmed Rajo have started migration to safer places.

Referring to Golo Mandhro village, Aziz Dero, a former elected representative of the area, said, “Believe me, we are finding it increasingly difficult to grow crops and drink water as irrigation water has become extinct and the sea level is rising, turning the once fertile land saline.”

According to Dero, Tuesday’s protest was a historic event in the district. “No one has forced people. They have voluntarily gone on strike because of the worst situation they have been facing for a long time,” he said, adding that people have no other option, but to shut their businesses and set aside their routine activities to join the protest.

Barrister Hasnain Mirza, parliamentary leader of the Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA), has been protesting on this issue in the Sindh Assembly. “I have moved a resolution against the severe artificial shortage, but unfortunately the government is avoiding it because its powerful people are beneficiaries of it,” he told The Express Tribune.

According to Mirza, PPP leaders and the government were taking revenge from the people who had voted against them. On the other hand, irrigation officials termed it a routine shortage of water. “It is not a man-made shortage,” said Badin Deputy Commissioner Hafeez Siyal. “The allegations are baseless. The shortage comes from upstream.”

Published in The Express Tribune, April 3rd, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1942405/1-dried-badin-observes-shutter-strike-protest-water-shortage/>

WATER STORAGE DEPLETING AT ALARMING LEVEL

The Newspaper’s Staff Reporter April 02, 2019

LAHORE: Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) Chairman retired Lt-Gen Muzammil Husain says that per capita water availability in Pakistan has squeezed to an alarming 908 cubic meter per annum from 5,260 cubic meter, pushing Pakistan towards water scarcity fast.

It also recommends a sustainable long-term plan to thwart the looming water crisis and improve the ratio of low-cost hydel electricity in Pakistan.

“It is a matter of grave concern that per capita water availability in the country has come down from 5,260 cubic meter as was in 1951 to an alarming level of 908 cubic meter per annum, pushing us to the stage of water-scarce country. So

we need a sustainable long-term plan to thwart the looming water crisis and improve the ratio of low-cost hydel electricity in Pakistan,” Mr Husain said while giving a briefing a delegation of the Command and Staff College Quetta that visited the authority’s office here on Monday.

At present, Pakistan can store only 10 per cent of its annual river flows against the world average of 40 per cent. Ironically, instead of increasing water storage capacity, the country has lost about one-fourth storage of the dams. The live water storage capacity that used to be 16.26 million acre feet (MAF) in 1976 has reduced to 13.68 MAF, which equals to only 30 days carry over capacity. India has carry over capacity of 170 days, Egypt 700 days and America 900 days.

“A major paradigm shift to the existing development mechanism in Pakistan is direly needed to improve the water situation and handle the monster of circular debt. There has to be a home-grown engineering expertise coupled with innovative financial models with less dependence on the government and efficient yet swift planning and approval processes for implementation of the project,” he explained. “The carry over water storage capacity has to be increased from 30 days to 120 days. Likewise, the ratio of low-cost hydel electricity also requires to be drastically improved,” he said.

The delegation was briefed about the water scenario and development projects of Wapda in the water and hydropower sectors. It was also briefed over the challenges and issues faced by Pakistan in water sector.

The Wapda chief, while talking about his vision for construction of dams and hydropower projects, said the Wapda plans to add two MAF to water storage capacity and 828 megawatt (MW) hydropower generation capacity up to 2025 in short term, another eight MAF water storage and 5,653 MW power generation up to 2030 in medium term and 28 MAF water storage and 6,245 MW generation capacity up to 2,050 in long term with completion of its various projects.

“Contract for Mohmand Dam Hydropower Project has been awarded and construction work on the project is about to start, while work on Diamer Basha Dam will also commence this year,” he added.

He also briefed the delegation about impact of climate change on water resources, water management challenges, water conservation and hydropower potential of the country. He also responded to the queries raised by the delegation during question-answer session.

Published in Dawn, April 2nd, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1473384/water-storage-depleting-at-alarming-level>

‘SUSTAINABLE LONG-TERM PLAN VITAL TO THWART WATER CRISIS’

By APP Published: April 2, 2019

LAHORE: Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) Chairman Lt-Gen (retd) Muzammil Hussain on Monday said a sustainable long-term plan was needed to thwart the looming water crisis and improve the ratio of low-cost hydel electricity in Pakistan.

He expressed these views while briefing a delegation of Command and Staff College Quetta at the Wapda House. During the visit, the delegation was briefed about the water scenario and development projects in water and hydropower sectors.

The Wapda chairman said, “A major paradigm shift to the existing development mechanism in Pakistan is direly needed to improve the water situation and handle the monster of circular debt.

“There has to be a home-grown engineering expertise coupled with innovative financial models with less dependence on the government and efficient yet swift planning and approval processes for implementation of the project. The carryover water storage capacity has to be increased from 30 to 120 days. Likewise, the ratio of low-cost hydel electricity also requires to be drastically improved.”

Highlighting the challenges and issues faced by Pakistan in water sector, Hussain told the delegation that per capita water availability in the country had come down from 5,260 cubic metres in 1951 to an alarming level of 908 cubic metres per annum, pushing us to the stage of water-scarce country.

“Pakistan can store only 10 per cent of its annual river flows against the world average of 40 per cent. Ironically, instead of increasing water storage capacity, Pakistan has lost about one-fourth storage of the dams,” he said. “The live water storage capacity that used to be 16.26 million-acre feet (MAF) in 1976 has reduced to 13.68 MAF, which

equals to only 30 days carryover capacity. India has carry over capacity of 170 days, Egypt 700 days and America 900 days.”

Dilating upon the vision for construction of dams and hydropower projects, the chairman shared with the delegation that Wapda planned to add two MAF to water storage capacity and 828 megawatts (MW) hydropower generation capacity up to 2025 in short term, another eight MAF water storage and 5,653MW power generation up to 2030 in medium term and 28 MAF water storage and 6,245MW generation capacity up to 2050 in the long term with completion of its various projects.

Contract for Mohmand Dam Hydropower Project has been awarded and construction work on the project is about to start, while work on Diamer Bhasha Dam will also commence this year.

The delegation was also briefed about the impact of climate change on water resources, water management challenges, water conservation and hydropower potential of the country.

The Wapda chairman also responded to the queries raised by the delegation during question-answer session.

Later, Command and Staff College delegation head and the Wapda chairman exchanged souvenirs.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1941874/1-sustainable-long-term-plan-vital-thwart-water-crisis-wapda/>

THE STATE OF WATER IN SINDH

Shahab Usto Updated April 01, 2019

IN December 2016, I had filed a constitutional petition in the Supreme Court of Pakistan, praying for the appointment of a commission to probe whether people in Sindh received clean drinking water, and whether the Sindh Environmental Protection Agency (Sepa) had discharged its statutory responsibilities. The apex court appointed a commission headed by a sitting judge of the Sindh High Court, Justice Muhammad Iqbal Kalhoro. During its one-year tenure, the Justice Kalhoro commission produced two comprehensive reports containing, inter alia, findings and recommendations.

It must be stated that the commission’s findings have never been disputed by the provincial government or by any other person mainly because they were drawn from a variety of sources — official records, government functionaries, forensic reports, experts’ input, public hearings, judicial proceedings, and the inspections of water and sanitation infrastructure. The conclusion that the commission reached was: “people of Sindh are not drinking clean water’. The mixing of untreated sewage with freshwater bodies — rivers, canals, lakes, ponds etc — was found to be the prime cause of contamination. In fact, there are 750 points of confluence where raw sewage meets with freshwater bodies, turning the entire 8,000-kilometre-long provincial irrigation network into a big conduit of drainage.

A grim finding of the commission on water is that virtually the entire water and sanitation infrastructure had been nonexistent or flawed.

Another grim finding of the commission is that virtually the entire water and sanitation infrastructure — water filtration plants, sewage treatment plants, landfill sites, water-testing laboratories, solid and liquid waste disposals, hospital incinerators and so on — had been for years nonexistent or flawed to the point of dysfunction. Yet no past or present government paid heed to this ‘existential’ issue, though billions of rupees were spent every year in the name of development, repair and maintenance of the water and sanitation-related facilities.

A case in point is the Karachi Water and Sewage Board. It has about 14,000 employees and an annual budget upwards of Rs6 billion. But none of the city’s seven water-filter plants produced water as per WHO standards. Likewise, all three sewage treatment plants with a cumulative capacity of treating 160MGD had been dysfunctional for many years. As a result, the sea receives 450MGD of raw industrial, municipal and hospital effluents, besides the oil slick and tar balls, causing “degradation of water quality, habitat loss, localised eutrophication, and metal accumulation in fish and shrimps”. Moreover, one-third of the water (650MGD) is lost to theft, line leakages, adulteration and so on. The quantum of loss can be measured by the fact that only one per cent of water is supplied through water tankers in the entire city.

The commission also found that underground water that is supplied to many cities in the province, including Larkana and Shikarpur, had turned brackish, and hence unfit for human consumption. Lack of sanitation, excess withdrawal of groundwater, low precipitation, encroachments on drainage outlets, and use of pesticides are some causes behind the degradation of underground water. But the provincial government has remained blissfully oblivious to the increasing loss of this important source of water.

Reverse osmosis plants are yet another source of water that is being tapped largely in the Thatta, Badin and Tharparkar districts. Indeed, RO plants present a classic case study in bad governance and corruption. Hundreds of plants were installed without following the rules; in many cases a single contractor installed, operated and maintained them; although the installation, operation and maintenance of these plants were financed by as many as five departments/agencies, involving billions of rupees, yet none of them ever bothered to monitor the quality or quantity of water produced by these plants.

It is proven by the fact that none of the 2,000-odd RO plants had a water-testing lab or water-measuring meter. No wonder, the commission concluded that the entire scheme was “nothing but a farce”, and recommended an investigation to fix the responsibility on, and award punishment to, the officers concerned.

There are about 2,100 rural water supply and drainage schemes which cater to the needs of the rural population. Most of the schemes were found to be dysfunctional mainly due to bad governance and local councils’ incapacity to operate them. Therefore, while the government spends billions of rupees annually on these schemes, the people continue to consume contaminated water, endure insanitary conditions, thus increasingly falling prey to various water-borne ailments eg hepatitis, kidney failure, typhoid, skin lesions, diarrhoea, etc.

Sadly, the commission also didn’t find the state of public hospitals enviable. Most of the district/tertiary hospitals lacked clean drinking water facilities, many suffered from bad sanitary conditions, and none had incinerators, and related arrangement, to dispose of hospital waste in accordance with Hospital Waste Management Rules, 2014.

Deplorably, the dangerous waste was dumped on the open grounds to be lifted along with municipal waste, which polluted not only the hospital environment but also posed risks to the health of local communities.

Another glaring instance of delinquency on the part of public functionaries noted by the commission was the total absence of a solid waste disposal system, notwithstanding the fact that Solid Waste Management Board had been created through an act in 2014. Therefore, there are no designated landfill sites anywhere in the province, including Karachi, and everyday thousands of tons of garbage are thrown into the drain nullahs, canals or the sea, or burnt on the open grounds, aggravating environmental degradation.

However, the most lamentable fact that came to the notice of the commission was the failure of Sepa, the provincial environmental regulator, to discharge its statutory responsibilities. Some of Sepa’s multiple failures are evident from the emission of untreated industrial effluents, contamination of irrigation system, degeneration of underground water, and degradation of the coastal belt. No wonder, the commission concluded unhappily that Sepa had yet to establish ‘justification for its existence’.

It would be worth discussing in a subsequent article the tasks that the Supreme Court assigned to the water commission headed by retired justice Amir Hani Muslim, to what extent he achieved those tasks in his one-year tenure, and whether the commission should continue.

Published in Dawn, April 1st, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1473198/the-state-of-water-in-sindh>

PEOPLES’ ASSEMBLY REJECTS PPP LAWMAKERS’ CLAIMS

A Correspondent April 01, 2019

BADIN: A peoples’ assembly organised by farmers’ associations in Tarai town on Sunday rejected claims of Pakistan Peoples Party lawmakers, officials of Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (Sida) and irrigation department that Badin farmers were not getting their share of water ‘due to design fault in Akram Wah’.

The speakers at the assembly, including Mir Ghulam Rasool Talpur and Ali Yousuf Jani, said that water share of the district was being openly stolen by influential people in connivance with the officials of Sida and irrigation department through flood canals and blockages in canals of Kotri barrage to divert water flows.

They said that they were prepared to challenge at all forums the lawmakers and other people who were making false claims about water distribution.

Meanwhile, a complete shutdown was observed in Dei town on Saturday on a call for protest given by Save Badin Action Committee against nagging water crisis in the district as traders of the tiny town joined farmers and villagers in their 20-kilometre long march from Die to Tando Bago where they staged a demonstration at Badar Chowk for three hours.

Azizullah Dero, Mir Noor Mohammad Talpur and Khuda Dino Shah who led the march rejected recent statement of PPP lawmakers of the district who claimed that the areas being fed by Akram Wah were not getting water due to design fault in the canal.

They said that their share of water started decreasing after blockages were erected by Sida and irrigation department officials at Alipur, 30-Mile and other points to divert flow of water to the lands of influential people.

They deplored that despite worst water shortage in the area their share was still being released into flood canals near Matli town from Akram Wah and Phuleli Canal.

They asked the PPP lawmakers to join their peaceful struggle for their survival instead of supporting those who were involved in water theft.

They slammed the government for its callous attitude towards continuous protest of famers and the worst water crisis in four talukas of the district, where more than one million inhabitants were not getting water even for drinking purposes.

They announced that complete shutdown would be observed on April 2 in all big and small towns of the district on their appeal to register protest against indifference and highhandedness of rulers.

Published in Dawn, April 1st, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1473136/peoples-assembly-rejects-ppp-lawmakers-claims>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM APRIL 8th TO APRIL 14th 2019

POTABLE WATER PROJECT HITS A SNAG

Mansoor Malik April 14, 2019

LAHORE: The Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) government's flagship programme Punjab Aab-e-Pak Authority to provide clean drinking water to people across the province has hit a snag as the authority's bill passed by the Punjab Assembly about a month ago is yet to be sent to the governor for his assent.

The bill has ingrained governor's role as its (authority's) patron-in-chief as was approved by the Punjab cabinet following a nod by Prime Minister Imran Khan.

The opposition had made hue and cry over the governor's role in an authority created by the Punjab government, saying it is tantamount to encroaching upon the provincial government powers. The Punjab Aab-e-Pak Authority bill 2019 was, however, passed by the Punjab Assembly with majority votes on March 14. It will replace the previous government's multi-billion-rupee Saaf Pani project that could not take off because of squabbling and political intervention from the ruling family.

Delay in moving bill to governor smacks of squabbling

Criticising the governor's role in the authority during a debate in the assembly, PML-N MPA Azma Bukhari had said the legislation seemed person-specific and called for nomination of an elected member from the house to head the authority. She had also announced challenging the bill in the Lahore High Court.

PML-N's Samiullah Khan had said Chaudhry Sarwar was earlier PML-N government's governor and wanted to work on water filtration plants, alleging that one of his close aides was in the water filtration plant business. He alleged that Mr Sarwar had even asked former chief minister Shahbaz Sharif to launch the project but Mr Sharif did not agree and that led to his parting of ways with the party.

"I fear some mega scandal in the authority at the end of the day," Mr Khan had said.

It is learnt that the Governor House secretariat has several times contacted the Punjab Assembly secretariat to get the bill for final assent by the governor but there has been no response.

This reporter sent messages and tried to contact officials of the PML-Q or the Punjab Assembly secretary to have their point of view but to no avail.

Sources say Punjab Assembly Speaker Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi had differences with Governor Chaudhry Sarwar and was not allowing the secretariat to forward the bill to the Governor House. They allege that Mr Elahi was not happy with the PTI government for not appointing his son Moonis Elahi as federal minister despite assurances.

They say a video was 'leaked' a few months ago wherein Mr Elahi and PML-Q federal minister Tariq Bashir Cheema in a meeting with PTI's former general secretary Jahangir Khan Tareen (at former's residence) were complaining against Chaudhry Sarwar and demanding that "Mr Sarwar should be controlled".

The PTI leaders had brushed aside the video contents saying "there is nothing serious" and asserted that the PML-Q was PTI's trusted coalition partner.

Sources say the delay in forwarding the bill, duly passed by the Punjab Assembly, is in the knowledge of the prime minister. Amid the impasse, sources say, the Governor House might approach the law ministry besides looking for other legal options to get the bill for the governor's assent and create the authority.

Published in Dawn, April 14th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1475983/potable-water-project-hits-a-snag>

FARMERS ADVISED TO SCHEDULE IRRIGATION PLANS FOR RABI CROPS

RECORDER REPORT | APR 14TH, 2019 | KARACHI

The Met Office has asked the farmers to schedule irrigation plans for the Rabi crops, as a fresh rainy spell has just begun. It warned the farmers of a sizeable yield loss if weeds continued to grow, asking them to remove the unneeded foliage without any delays from their standing crops. It said that the growers should also take steps to preserve the crops and nurseries from the damaging impacts of cold weather.

Weather in the next 10 days: Punjab is likely to witness mainly a dry weather with an isolated rain-thunderstorm in Multan, Bahawalpur, Gujranwala, Sargodha, Faisalabad, Lahore and Rawalpindi Divisions, besides Islamabad till April 20.

Widely a dry weather may prevail in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with chances of rain-thunderstorm in Malakand, Hazara, Peshawar, Kohat, Mardan, Bannu and D I Khan Divisions.

Sindh is expected to go through a rainy period as Sukkur and Larkana Divisions may receive rain-thunderstorm with gusty winds and precipitation is also likely elsewhere in the province.

Quetta, Zhob and Kalat Divisions are likely to see a spell of rain-thunderstorm but other parts of Balochistan may remain with a dry weather over the period. Gilgit-Baltistan is also expected to receive a scattered rain-thunderstorm with Kashmir to remain largely dry and cloudy until after April 15, which may also receive rain-thunderstorm.

On Sunday: A widespread dust-thunderstorm-rain is expected in Makran, Kalat Divisions and scattered falls in Quetta, Zhob, Sibbi, Nasirabad, D G Khan, D I Khan Divisions, besides at a few places in Kohat, Bannu, Malakand and Multan Divisions. Isolated moderate to heavy falls are likely in Makran, Zhob and Quetta Divisions. Hailstorm may also strike some rain forecast areas. Hot and dry weather is expected elsewhere in the country.

“A shallow westerly wave is presently affecting upper and central parts of the country. This weather system is likely to intensify on Sunday (evening/night) and grip most parts of the country on Monday,” the Met said.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/04/20190414464398/>

AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES: NEED STRESSED FOR IMPROVING AGE-OLD IRRIGATION METHODS

ZAHID BAIG | APR 14TH, 2019 | LAHORE

“Pakistan has fertile land and suitable climate for agriculture, but there is a need to improve agricultural practices, especially age-old irrigation methods, by promoting mechanization, which will help in lowering water consumption, labour cost and time spent on sowing and irrigation,” said Louis Lategan, farm manager of Nishat Agriculture Farming (Pvt) Limited.

While talking to Business Recorder, he said, “We need to focus on the biggest spender in agriculture and that is irrigation. The water we save by using efficient irrigation methods can be used by hundreds of other farmers and sectors.”

Louis Lategan, originally from South Africa, had the vast experience working in different water-scarce countries like Sudan and Ghana for the promotion of modern agriculture, is now attached with Nishat Agriculture Farming, a project of Nishat Group.

He is supervising the pivot system being used at two separate farms of Nishat Group, which according to him is the best irrigation method against flood watering. Nishat group leader living to its reputation has brought the best agricultural machinery and best agricultural practices to get more out of the land with fewer expenses and less burden on natural resources like water, he added.

“We have achieved a saving of 65 percent water because of uniform use of water in pivot system against traditional flood watering, while yield is 25 per cent more and is producing good quality fodder (with higher crude protein) under this system,” Louis told a select group of reporters during their a recent visit to NAFL farms.

He said that two crops are being grown on NAFL farms ie, Alfalfa and Rhodes grass. In Alfalfa NAFL has achieved 26-29 percent crude protein under pivot system in these crops against 17-18 percent which is achieved under the flood system. While the same treatment shows that in Rhodes grass, 12-14 percent crude protein is achieved in pivot while only 5-7 percent under traditional flooding system. It also helps in low consumption of electricity (65% less), precision application of inputs, time and labour savings, etc.

When asked about drip irrigation system, he said that water saving is more in drip irrigation system but with a drip system, you must apply acid and periodically chlorinate the drip line to dissolve mineral concentration that can plug emitters. The above-ground sprinklers on a pivot are visible at all times, so plugging and leakage are not a problem. An average nozzle on a pivot is 16 times larger than a drip emitter. Subsurface drip systems cannot stimulate seed germination if the drip tape is placed below the root zone. Sprinkler heads on a pivot apply water similar to the effect you get from rain, causing seeds to germinate. In fact, pivots can easily be fitted with a dual sprinkler package – one for germination and one for irrigation.

Talking about time-saving, he said that 121 acres of land can be irrigated in just eight hours by pivot system.

Traditionally it takes four hours to irrigate one acre in a flood irrigation system. He also said that pivot system also includes soil moisture sensor-meters which inform about the water requirements at any place in the farm and also generates weather forecasts, so water can be saved in case of rainfall which will irrigate the land. He said it is an efficient system both for dry land or sandy soils while having minimum risk of crop failure as it saves both from low irrigation or excessive watering.

He said that at present land size in NAFL project is 1200 acres, all being irrigated through pivot system while more land is being explored. He disclosed that the pivot irrigation system installed on their farm can also be accessed online through a mobile app to perform various functions.

Keeping in view the success of NAFL farms, the government should focus on extending subsidy on installing and promoting pivot systems instead of encouraging drip irrigation, because expenditure in pivot systems are higher initially. However, once installed, its infrastructure lasts longer, he added.

He also disclosed that extensive training was imparted to local labour while some of those were trained in Dubai by the firm which installed the pivot system in Pakistan. Students of the University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) are provided opportunities for the internship at Nishat’s Agriculture Farms, University trips also come to the farm to learn new agriculture-related techniques and processes in addition to internees, who are also trained from other universities too.

Journalists were also taken to the farm where different machines including pivot system irrigating Alfalfa crops, machines cutting crops and making hay bundles, seed planters etc. Hustam Jalal, General Manager Operations Nishat Dairy also told visitors that the Nishat Group is also exporting Rhode Grass Hay.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/04/20190414464412/>

POVERTY AND HEALTHCARE

Syed Mansoor Hussain April 14, 2019

Health is not just the absence of disease. As I started studying medicine, our purpose was thought to be to prevent and then treat different diseases. But the one thing few of us ever considered as a part of the medical domain was the general condition that people lived in.

Yes we read how overcrowding facilitated the passage of infections from one person to another. We learned that a poor diet with absence of vitamins could lead to specific medical conditions and that absence of Iodine in food caused ‘cretinism’. And that poor sanitation led to cholera and dysentery epidemics. Yet no attempt was made to put it all together by our teachers.

But then as I went into practice and actually started thinking about disease in a more general fashion especially after I started writing for this newspaper, I realised the obvious that all the conditions that I mentioned above that lead to disease and many others like them were connected to each other. And the connection is poverty.

Even the rich get sick. And indeed we all will die one day. However, in medicine we also work on the assumption that some deaths can be delayed. Or that what we refer to as ‘premature’ deaths can be prevented. In the case of the

relatively well-off one thing that helps them out in medical terms is education with which comes knowledge and information.

I am almost inclined to call poverty a disease that needs to be treated just like high blood pressure or diabetes. As medical planners we concentrate on providing the poor with medical help when they get sick. Nothing wrong with that but what happens after we cure them and then send them home?

Poverty alleviation is and must be the primary aim of all governments. How it can be done depends on different types of government systems. And no I am not going to go into that. But two simple measures can tell us what is happening. Population growth compared with the growth of the national GDP (gross domestic product).

Simply put, if the GDP is significantly higher than the rate of population growth then we can presume that the people in a developing country are probably getting less poor (richer?). Sadly that does not seem to be happening in Pakistan. And the relatively recent loud claims and plans to control population growth have, as expected, died down without much notice.

The point I am trying to make today is that even if we keep trying to provide better healthcare for the poor, in the larger scheme of things the overall improvement in how the poor live is not going to be very apparent. That of course does not mean that we should not even try and make better healthcare available to all those that need it.

Poverty alleviation is and must be the primary aim of all governments. How it can be done depends on different types of systems.

Let me just summarise some of the areas of medical interventions that make people live longer. The beginning is of course when a woman becomes pregnant with a child. She for starters needs to be physically mature enough to carry and deliver a child. Then she needs adequate nutrition and medical care including tests and diagnosis for possible problems and complications that can occur during pregnancy.

The next step is the birth of a child. Here I am all for child birth at home but only after it has been determined that the delivery is expected to be normal. Even so, medical assistance must be available in case of problems like difficult delivery and post-delivery bleeding.

Childbirth has historically been the most dangerous time in a woman's life as well as that for the newborn, and human life expectancy started improving a century ago when women and children dying at this time became less frequent. For the child the first month and then the next few years are vital for long term survival. Breastfeeding over the first two years of a child's life has been shown to improve growth and decrease the chance of 'stunting'. Here modern interventions like 'immunisation' (vaccination) against many childhood diseases are important.

However, most important is availability of nutrition that not only provides adequate calorie intake for a child but also a varied diet that includes all the vital 'micronutrients' (vitamins and minerals). At this tender age children are most vulnerable to diseases transmitted primarily through contaminated drinking water.

So, clean drinking water and 'sanitation' become important needs. The conditions that can be transmitted through contaminated drinking water include intestinal worms, typhoid, Hepatitis A, dysentery, and cholera. Even adults are not immune to these problems but it is children that are most susceptible to severe problems if infected or infested. Once children start going to school or intermingling with other children, communicable diseases become important and here the childhood immunisation plays an important role in preventing diseases like measles.

Also overcrowding and multiple family members living and sleeping in the same area can cause transmission of other diseases like tuberculosis (TB). Fortunately, it is not a problem in Pakistan but in the West, during the early part of the last century, overcrowding and living in 'tenements' was a medical problem due, amongst other things, to lack of access to sunshine leading to a disease like 'rickets'.

So now the child has grown into a teenager and eventually an adult. It is education, employment and ability to feed adequately that becomes the next vital need.

I presume that most poor people that work for a living or work at home are active enough and not well fed enough to develop the major problem of the rich and the well to do, and that is 'obesity'.

But even without obesity, the poor can still develop many chronic problems like high blood pressure, diabetes and if they were unfortunate enough to get treated with injections by village or small town 'quacks', the major scourge in Pakistan of Hepatitis C.

Having escaped into adulthood, even the poor need regular medical checkups to diagnose problems early enough while they are still easily treatable. But this treatment does require lifelong medicines and medicines cost money.

During my medical practice in Pakistan I have seen poor patients that essentially had to make a choice between taking medicines regularly or else feeding their children.

Another problem that poverty breeds is the need to have many children. For the poor, children especially boys, are like an old age pension. And girls being a 'burden' are therefore married off as early as possible leading to child marriages and child pregnancies with its inherent medical problems.

Besides these common problems, it is the poor that smoke cigarettes and tobacco products most often leading to severe lung problems as they get older. In short being poor is an overall problem and all the medical interventions I have mentioned above can and should be provided to all those that need them but that costs a lot of money and needs a lot of manpower.

If Pakistan can afford all these services including jobs that provide a living wage for all, then Pakistan will have become a developed country. Until then poverty will remain Pakistan's major healthcare problem.

http://tns.thenews.com.pk/poverty-healthcare/#.XLR_ejAzbc

EPA SAYS RAWAL DAM WATER QUALITY IS SATISFACTORY

By APP Published: April 13, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The water quality standards of Rawal Dam have been reported to be satisfactory as contamination levels are recorded as less harmful and hazardous. 'PAK-EPA teams have been collecting samples from Rawal Dam to ascertain pollutant levels in the water, however based on recent observations there is no serious threat posed to the water quality,' a PAK-EPA official told the media.

"Water quality management and observation was the mandate of Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) which also shared its report regularly with PAK-EPA," she added.

Moreover, the water was chlorinated through water treatment plant set up at the reservoir which used to treat all of the water coming through the dam. There was no possible room left for unhygienic water supply under these circumstances, she added.

It may be mentioned that extreme levels of water contamination had caused large number of fish to die last year which raised concerns among the masses.

Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Fisheries Department Director Ghoufran Shehzad told the media that the housings established in the catchment areas of Rawal Dam including Banni Gala and other areas were dumping their household untreated waste into the dam which was explicitly damaging marine life.

"Soaking pits could help reduce the risk which has not been built by the locals residing in the vicinity where few of them have implemented it despite notices by the authorities," he added. A WASA official informed that water chlorination was carried out in the treatment plant at Rawal Dam in line with the World Health Organisation prescribed standards.

"The water sampling has been carried out at the outer and inner inlets of the treatment plant to assess the water quality," he added.

Regarding the damage to marine life in Rawal Dam reported last year, he stated that the damage occurred due to reduced levels of dissolved oxygen in reservoir's water.

He added that it happened due to the stagnation of water in the dam and less rainfall during that season. He said this issue was sub-judice in the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

Whereas Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR), WASA, PAK-EPA, Environment Protection Department (EPD) Punjab and Pakistan Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (PCSIR) jointly formed a report over the issue and submitted it to the court.

Published in The Express Tribune, April 13th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1949565/1-epa-says-rawal-dam-water-quality-satisfactory/>

WAPDA CHIEF UNDERSCORES NEED FOR CONSTRUCTION OF DAMS

RECORDER REPORT | APR 12TH, 2019 | LAHORE

Underlining the need for construction of dams, Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) Chairman Lt-Gen Muzammil Hussain (ret'd) has said that as many as 20 million acre barren land can be brought under plough if the water is made available by developing water storages in the country. With construction of water sector projects,

we can strengthen our agriculture to attain food security and cope with the fast growing needs of water in domestic and industrial sectors besides injecting sizeable low-cost hydel electricity into the national grid to stabilize the national economy.

He expressed these views while speaking to a delegation of Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) that visited Wapda House on Thursday to exchange views on construction of dams and hydropower projects. LCCI former President Sohail Lashari headed the delegation.

Dilating upon the factors behind dismal scenario of water and hydropower sectors in the country, the Wapda chairman said that the situation can be improved by putting a robust development mechanism in place and exercising prompt decision-making. All stakeholders including the Chambers of Commerce and Industries have to play their due role to implement the National Water Policy for water, food and energy security of the country.

The delegation was briefed about Wapda projects in water and hydropower sectors. It was informed that Wapda plans to add two MAF to water storage capacity and 828MW hydropower generation capacity up to 2025 in short term, another eight MAF water storage and 5653MW power generation up to 2030 in medium term and 28 MAF water storage and 6245MW generation capacity up to 2050 in long term with completion of its various projects. Timely decisions and availability of funds a key factor to implementing short, medium and long-term projects in accordance with their timelines.

The delegation was further apprised about the contract for Mohmand Dam Hydropower Project has been awarded, while work on Diamer Basha Dam will also commence this year.

While appreciating the efforts made by Wapda for harnessing water resources in the country, the LCCI delegation shared their views for construction of dams in Pakistan to meet the increasing requirements of water and electricity.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/04/20190412463609/>

PROTEST AGAINST WATER SHORTAGE IN BADIN

The Newspaper's Correspondent April 11, 2019

BADIN: Activists of Sindh United Party (SUP) staged a demonstration in front of the press club here on Wednesday in protest against acute shortage of water in the district for the past nine months.

The protesters led by the party's office-bearers Pir Khalil Jan Sarhandi, Roshan Ali Buriro, Hyder Ali Shah and others also observed a sit-in on Shah Latif Road and raised slogans against Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (Sida) and irrigation department officials.

The leaders said that the lingering shortage of water for irrigating land as well as for drinking purposes had increased frustration with the authorities concerned. The officers concerned failed to end the crisis caused by theft of water from waterways of Badin, they said.

They said the shortage of water had not only destroyed fertile land but also deprived a large population in coastal villages of the water they needed for survival. The situation was forcing people to leave their homes and hearths and shift to urban areas.

They said that influential landowners and jagirdars in connivance with irrigation department and Sida authorities had erected diversions in canals to divert flow of water illegally to their lands. The authorities concerned appeared helpless before the influential thieves, they said.

Published in Dawn, April 11th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1475200/protest-against-water-shortage-in-badin>

RIVER INFLOWS RECORD 156,400 CUSECS OF WATER SO FAR

MUSHTAQ GHUMMAN | APR 11TH, 2019 | ISLAMABAD

The country is receiving more water this year due to heavy snow till last month as river inflows on Wednesday recorded 156,400 cusecs against last year's 92,600 cusecs and historic average of 115,900 cusecs. According to Indus River System Authority (Irsa), reservoirs storage is also far better than last year as it stood at 1.185 MAF against last year's 0.143 MAF and historic average of 1.692 MAF.

The water regulator further stated that all provincial indents are met in full and on Wednesday releases were as follows: (i) Punjab 61,500 cusecs;(ii) Sindh 50,000 cusecs;(iii) KP 3100 cusecs and (iv) Balochistan 300 cusecs for Kachhi canal only rest of Balochistan canals are closed for April as per their schedule.

Last week, Irsa's Advisory Committee projected 14 per cent shortfall in water for Punjab and Sindh in early Kharif 2019 whereas shortfall will reduce to 6 per cent in the late Kharif season starting from April 1, 2019.

The committee discussed in detail the expected/likely water availability for Kharif 2019. The committee had foreseen for the current season (compared to previous one) a better hydro-meteorological scenario as revealed by representative of Directorate General of Met Department. Based on the forecasted hydrological parameters, the committee anticipated a shortfall of 14 percent in early Kharif, and 6 percent shortfall in late Kharif season.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/04/20190411463045/>

FPCCI SEEKS SETTING UP OF INLAND WATER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

Parvaiz Ishfaq Rana April 10, 2019

KARACHI: Dispelling the general perception that Pakistan is a water-stressed country, the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) is of a firm belief that there is only a crisis of proper usage and mismanagement rather than anything else.

Suggesting different measures needed for proper usage and controlling of wasteful use of water, the apex body of trade and industry is also of a view that the present inflow of water in the Indus basin is the same as it was in the pre-Tarbela Dam era, ie 42 years ago.

An eight-member team of experts was given a task by the FPCCI for preparing a report on 'Water management, floods, transport and aquatic tourism'.

Spread over 76 pages, the report prepared by the experts also suggests setting up of an Inland Water Transport Authority (IWTA).

The report says that Pakistan is highly dependent on water for the livelihood of its 220 million people.

The country receives about 145 million acre feet (MAF) of water annually from three major rivers — Indus, Jhelum and Chenab and their tributaries, including Kabul River. But only 103 MAF reaches canal heads for irrigation while the remaining flows to the sea.

The report dispels the general impression that Pakistan is faced with severe water shortages and states that out of 103 MAF at canal heads, only 26 MAF water is used for crop cultivation while the remaining is lost through seepage, evaporation, escape below Kotri, leakage from the outmoded infrastructure, mismanagement and corruption.

Furthermore, unlevelled fields, old water distribution system (warabandi) and outdated irrigation methods such as flood irrigation also contribute to water losses at large scale.

The report suggests that there is an urgent need to go for drip irrigation in order to conserve water.

The lining of water courses should be completed at the earliest because so far work on 72,000 water courses has been completed and remaining 73,000 water courses still need lining. This will save water up to 23 MAF which will further increase the availability of water for major crops of the country, the FPCCI report adds.

The report advises the government to devolve water distribution systems to local bodies and other local stakeholders to end the stranglehold of 'corrupt' bureaucrats who facilitate illegal extraction of water. This will help save up to 15 MAF.

Similarly, construction of small dams, reservoirs and ponds should be done by elected local bodies and farming communities in districts, tehsils and villages to conserve water up to 15 MAF.

The tube wells in rural and urban areas should be regulated for maintaining water tables and aquifers.

Once efficient water management and conservation of water is made possible, it will be easy to introduce nationwide inland water transport for which IWTA be established as no such body is there at the federal or the provincial levels, the report further suggests.

The report supports the initiative of the former chief justice of Pakistan and the prime minister on Diamer-Bhasha dam, which will store 8.1 MAF of water.

Published in Dawn, April 10th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1475067/fpcci-seeks-setting-up-of-inland-water-transport-authority>

WATER PROJECTS IN KARACHI, GWADAR TO REMAIN INCOMPLETE IN FY20

By Shahbaz Rana Published: April 10, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Water treatment projects of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) for Gwadar and Karachi will not be completed in the next financial year as the federal government has not allocated sufficient funds in the next budget.

The Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue on Tuesday approved an allocation of Rs30 billion for the finance ministry and the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), but without scrutinising individual projects. The proposed allocation for fiscal year 2019-20 is subject to endorsement by the Priorities Committee and the Annual Plan Coordination Committee, which is expected to meet next month.

Headed by Senator Farooq H Naek, the standing committee approved allocation of Rs18 billion for the finance ministry and Rs12 billion for the FBR's ongoing and new projects.

A look at the proposed allocations for fiscal year 2019-20 by the finance ministry reveals that majority of the projects the ministry is funding in Balochistan and Sindh would not get the full financing. However, the projects, funded by the finance ministry in Punjab and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P), have been given a reasonably large share for their completion.

The government faces serious budgetary constraints, forcing it to massively cut development spending. In the next fiscal year, the chances for fund allocations as per requirements of the Ministry of Planning and Development are not very high.

Against total requirement of Rs31.6 billion, the Ministry of Finance has proposed Rs7.4 billion for the federally funded seven projects in Balochistan. Only two ongoing schemes will receive full funding.

Against the requirement of Rs2.9 billion, the five-million-gallon-per-day desalination plant at Gwadar, being set up under CPEC, is likely to receive only Rs400 million in the next fiscal year.

The Gwadar Smart Environmental and Sanitation System and Landfill project of CPEC will receive only Rs500 million against the total requirement of Rs2.2 billion. Another Gwadar project for necessary facilities of fresh water treatment and water supply has been proposed to get Rs1.5 billion against the remaining requirement of Rs6.3 billion. The project for construction of Dirgi-Shaboai road will receive Rs800 million against the total requirement of Rs4.2 billion.

The Development of Ziarat Town project, started in 2016, and Gwadar Safe City project will receive full funding and are expected to be completed in the next fiscal year.

Eight projects of Sindh, being funded by the Ministry of Finance, have been proposed to get Rs2.7 billion against the remaining requirement of Rs10.2 billion. However, two projects of the province have been given full funding.

For the Greater Karachi Sewerage Plant (S-III), the government has not allocated any funds against its remaining share of Rs862 million. The project is being implemented since 2008.

Similarly, the Greater Karachi Water Supply Scheme (K-IV) has also been proposed to receive Rs800 million against the Centre's remaining share of Rs2.6 billion.

The Lyari Expressway Resettlement project, started in 2002, will receive Rs500 million against the remaining requirement of Rs4.3 billion.

The Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Hospital Nawabshah has been proposed to get the full funding of Rs408.2 million.

The urban water supply scheme of Nawabshah has not got any allocation against the remaining requirement of Rs483 million. Likewise, the establishment of a combined effluent treatment plant for the industrial area of Karachi will get Rs1 billion against the need for Rs2.9 billion.

The federally funded projects will not receive full funding despite an announcement by Prime Minister Imran Khan to give a Rs162-billion package to Karachi. Against three remaining projects, two projects of K-P will get full funding. Total requirement for the three projects is estimated at Rs3.4 billion and the government has proposed Rs1.8 billion for next year.

The project for establishment of an institute of petroleum technology at Karak will receive Rs250 million against the need for Rs1.9 billion. However, the K-P Institute of Children Hospital Peshawar and Widening of Booni Road Chitral will receive full funding for their completion after a long period of 10 years. Punjab's only project for the upgrade of cancer treatment facility at Nishtar Hospital will receive full funding of Rs301 million.

Published in The Express Tribune, April 10th, 2019.

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM APRIL 15th TO APRIL 21st 2019

SHC DISMISSES PETITION BY FARMERS BENEFITING FROM ILLEGAL WATER CONNECTIONS

By Z.Ali Published: April 21, 2019

HYDERABAD: A matter in Sindh High Court (SHC) over the sharing of irrigation water has laid bare the manner in which water of tail end farmers is stolen in connivance with irrigation officials.

For more than four decades thousands of acres of agricultural land previously fed from a canal of Sukkur barrage were given water from Kotri barrage's Akram canal as tail end farmers kept suffering from the shortage.

However, on Friday SHC Hyderabad circuit bench dismissed a petition of the farmers who were beneficiaries of the illegal outlets and ordered Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (SIDA) to ensure compliance.

The petitioners, Muhammad Iqbal Kazi and others, maintained that SIDA has been 'forcefully' attempting to close Mallah distributary which irrigated their lands in Hyderabad rural.

Their counsel, senior advocate Jhamatmal Jethanand, alleged that SIDA is trying to favour some influential farmers by trying to close the distributary.

The counsels for the respondents, advocates Noorul Haq Qureshi and Syed Muhammad Saulat Rizvi, informed the court that contrary to the allegations, the petitioners in blatant violation continued to irrigate their lands from Akram canal. According to them, the irrigation department had provided temporary relief in 1977 to some farmers whose lands were located in the tail end of Sukkur barrage's system.

Under the arrangement 1,556 acres were transferred from the command area of Sukkur barrage to Kotri barrage. The temporary sanction was lastly granted up to winter sowing in 1981-82. The subsequent requests for extension of relief were eventually rejected in 1999.

However, the petitioners and their predecessors continued to draw water. "...there are certain illegalities committed by the petitioners themselves in tampering with the module," observed the bench comprising Justice Muhammad Iqbal Kalhoro and Justice Adnan-ul-Karim Memon.

"That due to theft of water by the petitioners from Akramwah, the tail-enders are disturbed and the water supply to their connection was temporary in nature."

A meeting of SIDA in March, 2017, took notice that the petitioners were illegally using three-foot-diameter pipeline carrying 200 cusecs water to irrigate 40,000 acres of land. The act was in gross violation as even the temporary relief had sanctioned only 4.5 cusecs water for 1,556 acres land.

In April, 2017, SIDA closed the three-foot pipeline but the petitioners opened it again allegedly without the authority's approval. Subsequently, SIDA removed 19 illegal pipelines and outlets of the area in question. The petitioners had prayed the court to order SIDA to reopen the closed pipelines. "...we do not see any merit in this petition which is dismissed," the court ordered.

Published in The Express Tribune, April 21st, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1955486/1-shc-dismisses-petition-farmers-benefiting-illegal-water-connections/>

'CANAL SYSTEM CAUSES WATER LOSSES EQUAL TO SIX DAMS'

Shahid Shah April 21, 2019

KARACHI: Pakistan loses water equivalent to six dams of Mangla and Tarbela structures due to the existing canal system in the country, a PM adviser said on Saturday.

Adviser to the Prime Minister Imran Khan on Institutional Reforms and Austerity Ishrat Husain said the country is wasting water through the canal system.

"If canal water wastage is stopped there will be no need of dam in the country... dams are expensive structures," Husain said, addressing a book launching ceremony. The book, 'Economy of Modern Sindh', was co-authored by Husain, who has been the State Bank of Pakistan's Governor.

The PM adviser said water discharge downstream Kotri barrage is needed to keep the mangrove forests alive and shrimp nurseries intact.

Upper and lower riparian issues in the irrigation system affected the province. “If irrigation water is charged the issue would be resolved.”

On a question, Husain said land reforms in Sindh will not have any major impact over the economy of the province. “They are not needed now,” he added. “Such reforms could have benefited the people in 1960s.”

The adviser said land is distributed among the shareholders under an Islamic law and further fabrication is not required. “Fabricated lands could not be used for big farming and there laser leveling is also a difficult task.”

Husain said rural as well urban economy in Sindh would improve if trust persists among the stakeholders. “Any development in the rural centres will have positive impact over the urban economy,” he added. “You must have confidence in the system, don’t expect an overnight change.”

The PM adviser said there is a misconception and propaganda that the 18th amendment would be repealed. But, he said, only 18th amendment could not provide the autonomy at the grass-root level. “Provinces must delegate authority and power to the local governments.”

The adviser said the book discusses various social gaps between the rural and urban centres. Rural women work without money, he added.

Husain said Sindh governments spent a lot of resources in health and education sectors, “but there has been a little change”. Political parties sharing the government powers, both rural and urban, want quota in jobs, and they don’t follow merit.

The PM adviser said huge potential exists for the development of Sindh.

“There is a very big coastline, which could be developed for fisheries and tourism,” he added. “Similarly, livestock and halal meat can be exported. Workforce could also be developed.”

Executive Director Institute of Business Administration Farrukh Iqbal conducted the dialogue ceremony, which was attended by citizens, faculty, former alumni and students.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/460638-canal-system-causes-water-losses-equal-to-six-dams>

WATER LEVEL IN DAMS RISING GRADUALLY

The Newspaper’s Staff Reporter April 20, 2019

LAHORE: Water storage level in country’s mega reservoirs—Tarbela and Mangla dams – is gradually rising due to snow melting and rains in the catchment areas.

According to an official report, the water storage level of Tarbela, which of minimum operating (dead) and maximum conservation levels are 1,392 and 1,550 feet, reached 1,417.23 feet on Friday. Similarly Mangla’s present water level was 1,140.90 feet. The minimum operating and maximum conservation level of Mangla is 1,050 and 1,242 feet.

On March 16, the water level at Tarbela Dam almost dipped to 1,393.35 feet, just 1.35 feet from 1,392 feet, its minimum operating/dead level. However, the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) saw the situation as not worrisome. The report mentions the Indus River inflows at Tarbela is 39,100 cusecs and outflows 15,000 cusecs; the Kabul River at Nowshera inflows 109,600 cusecs and outflows 109,600 cusecs; the Jhelum River at Mangla inflows 60,300 cusecs and outflows 15,000 cusecs; and the Chenab at Marala inflows 29,900 cusecs and outflows 16,000 cusecs.

Published in Dawn, April 20th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1477221/water-level-in-dams-rising-gradually>

PUNJAB CABINET GIVES GO-AHEAD TO LOCAL GOVT, WATER ACTS

The Newspaper’s Staff Reporter Updated April 20, 2019

LAHORE: The Punjab cabinet on Friday took up a 34-point updated agenda in its eighth meeting at Chief Minister’s Secretariat and gave a go-ahead to different legislative matters including proposed Punjab Local Government Act 2019 and Water Act 2019.

Both proposed acts will now be tabled in the Punjab Assembly for legislation.

The proposed Punjab Local Government Act 2019 was also presented to Prime Minister Imran Khan during his Lahore visit last week and he had given his consent. Through the Water Act 2019, a water resource commission would be established with chief minister as its chairman.

The Punjab cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Usman Buzdar, however, could not discuss the Punjab Growth Strategy 2023 as the subject was again taken out of the agenda at the eleventh hour. Sources say it also reflected in the cabinet's previous two meetings' agenda but was withdrawn at the eleventh hour.

The chief minister had himself visited the Planning and Development (P&D) Board on Wednesday, taken a briefing and approved the draft.

Growth strategy again omitted from otherwise marathon agenda

Punjab Information Minister Samsam Bukhari, while briefing the media after the cabinet meeting, remarked: "Punjab will surely grow."

Referring to a long list of agenda items of the cabinet meeting, Mr Bukhari said the cabinet had decided to meet every fortnight to be able to discuss shorter agenda at length. He said the cabinet approved granting DG Khan's tribal area Koh Suleman the status of tehsil as well as approved quota for the DG Khan and Rajanpur tribal areas' residents in the Ghazi Medical College in DG Khan.

The cabinet approved the Punjab Medical Teaching Institutions Reforms Act 2019 as well as given a go-ahead to close down five public sector companies created by the PML-N government in the health department. Health Minister Dr Yasmin Rashid told the cabinet that the remaining public sector companies' performance was being monitored. The meeting approved temporary regulations 2019 under regulatory steps for immediate eradication of dengue. The cabinet also approved closing down the South Punjab Forest Company.

The information minister said the cabinet approved releasing Rs10 billion for the government guarantee and debt authority in favour of the Punjab Thermal Power Pvt. Ltd. The Punjab Witness Protection Act 2018 was approved and a witness protection board would be constituted under this Act. Amendment to the Punjab e-Stamp Papers Rules 2016 was given approval as well.

The cabinet meeting approved the financing of population welfare program Punjab 2017-20 through public sector development program and funds were also approved for devolved vertical programs of health and population welfare sectors.

Mr Bukhari said the cabinet approved Ramazan Package 2019 through which 309 bazaars would be set up across the province and around 2,000 dastarkhawans would be arranged during the holy month.

Answering a question, he said much bigger subsidy would be given compared to that of previous years to ensure relief for the general public not only in Ramazan bazaars but in the open markets as well.

The meeting approved transfer of land for 720-megawatt Karot Power Project and affairs pertaining to the royalty of the Liquefied Petroleum Gas according to the market value were also approved.

The cabinet accorded approval to the Punjab Animal Health Bill 2019. It approved amendments to the benevolent fund rules for reconsideration of eligibility criteria of monthly grants and increase in grant money.

The cabinet meeting accorded approval to appoint Talib Rizvi new president of the Bank of Punjab as well as approved appointment of the Board of Directors' members of the Parks & Horticulture Authority, Faisalabad.

The cabinet approved the establishment of the Punjab University of Technology at Rasul in Mandi Bahauddin.

The cabinet meeting was attended by provincial ministers, advisers, special assistants, chief secretary, IG police and provincial secretaries.

Published in Dawn, April 20th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1477219/punjab-cabinet-gives-go-ahead-to-local-govt-water-acts>

PPAF MOOT PONDERERS WATER REPLENISHMENT STRATEGY

By Mohammad Zafar Published: April 20, 2019

QUETTA : A week-long water engagement exercise organised by Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) to come up with an action plan for effectively addressing water issues in Balochistan was concluded on Tuesday with suggestions to study two more themes, women and water; and water for coastal and marine areas.

As many as 86 observers from academia, civil society, government departments, and water specialists participated in the workshop from April 9-16. It comprised field visits as well as a two-day consultative workshop at Lasbela University of Agriculture, Water and Marine Sciences (LUAWMS).

The PPAF planned the engagement with multiple actors to come up with a draft water strategy for the province, and a comprehensive action plan to address water issues.

According to details, for the first activity, seven groups were formed to cover agro-ecological zones across Balochistan for field exposure and observation. Field trips were conducted in five zones divided into deserts, plains, the coastal areas, the Quetta valley, and the North and South Highlands.

Areas visited include Loralai, Zhob, Mastung, Khuzdar, Kharan, Dera Murad Jamali, Lasbela, Turbat, Quetta, Pishin, Chaman, and Ziarat.

Each group spent three to four days in the field, observing and noting issues pertaining to water in the province, including traditional water transport systems, interventions by the PPAF, the government, and donors, and possible solutions.

After the field visits, the teams congregated at the LUAWMS along with other groups to present their field learnings and plan respective ways forward.

The participants talked about drinking water for all, ground water management, surface water storage and management, limited agriculture with efficiency and value chain, rangeland management and water for livestock. They recommended that two more themes, women and water, and water for coastal and marine areas must also be studied.

Government departments such as Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency, National Disaster Management Authority, Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources, ASAS, Muslim Aid, LEAD Pakistan, various local district administrations and organisations as well as journalists and social activists also presented their readings. University of Balochistan, University of Turbat, Lasbela University of Agriculture, Water and Marine Sciences, NED University, Mehran University, and Quaid-e-Azam University representatives also participated in the workshop. The workshop concluded with closing remarks of LUAWMS Vice Chancellor Dost Muhammad Baloch and LEAD Pakistan team head Dr Muhammad Arshad.

It was stressed that detailed research will be carried out by specialised academic institutions in Balochistan. Action plans will also be developed by the PPAF for livelihoods development.

PPAF Grants Operations Senior Group Head Simi Kamal thanked the participants for their joint efforts in the exercise. “No part of this extensive project would have been possible without all our esteemed participants, in your own momentous ways, contributing towards this much-needed fight against the water crisis in Balochistan. With determination and solidarity, we will make an impact,” said Kamal.

The official handout said the PPAF’s pursuit in resolving the water crisis in Balochistan will continue. The leveraging, consultation and synergies amongst government line departments, educational institutions, universities, the think tank on rational use of water, water professionals and other relevant stakeholders’ involvement will also play a pivotal role in developing more effective and innovative approaches and initiatives, it added.

The PPAF has engaged in poverty alleviation initiatives in Balochistan with a big focus on water. It recognises that it has become ever more important for attention to focus on Pakistan’s national and regional water crisis and water-related issues.

It said Balochistan is the most water-scarce province of Pakistan, which requires special attention to avert the impact of climate change, drought and disasters keeping in mind the water crisis and water problems in the province.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1954958/1-ppaf-moot-ponders-water-replenishment-strategy/>

OUR INTENSIFYING WATER WOES

By Eric Shahzar Published: April 20, 2019

Water crisis is undoubtedly one of Pakistan’s most pivotal internal security challenges. The UN has predicted that Pakistan will dry up by 2025. Recently, many social awareness programmes including the former CJP’s Dam Fund initiative showed signs of hope.

However, little has been done to curtail the looming water crisis and even less to address the crucial issue of climate change. With every passing decade, natural disasters with no structurally feasible solutions are surfacing. Climate change will only intensify our water woes. Around one-third or 33% of Pakistan’s glaciers will be depleted by 2100, even if global warming is held at 1.5 degrees Celsius. This would impact our overall water, energy, and food security. At first, due to accelerated global warming, Pakistan will witness an unprecedented increase in floods throughout the country, which will disrupt nearly all our key development sectors.

According to the World Food Programme (WFP), six out of 10 Pakistanis are already food insecure. Our economy is in shambles and is only witnessing a downward trajectory. Not to forget, the floods of 2010 cost Pakistan a staggering \$9.7 billion.

Thousands of homes were completely wiped off. We are still facing grave side effects of these floods. Will Pakistan sustain even more calamitous floods in the future?

An already paralysed country with rising political and economic uncertainty it will face severe water scarcity over the next few years. Pakistan is completely dependent on its glaciers which feed over 200 million people. In a few decades, the World Bank predicts that our population will double. How is the government going to manage our water resources?

The impact of water crisis is already being felt especially in the underdeveloped regions. Senator Sherry Rehman, who is also Chairman of the Senate's Causus on Climate Change — said that there is not even a single drop of water to drink in Gwadar. The situation will only worsen in the coming decades.

The Pakistani government has been solely relying on building dams to resolve our water crisis. Building controversial dams with unconvincing fund initiatives is taking the country no where.

According to a recent World Bank report on water, more than 80% of our water resources are allocated to agriculture. This prodigal figure must be curtailed in order to manage our resources efficiently. Yes, Pakistan runs on an agrarian economy — however, it does not justify the amount of water used in the agriculture sector.

Our agriculture sector is outdated. The Pakistani government must initiate programmes to revamp our entire agriculture sector and allocate water resources more efficiently. Drip and sprinkle irrigation — combined with lining our fangled canals will us save water equivalent to twice the size of the controversial Kala Bagh Dam. It is high time for our water committees in Parliament to convert proposals into real-time work.

What is most important is a functional Council of Common Interests (CCI). The CCI is where Chief Ministers of the provinces sit at the same table with the PM's cabinet. All provinces despite their political differences must be on the same page when it comes to water security. To save Pakistan from its looming water crisis, all provinces must unite and eliminate this menacing threat promptly.

Our glaciers are melting. Droughts are intensifying, while our oceans are acidifying with methane plums rising up from the ocean floor. All this is happening decades ahead of scientific projections.

Pakistan's water crisis will create massive hurdles in the coming decades. The best we could do now is minimise the damage and use our water resources efficiently. It is now time to take climate change more seriously than ever.

Published in The Express Tribune, April 20th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1954640/6-intensifying-water-woes/>

FARMERS PROTEST AGAINST WATER SHORTAGE

A Correspondent March 03, 2019

BADIN: A large number of farmers staged a demonstration on Matli-Talhar road in Rajo Khanani town near here on Saturday in protest against nagging water crisis and diversion of water to flood canals by irrigation and Sida officials to irrigate lands of influential landlords.

The protesters' leaders Mir Noor Hassan Talpur, Azizullah Dero, Khuda Dino Shah and others said that severe water shortage had broken the back of farming community for which officials concerned of irrigation and Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority were responsible.

They deplored that entire Badin district was facing drought-like conditions similar to Thar but rulers were not ready to provide them their due share in water. The construction of new channels and watercourses to be fed by Akram Wah and Phuleli Canal would further aggravate the situation in tail-end areas of the district, they said.

They demanded the entire district be declared drought-hit and recovery of all agricultural taxes be suspended till ample water was provided to farmers for the cultivation of seasonal crops.

They made it clear that they had no political agenda and they were forced to take to the streets to protest against the worst water crisis and the corrupt, callous and indifferent functionaries concerned.

They vowed to continue their protest till they were provided their due share in irrigation water and announced holding a large demonstration in Badin on March 4 to protest against those who were depriving them of water.

Published in Dawn, March 3rd, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1467231/farmers-protest-against-water-shortage>

BADIN FARMERS CALL SIDA ‘WHITE ELEPHANT’

A Correspondent April 18, 2019

BADIN: Leaders of Save Badin Action Committee have held the Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (Sida) responsible for the nagging water crisis in the district for the past 10 months and said as long as Sida officials are allowed to distribute water, Badin farmers will never get their due share.

The committee leaders Khalil Ahmed Bhurgari, Azizullah Dero and Mir Noor Ahmed Talpur said in a joint press statement issued here on Wednesday that Sida had become a white elephant.

Major parts of the district faced the worst water crisis in decades because of unabated theft of water by influential persons through illegal channels. As a result, over one million people living in four talukas of the district were not getting water even for drinking purposes, they said.

They alleged that officers of both the irrigation department and Sida including its director Mir Ghulam Ali Talpur were directly involved in diverting water flows of canals towards lands of the influential persons affiliated with the ruling party.

They deplored that no serious efforts were being made by the 19-member technical committee formed by the Sindh government to look into the issue of blockages and flood canals, which were main factors behind the crisis.

They said that disappointed in the situation, leaders of the committee, landowners as well as farmers were migrating to cities to earn bread and butter for their families.

They lashed out at Badin lawmakers for their indifferent attitude towards peoples’ plight and peaceful protests of farmers for the past two months and vowed to enlarge the protest by staging ‘long marches’ and shutdowns in all towns of the district in coming days.

They said that they would mount pressure on Sindh government and force it to move into action against callous government officers of irrigation department and Sida, especially its director, and take steps to distribute water in a just manner.

Published in Dawn, April 18th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1476733/badin-farmers-call-sida-white-elephant>

BALUCHISTAN: PPAF CARRIES OUT WATER ENGAGEMENT EXERCISE TO OVERCOME WATER CRISIS

RECORDER REPORT | APR 18TH, 2019 | ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) carried out an extensive water engagement exercise to come up with an action plan for effectively addressing water issues in Balochistan.

According to details issued by the PPAF here on Wednesday, the water engagement, held from April 09 to 16 in Balochistan comprised field visits as well as a two-day consultative workshop at Lasbela University of Agriculture, Water and Marine Sciences (LUAWMS). As many as 86 participants, comprising water specialists and representatives from academia, civil society, government departments, and PPAF, were involved in the monumental exercise.

PPAF has engaged in numerous poverty alleviation initiatives in Balochistan with a big focus on water. It recognises that it has become ever more important for attention to focus on Pakistan’s national and regional water crisis and water-related issues. Balochistan is the most water scarce province of Pakistan. It requires special attention to avert the impact of climate change, drought and disasters. Keeping in mind the water crisis and water problems in the province, PPAF planned this unique engagement with multiple actors to come up with a draft water strategy for the province, and a comprehensive action plan to address water issues.

Various organisations demonstrated similar understanding in their participation in the water engagement exercise, including government departments such as Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency, National Disaster Management Authority, Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources, various local district administrations and organisations including ASAS, Muslim Aid, LEAD Pakistan, as well as journalists and social activists. Participating universities included University of Balochistan, University of Turbat, Lasbela University of Agriculture, Water and Marine Sciences, NED University, Mehran University, and Quaid-e-Azam University.

For the first activity, seven groups were formed to cover agro-ecological zones across Balochistan for field exposure and observation. Field trips were conducted in five zones divided into deserts, plains, the coastal areas, the Quetta

valley, and the North and South Highlands. Areas visited include Loralai, Zhob, Mastung, Khuzdar, Kharan, Dera Murad Jamali, Lasbela, Turbat, Quetta, Pishin, Chaman, and Ziarat. Each group spent three to four days in the field, observing and noting issues pertaining to water in the province, including traditional water transport systems, interventions by PPAF, the government, and donors, and possible solutions. After the field visits, the teams congregated at the Lasbela University of Agriculture, Water and Marine Sciences along with other invitees to present their field learning and devise respective ways forward.

Participants talked about drinking water for all, ground water management, surface water storage and management, limited agriculture with efficiency and value chain, rangeland management and water for livestock. It was recommended by participants and experts that two more themes, women and water, and water for coastal and marine areas must also be studied.

The workshop concluded with closing remarks from Vice Chancellor of LUAWMS, Professor Dost Muhammad Baloch and vote of thanks from Dr Muhammad Arshad, Team Lead from LEAD Pakistan. Detailed research will be carried out by specialised academic institutions in Balochistan. Action plans will also be developed by PPAF for livelihoods development around the identified themes, in terms of asset transfers, community infrastructure, interest free loans, linking to microcredit loans etc.

Ms Simi Kamal, Senior Group Head, Grants Operations, PPAF, also addressed the partakers of the workshop, emphatically thanking them all for their joint efforts in the water engagement exercise. “No part of this extensive project would have been possible without all our esteemed participants, in your own momentous ways, contributing towards this much-needed fight against the water crisis in Balochistan. With determination and solidarity, we will make an impact.”

PPAF’s pursuit in resolving the water crisis in Balochistan will continue. The leveraging, consultation and synergies amongst government line departments, educational institutions, universities, the think tank on rational use of water, water professionals and other relevant stakeholders’ involvement will also play a pivotal role in developing more effective and innovative approaches and initiatives.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/04/20190418465492/>

NAGARPARKAR RESIDENTS PLAN SHUTDOWN OVER PERSISTING WATER SHORTAGE

A Correspondent April 17, 2019

MITHI: People living in the hilly town of Nagar-parkar and all parts of the taluka have warned to launch a peaceful movement by giving a shutdown call in the town against unavailability of water in the region for the past many months.

Faiz Khoso, Arjan Par-mar, Zulfikar Khoso, Shakil Ahmed Janjhi and others, who have been protesting peacefully to draw the attention of the functionaries concerned of the Sindh government towards the issue, said they would observe the shutdown after two days for an indefinite period of time.

Talking to local journalists on Tuesday, they said two weeks ago when they had observed a complete shutdown in the town, local officials had assured them that water would be provided to them within a week, but their promises did not materialise.

They deplored that due to the rising temperature almost all the wells catering to drinking needs of people and their livestock had dried up and they were forced to purchase water from tanker mafia. The people lamented that due to water scarcity and the subsequent callousness of the government functionaries, their kids were dying of waterborne diseases. “There is an urgent need to save the lives of humans, livestock and rare species in the Parkar region,” they added.

They alleged that officials of the town committee were also unable to provide drinking water to those living in their jurisdiction while condition in villages was also not good as water table had gravely dropped due to the persistent droughts.

The residents reminded the top leadership of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), including Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, Faryal Talpur and others, who during their visits ahead of the general elections last year had promised to provide them with canal water through a pipeline.

Deploring that all the promises had yet to materialise, they lashed out at the PPP lawmakers from the area, including MPA Qasim Siraj Soomro, MNA Pir Noor Mohammad Shah Jilani and Senator Krishna Kumari Kolhi, for their indifferent attitude towards the unending miseries due to unavailability of water.

Despite repeated attempts, no lawmaker from the area could be contacted while Special Assistant to Sindh Chief Minister Advocate Veerji Kolhi, who hails from the same area, in a press statement issued here on Tuesday claimed that he had taken up the issue with the high-ups and water would be provided to the area people within next two days.

Published in Dawn, April 17th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1476518/nagarparkar-residents-plan-shutdown-over-persisting-water-shortage>

SEMINAR ON ‘WATER PRODUCTIVITY PROJECT’ HELD

ZAHID BAIG | APR 16TH, 2019 | LAHORE

Pakistan’s rice sector is lagging behind not only in productivity but also facing high cost of production as compared to other rice-producing countries, said Shahid Tarer, Director Galaxy Rice (Pvt) Ltd.

He was speaking at a kick-off seminar with regard to ‘Water Productivity (WAPRO) Project’ Organized by his firm in collaboration with SDC, Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation, Westmill Foods (A division of Associated British Foods & Grain Products Ltd. UK, MARS food & RPL).

WAPRO project is aimed at improving water efficiency and sustainable rice production in Pakistan. A large number of farmers attended the event.

Tarer stressed the need for promotion of global best practices for improving resource use efficiency. He also spoke about the vision of SDC’s long-term commitment to global food security and mitigating water scarcity & climate change scenario of Pakistan.

Imran Sheikh, Project Manager, highlighted the objectives and strategy of the WAPRO project and Galaxy’s Farmer Connect (GFC) program regarding regular advisory service to the farmers and promotion of rice cultivation as per Sustainable Rice Platform’s standard.

Rao Muhammad Tariq, Senior Manager, Fouji Fertilizer Company, shared his views about fertilizer application. He emphasized on balanced fertilizer application and its role in productivity and profitability.

Dr Arjumand Nizami, Country Director, Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation, capacitated the farmers regarding water efficiency as a business case. She quoted the pilot study of 21 rice farmers of head, mid and the tail of irrigation minor in district Sheikhpura.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/04/20190416464902/>

‘MODERN IRRIGATION METHODS MAY CHANGE FATE OF THAR’

A Correspondent April 15, 2019

MITHI: A two-day moot concluded on Sunday with a note and resolve that the practice of biosaline agriculture with application of modern irrigation methods has a great potential to turn Thar from a charity-recipient region into a food-exporting one.

The two-day conference and exhibition on the “Blooming Thar: Transforming Biosaline Agriculture in Tharparkar” also recommended that use of efficient irrigation system should be made mandatory in all government and non-government sector schemes with all inputs declared tax free and subsidised.

Speakers from across the desert district attending the event said that eradicating poverty and eliminating drought from the region of Thar within a short span of time was possible through launching of biosaline agriculture at a massive scale. Speakers included practicing bio saline agriculture farmers and stakeholders working in the area.

Addressing the concluding ceremony, Mirpukhas region Commissioner Abdul Waheed Shaikh was of the view that the government of Sindh was ready to mobilise its resources to implement biosaline agriculture in Thar. “The exhibition and conference are a piece of evidence that they want to promote the concept and will assist stakeholders and communities for the good.”

He said the moot had concluded that addressing drought-related challenges in Thar was no more an impossible task and now farmers should come forward and adopt the practice. Tharparkar Deputy Commissioner Asif Jamil Shaikh said that no scheme and programme were termed successful unless communities were fully involved from the

planning to the execution phase. He said that such events would greatly help both government functionaries, farmers and common villagers boost the agriculture sector in Thar region.

Mohsin Babbar of the Thar Foundation said Thar had a great potential to not only feed its populace, but produce food-related crops for the rest of Sindh.

The conference recommended that a comprehensive study on quality and quantity of groundwater should be initiated forthwith to determine the scale and develop an evidence-based way forward. He said his organisation was fully committed to help Tharis in their efforts to bring stability in their economies by adopting the modern methods in the light of the views of experts during the historic event.

Participants of the moot also recommended for establishing and notifying a steering committee which should further develop the modalities and on-ground solutions. The committee should consist of representatives from government, non-government organisations, academia and firms working in Tharparkar on coal mining and power generation.

The Sindh agriculture department was urged to fund a pilot project on a larger scale in which at least 100 cooperatives farming projects might be introduced with a joint execution mechanism for certain productive results.

The federal and provincial governments were urged to make all agriculture inputs like solar energy and efficient irrigation systems tax free.

Water experts including Mustafa Ujjan, Shabir Bhurt and Irshad Ansari and many Thari farmers spoke at the ceremony.

A large number of people turned up to visit the exhibition, a feature of the mega event, where 30 stalls were set up by relevant organisations.

Published in Dawn, April 15th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1476128/modern-irrigation-methods-may-change-fate-of-thar>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM APRIL 22nd TO APRIL 28th 2019

EXPERT STRESSES DESILTING OF DAMS TO MEET WATER NEEDS

Shazia Hasan Updated April 28, 2019

KARACHI: “There has not been much thought given to the silting issue when speaking of dams here. The capacity in Mangla and Tarbela dams has decreased in the last 40 years due to silting. So are we to build a new dam every 40 years due to this?” said architect and town planner Arif Hasan during his inaugural speech at the Water Conference titled ‘Political Economy and Issues of Water Management’ organised by the Irtiqa Institute of Social Sciences at the Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan Auditorium of the Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science and Technology here on Saturday. He also said that there was also the issue of the Indus delta, which is also going into the background these days.

“Some engineers believe that the water which flows into the sea is wasted. And no one is challenging this notion anymore. A former chief justice also thought so and said that he won’t let a drop of water be wasted this way. He even went further by saying that those who were against the building of new dams were enemies of the state,” he said.

Coming to a third issue regarding water here, he said that around 92 to 95 per cent of water in Pakistan was being used by the agriculture sector and the population of this country of about 200 million was fast growing. “Then what will we do when the population needs will increase and they will need more water? Where will they get water from?

Therefore, water conservation is also needed,” he said.

‘No one is challenging the notion that the water flowing into the sea is wasted’

He also said that as a fourth issue, the underground water table was going down for which there was a huge need for proper water management, coming to things such as regulating of water pumping, storing rainwater, water rationing in cities with bulk metering, etc, which needed maintenance budgets and infrastructure investment.

Executive director of Roots for Equity Dr Azra Talat Sayeed spoke about ‘Understanding water dynamics’. Sharing figures, she said that the total water of the world added up to around 1,359 million cubic kilometres comprising mostly of ocean and inland seas. “Around 97.2pc of the water is ocean and inland seawater while the fresh water is 2.8pc. And three-fourths of the fresh water is in the glaciers,” she said. “But this ratio has been disrupted and our water reservoirs are at risk. Therefore that talk of dams.”

Environmentalist and researcher Nasir A. Panhwar, speaking about ‘Sea intrusion and the delta’ said that all over the world, rivers naturally flowed into the sea. But out here it was the sea flowing into the Indus delta. “The Indus delta is a unique coastal system where the sea and river meet, where the soil is very fertile due to the accumulation of silt from the river for thousands of years. But after the diversion of the upstream water the amount of silt has become less while

bringing up various threats to the delta,” he pointed out while explaining about the 17 major creeks starting from the Gizri Creek to Sir Creek in the delta.

“Due to the diversion there is less freshwater flow in the delta now and an intrusion of the sea, a man-made disaster,” he said. “And because of the sea intrusion, the land is losing its fertility.”

Earlier, Dr Huma Ghaffar, Irtiqa’s president, said that water was essential, whether for livelihoods, health, food security or general economic development. “In Pakistan, population growth, elite capture of public benefits, rapid urbanisation and shifts in production and consumption patterns have placed unprecedented stress on water resources,” she said. “Coupled with institutional, operational, and governance failures, increasing pressure over water use and misuse is fostering domestic discord.”

Economist Dr Kaiser Bengali, Abrar Kazi, Mansoor Raza, Idris Rajput, Irshad Bohio, Hassan Abbas, Rubina Abro and Kaleem Durrani also spoke.

Published in Dawn, April 28th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1478777/expert-stresses-desilting-of-dams-to-meet-water-needs>

ALL AREAS OF BADIN TO START GETTING WATER WITHIN FEW DAYS: MINISTER

Hanif Samoon Updated April 28, 2019

BADIN: Sindh Minister for Irrigation Syed Nasir Hussain Shah on Saturday paid a day-long visit to Badin district to ascertain causes of the persisting water shortage. He examined the situation at various regulators and other installations near Matli, Talhar, Tando Bago, Rajo Khanani, Badin city and other areas.

He directed the officials concerned of the Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (Sida) to dismantle all illegal waterways and modules in order to ensure a fair distribution of water among all growers, farmers and agriculturists. He held press conferences at the residence of MPA Mir Allah Bux Talpur in Rajo Khanani town, Jamali House in Tando Bago and at the residence of MPA Taj Mohammad Mallah in Badin town to brief the media about his assessment.

He said the top leadership of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and Sindh government were committed to ensure an equitable distribution of water among all stakeholders of the Indus. He admitted that there were impediments leading to the acute shortage of water being faced by certain districts for many months.

He said he could feel the pain of protesting growers and farmers due to the situation. “That’s why I am here to meet the aggrieved people and try to get the issue resolved,” he added.

He advised leaders of the Save Badin Committee, which has been spearheading a sustained campaign against the deepening water crisis in the district, to wait for the final report of a relevant committee looking into the blockages responsible for the situation.

The provincial government has constituted a 19-member technical committee headed by Idris Rajput to identify the blockages illegally erected at different sections of the canals meant for feeding lands of Badin district.

“We are going to evolve a mechanism to further improve the system so that water theft all along its course from Guddu Barrage to Kotri Barrage could be effectively checked,” he said, adding that if the need be, Akram Wah would be made a twin channel with the financial assistance of World Bank under its Water Sector Improvement Project.

“Once the report is submitted to Sindh government, we will take no time to dismantle the blockages if they are found to be hindering flow of water in Akram Wah (water channel) and Phulleli Canal,” he said.

He said he knew that water shortage had devastated the farming community while people of Badin district had to consume hazardous subsoil water for their survival. He held out the assurance that it would be his prime duty to ensure supply of adequate water to each and every area of the district when the Indus would start getting the required flows in the days to come. “During my visit today, I saw people facing immense hardship in getting water in different areas of the district,” he said, and hoped that all parts of the district would be provided drinking and irrigation water within the next few days.

He informed the media that under a directive of PPP co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari work had been started to regulate water distribution. He said a delegation led by Sindh Chamber of Agriculture’s Qabool Mohammad Khatian had called on him in Karachi to brief him about the ongoing water crisis in the district. He said that the top PPP leadership had asked him to frequently visit the water-deficit areas and address the issue.

Published in Dawn, April 28th, 2019

CONFERENCE DEBATES COMING TO GRIPS WITH WATER CRISIS

Anil Datta April 28, 2019

Pakistan must concentrate on small dams as large dams can become a wasteful proposition on account of phenomena like silting.

These views were expressed by noted town planner and social activist Arif Hassan while inaugurating the water conference sponsored by the Irtiqa Institute of Social Sciences (IISS) at the Federal Urdu University of Science and Technology on Saturday morning.

The conference was themed, "Political economy and issues in water management".

He informed the participants that 40 percent of the Tarbela Dam had silted up in as many years which implied a decreased water supply for agriculture and loss of water for other uses.

Hassan said even the aquifers were depleting rapidly.

Social activist Azra Talat Sayeed, in her paper themed, "Understanding water dynamics in the era of globalization", said 700 million people spread over 43 countries were without safe water.

Among other things adding to the water crisis, she said, was the phenomenon of climate change. She said that one of the reasons for the phenomenon of global warming was the glacial melt. Glaciers, she said, were melting at a rapid pace, and this resulted in rising sea levels with the result that many isles and atolls could be lost under water for ever. She blamed the changing lifestyles as also technological advances especially in the field of transport which had heated up the atmosphere, as she put it.

She was deadly against the private ownership of water distribution.

She said that it must be solely in the public sector. She cited the case of Karachi where private ownership like the tankers mafia had created so many problems for the populace.

Mashkoo Raza of the NED University of Engineering and Technology dwelt specifically on the water scenario of Karachi. He said that the average human demand was 54 gallons daily. He cited Karachi's population at 15.05 million and said 65 percent of the water was stolen in Karachi. The water tariff, he said, was irrational.

"The non-payment of bills culture is the order of the day and only 25 percent of bills are paid by subscribers," he said. "Water tankers have become a commercial venture, all to the detriment of subscribers who are not very well placed financially or socially," he said.

Abrar Qazi, a water expert and political figure, said that actually there was no shortage of water in the country; the problem was that water management by the agencies concerned was very tardy.

Former provincial secretary and water expert Idrees Rajput said climate change was the biggest challenge to the water issue today, and the result was a rise in the ocean levels, glacial retreat, temperature increases, floods, droughts and monsoon variability.

He said what was called for was reducing greenhouse gases and afforestation.

He said China was the biggest producer of greenhouse gases, whose world share being 19.4 percent, followed closely by the US with 18 percent.

Taking a dig at the US, he said President Trump had withdrawn from the Paris Accord on environment saying that this climate change was just a routine phenomenon and nothing to be preoccupied with.

It was former president Barrack Obama who had made the US a signatory to the Paris Accord but Trump just bulldozed that.

Rajput said the major reason for the water shortage was burgeoning population.

Later, a documentary was screened depicting the population of the areas in the vicinity of the River Indus migrating to other places because of their land having been gobbled by the intrusion of the sea as a result of the disappearance of the Indus delta.

Poetess Sehr Imdad read out her poems both in Urdu and Sindhi, bemoaning the slow death of the Indus (Sindh Darya as she called it) and recalling the times when the Indus was a force to reckon with.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/463888-conference-debates-coming-to-grips-with-water-crisis>

GHAZI BAROTHA WATER SUPPLY PROJECT A PRIORITY, SAYS SPECIAL ASSISTANT

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter April 27, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The water-starved citizens of Islamabad are still yearning for the fulfillment of promises made by two previous governments to arrange 100 million gallon per day (mgd) water from Ghazi Barotha for the capital.

Prime Minister's Special Assistant on Capital Development Authority (CDA) Affairs Ali Nawaz Awan, who has been elected to the National Assembly from Islamabad on the ticket of the PTI, has been trying to launch the project.

A review meeting on the project was held at the CDA headquarters on Friday which was chaired by Mr Awan. During the meeting, he said the project was essential for residents of both Rawalpindi and Islamabad as 100 mgd each would be supplied to both the cities.

Efforts will be made to secure funds from World Bank or ADB, Awan tells meeting

"Supply of water from Ghazi Barotha to the capital city is among the priorities of the government so that issue of water shortage can be resolved once and for all," he said.

Mr Awan later told Dawn that every possible effort would be made to launch the water supply project.

"This is a mega project worth approximately Rs80 billion. Besides government funding, we will try to secure funds from World Bank or the Asian Development Bank," he said.

If all goes as per plan, water will be brought from River Indus at Ghazi Barotha point.

Chief Commissioner and CDA Chairman Amir Ali Ahmed, board members and other officers also attended the meeting.

Consultant Mod MacDonald presented proposals for conduction of water from Ghazi Barotha.

The CDA chief said population of Islamabad had exceeded two million and it was imperative to launch the project to meet the rising demand of water.

He said water would be conducted to Islamabad from Ghazi Barotha through a 45 kilometre-long line.

He said at present water to the capital city was being supplied from Simply Dam and through tubewells. A few areas of the capital are supplied water from Khanpur Dam.

"Therefore, in order to cater to the future requirements this project is among our top priorities," he said, adding the project would jointly be completed by the Punjab and federal governments.

The project was conceived in 2006 and initially its estimated cost was estimated to be Rs37 billion. A couple of years ago, the CDA prepared a revised PC-I in which the cost of the project increased to Rs77 billion. Now, according to sources, the estimated cost of the project has reached 80 billion.

"During the PPP and PML-N government, even during the PML-Q tenure, this project remained under discussion of politicians but no steps were taken to start it. The PTI government is now making efforts to start the project but time will tell how seriously it is pursuing it," said an official of CDA.

He said the CDA was almost fully dependent on the federal government funding for the project.

"As a token funding, in the current budget we have allocated Rs500 million for the project. If government wants to start the project it would have to m arrange funds," the official said.

The residents of the capital city have been facing shortage of water particularly during summer. Currently, Islamabad is being supplied around 60 mgd against its total need of 220 mgd.

Published in Dawn, April 27th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1478698/ghazi-barotha-water-supply-project-a-priority-says-special-assistant>

TECHNICAL BODY ON WATER SHORTAGE IN BADIN YET TO ACCOMPLISH TASK

A Correspondent April 24, 2019

BADIN: The 19-member technical committee formed by the Sindh government to collect facts about water shortage in Badin informed the deputy commissioner that it was unable to submit its report as it could not complete the job. It demanded three more months to accomplish the task.

Idris Rajput, the head of the committee, told a meeting in the Darbar Hall of the DC Office that members of the committee along with water experts discussed the issue with stakeholders and were currently visiting the spots where blockages were reported.

The meeting, chaired by DC Dr Hafeez Siyal was attended by officials of the Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (Sida) and irrigation department posted in the district.

Mr Rajput quoted a Sida official as stating that blockages were erected to “regulate” flow of water. However, he said, leaders of growers’ action committee rejected the claims.

“Let’s see whether water reaches the tail-end areas once the canals are provided with the required quantity of water during the crop cultivation of Kharif season,” he told the meeting.

He said that during the next three months, flows would be regulated to assess the situation in the entire district. He held out the assurance that no more lands within the command area of Sukkur Barrage would be provided water from Akram Wah and Phuleli Canal.

Mr Rajput advised Save Badin Action Committee leaders to move court against functioning of flood canals, and pointed out that all flood canals were illegal. One of them, Mallah minor, had very recently been declared illegal by the Sindh High Court, he added.

Published in Dawn, April 24th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1477947/technical-body-on-water-shortage-in-badin-yet-to-accomplish-task>

GROUNDWATER LAW: BRING IT IN 21ST CENTURY

BR Research April 23, 2019

Pakistan’s water sector legislative landscape suffers from the disease of extremes: there are either too many competing laws, or none. Groundwater, which by lowest of many estimates’ services more than 55 percent of annual requirement, falls under the latter category.

A clarification, however, is necessary: groundwater is not entirely ungoverned, except that the law regulating it wasn’t particularly made for the purpose. Called the Easements Act of 1882, the colonial era concept defines ‘rights of an owner by virtue of owning his property, and rights to use property of another without possessing it’.

Out of 64 articles, the only time the Act touches on the subject of groundwater is when it defines rights of every owner to use and consume water drawn a from natural stream (above or underground), without causing material injury to others.

The fact that the law makes no distinction between personal or commercial use displays it disconnect from current times: a legislation made for a period of abundance has little relevance for times of scarcity. Yet, the last amendment was made in 1960, and barring some legislation in Balochistan, no development has taken place since.

While periodic flooding and shortage in canal water system hogs most media attention, about 85 percent of Pakistan’s total crop requirement is serviced by groundwater, according to one study by Lead Pakistan, an Islamabad-based policy think tank. High levels of salinity in groundwater render it unsuitable for agriculture in Sindh. Put together, the two facts imply that underground water resource is most widely dependent on in Punjab, which produces close to three fourths of country’s all farming output.

Yet, when it comes to groundwater disputes, Easements Act of 1882 is all that an average Punjab-based farmer has to seek redressal from. Groundwater management authorities are virtually absent in provinces, even though the subject falls under provincial jurisdiction, whether considered from the urban water supply angle or as a source of irrigation water.

Furthermore, as rapid urban development makes inroads into traditionally rural districts, culturable land in the province is depleting at an alarming rate.

Needless to say, real estate developers are very used to getting their way in securing utilities, adding pressure on the already scarce groundwater supply.

The announcement of one such scheme in prime agricultural land in Bahawalpur should be a cause of concern.

But most of all, apathy towards groundwater is most abundant in lack of regulation, where every tube well owner is legally entitled to pump out water to the fullest extent possible, limited only by availability of electricity or diesel for its engine. Even if environmental damage from rapid depletion of resource were ignored, unabated extraction under Easements Act results in a zero-sum game for farmers within same community. After all, water streams underground

don't understand land demarcation, meaning that greater withdrawals by one farmer is equal to less water available for the rest.

Textbook economics refer to such farcical situation as "tragedy of the commons". What is more comical is that a 19th century law continues to be Pakistan's answer to a 21st century problem.

<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/04/23/491646/groundwater-law-bring-it-in-21st-century/>

WATER SHORTAGE MAY CAUSE SERIOUS THREAT: DG AGRICULTURE

RECORDER REPORT | APR 23RD, 2019 | LAHORE

Shortage of water and food may cause a serious threat in future to rapidly increasing population of Pakistan and there is a need to get more per acre yield by usage of less water to overcome this issue. This was stated by Director General Agriculture (Irrigation) Malik Muhammad Akram while addressing the progressive growers from Okara. He said growers can provide water and fertilizer to their crop timely and as per need by using the latest technology. While in traditional methods it is not possible to provide water or other inputs as per requirement.

He called for promoting drip irrigation system and said it can provide water and other inputs in a uniform way to plants. He said the Punjab government is providing 60 percent subsidy to promote drip irrigation. The meeting was also addressed by the special representative World Bank for Punjab irrigation productivity enhancement project and others.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/04/20190423466584/>

SWT TO SET UP 99 WATER FILTRATION PLANTS IN LAHORE

RECORDER REPORT | APR 22ND, 2019 | LAHORE

Commissioner Lahore Division, Dr. Mujtaba Piracha and Sailani Welfare Trust signed MoU to establish 99 water filtration plants in Lahore at different locations. Commissioner Lahore, Dr Mujtaba Piracha and President Sailani Welfare Trust Yosuf Lakhani signed on the MoU. During signing ceremony DC Lahore Saliha Saeed, Additional Commissioner Suhail Khawaja, Manager Lahore Sailani Trust Izhar Hussain and others were also present.

Commissioner Lahore Division said that Sailani Trust was going to accomplish another very big and noble initiative and administration would provide full cooperation in that regard. He said that the trust would work on non functional and installations new water filtration on their own self. He said that initiatives of Sailani trust would also expand in other districts as well. He said that during upcoming Ramzan, Sailani Trust was also going to increase number of dastarkhan in Lahore.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/04/20190422466421/>

RESIDENTS OF NUSRAT BHUTTO COLONY PROTEST WATER SHORTAGE

By Our Correspondent Published: April 22, 2019

KARACHI : Residents of Nusrat Bhutto Colony protested the water outage on Sunday as they gathered near the Sakhi Hassan Chowrangi causing disruption of traffic. The locals said that they were protesting as the water supply had been suspended since the last 10 days.

According to sources, the protesters blocked the main road near Sakhi Hassan Chowrangi, which blocked the traffic on all surrounding tracks. Long queues of vehicles started forming while the residents continued their protest and shouted slogans against water authorities. They also attempted to shut down the Sakhi Hassan pumping station.

The protesting residents said that they were facing extreme inconveniences due to the water outage for the last 10 days. They had no other choice but to buy water tankers which were extremely expensive, they said adding that they had complained to the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) officials but to no avail. Hence, they resorted to protest.

Due to the blockage of the main road, the traffic flow from Nagan Chowrangi and Sohrab Goth was diverted towards Qalandaria Chowk. The police personnel and Rangers' officials reached the spot upon receiving the complaints about the protest and managed to diffuse the situation. The police officials negotiated with the protesters and were successfully able to end the protest. The traffic was restored shortly after.

Sharaf Noor Jahan SHO Rao Zaheer said that the KWSB staff was repairing the water lines due to which the water supply in Nusrat Bhutto Colony was suspended. He said that they were trying to resolve the issue by talking to the authorities.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1956013/1-residents-nusrat-bhutto-colony-protest-water-shortage/>

MAY, 2019

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM APRIL 29th TO MAY 5th 2019

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MOHMAND DAM

By Zafar Bhutta Published: May 5, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Throughout Pakistan's tumultuous political history, the energy sector of the country has always borne the brunt of different misplaced government priorities – a major one being the continued focus on thermal power projects while sidelining the hydropower ones.

The previous government of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had been more focused on road projects and thermal power plants under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project, and chose not to invest in hydropower projects. The former government ignored the fact that water shortage is a major issue in Pakistan, which is directly linked to food security.

Fifty years ago, former president of Pakistan Ayub Khan foresaw the problem and conceived the idea of building another dam but it could not be materialised due to a lack of interest by the succeeding rulers – both elected and non-elected. The idea was revived during Gen (ret'd) Pervez Musharraf's tenure but its formal launching was delayed for various reasons.

Speaking about the dam, former Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) chairman Shakil Durrani told The Express Tribune that the dam was basically a flood-control project to protect different areas of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa from flooding.

"The project was handed over to the private sector in 2002 that failed to construct the dam and wasted seven years," he explained. "Consequently, the project was given back to Wapda in 2007." Durrani added that the French Development Agency (AFD) granted \$8 million to conduct the dam's feasibility study, and gave another \$1 million to carry out research on its environmental impact.

"Mohmand Dam is a promising project that will not only generate electricity but will also store water to irrigate land," he said.

For the past several years, Pakistan has been witnessing a series of floods which not only resulted in loss of lives but also proved to be detrimental to the country's economy. At present, the total water storage capacity of the country is 14 million acre feet (MAF), whereas its annual consumption requirement stands at 117 MAF. Due to a lack of storage, as much as over 10 MAF of water goes into the sea every year.

Pakistan's first hydroelectric power development policy was designed in 1995, while the second and third policies were introduced in 2002 and 2013, respectively. During the tenure of the PML-N, power plants with a cumulative capacity of over 10,000 MW became operational under the CPEC, but none of the plants generated hydroelectric power.

At present, there are only two major dams in Pakistan – Tarbela and Mangla. The former was built in 1977, and its storage capacity has dropped to 6.4 MAF against the earlier 9.4 MAF. However, following a structure-raising project, the capacity of Mangla Dam has been increased by 3 MAF to 7.4 MAF.

In such a situation, Pakistan needs to build more dams on fast-track basis for better water management and the production of cheaper electricity. Dams would also address the issue of floods and water shortage for crops in the country.

After learning lessons from the repeated floods, the present government of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has focused on building two major dams in the country – Mohmand Dam and Diamer-Basha Dam. The government has already inaugurated Mohmand Dam on May 2, 2019 to kick off its construction work.

The feasibility study of the dam was completed by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in March 2000, whereas its detailed engineering design was completed in April of 2017. The Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) approved the dam's PC-1 amounting to Rs309, 558 billion during a meeting on April 26, 2018, while the government released Rs17 billion for the ongoing financial year 2018-19 to construct the dam. Moreover, 818 acres of land has been allocated to Wapda in relation to the construction of the dam.

The gross water-storage capacity of the project is 1.2 million acre feet (MAF), and besides supplementing 160,000 acres of existing land, more than 16,700 acres (6, 773 hectares) of new land will also be irrigated with the help of the dam.

In addition, the dam will provide 300 million gallons of drinking water per day to Peshawar. And not only that, the Mohmand Dam is also of immense importance as it is the only project that can save Peshawar, Charsadda and Naushehra from devastating floods.

The power-generation capacity of the project stands at 800 megawatt (MW), and it will provide 2.86 billion units of cheap yet environmentally-friendly electricity to the national grid every year. What's more, the dam will also bring a refreshing change for the common man through the generation of cheap electricity.

Speaking to The Express Tribune, a Wapda official said that the dam is going to be constructed at a remote location in K-P, therefore, there would be no environment hazards or displacements as the areas is scarcely populated.

Owing to the dependency on thermal-power plants, consumers have been paying higher prices for electricity for years. The share of hydel in energy mix has been 30 per cent whereas 70 per cent is generated from other resources.

According to data provided to the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra), the share of hydroelectric power generation was only 22.77 per cent as of February 2019. As against that, the furnace-oil-based electricity share was 1.6 per cent, re-gasified liquefied natural gas (RLNG) was 16.89 per cent, local gas 23.8 per cent, coal 18.7 per cent and nuclear energy 11.68 per cent.

The cost of furnace-oil-based power was Rs11.9081 per unit, RLNG was Rs9.7643 per unit, local-gas-based electricity Rs5.7927 per unit, coal Rs7.8932 per unit and nuclear energy Rs0.9512 per unit. The cost of hydel generation ranges between Rs2 to Rs3 per unit, therefore, the project will generate cheaper electricity and store water to irrigate additional land.

The construction of the dam will also help resolve the ongoing water conflict between different provinces in Pakistan, who have been in a tug of war over their water share and have been accusing each other for stealing water.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1965931/1-need-know-mohmand-dam/>

SINDH GOVT TO ESTABLISH SMALL DAMS FOR FARMERS IN TAIL-END AREAS

Our Correspondent May 5, 2019

The Sindh government has expressed its resolve to build small dams to permanently overcome water shortage for farmers in tail-end areas of the irrigation system in the province.

Sindh Minister for Irrigation Syed Nasir Hussain stated this on Friday while chairing a meeting regarding affairs of the Irrigation system.

He said that construction of small dams would be completed at the earliest for the sake of improvement and reforms in the irrigation system in the best interest of the deprived farmers. The dams, after the completion of construction work, would be inaugurated by Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

Hussain directed irrigation department officials to store additional water available in the province due to heavy rains.

He said that all development projects of the irrigation department should be completed with utmost transparency.

He also directed the officials concerned to provide him details of all the irrigation sector projects that had to be completed with support of the federal government, adding that commissioning of the projects had been delayed.

He said that it was firm resolve of the irrigation department that no farmer in the province should suffer due to the shortage of irrigation water as distribution of water should take place in a fair and just manner. The minister said that whosoever tried to take law in his hand regarding fair distribution of irrigation water in the province should be taken to task.

He said that appointments in the department should be made on a meritorious basis, adding that educated and eligible youth of the local areas should be employed.

He said Rangers pickets should be established at all important regulators of the irrigation system to stop pilferage of water.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/466992-sindh-govt-to-establish-small-dams-for-farmers-in-tail-end-areas>

SINDH SETS TERMS FOR ACCEPTING MANGLA STORAGE INSTEAD OF TARBELA

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter May 04, 2019

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that Wapda's proposal for storage of water in Mangla Dam instead of Tarbela Dam may be accepted if certain terms and conditions are fulfilled.

He was chairing a meeting at CM House on Friday which was attended by Irrigation Minister Syed Nasir Shah, CM's Special Assistant on Irrigation Ashfaq Memon, principal secretary Sajid Jamal Abro, irrigation secretary Jamal Shah and special irrigation secretary Aslam Ansari, besides Wapda's representative and other officials concerned.

Explaining the conditions, the CM stressed that indents of the irrigation department downstream Chashma be given priority over transfer of water to the Jhelum-Chenab system; Chashma reservoir be kept at brim-full of above 648 feet to cover up dip inflows for consistency in fulfilling the indents by Sindh irrigation department; and in case of depressed receipt at rim station, provision of water to Sindh be ensured by releases from the Mangla reservoir unconditionally.

CM discusses Wapda's proposal with irrigation minister, officials

Giving his conditional approval to Wapda's proposal, the CM directed the irrigation department to put it up at the next meeting of the advisory committee of the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) scheduled to be held later this month. According to the proposal the outflows of Mangla would be restricted and the resultant shortfalls in Punjab compensated from the Chashma-Jhelum and Taunsa-Panjnad link canals.

Before the CM's approval, special irrigation secretary Aslam Ansari briefed him about the early-April meeting of Irsa's advisory committee. He said the meeting discussed water availability and regulation pattern during the Kharif season of 2019.

The Wapda representative suggested that storage in Tarbela Dam be restricted to the level of 1,430 feet up to June 30 this year on account of the ongoing work in order to facilitate power generation.

However, Sindh's representative expressed reservations over the proposal on the grounds: A. The first phase of receipt of water at rim stations is attributed to snow melting which is partly utilised for sowing of cotton crop, seedlings for paddy crop and storage in reservoirs to maintain consistency in release downstream.

The second phase of receipt at rim station is attributed to glacial melting during June and July.

The third phase of receipt is attributed to glacial melting augmented by monsoon rains during end of July and August which is mainly retained in dams for utilisation during forthcoming Rabi season.

During the interim period of phase-I and II from June 10 to July 10, a dip in inflows is experienced which is compensated by releases from dams. This period happens to be paddy transplantation season.

Thus, the Sindh representative contended, it was desirable to maintain Tarbela Dam at 1,450 feet level to ensure supply of irrigation water during transplantation and maturity of newly transplanted crop.

Published in Dawn, May 4th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1480119/sindh-sets-terms-for-accepting-mangla-storage-instead-of-tarbela>

TAIL-END GROWERS DEMAND WATER

The Newspaper's Staff Correspondent May 04, 2019

HYDERABAD: The tail-end growers of the Rohri Canal system staged a sit-in outside the executive engineer of Naseer Canal office in Saddar area on Friday in protest against non-availability of water flows to their fields. Farmers are having zero tillage for the time being although early Kharif season is passing fast.

The growers led by Pir Bux Hashmani and others were protesting against non-availability of water flows in the tail-end regions of the Rohri Canal system in spite of the fact that the canal was having 12,000 cusecs of water until May 3, which is almost 80 per cent of its designed discharge ie 16,000 cusecs. "We are having zero tillage in our areas fed by the Naseer Canal system," said Mr Hashmani.

Rohri Canal is a perennial canal of Sukkur Barrage on the left bank of the Indus that feeds areas up to Badin district through its Dad, Nusrat, Hala and Naseer canal divisions. Sindh's politically influential and elite own lands in the Rohri Canal's command areas.

Irrigation officials believed although Sindh was not getting indented supplies right now at Chashma Barrage, but water flows were still better when compared with last year. Sindh's current indent was 80,000 cusecs, but it was provided 73,000 cusecs. With inclusion of travelling losses' percentage, these flows would decrease further.

"We believe as compared with last year we are getting better flows at this point of time and it is entirely mismanagement in the irrigation system that cries from farmers of lower Sindh continue endlessly," said an official from Sukkur Barrage that feeds large swathes of Sindh on right and left banks of the Indus.

According to Mr Hashmani, they were told that 50pc water rotation was being claimed, which was unrealistic. "Again the Naseer Canal's Khairpur Gamboh subdivision is being badly affected whereas two other subdivisions — Chang and Tando Allahyar — are getting the required water flows. Upper riparian in these areas are comfortable with water availability and it is only tail-enders like us who bear the brunt of water shortage unnecessarily," he said. Khairpur Gamboh was the last subdivision of Naseer Canal.

He remarked that XEN Shoaib Samoon was not willing to respond to the protesting farmers who were staging a sit-in outside his office. He said that situation was worsening as Kharif season was passing fast. "Early Kharif has almost gone for us," he said.

Published in Dawn, May 4th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1480116/tail-end-growers-demand-water>

PER CAPITA WATER AVAILABILITY COMES TO DANGEROUSLY LOW LEVEL, SENATE TOLD

ZULFIQAR AHMAD | MAY 4TH, 2019 | ISLAMABAD

The Upper House of Parliament was informed Friday that per capita water availability last year stood at 908 cubic metres, whereas it was 5,260 cubic metres back in 1951. During the question hour, the government told the Senate if the same trend continues, water availability would further reduce to 800 cubic metres per capita by 2025, a severe shortage with serious impacts on socioeconomic life.

The House was told that a storage capacity of 4.965 million acres feet (MAF) of existing reservoirs has been lost owing to sedimentation and studies showed that an additional 0.75 MAF would be lost due to sedimentation by 2025, further reducing per capita water availability.

Senators Mushtaq Ahmad, Sirajul Haq and Nauman Wazir Khattak agitated on what they alleged denial of due share of net hydel profit to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and put aside Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Azam Swati's arguments that arrears to the tune of Rs 137 billion had been paid to the province whereas Rs 37 billion are yet to be cleared. They contended that power theft amounts are also being deducted from the province's share, which is unfair and questioned the logic behind selling electricity to the province at Rs 17 per unit whereas its generation cost was Re 1 per unit.

Senator Mushtaq claimed that Rs 500 billion arrears are payable from the Centre to the province, which the minister rejected and said when the formula agreed upon between the province and WAPDA, Sirajul Haq was KP finance minister and this was done in his presence. However, as the senators continued pressing the matter, Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani referred the matter to the House standing committee concerned. But not before Federal Minister for Power Omar Ayub said that there is no dispute between the Centre and the provinces, insisting there is no issue from the federation towards the provinces.

The House was also informed that during the last five years, Rs 1469.085 million were spent on advertisement by the Power Division. Accepting a challenge from JI Senator Sirajul Haq, Swati said that Haq should move a fresh question and he would get names of all the 350 dams built in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa during the last five years. Senator Haq had asked him to share names of 50 dams instead of the ex-KP government's promised 350 dams.

Omar Ayub said that under the net hydel profit, Rs 20 billion had been paid to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the remaining amount would be cleared by May-June. He explained the government is taking concrete measures to have control over energy security, which is presently not with Pakistan, as power generation relies 60 per cent on imported resources, including oil and LNG.

He continued the government plans to increase share of renewable energy from 4 per cent to 20 per cent by 2025 and enhancing nuclear energy share from 6 per cent to 10 per cent. Through a written reply to a question by Senator Mushtaq Ahmad of JI, Faisal Vawda, Minister for Water Resources, said that Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower project (NJHP) has been substantially completed with all the four units in commercial operation and over 2400 GWh energy had been inducted into the national grid up to April 11, 2019.

Answering a supplementary question, Swati said that a total of Rs 64.838 billion were collected under NJHP surcharge by April 30 this year and the surcharge would not be collected after June 30, 2019.

Opposition Senators Mushtaq Ahmad, Javed Abbasi and Sirajul Haq alleged that instead of being used for the objectives for which it was enacted, the Anti-Terrorist Act is being applied on political workers and journalists and even those who agitated against electricity load shedding. In a written question, Senator Mushtaq had asked about the number of persons who were awarded capital punishment under ATA during the last one year.

Law Minister Dr Muhammad Farogh Naseem replied that two ATA courts are functioning under the Ministry of Law and Justice, as other courts are under respective provincial governments and that three persons had been awarded life imprisonment in Islamabad. PPP Senator Sassui Palijo agitated on not finding an answer to her question, which she claimed to have asked four to five times but either she got incomplete reply or no reply at all.

She had sought details of land lost due to sea intrusion in different coastal areas of Sindh and the steps taken or being taken by the government to prevent sea intrusion. On her request, the matter was referred to the House committee concerned.

To another question by Chaudhry Tanvir Khan, Omar Ayub said that a total of 160 oil and gas discoveries had been made during the last ten years and of these, 131 are in Sindh, 13 in Punjab, 03 in Balochistan and 13 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

About the much-discussed offshore oil and gas reserves prospects, he said that in next two weeks, it would be established whether or not there is oil and gas found, but added it is a high risk activity.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/05/20190504469787/>

IMRAN OPENS CONSTRUCTION WORK ON MOHMAND DAM

Fauzee Khan Mohmand | Ibrahim Shinwari May 03, 2019

GHALANAI/ LANDI KOTAL: Prime Minister Imran Khan performed on Thursday groundbreaking of the Mohmand dam project, which would generate 800 megawatts electricity and store over 1.2 million acre feet of water, and on the occasion pledged to take steps for development of backward areas across the country, especially the tribal areas.

Wearing a traditional turban gifted to him, he said one of the reasons why the previous rulers didn't build dams during the last couple of decades was their lack of far-sightedness and vision.

These rulers were more interested in launching projects that could be completed within their tenures, said Mr Khan.

“Because a dam cannot be completed in, say, five years they didn't think of building one. But our government will take steps to develop all the backward areas without any regard for political benefits that could be obtained from such projects.”

He said the Chinese government managed to lift 700 million people out of poverty within three decades because it didn't think of petty political interests, and instead took the steps that proved beneficial in the long run.

All the parties to the National Finance Commission had agreed that they would allow the government to set aside three per cent from the divisible pool for the development of the tribal areas, he said.

Says efforts should be made to meet tribal people's needs because their youths are being incited against the state under a conspiracy

“But the provinces are now reluctant to allow any reduction in their shares. However, we will persuade them to fulfil their promise and we will be spending Rs100 billion annually on the tribal areas in the next 10 years.”

Mr Khan announced a special grant for the uplift of Mohmand district.

He said tribal areas had been lagging far behind the other parts of the country and were facing a host of problems.

“But these problems are similar. All the tribal areas lack education and health facilities. There is a water shortage in many of them. And they all lack employment opportunities.”

Terrorism and extremism exacerbated the problems there, said the prime minister. “Many people lost their shops, their livelihood. Many had to migrate to other places.

“That's why I feel that it's our duty and the duty of the other provinces to help develop these areas.”

Mr Khan said that taking care of the needs of tribal people was vitally important because under a conspiracy their youths were being incited against the state. The entire nation would have to be vigilant to counter such threats. He lauded the efforts made by the armed forces to restore the law and order situation in the once troubled areas. “We know that without stability and rule of law we simply cannot have investment and progress in these areas. So, it’s because of the tremendous sacrifices made by our military that we are seeing this day.”

He reminded the audience that despite two attempts the British could not conquer the Tirah valley. “But today I visited that same valley. That’s a testament to the bravery and sacrifices of our army men.”

Praising former chief justice of Pakistan Mian Saqib Nisar, he said it was not the Supreme Court’s duty to launch a special fund for the construction of the Mohmand and Diamer-Bhasha dams. “However, Chief Justice Nisar had to take the step because the past governments had failed to do their duty.”

The prime minister also praised the efforts of Wapda chairman retired Lt Gen Muzamil Hussain who he said “is passionate about building dams”.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Shah Farman, Chief Minister Mahmood Khan, Defence Minister Pervez Khattak, Chief of the Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa, federal Minister for Water Resources Faisal Vawda, federal Minister for Religious Affairs Pir Noorul Haq Qadri, Senator Faisal Javed and legislators from the tribal areas were present on the occasion.

Meanwhile, upon completion the Mohmand dam will bring about 17,000 acres of barren land under cultivation. The dam is being constructed on Swat river, at the confluence of the Mohmand and Charsadda districts and the reservoir area extends upstream to Mohmand, Bajaur and other northern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Its reservoir will supply 13.32 million cubic metres of water to Peshawar city.

Earlier, Mr Khan attended the closing ceremony of a weeklong sports gala in Tirah that was once a “no-go” region. He was the country’s first prime minister to visit the area.

A large number of tribal people welcomed the prime minister by chanting slogans for him and the armed forces. A contingent of the Frontier Corps presented a guard of honour. Mr Khan later distributed trophies among the winning teams and players. The festival titled Bagh-i-Amn began on April 25.

Published in Dawn, May 3rd, 2019
<https://www.dawn.com/news/1479931/imran-opens-construction-work-on-mohmand-dam>

WB OFFICIAL URGES GOVT TO IMPROVE WATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

RECORDER REPORT | MAY 3RD, 2019 | ISLAMABAD

World Bank Country Director Patchamuthu Illangovan has urged policy planners of the government of Pakistan to reorient water practices to cut back losses and potentially transform Pakistan into a \$2 trillion economy through improved water management systems.

Speaking at a public hearing, organised by the Senate Caucus for Climate Change in collaboration with Jinnah Institute here at Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Services (PIPS), Patchamuthu Illangovan said that Pakistan devotes 90 percent of its water to five agricultural products such as rice, sugarcane, cotton, wheat and maize that generate less than 20 percent of the GDP.

He said that agriculture is heavily dependent on irrigation, though agriculture contributes around one-fifth of national GDP. He pointed out that 69 percent of water currently being used is unsafe for human consumption.

“Pakistan cannot follow a ‘grow now and clean later strategy,” he said, adding that it should convert its youth bulge into a demographic dividend. “Climate change is not about a single political party or sector,” he said.

Illangovan also presented a comparison between Pakistan and other less-developed countries that have devised better water and environmental management systems.

He said that Pakistan’s youthful population should be leveraged to create human resource advantages in the coming years, as young people can become champions of managing and protecting the environment.

Adviser to Prime Minister on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam said that politics is lagging far behind the science of climate change, which has repeatedly shown the imminent dangers of increasing global temperatures.

He informed that the Shishpar Glacier in Gilgit-Baltistan has receded very fast due to heat generated in another part of the world. He pointed out that Pakistan is the 8th most vulnerable country to climate degradation, but its policies alone are no safeguard against deteriorating environmental conditions.

Among other initiatives undertaken by the PTI government to combat climate impacts is 'Billion Tree Tsunami' reforestation effort aimed at carbon sequestration which has been lauded by environmental auditors.

He said that in another phase, the government has a vision to plant 10 billion trees in the country for which 50 percent funds will be allocated by the federal government while the remaining 50 percent by the provinces.

Referring to the water scarcity, he lamented that a huge amount of water is being wasted while only 9 percent water is being stored. However, he said that government is engaged with China to bring projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) aimed at ensuring storage of the water being wasted.

Senator Sherry Rehman, in her address to the forum, asserted that the scale of challenges presented by climate requires legislators to devise collective agency and lead the charge on climate adaptation across Pakistan.

She said that the Senate Caucus was set up with a view to convening stakeholders and advocating urgent action on climate change that cuts across federal and provincial mandates.

She said that climate indicators are worsening in Pakistan and should not be taken as statistics alone, as they are impacting lives, livelihoods and survival for citizens everyday.

She pointed out that hazardous air quality has claimed more lives in 2016 alone than the war on terror, adding that more than 5 million people are forced to live through drought conditions and disasters have cost up to \$2 billion each year on average over the last two decades and Pakistan's carbon emissions have quadrupled in 15 years.

She appreciated the growing interest and participation of legislators at the Caucus, who are generating scrutiny around climate policies, and championing issues like reduced plastic usage and improving ambient air quality from the Caucus platform.

She further said that climate change requires coordinated responses by stakeholders that go beyond bland analyses of policy frameworks, and within that, the roles of government, parliament, civil society and citizens are all critical.

Leader of the House in Senate Senator Shibli Faraz, while speaking, appreciated the efforts of the Caucus, and the importance of collective action in combating climate change.

Amhad Rafay Alam, environmental lawyer and activist, stated that integrated environmental policies should not mean centralisation of devolved powers back to Islamabad.

He said that the plantation of trees is a welcome step, but it can neither realistically address the challenge of increasing temperatures, nor sequester carbon at the rate at which it is being produced in the atmosphere.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/05/20190503469222/>

PROVINCES DIRECTED TO ENSURE RECOVERY OF GROUNDWATER CESS

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter May 01, 2019

ISLAMABAD: In unequivocal terms, the Supreme Court made it clear on Tuesday that the provinces did not enjoy any flexibility and would have to recover the charges the apex court had determined for extracting groundwater at the rate of Re1 per litre.

A three-judge SC bench headed by Justice Umar Ata Bandial had taken up a suo motu case regarding sale of bottled water extracted from underground sources without paying any charge and its quality and fitness for human consumption as well as a number of review petitions against the order of imposing water cess.

"I feel so bad to say that the government unfortunately seems not interested and there is so much of foot-dragging on the part of the Punjab government in carrying out the orders," Justice Ijaz-ul-Ahsan, a member of the bench, deplored. He said that the Supreme Court judgement on extracting groundwater had to be implemented at any cost.

Despite court orders, no committee formed so far to monitor use of groundwater, SC told

Attorney General (AG) Anwar Mansoor told the court that despite the apex court's directive to appoint a committee through its Dec 13, 2018 order, no such committee had been constituted so far to monitor and rationalise the use of precious groundwater, adding that it was for the provinces to determine their own tariff over the use of groundwater by different industries.

However, the AG assured the court that he was working to develop a uniform law to be implemented in the entire country by involving the provinces as well as the secretaries concerned and stakeholders. The law is expected to be prepared in three weeks.

However, he also requested the court to wait for the decision of the Lahore High Court which was also seized with the water tariff issue.

But Justice Bandial said the court was not sitting here to get involved in the nitty-gritty of the issue, rather it was for the executive agency to do so. He said the court would issue an order for the early setting up of the committee as proposed in the apex court order.

But there was a principle to be adhered to, which was conservation of precious water, Justice Bandial emphasised, adding that he had heard about an epidemic of hepatitis-E in Lahore and one of his friends had to be hospitalised on account of alarming arsenic content in groundwater.

Unfortunately, a stage had come in Lahore where groundwater had become so dangerous due to arsenic content, Justice Bandial regretted. He said it was not for the court to issue a directive, but for the government to develop a consensus and then mobilise public opinion on conserving water.

Justice Bandial observed that the AG was working to develop the law since the issue was affecting the government also, asking the official to come up with solutions to convince the court to modify its Dec 13 order.

Justice Ahsan said the committee so constituted had a broader mandate because it had to develop a mechanism of monitoring and recovering water charges from all major industries.

Prof Dr Mohammad Ahsan Siddiqui, an environmental scientist who was appointed head of a special committee on water, said water flow meters had been installed in 45 industries, adding that the governments had so far recovered Rs176 million out of Rs3.4 billion billed to these industries.

About the review petitions against the Dec 13 order filed by a number of industries, the court decided to wait for the outcome of the AG's meeting with the stakeholders and the advocate generals after which the fate of the review petitions would be determined. The case will be taken up after a month.

Published in Dawn, May 1st, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1479454/provinces-directed-to-ensure-recovery-of-groundwater-cess>

SINDH FACED 58PC WATER SHORTAGE DURING EARLY KHARIF, PA TOLD

Tahir Siddiqui May 01, 2019

KARACHI: The Sindh Assembly was informed on Tuesday that the province had faced 58 per cent shortage of water during the early Kharif season 2018.

Furnishing a statement and replying to the queries of lawmakers during the Question Hour session in the house, Irrigation Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah said that the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) in its meeting on March 29, 2018 had anticipated water shortage of 31pc during early Kharif from April 1 to June 10.

Later, he said, Irsa in its meeting held on May 15, 2018 revised the shortage estimate to 42pc. However, he added, the province actually faced 58pc shortage during early Kharif.

Replying to a question asked by Arif Mustafa Jatoi of the Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA), he said that the provincial government had formulated and implemented a contingency plan to cope with the situation and prioritise supply of water.

He said that top priority was given to provision for drinking water. The minister also said that the provincial government had taken Rangers' help to control water theft and ensure supply to tail-end farmers.

Answering a question asked by Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf member Khurram Sher Zaman, the minister said that several crops including cotton and red chilli on 100,000 acres were adversely affected due to water shortage.

In reply to another question by Mr Jatoi, he said that the provincial government had taken up a plan for the lining of main canals, branch canals, distributaries and minors to reduce water losses and the allied issue of waterlogging and salinity.

He said that the provincial government had provided block allocations in budgetary grant. He said that Rs12 billion was allocated in 2016-17, Rs15bn in 2017-18 and Rs5bn in 2018-19.

Giving the details of the irrigation department's achievements in the lining of water channels financed through Annual Development Programme (ADP), the minister said that as many as 52 schemes had been completed. Besides, the minister said, 37 schemes were under execution.

When GDA lawmaker Nusrat Sehar Abbasi quoted the auditor general of Pakistan as saying that Rs50bn corruption was committed in the irrigation department, the minister replied: "The AG points out some irregularities but it doesn't mean that the corruption took place."

PTI's Dr Imran Ali Shah insisted that the AG had pointed out "malpractices" and the same could not be termed just "irregularities".

Nasir Shah asked the PTI member to go through the AG's audit report for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and argued that the PTI government there had failed to answer where billions of rupees were spent.

"You have different criteria for Sindh government," Mr Shah said, and offered the report on KP to the lawmaker.

Published in Dawn, May 1st, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1479499/sindh-faced-58pc-water-shortage-during-early-kharif-pa-told>

PM TO PERFORM GROUNDBREAKING OF MOHMAND DAM ON MAY 2

Aisha Mahmood April 30, 2019

The much-awaited groundbreaking of Mohmand Dam will be performed by Prime Minister Imran Khan on May 2 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa .

This was announced by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Central Head of Public Relations Azhar Laghari on his Twitter.

Laghari wrote that the premier will inaugurate the groundbreaking ceremony of Mohmand Dam Hydropower Project on the morning of May 2.

Last year, former Chief Justice of Pakistan Saqib Nisar took the initiative of collecting donations to overcome the country's water scarcity. He was then joined by the prime minister and the fund was called the Supreme Court of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of Pakistan Diamer-Bhasha and Mohmand Dams Fund.

According to the SBP data, the fund has so far raised Rs. 10,402,081,797. The project is being constructed on Swat River in Mohmand district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and is scheduled to be completed in five years and eight months.

On its completion, the dam will store about 1.2 million acres feet (MAF) of water and generate 800MW of hydel electricity.

<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/04/30/493637/pm-to-perform-groundbreaking-of-mohmand-dam-on-may-2/>

PAKISTANIS IN US, UK TOP CONTRIBUTORS

By APP Published: April 28, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister and Chief Justice of Pakistan Diamer-Bhasha and Mohmand Dam Fund has so far received Rs10.36 billion.

The countrywide contribution to the fund stood at Rs8.826 billion while the remaining Rs1.53 billion were contributed by expatriate Pakistanis, according to an update issued by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

Pakistanis living in the US remained the top among foreign countries who donated Rs545.314 million, followed by the UK from where a sum of Rs370.74 million had been transferred to the dams fund so far.

Similarly, the fund also received Rs144.38 million through the SMS service of various cellular companies in Pakistan.

According to details issued by the SBP, the top ten institutional donors include Employees of government of Punjab with a contribution of Rs1.09 billion, Pakistan Army (Rs582.071 million), HQ CWO SPD (Rs201.093 million), Bahria Town (Rs110.12 million) and PAF with Rs100.28 million.

The estimated amount required for construction of two dams is Rs1,700bn, of which Rs1,450bn will be spent on the construction of the Diamer-Bhasha dam and Rs300bn on the Mohmand dam.

Mian Saqib Nisar, the then Chief Justice of Pakistan, took the initiative of collecting donations by launching the fund in July, 2018 that was later joined by Prime Minister Imran Khan, making it a joint venture to overcome the country's water scarcity.

The prime minister in a televised address to the nation last year had appealed to the estimated nine million overseas Pakistanis, particularly those living in European countries and the United States, to contribute at least \$1,000 per head "to the noble cause", and warned that Pakistan could face famine-like conditions by 2025 if new water reservoirs were not built.

With additional input from News Desk

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1961456/1-pakistanis-us-uk-top-contributors/>

RUSSIAN ENVOY OFFERS TO HELP RESOLVE KARACHI'S WATER WOES

By PPI Published: April 29, 2019

KARACHI : The Consul-General of Russian Federation in Karachi, Aleksandr G Khozin, said that maintaining international peace and security is one of the priorities of Russian foreign policy.

Russia's stance today is based on the recognition of its responsibility for universal security and global stability, along with promoting national interests.

Being a nuclear power and a permanent member of the United Nations' Security Council, Russia has its own duties, said Khozin while speaking at a dinner reception hosted by the Consulate at a local hotel to celebrate the Day of Russia.

The reception was attended by diplomats, businessmen, industrialists, high government officials, and elites of the city. Khozin said that throughout history, Russia had gathered a lot of experience, particularly when it came to those lessons of the 20th century that emphasised on a balanced policy in international affairs.

"We are trying to work with all global partners. We introduce our proposals on how to enhance predictability and trust in the field of international security," he said.

The Russian envoy added that the increasing interaction between Russia and Pakistan on regional and international issues as well as in bilateral dealings enjoyed an independent value. He said his country welcomed Pakistan's joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in 2017 as a full-fledged member. And, that Pakistan played a significant role in the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure, particularly in moving forward the anti-narcotics cooperation. The exchange of teachers and students of the organisation in anti-narcotics field would be an important move.

In 2018, many contacts were made between the Russian and Pakistani governments at different levels in connection with celebrating 70 years of diplomatic relations between both the countries. Both the governments expressed their satisfaction on level of relations based on the principles of equality, mutual respect and consideration of each other's interests as well as the constructive nature of their cooperation in global affairs. The two sides re-affirmed to consistently furthering bilateral political dialogue and expanding practical cooperation in diverse areas including counter-terrorism, trade, economy and other areas of interest, he said, according to a press release.

The Russian Consul-General said trade and economic partnership were truly important aspects of Russia's interaction with Pakistan. In 2018, bilateral trade was around \$732 million; which was 191m higher than that of 2017. However, he said, it was much lower than the real potential of the economic cooperation.

He referred to the visit of the trade delegation from St Petersburg, Russia, led by its Vice Governor Sergey Movchan and the signing of the road-map with Sindh government in October 2017, which aimed at the realisation of joint projects in the fields of industry, trade, education, science and culture till 2021.

Khozin mentioned that Pakistani partners were mostly interested in creating light industry cluster on the territory of St Petersburg like the creation of Pakistani Trade House. There was also prospect of cooperation in solving water supply, sewage and water purification problems in Karachi.

He urged the Pakistani business community, especially in Karachi, to actively be involved in putting the plans into practice. "Our joint efforts are all for the good of mutually beneficial Russia-Pakistan relations," he asserted.

Sindh Senior Minister for Work, Services and Irrigation, Syed Nasir Hussain Shah said that Pakistan welcomed Russia's growing global engagement and would remain keen to continue consultations and coordination with Russia on international and regional issues.

Pakistan and Russia have been long-standing friends with a special and privileged strategic partnership. "We also seek strong cooperation with Russia for broad-based and mutually beneficial economic growth and development in the region," said Shah.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1961487/1-russian-envoy-offers-help-resolve-karachis-water-woes/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MAY 6 TO MAY 12, 2019 **RELATING TO RIVERS**

May 12, 2019

While dams are often promoted as the environmentally-friendly solution to electricity and water shortages, the UN's panel on biodiversity has released a damning criticism of the practice of building dams and reservoirs on rivers. The study captures the severity of the impact of man-made constructions along major rivers. Based on satellite data, an international team looked at 12 million kilometres of rivers worldwide in the first global assessment of the human impact on our planet's freshwater supply. The report found that almost two in three of the Earth's longest rivers have dams or reservoirs built on them. Out of 91 rivers longer than 1,000 kilometres, only 21 retain a direct connection to the oceans, while just over a third of the world's 242 longest rivers retain a free-flow. Most of the remain free-flowing rivers are located in remote parts of the Arctic and the Amazon and Congo basins.

While building dams has become the most natural thing to do, experts have warned that the practice is having a big impact on Earth's biodiversity. Dams and reservoirs damage import ecosystems. The mode of economic development dominant in the world purely sees rivers as resources for the consumption of man, but the long-term consequences of such are often underestimated. A World Bank report into Pakistan's water ecosystem in 2005 warned that the country faces major flooding if it does not desilt its rivers. The prediction came true in 2010 when billions worth of economic activity were lost in major floods. The impact of floods has not lessened since, nor have any lessons been learnt. Over the last year, the government has been pursuing a crowd-funding effort to build more dams in the country. According to the UN report, over 50 percent of the world's rivers are now showing severe degradation due to human activity. Free-flowing rivers were once the lifeblood of human civilisation. The industrial revolution gave man the hubris that s/he could tame nature – without feeling the impact of such a move. Now, the impact of over a century of building dams en masse on free-flowing rivers is beginning to show its impact. One of the major impacts is the disruption of the flow of natural nutrients to replace those lost through agriculture. Moreover, dams restrict the amount of river-bourne species that complete their lifecycles. Hydropower projects in of themselves lessen the flow of sediment to river deltas, which reduce their projection against sea level rises. The question is whether the UN biodiversity report will have any real impact on how we relate to rivers. Will humans stop building more dams? Will we find a way to return the major rivers to a state of free-flow? The chances of that are low.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/470003-relating-to-rivers>

WHERE ALL THE WATER GOES

By Dr Hasan Dawood Published: May 11, 2019

This year's UN's water theme of 'leaving no one behind' is a clear expression of marking no discrimination, in order to bring sustainable development to the society. There is no denying the fact that water is life and it is crucial for human survival in terms of food security. At collective level, it fuels economic growth and steers the economies like ours which are agrarian in nature.

United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) — 6 on 'Clean Water & Sanitation' marks the access to clean water as a basic human right. It stresses on taking everyone along and making strategic plans that do not leave any individual behind.

Water scarcity currently affects four out of every ten people in the world. The situation is worsening owing to population growth, urbanisation, pollution of water resources and the impact of climate change. It has been estimated that the world is facing a water deficit of 19% which is expected to go up to 40% by 2030. About 1.1 billion people lack access to water and around 2.7 billion people face water scarcity equal to about a month in a year. Inadequate sanitation affects about 2.4 billion people being vulnerable to diseases and water-borne illnesses. The access to water and sanitation represents a global threat i.e. 1,400 children under the age of five are dying from diarrhoea.

The water resource is depleting at a rapid pace with some countries at a higher risk than others. It is, however, relieving to know that water scarcity is not inevitable. Our behaviour, usage, management and government policies are directly correlated to it. Some studies even suggest that scarcity is a policy-induced consequence of mismanaging water resources. This means that if managed properly, by all the actors collectively, we can ensure that all of us have access to it.

Keeping this in mind, many countries in the world have come up with regulations that advise optimal use of water for different purposes to achieve similar results and hampering the wastage. The situation in Pakistan is not much different and it calls for immediate actions to be taken in a way that deliver results. It is pleasing to mention here that the country has come up with a National Water Policy last year with Punjab taking lead yet again in terms of formulation and passage (in the process) of a Water Act.

Recently published, a World Bank report, “Pakistan Getting More from Water”, is relevant to summarise here because it gives a comprehensive picture of Pakistan’s water resources and how it can be managed optimally.

As per the report, Pakistan’s current per person water availability is 1,100 cubic meters. The report clearly spells out that Pakistan does not make the best use of its available water. It has poor water resource management and poor water service delivery. We, as a country, are performing far from perfect in this regard. Some key highlights of the report are worth discussing here:

Agriculture uses most of the country’s water, with declining contribution to the national GDP which is about one quarter. The four major crops (wheat, rice, sugarcane, and cotton) that represent nearly 80 per cent of all water use generate less than five per cent of GDP.

The economic losses associated with water cost the country billions of dollars every year. According to estimates, the country faces average annual losses of about four per cent of GDP in terms of healthcare, floods, and water scarcity in agriculture.

Water-related diseases are a leading cause of suffering and death in Pakistan. Poor water supply, sanitation and hygiene contribute to very high levels of stunting among children.

Though the growth of population is getting slow, it is still projected to exceed 300 million by 2047, with an increasing demand. Without effective demand management mechanisms, only increasing the supply wouldn’t help. With ongoing trends, water demand could increase by nearly 50 per cent by the year 2047 significantly exceeding the supply.

Pakistan’s major agriculture exports consume a large fraction of water while profitability is sensitive to international prices. That is why agriculture sector needs to become more responsive to variations in the water availability.

The largest increases in demand will come from irrigation as the current trends show. Population and economic growth are the main drivers, but climate warming will contribute significantly.

The economic productivity of water is very low, especially in agriculture. Productivity improvements in agriculture will require better management of water delivery with improved on-farm water management, increased input quality, crop diversification, and better pest control.

Biodiversity losses — declining fish stock and degradation of the Indus Delta ecosystem — are increasing with nothing being done to recover the losses.

The greatest long term risk to groundwater sustainability is pollution.

It becomes very clear that most of the country’s water problems are either demand-related, that too are coming substantially from the agriculture sector, or policy-related, that we have been lacking for almost half a century. It is no secret that many developing economies import high water-footprint products from the less-developing economies so that they can save their own water resources. We need to rethink our export line with introducing policies that ensure optimal water use in agriculture with access to safe water for every nook and corner of the country. As it is a basic human right, the state should take over the responsibility of its judicious use.

Published in The Express Tribune, May 11th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1970191/6-where-all-the-water-goes/>

29,000 TUBE-WELLS IN BALOCHISTAN LIKELY TO RUN ON SOLAR ENERGY

Saleem Shahid May 10, 2019

QUETTA: The Baloch-is-tan government has decided to switch tube-wells instal-led in the fields in the province to the solar system.

A meeting, presided over by Chief Minister Jam Kamal Khan Alyani, was informed on Thursday that there are around 29,000 agriculture tube-wells running on electricity across the province. It was decided that the geo-testing mechanism will be adopted for the verification of tube-wells.

Parliamentary secretaries and administrative secretaries of respective departments also attended the meeting.

The meeting also discussed the matters related to the appointment of chairman of Provincial Zakat Council and distribution of Zakat. It decided to start distribution of Zakat among the deserving people with immediate effect after appointing the chairman of the Zakat Council.

The meeting reviewed the performance of power, environment, mines, forestry, women empowerment and religious affairs departments, the Quetta Develop-ment Authority and Baloch-istan Development Authority.

Administrative heads briefed the meeting about their respective departments.

The meeting decided to empower the Balochistan Development Authority and other semi-government institutions. The chief minister directed all the parliamentary and departmental secretaries to finalise the development programme for the next financial year.

Published in Dawn, May 10th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1481353/29000-tube-wells-in-balochistan-likely-to-run-on-solar-energy>

PAKISTAN ASKS WORLD BANK TO TAKE UP INDUS WATERS TREATY ISSUE

By Our Correspondent Published: May 9, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office on Thursday said Pakistan wants that historic Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) should be allowed to function after an Indian minister threatened to stop Pakistan's share of water if Islamabad 'does not stop supporting terror groups.'

Speaking at a weekly briefing, Foreign Office spokesperson Dr Muhammad Faisal said the 1960 treaty was signed by both the countries but India has been violating the treaty in the cases of Kishanganga and Ratle Hydro Electric Power Projects.

He said Pakistan has already raised the matter at the dispute resolution mechanism of the World Bank, which brokered the IWT. However, the matter has not been resolved, as yet.

"Pakistan wishes that the Indus Waters Treaty should be allowed to function and the dispute resolution mechanism should take its due course. We urge the World Bank to empanel the Court of Arbitration, so that a resolution is reached in this regard," the spokesperson stressed.

His reaction came in response to the statement issued by India's Union Minister Nitin Gadkari that New Delhi will stop Pakistan's share of water – allocated in the IWT – if Islamabad "does not stop supporting terror groups".

"We have already started a study into the matter. The water that will be stopped from flowing into Pakistan and will be given to Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan," said the multi-portfolio Indian minister during a press conference on his campaign tour.

According to Hindustan Times, he said India and Pakistan signed the water treaty based on friendship that has long since vanished. "So we are not bound to follow this treaty," said Gadkari, who also holds the portfolio of shipping and water resources.

In March, soon after tensions between the two nuclear-armed neighbours flared up and the two sides skirmished in the air, during which at least two Indian Air Force jets were shot down, New Delhi started impeding the flow of three rivers shared by the two countries.

New Delhi had stopped 0.53 million acre-feet of water from the three eastern rivers flowing into Pakistan. Talks on the lingering water disputes between the longtime rivals were held in August 2018 but ended without any major breakthrough.

Under the IWT, Islamabad has unrestricted access to the western rivers Indus, Jhelum and Chenab, while New Delhi enjoys the same authority over the eastern rivers Ravi, Beas and Sutlej.

Responding to a question about the increase in Indian defence budget, the spokesperson said India has been trying to push the region into an arms race. "Let me say that an increase in the defence budget is not the sole determinant of a nation's strength. You have seen the results of misadventure by India on February 27, 2019 and the befitting reply given by our military forces," he maintained.

He said Pakistan desired 'cordial' relations with India. To another question about the shortage of famous summer drink Rooh Afza in India, Faisal said Pakistan is ready to meet the Indian demand. "If the supply of Rooh Afza from Pakistan quenches their thirst, then we will certainly want to do so," he said.

He condemned human rights violation by India forces in Kashmir and said since 1989, when resistance movement in the valley started, India has killed 19 journalists and arrested dozens. The spokesperson said India has also detained many Hurriyat leaders, including Yaseen Malik despite his ill health.

He said Pakistan supports dialogue and political solution to Afghanistan issue with focus on "Afghan-led and Afghan-owned approach". He said Pakistan urges all the stakeholders to converge their energies on negotiations to avoid conflict in the already war-torn country.

On chances of meeting between Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi and Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj at the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organisation moot on May 21-22, he said: “Informal handshake could be a possibility; however there is no meeting scheduled so far”.

The FO spokesman confirmed that Aasia Bibi, a blasphemy accused acquitted by the Supreme Court on October 31, 2018, had left Pakistan on her own free will. However, he did not specify which country she has moved to.

Owing to chaotic situation in Libya, he said, Pakistan’s mission is in touch with the representatives of Pakistani community and has advised them to register with the embassy for prompt coordination in case of any emergency situation.

He declined to comment on recent detention of some Chinese citizens by the Federal Investigation Agency on charges of sex trafficking and said the matter pertains to Ministry of Interior.

[WITH ADDITIONAL INPUT FROM AGENCIES]

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1969298/1-india-will-stop-pakistans-share-water-indian-minister/>

ZARDARI SUMMONED BY NAB ON MAY 9

By Our Correspondent Published: May 7, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari has been summoned by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Thursday, May 9.

Zardari has been summoned in the NAB case that is investigating the awarding of a water supply contract to a private company.

NAB Rawalpindi has filed reference against a number of people in their investigation against the holders of public office, legal persons and others regarding illegal award of contract by Government of Sindh special initiative department to M/S Harish & Company.

Last month, NAB filed first interim reference in the fake bank accounts case, nominating nine accused for misuse of authority and illegal allotment of amenity plots in Karachi.

The anti-corruption watchdog’s prosecutors submitted the reference to an accountability court in Islamabad. The accused included eight senior government officials and director of a private company.

The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) had named PPP leaders Asif Ali Zardari, his sibling Faryal Talpur, Omni Group chairman Anwar Majeed, his sons and over 10 others as suspects in an interim charge sheet filed in a banking court in August last year.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1967650/1-zardari-summoned-nab-may-9/>

LOS ISSUED TO TWO AJK HYDROPOWER PROJECTS

The Newspaper’s Reporter Updated May 07, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Private Power and Infrastructure Board (PPIB) has approved the issuance of tripartite letter of support (LoS) to two small hydropower projects in Azad Kashmir.

The PPIB in a meeting on Monday approved 7.08MW hydropower project located at Ghori Wala Nullah in Neelum Valley and 8MW Kathai-II hydropower project at Kathai Nullah, Jhelum Valley in Hattian under the ‘Power Generation Policy 2015’.

The approval of two plants in the valley will pave a way forward for many other similar small hydropower projects and enhance confidence of investors in developing small to medium-size such plants in provinces and Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Power Minister Omar Ayub Khan, chairing the meeting, said that “our dream is to ensure affordability in arranging future capacity additions for which hydro, solar, wind and coal assets are particularly vital which are abundantly available across the country and enough to provide round-the-clock power supply for a long time.”

PPIB Managing Director Shah Jahan Mirza briefed the meeting on various ongoing power generation projects currently being processed. The meeting was informed on various issues being encountered by upcoming independent power producers (IPPs) require the board’s approval so that they are able to proceed swiftly.

In order to facilitate sponsors in the implementation of Thar coal-based power generation projects, the board, after detailed deliberations agreed to allow six months extension in financial closing date of 1,320MW Thar coal-based project being developed by Thar Coal Block-1 Power Generation Company (Shanghai Electric Ltd.).

The board further decided to encourage the Thar coal-based power projects which are crucial in meeting the future energy requirements of country and also save millions of dollars of foreign exchange annually.

It would generate economic activity and create employment opportunities for the local population.

While considering bottlenecks in the development of Thar coal-based power projects, especially with regards to the availability of cooling water, the board decided that every possible support from the federal government would be extended to Sindh for timely supply of water to these projects so as their committed CODs may not be delayed and also emphasised on the provincial government to expedite the completion of water supply infrastructure on fast-track basis.

The board also allowed extension in financial closing of 1,263MW RLNG-based power generation project near Trimmu Barrage in Jhang district.

Khan stressed on the government's commitment to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which has given major relief to the local power sector. "We are committed to prioritise this initiative and in this regard, the investors are being facilitated to meet various timelines including commercial operation dates specified under the framework of CPEC," he said.

Published in Dawn, May 7th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1480787/los-issued-to-two-ajk-hydropower-projects>

FEDERAL GOVT REVISES UP COST OF DASU HYDROPOWER PROJECT

By Shahbaz Rana Published: May 7, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Monday revised upward the land acquisition cost of under-construction Dasu hydroelectric power project by another 40% to address concerns of local population, which has increased its total cost to Rs510 billion.

Headed by Minister for Planning and Development, the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) increased the land component cost of the project from the original Rs12 billion to Rs39.6 billion. It was the second revision in the land cost, as earlier the last government had also jacked up the total cost to Rs19.1 billion from the original Rs12 billion.

Overall, the CDWP accorded approval to 17 projects worth Rs18.8 billion and recommended nine projects worth Rs594.5 billion to Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecne) for consideration, including the Dasu hydropower project.

Projects related to energy, transport, communication, science and technology, health, population planning, industries and commerce, food and agriculture and education were presented in the meeting. The Ministry of Water Resources presented position paper of Dasu Hydel Power Project due to increased land and compensation cost from Rs19 billion to Rs36 billion, said the planning ministry. This led to increase in overall cost from Rs486 billion to Rs510 billion. The CDWP approved the upward revised cost and referred the project to Ecne for consideration, said the Ministry for Planning.

The project, which is critical for improving the country's energy mix, faces problems despite the top priority accorded to the construction of hydroelectric power schemes by the government and the judiciary.

The Ecne had approved land acquisition rates in mid-2015. The last Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government gave preference to the Dasu hydroelectric power project over the Diamer-Bhasha dam. Despite that, Wapda could not take appropriate measures to put the project on fast track.

The Dasu hydropower project has a design capacity of 4,320 megawatts and Pakistan had envisaged completing the project by December 2021 to add 2,160MW of electricity to the national grid under the first phase. The previous government preferred the 4,320MW Dasu hydropower project over Diamer-Bhasha dam and then prime minister Nawaz Sharif was initially keen to inaugurate its first phase before the end of his five-year term in 2018.

As against total requirements of 16,000 Kanal, the authorities could acquire only 5,920 kanal land as of end February. But the local residents have refused to sell their lands at the government rates and demanded substantial increase. Now, the CDWP has approved to increase the land acquisition rates for all categories by 40%. The residential landholders would get nearly Rs2 million as against earlier rates of Rs1.4 million.

The Ministry of National Food, Security & Research presented five projects to enhance yield of various crops. The CDWP cleared the productivity enhancement of wheat project at a cost of Rs32 billion, productivity enhancement of

rice worth Rs15.8 billion, productivity enhancement of sugarcane worth Rs5 billion, National Oilseeds Enhancement Programme (NOEP) worth Rs10.2 billion and cage culture cluster development project worth Rs6.6 billion.

The CDWP approved construction of 132 KV Grid Station at Mashkay and 132 KV STD Nal-Mashkay Transmission Line project at a cost of Rs1.2 billion. A '500 KV Moro Grid Station' worth Rs5.4 billion was also approved.

Three health related projects were presented in the meeting. The Ministry of National Health, Services, Regulation and Coordination presented 'Treatment of Cancer Patients of ICT, AJK & Gilgit-Baltistan' worth Rs4.8 billion, which was recommended to Ecnec for consideration. The Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) presented two projects upgrade of Atomic Energy Cancer Hospital-KIRAN worth Rs2.3 billion and 'up-grade of diagnostic and therapeutic facilities at BINO, Bahawalpur' worth Rs1.4 billion.

Three projects related to population planning were presented by the Ministry of National Health, Services, Regulation and Coordination. The 'population welfare programme Gilgit-Baltistan' worth Rs422.6 million, 'Population Welfare Program, AJ&K' worth Rs355.512 million and 'Population welfare Program, FATA (erstwhile)' worth Rs184.3 were accorded approval till June 2019 in the meeting.

Published in The Express Tribune, May 7th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1967127/2-federal-govt-revises-cost-dasu-hydropower-project/>

COMMISSION MUST CONTINUE

Shahab Usto May 06, 2019

IN January 2018, the Supreme Court appointed Amir Hani Muslim, a retired Supreme Court judge, the new head of the water commission with a mandate to 'implement' the recommendations of the previous commission that the apex court had formed in December 2016 in response to my constitutional petition.

In its one-year tenure, the Amir Hani commission made 276 visits across the province and held 117 proceedings. The visits helped the commission make 'first-hand assessment', and possibly resolve some issues instantly. Quasi-judicial proceedings, however, were held to thrash out complex issues in a transparent manner, involving all stakeholders — bureaucrats, technocrats, academia, civil society, lawyers, politicians, businessmen, and even laymen. The commission turned into a forum of first choice for many water-starved people, whether living in Tharparker's deserts or Karachi's posh localities.

Almost every city, town, and village of the province received benefits from its interventions. Some of the benefits accruing to the general public are: restoration of the 1,465 out of 1,800 dysfunctional reverse osmosis plants; rehabilitation of 200 rural water supply and drainage schemes, with 339 more schemes expected to be restored by June 2019; execution of a comprehensive plan to treat the 750 points where sewage mixes with freshwater bodies; forging of a cost-effective scheme to save Manchhar Lake from pollution; revival of 15 out of 33 sick water filter plants, with nine more plants to be revived by the year end; installation of 14 incinerators and a fraction heat sterilisation unit in various hospitals, with eight large-capacity incinerators to be attached to tertiary-care hospitals; and commissioning of nine water-testing laboratories by June 2019, with eight more to be added by December 2020.

Almost every city, town and village of Sindh has benefited from the water commission's interventions.

Likewise, industrial effluents had been a major source of pollution for decades. The Sindh Environmental Protection Agency had completely failed to enforce its writ against the powerful industry. The commission's relentless pursuit, however, bore results. The industry — including the powerful owners of sugar mills and distilleries — have given the time-bound written undertakings to instal pre-treatment plants, entailing the contempt proceedings for defaulters, and sanctions under the SEPA Act.

Under the aegis of the Commission, Hyderabad has also seen a surge in water- and sanitation-related activities. Hence, four of the six dysfunctional water filter plants having the capacity of 65 MGD now stand rehabilitated; the remaining two should be ready next year. Also, four effluent treatment plants are being restored, while the rehabilitation of a 400MGD pre-settlement lagoon in Jamshoro and overhauling of the city's water distribution and sewage systems have seen a new spurt.

In Kotri, a new combined effluent treatment, built in 2010 at the cost of Rs700 million, had never got off the ground. As a result, industrial effluents continued to pollute the KB Feeder that supplies freshwater to Karachi. However, the plant is now scheduled to start by June 2019.

Karachi is riddled with many a malady which cannot be treated in one year. But the city got a robust head start from the commission and has opened up vistas for seeking long-term solutions to its water and sanitation problems. For

instance, instead of wasting time on a congenitally defective K-IV project, the commission focused on harnessing the existing stocks of water. Thus, the 260MGD Dhabeji pumping station was made operational to augment the city's water supply by 100MGD.

Water-measuring metres were installed at the bulk-pumping stations to curb the theft/wastage of water, a whopping 190MGD. New chlorinators and modern laboratories were added to filter plants to improve water quality. The rehabilitation of water-filter plants involving major civil works has also been set in motion.

Likewise, treatment of sewage, a much-neglected issue, saw a revival under the commission. Thus, Sewage Treatment Plant-III (77MGD) was restored in June 2018. STP-I (100MGD) would start by July 2019. STP-IV (180MGD) should also operate by December 2020. Five industrial effluent treatment plants are scheduled to be built in the SITE, Trans-Lyari, F.B, Landhi and Superhighway areas.

The Defence Housing Authority has also been 'bound down' to stop releasing untreated sewage into the sea. More importantly, the KPT has undertaken to construct STP-V (100MGD) at Mai Kolachi Road in two years.

Commendably, the head of commission secured this prime land (135 acres) which had been a subject of litigation between the KPT and the Sindh government. If all these schemes are executed as planned, the sea would be free from untreated effluents in two years.

Pushed by the commission, the provincial government has started procuring lands for constructing modern landfill sites in every district, including Karachi, though the pace is sluggish. However, the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board and its Chinese partner have improved their performance in Karachi. Sepa has also shown some improvements under the commission's watch, but surprisingly the former director general who was removed by Supreme Court has been reappointed by changing the rules

Some of the other important measures taken by the commission are: removal of encroachment from the nullahs; protecting the water-sanitation infrastructure from commercialisation of industrial plots; regulating water tankers, introducing online services for complaints/ reservation of tankers; providing awami tanks for water-starved communities; shutting illegal hydrants; securing water for areas like Baldia Town; preventing theft of sand and gravel from riverbeds/ channels; and ensuring clean water in some tertiary-care hospitals.

The provincial government has appreciated the commission's contributions and requested the Supreme Court to extend its term. The court accordingly endorsed the request in its order, dated Jan 14, 2019. However, since then, the fate of the commission, and by extension, of hundreds of schemes initiated/monitored by it, hang in the balance.

Remember, the commission delivered because it enjoyed a unique set of advantages — judicial mandate, operational autonomy, clear objectives, a taskforce comprising competent officers/experts, and an indefatigable head. Therefore, given the water- and sewage-related issues confronting the people, only such a commission can deliver again.

The writer is a lawyer and academic.

Published in Dawn, May 6th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1480570/commission-must-continue>

GROWERS CONTINUE PROTEST DRIVE AGAINST WATER CRISIS IN BADIN DISTRICT

A Correspondent May 06, 2019

BADIN: Continuing its sustained campaign against government's failure to provide irrigation and drinking water to Badin district, a group of growers calling itself the 'Save Badin Committee' organised yet another march from Talhar to Badin on Sunday.

A large number of growers, farmers, civil society activists and residents of the district took part in the 27-kilometre march amid sizzling weather conditions.

The participants, coming from all parts of the district, held a demonstration outside Badin Press Club, where the committee leaders, Khalil Ahmed Bhurgari, Mir Ghulam Rasool Talpur, Mir Noor Hassan Talpur, Azizullah Dero and others, spoke to them.

They said water crisis persisted in the district despite assurances given by several ministers to the committee and other stakeholders that the situation would improve. They noted that many areas of the district were not receiving even drinking water. They insisted on removal of blockages along water courses saying that until and unless they were dismantled, supplies to all areas would not improve due.

They told the participants that they had repeatedly taken up the matter of blockages with the officials concerned over the last several months but to no avail. Meetings were held with Irrigation Minister Syed Nasir Shah, Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (Sida) director Mir Ghulam Ali Talpur and other officials concerned but no practical steps towards removal of the blockages had been taken yet, they added.

The committee leaders vowed to continue their protest till adequate water was supplied to all parts of Badin. They warned that the CM House in Karachi would be besieged after Eidul Fitr if water crisis persisted.

The committee has organised a series of protest marches in the district over the last couple of months.

In the previous one, MPA Nusrat Sahar Abbasi also took part when growers and civil society activists started a 17-kilometre march from the Khalifo Qasim area to Tando Bago town on Saturday.

She spoke to the participants when they converged on the Tando Bago press club. She lashed out at the Sindh government for doing nothing towards resolution of the pressing issue. She noted that the entire Badin district had been deprived of its due share in irrigation water for nine months.

MPA Abbasi also lashed out at the provincial government for shifting the blame of the crisis to the federal government, and claimed that Sindh was getting its almost full share in the Indus water but an artificial shortage was being resorted to as PPP favourites were taking away others' share.

"It's height of the injustice that the water share of growers, farmers and tillers is being diverted to the lands of influential figures

affiliated with the party ruling over Sindh," she said, adding that she would continue to raise the issue on the floor of the Sindh Assembly. She called for closure of flood canals, removal of blockages and a fair distribution of water among all stakeholders in Badin.

She said she would move a resolution on water crisis in Badin during the next session of the assembly.

She appreciated growers and farmers of Badin for waging a sustained struggle for their right to claim due share in water.

She alleged that irrigation and Sida officials were actually responsible for the artificial water shortage in the province and resultant devastation of the farming community and the agriculture sector.

Published in Dawn, May 6th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1480481/growers-continue-protest-drive-against-water-crisis-in-badin-district>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MAY 13th TO MAY 19th 2019

RALLY, SIT-IN AGAINST UNAVAILABILITY OF DRINKING WATER FOR MONTHS IN NAGARPARKAR

A Correspondent May 18, 2019

MITHI: A large number of people took to the streets of Nagarparkar town in response to a call given by the Awami Tehreek (AT) for protest against persistent water crisis in Tharparkar and unavailability of safe drinking water to households for months.

Carrying banners and placards inscribed with demand for water, the protesters culminated their march at Miskeen Jahan Khan Khoso Chowk, where they held a sit-in for two hours.

The protesters marched through the streets of Nagarparkar and held demonstrations at various points raising slogans against the Sindh government, particularly irrigation department for failing to ensure water supply to Tharis for their survival.

Speaking to them, Bhero Lal, Magno Kolhi, Ghulam Mohammad Dal and others, who led the protesters, severely criticised Sindh government's "callousness" and its utter failure to provide even drinking water to the people of Nagarparkar.

They said residents of the town and its adjoining areas had to travel miles together to fetch a few buckets of drinking water every day. They held the elected representatives of the area responsible for the situation.

They noted that MNA Pir Noor Mohammad Shah Jilani and MPA Qasim Siraj Soomro had been seen nowhere in their constituencies since winning their seats. They deplored that the lawmakers were not even responding to their voters' phone calls. The speakers said they tried their best to apprise them of the local residents' grievances but to no avail.

They told the protesters that an inordinate delay was being made in the laying of a pipeline, planned to be laid to carry water from a canal in Naukot to Nagarparkar.

They accused PPP leaders and their henchmen of being involved in massive corruption, and demanded a thorough probe into the funds released for executing water schemes.

They deplored that the ruling party did not consider making arrangements for water supply to citizens in the holy month of Ramazan amid terribly hot weather.

They pointed out that almost all wells in the Parkar region had dried up due to insufficient rains last year. This had not only forced hundreds of the families to migrate to the barrage areas but resulted in the death of several hundred cattle heads and rare species in the region.

The speakers warned of an indefinite shutdown call to be given if the hilly town was not provided water within the next eight days.

Published in Dawn, May 18th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1482899/rally-sit-in-against-unavailability-of-drinking-water-for-months-in-nagarparkar>

CENTRE, SINDH AT LOGGERHEADS OVER SHARE OF NAI GAJ DAM'S COST

Nasir Iqbal Updated May 17, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Foot dragging and financial wrangling between the federal and Sindh governments have led to increase in the construction cost of much needed Nai Gaj dam in Sindh. The cost of the dam project which was initially envisaged at Rs16.9 billion has now reached Rs46.9bn.

The fact came to the fore in reports furnished before the Supreme Court which is seized with a petition moved through senior counsel Rasheed A. Razvi highlighting snags that had hit the construction of Nai Gaj dam in Dadu district. The Ministry of Planning, Development and Reform approached the SC on Thursday, seeking a directive that Sindh should share 50 per cent of the additional cost for the construction of the provincial dam which came to Rs10.37bn.

On the other hand, Sindh claims that its share according to a formula proposed by Wapda comes to Rs1.89bn.

In an application before a three-judge SC bench headed by Justice Sheikh Azmat Saeed, the ministry said that the Sindh government was sharing the additional cost which came to Rs10.37bn that was approved in 2012. The commitment to share 50pc additional cost by Sindh was made during a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec).

Federal govt claims Sindh should provide Rs10.37bn; provincial govt believes its share as per Wapda's formula comes to Rs1.89bn

The SC rejected the report furnished by the Sindh Irrigation Department and summoned the province's chief secretary and secretaries of finance and irrigation for May 23.

The ministry also sought permission from the apex court to furnish a proper report highlighting that Nai Gaj dam was first approved in 2009 at a cost of Rs16.9bn, but since the project could not be completed in the specified period, it had to be revised again in 2012 at a revised cost of Rs26.3bn.

Till date Rs12bn had been spent on the project whereas its physical progress according to Wapda was 51pc, the ministry said.

The second revised PC-1 of the project with the enhanced cost of Rs47.7bn was considered by the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) on Jan 10 this year and after deliberations, it recommended the project for the consideration of Ecneec at a rationalised cost of Rs46.9bn with some conditions.

On Jan 25, Ecneec in its meeting decided that though as a matter of principle, any project benefitting a single province should be financed through the province's own resources, but since the project was already under implementation through federal funding, the Sindh government should also be asked to share 50pc of the additional cost over and above the first revision in 2012.

The ministry stated that the federal government was ready to provide funds to the extent of its share but the Sindh government was sticking to the financial formula of Wapda which was proposed in the second revised PC-1 and came to Rs1.89bn as its share.

As per the original PC-1, the amount due to the Sindh government was Rs1.54m to be utilised for the land acquisition, environment and security. This amount later become Rs1.89bn in the revised PC-1 and continued to be the same in the second revised PC-1.

The ministry argued that this Rs1.89bn was already included in the cost of the project approved in 2012 at Rs26.23bn, whereas Ecneec had directed for 50pc share of the provincial government over and above the approved cost of 2012.

Meanwhile, Sindh Secretary Irrigation Jamal Mustafa Syed also furnished a report stating that the proposal submitted by Wapda in the form of second revised PC-1 for the construction of Nai Gaj dam amounting to Rs47.7bn envisaged land acquisition, resettlement, security and command area development at an estimated cost accumulated to Rs1.89bn which the Sindh government had to provide.

Whereas the cost of works and allied items had to be financed by the federal government, the report claimed.

The Sindh government assured the court it was committed that the command area development would be synchronised with the commissioning of the dam as per procedures and policies of the government.

According to the petition, Nai Gaj is a hill torrent that emanates from Khuzdar district of Balochistan and after passing through plains of Kutch, eventually enters Manchar Lake. Nai Gaj area remains dry for eight months and gets water in four months during monsoon season. Nai Gaj flows often devastate flood protective bunds and inundate agricultural lands when Manchar Lake is not in a position to receive flows after attaining peak level in monsoon season. Monsoon water after inundating agricultural lands and devastating houses and standing crops fall into sea and, as such, huge amount of water is wasted.

Apart from serving as continuous flow of fresh water to Manchar Lake, which will improve the ecology of the Lake, Nai Gaj dam will also serve as a lifeline for the people of this mountainous region that lies in Dadu with the potential of changing socio-economic conditions of the area people.

Published in Dawn, May 17th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1482805/centre-sindh-at-loggerheads-over-share-of-nai-gaj-dams-cost>

SINDH GOVT'S LACK OF INTEREST IN NAI GAJ DAM IRKS SC

By Our Correspondent Published: May 17, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Thursday expressed its displeasure over the Sindh government's lack of interest in the construction of the Nai Gaj dam and summoned the chief secretary on May 23 for an explanation. It observed that the provincial government was not abiding by the decision of the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecneec) and the cost of the dam was increasing with each passing day.

A three-member bench of the apex court headed by Justice Azmat Saeed heard the case of the Nai Gaj dam's construction.

Justice Saeed asked the Sindh additional advocate general about the location of the dam. The additional advocate general responded that the dam would be built in Dadu district.

The judge remarked that the Sindh chief secretary should come to the court and record his statement as to whether Dadu required water or not. "The court is aware about the individuals whose farms the Sindh government wants to see irrigated. Would it like the court to name those individuals," Justice Saeed said.

"The Sindh government doesn't care whether other people live or die. The chief secretary should record his statement and after that the court would consider reviewing its decision," he added.

Justice Ijazul Hassan observed that the Sindh government was reluctant to accept the Ecneec decision and the cost of the dam was continuously increasing.

The deputy attorney general informed the court that the project's initial cost was Rs26 billion and now it had reached Rs46 billion.

In an earlier hearing, the Sindh additional advocate general while objecting to Ecneec's decision told the court that the provincial government could not pay 50% cost of the project. However, he added, the government had agreed to the Water and Power Development Authority's (Wapda) proposal on the construction of dam.

Justice Saeed observed that Ecneec had turned down Wapda's proposal. "It appears that the two federating units have some misunderstanding on the cost of the project," the judge noted.

The deputy attorney general told the court that Sindh government had to pay 50% of the additional cost. The dam costs Rs46 billion while the Sindh government needed to pay only Rs10 billion, he added. Justice Saeed observed that Ecneec was a constitutional forum and deserved respect.

Nai Gaj is a torrent which starts from Khuzdar, Balochistan and after passing through the plains of Kutch enters Manchar Lake. The Nai Gaj banks remain dry for eight months and receive water in four months during the monsoon season. After Manchar Lake reaches its peak level, water from Nai Gaj often devastates embankments and floods fields.

After inundating farms and destroying houses and crops, the water goes into the sea.

Besides providing continuous flow of fresh water to Manchar Lake, the Nai Gaj dam will also improve socio-economic conditions of the residents of Dadu.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1974793/1-sindh-govts-lack-interest-nai-gaj-dam-irks-sc/>

MINISTER VOWS TO GO AFTER ‘WATER THIEVES’

The Newspaper’s Correspondent May 14, 2019

LARKANA: Sindh Minister for Irrigation Syed Nasir Hussain Shah has said that his department will tighten the noose around necks of water thieves to ensure supply of water to tail-ends of canals and enable genuine growers to cultivate their land.

He said while talking to irrigation department’s officers during his whirlwind visit of irrigation installations from Karachi to Larkana on Monday that he was making concerted efforts to ensure supply of water to the tail-end areas. He said that it was essential to complete desilting of canals and waterways in time to achieve best results. The government was determined to ensure release of water even into smaller channels and tributaries.

He said that he had taken the irrigation portfolio as a challenge and he would try his best to come up to the expectations of the chief minister by ensuring water supply to remote and tail-end areas.

Pakistan Peoples Party’s ministers were serving masses and solving their problems, he added.

The minister who visited Dadu Canal, flood protective dyke, Mirokhan regulator, Heerdin drain, Saifu-llah Magsi branch, Shah-dad-kot branch, Warah Canal and its offshoots urged the officers concerned to expedite ongoing desilting work. The officers in Larkana, Warah, Qambar and Shah-dad-kot briefed the minister about the progress on the undertaken task.

Accompanied by local PPP leaders the minister met small growers and peasants and received first-hand information about the obtaining situation with regard to water in their areas.

Mansoor Chandio at Garhi regulator in Warah informed the minister about the state of water in Warah branch, Mir Wah, Koor Has-him, Arthar Shakh, Gaji distributary and other tributaries of the Warah branch.

He called for early and maximum release of water into Warah branch that had a big catchment area to irrigate and appealed to the minister to instruct the engineers and other officers concerned to ensure timely supply of water to the tail-end areas.

Published in Dawn, May 14th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1482071/minister-vows-to-go-after-water-thieves>

MOOT ON WATER CRISIS WARNS OF WIDESPREAD DEVASTATION

A CORRESPONDENT Published May 13, 2019

BADIN: Water experts, environmentalists, growers and other stakeholders of the agriculture sector from various districts of Sindh participated in a conference held at the Tando Bago Press Club on Saturday evening to discuss deepening water crisis in the province.

The shed light on the devastating effects of the crisis on environment, farming and ecology in the province, particularly the worst-hit Badin district.

The conference was organized by leaders of a group calling itself the ‘Save Badin Action Committee’.

Noted environmentalist and writer Prof Mushtaq Mirani told the participants that the worst-ever water crisis in Badin district was playing havoc with agricultural land, environment and ecology of the area. He called for framing sustainable policies and doing proper planning to save the agriculture sector. He warned that environmental degradation being caused by the “artificial” crisis and resultant deforestation along with sea intrusion could cause widespread devastation in the whole region

Water expert Mir Ghulam Rasool Talpur expressed his serious concern over the crisis pointing out that Badin, once called the ‘sugar state’ for housing six sugar mills, was also known for producing bumper rice crops and for priced fish farming, was today experiencing devastation due to the crisis. He called for a judicious water distribution to bring an end to the artificial water crisis.

Sindh Abadgar Association leader Pir Fayyaz Hus-sain Rashdi, Mir Noor Ahmed Talpur, Azizullah Dero, Khalil Ahmed Bhurgari and others also spoke.

Published in Dawn, May 13th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1481867/moot-on-water-crisis-warns-of-widespread-devastation>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MAY 20 TO MAY 26th 2019

ADB SETS ASIDE \$200M FOR POTABLE WATER IN SAHIWAL

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter Updated May 26, 2019

LAHORE: The Asian Development Bank has allocated \$200 million to provide clean drinking water schemes in Sahiwal City and implementation plan is ready under the aegis of Punjab Intermediate Cities Improvement Investment Programme.

The local government and community development department officials say the master plan would be prepared for future 25 years to ensure citizens be provided cent per cent clean and hygienic drinking water in different union councils of Sahiwal City.

The officials said the project aimed at working in 12 union councils of Sahiwal, where 400,000 people would be benefitted during the current calendar year and later facilitate some one million people in the coming years.

In order to resolve civic problems being faced by the masses in major cities of the province, the Punjab government would spend \$600m and introduce PICIIP in Sahiwal, Sialkot, Sargodha, Rahim Yar Khan, Bahawalpur and Muzaffargarh.

Another LG&CD department official said the PICIIP would support different civic up-gradation programmes in these cities in two phases while in the first phase the programme would support municipal corporations in Sahiwal and Sialkot cities with an allocation of \$250m of which ADB would finance \$200m, while the Punjab government would provide \$50m.

“The PICIIP is aimed at improving the efficiency of municipal corporation by improving the services of water supply, sanitation, sewerage treatment, solid waste management, transport infrastructure,” the official said and added that the services would contribute towards enhancing the economic activities and strengthen business process with improved community health and better quality of life of the residents of Sahiwal and Sialkot cities.

Published in Dawn, May 26th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1484587/adb-sets-aside-200m-for-potable-water-in-sahiwal>

PIDA ABOLISHED: IRRIGATION DEPT TAKES CONTROL OF CANALS, WATERCOURSES

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter May 25, 2019

LAHORE: The Punjab Irrigation Department has taken control of canals and water courses in the province revamping the provincial irrigation scenario.

An official told Dawn Governor Chaudhry Sarwar has signed the Punjab Khal Panchayat Authority Ordinance abolishing the decades-old Punjab Irrigation and Drainage Authority (PIDA).

He said the ordinance was signed on Monday and it was notified in the gazette on Wednesday.

According to him, PIDA failed to achieve the objectives of its creation as water rate (abiyana) collection in areas under its jurisdiction fell to 45 percent while the department was collecting 70 percent of water rate from the canals it was operating.

Assuaging concerns of PIDA employees about their future, Irrigation Minister Mohsin Leghari says jobs of all PIDA functionaries will stand transferred to the Khal Panchayat Authority in the same grades, perks and privileges they were enjoying in PIDA and their jobs will be fully protected.

All assets and other matters of PIDA also have been assigned to the new authority.

After chairing the maiden meeting of the authority here on Friday, the minister said that the system was introduced for a better management of the canal network.

He said all farmers organisations had been rendered inactive after the promulgation of ordinance and the management of Area Water Boards had gone to relevant superintending engineers. He said from now on the collection of water rate would be the responsibility of the revenue department.

Published in Dawn, May 25th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1484382/pida-abolished-irrigation-dept-takes-control-of-canals-watercourses>

MOHMAND ‘MULTIPURPOSE’ DAM

KHALID FAIZI | MAY 24TH, 2019 | ARTICLE

Amongst the Swat basin/Kabul river water storage/hydropower generation projects details of two schemes given in the important work commissioned by the Government of Pakistan and presented in the 1965 “Water and Power Resources of West Pakistan – a study in Sector Planning Pieter Lieftinck” are pertinent. The first, Ambahar water storage/power project, first identified by Chas T Main at a site some 21 km upstream from the Munda headworks, was proposed by Lieftinck as a 920 feet high dam, gross water storage capacity of 7.9 MAF and ultimate power generation capacity of 1,270MW. The second was the Munda water storage/power project, some 5 km upstream from the Munda headworks with a 660 feet high dam, 2 MAF of water storage and 760MW of ultimate power generation capacity.

In 1998 the Government of Pakistan requested the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to carry out the feasibility study for the Munda multipurpose dam, identified by the Lieftinck report some 33 years earlier. The initial feasibility study was completed by JICA in 2000 which proposed a 700 feet high concrete faced rock-filled multipurpose dam with power generating facilities of 740MW, at an estimated cost of US\$ 1.15 billion situated some 5km upstream from the Munda headworks and 37km from Peshawar.

Due to paucity of funds, the project was included in the long-term hydel generation expansion plan part of the “Policy for Power Generation Projects 2002” issued by the GOP and offered to the private sector for development and construction. A US firm AMZO showed keen interest and in 2004 PPIB awarded Letter of Interest (LOI) for updating the feasibility study. The updated feasibility study was submitted to PPIB, but no further progress could be achieved due to legal issues amongst the sponsors; the LOI was rescinded and WAPDA was once again assigned the task to complete the project.

The PC-II for consultancy related to detailed engineering design for Munda dam was approved by the Central Development Working Party in October 2008. In 2010, when the estimated project cost was US\$ 1.4 billion, WAPDA invited expression of interest for detailed engineering design and in 2012 contract for Mohmand dam (the new name) was signed with a consortium of local and International consultants led by SMEC, Australia.

However, the Planning Commission raised objections to computation of Probable Maximum Flood and work on design remained suspended for about two years with authorization order for commencement of work issued in August 2015 after independent experts found that Planning Commissions objections were unfounded.

The PC-I dated 26 April 2018 approved a project cost of Rs 309.558 billion approx. US\$ 3 billion for the 700 feet dam, gross water storage of 1.3 MAF and power generation installed capacity of 800MW producing 2,862 GWh of electricity annually at a plant factor of 41%.

The cost escalation over the years is shown in the following graph:

The cost curve over a 50-year plus period is smooth and reasonable reflecting a gradual increase in costs over the years, provided the 2018 PC-I bump is excluded, where it is evident that the PC-1 cost was grossly overestimated. The current total project cost is reasonable and will result in a levelized tariff of US ¢ 6-7 per kWh which is attractive and includes both the water and the power generation elements, which should ideally be cost separately. Pakistan needs cheaper generation which hydropower can provide; the Mohmand dam project achieves this objective and will reduce the basket price of electricity in the Pakistan electricity grid.

It is important to note how public hydropower projects can spin out of control leading to massive cost overruns. This was evidenced by the 969 MW Neelum-Jhelum hydropower project which started off with a cost estimate of Rs 15 billion in 1989 exploding over 3000% to a cost of over Rs 500 billion after commissioning in 2018. The tariff for the first 20 years is close to Rs 15 per kWh while levelized tariff for 50 years is over Rs 13 per kWh; this cost is at par with the most inefficient thermal generation cost and will not decrease but will increase the average basket cost of electricity in Pakistan. The loss resulting in billions of US dollars, will be ultimately borne by the Country and is one of the many reasons why we are in dire financial straits today!

Steps should be taken so that Mohmand does not follow the fate of Neelum-Jhelum and is completed within time at the budgeted cost. The Neelum-Jhelum HPP approached NEPRA for a commercial operations date (COD) tariff determination after construction and commissioning; but no tariff petition had been filed before construction began. Learning from experience, a tariff petition for the Mohmand HPP should be submitted to the regulator, NEPRA, before construction starts. The regulator would determine the tariff which would set the framework and parameters for project construction management and cost and ensure that the required financial discipline is exercised. Once construction is complete, a final tariff would be determined at COD based on the final project cost, allowed cost true-up and other specified parameters which will determine the sale price of the electricity into the grid. This is a standard practice for private sector generation projects and should be applied to all projects whether in the public or private domain as it would result in a low, known tariff, enable planning of the future basket price of power and avoid future surprises.

(The views expressed in this article are not necessarily those of the newspaper)

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/05/20190524478784/>

SC NULLIFIES LHC'S ORDERS ON WATER CHARGES

By Aqeel Afzal Published: May 24, 2019

ISLAMABAD.: Suspending the orders of Lahore High Court (LHC) on water charges, the Supreme Court has directed all the four provinces to present a report on the mechanism devised for water bills in the next hearing and directed the government to bill according to production instead of companies' capacity.

The apex court said that the Punjab government instead of relying on companies' metres in the province should install its own metres and the recommendations on billing mechanism should only be presented in the Supreme Court.

The top court observed that the order of LHC pertaining to water bills will remain suspended. The amount derived from the bills will remain in the accounts but will not be used.

A three-member bench headed by Justice Umar Ata Bandial heard the case on review appeals on water commercial charges.

During the hearing, Justice Ijazul Ahsan asked how LHC nullified the notification after the orders of the Supreme Court. He said as the matter was in the apex court, LHC had lost the authority to pronounce a decision under article 199. He added that there was no way to uphold the LHC's orders.

The counsel for the private company argued that the water charges notification was prepared earlier. However, it was released later. He added that bills up to Rs250 million were being sent to the consumers.

Justice Bandial said "We don't want to sentence anyone. We are hearing this case as it is of public interest".

Justice Ahsan mentioned that the government had to issue a notification within a week as per the verdict given on December 6. He maintained that everyone decried about revenue whereas this was the main source of revenue.

Justice Ahsan said to the Punjab government's counsel that he had to submit a notification within a week and report within a month to which the lawyer replied that he would submit a clarification if the court permitted.

The Water and Sanitation Agency's (WASA's) lawyer told the court that bill was generated on company's given readings.

Justice Ahsan asked the counsel to pay bill commensurate to their production. He added that bill should be generated on the basis of reading where the metres were installed and on production basis where the meters were not installed.

Justice Ahsan maintained that the court had fixed Rs1 per litre in its verdict and added that it had ordered to charge on production basis instead of usage for the company's own benefit.

The counsel noted that those companies which saved water from wastage should be given concession.

The court directed advocate generals of all provinces to submit a report regarding water charges mechanism in the next hearing.

The top court ordered the Punjab government to install its own metres instead of relying on companies' meters and added that the recommendations on mechanism should only be presented in the Supreme Court.

The court pronounced that LHC's verdict will remain suspended while the amount collected from bills would continue to be in accounts but will not be used.

The court adjourned the case until after Eid when the advocate general Punjab assured to submit a detailed report.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1979211/1-sc-nullifies-lhcs-orders-water-charges/>

PAKISTAN, FRANCE SIGN CREDIT FACILITY DEAL

By APP Published: May 24, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and France signed a credit facility agreement on Thursday worth €94.01 million (Rs11.7 billion) for the Extension of Water Resources Faisalabad phase-II project.

The agreement was signed by Economic Affairs Division (EAD) Secretary Noor Ahmed, French Ambassador to Pakistan Marc Barety, and French Agency for Development (AFD) Country Director Jacky AMPROU.

Under the agreement AFD would provide a soft loan for the project for a period of 20 years, including a grace period of six years at an interest rate of six-month Euro interbank offered rate (Euribor) with a spread of 52 basis points.

Since the groundwater quality of Faisalabad city is brackish, the proposed project would augment Faisalabad Water and Sanitation agency's capacity to provide 30 million gallons per day (MGD) of additional clean drinking water to citizens through surface water treatment plant, said a press statement issued by the finance ministry.

France, through AFD, is providing technical and financial support in energy and urban development sectors in Pakistan.

Published in The Express Tribune, May 24th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1979255/2-pakistan-france-sign-credit-facility-deal/>

THEY GROW THE NATION'S FOOD, BUT THEY CAN'T DRINK THE WATER

By Jose A. Del Real May 21, 2019

EAST OROSI, Calif. — Water is a currency in California, and the low-income farmworkers who pick the Central Valley's crops know it better than anyone. They labor in the region's endless orchards, made possible by sophisticated irrigation systems, but at home their faucets spew toxic water tainted by arsenic and fertilizer chemicals.

"Clean water flows toward power and money," said Susana De Anda, a longtime water-rights organizer in the region.

She is the daughter of lechugueros who worked in lettuce fields and helped make California one of the agricultural capitals of the world. "Homes, schools and clinics are supposed to be the safest places to go. But not in our world."

As she spoke, Ms. De Anda drove through several towns where tainted water is a fact of life, here in the state's agricultural center. In the foreground, along State Route 201, were miles of lush orange groves and dairy farms. Spotted out the passenger window of her silver Toyota was Stone Corral Elementary in the town of Seville, where century-old pipes contaminate the tap water with soil and bacteria. The school depends on grant money to pay for bottled water for students.

Today, more than 300 public water systems in California serve unsafe drinking water, according to public compliance data compiled by the California State Water Resources Control Board. It is a slow-motion public health crisis that leaves more than one million Californians exposed to unsafe water each year, according to public health officials.

Though water contamination is a problem up and down the state, the failing systems are most heavily concentrated in small towns and unincorporated communities in the Central and Salinas Valleys, the key centers of California agriculture. About half of all failing water systems are in the agricultural San Joaquin Valley, in the southern section of the broader Central Valley, said Ellen Hanak, the director of the Water Policy Center at the Public Policy Institute of California.

Gov. Gavin Newsom has proposed a tax of about \$140 million on urban water districts and the agriculture industry to pay for redevelopment in districts serving unsafe water. That money would come in addition to \$168 million he has allocated toward water infrastructure improvements from a bond proposition passed last year.

Some have bristled at the proposed tax, given already high tax rates in the state and a budget surplus of more than \$21 billion. The Association of California Water Agencies — whose members provide an estimated 90 percent of water distributed in the state — has spoken out against the governor's proposed solution, arguing it would affect the cost of living in already-expensive California.

"There's agreement with everyone involved in policy that there is a problem and it needs to be solved," said Cindy Tuck, the group's deputy executive director for government relations. But, "we think it doesn't make sense to tax a resource that is essential."

State Senator Melissa Hurtado, a Democrat representing the Fresno area, whose district is severely affected by tainted water, said she would like to see more money allocated for infrastructure spending, but believes a tax on water is a nonstarter. Last week, the Democratic-controlled State Senate budget subcommittee voted against the governor's proposed water tax, in favor of recommending funding from the state's general fund. The Legislature is expected to work out the details as part of broader budget negotiations, which will come for a vote in June.

But the debate in Sacramento feels far away in East Orosi, a farmworker community of about 500 nestled along the foot of the Sierra Nevada that is surrounded by fields of oranges. There, residents complain of conditions that resemble the developing world, not the richest state in the nation. Fears of nitrate exposure in the tap water — which numerous studies have linked to an increased risk of infant death, and at high levels, an elevated risk of cancer in adults — compound other difficult realities like faraway grocery stores and doctors, grueling work conditions, and a lack of political clout.

Veronica Corrales, the president of the East Orosi water board, wonders why more people are not outraged that, in 2019, people living in a state as wealthy as California lack such a fundamental necessity.

Many factors have led to the groundwater contamination reflected in the state's data, but public health experts say the region's agriculture industry has played an outsized role. Chemical fertilizers and dairy manure seep into the ground and cause nitrate contamination, like the kind plaguing East Orosi. Such contamination, which is common throughout the valley, takes years to materialize and even longer to clear up.

Arsenic is naturally occurring in some areas but can become worse with exhaustive groundwater pumping, which has been a longstanding problem in the valley and accelerated during the drought between 2012 and 2016.

It is exceedingly difficult to say with certainty whether any illness is directly tied to specific environmental factors, including contaminated water. But an article published last month in *Environmental Health*, an academic journal, estimated that 15,500 cases of cancer in California could occur within 70 years because of unsafe drinking water.

For years, Martha Sanchez and her husband, Jose — who live in East Orosi and make their living filling crates with oranges or picking cherries — have received notices from the local water system that their taps are unsafe to drink from because of contamination. The family spends at least \$60 a month for tap water they can't use, Ms. Sanchez estimates, which is factored into the rent. To cook and wash dishes, Ms. Sanchez ladles bottled water into pots and pans from heavy blue jugs kept in the kitchen. She and her children shower using the water from the pipes, but she says it makes their skin itch.

"Some people around here drink it," Ms. Sanchez said. "Here at home, I don't use it at all for cooking, not even for beans."

Ms. Sanchez's family is given five free five-gallon jugs of water every two weeks, funded by a grant from the State Water Resources Control Board that was secured by Self-Help Enterprises, a community organization. But, Ms. Sanchez says, it is never enough to hold the family over, and they buy an additional four gallons.

Her husband, who is a supervisor in the fields, pays for clean water out of pocket for the employees he manages, because the farm does not provide it. Sometimes he brings in about \$80 for a full day of work.

These problems are not new. The failing infrastructure at the heart of the potable water crisis in these communities is tinged with the legacy of rural redlining, said Camille Pannu, the director of the Aoki Water Justice Clinic at the University of California, Davis, who likened the situation in the valley to the one in Flint, Mich. "Flint is everywhere here," she said.

"The fact that more than a million Californians in 2019 have been left behind is really appalling," said Jared Blumenfeld, the secretary of the California Environmental Protection Agency. "I'll never forget talking to people in Imperial and Coachella Valley who are like, 'You know what, it's amazing when we go back to Mexico, the water is better.'"

Mr. Blumenfeld said the "vast majority" of water systems with unsafe water are in small communities where there are too few customers to cover the cost of water treatment and maintenance. Laying even short distances of pipe can cost millions of dollars, which is sometimes feasible when costs are spread out among many people but not so for individual families, or when towns are especially remote.

"I've never seen as many small drinking water systems in any other state. California is unique in that way," Mr. Blumenfeld said.

Many families who live in those areas use water from private wells because their homes are not connected to public water systems. The number of people exposed to dangerous water statewide could be even higher than the data shows: The state does not regulate private wells and does not monitor systems with fewer than 15 connections.

One solution for expanding potable water access could be for larger systems to absorb smaller systems, which would allow them to spread infrastructure costs across more customers. In the San Joaquin Valley, nearly 80 percent of disadvantaged communities without potable water are less than one mile away from other communities with safe drinking water, according to a 2018 report by the U.C. Davis Center for Regional Change.

But larger water systems are often wary of absorbing the smaller systems. In part, they do not want to absorb the costs that come with overhauling dilapidated infrastructure, said Ms. Hanak, the Water Policy Center director.

Often, community members also worry that adding lower-income customers from neighboring communities will leave them to foot the bill. And the poorer customers worry they will have to pay rates they cannot afford.

The East Oroqui water district has teetered from one consolidation effort to another over the last decade, with little success. The state recently signaled that it would order nearby Oroqui, which has clean water, to consolidate its system with East Oroqui to expand clean-water access. Compelled by the state, the two communities have sought to negotiate a consolidation, but disagreements have left them at a stalemate.

“Because Oroqui has clean water, they don’t want to take on rate payers from East Oroqui who they think are so poor they’ll skip out on their bills,” Ms. Pannu said. “Unfortunately, you have poor people versus poorer people.”

Joaquin Esquivel, the chairman of the State Water Resources Control Board, said the gaps in potable water access were unacceptable, and promised that the state would continue using its consolidation authority to ease disparities. But he added that sustained funding for infrastructure and maintenance projects would be crucial for long-term solutions.

Ms. Corrales, a nurse, stepped in as the president of the East Oroqui water board several months ago. There was no one else who wanted the job, she said, and she was voted in at a community meeting almost without realizing it.

Sometimes she is not sure whom she should be fighting: the state, the farm owners, the skeptics in Oroqui. She just wants clean water.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/21/us/california-central-valley-tainted-water.html>

RAHU CLAIMS MOST TAIL-END AREAS OF BADIN GETTING AMPLE WATER

Dawn Report May 23, 2019

BADIN: Sindh Minister for Agriculture Mohammad Ismail Rahu has said that the government will not hesitate to remove any person if the 19-member technical committee led by water expert Idris Rajput held him responsible for playing a role in water shortage in the district.

Mr Rahu said in a statement issued on Wednesday that those who had been protesting against the water scarcity and blockages in canals should better wait for the final report being prepared by Mr Rajput and his team.

He said that with improvement in water flows at Kotri barrage most of the tail-end areas were being supplied ample water both for cultivation and drinking and assured farming community of the district of releasing sufficient water into their waterways in coming days so that they could cultivate rice, the chief crop of the district.

“Nobody will be allowed to steal water through tampered modules or pipelines,” he warned and said that operation against water thieves was afoot with the help of officials concerned, police and district administration without any discrimination.

He said that he had requested leaders of farmers’ organisations to inform him about illegal outlets so that he could take stern action against those who operated them.

The minister said that incompetent federal government had wrecked havoc with the economy and already had people praying for their early exit.

Democratic forces would soon join hands to oust the inept rulers, he added.

MITHI: Pakistan Peoples Party MPA Qasim Siraj Soomro has said that construction work on the Nagarparkar pipeline has been completed and it will start supplying canal water to the town from Thursday.

He told journalists at his residence in Nagarparkar on Wednesday that the pipeline would be ready to provide water to the town and adjoining villages within next two days. “We are already providing water to different villages through tankers and will continue the relief operation,” he added.

DADU: Sindh Minister for Irrigation Syed Nasir Hussain Shah has that Rangers personnel will be deployed at Johi branch from May 27 onwards to start operation against water theft.

He told journalists during a visit of the branch in Thariri Jado Shaheed village that irrigation officials had been directed to lodge FIRs against water thieves. He said the operation against water thieves was part of government efforts to ensure provision of water to the tail-end of the branch.

After the de-silting of the branch from zero point to the tail-end till Chhini was completed and weak embankments repaired, it would further boost water supply to the tail-end, he said.

He said that all developments works on the branch would be completed during this summer so that growers could receive their share of water. Hindrances would be removed and regulators, modules and watercourses would be repaired according to their design capacity, he said.

Earlier, superintending engineer Sajid Ali Bhutto briefed the minister, lawmakers of the area and office bearers of Sindh Abadgar Board and said that growers had changed crop pattern. The de-silting work had been launched from 19 miles to 47 miles at a cost Rs35 million, he said.

Published in Dawn, May 23rd, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1483894/rahu-claims-most-tail-end-areas-of-badin-getting-ample-water>

RS9.98BN CONTRACT SIGNED FOR MOHMAND DAM PROJECT

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter Updated May 22, 2019

LAHORE: The Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) on Tuesday signed a contract of Rs9.98 billion with a joint venture (JV) for consultancy services regarding construction design, supervision and contract management of the Mohmand dam hydropower project.

The JV namely Mohmand Dam Consul-tants Group (MDCG) is led by Nespak and comprises six partners and seven sub-consultants (four foreign and nine local firms).

According to a press release issued here by a spokesperson for Wapda, the agreement was signed in Islamabad by the Wapda general manager/project director of Mohmand dam, Mohammad Javed Afridi, and MDCG representative Dr Tahir Mehmood Hayat.

Federal Minister for Water Resources Mohammad Faisal Vawda, Secretary of Water Resources Mohammad Ashraf, Wapda Chairman retired Lt Gen Muzammil Hussain, Joint Secretary of Water Resources Syed Mohammad Mehr Ali Shah, Wapda members, senior officers and representatives of the consulting firms were present on the occasion.

The spokesperson said the Pakistani engineering firm had been assigned the lead role in the contract for consultancy services in such a mega water sector project for the first time in the country's history for capacity building of local engineering firms and bringing them on a par with known international consultants.

The Mohmand dam project is being constructed on Swat river in Mohmand tribal district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It is a multi-purpose project with gross water storage capacity of 1.2 million acre feet and power generation capacity of 800 megawatt.

Published in Dawn, May 22nd, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1483796/rs998bn-contract-signed-for-mohmand-dam-project>

AROUND 62MAF WATER WASTED EVERY YEAR, NA BODY TOLD

MUSHTAQ GHUMMAN | MAY 21ST, 2019 | ISLAMABAD

The Ministry of Water Resources on Monday revealed that up to 62 million acre feet (MAF) water is wasted every year starting from rivers to the fields. These figures were shared with the National Assembly Standing Committee on Water Resources presided over by Nawab Yousuf Talpur.

Minister for Water Resources, Faisal Vawda asked his Ministry's officials to extend all possible assistance sans official procedures to resolve water related issues.

Joint Secretary Water, Mehar Ali Shah informed the committee that when the federal government started thinking on the national Water Policy in 2005 it was decided to seek legal opinion from the Law Division whether the Federal Government can formulate water policy or not.

Law Division, in its comments asserted that there is nothing like a National Water policy in Constitution of Pakistan especially Federal Legislative list. However, if federal government wants to formulate Water Policy, it can go ahead in consultation with the provinces.

He stated that the federal government held broad based consultation with the provinces, and line Ministries like Ministry of National Food Security and Research, Pakistan Council for Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) (Ministry of Science and Technology Planning, Development and Reforms Division, civil society and academia. He said the federal government neither has legislative power nor executive power on water which needs to be discussed in the light of policies.

According to him, National Water Council has been constituted to deal with ground water management, efficient water use, optimum utilization of resource, and reduction of water use.

He said the steering committee has already part of the approved National Water Policy, and is meeting next month wherein different issues related to water will be discussed.

“Since federal government can not legislate on water, therefore the only forum we have is National Water Council, where we can share our views with those concerned and take an informed decision in the light of guidelines approved in the National Water Policy,” he added.

Mehar Ali Shah further stated that steps are being taken at the provincial level to minimize water losses.

He said there will be no surplus water in the system even after construction of Diamer Bhasha Dam, adding that no proposal is under consideration regarding desilting of Tarbela dam with up to 170 to 200 million tons silt coming in the reservoir and 70-75 million tons silt is added to Mangla reservoir each year.

One of the members of the committee from Bahawalpur argued that the committee is ready to extend any kind of support for alteration in the National Water Policy, but Secretary Water Resource, Muhammad Ashraf argued that water is a devolved subject in the light of 18th Amendment and cannot be touched as it would then have political implications, adding that any amendment can only be possible if provincial assembly of a province approves an amendment.

Chief Engineering Advisor/ Chairman National Flood Commission, Ahmed Kamal informed the committee that the four provinces have been directed to bring proposals on water conservation to the next meeting of the steering committee. The provinces have also to prepare groundwater regulatory framework and have been asked to establish ground water regulatory authorities. In addition provinces have also been asked to start public awareness campaign by using educational institutions.

During discussion it was stated that underground water level is also going down in Punjab.

The committee was informed that flood fighting plans have been dispatched to the provinces so that they can start preparation for preparedness to deal with any risky situation. The committee was also given a briefing on monsoon prospects in Pakistan.

Secretary Irrigation Punjab, Qazi Amjid informed the committee that Punjab government has formulated its own Water Policy under which Water Resources Commission is being established in the province in accordance with Water Act.

He said provincial government will starting water metering and licences will be made mandatory for water extraction. He further stated that contaminated water would no longer be released in the river or canal without treatment, adding that a treatment plant is being established in Lahore.

According to Secretary Irrigation Punjab, the provincial government will construct Dadocha dam by 2021 (three years) to supply 35 million gallons of water to Rawalpindi, Islamabad.

The representatives of Sindh, KP and Balochistan informed the committee that their governments are working on Water Policy.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/05/20190521477391/>

BADIN’S FARMERS APPROACH SHC OVER ACUTE WATER SHORTAGE

By Our Correspondent Published: May 21, 2019

HYDERABAD: After protesting for several months to bring their plight, caused by acute water shortage, to the notice of the provincial government, the farmers of Badin have finally knocked the door of the Sindh High Court (SHC). The Hyderabad Circuit Bench on the farmers’ petition, alleging a design fault in the Rs300 billion rehabilitation project of Phuleli canal which has led to the shortage, has issued notices to the respondents for June 20.

“Declare that the raising of crest levels of cross and head regulators of Phuleli canal under newly built project is illegal and in violation of the fundamental rights of the petitioners and lower riparians [of the canal],” Noor Ahmed Talpur,

Azizullah Dero and five other farmers pray in the petition. They contended that the raised crest level, which refers to the highest level that the canal can reach at a certain time, is the sole cause of shortage across Badin district.

“[The crest level] has been raised with mala fide intention to divert the due share of the petitioners and other farmers towards the lands of influential upper riparian farmers.” The petitioners have cited the officials of Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (SIDA), Sindh Water Sector Improvement Project (WISP), Sindh chief secretary and chairperson of a recently formed inquiry committee, which probed the canal’s rehab project, as the respondents.

The petitioners also pleaded that the court declare the inquiry committee’s report unjustifiable and unreasonable because it did not offer solution to redress the problem.

Under pressure of the agrarians’ protest, SIDA’s Chairperson Abdul Basit Soomro had notified the 19-member committee, headed by former irrigation secretary Idress Rajput, on March 22. The committee was tasked to ‘inspect’ whether the canal’s design fault, which underwent rehabilitation in 2017-18 at the cost of Rs300 million, was creating the scarcity.

“The chairman and members shall inspect the newly built cross and head regulators over Phuleli canal executed under World Bank funded Water Sector Improvement Project (WSIP),” read the terms of reference of the notification. “... evaluate the performance of structures in the light of raised sill levels that whether these sill levels are creating any acute shortage.” The storage above sill level is called live storage and below the level is called dead storage.

Save Badin Action Committee’s Mir Ghulam Rasool Talpur claims that the water of Kotri barrage, from where the Phuleli canal springs, is being diverted to the lands of feudal lords. The opponents of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) accuse the party’s provincial government for taking retributive action against Badin’s people, who voted the PPP’s dissident, Dr Zulfiqar Mirza, in the local government and general elections, by depriving them of water. On Sunday the Sindhi nationalist parties took out a protest rally in Badin to condemn the official apathy to the plight of the coastal district’s residents.

Published in The Express Tribune, May 21st, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1977094/1-badins-farmers-approach-shc-acute-water-shortage/>

GOVT TO FORM TECHNICAL BODY TO PLAN GHAZI BAROTHA PROJECT

Aamir Yasin May 20, 2019

RAWALPINDI: The federal government will form a technical committee to look into the ways water can be brought from Ghazi Barotha to meet the needs of Rawalpindi and Islamabad until 2050.

The committee will decide whether the project will be launched on a build-operate-transfer (BOT) basis or through a public-private partnership, as the government does not have the money to launch the project itself.

The Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) and Capital Development Authority (CDA) have finalised the members of the committee, which will meet next week.

On Friday, the committee met with former finance minister Asad Umar – who heads the National Assembly Standing Committee on Finance – in the chair. The meeting was also attended by Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on CDA Affairs Ali Awan and RDA Chairman Arif Abbasi, as well as senior finance ministry officials.

Committee will decide whether to initiate project on build-operate-transfer basis or through public-private partnership. The Ghazi Barotha Project was proposed in 2006 as a way to bring 200 million gallons of water daily (MGD) to the twin cities, at a cost of Rs37 billion. The project was supposed to start in 2009 and end in 2013, but could not be initiated due to a lack of funds.

There were also objections to the project from other provinces. In 2016, the Council of Common Interest agreed to give Rawalpindi and Islamabad 200 MGD of water in the first phase of the project; 100 MGD for Islamabad and 50 MGD for Rawalpindi’s city and cantonment areas respectively.

However, experts believed that the cost of the project could have doubled in the intervening years.

“If work had started in 2009 the cost of the project would be limited to Rs37bn. Now, more money will be spent on the project,” a senior official said.

Mr Umar said the project needs to be started to end the water shortage in the twin cities.

He said the committee would soon finalise whether the project should be carried out on a BOT basis or under a public-private partnership, as it will cost a lot.

He added that he is not chairing the technical committee, but chaired the meeting of the committee, and said that the civic bodies were asked to nominate technical staff.

He said the PTI had promised to end the water shortage in the capital during its election campaign.

He said that Islamabad's water requirement has reached 150 MGD, but under the present system the capital receives 50 MGD.

"After the project, Islamabad will get 100 MGD of water from Ghazi Barotha, which will be sufficient for the next 10 years," he said.

Mr Umar said installing tubewells was not the solution to meeting water needs, as groundwater is depleting rapidly in the region. He said installing more tubewells would lead to extracting contaminated water.

Mr Abbasi from the RDA said that supplying water from Ghazi Barotha Dam is the only solution to the water shortage in Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

At present, there are more than 1,000 tubewells installed in the twin cities which has caused the groundwater level in the region to deplete rapidly, he said.

He said Rawalpindi would receive 100 MGD from the project, which would be enough water to meet the city and cantonment areas' requirements until 2050.

The city and cantonment areas currently receive water from Khanpur Dam, Rawal Dam and tubewells.

Published in Dawn, May 20th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1483319/govt-to-form-technical-body-to-plan-ghazi-barotha-project>

KOTRI BARRAGE WATER BEING DIVERTED TO LANDS OF FEUDAL LORDS OF SUKKUR, MOOT TOLD

Hanif Samoon May 20, 2019

BADIN: Speakers at a conference on water crisis and its impacts on agriculture and ecology of the district held in Tarai town on Saturday urged authorities concerned to save Badin from further devastation and claimed that water of Kotri barrage was being diverted to the lands of feudal lords whose estates fell within catchment area of Sukkur barrage.

A water expert and environmentalist, Mir Ghulam Rasool Talpur, said at the moot organised by Save Badin Action Committee that it was sad the Sindh's rulers had never bothered to improve agriculture and irrigation systems over the years and focused their attention only on irrigating their ever expanding farmlands by stopping water to the lands of small growers and farmers.

He claimed that water of Kotri barrage was being diverted to the lands of feudal lords that fell within the catchment area of Sukkur barrage by erecting blockages at Alipur regulator near Matli and other points. Unfortunately, Badin's water was being flowed to the area where sub-soil water was also available and could be used for irrigating land, he said.

"It is sheer callousness and cruelty by rulers to deprive farmers of Badin of their due share in water when the province is getting its water share from the system," he said.

He asked participants in the seminar to carry on their peaceful struggle for the future of their generations and warned that persisting water crisis together with sea intrusion would trigger unprecedented devastation in the area if all the waterways of the district were not supplied water on a regular basis.

Mr Talpur warned officials of Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (Sida) and irrigation department not to turn entire Badin district into another Thar and said that prolonged water shortage in the area and its coastal belt was also causing the sea to devour more fertile land.

Taj Joyo, writer and critic, said that it was height of injustice to stop supply of water to a district, which was once very prosperous and its people were living comfortable and peaceful lives as the area produced quality rice, fruits and vegetables.

"Those who are at the helm of affairs in Sindh should administer justice to people, who are protesting peacefully for their due share in water for the past many months," he said.

He held rulers responsible for the miserable plight of people and lauded the struggle launched by farmers and their supporters for their just rights.

Ali Bha, a grower and local historian, said that incompetent and callous rulers had no concern for the plight of people in the vast district who had not received water for the past nine months. “We are forced to dig wells in dried up beds of channels and consume the highly contaminated water,” he said.

Azizullah Dero, Khuda Dino Shah, Mir Noor Ahmed Talpur, Usman Rahukro, Nasarullah Jarwar, Ameer Azad Panhwar and other leaders of the committee also spoke at the conference.

Meanwhile, traders in Rajo Khanani town observed a shutdown strike on Saturday to show solidarity with the farmers of the area who were protesting against the nagging water shortage. They also joined the farmers’ sit-in on Matli road under scorching sun for four hours.

The protesters’ leaders Mir Ashiq Talpur, Mohammad Nizamani, Manzoor Loond and others accused Sida director Mir Ghulam Ali Talpur of creating the water crisis in the district by his indulgence in corruption and incompetence in distributing irrigation water.

“The director has completely mismanaged the irrigation system of the canals on the left bank of Kotri barrage and is supplying water only to those who are either greasing his palm or bringing pressure to bear on him,” they alleged. They requested PPP leadership to order chief minister to immediately remove Mr Talpur, who according to them, was bringing bad name to the party.

They said that most of the participants in demonstrations and protests were PPP voters, who were facing the worst water crisis in years and demanded removal of blockages in canals and an end to releasing water into flood canals. They vowed to continue the protest till their demands were met.

In the course of the protest, a farmer Rashoro Kolhi tried to commit suicide to register his protest against water scarcity but he was saved by his colleagues.

Published in Dawn, May 20th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1483309/kotri-barrage-water-being-diverted-to-lands-of-feudal-lords-of-sukkur-moot-told>

JUNE, 2019

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM MAY 27th TO JUNE 2nd 2019

LBOD WATER FOR THAR COAL: MURAD CALLS FOR CHOOSING BETWEEN RO AND MBR TECHNOLOGY

RECORDER REPORT | JUN 2ND, 2019 | KARACHI

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Saturday called for choosing appropriate technology for pre-treatment of LBOD water such as Reverse Osmosis (RO) or Membrane Bio Reactor (MBR) as soon as possible.

“The completion of LBOD scheme to provide water to Thar Coal Block-II is most important for further investment in the energy sector,” he said, presiding over a meeting regarding installation of pre-treatment for RO plant at Nabisar for Thar Coal Block-II at the CM House, here. The meeting was attended by Minister Energy Imtiaz Shaikh, special assistant to the CM on Irrigation Ashfaq Memon, chairperson P&D Naheed Shah, secretary Energy Musaddiq Khan, secretary Finance Najam Shah, secretary Irrigation Dr Saeed Mangniyo, Khalid Masroor CEO of HUBCO, Abul Fazal Rizvi CEO SECMC, Saleemullah Memon, CEO TEL & ThalNova, Ahsan Zafar Syed, CEO Engro Energy, Haji Khan Jamali, superintendent engineer Irrigation Thar Coal Project and other concerned officers.

The chief minister was told that the scheme of pre-treatment at Nabisar for Thar Coal Bloc-II was approved by the government at the cost of Rs 3.25 billion. The scheme was prepared to feed 60 cusecs of raw water to RO plant. The design was based on ultra filtration basis.

Later on, the work was stopped on the scheme and on the request of the SECM and power companies, a revised scheme of Rs 14.3 billion was prepared based on Membrane Bio Reactor (MBR) technology and it was designed for inflow of 75 cusecs.

The Planning & Development department raised serious objections to the rise in the cost from Rs 3.25 billion to Rs 14.325 billions. Therefore, matter was referred to the provincial cabinet. On the recommendation of the cabinet committee, NESPAK was hired as third party consultant for recommendation of technology and financial review. Now, the power companies have requested that due to urgency for operation of power units updated ultra filtration technology for discharge of 75 cusecs of raw water may be approved and save the time required by the consultant.

The water quality required for the pre-treatment plant should have certain parameters such as biochemical oxygen demand (BODs), chemical oxygen demand (COD), suspended solids (SS), total nitrogen (TN), ammonia nitrogen (NH₄⁺), feed water fouling index, free chlorine, Iron and manganese.

The chief minister directed minister Imtiaz Shaikh to call a joint meeting of power companies, SECM and NESPAK to discuss the urgency of selection of the technology. He emphasised to resolve this matter so that operation of power plants being installed there could be started. Shah said that major achievement has been made by launching 660 MW Thar coal power plants but, he added, we have to expand this generation by installing more plants. He said Thar was the future of Pakistan hence we have to work on it more effectively and efficiently.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/06/20190602483258/>

‘THAR WATER CRISIS CAN BE OVERCOME BY MORE RO PLANTS’

A CORRESPONDENT Published May 31, 2019

MITHI: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) MPA Rana Hamir Singh has said that people of the Thar desert region can be provided drinking water by installing more reverse osmosis (RO) plants.

Addressing a press conference at Thar press club here on Thursday, along with his son and Tharparkar district council deputy chairman Kanwar Karni Singh, he claimed that the Sindh government had done a lot for Tharis and now it was making a plan to provide more facilities in the drought-hit Thar, including installation of more RO plants to cater to the need of drinking water.

The MPA said he had advised the government to provide Tharis with water by setting up more plants, adding that Thar desert had enough water reserves which could be utilised for decades.

He expressed the hope that more and more plants would be installed as per the promises by his party leadership and the functionaries of the Sindh government.

He observed that those who once were ruling the roost in Thar were nowhere to be seen currently after they were inflicted with humiliating defeat during the last general elections by the candidates of the PPP.

Published in Dawn, May 31st, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1485541/thar-water-crisis-can-be-overcome-by-more-ro-plants>

JUDGE WANTS REPLACEMENT OF DAMAGED PIPE FOR SUPPLY OF CANAL WATER TO THAR

A Correspondent May 31, 2019

MITHI: Mushtaq Ahmed Kalwar, district and sessions judge of Tharparkar, who was member of Supreme Court-formed committee to assess and monitor drought impact in Thar, directed the officials concerned to expedite work on damaged pipeline near Kare Tarr village and replace it with a new one so that people could get canal water as soon as possible.

The judge took notice of media reports about unending water crisis in the hilly town and other parts of the region and directed the functionaries of public health department to ensure supply of water to the residents without any favour or discrimination.

He said that people of the desert region should be provided water through tankers and warned of stern action if his directive was not complied with. The pipes burst soon after canal water was pumped into them a few days back.

Published in Dawn, May 31st, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1485538/judge-wants-replacement-of-damaged-pipe-for-supply-of-canal-water-to-thar>

WATER SHORTAGE

By Editorial Published: May 31, 2019

Water shortage in Karachi is a story of scarcity in the midst of plenty. It is a story of insatiable greed, corruption, inefficiency, mismanagement and governmental apathy. The problem has been worsening with the passage of time. In their inaction, the authorities remain constant like the North Star. Every summer the problem is felt acutely because of the ever-growing shortage of water and the increased demand for it. According to UN standards of water consumption,

Karachi, a mega city of around 20 million, needs 11,00 mgd (million gallons daily) water but is supplied only 550mgd. Most of the water supply infrastructure is more than 40 years old and rusting at many places. According to officials of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB), the body responsible for supplying water to the city, the board has no funds to fix the problem. Independent observers, however, are of the view that repairing and replacing the aging infrastructure would be of no avail if corruption, mismanagement and inefficiency are not eliminated. Now many areas are facing a severe shortage of water. Many areas have not been getting water in the tap for years, but the residents do get water bills regularly every month. Residents continue to pay the bills for fear of disconnection. People in several areas have been left with no option but to consume the underground brackish water. There had been much talk about the K-4 water supply scheme meant to enhance supplies to the city but no one knows the present status of the scheme. Or how long will it take for completion? KWSB officials are of the view that even the quantity of water that the city is being supplied at present would be adequate to meet its needs. Out of the 550mgd of water, 235mgd, or 42 per cent, is stolen. This stolen water is sold to those for whom it was meant. Corruption boil and bubble.

Published in The Express Tribune, May 31st, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1983696/6-water-shortage-11/>

UN WORLD WATER DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2019: GLOBAL WATER DEMAND TO CONTINUE INCREASING ABOUT 1 PERCENT PER YEAR UNTIL 2050

ITRAT BASHIR & ZAHID BAIG | MAY 29TH, 2019 | LAHORE

Global water demand is expected to continue increasing at about one percent per year until 2050, accounting for an increase of 20 to 30 percent above the current level of water use and much of it due to increase in demand by the industrial and domestic sectors.

This was expressed in the United Nations World Water Development Report 2019, 'Leaving no one behind'. It further disclosed that agriculture's share of total water use is therefore likely to fall in comparison with other sectors, but it will remain the largest user overall over the coming decades, in terms of both water withdrawal and water consumption.

"Water use has been increasing worldwide by about 1 percent per year since the 1980s and this steady rise has principally been led by surging demand in developing countries and emerging economies (although per capita water use in the majority of these countries remains far below water use in developed countries, they are merely catching up). This growth is driven by a combination of population growth, socio-economic development and evolving consumption patterns. Agriculture (including irrigation, livestock and aquaculture) is by far the largest water consumer, accounting for 69 percent of annual water withdrawals globally. Industry (including power generation) accounts for 19 percent and households for 12 percent," it added.

According to the report, over 2 billion people live in countries experiencing high water stress, though the global average water stress is only 11 percent, 31 countries experience water stress between 25 percent and 70 percent while 22 countries are above 70 percent and are therefore under serious water stress. Growing water stress indicates substantial use of water resources, with greater impacts on resource sustainability, and a rising potential for conflicts among users.

"Levels of physical water stress are likely to increase as populations and their demands for water grow, and the effects of climate change intensify. Estimates suggest that if the degradation of the natural environment and the unsustainable pressures on global water resources continue, 45 percent of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 52 percent of the world's population and 40 percent of global grain production will be at risk by 2050. Poor and marginalized populations will be disproportionately affected, further exacerbating already rising inequalities," the report observed. It makes an interesting, but alarming, observation that about 90 percent of all natural disasters are water-related. Over the period 1995-2015, floods accounted for 43 percent of all documented natural disasters, affecting 2.3 billion people, killing 157,000 more and causing US \$662 billion in damage. In comparison, droughts accounted for 5 percent of natural disasters, affecting 1.1 billion people, killing 22,000 more, and causing US \$100 billion in damage over the same 20-year period. Over the course of one decade, the number of floods rose from an annual average of 127 in 1995 to 171 in 2004. Climate change is expected to increase the frequency and magnitude of extreme weather events.

To improve the water situation, the report suggested the need to improve water resource management, which is particularly critical for areas experiencing chronic or recurring water scarcity (where demand exceeds sustainable supplies, or where supplies are compromised by pollution, land degradation or other phenomena), the need to improve accessibility exists across all types of hydrological regimes, even in places of relative water abundance.

“Barriers to improved accessibility are often social and/or economic in nature. Although both supply and accessibility are critical to ensuring water security for all, water accessibility has historically received less media (and arguably political) attention. Yet, from the perspective of ‘leaving no one behind’ and realizing the human rights to water supply and sanitation, overcoming the challenges of accessibility can be equally (and in many specific cases even more) critical than that of addressing issues of supply and scarcity,” it added.

According to it, from a technical perspective, the potential responses to addressing the lack of drinking water supply services to groups in disadvantaged and marginalized situations can vary significantly from one place to another, depending on local physical conditions and human and institutional capacities, among others.

Indeed, whereas sizeable high-density urban communities provide opportunities for large-scale centralized water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure and facilities through resource-sharing and economies of scale, less costly decentralized supply and sanitation systems have been shown to be successful solutions in smaller urban settlements.

For people in low-density rural areas, where shared facilities can offer a more affordable alternative to household-level services, the objective is to bring these facilities closer to people’s homes, while ensuring and maintaining their safety and affordability.

In terms of selecting the most appropriate WASH technology, the basic principle is therefore not one of ‘best practice’, but rather one of ‘best fit’, based on current and expected future socio-economic circumstances. And, in order to select the ‘best fit’, it is essential to involve the different user groups during the initial decision-making process as well as throughout the implementation and operational phases.

“Addressing the challenges faced by the rural poor, especially in relation to managing water in the context of climate change, will require increased investment in water infrastructure, such as water harvesting or irrigation, improving the advisory services for crop and water management, and planning and implementation of drought preparedness plans. These actions, when coupled with better access to social protection, including social security schemes (pensions and insurance) and more targeted social assistance programmes, will improve the economic and productive capacity of poor smallholder farmers and their families,” it added.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/05/20190529482027/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JUN 3rd TO JUN 9th 2019

SMALL DAMS NEEDED TO MEET BALOCHISTAN’S WATER SHORTAGE: ALVI

APP Updated June 08, 2019

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday said construction of new small dams was significant to meet the water shortage in Balochistan.

The president was talking to reporters outside the residence of Balochistan Assembly Speaker Mir Abdul Quddus Bizenjo in Hub, where he visited to offer condolences on the death of Mr Bizenjo’s father.

President Alvi said the recent rainfall had brought a temporary end to drought in Balochistan, however, the province needed an effective plan to address the challenge of water scarcity.

He also called for formulating a policy for exploration of minerals in the province, which he said would generate employment opportunities for the locals.

The President expressed satisfaction that situation in Balochistan had improved to a great extent.

Earlier, the President offered condolences with the Balochistan Assembly Speaker and prayed for the departed soul.

Published in Dawn, June 8th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1486797/small-dams-needed-to-meet-balochistans-water-shortage-alvi>

WORLD OCEANS DAY

Editorial June 08, 2019

TODAY marks the UN's World Oceans Day 2019. The five great oceans that cover over 70pc of the earth's surface are faced with unprecedented threats in the 21st century. With a rising human population and increasing consumerist demand, these water bodies that are host to the vast majority of the planet's life forms have seen more disturbances in the past few decades than in the centuries before. With climate change and water temperatures rising, entire ecosystems have become imbalanced: coral bleaching and the change in migratory and hatching patterns of fish are just a few of the effects of global warming. Then there is the massive problem created by humankind's addiction to plastic, which causes suffering to other forms of life that are not responsible for this state of affairs. The worldwide production of plastic has increased to nearly 300m tonnes a year. Over 8m of that ends up in the oceans, where it can take anywhere from 100 to 1,000 years to disintegrate. Plastic has been found in marine life in the Mariana Trench — the deepest part of the ocean known to us.

Other forms of pollution include discarded deep-sea fishing nets and hooks that marine life gets entangled or ensnared in. There is also large-scale industrial pollution, while growing tourism industries by the coast and commercial shipping activity leave behind their share of pollution, disturbing the natural habitat of animals and plant life. Oil and gas companies also continue to engage in drilling operations and deep-sea mining under the seabed. Then there is the glaring problem of overfishing, illegal fishing and unethical fishing practices such as the use of dynamite to catch fish, which results in large-scale losses and damage to the environment, with some species of fish nearing extinction just to feed humanity's expanding appetite. The citizens of the world must elect leaders that pledge to make the environment a top priority, and we must hold one another accountable in the safekeeping of our shared planet before it's too late.

Published in Dawn, June 8th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1486830/world-oceans-day>

WATER INFLOW IN MAJOR RIVERS JUMPS TO 288,400 CUSECS

RECORDER REPORT | JUN 5TH, 2019 | ISLAMABAD

Water inflow in all major rivers witnessed sharp increase due to shooting up mercury level and on Tuesday it jumped to 288,400 cusecs against outflow of 249,100 cusecs. According to the data released by the Indus River System Authority (IRSA) water inflow in river Indus at Tarbela was recorded as 110,600 cusecs against outflow of 103,200 cusecs.

Water inflow in the River Jhelum at Mangla was recorded as 56,900 cusecs against outflow of 25,000 cusecs.

Similarly, water inflow in the Kabul River at Nowshera was recorded as 74,400 cusecs at and 19,100 cusecs from the Chenab River at Marala. Water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1409.82 feet, which was 23.82 feet higher than its dead level of 1,386 feet.

The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1153.90 feet, which was 113.90 feet higher than its dead level of 1,040 feet. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 147,400, 86,700 and 25,100 cusecs respectively.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/06/20190605483838/>

CENTRE REFUSES TO FINANCE WATER, UNIVERSITY PROJECTS, TO FOCUS ON OTHER SCHEMES

Khaleeq Kiani Updated June 04, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The centre has decided not to finance water sector projects benefiting one province and new universities from the federal Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) in future and instead to launch about Rs97.5 billion worth of new schemes next year to boost agriculture, fisheries and livestock.

A senior government official told Dawn that most of the new schemes for agriculture, fisheries and livestock have been finalised by a special task force led by PTI leader Jehangir Khan Tarin. These schemes, many of them still unapproved or under process, have been allocated Rs10.453 in PSDP 2019-20.

“Financing of water sector projects benefiting one province will be discouraged from the federal PSDP except financing of small dams in Balochistan”, a senior official explained as key policy takeaways of the recent National Economic Council meeting presided over by the prime minister and represented by provincial leadership.

“As a matter of policy, land and settlement cost shall be borne by the provincial government. To fully benefit from such public investment, the provincial government will ensure development of command area. Kachhi Canal Phase-I project will be completed during next 2-3 years”, official record suggest.

Allocates Rs98bn for agriculture under next year’s PSDP

Nevertheless, as per National Water Policy minimum allocation to water sector should be 10pc of PSDP size.

Therefore, Rs70bn have been allocated for water sector in next year PSDP against its mandated share of Rs67bn. In doing so, large mega dams and drainage projects (both new and ongoing) are being funded while provincial schemes of small dams would be funded in less developed regions to ensure equitable regional development.

The emphasis of public investment in higher education has also been changed to quality instead of quantity. In this regard, the “establishment of new universities is being discouraged”.

Instead focus would continue to be given on improving quality of higher education with access at the district level and establishment of capabilities in emerging and new technologies. Also the investments will be made to train manpower in technologies like artificial intelligence, cyber security, robotics & automation, big data and cloud computing, nanotechnology, biotechnology, man-made materials, GIS and Space sciences and advanced agriculture technologies.

The schemes in the agriculture identified by Tarin are focused on productivity enhancement of major crops through efficient irrigation practices, reduction in cost of production by adopting right combination of use of fertilisers and certified high yield seeds. Also, targeted efforts would be made for enhanced export of agriculture value added projects and reduction in export of raw material, coordinated research and development of command area.

The main thrust is not only ensure food security for growing population but also bring about prosperity in the lives of rural population in general and small farmers in particular.

“Task force on agriculture has identified projects in consultation with provincial governments and private sector for fast track promotion of this sector by enhancing allocation from Rs1bn in 2018-19 to Rs12bn during 2019-20,” according to official record.

About 24 new projects under the National Food Security & Research Division would be launched in 2019-20 with a total allocation of Rs10.45bn and remaining Rs87bn would spill over the next few years as a throw forward. Half of these projects — 12 out of 24 — are yet to be approved by any development forum — the Central Development Working Party (CDWP) or the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (Ecneec).

One of the major projects among them is Rs56bn worth of National Programme for Improvement of Water Resources. The project is still unapproved by any technical forum from economic viability aspect but has been allocated an amount of Rs5.5bn for next year.

Another Rs11bn project — also unapproved yet — is Enhancing Command Area of small and mini dams has also been given an allocation of Rs1.1bn in the first year. Likewise, another major project worth Rs7.1bn — Productivity Enhancement of Wheat — has been allocated Rs650 million next year. Yet another project of Rs4.2 for National Oilseed Enhancement has been earmarked Rs400m for next year.

A Rs1.4bn pilot project for development of shrimps farming will be given an amount of Rs400m next year. An amount of Rs450m has been allocated for Rs4.05bn worth of Rice Productivity enhancement while Rs200m earmarked for Rs1.2bn sugarcane enhancement project.

A sum of Rs50m has been allocated for Backyard Poultry, Rs60m for Cage Fish Culture Cluster Development, Rs400m for conservation and efficient use of water in barani areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Rs100m for Calf Feeder Farming.

Likewise, Rs200m would be spent next year on Rs1.5bn Promotion of Trout Cage Farming in Northern Areas while Rs200m being given to Rs800m worth of Save the Buffalo Calf Project and Rs50m for Better Cotton Initiatives.

Published in Dawn, June 4th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1486424/centre-refuses-to-finance-water-university-projects-to-focus-on-other-schemes>

AUSTRALIA OFFERS SUPPORT FOR WATER CONSERVATION: HC

Australia is willing to provide technical knowledge and support in drought mitigation and water conservation in Pakistan, especially in Balochistan and parts of interior Sindh. This was stated by Australian High Commissioner in Pakistan Margaret Adamson, who called on Chairman NDAM, Lieutenant General Muhammad Afzal in Islamabad on Monday. Ms Adamson visited the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) along with her team and representatives of World Food Programme (WFP).

While welcoming Australian High Commissioner in his office, Chairman NDMA Lieutenant General Muhammad Afzal appreciated Australia's humanitarian efforts in Pakistan. He specially praised the standards of education and research at Australian Universities and noted that Pakistan and Australia could devise a mechanism for research and data sharing in areas of Climate Change, Disaster Management and Risk Mitigation. While emphasizing on the long-term interventions, he said that rather than focusing on short-term relief and rehabilitation efforts, Disaster Management needed sustainable intervention for longer periods of time to build resilience and mitigate the vulnerabilities. He also highlighted that Community involvement was vital for Disaster Management, which could be ensured through strengthening District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs).

The visiting High Commissioner congratulated Chairman NDMA on his new appointment and expressed her desire to exchange knowledge and experiences and expand cooperation between the two countries for the long-term sustainable partnership in the areas of disaster risk mitigation.-PR

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/06/20190604483579/>

BADIN DISTRICT BEING RUINED UNDER A CONSPIRACY, CONFERENCE TOLD

Hanif Samoon June 03, 2019

BADIN: Participants in a conference on water have urged the provincial government to make sure that the irrigation water is supplied to all tail-end farmers in district Badin.

A large number of water experts, environmentalists, farmers and growers' representatives, as well as activists of different political, social and religious parties, from different towns and cities of the district expressed their views at the conference, held at the Badin Press Club on Saturday evening.

The conference was organised by the 'Save Badin Committee' as part of its sustained struggle against what it believes, an artificial water crisis in the district.

They alleged that the district was being destroyed for petty interests and the government had miserably failed to overcome the worsening water crisis. They said that more than one million acres of the fertile land had been turned barren under a conspiracy while as much land in the barrage areas was being supplied ample water stolen from the share of other landowners.

The conference highlighted devastating impact on the agriculture sector and deteriorating economic condition of the local population.

The speakers at the conference included Mir Ghulam Rasool Talpur, Nawaz Shah Bhadai, Khalil Ahmed Bhurgari, Ameer Azad Panhwar, Sayed Khuda Dino Shah, Ghafoor Chandio, Dr Soomar Khoso, Nakash Alwani, Noor Ahmed Talpur, Azizullah Dero, Shah Nawaz Siyal and Zafar Shah.

They urged the government to release the adequate flows in the canal feeding the district.

They deplored that the water crisis in the coastal belt of the district was playing havoc with environment as it had been destroying the district's economy for many years.

They said the committee's struggle had now entered a crucial phase, where it was set to become a movement for a judicious distribution of water, they added.

They said that more than 40 cusecs of water share of district Badin was being stolen, and claimed that the Sindh government, the Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (Sida) and other water bodies were involved in the water theft.

They stressed that it was high time to exert more pressure on the government to devise sustainable policies and plans to resolve water crisis, adding that worsening and severe artificial water shortage and sea intrusion would bring more widespread devastation in the whole region if the remedial measures were not taken timely by the rulers.

They warned that playing with natural flows of water designed by past water experts and engineers when barrage system was being introduced in Sindh, would cause widespread devastation if more than normal rains or flood-like situation emerged in rivers.

They criticised the officials of irrigation and Sida for carrying out faulty designs in the flow of canals just to divert water to land of the influential people.

The blockages, construction of flood canals and theft of water through illegal direct outlets and tampered with modules were the main factors behind the bitter fact that despite much water, the tail-end areas were still without water, they added.

The speakers also slammed the rulers for their alleged callousness towards the historic peaceful struggle launched by farmers of the district.

“It is a matter of serious concern that Badin district is irrigated by the canals from both Sukkur and Kotri barrages, but share of water of the farmers is always stolen by the landlords with the connivance of irrigation officials,” they added.

The speakers addressing the water conference held the officials of both Sida and irrigation department responsible for their plight adding that they demanded the removal of the corrupt officials.

They said that after Eid they would extend the scope of their peaceful protest and would give a lockdown call in the whole district if their demands were not met.

Published in Dawn, June 3rd, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1486129/badin-district-being-ruined-under-a-conspiracy-conference-told>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JUN 10th TO JUN 16th 2019

FARMERS MARCH IN SCORCHING HEAT TO RECORD PROTEST AGAINST WATER CRISIS

A Correspondent Updated June 13, 2019

BADIN: A large number of farmers, traders and villagers staged one-kilometre march on foot from Malkani Sharif town to Khairpur Gumbo in scorching heat to record protest against nagging water crisis in Badin district for the past several months.

After the protesters reached Khairpur Gumbo they also staged a demonstration on Pangrio-Jhuddo road for three hours and listened to speeches by their leaders.

Sindh Abadgar Tanzeem (SAT) leaders Pir Fayaz Hussain Shah Rashidi, Tariq Mehmood Arain, Mohammad Ali Liskani and others lashed out at officials of irrigation department for their callousness towards landowners' plight in irrigation sub-division of Khairpur Gumbo.

They said that growers were in deep crisis because of complete lack of water in their waterways as the water of their share was being stolen by influential landlords in connivance with irrigation department officials in complete disregard of orders of the apex court.

They recalled that Supreme Court had taken notice of acute water shortage in the area in 2013 during their historical protests and issued strict directives to irrigation officials to ensure fair distribution of water in all 17 outlets of the sub-division.

They alleged that despite having ample water in Sukkur Barrage canals irrigation officials were not taking any pity on them and providing them their share of water. The entire fertile region had turned into a wasteland due to nagging water crisis for past several months, forcing hundreds of families to migrate to urban areas after failing to get any respite from the manmade disaster, they said.

They expressed sympathies with leaders of Save Badin Committee and assured them of their complete support in the ongoing peaceful struggle against water shortage mainly caused by erection of blockages in canals.

They warned they would widen their protest if they were not supplied water immediately.

Rs50m project fails to supply canal water to Nagarparkar

MITHI: Over Rs50 million worth project for supply of canal water to Nagarparkar town through pipeline has so far failed to bring the scarce commodity to the drought-stricken hilly town and it remains a distant dream for the area people to get water during extremely hot weather within next few weeks.

The area people told this reporter on Wednesday that the pipes developed leaks near Veera Wah area a few days back, stopping supply of water to a large number of residents.

They said that work on the replacement of rusted pipes was going on at a snail's pace and they had no hope they would be able to get water in coming few weeks though officials had already spent the sanctioned amount of Rs50m.

They said that former MPA from the area Sharjeel Inam Memon had sanctioned the water supply scheme but its cost kept rising every year till it was completed.

They said that Pakistan Peoples Party lawmakers including the area's MPA Qasim Siraj Soomro, MPA Rana Hamir Singh, special assistant to chief minister advocate Veerji Kolhi had promised to supply them water before Eid but it did not happen because of official neglect and massive corruption in the project by the public health engineering department functionaries.

They said that both Mr Soomro and Mr Kolhi were nowhere to be seen to supervise work on the damaged pipeline. Nobody was serious to provide them piped water in severe drought conditions in which all dams and deep wells had dried up, they said.

They demanded that the entire pipeline be replaced with a new one at the earliest so that they could get drinking water for them and their livestock.

The pipeline first burst at Kare Tarr village as the pipes had gathered massive rust because of high levels of salinity in the area. No official concerned or lawmaker was available for comment on use of substandard material in the mega project.

Published in Dawn, June 13th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1487816/farmers-march-in-scorching-heat-to-record-protest-against-water-crisis>

‘WATER LEVEL IN INDUS RISING OWING TO MELTING OF SNOW’

Dawn Report June 12, 2019

SUKKUR: Water level in the Indus at all three barrages — Guddu, Sukkur and Kotri — has been improving steadily due to melting of snow on mountains in the upper areas of the country and it is anticipated that in the coming days canals may be receiving flows sufficient enough to feed even the tail-end areas in the province.

This was stated by Sukkur Barrage control room in-charge Haji Abdul Aziz Soomro at a meeting here on Tuesday. He pointed out that the entire country had remained in the grip of extremely hot weather conditions which caused melting of snow on a big scale and ultimate heavy flows into the Indus.

“A 20 per cent increase in the flows at the three barrages over Indus has been registered over past few weeks as compared to the same period last year,” he noted

Mr Soomro said that the situation would prove a boon for growers of both Sindh and Balochistan as water would be available to them for cultivation of thousands of acres. He said flows were now being ensured into all canals off-taking the barrages.

BADIN: Sindh Minister for Irri-ga-tion Syed Nasir Hussain Shah has directed the officials concerned to ensure a judicious distribution of water among all growers in Badin district.

He was speaking to leaders of the Save Badin Committee (SBC), which has been running a sustained struggle to force the authorities concerned to take measures for overcoming the persisting water crisis in the district, at a meeting in Darbar Hall of the DC office here on Monday.

Minister for Agriculture Ismail Rahu, CM's adviser on water issue Ash--faq Memon, Senator Dr Sikan-dar Mandhro, MPAs Taj Moham-mad Mallah, Mir Allah Bakhsh Talpur and other PPP leaders accompanied Mr Shah. Officials of the Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (Sida) also attended the meeting.

Nasir Shah assured SBC leaders that all genuine issues of growers would be addressed. In this regard, he said, the officials concerned had already been asked to take stern action against those involved in water theft by resorting to various unlawful practices.

He said that Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah would be visiting the tail-end areas of this district within a week or so to assess the situation.

SBC leaders, including Mir Noor Ahmed Talpur, Azizullah Dero and Syed Khuda Dino Shah informed the minister that the entire tail-end area in Badin had been without water or was receiving a scant supply over the last several months.

They said they were also suffering heavy losses due to the loss of season for the cultivation of paddy/rice, which was the chief crop of this region.

They made it clear to the minister that as long as illegally raised blockages along watercourses were there, water could not be supplied to all parts of the district judiciously.

They urged him to order removal of all blockages and a halt to the release of water into flood canals. This should be taken as a test of PPP leadership's sincerity with the farming community of the district and their commitment to resolve such chronic issues, they added.

Local PPP leaders Haji Saeen Bakhsh Jamali, Malik Fazal and others endorsed SBC grievances and recommended appropriate action to the minister. They told Mr Shah that growers of the district had long been holding protests over unavailability of irrigation and drinking water in their respective areas. They noted that one of the major reasons for the persisting crisis was blockages erected at different spots along Phulelli Canal.

The PPP leaders informed the ministers that the lands receiving water through the Alipur regulator were not getting their due share of water.

Mr Shah held out the assurance that the provincial government would take urgent measures to dismantle blockages in the light of the recommendations of the committee concerned.

After the meeting, the irrigation minister told local reporters that grievances of the farming community were being addressed with keen interest. He said the top PPP leadership was very much concerned about the water crisis in this district. He said the government was making all-out efforts to provide maximum possible relief to the crisis-hit population.

The Sindh government had constituted a 19-member technical committee a few months back to look into the causes of the water crisis in Badin district and recommend measures to overcome it. The committee is headed by water expert Idris Rajput.

After undertaking a survey of the district and assessing the situation, Mr Rajput and his team recently advised the SBC to wait till improved flows in canals so that blockages could be detected and other factors identified.

Mr Shah noted that the federal rulers were not releasing Sindh's Rs150 billion share due to which the province was faced with financial crisis.

Agriculture Minister Rahu said that the country was facing worst ever crises due to flawed policies of the PTI [Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf] government. He claimed that unrest prevailed among people of the entire country due to rising inflation and price hike. He said that due to a financial crisis, the Sindh government was unable to complete a number of development schemes in the province.

Regarding water issue, he said the situation was now improving fast due to better flows into Indus.

Published in Dawn, June 12th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1487632/water-level-in-indus-rising-owing-to-melting-of-snow>

PASHTUN BELT OF BALOCHISTAN: SENATE BODY FOR WORK ON FEASIBILITY OF CONSTRUCTION OF DAMS

RECORDER REPORT | JUN 12TH, 2019 | ISLAMABAD

The Senate Standing Committee on Water Resources on Tuesday directed WAPDA and provincial irrigation department to work on feasibility for construction of dams in Pashtun belt of Balochistan to protect the lives and agricultural system of the area. The committee members noted that due to lack of irrigation system and livelihood opportunities, the people of the area are suffering badly.

The meeting was held under the chairmanship of Senator Shamim Afridi here at the Parliament House on Tuesday and was attended among others by Leader of the House Syed Shibli Faraz, Senators Usman Khan Kakar, Syed Sabir Shah, Sana Jamali, Dr Jehanzeb Jamalini, Adviser to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Energy Himayatullah Khan, secretary water resources, chairman IRSA, and officials from the ministry.

It was recommended to initiate work on numerous projects as early as possible and in long-term a master plan should be prepared to address the concerns, as this area is equally a stakeholder of the country's resources as other parts but is being ignored. The committee while discussing the delay in completion of Kachi Kanal and Naulang Dam decided to call chief secretary Balochistan, secretary irrigation Balochistan and secretary Planning Commission in the next meeting for allocation of money for remaining work of Kachi Kanal.

The committee was told by Adviser to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Energy Himayatullah Khan about the delay in payment of royalty on account of electricity generation to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under the AGN Kazi formula. It was told that Article 161(2) of the Constitution asks for net profits earned by the federal government from bulk generation of power and they shall be paid to the province in which the hydro-electric station is and the net hydel profit will be determined by Council of Common Interests (CCI).

The CCI approved the payment formula by a committee under AGN Kazi in 1991 and was endorsed by the Supreme Court as well. The interim arrangement approved in 2016 makes a payment of Rs 20 billion per year while the actual net hydel profit is Rs 120 billion to be paid per year to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Rs 52 billion per year to Punjab. The committee was told that the CCI has taken up the issue again and the committee will be informed about its decision after the meeting of the sub-committee.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/06/20190612485300/>

RS 850.214 BILLION ALLOCATED FOR 107 WATER PROJECTS

MUSHTAQ GHUMMAN | JUN 12TH, 2019 | ISLAMABAD

The government has approved 107 water sector projects/ schemes both on-going and new in Public Sector Development Program 2019-20 at a cost of Rs 850.214 billion for the financial year 2019-20. According to budget documents allocation in rupee terms is Rs 689.773 billion whereas foreign aid component is Rs 160.44 billion. For hydel projects Rs 120.71 billion have been earmarked for ongoing schemes. An amount of Rs 546.8 billion has been earmarked for one of the key projects i.e. Dasu hydropower project stage -1 (2160 MW) and Rs 344.92 billion are meant for Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project (969 MEW) supported by China, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, IDB and OPEC.

Other key projects are budgeted the following funds: (i) Golan Gol Hydropower Project (106 MW) Rs 1.985 billion;(ii) Keyal Khawar hydropower project, Rs 696 million;(iii) Mangla Power Station refurbishment and upgradation of generation units (310 MW) Rs 5.577 billion;(iv) Tarbela fifth extension hydropower project (1410 MW), Rs 3.270 billion;(v) Tarbela fourth extension (1410 MW Swabi) Rs 143.4 billion;(vi) Warsak hydroelectric power station 2nd rehabilitation (242.96 MW) Rs 4.345 billion.

The new schemes budgeted are as follows: (i) Dargai Hydroelectric Power Station rehabilitation and capacity enhancement from 20 to 22 MW, Rs 345 million;(ii) Dudnal Dam Multipurpose project (960 MW) Muzzafarabad (feasibility) Rs 252 million;(iii) Ghazi Bathotha Hydropower Project (feasibility) Rs 40 million;(iv) Lower Pales hydropower project (645 MW) District Kohistan, Rs 40 million;(v) Pattan hydropower project (2400 MW) Kohistan (detailed design) ;(vi) Mohammad Dam(part 1) Rs 15 billion;(vii) Nai Gaj Dam project, Dadu (PSDP) Rs 1.590 billion ;(viii) Naulong storage dam project, Jhal Magsi, Rs 800 million;(ix) Diamer Basha (Dam part) Rs 16 billion;(x) Diamer Basha Dam(land acquisition & resettlement, Chilas, Gilgit-Baltistan) Rs 4 billion;(xi) construction of 100 dams in Balochistan (package-III 20 dams) Rs 1 billion and ;(xii) Garuk storage dam Kharain, Rs 1.345 billion;(xiii) Kachhi canal Rs 6.604 billion. The allocation for most of the new schemes is in millions, a fraction of their cost.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/06/20190612485368/>

WATER WOES HURT AGRICULTURE OUTPUT

Amin Ahmed Updated June 11, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The agriculture sector posted a meagre growth of 0.85 per cent against projected target of 3.8pc for the outgoing fiscal year, the Pakistan Economic Survey 2018-19 released on Monday showed.

The under-performance of agriculture sector hinged upon reduction in the area of cultivation, lower water availability and drop in fertiliser offtake. The crops sector witnessed negative growth of 4.43pc against the target of 3.6pc on the back of decline in growth of important crops by 6.55pc.

Sugarcane production declined by 19.4pc to 67.174 million tonnes; cotton declined by 17.5pc to 9.861m bales; and rice declined by 3.3pc to 7.202m tonnes, while production of maize crop increased by 6.9pc to 6.309m tonnes and production of wheat crop marginally increase by 0.5pc to 25.195m tonnes.

Other crops having share of 11.21pc in agriculture value addition and 2.08pc in GDP showed growth of 1.95pc mainly due to increase in production of pulses and oilseeds. Cotton ginning declined by 12.74pc due to decrease in production of cotton crop.

On the other hand, livestock recorded a growth of 4.0pc against the target of 3.8pc. Fisheries sector having share of 2.10pc in agriculture value addition, grew by 0.79pc, while forestry sector having share of 2.10pc in agriculture grew by 6.47pc due to increase in timber production in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The production of onion and chilies witnessed an increase of 2.0pc to 2,120 tonnes and 0.4pc to 148,700 tonnes, respectively. However, the production of pulse lentil, moong, potato decreased by 5.5pc, 3.45pc and 0.3pc

respectively compared to last year's production. The total availability of water for the Kharif crops 2018 recorded 59.6 million acre feet (MAF) of water, reflecting a shortage of 11.2pc against the average system usage of 67.1 MAF and by 14.9pc as compared to Kharif 2017.

The survey attributed the drop in fertiliser offtake to the high prices of the input despite subsidy from the government during fiscal year 2018-19.

The survey listed ten initiatives of the government under the Prime Minister's Agriculture Emergency Programme and stated that these initiatives would supplement the efforts of the government to improve productivity of major crops.

Published in Dawn, June 11th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1487503/water-woes-hurt-agriculture-output>

SC ASKS PROVINCES TO FURNISH DRAFT LAWS FOR WATER CONSERVATION

Nasir Iqbal Updated June 11, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has once again asked provincial governments to come up with draft laws aimed at conservation of precious water resources through uniform policies.

"We are giving final notice to all the governments to furnish draft laws for conservation of water resources and we expect positive steps from them since it is not a matter of Karachi or Quetta but the entire country," observed Justice Umar Ata Bandial while heading a three-judge bench which heard a suo motu case relating to conservation of precious water resources on Monday.

The judge cautioned that the court would, otherwise, take strict action against the provincial governments.

"We learnt about the importance of conservation of precious resources when the captain of a cricket team was fined heavily for washing his car," Justice Ijaz-ul-Ahsan observed.

Failure will prompt strict action, judge observes in suo motu case relating to conservation of water resources

At the last hearing on April 30, Attorney General Anwar Mansoor had assured the court that he would ensure devising a uniform law to be implemented in the whole country by involving the provinces as well as the secretaries and other stakeholders concerned.

The apex court took up the suo motu case regarding the sale of bottled water by companies after extracting water from underground resources without paying any charge and checking the quality of water for human consumption as well as a number of review petitions against the order of imposing water cess.

Law officers representing the provinces, however, told the apex court that some draft laws had been prepared, but they were still at the stage of being vetted.

The court asked the provinces to furnish the draft laws before the apex court by Friday when the case would be taken up again.

On Monday, the federal government furnished a report before the court to inform it about nominating different individuals as members of the committee to monitor and rationalise the usage of precious underground water.

In this regard, the Sindh government has nominated Additional Advocate General Mohammad Rafiq Rajourvi as its representative in the committee. Secretary of Excise and Taxation Syed Zafar Ali and Additional Advocate General Zahid Yousaf will represent Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Assistant Advocates General Balochistan Mohammad Farid Dogar and Mohammad Ayaz Khan Swati will represent their province. Punjab will be represented by its Advocate General Barrister Qasim Ali Chowhan while Prosecutor Saeed Ahmed Waseer will represent Islamabad Capital Territory.

Justice Bandial urged all the parties to come up with proposals suggesting a way forward because they all have agreed that water is a valuable resource which must be conserved. He said charging Rs1 cess per litre was perfectly in order, highlighting that some companies had complained that their businesses were being jeopardised due to the scale of the charge.

He said the purpose of the current proceedings was not to close down any industry, but to develop measures discouraging wastage of water.

The court asked Prof Dr Mohammad Ahsan Siddiqui, an environmental scientist who has been appointed head of a special committee on water, to summon a meeting of the committee after nomination of the provinces' representatives. He has been asked to develop strategies to improve the industry.

Dr Siddiqui has been tasked to propose what should be the correct basis of charge on the extraction of water, especially in view of the complaints raised by some companies.

The special committee will also inform the court who is dragging its feet in the process.

Justice Bandial regretted that the Punjab government was not acting responsibly; highlighting that it was sending bills to industrial units on capacity basis rather than utilisation basis.

A representative for Wasa (Water and Sanitation Agency, Lahore), however, informed the court that the Punjab government was not releasing required funds in this regard.

The court urged beverage companies to pay at least 20 per cent of the bills they have received for utilising water resources.

Meanwhile, senior counsel Barrister Syed Ali Zafar on behalf of Haidri Beverages (Pvt) Ltd submitted a set of recommendations for new industrial practices to save water resources. The recommendations have highlighted efficient measurements by identifying water saving opportunities and subsequent action planning, harnessing water saving and recycling opportunities and creating organisational culture that promotes such practices.

Published in Dawn, June 11th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1487425/sc-asks-provinces-to-furnish-draft-laws-for-water-conservation>

AGP BACKS CURRENT WATER APPORTIONMENT FORMULA OF IRSA

MUSHTAQ GHUMMAN JUN 14TH, 2019 ISLAMABAD

The Attorney General for Pakistan has supported the current water apportionment formula adopted by Indus Water River System Authority (Irsa) keeping in view available water. These recommendations were prepared by the Attorney General, after due consultation with the provinces, Irsa and going through available official record. The report will be discussed by the Council of Common Interests (CCI) which is scheduled to meet on June 17, 2019 with Prime Minister Imran Khan in the chair.

On May 27, 2018, the Council of Common Interests (CCI) had constituted a committee headed by the Attorney General for Pakistan and comprising one representative from each province. The committee was mandated to look into the current issue of availability of water and its distribution in the country and present its recommendations for consideration of the CCI. The committee was authorised to also consult the record of proceedings that resulted in approving the Water Accord 1991.

The committee convened two meetings i.e. on November 15, 2018 and December 4, 2018 and consulted all the stakeholders besides going through the available record.

According to the analysis and recommendations of Attorney General for Pakistan, the Water Accord was a historic achievement, after several decades of failed attempt at developing a formula for distribution that was acceptable to all federating units. But the Water Accord also contains within its provisions problems that can frustrate it.

The total surface water available in the country in 1991 that could be distributed was over 102 MAF but the Water Accord apportioned water on the presumed capacity of over 114 MAF, thereby setting a conscious target for the federation to enhance storage capacity. Unfortunately, no real effort was made to enhance storage capacity and new large storage facilities or reservoirs have been made since 1991. In fact, overall distributable volume of water has gone below 102 MAF owing to silting of major water reservoirs. The key problem is that the Water Accord grants volumes of water to provinces that is not even available in the system.

Accordingly, Sindh's claim that water apportioned according to para of the Water and Accord (which distributes water on the presumption of 114 MAF read with para (a) & (b) and the CCI's decision of September 16, 2019 is correct in law. Punjab's contention, on the other hand, is based on a correct assessment of the factual position, but it ignores specific provisions of the Water Accord. Accordingly, it is this very clash of law and logic that has led to creation of this committee.

According to the recommendations, the committee headed by Attorney General bears a heavy burden, for if this issue is not resolved it has the potential of becoming a serious issue in the continued functioning of the federation. The rapidly increasing population is placing an extraordinary burden on all resources, but none more so than water. Unless handled prudently, the water issue can lead to political discord and ecological degradation.

All provinces agree that the sanctity of the Water Accord, arrived at through consensus after long tedious negotiations, be maintained and that no formula outside the parameters laid down in the Water Accord (which includes the decision of September 16, 1991) should be adopted. However, controversy persists between Punjab and Sindh upon the issue of sharing of water during shortages with little flexibility displayed by both provinces.

The analysis and recommendations of Attorney General suggest that the principle of law is that a document has to be read as a whole and that if any provision relates to, or is qualified by any other provision of the same document then the said qualification has to be given a meaning.

It is evident that the real problem impeding the implementation of the 1991 Accord lies on the reading of para 2 and para 14 (a) & (b). Para 2 in fact in the presumption that the available water in the Accord is 114.35 MAF and calculation in Para 2 is made on the assumption. It may, however, be stated that the said assumption in Para 2 has never been achieved so far. Consequently, Punjab maintains that till the availability of 114.25 MAF, the available water should be apportioned among provinces on the basis of 1977-82 'historic uses' (102.72 MAF) as per Para (14(b) of the Accord. On the other hand, Sindh firmly sticks to its view that the apportionment of water among provinces, under all circumstances, must take place as per Para 2 read with Para 14(a) & (b) of the Accord and further read with the CCI decision contained in the minutes of September 16, 1991 where the 10 day average system wise allocation was determined, which has since become a part of the Accord. Sindh further disputes that there is shortage of water and maintains that downstream low availability of water is mainly due to water losses and theft upstream. As to KPK and Balochistan, Punjab maintains that those provinces should be exempted from any reduction in their share of water. Meanwhile, water is apportioned as per the three tier formula adopted by Irsa. This formula conforms to Punjab's interpretation of the Water Accord but is opposed by Sindh thus as a biased decision.

It is therefore important to analyse the Water Accord and to interpret it so as to come to an equitable formula, remaining within the Accord and to read as it is, rather than importing anything from beyond the Accord.

Para 2 of the Water Accord states, that all the parties have accepted the 'distributional principles'. This principle is given in the Accord that there would be an assumed flow of 114.35 MAF and that it was on the basis, that the requirement and distribution was given to each province for the Kharif and Rabi periods. The important thing that needs to be seen is that Para 2 only gives a principle as mentioned in the said clause. The figures cannot be exact, but by giving the figures, with the assumed flow of 114.35 MAF, a ratio of what has to be distributed can be worked out from the actual flow during that period. The parties to the Accord did realize this, as such clause 14 was introduced in the Accord. It is in Para 14(a) of the Accord that ten daily basis would be separately worked out and consequently 14(b) says that the "average system uses for the period 1977-82 would form the guidelines for future regulation pattern," and further states "these ten daily uses would be adjusted pro-rata to correspond to the indicated seasonal allocations..... The question is, what do the words "adjusted pro-rata" read with the words "ten daily uses" mean this will be analysed hereafter.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/06/20190614486175/>

KARACHI WATER CRISIS TO WORSEN OVER COMING DAYS

By Naeem Khanzada Published: June 16, 2019

KARACHI: Water crisis in Karachi worsened as water supply from Dhabeji pumping station, the only source of water to the metropolis, was disrupted due to prolonged electricity suspension on Friday evening at 7:25pm. The entire city has been deprived of water since then.

As a result of the power breakdown at Dhabeji pumping station, a 72-inch-diameter pipeline burst because of the pressure created due to the reverse flow of water. Reportedly, the grid station at Dhabeji pumping had also caught fire and once the fire was doused, it took about 13 hours to repair the grid station.

In this duration, the city remained deprived of 340 million gallons of water, as water supply to the city from six hydrants remained suspended. Otherwise, Karachi receives 480 million gallons of water from Dhabeji pumping station daily.

According to Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) Managing Director Asadullah Khan, fire at the grid station broke out on Friday evening and as a result, 340 million gallons of water couldn't be supplied to the city because the pumping station remained non-functional for 13 hours. He said that power suspension and fire at grid station had disrupted 56% of the water supply, which in turn affected the entire city.

However, K-Electric (KE) representatives claimed that their team had reached Dhabeji pumping station immediately, following the news of the fire, and quickly repaired the faults, ensuring that the electricity supply to the pumping station is restored.

Asadullah Khan informed that K-Electric has restored power supply to Dhabeji and water supply from the pumping station has also been restored. If the interrupted electricity supply to the pumping station is continued, the water

supply could be restored to normal within 72 to 90 hours, he added. He said that the burst pipeline has been repaired and appealed to the citizens to use water carefully as city faces a huge water shortfall.

Sources at KWSB, however, claimed that the water crisis in the city has worsened and the water supply to Karachi will remain suspended for next two to three days.

Water supply through water tankers in the city has also been affected severely.

Areas most affected by the suspended water supply include Korangi, Landhi, Malir, Shah Faisal Colony, Gulistan-e-Johar, New Karachi and North Karachi.

Karachi's overall demand of water is 1.2 billion gallons but it is being supplied with only 580 million gallons of water. Published in The Express Tribune, June 16th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1993484/1-water-crisis-worsens/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JUN 17th TO JUN 23th 2019

DAM FUND RETURNS

Editorial June 17, 2019

DROP by drop, some semblance of sense is beginning to find its way to the whole 'dam fund' conversation. When the Supreme Court looked at the Rs10.6bn that have been deposited in the fund thus far and learned that the entire amount seems to be sitting in current accounts that yield no return, and that, with the rise of inflation, are losing close to Rs10m per day, it was right to be alarmed. Fact is, this is one of those things that is always taken into account whenever large quantities of money are being handled by any institution or entity. In most cases, however, where even a bit of competence is available, such things are thought of and sorted out before, not after, the large quantity of money materialises. Idle money evaporates. This is common knowledge, and the fact that these donations were allowed to sit in unproductive accounts for such a long period of time means that the trust of the donors that their money would be properly utilised had been dealt a blow at the very outset of the whole affair.

Now that the court has decided to place the funds in 10-year paper — from the sounds of it since the National Bank of Pakistan is offering a return of 12.6pc on them — further questions of an equally critical nature arise. What tenor is the return for? Meaning, for what time period will the funds be put away to ensure this annual rate of return? Second, what happens to the interest earned, considering the amount could be larger than Rs1bn a year? Does it get compounded or will it be drawn and used elsewhere? If it is compounded, that means the funds are locked away for an extended period of time, and somebody might want to inform Wapda of this because some of its people have come on the airwaves announcing that they have plans for utilising these funds. If the interest is to be withdrawn, where will it be used?

Instead of venturing further down this road, and taking on the task of fund managers, the Supreme Court would be well advised to find an alternate use for the money — one that adheres to the spirit in which it has been donated.

When the former chief justice launched the whole enterprise, he clearly did not know what he was doing. Everything about the fund was made up along the way, with no foresight about how the money would be placed, how the amount would be utilised — or whether or not it is the job of the court to be running such an effort in the first place. Now that this unfinished business has been left for posterity to tackle, the best thing would be to use the funds to finance small dam construction in Balochistan and call it a day.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1488658>

BADIN LAWYERS BACK GROWERS IN STRUGGLE FOR END TO WATER CRISIS

A Correspondent June 18, 2019

BADIN: The legal fraternity of Badin on Monday threw its weight behind the Save Badin Committee in its sustained struggle for a regular supply of adequate irrigation and drinking water to all parts of the district.

After hearing the committee leaders' grievance in detail at a conference organised by the Badin District Bar Association, the lawyers including Fayyaz Hussain Abro (bar president), Mohammad Essa Mallah, Kamran Lakho, Mr Chetan and others assured growers of Badin of their full support in their struggle.

They also condemned the "step-motherly" treatment being meted out to the farming community in most parts of the district.

The lawyers who spoke at the conference alleged that officials of both the irrigation department and Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (Sida) were doing injustice to small landowners and farmers by depriving them of their due share in water even at a time when sufficient water was available in the system.

The lawyers also pledged their participation in SBC's ongoing protest campaign against the "artificial" water crisis in the district.

Water expert Mir Ghulam Rasool Talpur told the conference that it was quite clear that tail-end areas could never get sufficient water until and unless all blockages raised along Phuleli Canal were removed.

Mr Talpur revealed that an amount of Rs6 billion was spent to construct these blockages with the aim of irrigating over one million acres of land within the command area of Sukkur Barrage.

This, he added, ultimately turned most parts of Badin district barren.

He said persistent water crisis in the district had caused widespread destruction of fertile agricultural lands and was forcing hundreds of peasant families to migrate to urban areas amid starvation-like conditions and no signs of a respite.

He told the conference participants that the blockages, illegal waterways and release of water into flood canals all were flagrant violations of the fundamental rights of those living in the tail-end areas. He apprehended that the situation might aggravate further in the coming months when the farmers need ample water for the cultivation of rice, the chief crop of this region.

Earlier, Khalil Ahmed Bhurgari, Mir Noor Ahmed Talpur, Azizullah Dero, Ameer Azad Panhwar, Khuda Dino Shah and other SBC leaders, speaking at the conference, held the Sindh government of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) responsible for the situation, claiming that irrigation and Sida officials were not ready to remove the blockages in order to help influential figures of the area, mostly belonging to the PPP, comfortably irrigate their lands.

They criticised Sindh Irrigation Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah for his "hollow" promises during their recent meeting here in the presence of several lawmakers from the same district.

One of the SBC leaders said: "Nasir Shah should encamp himself in this district to see the situation in the tail-end areas, instead of relying on the false and fabricated reports sent to him by the [irrigation and Sida] officials. Actually, the same officials are directly responsible for the miseries of growers and farmers".

The SBC leaders informed the legal fraternity that the district administration, instead of ensuring a judicious distribution of water, was victimising farmers by implicating them in false cases of water theft.

They vowed to continue their sustained campaign for an end to the artificial water crisis in the district.

They noted that even now when the Indus was getting ample water upstream Kotri, adequate release downstream the barrage was not being done to ensure provision of the due share of the tail-end areas.

They said the delay in this regard was bound to cause huge monetary losses to more than 1.2 million growers, farmers and tillers of Badin district and destroy their fertile lands.

They said the landowners and farming community would not be able to repay their loans if the situation persisted.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1488755>

WAIT-AND-SEE!

BR Research June 18, 2019

If yesterday's press conference of SBP governor Dr Reza Baqir is any indication, all eyes are on controlling inflation through monetary policy. But some eyes perhaps need to be lent to investment growth as well. Surely, if Pakistan is heading in the direction that the Governor terms "prosperous", it should follow that we would see steady and robust inflow of investments in different productive sectors of the economy. But monetary policy tightening and rising trend of interest rates tends to hamper investment which in turn limits capital formation, business activity, expansion and growth.

Dr Baqir believes that market sentiments may be even more important than the cost of borrowing for investors and the broader economic reforms that this government is working on is already building international confidence in the economy. Let's take his word for it. The question is: will Pakistani businesses invest in expansions and technological advancement when they are grappling with their more current concerns of keeping themselves afloat?

The private sector credit statistics are showing significant cracks. While overall borrowing of the private sector from banks has gone up, the share has shifted to working capital and trade financing needs. With the depreciating rupee and mounting fuel costs, the resultant cost of inputs for manufacturers has spiked. Liquidity has come under pressure causing the private sector to increase their borrowing from financial institutions.

According to the Economy Survey, in the July-Mar 2019 period, the lending for the purpose of working capital is nearly 70 percent of all private sector loans (2018: 53%), 18 percent of it is in trade financing (2018: 8%), leaving merely 15 percent for fixed investment credit. This used to be a solid 37 percent in Jul-Mar 2018. The decline in fixed investment credit in total is significant as the measure indicates growth in future production (Read "[No credit to credit expansion](#)", June 11, 2019).

The former SBP governor Tariq Bajwa had informed earlier that despite monetary policy tightening, the mark-up rates on export finance facility (EFF) and long term financing facility (LTFF) are at their 10-year lows thereby incentivizing export oriented sectors. Loans under these facilities have grown, though very slowly while exports growth can be seen marginally in volumes, if not value. However, the slowdown is evident in financing to SMEs—since Dec-18, loans to SMEs have dropped 7 percent. It also does not seem that new borrowers are being added to the total SME portfolio. It is also clear that businesses are not spending on BMRs or planning new expansions at this moment, save for those that are already underway (such as cement, steel etc.) and who now have to pay a much heftier cost of financing, one they did not bargain for.

The new governor wants to address uncertainty in the market and has expressed that to be a major goal. What remains to be seen then is how businesses would react once this elusive certainty is achieved, high costs of doing business and borrowing notwithstanding.

<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/06/18/503595/wait-and-see/>

KADHAN TOWN SHUT OVER WATER CRISIS IN BADIN

A Correspondent June 21, 2019

BADIN: A complete shutdown was observed in Kadhan town on Thursday on a call given by Save Badin Committee to protest against nagging water crisis in most parts of the district.

The town's traders kept their shops shuttered for over six hours and joined a rally taken out later in the day by farmers which culminated in a demonstration outside local press club.

Abdul Ghafoor Chandio, Mir Aziz Talpur, Abdul Qayyum and other leaders of the committee, who led the protest, held officials of the Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority and irrigation department responsible for the worst water crisis in tail-end areas, particularly in coastal belt of the district.

They said that the water share of the district was being diverted to lands of influential persons in other districts and asked Sindh Minister for Irrigation Syed Nasir Hussain Shah to visit the affected areas to see with his own eyes the widespread devastation caused by the water scarcity.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1489383/kadhan-town-shut-over-water-crisis-in-badin>

PPP PROPOSES GOVERNMENT TO ALLOCATE 15 PERCENT PSDP FUNDS TO BUILD DAMS

NAVEED BUTT & ZULFIQAR AHMAD JUN 22ND, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Khursheed Shah on Friday proposed the government to allocate 15 percent funds of Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) to build dams. Taking part in budget debate in the National Assembly, he said: "I told the then chief justice [Saqib Nisar] if you are sincere about building dams, tell the government to call a mini-budget session and allocate 15 percent of PSDP to construct dams. I also told him that you have collected Rs 10 billion through donations and spent Rs 11 billion on advertisements."

"This was a cheap publicity stunt," Shah said, adding, "There is a need to take concrete measures if we are serious about dam construction." He said that his party is even ready to vote in favour of the budget if the government allocates 15pc of the PSDP to build dams. At the same time, he admitted that he had not discussed this option with his party leadership.

"This will not be Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's decision, this will be the decision of the masses, of this parliament, and we (opposition) will appreciate you," he added.

Shah declared that it would take decade to build dam even if the government allocates funds for building dams in the budget. He also called for an increase in the money allocated for education. "It was due to the lack of education that people in Pakistan could not take care of their health," he added.

"You are reducing the amount allocated to education in this budget from Rs 97 billion to Rs 77 billion. The allocation for health was Rs 98 billion last year, this year it is around Rs60 billion...decrease [the money allocated to] health but increase [funds for] education," he said.

He said that he had welcomed the government's announcement that it would build 50 million houses for the poor as previous budgets did not have any funds allocated to housing.

"You want to give loans [for housing] to 300,000 poor people. Poor people are those who are included in BISP (Benazir Income Support Programme), who earn Rs 5,000 or less. How will a person [with this income] return the loans? We thought that the people listed in BISP will be the ones who would be given houses but we did not see anything like that."

He said that the prices of gas, electricity and medicines have gone skyrocketing, which has further increased the inflation, making it difficult for the poor to make the both ends meet as it has reached from 3.7 percent to 9 percent. Shah wrapped up his speech by advising politicians "not to rely on falsehood to earn votes."

"I did not tell lies. I said falsehood," he clarified. He then listed claims made by the current government during the election campaign that it had gone back on; "[Prime minister] said he will not approach the IMF [International Monetary Fund], he will not depreciate the currency, will not increase prices of petrol and electricity, will not extend the hand of friendship to India and will not announce a tax amnesty scheme."

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Khawaja Asif said that the incarcerated party supremo, Nawaz Sharif, was not interested in becoming the prime minister again for the fourth time.

Taking part in budget debate in the National Assembly, he said that Asif criticised the government and said, "Nawaz Sharif's narrative is being popular with the passage of time. His slogan is to give respect to vote and that the Constitution is supreme."

"Let the people of Pakistan decide whether the PML-N should be in power or not," he said.

Asif said the people who changed their loyalties are to be blamed for the tussle between the government and opposition.

"There are some people who are getting spoiled after changing their political parties. They have a hand in the current political unrest in the country."

"All the people who are sitting in the first row of the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government are passengers. The 10-year investigation commission should deal with them," said the PML-N leader.

Asif continued that none of the previous governments in Pakistan lost their credibility at the early stage of their regime as the PTI-led government did.

"The PTI government must be given more time so that they cannot complain they were not given enough time to prove themselves. Let them reveal themselves completely so that they do not jump on the containers again."

The former foreign minister said: "If someone goes abroad for medical treatment, the government condemns him/her. But to fix the economy of the country, they have brought a doctor from abroad. Someone must ask the finance minister where he spent his time after getting free from power."

"Rented people cannot complete Imran Khan's agenda. He must bring workers in the front," stressed Asif.

Khawaja Asif said the withdrawal of zero rated facility for export-oriented industry will not only cut job opportunities but also further decline Pakistani exports. He said the government should review this decision.

Another PML-N leader and former defence minister Khurram Dastagir Khan criticised the government's economic policies saying these have resulted in price hike and unemployment.

He said that the exports have decreased \$63 million during July to May of this current fiscal year as compared to the previous year, adding due to rupee depreciation, the defence budget has come down to \$9 billion to \$7 billion, which is not good as security should be top priority.

"The foreign direct investment has decreased by 52 pc - \$2.8bn to \$1.37bn. The prices of fertilizer and pesticides have been increased, while prices of medicines have been increased by 400 percent," he regretted.

Continuing discussion on the budget, Sahibzada Sibghatullah described the budget as investment friendly. He said the country has been put on the right track and it will move forward on the path of progress and development.

Fakhar Imam of PTI said the agriculture sector should be uplifted to meet the current economic challenges faced by the country. Muhammad Yousuf Talpur of PPP called for fair distribution of resources for development of all areas.

Munir Khan Orakzai said the tribal districts should be given their share in China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Junaid Akbar said it is for the first time that focus is being given to documentation of economy and duties on raw material have been reduced in order to revive industries and enhance exports.

Usama Qadri appreciated Prime Minister Imran Khan's firm stance against corruption. He said those who committed economic terrorism must be taken to task and held accountable. He called for establishment of a complete Islamic banking system in the country.

Muhammad Barjees Tahir said this budget has not been prepared by the government but by the IMF. He said the government has failed to achieve the revenue target for the current fiscal year.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/06/20190622489357/>

KW&SB LOSING 174 MILLION GALLONS OF WATER PER DAY

MUHAMMAD SHAFI JUN 22ND, 2019 KARACHI

Karachi Water & Sewerage Board's (KW&SB) water supply losses have gone up to 30 percent, or 174 million gallons per day (MGD) resulting in severe water crises in the mega city of the country. As per official documents, the city was facing a water shortfall of 56 percent or around 512 MGD as against the total demand of 918 MGD. The present net

water supply availability stands at 406 MGD, which constitutes some 44 percent of the total demand of 17 million consumers of the metropolis.

Dhabeji is the main source of water supply to the KW&SB network with 450 MGD, followed by Hub with 100 MGD, and Gharo 30 MGD. The total water supply from these three water sources stands at 580 million gallon per day. However, around 30 percent or 174 MGD of the total can't reach to the end consumers due to line leakages, theft etc. The total water supply from six legal hydrants is 18 MGD that is 3.1 percent against total water supply to Karachi. KW&SB is managing intermittent water supply through rationing system which is the major cause of less availability of water to many consumers. The average area wise water supply duration to residential areas is 4 to 5 hours in a day which is not sufficient to cater the demand of the thickly populated city. Due to the supply demand gap, even if the quantity (18 MGD) which is being drawn at hydrants is released in the system it cannot reach the tale end areas; hence the only means to supply water is through tankers. Basically, these tankers are being used as surface transmission mains for the tale end areas.

The water utility said its first priority is ensure water available in the residential areas, due to which the industrial areas face water shortages, however the tanker service has been introduced to mitigate the water shortage in the industrial zones.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/06/20190622489291/>

SURVEY ORDERED TO START WORK ON DADUCHA DAM

THE NEWSPAPER'S STAFF REPORTER Published Jun 23, 2019 06:59am

RAWALPINDI: The Punjab government has asked the divisional administration to take necessary steps so the construction of Daducha Dam could be started in the upcoming fiscal year to end water shortage in Rawalpindi. Divisional Commissioner retired Capt Saqib Zafar on Saturday visited the site where he was briefed by land revenue department officials about the area and main features of the dam. The commissioner asked the officials to carry out a new survey to ascertain numbers of people expected to be affected by the project.

According to sources, total cost of the project is Rs6.127 billion. The provincial government has allocated Rs3 billion for the construction of the dam and Rs3 billion for land acquisition. In 2018-19, the government had released Rs1.7 million to the irrigation department for the initial cost of the project. However, Rs2.5 billion were allocated for the project in the 2019-20 budget.

The dam will be built on upstream of Soan River. Rainwater from Murree and Kahuta hills will be stored in a lake at Daducha village near Sihala on Kahuta Road.

Three villages – Bhun, Launa and Bhaoni – will come under the dam. As many as 218 houses, seven industrial and commercial units and other areas will also be affected.

The commissioner said the government wanted to start the project as per directives of the Supreme Court at its original site to bring 25 million gallons daily (MGD) water to the city areas.

He asked the land revenue department to complete the survey of the area as soon as possible, adding that the government wanted to end water shortage in Rawalpindi.

The commissioner was informed that the district administration had imposed Section 4 of Land Acquisition Act 1894. More than 18,000 kanals will be acquired.

Officials of the district administration said assistant commissioners visited the site and stopped any new construction there.

The commissioner said though construction work would be initiated by the irrigation department, the district administration would acquire the land.

He said there were three main projects for Rawalpindi in the coming fiscal budget – Daducha Dam, Ring Road and Leh Nullah Expressway. Meanwhile, Water and Sanitation Agency (Wasa) officials told Dawn that the civic agency was working on a plan to bring water from Daducha Dam as per the instruction of the Punjab government.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/amp/1489845>

BUZDAR ORDERS CRACKDOWN AGAINST THEFT OF CANAL WATER

News Desk Jun 23, 2019

By Our Staff ReporterLAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar has directed an indiscriminate crackdown against the theft of canal water. He issued necessary instructions to the Irrigation Department in this regard on Saturday....

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JUN 24th TO JUN 30th 2019

GOVT CONCERNED OVER SLOW PACE OF WORK ON GOMAL ZAM DAM IRRIGATION SYSTEM

Manzoor Ali Updated June 24, 2019

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has voiced its concern over slow progress on Gomal Zam Dam irrigation system for development of vast area in Dera Ismail Khan and Tank districts.

The USAID-funded multibillion rupee project plans to develop command area of 191,000 acres in the two districts. Documents available with Dawn show that recently provincial chief secretary expressed his annoyance over slow pace of work on the project.

“Things are not moving as planned,” the chief secretary wrote, directing the officials to convene a meeting of project steering committee, which he would also attend. The meeting is scheduled for Monday (today).

The documents note that the pace of work on the project was quite slow owing to law and order situation in the area and non-hiring of project implementation unit and project management unit teams on which USAID had also shown its apprehensions.

It stated that in October 2017, those recruitments were finalised, however, the earlier appointed project director was terminated for technical reasons and the post charge was handed over to a senior officer of on farm water management department. It said that full financial powers were also assigned to the project director GZD with the approval of smooth execution of project activities.

It said that keeping in view the apprehension of the USAID and in the light of the Pakistan Engineering Council’s advice, management recently again changed the project head and appointed senior agriculture engineer of agriculture department as project head of Gomal Zam Dam-Command Area Development Project (GZD-CADP).

The official has long been associated with the project. However, he has been assigned additional charge of the post to move forward the working plan of the approved project and his appointment case on regular basis is being taken by provincial steering committee, headed by the additional chief secretary of planning and development department for his approval.

The document noted that the revision of PC-1 and extension of the stipulated time of project up to June 2022, planned to cater to activities lagging behind its timelines, as well additional scope of the project was being added due to construction of Warren Canal.

“The tacit approval of the extension of the project period up to June 2022 has already been accorded by USAID, of which formal approval is awaited,” it said.

The document said that the GZD-CADP was initiated back in 2014-15 and primarily it had three main components including construction of dam, canal irrigation system and command area of 191,000 acres of land.

The first component was the mandate of Wapda, which was executed through Frontier Works Organisation (FWO) while canal irrigation system was partially completed by FWO, leaving the construction of Warren Canal portion of the system.

Engineering chakbandis of the so far completed irrigation system has been handed over to irrigation and agriculture department for working out their revenue and command area development through respective department.

The command area development itself has four components including construction/alignment of initially planned 393 watercourses along with precision land levelling, 393 water reservoirs connected to high efficiency irrigation system, enhancing crops productivity, horticulture and livestock and value added agriculture and marketing of products.

The documents said that since the farmers had to pay two per cent share of the project, the government agreed to pay it in shape of interest-free loan.

It said that the law and order situation in the areas that resulted into casualties changed the pace of work to sluggish, however, despite volatile security situation, the project executed work on 189 watercourses of 245 outlets.

However, a source told Dawn that since the start, the project did not have a dedicated head and even now an official was given additional charge for such an important scheme, which had the potential to change the life of thousands of people in the region.

Agriculture Secretary Israr Khan told Dawn that it was a normal meeting to discuss project strategy and had nothing extraordinary about it. Regarding delay in completion of the project, he said that the scheme was launched late beyond the schedule at the start.

Regarding the project director, he said that a senior engineer, who had good knowledge and experience of the project, was chosen as per the requirements of the Pakistan Engineering Council.

‘7,000 CUSEC OF KOTRI BARRAGE WATER BEING STOLEN DAILY’

A Correspondent June 24, 2019

BADIN: Speakers at a conference on water held here on Sunday said that water of Kotri barrage canals was being diverted to the command area of Sukkur barrage in violation of all relevant rules and regulations and fundamental human rights.

Water expert Mir Ghulam Rasool Talpur said at the moot organised by the Save Badin Action Committee that more than 7000 cusecs a day was being stolen between Sukkur and Kotri barrages to irrigate over 700,000 acres of land in Sukkur barrage command area.

He urged growers, particularly in tail-end areas of Badin, Thatta and Sujawal districts, to wage a joint struggle to save Kotri barrage, which was being rendered useless for lower Sindh farmers under a conspiracy.

He said that it was height of cruelty that tail-end farmers were being deprived of water even when there was ample water available in the river.

If corrective measures were not taken in time over 1.5 million farmers in the three districts would not get water even for rice cultivation this year, he said.

Mir Noor Ahmed Talpur, Azizullah Dero, Khuda Dino Shah and others lashed out at Sindh government for depriving them of their due share in water despite having a continuous and peaceful struggle for past five months and assurances by Sindh minister for irrigation and others.

They alleged that water of their share was being stolen openly and diverted to the lands of influential persons, many of whom were parliamentarians.

They termed fraud the 19-member technical committee formed by Sindh government with water expert Idris Rajput as head and called it a ploy to buy time after the farmers threatened to besiege the chief minister house.

Town shut on farmer's call

A complete shutdown strike was observed in Malkani Sharif town on Sunday on a call given by farmers to protest against nagging water crisis in the area for past many years.

The town's traders closed their shops and joined the protest by farmers who held a demonstration on Pangrio- Jhudo road.

The protesters' leaders demanded high-ups of federal government, judiciary and other functionaries concerned come to their rescue and save them from complete ruin.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1490001/7000-cusec-of-kotri-barrage-water-being-stolen-daily>

PROTEST AGAINST DIGGING OF ILLEGAL WATERCOURSE

A Correspondent June 25, 2019

SUKKUR: Residents belonging to the Khoso community took out a rally and held a sit-in outside the press club in Jacobabad on Monday in protest against taking supply of irrigation water through an "illegal" watercourse from their land by a Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) member of provincial assembly (MPA).

Pakistan Peoples Party leader Changez Khoso, Khadim Khan Khoso, Rehmatullah Khoso and others, who led the protest, said PTI MPA Aslam Abro had purchased about 30 acres agricultural land adjacent to their agricultural lands in Bahadurpur.

There was no way that water could reach his land. So the influential MPA was forcibly carrying out digging work through their lands for the new watercourse/minor canal, which they termed unjustified.

They demanded of Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and IGP to take notice of their protest and get stopped the digging work, otherwise the SSP and MPA Abro would be responsible for it.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1490288/protest-against-digging-of-illegal-watercourse>

LYARI RESIDENTS PROTEST WATER SUPPLY SUSPENSION

By Our Correspondent Published: June 25, 2019

KARACHI: The residents of Lyari once again took to the streets to protest the suspension of water supply in the area on Monday. The protesters blocked Mauripur Road for a couple of hours causing a traffic jam on Mauripur Road, West Wharf, Jinnah Bridge and Native Jetty Bridge.

Scores of residents from Agra Taj Colony, Machar Colony, Memon Society, Hangurabad and the adjoining areas resorted to protest early morning on Monday against the prolonged water suspension. Women and children also protested and carried placards.

The agitated protesters, erecting barriers blocked Mauripur Road for traffic and shouted slogans against the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB), halting the movement of vehicles carrying goods to and from Karachi Port. The traffic jam lasted for hours.

The protesters complained that for the past six months, water supply in their area had been suspended and despite registering complaints with the water board repeatedly, no steps have been taken yet.

They said that they were being punished for voting for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) as the ruling party at the Centre. They added that they would continue to protest until the KWSB authorities assured them that water supply would be restored to their area.

An elderly man and woman fainted during the protest and were promptly taken to a hospital.

The hours-long protest and the resultant traffic jam brought the attention of the police to the suffering of Lyari's residents. Assistant Commissioner Anwar Ameen along with a heavy contingent of police reached the site for negotiations with the protesters. He assured them that the issue of water supply and several others would be resolved.

The protesters peacefully dispersed after negotiations and Mauripur Road opened for traffic.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1999438/1-lyari-residents-protest-water-supply-suspension/>

PUNJAB OKAYS WATER SUPPLY PROJECTS FOR PINDI

By Our Correspondent Published: June 25, 2019

RAWALPINDI: The Punjab government has given the green light for a water supply project for the Rawalpindi district in the next fiscal year 2019-20, which will bring water from two dams to the parched city.

The plan involves the construction of the Daducha mini-dam on the outskirts of Rawalpindi near the village of Daducha. Separately, a new water supply line will be laid a water treatment plant will be installed at the Chhann dam.

On directions of the Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar, the officials from the Punjab finance department have visited the site reserved for construction of the Daducha dam. The land acquisition process for the dam is expected to begin in July.

The dam is expected to cost Rs6 billion while the installation of water supply pipelines and treatment plants are expected to begin in the second phase of the project.

Further, after installation of the new supply line and water treatment plant at the Chhann dam, the cantonment areas of the garrison city are expected to receive water to fulfil their requirements.

Moreover, funds worth Rs5 billion have been approved owing to efforts from Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) MPA Wasiq Qayyum Abbasi.

The MPA, who was elected from PP-12 Rawalpindi-VII in the July 25, 2018, general elections, has been working on both projects and said that work on them is expected to commence in the first quarter of the new fiscal year.

Moreover, the government has decided to ban the installation of new tube-wells in the district until further orders because the wells have been depleting underground water levels of the city rapidly.

Separately, the Punjab government has released Rs24.998 million for the municipal corporations (MCs), district councils and municipal committees of Rawalpindi under the Provincial Finance Commission (PFC) non-development fund.

The Capital Development Authority (CDA) in neighbouring Islamabad has been reviewing proposals from various companies to build a water supply system from the Ghazi-Barotha Dam. One of the proposals discussed included building a 45 kilometre-long pipeline from the dam to the city.

Once complete, the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi could expect to receive around 200 million gallons per day (MGD) of water of which 100 MGD will be supplied to Rawalpindi while rest will be consumed in Islamabad. The project had been conceived in 2006 when former military ruler General (retired) Pervez Musharraf was still at the helm. It was estimated to cost around Rs17 billion and work on the project was scheduled to commence in March 2009 and it was supposed to have been completed in five years by 2013.

But owing to issues over water division from the divisible pool for provinces and then price, the Ghazi-Barotha water supply scheme had been pending for the past 13 years.

The previous Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) government had started work on it with Mayor Aziz sending a project concept-I to the planning ministry for approval.

Even though the project's cost had ballooned to Rs85 billion by the time the incumbent Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) took over, the government released Rs500 million towards the project.

The project is supposed to be jointly funded and completed by Punjab and the federal governments.

In the recently unveiled Punjab budget for the fiscal year 2019-20, the Punjab government has failed to directly mention any allocation for the Ghazi-Barotha water supply project but it has listed Rs9.568 billion for water supply projects in the province under the head of estimated expenditures. Curiously, this was down from the Rs14.597 billion that the province spent on water supply schemes in the province in the outgoing fiscal year of 2018-19.

The budget documents separately list Rs22.4 billion for expenditure on water supply development projects in the province.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1999563/1-punjab-okays-water-supply-projects-pindi/>

BADIN MAY FACE DESERTIFICATION IF NOT SUPPLIED WATER, MOOT WARNS

A Correspondent June 28, 2019

BADIN: Speakers at a conference on water held on Thursday warned that if the Sindh government did not take urgent corrective measures to ensure fair distribution of water, major parts of Badin and other areas in lower Sindh would gradually turn into deserts.

Former irrigation secretary and head of Save Laar Action Committee Mir Mohammad Parhiar said at the moot that water problems started appearing after 1985 when political governments began exerting pressure on irrigation department officials to provide water to their favourites through illegal outlets.

“The political figures asked officials to divert flows of water even to desert areas against the design capacity of canals of Sukkur Barrage,” he added.

He said that all water problems originated in the area between Sukkur and Kotri barrages from where water was being taken from river through big pumping stations. A pumping station with a capacity of lifting 400 cusec was being built near Moro-Dadu bridge to directly take water from the river to irrigate lands occupied by influential persons of the area in flagrant violation of relevant laws, he said.

He said that all such projects were carried out without consultation with experts and growers of the respective areas only to steal water of farmers living in lower Sindh, particularly Badin.

Mr Parhiar said that as per laws of Indus River System Authority, tail-end areas of Badin, Thatta and Sujawal and other areas ought to be supplied water by the first week of April for early cultivation of Kharif crops including rice while the areas of Sukkur Barrage should be given water after the lower riparians had received their share in the beginning of May in accordance with decades-old practice.

He said that when officials of Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (Sida) were planning to build blockages in the bed of Phuleli Canal near Alipur regulator to divert water to lands falling within command area of Sukkur Barrage, the irrigation officials had raised serious objections but Sida officials did not pay heed to them in their “greed for huge corruption”.

He said that officials concerned were not ready to disclose real allocation for Phuleli and Akram Wah canals to hide their corruption and incompetence. The officials should have spent the huge amount of Rs6 billion on the maintenance of the two canals instead of wasting it on the construction of blockages, he said.

He demanded the Sindh government announce relief package for farmers by providing seeds and fertiliser at half the price so that they could survive through this difficult time.

Mr Parhiar said that all farmers’ organisations were ready to launch a decisive movement for fair distribution of water and asked rulers to read writing on the wall and growing unrest among people.

Pir Fayyaz Hussain Rashidi, chief of Sindh Abadgar Tanzeem, said that rampant corruption, mismanagement and political interference were fast turning Badin into a desert where people were forced to dig wells for drinking water and fertile lands were becoming barren for lack of water.

Mohammad Khan Sario, vice president of Sindh Abadgar Board, said that rulers’ sugar mills had caused widespread destruction in the district and held them responsible for the worsening state of affairs in the district.

Zubair Ahmed Fazli, leader of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf, demanded that all lawmakers who had kept mum over the issue should tender resignation.

Town shut over water shortage

A complete shutdown was observed in Kario Ghanwar town on Thursday on a protest call given by farmers against severe water crisis in the area for past many months.

The farmers staged a demonstration at Shaheed Fazil Rahu Chowk on Golarchi-Hyderabad road in which traders also participated after shuttering their shops.

Later, Assistant Commissioner Zulfikar Ali Nizamani and irrigation officials held talks with the protesters’ leaders and persuaded them to end the protest. Meanwhile, farmers in Malkani Sharif town resumed their protest for the 12th consecutive day against water shortage.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1490775/badin-may-face-desertification-if-not-supplied-water-moot-warns>

PROJECT TO TACKLE KARACHI’S WATER CRISIS LIKELY TO FACE FURTHER DELAYS

By Syed Ashraf Ali / Creative: Mohsin Alam Published: June 29, 2019

KARACHI: Karachi has been facing an acute shortage of water lately and soaring temperatures have aggravated the situation. Akin to several other projects that the provincial government introduced to address the water crisis, a mega project — with a capacity of supplying 65 million gallons of water per day (MGD) – is also likely to face unnecessary delays due to a lack of funds.

To complete the project, the Sindh government needs Rs11 billion, however, only Rs500 million have been earmarked for it in the budget for the next fiscal year.

Meanwhile, out of the Rs600 million reserved for the project in the budget of the outgoing fiscal year, only Rs150 million had been released. It will come as a shock to Karachiites that the project was approved in 1985 as part of the city’s present water quota of 650 MGDs.

The project could have been started 13 years ago through the construction of canals and conduits in the Keenjhar Lake to link them to the city – a move that could have addressed the shortage that the city is currently facing. However, the lukewarm attitude of the authorities, coupled with other priorities, led to unnecessary delays.

For the past one-and-a-half years, the Sindh government has neither approved Rs11 billion for the PC-1 of the project nor did it allocate the necessary funding to the original PC-1 that amounted to Rs5.9 billion.

To top it off, the negligent and laid-back attitude of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) officials halted the development of the project for around 10 months in 2018. The development work commenced in 2017 with an 18-month deadline, but only about 15% of the work could be completed in the past two years.

According to KWSB officials, there is a considerable difference between the demand and supply of water in Karachi. At present, a total of 600 million gallons (MGD) of water is supplied to the city under the bulk water distribution system, while hindrances such as water theft, seepage in water lines, evaporation, and lack of capacity in water pumps only allow a supply of 420 MGDs to reach the city.

A project aimed at increasing the capacity of pumps at the Dhabeji Pumping Station was proposed and initiated but it is also facing undue delays. Based on its population, Karachi needs about 1,100 MGDs of water on a daily basis but it currently faces a shortfall of 780 MGD.

In view of the current shortfall, 65 MGD is quite an insignificant volume to meet the shortage but if the project had been completed on time, the ongoing water crisis would not have been as acute as it is now. Moreover, areas where water is not supplied for months could get some water on a rotational basis every 15 days.

For the past 13 years, the citizens of Karachi have been deprived of the city's approved water quota. In 1985, during the government of former president Gen Zia-ul-Haq, 650 MGD of water was approved for Karachi from the Indus River, out of which only 585 MGD is being currently supplied.

At present, Karachi gets its water from the Keenjhar Lake through canals and conduits built under the K-III scheme. Under the scheme, the last water project was completed in 2006 with a capacity of 100 MGD. Per the plan, a canal with 65 MGD capacity had to be built after the completion of the project to account for Karachi's approved water quota but the government of Sindh, together with the water board, focused its energies on getting additional water quota from the Indus River for the completion of the K-IV project.

Talking to The Express Tribune, a KWSB official – who spoke on the condition of anonymity – said that owing to the acute water shortage in the city, the board started employing efforts to start a water project in 2012, but it was approved by the provincial government only in 2014.

The initial study of the project was completed in 2016-17, while a budget of Rs1 billion was allocated for the project in 2017-18. However, out of the total, only Rs250 million were released.

The funds were utilised for carrying out a detailed study and creating the design of the project. The consultants completed the designing work within six months, after which the contract for the project was awarded to the National Logistics Cell (NLC) against the lowest tender bid. Soon thereafter, the project was kick-started. However, work related to Package-1 and Package-3 of the project is under way, while the tenders for Package 2 and 4 have not been awarded yet.

According to a KWSB official, in 2018, some high-ranking officials of the water board removed some engineers from the project. The project director and engineers were later appointed on the basis of nepotism with no field-

work experience. The incompetent engineers termed the design unfeasible due to which the development work on the project remained suspended for 10 months.

Later, Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani took notice of the delay and transferred the engineers immediately. He also ensured the appointments of qualified staffers anew.

Based on Ghani's instructions, the development work resumed in the beginning of 2019 but the provincial government has released only Rs150 million out of the approved total of Rs600 million for the project.

Consequently, the development work on the project is going on at a snail's pace with the total completion progress reported at 15 per cent.

The progress on development work has also been slowed down because the reviewed PC-1 of Rs11 billion is also being deferred. The operations at the pipe manufacturer used by the Karachi Development Authority (KDA) have been suspended due to which the KDA failed to procure the pre-stress pipes suggested by the design.

In addition, the water board has also been unable to procure other materials needed for the construction of the conduit. Prices of the construction materials have also gone up due to which development cost has increased from Rs5.9 billion to Rs11 billion. The water board prepared and forwarded a revised PC-1 to the planning and development department about a year-and-a-half ago. However, the approval for the new PC-1 is still pending due to which the water board has been unable to award tenders for PC-2 and PC-4.

The KWSB official further said that considerable changes have taken place in terms of the cost and design of the K-IV project, which has a capacity to process 260 MGD of water. The mega project is seeing delays due to increased cost as its original PC-1 was Rs25 billion which had to be equally shared by the federal and the provincial governments.

However, changes in the project's design have led the revised PC-1's cost to jump to Rs75 billion. To see to the matter, the Sindh government has tasked the National Engineering Services Pakistan (NESPAK) to ascertain the reasons for the changes in the design. After a drastic increase in the project costs, it is difficult to state whether the federal government will approve the new PC-1 or agree to increase its share.

Under current circumstances, the 65 MGD project has gained immense significance. The project is completely funded by the provincial government and it does not involve a lot of technical difficulties or hurdles. If the Sindh government takes an interest in the project, this low-cost project could easily be completed in the shortest possible time.

Spanning a distance of 58 kilometres, the 65 MGD water scheme will link the Keenjhar Lake to Pipri Pumping Station. The project has four development packages, out of which PC-1 and PC-3 are under construction, which will include a 14.5-kilometre open RCC canal and a five-kilometre conduit from the Keenjhar Gajol Canal to the Gharo Pumping Station. The Halejee Lake will also be augmented at the same time with the installation of a new gate. From Halejee Lake, a water line will be linked to a new RCC canal.

The Express Tribune tried to reach out to the KWSB's project director several times to confirm the news, but he was neither in his office nor available over the phone.

A KWSB spokesperson, however, said that the revised PC-I of the 65-MGD plan has been sent to the Sindh government for approval.

He said that the development work on the remaining two projects will begin shortly after the approval of the revised PC-I by the Sindh government.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2002438/1-project-tackle-karachis-water-crisis-likely-face-delays/>

SINDH ACE GEARS INTO ACTION AGAINST ‘TANKER MAFIA’

By Press Release Published: June 29, 2019

KARACHI: The Sindh Anti-Corruption Establishment launched a drive against elements involved in the organised theft of water through the tanker mafia at Dhabeji and Haleji Conduit on Friday.

According to ACE officials, as many as 21 illegal water connections diverted to personal farm houses, dairy farms, and commercial cultivation fields have been detected and sealed. They had been operating illegally for the past several years.

An ACE official revealed that in the same area, through yet another modus operandi, water was being stolen from the main installation of Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) by tanker owners for sale in the city. As many as 13 uncovered and punctured sites, en route Haleji Conduit, were detected and sealed. One water tanker being filled from one of the openings was seized on site and the contractor, along with the driver, has been booked.

The official said that a number of such tankers filled water from KWSB installations and ply on the road from Gharo to Karachi. These tankers face no scrutiny because the contractors pay a ‘monthly’ sum to the police and the KWSB officials.

Separately, the ACE has found that around 46 contractors, possessing a fleet of tankers, keep stealing potable water from the main pipeline of KWSB, mix it with subsoil water and sell it in the city at highly profitable rates.

The ACE said that the subsoil water was also being taken by the contractors without any NOC and regulation. It was just a front to cover water theft from the KWSB’s main trunk.

Officials of the Deputy Commissioner, police and the KWSB were found involved in the water theft. As part of its crackdown, six perpetrators including 2 XENs of the KWSB, have been taken into custody for interrogation. All illegal hydrants have also been sealed.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2002435/1-sindh-ace-gears-action-tanker-mafia/>

JULY, 2019

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JULY 1st TO JULY 7th 2019

WATER SCARCITY PERSISTS TO RUIN LANDS IN TAIL-END AREAS

Mohammad Hussain Khan July 02, 2019

HYDERABAD: Low discharge coupled with rotation system resorted to by the Kotri Barrage authorities have made things worse over the last several days for tail-end paddy growers in the command area of Pinyari (old Phuleli) Canal. The non-perennial Pinyari Canal that takes off from Kotri Barrage’s left side feeds the areas up to Jati, in Sujawal — a district recently carved out from Thatta district.

The canal receives water flows only in summer season for paddy cultivation for six months but barrage sources confirmed that the rotation system was being given effect. The canal has a designed discharge of around 13,500 cusecs and currently 6,500 cusecs were available. In June, the Kotri Barrage faced a shortage of 40 per cent to 55pc.

Given the designed discharges, the water flows' allocation remained inadequate for the canal. Initially, the shortage remained somewhat bearable during mid-May and during that period paddy growers prepared nurseries of their crop. The crop is now to be transplanted in the fields for which sufficient flows are needed. Almost every paddy grower would go for transplantation simultaneously which means adequate irrigation water flows should remain available in the canal from the head regulator to the tail-end.

"This is not the case," says a paddy grower from Jati, whose lands are located in the tail-end area of Pinyari Canal. He pointed out that water shortage was being reported in Pinyari and more than three other canals off-taking the barrage. "We feel we are bearing the brunt of shortage more than anyone else," he said.

The Pinyari Canal system is managed by the irrigation department whereas Kotri Barrage's other non-perennial canal, Phuleli, is managed by the Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (Sida).

The other two canals are perennial. The Kalri Baghar (KB) Feeder and Akram Wah are managed by the irrigation department and Sida, respectively.

"We need around 40,000 cusecs to meet requirements of all canals during this period but we are getting lesser flows," Kotri Barrage chief engineer Shafqat Wadhu maintains. He said that when flows were available in May, growers comfortably prepared their nurseries but now they were indeed facing problems at the time of transplantation of seedlings of their paddy crop. "This has necessitated rotation of canals in order to manage flows," he said.

According to a former Sida managing director, the total cultivable command area of Kotri Barrage is around 3.08 million acres, inclusive of around 2.1 million acres under the command of non-perennial canals and 0.922 million acres under perennial canals' systems.

Kotri Barrage has a large command area, of which KB Feeder and Pinyari canals cumulatively have, as per a safe estimate, a command area of 126,000 acres.

Today, the barrage's upstream flow was 24,975 cusecs which is being distributed among four canals. The flows, according to irrigation officials' estimates, may improve in case of monsoon rains and rise in temperature upstream river Indus.

The grower observed that rotation was being given effect in Pinyari Canal from head regulator to Daro branch and then from Daro downstream up to the Jati area for every six days. "We are getting water for three days in every 18 days. About 85pc of growers in this area have a landholding of 10-50 acres of land with no influence to approach anyone to seek remedy."

Sindh Chamber of Agriculture (SCA) leader Nabi Bux Satio seconded the Jati growers' view, saying that inadequate flows have hit paddy transplantation especially in the tail-end areas.

While farmers having land at upper reaches are getting water as they are able to lift water from canals, the tail-end growers of the same system are being seriously affected, according to him. He said that downstream water users of Pinyari Canal were indeed facing serious issues in terms of water availability.

A Kotri Barrage official wishing not to be named said that tail-end farmers were not getting water as per their requirement but it was not correct to say that water was simply unavailable. "Upper riparian gets full flows at the cost of tail-end growers and it is quite difficult to control every single water user. Everyone wants to have full supply for maximum cultivation," he said.

Published in Dawn, July 2nd, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1491505/water-scarcity-persists-to-ruin-lands-in-tail-end-areas>

UPPER SINDH: TREASURY EXPRESSES WORRIES OVER IRRIGATION WATER THEFT

RECORDER REPORT JULY 2ND, 2019 KARACHI

Treasury on Monday expressed worries over theft of irrigation water in upper Sindh, saying that the ruling party legislators will not be able to visit their constituencies if failed to help provide growers with the key agriculture input. Ruling PPP's Nadir Magsi during the Sindh Assembly session pointed out that his constituency Qambar Shadadkot is faced with a serious water shortage problem, saying that the legislators of the ruling party could not face their voters if the irrigation issue continued to haunt them.

He said that agriculture is the backbone of the rural economy of Sindh, while growers also faced with the water theft in the upper parts of the province. "If water distribution in on unjustified basis then issues cannot be solved," he said, urging the government to direct the Sindh Irrigation Department to solve the water issue at earliest.

Earlier, on a point of order, Opposition leader, Firdous Shamim Naqvi of the PTI also showed doubts over repeated listing of the Sindh Forest Department on the assembly's agenda for questions and answers session, saying that the house is more interested in discussing human rights than such a department's performances. The Sindh Home Department is continuously being ignored from the list of the house agenda, he said.

Sindh Forest Minister, Syed Nasir Hussain Shah assured the house of just water distribution across the province for agriculture sector, saying that Sindh was receiving less of the quota which created such a problem for growers. He said that the government has taken action against the water theft and registered FIRs against the perpetrators. He also replied to a query during the questions and answers session on Sindh Forest Department, saying that the Sindh Board of Revenue had allotted some 78,444 acres of the department land illegally, in the past.

"I am not revealing the names of those occupied the forest land for relationship and respect but I can tell that they belong to the GDA," the minister told the house, saying that some 507 cases of illegal allotments are before the court. He said that the Sindh cabinet had approved lease cancellations of forest land measuring 78,000 acres of which Sindh Forest Department could not recover 290 acres so far. However, illegal allotments of the forest land were not revoked, he said, adding that the occupants of the land are 'powerful'.

The house also referred a privilege motion to the assembly's select committee, which the PPP women lawmakers had tabled against PTI's parliamentary leader, Aleem Adil Shaikh for 'indecent remarks' against them. Despite, the opposition's effort to convince the chair to end the issue with an apology in the house, the matter was referred to the committee, which consists of opposition's small parties like MMA's only lawmaker, Syed Abdul Rasheed, TLP, Mufti Qasim Fakhri and its lady legislator, Sarwat Fatima, besides a number of ruling PPP members including Qasim Siraj, Ghanwar Isran, Fayaz Butt and Pir Mujeeb.

Sindh Excise Minister, Mukesh Kumar Chawla demanded action against the PTI's parliamentary leader and proposed a punishment for him for his unbecoming attitude toward the treasury female members, but Firdous Shamim Naqvi urged the house not to set an example of referring each and every matter to such a committee since it will be new pattern to settle score against the one another.

The opposition parties including PTI, MQM and GDA opposed the move and staged a walkout in protest against the formation of the select committee, which is now set to give its decision on the matter. The house now stands adjourned till Tuesday at 2 pm.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2019/07/02/8-page/789286-news.html>

FARMERS' LONG MARCH AGAINST WATER SCARCITY ENTERS 5TH DAY

By Our Correspondent Published: July 2, 2019

HYDERABAD: Farmers of the coastal districts, after suffering for the past several months from a drought-like situation due to acute shortage of water in the Indus River, have embarked on a long march to highlight their plight. The marchers on the fifth day of their protest, which started from Sujawal district, reached Gharo, a rural town of Thatta district, on Monday.

"An artificial water shortage has been created in Thatta district, affecting tens of thousands of farmlands," said Ayaz Lashari, who is among the vanguards of the march. "The irrigation officials and large landholders are responsible for the scarcity".

The march will culminate in Makli area of Thatta on July 3 where the organisers plan to gather thousands of farmers and representatives of civil society and political parties to raise their demand in chorus for their share of water. "We can no longer tolerate robbery of our share of water," warned Lashari.

Lashari, Ghulam Mustafa Chandio, Haq Nawaz Rind and other protesters alleged that another scheme behind the artificially created water shortage is the Zulfiqarabad project.

Unequal distribution: Farmers from Balochistan protest water shortage

"They want to compel the people of the coastal areas to leave their abodes and farmlands and migrate to other cities so that large swathes of land can be cheaply acquired for Zulfiqarabad project," alleged Ameer Azad Panhwar while talking to the local media.

Thatta and Sujawal are the tail-end cities of the Indus River. While Sindh blames Punjab for stealing its share of water owing to which scarcity crops up in the tail-end areas, local farmers also see the provincial government and politicians as architects of the shortfall.

The protesters also pointed out water theft by fish farms as thousands of acres of the farms are being illegally supplied irrigation water. "The water which is meant to be supplied to agricultural land is being stolen by the fish farms in connivance with the irrigation officials," one protester alleged. He said that the per acre water consumption of the fish farms is dozens of times higher than the agricultural land yet the officials who receive heavy bribes from the farms are causing deliberate destruction to agriculture.

People in Badin, which is also a coastal district, have also been protesting for months about the shortage. They also blame Pakistan Peoples Party's (PPP) Sindh government for wittingly creating the scarcity in order to punish Badin's people who voted for the party's political opponents in the 2018 general elections and 2016 local government elections.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2004209/1-farmers-long-march-water-scarcity-enters-5th-day/>

SHUTDOWN AGAINST WATER CRISIS IN BADIN DISTRICT

A Correspondent July 03, 2019

BADIN: A shutdown was observed in the tiny town of Khorwah on Tuesday as part of a sustained campaign, being run by the Save Badin Action Committee, against water crisis in Badin district.

Traders and shopkeepers kept their businesses closed from dawn to dusk and joined in a protest rally organised by the committee.

The rally participants marched through the streets and then assembled at the main roundabout of the town to hold a demonstration that lasted three hours.

Speaking to them, Ameer Azad Panhwar, Ali Mohammad Mehri, Munwar Ali and others said that the water crisis persisting in the districts for months was playing havoc with their lives and livelihood.

They pointed out that rice cultivation season had already started but they were unable to do anything for want of water.

Meanwhile, the Save Badin Action Committee has rejected the fresh rotation programme announced by the Badin deputy commissioner as per the recommendation of the irrigation department and Sida.

They held the irrigation department and Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (Sida) responsible for the artificial crisis which, according to them, was now going to devastate all small growers of the district.

Committee leaders Khalil Ahmed Bhurgari, Mir Ghulam Rasool Talpur, Mir Noor Ahmed Talpur, Azizullah Dero and others termed the so-called rotation programme an eyewash arguing that water could not be supplied to this district from Phuleli canal until and unless sufficient flows into Kotri barrage were arranged from Sukkur Barrage through proper regulation.

They repeated their demand for the dismantling of all blockages and stoppage of water release into flood canals, saying that these blockages were actually root cause of the water crisis in Badin.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1491692>

NA PANEL TOLD GILGIT, SINDH AND BALOCHISTAN BEING SUPPLIED UNSAFE DRINKING WATER

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Standing Committee on Science and Technology was informed on Wednesday that drinking water in entire Gilgit as well as 80 percent urban areas of Sindh and Balochistan is contaminated and unsafe.

The committee met with MNA Sajid Mehdi in chair at the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR).

The PCRWR chairman briefed the committee that PCRWR's research budget has not been given for the last two years. He told that PCRWR laboratories all over the country, which have been dormant since 2015, will be functional soon.

Federal Minister for Science and Technology Chaudhry Fawad Hussain said research data is essential to make informed policies and set standards and it is only possible if research laboratories are well-equipped and human resource is well-trained.

The committee was further briefed that the Punjab government spent Rs 880 million during the last five years to provide safe drinking water to the people but the programme failed due to improper planning. The committee recommended that steps should be taken to create liaison between the federation and provinces.

The committee was informed that all companies in the country are providing bottled water while only Qarshi Company is providing mineral water.

MNAs including Engr Usman Khan Tarakai, Shoukat Ali Bhatti, Abdul Shakoor Shad, Sobia Kamal Khan, Mukhtar Ahmed Malik, Muhammad Ashraf, Zeb Jaffar, Dr Samina Matloob, Khurshed Ahmed Junejo, Sikandar Ali Rahoupoto and Naveed Aamir Jeeva, and officials of the ministry attended the meeting.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2019/07/04/5-page/789603-news.html>

SINDH GOVT HOSTS MOOT OF PARTIES TO DISCUSS WATER CRISIS IN CITY TODAY

By Our Staff Reporter | 7/5/2019

KARACHI: The Pakistan People's Party-led Sindh government on Thursday said it was going to hold a conference on Friday (today) to discuss the worsening issue related to water shortages in the city and elsewhere in the province.

‘We are holding a meeting in which all political parties, including those having no representation in the parliament have been invited to attend to resolve the issue regarding water shortages,’ said Barrister Murtaza Wahab, adviser to the chief minister on information, while speaking to reporters at the Sindh Assembly building.

The meeting would be presided over by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah.

He said the meeting would be held at 10am on Friday in which everyone would try to comprehend the issue and offer recommendations for its solution.

‘We’ll share the realistic issues confronting our government and will seek opinion from all. It will be a shared exercise with sincere objective to resolve the issue.’

He said social organisations and trading bodies were also being invited to attend the meeting.

Barrister Wahab said water shortage was not a fabricated issue, but in real terms ‘we are facing serious shortages’.

He said Karachi needed 1,150 million gallons per day water while just 470mgd water was there to cater to the millions of people residing in the teeming metropolis.

He added that the machinery at the Dhabeji pumping station was being revamped and would contribute another 80mgd of water to the city when the revamping got completed by September.

‘Our citizens should realise that water is not arriving in the system.’

He said Sindh had written a letter to the federal government a few months ago in which it demanded an additional 650mgd water for Karachi.

A similar letter had been written when Syed Qaim Ali Shah was the chief minister, he added.

He said it was not impossible to resolve the issue if the PPP’s provincial government, and the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf and the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan, who were partners in the federal government, take up the matter jointly.

‘We hope that everyone will chip in positively in tomorrow’s meeting to resolve this huge human issue.’

Barrister Wahab added that the provincial government had considered the installation of a desalination plant; however, for that the federal and provincial governments would have to work jointly.

For this, he added, sovereign guarantee and supply of the required gas would have to be given by the federal government.

He said the issue of water shortages was much older than 11 years of the PPP’s provincial government and instead of playing blame game everyone should feel gravity of the matter.

He said the MQM-P had duly been invited and they could also bring the city’s mayor along. Besides, MQM’s Farooq Sattar faction had also been invited.

Murtaza Wahab said 100 buses would be running on 13 routes of the city by the middle of August in order to ease the city’s worsening transport problems.

https://epaper.dawn.com/DetailNews.php?StoryText=05_07_2019_116_008

ALYANI ASKS SINDH CM TO STOP ‘THEFT’ OF BALOCHISTAN’S WATER

Saleem Shahid Updated July 06, 2019

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Kamal Khan Alyani asked Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Friday to resolve the issue of Balochistan’s share of water coming through the Kirthar and Pat Feeder canals.

Mr Alyani telephoned the Sindh chief minister and informed him that due to alleged water stealing in Sindh, farmers of Balochistan’s green belt of Naseerabad division were facing serious water shortage and their crops were getting destroyed.

He asked the Sindh chief minister to take immediate measures to address the issue.

Murad Ali Shah assured Mr Alyani that he would look into the matter to resolve it on a priority basis.

Both the chief ministers agreed to call a meeting of chief secretaries and irrigation officials of the two provinces to find out a permanent solution to this crucial issue.

According to Irsa agreement, Balochistan must receive 6,700 cusecs of water from Pat Feeder canal and 2,400 cusecs from Kirthar canal, but because of alleged stealing of water in Sindh, Balochistan receives only 50 per cent of its share.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1492408/alyani-asks-sindh-cm-to-stop-theft-of-balochistans-water>

SHAHDADKOT SHUT OVER SHORTAGE OF IRRIGATION WATER

The Newspaper’s Correspondent July 06, 2019

LARKANA: A complete shutter-down strike was observed in Shahdadt on Friday in protest against an acute shortage of irrigation water in Shahdadt and Saifullah Magsi branches, the main arteries irrigating vast rice belt in Qambar-Shahdadt.

The Abadgar Bachayo Tehreek had given a call for the strike, which was well responded by tillers, farmers and small growers. Chanting slogans, they marched on the main roads and staged a sit-in at Koto-Moto chowk.

Talking to reporters, they pointed towards the worsening water scarcity in about 50 small irrigation tributaries being fed through both Saifullah Magsi and SKT branches, the only source to irrigate the huge rice-cultivating belt.

They said that for one month severe water shortage had been registered in Dhori Shakh, Patoja Shakh, Qubo, Tanvri, Patoja, Mastoi Bhutta and others and under the given conditions, framers had not even prepared paddy nurseries yet.

They were desperately waiting for kicking off paddy transplanted on hundreds of acres of land. In some patches even the prepared paddy nurseries were drying and dying due to non-availability of water, they said.

The situation was so grave that in certain areas, animals were dying for they had neither water nor fodder to survive, they claimed, and went on saying that local population was migrating under the circumstances.

This was an extraordinary situation which demanded additional measures to address the sensitivity of the issue, they said.

They pointed out the theft of water by over 100 unauthorised pipes taking illegal supply from Saifullah Magsi branch by some people in Balochistan. They called for urgent corrective measures and deploying Rangers to tackle the situation and announced to file petition in the high court in this regard.

Realising the gravity of the situation, irrigation secretary Dr Saeed Ahmed Mangnejo, along with Qambar-Shahdadt Dep-uty Commissioner Javed Ahmed Jagirani, reached the spot to know about the facts. They visited different offshoots of Saifullah Magsi branch [the main artery], Kutchi pul, Qubo Saeed Khan and other parts of the district and held meetings with representatives of farmers’ organisations.

Talking to Dawn, the secretary irrigation said that he was there to listen to the grievances of the growers and find out remedies. He said that with the gradual improvement in water flow in River Indus [as was expected], the situation would improve soon and efforts would be made to address growers’ issues.

He said illegal pipes installed in Saifullah Magsi branch to steal water would be removed and if needed Rangers and police help would be sought to deal with the situation. If required ‘rotation’ plan would be put in place in certain areas to ensure water availability at the tail-ends of the tributaries, he added.

He said that in the light of peoples’ complaints, two executive engineers Attaullah Chinjni of SKT branch and Tariq Abro of Saifullah Magsi branch were immediately replaced with new officers.

He said amidst the situation, a joint meeting of Sindh and Balochistan at the secretary level was scheduled for July 11 in Karachi to discuss the irrigation water issues. He said engineers and technical staff concerned from both provinces would sit together to look into the day-to-day issues and evolve a strategy for smooth and just distribution of water between the two provinces. He said the meeting would also discuss the issue of water theft from Saifullah Magasi branch.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1492307/shahdaskot-shut-over-shortage-of-irrigation-water>

FAO BEGINS AGRICULTURE WATER ACCOUNTING SYSTEM FOR INDUS BASIN

Amin Ahmed Updated July 07, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations has launched a comprehensive agriculture water accounting system for the entire Indus Basin that will increase resilience to climate change among the most vulnerable farmers in the basin and strengthen government's capacity to plan and support farming communities against future climate changes.

For this mega project, the Green Climate Fund (GCF) — the new global fund created to support the efforts of developing countries to respond to the challenge of climate change — is expected to approve \$35 million at its three-day board meeting that commenced in Songdo in South Korea on Saturday.

The project has an estimated budget of \$49.7m, including government co-financing of \$12.7m. The project will help shift Pakistan and Indus Basin agriculture from its current situation of high vulnerability towards an alternative paradigm wherein better information and farming practices will significantly increase resilience to climate change, according to project document.

Project will increase resilience to climate change among most vulnerable farmers

The FAO says the project will develop the country's capacity to get and use the information it needs to tackle the impact of climate change on agriculture and water management by putting in place the state-of-the-art technology. Lack of coordination across institutions hampers effective and efficient management of the country's most critical natural resource. Agricultural water consumption at the farm level is difficult to regulate due to outdated policies and the limited integration of water monitoring efforts and subsequent enforcement.

Another barrier is posed by the fact that agricultural extension is lacking at the provincial level with low understanding of climate change threats and responsive practices.

Four water accounting assessments will be undertaken in Punjab and Sindh under the project to be carried out by the FAO in collaboration with the Ministry of Water Resources and the Indus River System Authority (IRSA), using the methodology defined as a part of FAO's work financed through a technical cooperation programme.

The project will be implemented in five districts of Punjab — Dera Ghazi Khan, Muzaffargarh, Multan, Lodhran and Khanewal — and three districts of Sindh — Sanghar, Badin and Umerkot. It is designed to increase the resilience to climate change of agricultural producers in Indus River Basin and it will directly benefit an estimated 1.34 million rural people in 200,000 rural households.

The threat of climate change to agriculture and the Indus Basin would likely also have serious socio-economic implications for 158 million people that belong to households in the Indus Basin. About 43 per cent of farmers are smallholders, managing landholdings of less than one hectare. They are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change due to their lack of assets to buffer shocks and access to information, new technologies, finance and government services through which they can undertake adaptive actions.

The project will finance the installation of six new agro-meteorological stations and upgrade two existing weather stations to serve the project districts and improve the current scant coverage for the basin. The information generated by these stations will be shared with stakeholders working on early warning, while the system will be linked to FAO's global information early warning system and will facilitate the use of the associated use 'Agricultural Stress Index System' developed by the FAO.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1492613/fao-begins-agriculture-water-accounting-system-for-indus-basin>

CALL TO ADDRESS THAR'S CORE ISSUE OF WATER ON A PRIORITY BASIS

Hanif Samoon July 07, 2019

MITHI: Lawmakers, water experts and members of civil society organisations speaking at a conference here on Saturday called for a permanent solution to the water issue of Tharparkar.

They were of the concerted opinion that water was the biggest issue of this rain-dependent arid zone and, as such, was required to be resolved on a priority basis.

Sindh Minister for Local Government Saeed Ghani told the conference, organised by the Sukkar Foundation, that it was not possible to provide canal water to the entire desert region through pipelines. However, he said, the provincial government was making every possible effort to employ alternative means to provide water to a maximum number of people.

“The Sindh government is providing canal water to towns through pipelines and installed hundreds of RO plants in the rural areas where laying pipelines is not feasible,” he pointed out.

Mr Ghani agreed that more RO plants were needed to be installed in the remaining villages so that Tharis could get drinking water for themselves and their livestock close to their houses.

The minister claimed that over 600 out of the total 750 RO plants in Thar were operational. “The Sindh government, despite financial problems, will focus on the core issue; it will install more RO plants,” he said.

PPP MNA Dr Mahesh Kumar Malani told the participants that there was an urgent need for enhancing the capacity of the existing RO plants and install more such units in remote villages of Thar.

He said that the provincial government had built small dams in the hilly area of Parkar to store rainwater flowing from the foothills of Karoonjhar.

MPA Rana Hamir Singh reiterated that with proper planning, RO plants could provide a good solution to the water issue of Thar. He said there was also an urgent need for storing rainwater during monsoon.

Public Health Engineering secretary Roshan Shaikh said that the Sindh government had earmarked Rs60 million for the construction of model villages with all necessary facilities. CM's Special Assistant Advocate Veerji Kolhi said that the Nagarparkar region always suffered more in drought period, adding that that more small dams were required to be built to store rainwater from Karoonjhar hills.

He expressed his concern over the fact that despite presence of 27 such dams in the region, more than 80 per cent of rainwater was going waste.

PPP leader Aajiz Dhamrah told the conference that PPP government, despite all odds, would continue to provide maximum possible facilities to the people of Thar.

Senator Gyanchand, MPA Fakeer Sher Mohammad Bilalani, Dr Sono Khangharani, Abid Cha-nna, Thar Deputy Commissioner Dr Shahzad Tahir Thaheem, Kanwar Karni Singh, Krishan Sharma, Natho Khan Rahimoon and others also spoke.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1492521>

GHAZI-BAROTHA WATER SUPPLY PROJECT REVIVED AFTER 13 YEARS

By Qaiser Shirazi Published: July 7, 2019

RAWALPINDI: With the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi facing dwindling water supplies owing to lower rainfall and a corresponding rise in population, a plan to provide water from Ghazi-Barotha which had been pending for the past 13 years has now been revived by the incumbent government as it has ordered to prepare a new feasibility report for the project.

The decision was taken in a technical meeting chaired by the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Capital Development Authority Affairs Ali Nawaz Awan and attended by technical teams of Capital Development Authority (CDA), Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) and Cantonment Boards (CBs).

The new report and a project concept 1 (PC-I) of the project would be completed in three months.

The previous feasibility report was rejected as it was prepared 10 years ago. Furthermore, the project cost has also soared to Rs90 billion.

Residents protest lack of water supply For the project, the federal and provincial governments have allocated Rs10 billion as initial funds. It will be initiated on the basis of public-private partnership.

In this regard, the RDA Chairman Arif Abbasi endorsed the decision and said that the prime minister had ordered to start preparations for the project.

The project had been conceived in 2006 when former military ruler General (ret'd) Pervez Musharraf was still in office. It was estimated to cost around Rs17 billion and work on the project was scheduled to commence in March 2009. It was supposed to be completed within five years' time by 2013.

It was spread over three phases. In the first phase, the twin cities were to be provided with 200 million gallons of water a day by laying a 60-kilometre-long, 80 inch-wide pipeline from the Tarbela Dam at Ghazi Barotha to a water treatment plant at Sangjani in Islamabad.

In the second phase an additional 200 millions of gallons of water will be received on a daily basis while in the third phase, 255 million gallons of water will be received.

Previously, due to issues over water division from the divisible pool for provinces and also the project's overall cost, the Ghazi-Barotha water supply scheme had been pending for the past 13 years.

Even though the project's cost had ballooned to Rs85 billion by the time the incumbent Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) took over, the government allocated Rs500 million for the project.

The project is supposed to be jointly funded and completed by Punjab and the federal governments.

Work on Chahan Dam water supply scheme to start next fiscal year

In the recently unveiled Punjab budget for the fiscal year 2019-20, the Punjab government has failed to directly mention any allocation for the Ghazi-Barotha water supply project but it has listed Rs9.568 billion for water supply projects in the province under the head of estimated expenditures. Curiously, this was down from Rs14.597 billion that the province spent on water supply schemes in the province in the outgoing fiscal year of 2018-19.

The budget documents separately list Rs22.4 billion for expenditure on water supply development projects in the province.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2007843/1-ghazi-barotha-water-supply-project-revived-13-years/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JULY 8th TO JULY 14th 2019

\$35M PROJECT TO IMPROVE WATER MANAGEMENT, AGRICULTURE

Amin Ahmed Updated July 08, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The board of Green Climate Fund (GCF) on Sunday approved financing of \$35 million for a project of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations to transform the Indus River Basin by improving agriculture and water management to make the vital food-producing region more resilient to climate change.

The approval of the first FAO-led GCF project in Asia at the board's meeting in Songdo, South Korea, is being seen as an important step forward in the FAO's support for countries to respond to climate change in partnership with the new fund created to support the efforts of developing countries against climate change.

In the Indus River Basin, agriculture employs nearly 26 per cent of Pakistan's labour force and produces more than 90pc of the country's agriculture outputs. However, extended droughts and floods have affected millions of people in recent years.

Such extreme weather events are expected to become more frequent and severe in Pakistan as a result of climate change.

As temperatures continue to rise and precipitation patterns continue to change, water will become increasingly scarce and difficult for farmers to utilise, jeopardising the food security and livelihoods of Indus Basin farmers, as well as overall food security in Pakistan.

Welcoming the decision of GCF, FAO Deputy Director General of Climate and Natural Resources Maria Helena Semedo said: "We are at a critical moment that calls for bold climate action that can stimulate concrete solutions to help build resilience. The approval of this project — the first FAO-led GCF project in Asia — is an important step forward in FAO's broader support to countries to respond to climate change, in partnership with the GCF."

The project is worth over \$47m and stands to directly benefit 1.3m people. The provincial governments of Punjab and Sindh have committed an additional \$12.7m in co-financing to be managed by FAO.

“This new FAO project, thanks to support from the GCF and the government, will help shift Pakistan and its Indus Basin agriculture from a current situation of high vulnerability toward an alternative paradigm wherein better information, water management and farming practices will significantly increase resilience to climate change,” said Mina Dowlatchahi, FAO representative in Pakistan.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1492758/35m-project-to-improve-water-management-agriculture>

MURAD SAYS SINDH TO ASK IRSA FOR RELEASE OF MORE WATER

WaseemShamsiUpdated July 08, 2019

SUKKUR: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that provincial government will ask the Indus River System Authority to release water commensurate with the province’s demand as acute shortage of water persists in Sindh.

Mr Shah said while talking to media persons after a briefing at Sukkur barrage on Sunday that it was hoped the situation would improve after 245,000 cusec water reached Chashma barrage downstream but even after that the water shortage problem still nagged the province.

He said that on the one hand there was danger of flood while on the other there was shortage of water, which continued to badger growers. The shortage was recorded even at Guddu and Kotri barrages and the government would talk to Irsa, urging it to release water according to the province’s demand, he said.

He said the demand of water at Sukkur barrage was 62,000 cusec but 48,000 cusec passed through the barrage as of Saturday. He had directed special assistant for irrigation Ashfaq Memon to talk to the Irsa in this connection, he said. He said that directives had been issued to the irrigation department to bring improvement in management as well as distribution of water. Reports about many portfolios without ministries were baseless because he as chief minister was empowered to entrust as many portfolios as he wished to a minister. “In the light of the 18th Amendment, we can appoint at least 18 ministers,” he said.

He said in answer to a question about Centre’s move to take three hospitals back from the province that the hospitals in question were already under the control of Sindh government while Centre had no intention no look after them which was evident from its failure to allocate funds for the hospitals in the budget.

However, he said, the Sindh government allocated Rs16.5 billion in the budget for the hospitals although the Centre had released Rs105 billion less to the province.

Mr Shah said that transfer of Sukkur commissioner was not violation of code of conduct of the Election Commission of Pakistan as the code applied only to districts. However, his transfer had been stopped on a request of the election commission, he said.

He said that Rs315 million were being released to take affective steps to fight against locust attack. Help in this regard had also been sought from the Centre as “we have to eradicate locusts at any cost within three months,” he said.

He said that he believed MoulanaFazlurRehman fulfilled his commitment. “As we supported him in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa he will certainly reciprocate the help in Ghotki and we hope his party will also cooperate with us,” he said.

Earlier, Secretary Irrigation Dr Saeed Ahmed Mangnejo said during the briefing that less water was being released to Guddu barrage than the demand. A fresh demand for 190,000 cusec had been made to the Irsa, he said.

He said that 400 FIRs had been lodged against water thieves who were stealing water through pipelines and lift machines and action had been taken against officials of the irrigation department for their poor performance.

During the briefing, the chief minister directed DIG of Sukkur police to liaise with irrigation department in its efforts to curb water theft and take stern action against the thieves.

The chief minister tried to distance from Maryam Nawaz’s ‘disclosures’ about judiciary and her release of a startling video tape showing a judge purportedly confessing he had given verdict under duress.

He did not want to comment on it because it was for the judiciary to investigate the scandal and come clean on the charges being hurled at the respectable institution, he said.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1492684>

PPP LAWMAKERS COME HARD ON IRRIGATION, SIDA OFFICIALS OVER WATER CRISIS

HanifSamoon July 08, 2019

BADIN: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) lawmakers from Badin and the party's local leadership have warned officials of irrigation department and Sida (Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority) to mend their ways or face the music, asking them to ensure a free distribution of water among all growers in the district.

Senator DrSinkander Ali Mandhro, MNA Mir Ghulam Ali Talpur, MPAs Mir Allah BuxTalpur, Taj Mohammad Mallah, Basheer Ahmed Halepoto, Haji RamazanChandio, SainBuxJamali and others held an hours-long meeting with CM's Adviser AshfaqMemon, Sida chairman Abdul BasitSoomro and local officials of Sida and irrigation department at the residence of MPA Mir Allah BuxTalpur in RajoKhanani town on Saturday evening to discuss the persisting water crisis in the district.

They made it clear to the officials that no excuse with regard to a fair distribution or regulation of water would be tolerated any more.

Sources privy to the meeting said that the lawmakers and other PPP leaders at the meeting believed that the local officials were largely responsible for the mess that ultimately led to a sustained campaign launched by the Save Badin Action Committee amid the water crisis.

The lawmakers, according to the sources, told the officials that people of the district were now losing patience and it was becoming very difficult for local PPP leadership to handle the situation. The situation may get out of control if proper regulation of water flows was not ensured within the next few days, the lawmakers were quoted as telling the officials.

They also hinted at removal of the Sida director concerned over his unsatisfactory performance as well as appropriate action against certain other Sida and irrigation officials if the situation did not improve.

MNA Mir Ghulam Ali Khan Talpur told Dawn on Sunday that he asked the officials present at the meeting to either ensure provision of water to all areas of the district or risk their transfer to somewhere else. He said "we [PPP leaders] are supposed to address public issues; we all are of the same opinion that local irrigation and Sida officials be made to discharge their responsibilities efficiently and honestly".

The MNA said he was in constant touch with the top party leadership as well as the relevant high-ups of the Sindh government in this regard. In consultation with them, honest and efficient officials could be brought in to overcome the crisis, he added.

MrTalpur said that the matter of the Sida director's transfer was under consideration. Three names for the slot had already been recommended to the competent authority, he added. He held out the assurance that growers of Badin would get relief from water crisis soon.

Earlier on Saturday, CM's Adviser AshfaqMemon spoke to the media at Alipur regulator near Matli town. He said effective measures were being taken to provide adequate water to growers across the district so that they could cultivate their chief crop of rice in this season. He pointed out that water losses right from Sukkur barrage to Kotri barrage was being reported.

According to him, ditches and other natural obstructions all along the wide bed of the Indus were a major factor contributing to the problem. "This issue could not be addressed unless there is a flow of over 100,000 cusecs from Sukkur barrage," he added.

He said the officials concerned were also making efforts to curb water theft through illegally fixed pipes and other such means. He said they were trying to manage water distribution at each regulator of the district.

Protests over water crisis continue

Growers held demonstrations in Badin, TandoBago, KarioGhanwar, Khorwah, Kadhan and several other towns on Sunday to protest over persisting water crisis in the district. The strongly criticised local irrigation and Sida officials for their failure to address the issue and their indifferent attitude towards their problem. They held corruption within the department and the institution responsible for their miseries.

They vowed to continue the series of protest, continuing for several months, till adequate water was supplied to them for the cultivation of their crops.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1492678>

SAB HOLDS GOVT RESPONSIBLE FOR WATER SHORTAGE

The Newspaper's Staff Correspondent July 08, 2019

HYDERABAD: The Sindh Abadgar Board (SAB) has held the Sindh government responsible for damages to the farm sector in the wake of water shortage.

The board, which met here on Sunday under the chairmanship of its president Abdul Majeed Nizamani, demanded provision of water at Kotri barrage during the ongoing rice sowing season.

In its monthly meeting, the SAB noted that the second week of July had started, but the shortage of irrigation water at Kotri barrage continued and there was no hope of water in the days to come. Farmers were in deep trouble due to non-availability of water flows, it said, adding that such situation was causing damages to crops.

It said that a large number of farmers were not able to sow seed for paddy's nurseries while those who had prepared nurseries were not able to transplant the crop. Consequently, it said, plants grown in nurseries had been destroyed for want of irrigation water.

The meeting observed that there was no doubt about the fact that water was not being made available to Sindh in line with its share. But, it said, it was also an established fact that whatever flows were available in the irrigation system, the provincial authorities were not able to distribute them judiciously.

It was due to corruption and mismanagement that the flows were not judiciously used by the authorities, it said, adding that surprisingly water was made available in those areas where cultivation of rice was banned under law. But the areas where such cultivation was not banned did not get supplies even for drinking.

It demanded the government ensure the required water flows at Kotri barrage as soon as possible.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1492681>

AS WATER DISAPPEARS, PARCHED SINDH DELTA FARMERS MARCH NORTH

Reuters Updated July 09, 2019

KARACHI: As shopkeeper Ali Akbar went to open his store last week along the main street of Thatta, he found himself wading through a sea of people who had blocked the road, causing an enormous traffic jam.

It wasn't a political rally the normal cause of such crowds. It was people without water.

"They were demanding the government declare a water emergency and resolve their woes on a war footing," Akbar told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in a telephone call. "It was extremely hot, but they remained resolute." Over a week, the people had walked 140 km from the Indus delta region, desperate to find an answer to worsening water shortages and land losses to erosion in their home villages.

Zuhaib Ahmed Pirzada, a young environmental activist from Thatta, said an original 50 or so marchers from the area around Kharo Chan where the delta meets the Arabian Sea, were joined by others as they marched north.

By the time the crowd reached Thatta, there were 1,500 marchers.

Tanzeela Qambrani, a lawmaker from Badin district, said the region has seen the "slow death" of the delta for many years.

Water expert Simi Kamal, who works at the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund and started a foundation focused on water and food security, said the spread of large-scale irrigation along the Indus River is partially to blame for less water reaching the delta.

But she said "mismanagement" of water, including wasteful flood irrigation and failure to leave enough water in systems to support nature, played a far bigger role.

"Together these have been catastrophic for the environment as well as the local population," she said, predicting that a shifting climate would only make the problem worse.

The Indus is a water lifeline for over 200 million Pakistanis, about 50 million of them near the rivers end in Sindh, according to the US-Pakistan Center for Advanced Studies in Water and other agencies.

A report by environmental and development group Lead Pakistan said that as demands on the Indus water grow, the delta is receiving less than a third of the water it needs.

The flow is also less than what it is due under a 1991 water-sharing accord among Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces, the report said.

Khalid Hyder Memon, a former irrigation department official in the Sindh provincial government, said he felt Punjab province, upstream, was "stealing" water that should be Sindh's share.

He said repeated protests and requests over the last two years for a water audit by an independent body had not yet been acted on by the Indus River System Authority, which monitors water distribution and sharing.

An audit would establish how much water there is in the system and how much is released to each province," said Memon, who worked on irrigation issues for 37 years.

But Usman Tanveer, deputy commissioner of Thatta, said recent shortages of water in Sindh were in part the result of cool June temperatures in Gilgit-Baltistan's Skardu district, with less snowmelt coming from the foothills of the Karakoram mountains.

"It takes between 17 to 25 days for the water from Skardu to reach us. The unprecedented and persistent low temperatures delayed snow melt and created havoc for us," he explained.

Qambrani said the Sindh government needs to show "seriousness" in dealing with growing water threats as climate pressures become the new normal, and as sea level rise and less water and sediment flowing down the Indus erodes delta land.

"Here in the delta, the sea is fast swallowing up our land. The government must come up with a sound plan now or we will have a huge population of climate refugees to deal with," the legislator said.

On Sunday, the international Green Climate Fund announced it was providing \$35 million in funding, supported by \$12.7 million in funds from Pakistan, to improve water management and farming practices in eight climate-hit districts in Pakistan, including in Sindh and Punjab provinces.

The six-year project, which the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation will begin running this year, aims in part to help small-scale farmers learn how to farm with less water.

It will also give them access better weather information to plan more effectively for droughts and other climate-related risks.

On the orders of Sindh chief minister, a government team met those leading the march to Thatta, and listened to their demands.

Those included remodeling of waterways, installation of many more desalination plants, repair of non-working plants, and closure of illegal fish farms.

If they install at least 100 other reverse osmosis plants for the nearly 400 big and small villages in the coastal belt of Sindh, our drinking water problem would be resolved," said 27-year old Ayaz Lashari, one of the organisers of the march.

Tanveer, the Thatta district commissioner, said the irrigation department had already begun visiting illegal fish farms, which had been slapped with notices of closure, he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

The farms use water allocated for irrigation and do not pay the required water tax, he said.

We would like people to come up and tell us exactly who is stealing the water and from where and we will take immediate action," he promised.

Lashari, one of the marchers, and his large extended family once owned 600 acres of farmland, where they had 300 cows, 250 buffalos and a Jeep, which was unheard of then, he said.

They grew sugarcane, cotton, wheat, rice, vegetables and the finest, most sweet bananas, he said.

Now, however, 267 acres of their land have now been lost to the sea, he said, and another 275 acres have become saline and infertile.

My brothers and uncles just cultivate 27 acres of the remaining 58 acres, as we do not have the financial resource to buy inputs for the entire 58 acres," he said.

He and his family live in a rented house on rented land, with his father supplementing the farm income by working in a government department, Lashari said.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1492996>

PROTESTERS BLOCK HIGHWAY AGAINST WATER SCARCITY IN BADIN

A Correspondent July 09, 2019

BADIN: Farmers, activists of political parties and members of general public who came onboard tractor-trolleys and bullock carts from several adjoining villages gathered at Khorwah Chowk and staged a sit-in on Badin-Karachi section of National Highway on Monday in protest against persistent water scarcity in canals of Shaheed Fazal Rahutaluka. Talking to journalists, Save Badin Action Committee leaders Ameer Azad Panhwar, Khalil Ahmed Bhurgari, Mir Noor Ahmed Talpur and others regretted that authorities concerned had paid little heed to resolving nagging water crisis in the district despite continuous and peaceful protests.

They said that on the one hand Pakistan Peoples Party lawmakers too were holding officials of Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (Sida) and irrigation department responsible for the water crisis in tail-end areas while on the other they were reluctant to even meet their voters who were on roads to demand their due share in water.

They demanded that flows of at least 50,000 cusec be ensured at Kotri Barrage so that all farmers could water their land for rice cultivation. Time for rice cultivation was fast running out, they said.

They said that if the Sindh government really wanted to save farmers from economic disaster it should immediately remove blockages as well as Sida director Mir Ghulam Ali Talpur.

They accused irrigation officials of selling water to influential landlords after receiving huge bribes, leading to shortage of water in tail-end areas particularly in nine distributaries of Khorwah and Golarchi.

They said that Shaheed FazilRahutaluka had not received water for many months, causing paddy nurseries to dry up completely.

Tampered water modules were also a major cause of water shortage, they said and rejected Sida claims of restoring water supply during the first week of July. They termed it a joke with poor growers and called for immediate restoration of water supply to save farmers from further losses.

Pakistan Peoples Party leader Dr Dodo Mehri, who also participated in the protest in solidarity with farmers, said that water shortage was inflicting great pain on people of Badin district and urged top PPP leadership and high-ups of Sindh government to come forward and save the district from further destruction being wrought by prolonged water shortage.

Framers in Khorwah, Badin, TandoBago, Shadi Large, Kadhan and other towns of the district held similar protests against the nagging water crisis in most parts of the district.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1492950>

SINDH'S WATER WOES

Editorial July 11, 2019

UNDER the scorching sun, they marched north, from Kharo Chan to Thatta. Approximately 1,500 people traversed 140km over the course of nearly one week by foot. The marchers had a singular demand: the government should put an end to the water crisis they faced. Their lament is not new. For years, the province has struggled with acute fresh water shortages and loss of land due to soil erosion. For a country that contains a number of mighty and small rivers along its length and breadth, it is nothing short of a tragedy that a basic necessity of life cannot be accessed by all its citizens. The reasons for the current crisis are multifold: some allege mismanagement of water, or decry the increase in illegal fish farms and large-scale irrigation along the Indus. Others bring up provincial hegemony, which results in smaller provinces being neglected and not receiving their due share. Sindh, in particular, is largely dependent on the Indus to meet its water needs for drinking and agricultural purposes. It is supposed to receive 42pc of the shared water from the Indus basin, according to the Water Apportionment Accord 1991, but experts argue the figure needs to be revised as it does not take into consideration the province's current population numbers and changed landscape.

Additionally, the mangroves that once protected the coastal belt from sea intrusion have been destroyed on a large scale due to increased salinity in the water, along with rapid urbanisation and industrialisation. Despite several replantation drives conducted over the past two decades, there has been a great loss of land, particularly in the areas between Keti Bandar and Shah Bandar. According to environmentalists and farmers, much of the Indus delta has now been engulfed by horizontal sea expansion, and its economy and way of life are threatened.

Some have warned of a worsening situation in the near future, predicting large-scale climate based migration. The reality of climate change cannot be denied any longer as it threatens lives and livelihoods. Already, the province has suffered greatly and witnessed both floods and droughts. A water policy that is people-centric at its core and takes the current context of the province into mind is the need of the hour. Let's not forget that water is also a basic human right.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1493395>

DRY BATTLE: PUNJAB LODGES COMPLAINT AGAINST WATER LOSSES IN SINDH

By Rizwan asif Jul 11,2019

LAHORE: Punjab and Sindh have entered into a new water dispute. The Punjab government, in a written complaint filed with the Indus River System Authority (Irsa), has maintained that the Sindh irrigation department has deliberately and wrongfully installed water gauges at Guddu Barrage.

In addition, the complaint maintains, Sindh's irrigation department is making use of seven-year old discharge table for ascertaining water discharge instead of the updated table. Consequently, the amount of water losses resulting from irrigation operations at Guddu Barrage in Sindh has reached 28%, which they called "not conceivable".

All of the country's provinces have had years-long understanding for management and supply of water. According to the agreement, any province where water losses go beyond 5% will prepare a new water discharge table.

Taking notice of the complaint, Irsa Chairman SherZaman Khan has set up a committee to monitor water supply at Guddu Barrage. The committee will also review the water gauges and discharge status at Sukkur and Kotri barrages and submit its report to the chairman. Earlier, Punjab's irrigation department sent a letter to Irsa on June 20 in which it maintained that its teams had obtained details of water discharge levels at Guddu barrage.

According to the findings, the letter maintained, Sindh's irrigation department has been gauging water levels from the discharge table prepared in 2011-12, adding that the department has also wrongfully placed its gauge machines 130 feet from head regulators instead of placing them on the dedicated gauge wells. These machines should be at a distance of 1,000 feet from the head

regulators and directed downstream, the letter explains.

The letter further states that Sindh's irrigation department has been claiming that the water losses between Punjab and Guddu Barrage range between 19% and 28%, which is "not conceivable". The letter demands that Irsa launch an immediate inquiry.

On the chairman's instructions, Irsa operations director has formed a committee, which includes the operations director himself, the authority's members for Sindh and Punjab, and one representative each from the provincial authorities concerned.

The committee has also been told of the inspection schedule of the barrages.

According to the schedule, the committee started to monitor Guddu Barrage from July 9, while the inspection will be complete by the end of the day on July 10. The committee will then inspect Sukkur Barrage and related canals between July 14 and July 17, while also recording the water discharge levels.

Similarly, the inspection for Kotri Barrage would take place between July 19 and July 21. After monitoring all of the barrages, the committee will present a report to the Irsa chairman.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2010552/2-dry-battle-punjab-lodges-complaint-water-losses-sindh/?amp=1>

SHC ISSUES NOTICES TO IRRIGATION OFFICIALS TO EXPLAIN WATER SHORTAGE IN BADIN

Shoaib Ur Rehman July 13, 2019

HYDERABAD: The Sindh High Court has issued show cause notices to 7 officials of the Sindh Irrigation Department and Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (SIDA) including Secretary Irrigation over shortage of water in Badin district.

The bench comprising justiceSalahuddinPanhwar ordered the 7 respondents to explain as to why they should not be booked in an FIR registered under the sections of Pakistan Penal Code for not providing water to the area. "as to why they shall not be booked under PPC for committing a serious crime by depriving the tail-end khatedars from drinking and irrigation water thereby making their lives miserable," the judge stated.

He also ordered Sindh Secretary Irrigation to organize a public hearing with the farmers of Ahmed Raju area in Shaheed FazilRahataluka of Badin district on July 20. Justice Panhwar directed the Secretary to also submit a complete report to ensure that the farmers of Chakri, Nukerji, Grari and Mari Masyo minors, Garari and Ahmed Rajo regulators received due share of water without any hindrance.

The SHC issued notices to Deputy Advocate General to assist the court in deciding deployment of Rangers to help the irrigation officials in controlling the water theft.

The court also took on record the site visit report submitted by 1st Civil Judge and Judicial Magistrate Badin district Waqar Hussain.

The judge stated in the report that during his visit he witnessed hardly half feet water levels in Jhole Branch and Guni canal against the requirement of over 3 feet water levels.

He noted that the water currently being supplied was hardly sufficient for drinking purpose for the humans and livestock animals living in those areas.

The SHC adjourned the hearing to July 23 while also putting Deputy Commissioner and SSP Badin on notice to personally appear in the court.

<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/07/13/509495/shc-issues-notice-to-irrigation-officials-to-explain-water-shortage-in-badin/>

FARMERS STAGE SIT-IN ON HIGHWAY TO PROTEST WATER SHORTAGE

A Correspondent July 13, 2019

BADIN: A large number of farmers, their supporters and families, including women, staged a sit-in on Badin-Karachi highway in Tarai town, about 17 kilometres from here on Friday to register protest against persisting water crisis in Badin district for past many months.

The protesters ended their protest after director of Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (Sida) Mir Ghulam Ali Talpur and some officials concerned met them and assured that their areas in the tail-end of Imam WahJagir canal would be provided water within 12 hours.

Traffic flow on the busy highway remained badly affected for over one hour due to the demonstration.

Meanwhile, farmers staged a protest against the nagging water crisis in Shaheed FazilRahutaluka during a public gathering being addressed by Badin deputy commissioner DrHafeezSiyal in Golarchi town.

The protesters asked the officer to keep his word and provide water to all the rice producing areas of the district. Sida and irrigation officials were nowhere to be seen to regulate gauges of water channels, they complained.

The DC assured the protesters that the departments concerned were making sincere efforts to provide water to every farmer of the district.

The farmers in Kadhan, Badin, Talhar and other towns of the district also took out rallies and staged demonstrations to register protest against unjust distribution of water in their areas and press the functionaries to provide them their due share in water.

Khalil Ahmed Bhurgari, Mir Noor Ahmed Talpur, AzizullahDero, Khuda Dino Shah and other leaders of Save Badin Action Committee told local journalists said that thousands of farmers would gather in Talhar town today (Saturday) to protest against water crisis and urge the Sindh government to remove blockages from canals and Sida director, who was creating hindrances to supplying water to the tail-end areas of the district.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1493661/farmers-stage-sit-in-on-highway-to-protest-water-shortage>

. BADIN FARMERS CALL OFF MONTHS LONG PROTEST AFTER OFFICIAL ASSURANCES

A Correspondent Updated July 14, 2019

BADIN: Leaders of Save Badin Action Committee called off on Saturday the rallies and sit-ins farmers had been staging for several months against severe water shortage in the district after receiving assurances from PPP lawmakers and officers concerned that the district would be provided water by July 20.

However, the leaders warned at a press conference at Badin Press Club after meeting with the government's delegation that if their demands remained unmet they would call a strike in all towns of the district after July 20.

PPP Badin chapter general secretary Haji Sain Bux Jamali reached the hunger strikers' camp in Talhar town set up by the committee where a large number of farmers from different parts of the district were staging protest and requested them to hold talks with his party leaders and officials in Badin.

Afterwards, the committee leaders Khalil Ahmed Bhurgari, Mir Ghulam Rasool Talpur, Mir Noor Ahmed Talpur, Azizullah Dero, Khuda Dino Shah, Ameer Azad Panhwar and others held talks with Adviser to Sindh Chief Minister Ashfaq Ahmed Memon, MNA Mir Ghulam Ali Nizamani, Senator Dr Sikandar Ali Mandhro, MPA Taj Mohammad Mallah, MD Sida Wali Mohammad Naich and other officials of Sida and irrigation department at the irrigation office in Badin and placed their demands before them for just distribution of water in the district.

Mr Memon and PPP lawmakers assured the leaders that all the areas of the district would receive ample water by July 20. They reportedly held out assurances that action would also be taken against those, who were found guilty of creating hindrances to judicious distribution of water and its regulation in channels of the district.

They told the committee leaders that Sindh government would also request Rangers personnel to help them in their efforts to take action against water thieves who were stealing water from Kotri Barrage to Alipur regulator.

Earlier, a large number of farmers took part in a 12-kilometre long march on foot from Senghari bus stop to Kadhan town to register their protest against the nagging water crisis in the channels of Kadhan irrigation sub-division.

Azizullah Dero, Ameer Azad Panhwar and other leaders led the march.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1493850>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JULY 15th TO JULY 21st 2019

AJK GOVT SETS CONDITIONS FOR KOHALA POWER PROJECT

Tariq Naqash July 15, 2019

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) government has agreed in principle to the construction in private sector of 1,124 megawatt Kohala Hydropower Project (KHP) but with certain conditions.

A tripartite agreement in this regard is likely to be finalised and inked by the parties soon, it has been learnt.

These conditions were worked out by a subcommittee of the AJK cabinet which was constituted on July 3 to deliberate about four points regarding settlement of issues linked with the public sector Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project (NJHP), KHP and Mangla Dam extension project.

The 12-member subcommittee was headed by Senior Minister Chaudhry Tariq Farooq and comprised four other ministers and seven civil servants.

The KHP envisages diversion of River Jhelum from Saran in Jhelum Valley district (diversion weir) through a tunnel with its powerhouse and outfall near Barsala village of district Muzaffarabad.

The preliminary execution stage, involving identification and acquisition of land, was started by Kohala Hydropower Company (KHCL) two years ago.

However, as the commissioning of NJHP in 2018 reduced water flow in Neelum River downstream the dam site in Nauseri and triggered public outcry in Muzaffarabad, the KHP execution process was also adversely affected.

A peaceful sit-in camp against the second diversion of Jhelum River was set up by civil society activists near press club for more than 80 days before it was uprooted by the local administration.

According to sources, in September last year Prime Minister Raja Farooq Haider had taken up the matter regarding the "environmental and social impact" of NJHP and KHP with Prime Minister Imran Khan following which the federal secretary for water resources was directed by the latter to analyse the situation and report back to him.

The report was submitted to Prime Minister Khan on April 1 and its recommendations were instantly endorsed by the AJK government.

At its July 3 meeting, the AJK cabinet had deferred a draft agreement jointly authored and agreed by AJK civil servants and KHCL. Instead, the senior minister led subcommittee was formed for its recommendations on four points which according to Mr Haider were acknowledged by Mr Khan as well during their meeting on June 20.

The conditions proposed by the subcommittee were approved by the AJK cabinet in totality in its July 10 session but a formal press release about it was not issued by the government.

These conditions would be forwarded to Private Power Infrastructure Board (PPIB) and KHCL for incorporation in the draft of tripartite agreement which the subcommittee had recommended, sources said.

However, the subcommittee had advised that the feasibility studies for environmental impact and mitigation measures should be conducted by experts hired by the AJK government through competitive bidding but their cost should be provided by the KHCL or the federal government.

On pending issues of NJHP, KHP and Mangla Dam, the subcommittee suggested that the NJHP agreement and implementation agreement on KHP should be signed on the same day and reports on NJHP and KHP should be approved and incorporated in the respective agreements.

The subcommittee had also recommended that the Mirpur-Mangla-Mansehra-Muzaffarabad Motorway project under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) should also be initiated.

Regarding the pending issues of Mangla Dam extension project, it had called for completion of leftover work of five satellite towns, including water supply and sewerage system, gas provision, inclusion of extended families, funds for enhanced land compensation, completion of Rathua Haryam Bridge, provision of 614 cusec water for Mirpur and revival of watershed management activities.

Of the tourism framework for AJK by National Tourism Control Board (NTCB), the subcommittee had proposed that the AJK government should proactively engage with NTCB for extension of environmental and tourism initiatives of the federal government to AJK. It had also proposed that the newly constituted agriculture task force in Pakistan should finalise a framework and way forward for AJK.

On the fourth point of bringing of all major water issues before the next Council of Common Interests meeting, the subcommittee had proposed constitution of a seven-member committee of civil servants for liaison and coordination with the concerned divisions and ministries of the federal government.

Other than these issues, the cabinet had agreed that the minimum ecological flow in Jhelum River downstream the composite dam in Saran should be equivalent to 42 cumecs.

Regarding the water bodies, the cabinet had decided that KHCL should first undertake a third party feasibility study from its own resources to be approved by the AJK government and PPIB, before initiating their construction in accordance with an environmental no objection certificate.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1494144/ajk-govt-sets-conditions-for-kohala-power-project>

WORK ON DASU PROJECT TO START SHORTLY: VAWDA

APP Updated July 16, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Water Resources Faisal Vawda has said the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecne) has approved the 4,320MW Dasu hydropower project and that work on it would start shortly.

Addressing a press conference on Monday, the minister said the project had been delayed for three and a half years and as a result the national kitty was suffering a daily loss of Rs300-360 million.

He said an inquiry was being conducted to determine who were involved in delaying the important project. The country had suffered a loss of billions due to this criminal negligence.

In response to a question, Mr Vawda said the previous government took a loan for the project without acquiring land for it. He said efforts would not only be made to curtail its cost but also to complete the project within the next four years.

He said the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) had inaugurated 34 projects without arranging funds and only two could be completed.

However, he said, the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) would start projects for which funds were available. The minister said a special plan was devised for Sindh which would be a surprise to the people. However, he said the prime minister would announce the plan.

In response to another query, Mr Vawda said that conspiracies were being hatched to malign the state institutions. However, he categorically said the government would not bow down and the process of accountability would continue.

Responding to a question regarding video leaks, the minister said that every institution had its own complaint centre. The judiciary was an independent institution and would look into the matter, he added.

He said earlier a conspiracy was hatched to malign the National Accountability Bureau and now such tactics were being made to malign the judiciary.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1494387/work-on-dasu-project-to-start-shortly-vawda>

FARMERS PROTEST WATER SHORTAGE

Published: July 16, 2019

LARKANA: Farmers and peasants of various villages of Larkana district reached Irrigation Department Complex on Monday and held a protest demonstration in its corridor against acute water shortage. They said that they complained to the engineers at the irrigation department several times for releasing water into the respective

irrigation drains but they have been denied water so far as they are selling water to influential landlords. They said that if water is not released quickly, their lands will become barren.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2014173/1-farmers-protest-water-shortage/>

GROWERS HOLD PROTESTS AGAINST UNAVAILABILITY OF WATER IN IRRIGATION CHANNELS

A Correspondent July 17, 2019

BADIN: Growers on Tuesday again staged demonstrations in various districts to register their protest against unavailability of water in their respective water channels.

They blocked the Hyderabad-Golarchi road at Jarki bus stop near Kario Ghanwar town for many hours to register their protest against what they called an artificial water crisis in their areas. They also staged a sit-in on the Karachi-Badin road at Mourjhar bus stop to show their anger and indignation against officials of the Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (Sida) and irrigation department for failing to provide them with due share of water for paddy cultivation. Due to severe water crisis in the areas, rice seedlings getting mature were withering away, they said and vowed to continue their protest if their demands were not met.

Meanwhile, leaders of the Save Badin Action Committee told local journalists that irrigation officials were least interested in just distribution of water in many parts of the district despite assurances held out by the top officials and lawmakers from Badin that all the tail-end areas of the district would get required water by July 20.

Mir Noor Ahmed Talpur, Khalil Ahmed Bhurgari, Syed Khuda Dino Shah and Azizullah Dero said that they were in contact with farmers and other stakeholders to get ready for the “decisive” movement against corrupt and inefficient officials. They said they would not hesitate to use all peaceful means to register their protest by giving a lockdown call in all the big and small towns of the district for an indefinite period of time.

They hoped that the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leaders would also join them in their protest.

They said that some forces were still busy trying to save the “controversial” Sida director, who according to them was behind the mess created in the district.

During a public hearing (open katchehri) in Bilawal Bhutto Park on Monday in Tando Bago town, some PPP leaders as well as the deputy commissioner of Badin and other officials assured farmers of the district that they would get their due share of water.

Speaking on the occasion, PPP MNA Mir Ghulam Ali Khan Talpur said that the party leadership was fully aware of the problems of the common people of the district.

As per commitment with the leaders of farmers, all possible efforts were being made to provide water to every tail-end farmer for crop cultivation before July 20.

Mr Talpur said development schemes had hit snags due to “step-motherly treatment” being meted out to the provincial government by the federal government. He said that Tando Bago town would get a modern National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) unit from the Sindh government, which was earlier sanctioned to be established in Matli town.

“The people of Matli town and its other areas can have easy access to the NICVD unit already set up in Tando Mohammad Khan. So I am trying to get the new one shifted to Tando Bago town,” he added.

Badin DC Hafeez Ahmed Siyal said that he was himself supervising water distribution as well as regulation in the canals of the district. He asked the participants of the gathering to directly contact him or any other officials concerned with regard to the issues of their respective areas.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1494460/growers-hold-protests-against-unavailability-of-water-in-irrigation-channels>

SHC ORDERS APPOINTMENT OF COMPETENT WASA CHIEF

By Our Staff Correspondent | 7/19/2019 12:00:00 AM

HYDERABAD: A division bench of the Sindh High Court, Hyderabad circuit, has directed the secretaries of finance and local bodies departments to personally appear before it on Aug 1.

It has asked the Knance secretary to provide details along with breakup of the funds released to the Hyderabad Development Authority (HDA) over the last 10 years and specify whether separate funds were released for Wasa.

The bench comprising Justice Salahuddin Panhwar and Justice Adnan Iqbal Chaudhry was seized with a petition filed by Advocate Sajjad Ahmed Chandio regarding drinkingwaterissueof Hyderabad.

It also ordered the chief secretary to appoint a competent officer as managing director of the Water and Sanitation Agency (Wasa) within a week. The appointee must have reputation and skills in drinking water supply system, it said. The bench asked the petitioner to also include the Cantonment Board Hyderabad (CBH) as a respondent. The order was passed by the bench after hearing Hyderabad Commissioner Abbas Baloch, Wasa's managing director Ghulam Mohammad Kaimkhani, additional MD Saleemuddin and finance director Mohsin Jafri as well as the petitioner.

Additional Advocate General (AAG) Sindh Allah Bachayo Soomro filed statements of Hyderabad Development Authority (HDA) director general, Wasa managing director and others showing last five years' procurement of alum/chlorine. Irfan Bughio represented HDA and Wasa officers.

The bench noted that the statement showed that no chlorine was used between 2014 and 2016 and in 2018, which was indeed alarming. It asked the commissioner to conduct a probe and submit his report to help ascertain whether criminal negligence was committed and whether funds were made available to Wasa.

The bench also asked the LG secretary to appear in person and explain comprehensive mechanism to regulate the water issue of urban areas of Hyderabad by providing a roadmap.

Regarding Wasa officers' contention that Sindh government was not releasing funds/granting aid for water distribution, the court ordered the finance secretary to submit a complete breakup of the funds released to the HDA over the last 10 years specifying whether a separate budget was provided to Wasa for water supply. The bench ordered the finance and LG secretaries to personally appear before it and explain the delay caused in the release of funds.

The court adjourned the matter to Aug 1.

During the hearing, the Wasa MD informed the bench that he was holding the additional charge of the HDA director general. On this, Justice Panhwar wondered why dual charge was given to him.

He also asked the MD why chlorine was not used in the specified years despite allocation of budget for the purpose.

This summons registration of an FIR against the then MD, he remarked.

MD Kaimkhani admitted that chlorine was not used in 2017-18 as it was not available then. He explained that 240kg of chlorine a day was required for Wasa's 30MGD (million gallon per day) filtration plant. 'The court can remove me [over the lapse],' he remarked. According to Mr Kaimkhani, Wasa purchases chlorine from two Lahore-based companies. It supplies filtered water from its plant but the actual problem lies in the distribution system, where it gets mixed with effluent in the broken drainage conduits.

He stated that Rs400m schemes for 2019-20 had been approved by Sindh government for water supply lines.

Commissioner Abbas Baloch brought it to the court's notice that Wasa lacked capacity of executing various works after many of its engineers retired. 'During a recent surge in typhoid cases, we learnt that water supply lines are mixing up with drainage lines,' he said. He contested Wasa officers' claim that government did not provide grants to the agency.

Wasa's finance director Mohsin Jafri interjected to argue that Wasa provided filtered water worth Rs471m to government departments while provincial government allocated just Rs125m annually under the head of water charges; thus a Rs346m deficit was being borne.

'Provincial departments owe Rs2.6bn to Wasa. We are also not able to pay salaries to employees for five months,' he said, adding that Wasa's subsidy of Rs15m was discontinued in 1992.

Mr Baloch also stated that Sindh government wanted to reconcile these bills while Wasa wanted deduction of water charges at source.

Petitioner Chandio contended that service stations were getting water from Wasa and domestic consumers were forced to seek private water supply through tanker service. He said that domestic users were blamed for unpaid bills. He said that commercial connections were allowed while recoveries were not properly made.

Mohsin Jafri undertook to provide details of service stations and recovery of water charges from them. He said that 67pc recovery in commercial sector was made.

The CBH, he added, paid one month's bill to Wasa after six months while Rs3.1m monthly water/sewerage billing to it was being regularly done.

https://epaper.dawn.com/DetailImage.php?StoryImage=19_07_2019_117_007

HASNAIN MIRZA VOWS TO LAUNCH CAMPAIGN AGAINST WATER CRISIS IN BADIN

A Correspondent July 20, 2019

BADIN: Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) parliamentary party leader in the Sindh Assembly Barrister Hasnain Mirza on Friday called for judicial monitoring of water distribution in Badin district, arguing that there was no justification for the provincial government's resorting to implementing rotation regime when adequate water was available in the system.

Speaking to this reporter after meeting local growers' leaders and councillors at Mourjhar farmhouse over the last three days, MPA Mirza said some retired judges should be given the task of monitoring the distribution system and ensuring flow of adequate water up to tail-end areas of Sindh.

In the meantime, he added, some honest officials should be brought in to help overcome the persisting water crisis in the district.

"Badin district's due share in water is being denied under a conspiracy to turn its fertile lands barren," he alleged, and warned the government functionaries concerned against executing it. He asked them to mend their ways and restore the district's due share forthwith.

About the rotation system, he argued that water supplied this way was useless for growers as they could not cultivate rice crop unless adequate and uninterrupted flows were ensured during the extremely hot weather conditions prevailing in the province.

Barrister Mirza criticised the Sindh government for its indifferent attitude towards the growers' plight, and noted with concern that none of its officials concerned had bothered to approach the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) so far to seek water as per the indent.

He said his mother, Dr Fehmida Mirza, in her capacity as a federal minister, had on July 4 approached Isra and drew its attention towards the deepening water crisis in the district.

The MPA urged the judiciary to look into the worsening situation. He called for deployment of Rangers to check water theft from Indus and canals.

Referring to his meetings with leaders of various farmers' organisations, he said they wanted him to lead a vigorous campaign to force government to take appropriate measures to bring an end to the crisis.

He said the growers and his supporters in the district were evolving a strategy to launch the campaign if adequate water supply to the district was not resumed by Saturday (today) as was promised by leaders of the ruling Pakistan Peoples Party including its MNA from the area.

He said that the government and its officials concerned were forcing people to take to the streets by not paying heed to growers' frantic calls amid a drought-like situation. He recalled that he had moved a resolution in the Sindh Assembly on Feb 19 calling for the removal of all blockages and closure of flood canals but it was being ignored since then despite several reminders sent to the government.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1495065/hasnain-mirza-vows-to-launch-campaign-against-water-crisis-in-badin>

PPP LEADERS, LG REPRESENTATIVES LEAD PROTEST IN SUJAWAL AGAINST WATER SHORTAGE

The Newspaper's Correspondent July 20, 2019

THATTA: Local leaders and activists of Pakistan Peoples Party, among them a former provincial minister, elected members of local bodies and farmers took out a rally and staged a sit-in on main intersection of Sujawal, Thatta and Badin highway in Sujawal town on Friday in protest against acute shortage of water in vast coastal area of the three districts.

Traffic on both sides of the highway remained blocked for over two hours when the protesters and their supporters, wearing black armbands, holding banners and waving sickles and spades mostly from Thatta and Sujawal's coastal areas, staged the sit-in.

Former provincial minister and sitting president of PPP's Sujawal chapter Mohammad Ali Malkani, chairman of town committee Sher Ali Shah Bukhari, member of district council Haji Shokat Malkani and other party leaders, who led the protest, said that the coastal districts had been experiencing acute shortage of water for over a month.

They said that unbridled greed, criminal negligence and mismanagement by irrigation department had created drought-like conditions in coastal talukas of Kharo Chhan, Shah Bandar, Jati, Kodaryu, Garheli, Jungo, Kalka and Zero Point. They said that lack of water downstream Kotri Barrage for last couple of years had wreaked havoc with Indus delta and its adjacent areas, forcing a large population, mostly fishermen communities and labourers, to migrate towards urban areas.

They contended that riverine network of tributaries, outlets and channels had dried up and wore the look of a desert due to complete lack of water.

They said the situation had become so alarming that school attendance in the area had drastically dropped and children as well as pregnant women were facing malnutrition and starvation.

They said that cattle heads were dying and paddy seedlings were withering away which would ultimately render irreparable financial losses to growers and population in general.

They said that if water was not released to coastal areas it would ruin ecology as well as rural economy.

They warned that despite their affiliation with ruling party they would not hesitate to expand their protest campaign in coming days if the irrigation department failed to listen to their genuine grievances and release water to lower Sindh to save growers from starvation.

A large number of members of civil society, political activists affiliated with various other parties and people from almost all walks of life also joined the protest which ended peacefully after the sit-in.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1495066/ppp-leaders-lg-representatives-lead-protest-in-sujawal-against-water-shortage>

EFFORTS AFOOT TO ADDRESS WATER ISSUE: SHAHWANI

OUR CORRESPONDENT BU 20 July, 2019

QUETTA. Provincial government spokesperson Liaquat Shahwani said on Thursday that the water issue in Quetta has spiralled out of control while adding that adequate steps were being taken to ensure supply of clean drinking water to the residents of the provincial capital.

"It isn't just our agriculture, economy and other sectors that cannot function without water, but our very survival is dependent upon it," the spokesperson said in a statement.

He added that on the directives of Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Kamal, the provincial government had called a high-level meeting of officials concerned to discuss the water crisis.

"The small dams, including the Mangi dam, will be used to plug the gap in water supply while the Water and Sanitation Agency (Wasa) has been asked to ensure that tube-wells in Sariyab are made functional," he said adding that the current government has allocated funds in the resolution of the water crisis.

https://epaper.tribune.com.pk/DisplayDetails.aspx?ENI_ID=11201907200076&EN_ID=11201907200025&EMID=11201907200012

IRRIGATION DEPT LAUNCHES OPERATION AGAINST WATER THEFT

By Our Correspondent Published: July 21, 2019

KARACHI: The provincial irrigation department has launched an operation against illegal watercourse modules and tampering of outlets, on the instructions of Sindh Chief Minister (CM) Syed Murad Ali Shah. The initiative has been taken to ensure the equitable distribution of water to the tail-end users.

Larkana Right Banks Canal Chief Engineer Saeed Jagirani sent a report to the CM, informing him that he has started the operation against illegal modules and tampering of water outlets as there have been complaining about several channels haven't been receiving their share of water. Larkana district administration, police and Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) have offered their complete support and cooperation to the irrigation department, as it launched the operation in different areas.

In the first phase of the operation, all illegal modules and outlets were removed from Saifullah Canal and Dhanraho Canal, and water was released to channels which had turned dry due to water theft. Similar operations were also carried out on Kirthar Canal, Warah Canal, Dadu Canal and Mehar Branch.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2017914/1-irrigation-dept-launches-operation-water-theft/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JULY 22nd TO JULY 28th 2019

BADIN FARMERS RESUME PROTEST AGAINST UNFAIR DISTRIBUTION OF WATER

A Correspondent July 22, 2019

BADIN: Enraged farmers took to the streets in several towns of the district on Sunday to protest against 'delinquent' officials of Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (Sida) and irrigation department for their failure to ensure fair water distribution in tail-end areas.

Adviser to Sindh chief minister Sindh Ashfaq Memon and high-ranked officials of Sida and irrigation department had promised to leaders of Save Badin Action Committee in the presence of lawmakers from Badin a few weeks back that the district would get water and fair distribution of water would be ensured in tail-end areas but it did not happen, according to the committee leaders.

The farmers staged demonstrations in Badin, Kadhan, Tando Bago, Pangrio, Kario Ghanwar, Rajo Khanani and other towns of the district to vent frustration over the failure of the authorities concerned to regulate water flows in a just manner.

They held the officials of Sida and irrigation department responsible for the persisting water shortage problem and demanded immediate removal of Sida director Mir Ghulam Ali Talpur and dismantlement of blockages in canals.

They deplored that unavailability of water in most tail-end areas had caused large-scale damage to their crops including rice, chief crop of the area. Most farmers had not enough water for cultivating paddy despite the bitter fact that there was more than enough water at Kotri barrage, they said.

The committee leaders Khalil Ahmed Bhurgri, Mir Ghulam Rasool Talpur, Mir Noor Ahmed Talpur and others, who led protests in different towns, claimed that officials were destroying fertile lands of Badin district under a conspiracy by stopping water flows to most parts of the district.

They regretted that it was height of callousness and injustice to stop water flows into canals of Shadi irrigation sub-division for the past five days when irrigation officials were releasing more than 30,000 cusec water downstream Kotri barrage.

They said that on July 23, a historic shutdown would be observed in all big and small towns of the district in protest against the nagging water crisis which was mainly caused by blockages in canals and incompetent Sida director Ghulam Ali Talpur.

Meanwhile, on Saturday provincial irrigation secretary Saeed Ahmed Magnejo accompanied by Badin deputy commissioner Dr Haseeb Ahmed Siyal and Sida and irrigation officials had reached Ahmed Rajo area of Shaheed Fazil Rahu taluka to assess the water situation on the orders of the Hyderabad circuit bench of the Sindh High Court, which had received an application on July 12 from Mir Mohammad Talpur, a landowner, about persisting water shortage in the district.

The secretary and other officials concerned assured farmers during a meeting that they would get their due share of water within next seven days. If the Sida officials had discharged their duties properly to regulate water flows in the area they would not have to hold open katchehries here, he said.

He warned that no mistakes by local functionaries would be tolerated and asked farmers including the petitioner to keep in touch with officials till they received their due share.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1495414/badin-farmers-resume-protest-against-unfair-distribution-of-water>

WATER WARS IN THE OFFING!

By Khalid Saleem Published: July 22, 2019

Coming across one of the scores of billboards that blight the skyline of major cities of this blessed land, one finds that a certain bottled brand has the distinction of being 'Pakistan's favorite water'.

One reason behind this rushed announcement is that our economy whiz kids have all of a sudden realised that there is big money to be made from water. This commodity, that was not only freely available once, but also considered nature's gift to humankind, has now — thanks to the mixed priorities of our merry band of planners — become a saleable commodity, out of which millions can be earned without much effort.

The only hurdle in the way of this cut-throat brigade was that this precious commodity was available in plenty in this Land of the Pure (read Poor). So, what better way to vault this hurdle than to contaminate our natural sources of water, in order to oblige an already impoverished multitude to get addicted to bottled water they cannot afford? What will they think of next? Bottled fresh air, perhaps!

It may sound old fashioned, but one can distinctly remember the time when the ultimate thirst quencher was, well, plain water! When one felt thirsty they would instinctively opt for a refreshing glass of fresh water. If they felt like living it up in the hot weather, there was the luxury of iced water. This now appears to be history if you happen to belong to the benighted but bejeweled brigade.

It is now considered 'infra-dig' to drink water if you happen to be thirsty — you are supposed to go for what is euphemistically called 'a beverage'. For those who still thirst for plain old water, the powers-that-be have thought up the concept of 'designer water'. Public Relations agents have thereby managed to give a whole new meaning to the phrase 'liquid assets'.

While this game is played in the prosperous societies — and by association in the prosperous segments of the poorer societies — the overwhelming majority of the world's population does not have access to clean drinking water.

Those (including inhabitants of our blessed land) whom nature has endowed with abundant water resources are being deliberately denied access to this natural resource by their 'planners', in order to swell the local market for the beverage multinational giants.

At this point, perhaps the multinational beverage giants can be reminded of their duty towards humanity. Profits from the sale of bottled beverages (even if we are to count only the developing world markets) are astronomical. Would it be too much to expect these multinational giants to put aside a small proportion of their profits (say 10%) to be utilised — under the general supervision of the UN — for projects intended for the express purpose of making clean drinking water available to the deprived sections of the world populace? Such projects could help raise the image of the UN from an ineffectual debating society to that of a utilitarian organisation working for the general upliftment of the peoples it is supposed to represent.

History has seen wars that were fought to gain control of various natural resources. The most recent have been the wars fought for oil. It appears highly likely that the wars of the foreseeable future will be for the control of the world's water resources.

In the Middle East and occupied Palestine, the struggle for the control of water sources has already started, while India's obstinacy about Jammu and Kashmir may be directly traced to her desire to control the upper reaches of the water sources flowing into Pakistan.

An authority on ecology once said: "there is no problem faced by a developing country that cannot be traced back to water: either its shortage or its surfeit".

The world has learned the hard way to take water seriously. As always, we are several steps behind. Yet, it is never too late to make amends as there are bitter lessons to be learnt from history. As they say, fore-warned is fore-armed.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2018363/6-water-wars-offing/>

SHC ORDERS ACQUIRING OF POLICE, RANGERS' ASSISTANCE TO CHECK WATER THEFT

By Our Staff Correspondent | 7/24/2019 12:00:00 AM

HYDERABAD: A division bench of Sindh High Court Hyderabad circuit here on Tuesday ordered action against water theft cases in the tail-end areas of Kotri Barrage and Rohri Canal's command systems with the assistance of police and Rangers personnel in the wake of written undertaking submitted by Sindh Irrigation Secretary Dr Saeed Magnejo during proceedings of the case.

The bench, comprising Justice Salahuddin Panhwar and Justice Adnan Iqbal Chaudhry, passed the order on a petition filed by one Mir Mohammad whose lands are fed by Kotri Barrage. On the plea, the court on July 12 had issued show-cause notices to the irrigation secretary, Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (Sida) managing director (MD), Kotri Barrage chief engineer, Left Bank Canals Area Water Board director, Kotri Barrage left bank circle superintending engineer, Guni canal division executive engineer and Golarchi sub-division Badin assistant executive engineer.

The bench heard the irrigation secretary at length. He was asked to submit a detailed mechanism under which water flows' availability is to be ensured to the tail-end areas of Rohri Canal and Kotri Barrage command. The Sida MD and Kotri Barrage chief engineer Shafgat Wadhu briefed the bench about tail-end areas of all four canals emanating from Kotri Barrage as well as their designed discharges.

'We don't receive any petition from those having lands upstream canals and these are always received from the tail-end areas' growers,' Justice Panhwar observed. He referred to the orders passed at Sul(kur bench in 2018 regarding water shortage issues.

He told the irrigation secretary that the irrigation department was the custodian of water flows being made available to it in the system. He said that while rice crop was grown despite a ban, the tail-end growers did not get water even for drinking. 'We have seen litigants literally weeping in court while demanding irrigation water flows for their lands.

Will any of your officers weep in court?' he quipped.

He wondered whether there was no other officer like Mansoor Memon of Nara Canal area water board who had addressed water shortage issue in Nara Canal's tail-end areas which were badly hit by water shortage last year. The secretary agreed that Mr Memon had indeed worked brilliantly.

He said that was all terrorism and dacoity of water flows. He said that it was the question of survival of people.

The irrigation secretary informed the court that the issue mostly pertained to non-perennial canals which did not get any water between October-March period in line with the Water Apportionment Accord 1991. He said that old and new Phulleli canals were both non-perennial channels which got their supplies only in April.

Justice Panhwar contended that whatever flows were available needed to be distributed judiciously. He said the court could offer assistance to irrigation officials in this respect. He expressed that while upper riparian get 100pc water flows, the tail-end growers were not getting them. The judge at one point hinted at referring cases of irrigation officials with 10 years of service for verification of their assets to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) but did not pass an order.

The secretary conceded that 100pc flows were not being ensured to tail-end farmers.

Justice Panhwar observed that irrigation officials had no time to read judgements passed in Zafar Ali Shah and Khadim Hussain cases.

Under court's directives, the secretary irrigation, MD Sida, left bank canals area director and others submitted two-page undertaking through Additional Advocate General (AAG) Allah Bachayo Soomro, defining comprehensive mechanism for vigilant monitoring for proper regulation and distribution of water supply to tailenders in the command areas of Kotri and Sukkur barrages.

According to it, sub-divisional level vigilance committee, comprising assistant commissioner, assistant executive engineer concerned, representative of the police department, for monitoring equitable distribution of water would be formed from head to tail.

A committee headed by the executive engineer (XEN) concerned along with police and Rangers would launch operation against water theft.

The XEN concerned would seal illegal/ tampered watercourses, remove illegal pipes, lift machines and confiscate their machines and would lodge FIR against persons found involved in theft cases.

A request for deployment of Rangers has already been made to the home department to assist irrigation staff during duty. In some areas the authorities have started operation with police and Rangers. A committee led by the deputy commissioner, Sida director/ superintending engineer, the SSP concerned would supervise the operation against water theft.

Chairman of the Area Water Board (AWB) concerned, Sida director, superintending engineer of the circle concerned would be responsible for coordination and implementation of operation against water theft and other irregularities and ensure fair distribution of water.

Concerned chief engineer/Sida MD would be responsible for overall supervision and regulation/vigilance for all actions to be undertaken for control of water theft/ irregularities, regulation and distribution of water under allocation supply/availability of water. The irrigation secretary would pay visits at least 10 to 15 days in a month and fix headquarter at Sukkur Barrage and Kotri Barrages three or four days a week.

In view of undertaking, the court ordered establishment of the rescue centres in every taluka falling in tail-end areas and they would be run round the clock under competent officer for surveillance.

It directed the irrigation secretary and chief secretary to ensure formation of committees in light of the abovementioned orders passed at Sukkur bench. It ordered that the Nara Canal (Mansoor Memon) director shall provide complete assistance to replicate water distribution measure applied in Nara Canals` command in Kotri Barrage and Rohri Canal`s commands for two months.

It said that no disturbances shall be caused while implementing such mechanism by the said director and all district and sessions judges of respective areas shall assist him if required by deploying magistrates. It directed the AIGs Sukkur and Hyderabad regions to register water theft cases.

It said that Rangers would monitor situation between March-July period to ensure water supply to the tail-end khatedars. A scheme should be prepared to purchase boats to handle situation during breach and during floods. The process should be completed through third-party contract under Public Private Partnership Act.

Concurring with petitioner`s view it ordered that since he got water belated flows, therefore he should be compensated. The court ordered removal of officials working on the own pay scale (OPS) basis in a month. No such officer would be appointed, it said.

It asked the Sida MD to examine cases of petitioners and redress their grievances by passing specific orders with compliance to court within three weeks. It ordered removal of encroachments over irrigation bungalows within one month and list be provided to the court about the bungalows occupied by persons other than irrigation officials.

https://epaper.dawn.com/DetailImage.php?StoryImage=24_07_2019_117_007

PTI LAWMAKER BLAMES SINDH GOVT FOR WATER CRISIS IN BADIN

A Correspondent July 25, 2019

BADIN: Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) MNA Mohammad Alamgir Khan has held the Sindh government responsible for the worst water crisis in the tail-end areas of lower Sindh despite availability of more than enough water in the system.

“It is the height of injustice and callousness on the part of rulers in Sindh that farmers are not getting the water they require for rice cultivation despite the fact that there is so much unused water which is being released downstream Kotri Barrage,” he said.

Mr Khan, who is known for his civic awareness movement, FixIt, was speaking to Mir Noor Ahmed Talpur, chief of the Save Badin Action Committee in Talhar town on Wednesday.

He assured farmers of Badin district that he would take up the issue of nagging water crisis in the tail-end areas for the past many months.

Lauding the relentless struggle launched by farmers of the district for getting their due share of water, he said incompetent rulers in Sindh were not willing to regulate flows of water. He assured the farmer leaders that he would take up the burning issue in the next session of National Assembly so that pressure could be mounted on the Sindh government to draw its attention towards the unending miseries of the farming community.

Mr Khan said the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) rulers were only interested in plundering public money and they had no concern for resolving the core issues of the province.

He alleged that the PPP rulers and their “blue-eyed boys” in various departments, including in irrigation and Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (Sida), had made lives of people miserable.

He said Prime Minister Imran Khan during his visit to the US proved himself to be a genuine and great leader of Pakistan. Such people could change the fate of nations, he said.

Briefing the PTI lawmaker, Mr Talpur said most parts of the district were deprived of water mainly due to blockages erected by Sida and irrigation department in canals to divert flows of water of their share towards the lands of influential landlords in the command area of Sukkur Barrage.

He said callous rulers as well as selfish officials were bent upon destroying agriculture of the district by stopping water to the tail-end areas for the past 10 months.

He hoped that the farmers would get relief from judges of Sindh High Court where they had filed a petition against the water crisis and blockages.

Other PTI leaders, including Muqheet Nizamani, Daud Altaf, Junaid Leghari and others said that due to malpractices committed by the PPP rulers, the entire Badin district had turned into ruins.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1495960/pti-lawmaker-blames-sindh-govt-for-water-crisis-in-badin>

IRRIGATION DEPARTMENT FAILS TO STOP WATER THEFT: PTI MPA

RECORDER REPORT JUL 25TH, 2019 KARACHI

PTI MPA Riaz Haider expressed serious concerns over shortage of water in Karachi accusing the hydrant mafia of the artificial water shortage. He said police is playing the role of silent spectator on the incident. Riaz Haider said there is water problem in the whole city but his constituency is affected more. In view of the hydrant, 70 percent of the tankers are going to my area, he added.

He said the Irrigation Department has failed to stop water theft and the water board is being used politically. During the shortage of water in Hub Dam, we were still getting water and now even though there is water in Hub Dam, we are not getting water, MPA said.-PR

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/07/20190725500007/>

CM DIRECTS KWSB TO ENSURE JUDICIOUS SUPPLY OF WATER

RECORDER REPORT JUL 27TH, 2019 KARACHI

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah directed Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) to launch rotation system for distribution of water in the city and inform the public through its website so that people know when they would get water. He said this, presiding over a meeting of Local Government (LG) department held here on Friday to evolve strategy regarding arrangements and preparations for monsoon/heavy rains starting from July 29 and work out a plan for equitable distribution of water in the city. The meeting was attended by Sindh LG Minister Saeed Ghani, Principal Secretary to the CM Sajid Jamal Abro, Commissioner Karachi Iftikhar Shahalwani, LG Secretary Khalid Hyder Shah, MD KWSB Asadullah Khan and other concerned officers of water board.

The chief minister emphasised that KWSB has to ensure transparency. He made clear the system could not be left at the mercy of valvemmen. LG Minister Saeed Ghani said that there was 406MGD net supply of water in the city against a requirement of 918MGD. The chief minister noted almost 50 percent shortage; therefore, he directed distribution of water must be made equitably. "A rotation system as is planned by the irrigation department during water shortages may also be replicated by KWSB in the city," he said, adding that "presently, some areas are getting water regularly while others are waiting for weeks- this is injustice and unfair practice," he said.

Murad Shah said he had solid reports that the valve-men had established their parallel sway in the water distribution system. "The valve-men involved in favouritism must be identified and criminal cases may also be initiated against them," he asked LG minister. He also directed KWSB MD Asadullah Khan to work out a detailed rotation plan and upload it on its website so that people must know when they would receive water. He also directed him to launch operation against illegal water connections and theft. "It is also a big challenge for KWSB and must be dealt with, accordingly.

The chief minister also urged LG minister to engage water board engineers for proper maintenance and upgrading of water distribution system so that 30percent line losses/theft could be controlled. "If you succeed in controlling 30 percent water losses, you will be able to save 174MGD water, a big deal," he told the minister. Heavy rains: The chief minister said that the Met department issued a forecast of heavy rains starting from July 29 in Karachi; therefore,

necessary arrangements, including cleanliness of nullahs, proper maintenance of sewerage system and repair of depressions on the road must be made.

Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani said 16 nullahs were under KMC control and they were given Rs 500 million, last year. The chief minister said that the KMC must have a work plan for cleaning of nullahs so that necessary funds could be released.

He said that the KMC must make profiling of each and every nullah, including their length, cemented and non-cemented portions, squatted portions, choking points, the points from where filth and garbage was dumped or dropped in the nullah, etc. "Without a detailed engineering plan, you cannot clean nullah or maintain them," he said.

Minister Saeed Ghani said he had convened a meeting of all local bodies of the city in which a comprehensive plan would be worked out to handle heavy downpour efficiently. He said he was in touch with other civic agencies operating in the city so that a joint working plan could be made.

The chief minister directed him to keep all the concerned staff on alert and keep inspecting all the troubling points where rain water accumulates so that they could be maintained properly. Murad Shah urged KWSB to begin patrolling on bulk transmission system, canals, siphons, conduits and other installations located in the areas of Dhabeji, Garho, Pipri and NEK pumping stations and filter plants. In case of power failure at the pumping station, complaint must be filed with K-Electric immediately so that water and pumping stations could function smoothly. MD Water Board Asadullah Khan gave the chief minister detailed briefing regarding the preparedness for the expected heavy rains.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/07/20190727500587/>

PTI LEADERS ACCUSE SINDH GOVERNMENT OF DELAYING VITAL K-IV PROJECT

RECORDER REPORT JUL 27TH, 2019 KARACHI

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Sindh chapter's information secretary and MPA Jamal Siddiqui said the Sindh government is not serious to expedite crucial mega project - K-4. Addressing a press conference in committee room of Sindh Assembly, MPAs Jamal Siddiqui, Riaz Haider and Shahnawaz Jadoon here Friday said the Sindh government is delaying this vital water supply project, as it is not serious to address artificial water crisis in the metropolis.

They said, today the most pressing problem of entire Sindh is unjust distribution of water. He said people have to face immense problems for getting even drinking water. They said water-riots like situation and growing tension in the megacity over water shortage need a serious attention. They said the K-4 project is being deliberately made a white elephant.

PTI leaders said this is a workable and viable project and it could provide 250 million gallons water to the megacity in coming two years. They said as per a feasibility this project could be completed within one year with a saving of Rs 260billion. They said Usmania Company has already submitted a hydro system plan and the KWSB also endorsed it. The PTI leaders said Sindh government should show seriousness on K-4 project while the federal government has provided funds for this project and Rs 11 million has already spent on it. They said if this crucial project is politicized, it would become another victim of red-tape. They said the government is creating problems for the contractor of this project. They said untrained staff is deputed on this project, who do not know the technicalities of this crucial project. They appealed to chief of the army staff to depute some senior engineers of the engineering corps of the Pak Army to supervise this project. They said small dams should be constructed to save river water that goes into the sea. Jamal Siddiqui said if the government of Sindh leaves this project alone the federal government is ready to work on it. He said democracy is so free now that it has already reached Kot Lakhpat Jail. He said desalinization is a costly project and not economically viable.

He said we want to tell the government of Sindh and KMC that the Nullahs in Karachi are already choked and in case of heavy rains the metropolis could face floods. He said if some expert is deputed to supervise the K-4 project, it could be successfully completed. He said we praise the performance of FWO that they have completed the project by 70percent.-PR

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/07/20190727500588/>

CM MURAD DIRECTS KWSB TO DEVISE 'ROTATION' PLAN FOR WATER SUPPLY

By Our Correspondent Published: July 27, 2019

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister (CM) Syed Murad Ali Shah has directed the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) to launch a rotation system for distribution of water in the city and keep the public informed about the schedule of water supply through its website.

“KWSB has to manage the entire system in a transparent manner,” he said on Friday, while presiding over a meeting of the local government department to design a strategy for the monsoon rains, starting July 29. The meeting also discussed a plan for the equitable distribution of water in the city.

The local government minister said that the city was currently receiving 406 million gallons per day (MGD) per day against its requirement of 918MGD. At this, the chief minister remarked that there was almost a 50 per cent shortage, therefore, the water must be distributed equitably.

“A rotation system, such as the one implemented by the irrigation department during water shortages, may be replicated by the KWSB in the city,” he said. “Presently, some areas are getting water regularly while others keep on waiting for weeks.”

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2022336/1-cm-murad-directs-kwsb-devise-rotation-plan-water-supply/>

SPEAKERS CALL FOR MAKING WATER KEY DEVELOPMENT AREA

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter July 28, 2019

KARACHI: Acute shortage of water across Sindh is forcing millions of people to spend a large amount of their hard-earned money daily to secure water for their families. Such dependence keeps the masses in cycles of poverty. This situation highlights the immediate need to prioritise water as a key development area, if poverty and inequality are to be reduced.

These were some important points shared during a discussion jointly organised by Strengthening Participatory Organisation (SPO), local government department and SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) Unit of the Sindh government and WaterAid-Pakistan on Friday at a local hotel.

Titled ‘SGD Leadership Forum on Water & Sanitation-Karachi’, the event was attended by a selected number of legislators, civil society and private sector representatives.

Speakers laid great emphasis on the fact that access to clean drinking water and basic sanitation services were fundamental human rights and the government’s failure to provide these amenities deprived people of equal opportunities for a healthy, educated and financially secure life.

There were also concerns over the government’s performance and speakers were of the opinion that all targets set by the provincial government to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals wouldn’t be met until the local government system became fully functional and the technical capacity required to implement the plans was available.

The lack of trust among various departments and parties and non-existence of pricing mechanism for water sanitation services, some speakers pointed out, were important reasons behind lack of availability of water and sanitation services in Karachi.

“Capacity-building, awareness raising, adequate resource allocation and management at the union-council level are significant measures that need to be taken to address water and sanitation-related issues,” said Mohammad Hussain Khan, former local government and town planning minister, presently representing the MQM in the provincial assembly.

There was also a need to set up a local government commission to ensure accountability of the local government system, he added.

Mohammad Qasim Soomro, an MPA and member Legislators Core Group on Water and Sanitation, noted that issues within the local government system were responsible for causing public health problems, such as water contamination and lack of access to proper water supply and sanitation.

“Only a strengthened local government backed by a political system could deliver safe drinking water to people,” he said, underscoring the need for developing a water master plan for Karachi to address the city’s chronic water issues. Syed Abdul Rasheed, member Provincial Parliamentary Task Force on Sustainable Development Goals, spoke about the health crisis the province faced due to contaminated water and said that if “we could ensure supply of clean drinking water, not only our health indicators would improve, it would allow us to use our financial resources efficiently”.

Project manager of SGD Unit, Sindh, Mumtaz Ali, referred to a report which indicated that Rs100 billion would be required annually to achieve sustainable development targets whereas the provincial government estimated an investment of Rs36bn.

“The government of Sindh alone cannot bridge this financing gap. There is a need for coordinated efforts of multiple stakeholders,” he said.

Nadeem Ahmed representing WaterAid called for prioritising water as a key development area. “Doing that, not only poverty can be reduced but also health, and education indicators can be improved”.

Mohammad Shakil Qureshi, director investment, Karachi Water Supply & Sewerage Services Improvement Project, informed the audience about KWSB’s plans for the city according to which the utility has started a \$16bn project with the support of the World Bank, which would be completed in four phases.

The project is mainly focused on improvement in the KWSB system and structures; ultimately the project would increase efficiency and quality of water if successfully implemented.

Legislators, civil society activists and water experts also participated in a panel discussion focusing on issues related to water and sanitation and the role of key stakeholders to resolve it.

In her concluding remarks, Raheema Panhwar representing the SPO said the organisation had set up a legislators’ WASH core group consisting 25 MPAs. It was also providing support to legislators and the local government department in water and sanitation sector in collaboration with WaterAid.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1496552>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM JULY 29th TO AUGUST 4th 2019

MAGSI ADDRESSES IRRIGATION WATER CRISIS

A OUR CORRESPONDENT 29 JULY 2019

QUETTA. Provincial Minister for irrigation Nawabzada Tariq Magsi on Friday visited Kirthar Canal to address the irrigation water crisis in Naseerabad division.

The irrigation minister visited Kirthar Canal from Bagh Head to Grank in Singh and heard the woes of local farmers. Another cabinet member Abdul Sattar Lakhti accompanied the minister with other officials including Riaz Ahmed Baloch, Nadeem Ahmed Dehwar and Mohammad Yar Magsi.

The irrigation minister reviewed the water flow of the major irrigating canal in the provincial green belt.

He directed the closure of all illegal external and internal water courses passing through the canal, adding that farmers had the foremost right on the canal water.

"The Irrigation Department will take strict action against water theft from the canal", Magsi said.

Nadeem Ahmed Dehwar shared the woes of farmers of Balochistan. They have been deprived of their due share of water from Kirthar canal which compelled them to use old and flawed irrigation system, he said.

"The due share of the province is 2,4000 cusecs of water from the canal but it receives 2,000 cusecs which threatens irrigation fields in Balochistan" he said.

https://epaper.tribune.com.pk/DisplayDetails.aspx?ENI_ID=11201907290142&EN_ID=11201907290043&EMID=11201907290023

FAO, SINDH GOVERNMENT DISCUSS CLIMATE-RESILIENT AGRICULTURE & WATER MANAGEMENT PROJECT

RECORDER REPORT JUL 31ST, 2019

KARACHI: The FAO representative in Pakistan Mina Dowlatchahi on Tuesday called on chairperson Planning and Development Board Sindh Naheed Durrani to discuss final steps to operationalise the recently approved climate-resilient agriculture and water management project in Umerkot, Badin, and Shanghar districts of the province. The Green Climate Fund (GCF) has provided FAO with a grant of nearly \$ 35 million for this work, while the provincial governments of Punjab and Sindh have committed an additional \$ 8 million and \$ 4.7 million, respectively, in co-financing to be managed by FAO.

The project will also be implemented in five districts of Punjab over a period of six years. It will develop Pakistan's capacity to collect information it needs and communicate it to relevant stakeholders to cope with impacts of climate change on agriculture and water management by putting in place state-of-the-art technology.

It will also build farmers' resilience through skills, knowledge and technology of climate-resilient approaches towards agriculture and water management. Thanks to support from the Green Climate Fund and the government, the project will constitute an important step in a longer-term process of transforming agriculture and water management in both Sindh and Punjab, where changing climatic conditions will require significant alteration in practices across sectors" said FAO representative Mina Dowlatchahi.

"The project will focus on setting this transformational process in motion and equip the government, farmers and other stakeholders to continue driving this process beyond project closure, hence reducing vulnerability to climate change", she said.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/07/20190731501651/>

MINISTER HINTS AT REVIVING KALABAGH DAM PROJECT

Khaleeq Kiani Updated August 01, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Water Resources Faisal Vawda on Wednesday hinted at reviving the Kalabagh dam project besides correcting 'by hook or by crook' the imbalances purportedly caused by devolution.

Speaking at a hurriedly called press conference to raise allegations of conflict of interest against PML-N leader Shahbaz Sharif unrelated to his ministry, Mr Vawda said that the previous governments had shelved the Kalabagh dam project due to the "influence of enemies of Pakistan", who always made water storage projects controversial.

The minister said he had ordered the project to be reviewed.

In reply to a question, he said: "Kalabagh was declared dead in ICU (intensive care unit), now I am the new doctor in-charge and have ordered preparations to re-examine it. I will not let the project be buried".

He said that the country was in dire need of new water reservoirs and these should have been constructed earlier. However, it was unfortunate that attempts were made to make several dam projects, including Kalabagh, controversial.

Replying to a query regarding the recent urban floods in Karachi, the minister blamed the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) for the fiasco. "It was the failure of the provincial government of the PPP as it did not give attention to timely clearing of storm-drains in the metropolitan. It is not my duty to remove encroachments from Karachi but we are playing our role through the National Disaster Management Authority, the corps commander of Karachi and other institutions," he said, adding that it was the duty of the provincial government to remove encroachments from the waterways.

Mr Vawda said that it was the responsibility of the local bodies and the provincial government to take precautionary measures to prevent flash floods in Karachi that had taken several precious lives.

He said that the federal government was extending all possible technical and logistic assistance to mitigate sufferings of flood-affected people in the city. The minister said that the federal government had provided funds to Sindh but the provincial government seemed least interested to spend money for welfare of the common man.

Mr Vawda said that he was not the relevant minister to comment on loss of human lives, public properties and economic and business losses and no effort could compensate these losses, but these "imbalances caused by devolution" needed to be corrected by "hook or by crook" so that these problems did not re-emerge in future. Such matters, he said, could be addressed through collaborative efforts of the federal and provincial governments but it was not affordable for the federal government to keep providing funds while the relevant (provincial) governments did nothing on the premise of 18th Amendment.

In reply to another question regarding the K-Electric's performance during the recent rains, the minister said that he was entitled to speak on the issue as Federal Minister for Power Omar Ayub looked after the matter related to electricity.

To another query, Mr Vawda said that transferring and sharing of water data was a settled issue between Pakistan and India, hoping that India would implement it. The minister however ruled out that India was targeting Neelum-Jhelum project. "As far as the security of Neelum-Jhelum project is concerned, it is under control and I have not received any report about India targeting it" he added.

Talking about another alleged case of Sharif family's corruption, Mr Vawda said that Ali Imran, the son-in-law of Leader of Opposition in National Assembly Shahbaz Sharif, had leased out a building, constructed with looted money, to the National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) on monthly rent of Rs3,565,800.

"Ali Imran was not able to rent out the building, located at M.M. Alam Road, Lahore, for quite some time, but later he managed to lease it out to the NBP, using political influence," the minister said in the opening statement of his news conference.

He said that the documentary evidence was being forwarded to the National Accountability Bureau for further proceeding, hinting that more corruption cases of the Sharif family would emerge in the coming days.

Faisal Vawda said that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz government had made "political appointments" in different departments to serve its purpose, get loans and make personal assets in the country and abroad.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1497388>

RAIN FILLS HUB DAM

By Ashraf Ali Published: August 1, 2019

KARACHI: Around 35 dams of varying sizes in the suburbs of Karachi were filled to the brim as rain poured over the city this week. The increase in underground water level would come in handy for irrigation of agricultural land and also benefit cattle farmers. Besides, drinking water would be available for over 1.5 million citizens for one year.

Hub Dam, one of Karachi's two main sources of water supply, filled up to 310 feet. As the water level previously stood at 298.5ft this spell of rain has increased water level by 11.5ft. The dam now has enough water stored to be able to supply 100MGD to Karachi till December 2020.

Speaking to The Express Tribune, Hub Dam Project Director Muhammad Ahtisham said that rainwater from Kirthar Range is gradually flowing towards Hub Dam. According to him, the water level of the dam rose during rainfall last winter because of which Karachi is being provided with 100MGDs of water and Lasbella is also being provided with 61MGDs since March. He claimed that the reservoir level of the dam is expected to increase till up to 339 feet -the maximum capacity of the dam – which would be enough to provide water for Karachi and Lasbella for three years.

Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) Managing Director Asadullah Khan confirmed that with the recent rise in water level, the dam has enough water stored to be able to supply to the port city till December 2020.

At its optimal, Hub Dam supplies 63% of its capacity, which comes to 100MGD, to Karachi's West district, as well as North Karachi and New Karachi which fall in the Central district. The remaining 37% of the dam's water is supplied to Lasbella.

Now that the reservoir's level has reached 310ft, after a good spell of rain in the catchment areas, it would mitigate the shortfall in its designated areas in West and Central districts.

However, residents of these areas have yet again been left yearning for the basic amenity on account of the poor planning of the KWSB.

All these areas, which include Baldia Town, Orangi Town and SITE are densely populated and also comprise large industrial complexes, for which the water supply always remain inadequate.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2025481/1-rain-fills-hub-dam/>

GOVT PLANS TO RESTORE OLD WATERWAYS, EXPLORE NEW ONES: MURAD

By Our Correspondent Published: August 2, 2019

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that his government is planning to construct a small dam or a storm water drain starting from the upper side of Northern Bypass to give way to the rain water flowing from the Kirthar Mountain range. A similar storm drain is also required in Hyderabad to save the city from flash floods, he added.

He disclosed these plans during a meeting with the new British Deputy High Commissioner Mike Nithavrianakis at the Chief Minister House on Thursday.

The chief minister and the visiting envoy discussed bilateral relations, trade and commerce, energy and also exchanged views on the recent downpour in Karachi and Hyderabad. The CM said that the natural waterways in both the cities have been encroached upon, which is why the rain water could not pass through through storm water drains.

He said that there is a natural drain called Lat Nai on the upper side of the Northern Bypass. Another natural drain known as Mokhi Dhoru starts at Al-Asif Square and terminates through Lyari River. Yet another drain originates from the lower side of Super Highway, covering Dumba Goth and Malir Cantt and terminating somewhere at Nathan Khan.

Shah said that the Northern Bypass, New Sabzi Mandi, various societies and townships have emerged on the natural storm water drains, leaving no passage for the water to flow toward the sea. "This is why all these localities are flooded when heavy rains are received in the city and its adjoining areas," he said, adding that the same was the case with Saadi Town.

"After unblocking natural drains, we have started de-watering the city with diesel pumps and other equipment," he said, adding that his government was planning to build two storm water drains starting from the mountain range. One would cover the upper side of the motorway, from the Northern Bypass area, New Sabzi mandi, Al-Asif Sqaure and would terminate in the Lyari River. The other drain would cover the lower side of the motorway, Dumba Goth, Safoora Goth, Malir Cantt and all the nearby areas and would terminate at the Nathan Khan storm water drain.

"I will commission a study and consult the relevant experts to explore the alignment of the proposed drain with natural gravity so that rain water from the upper and lower sides of the motorway could be disposed of smoothly," he said, adding that a small dam may also be constructed in the lap of the mountain range, somewhere at Gadap village area or Mahar mountain.

CM Shah also said that he had visited Hyderabad and found that all the natural waterways have been encroached upon. "I am planning to construct a new drain which can cater to the needs of the entire city," he said, adding that a study would be conducted shortly, otherwise in near future these both cities, Karachi and Hyderabad would be under threat of flash floods.

During the meeting, the chief minister told the visiting envoy that the Thar Coal power plant has started producing 660MW of electricity on commercial basis. “This commercial production started on July 17, 2019, and now we are working on expanding the coal mine in Block-II and power generation,” he said.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2026237/1-govt-plans-restore-old-waterways-explore-new-ones-murad/>

COURT ORDERS CHIEF SECRETARY TO DEPLOY RANGERS AT TAIL-END OF ROHRI CANAL

The Newspaper's Staff Correspondent August 03, 2019

HYDERABAD: The Hyderabad circuit bench of the Sindh High Court on Friday ordered formation of a committee to re-examine all direct outlets emanating from Rohri Canal and directed Sindh chief secretary to ensure deployment of Rangers at the canal's tail-end areas.

The committee should have an expert from Mehran University of Engineering and Technology as a member, said an order passed by a division bench comprising Justices Salahuddin Panhwar and Adnan Iqbal Chaudhry on a number of petitions filed by tail-end growers.

A petitioner Pir Bux Hashmani and others who were part of Tail Abadgar Tanzeem said that respondent officials of the irrigation department should be directed to ensure actual design of outlets and remove illegal pipes and machines from the entire command area of the Rohri Canal.

The petitioners claimed that their lands which fell in Khairpur Gamboh subdivision of the Rohri Canal system were not receiving water. They were represented by Ghulam Nabi Meo advocate. Rohri Canal superintending engineer Mukhtiar Abro told the court that if farmers felt that he was unable to provide water to their lands he could be removed.

He said that the farmers who had presented him ajraks as a mark of appreciation for his work were now criticising him. Justice Salahuddin Panhwar responded to his remark saying that a government officer had to work because it was his job regardless of whether it was appreciated or not.

The SE said that if growers wanted rotation programme to end he would end it. One of the tail-end growers told the court that while they were not able to get water even for drinking, landowners in two other subdivisions — Chang and Tando Allahyar — were cultivating 100pc of their lands, adding that there were 65 direct outlets along the canal system.

Mansoor Leghari advocate who represented a petitioner Saleem from Rohri Canal's command area said that he would be satisfied if his case was disposed of in the light of judgement passed on June 28, 2016, by the court's Sukkur bench. The court said the chief secretary should seek assistance from Rangers after meeting legal formalities and ensure the paramilitary force's patrolling along all canals of Sukkur and Kotri barrages to ensure water availability in tail-end areas.

The court said the committee should comprise irrigation officers including director of area water board of Nara Canal Mansoor Memon, Rohri Canal SE Mukhtiar Abro, Zareef Khero and an expert of MUET and it should be notified by the chief secretary.

The committee would be tasked with re-examination of direct outlets fed by the Rohri Canal, right from Sukkur Barrage to Khairpur Gamboh subdivision, the last and tail-end system of the canal out of 35 subdivisions, said the court.

It said the committee would submit its report within two months and the irrigation department would bear all its expenses. The report would be submitted to the court and its recommendations would be implemented by irrigation and power department, said the order.

In an identical matter, the bench handed over three daroghas (low-ranked officials of irrigation department) to police for remanding them to judicial custody over complaints of growers of Nara Canal area.

The court said that as the first warning daroghas were being sent to jail but if the situation did not improve the engineers would be next to follow them to prison.

An elderly farmer claimed that of 1,000 acres of his landholding, he had produced only 1,600kg of wheat in last season due to acute water shortage. He and others were being politically victimised and he, being around 90-years old, would not make any overstatement of their suffering, he said.

The court directed sub-divisional officer to re-examine the watercourses and ensure availability of water to the affected farmers or face legal consequences. A report in this regard should be submitted within 15 days and director of area water board should ensure implementation of the court's order, it said.

Sindh's Additional Advocate General Allah Bachayo Soomro urged the court to pardon daroghas on humanitarian grounds. After this the elderly landowner and others also forgave them and the court modified its earlier order, directing that daroghas not be posted in Nara Canal division.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1497719/court-orders-chief-secretary-to-deploy-rangers-at-tail-end-of-rohri-canal>

BUILDING NEW DAMS GOVT'S TOP PRIORITY: CMIT MEMBER

OUR CORRESPONDENT 03 AUGUST 2019

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister's Inspection Team (CMIT) member Abdullah Jan has said that the building of new dams remained a top priority of the provincial government to overcome water shortage.

He shared these views while visiting Killa Khudadad Zai Dam in the recent spell of torrential rains. "While the dam has been badly damaged, the provincial government has initiated reconstruction work," he said

Jan added that the provincial government was also looking for new reservoirs of water, keeping in view the current shortage in the province.

He directed authorities concerned to ensure that reconstruction work is completed to ensure that reconstruction work is completed on time without compromising on the quality of work. "Negligence will not be tolerated during the reconstruction process," he added.

Directing people of the district to avoid wasting water, Jan said: "The water level is declining in the province, particularly in Quetta. However, the government of Balochistan is utilising all resources to overcome water scarcity."

https://epaper.tribune.com.pk/DisplayDetails.aspx?ENI_ID=11201908030108&EN_ID=11201908030046&E_MID=11201908030013

AUGUST, 2019

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM AUGUST 05th TO 11th 2019

MANCHHAR LAKE RISES AFTER WEEKLONG HEAVY RAIN IN KHIRTHAR RANGE

By Our Correspondent | 8/5/2019 12:00:00 AM

DADU: Water level in Manchhar lake rose to 109.6 feet RL (reduced Level) as of Sunday in the wake of continuous rainfall in Khirthar range of mountains for the entire past week, according to irrigation department officials posted at the lake.

The torrential rain that caused flash floods in the hilly area cut off land links of over 450 big and small villages from each other and nearby towns over the past seven days.

The rain swelled the natural rainwater drain, Nai Gaaj Nullah, to 18 feet and caused damage to two main bridges at Josai and Daro Machhi villages and Wahi Pandhi-Gorakh hill station road as it sped downwards along its natural route.

At least 21 out of the 450 villages in western part of Dadu district were inundated. They were; Shafi Mohammad Loond, Fateh Mohammad Birohi, Soori, Rustamani, Jam Babar, Bahwal Babar, Pir Bux Lashari, Dodo Birhmani, Ghulam Lashari, Sawaro, Golo Faqir, Chhini, Gaji Shah, Qasibo, Fateh Mohammad, Bachal Shah, Ahmed Birhmani, Meer Khan, Balil Shah and Ahmed Birhmani.

Marooned villagers complained of shortage of food, clean water for drinking and medicines and said that no officials of the district administration had come to their rescue.

Sher Mohammad Mallah, in-charge of the irrigation department's emergency cell at Manchhar lake, said that since Nai Gaaj's water had started flowing into the lake in addition to rainwater from various other sources, the lake's level was on a steady rise and had so far risen to 109.6 feet RL.

He said that if and when the level reached 112 feet RL and continued to climb to 120 feet RL it would become dangerous. The lake water had overflowed its embankments when the level had reached 122 feet RL in 2010, he recalled.

Special assistant to Sindh chief minister for irrigation Ashfaq Memon told Dawn that water level in the Indus was also rising he said, adding at current level the lake did not pose any threat.

https://epaper.dawn.com/DetailImage.php?StoryImage=05_08_2019_115_006

SUFFICIENT WATER IN DAMS AFTER JULY RAINFALL: IRSA

Ikram Junaidi Updated August 06, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Indus River System Authority (Irsa) on Monday blamed climate change for the acute shortage of water in the country that persisted till June. However, it said that the situation had improved after July and there was sufficient water for the provinces.

“Though dams also get rainwater, they are mostly filled by snow melting. Unfortunately, this year the mercury could not touch the highest degrees due to which there was less water in the rivers till June 15. However, after that water levels started improving and currently there is sufficient water for the provinces,” Sindh’s Irsa member Mazhar Ali Shah said while briefing the Senate Standing Committee on National Food Security.

The meeting, chaired by Pakistan Muslim League-Functional Senator Syed Muzaffar Hussain Shah, was held at the committee room of the Parliament House.

The chairman said there was an acute shortage of water in Sindh during June and July due to which the cotton crop was severely affected in districts of Sanghar, Mirpurkhas and Badin.

“I have heard from most of the farmers that they suffered because of shortage of water this year,” he said.

However, Mr Mazhar claimed that the problem was till June 15 because after that the situation improved as water started reaching the tail end of the river.

“In the month of July, we had more water as compared to our demand. Currently, Tarbela Dam is almost full. There is a bit less water in Mangla Dam but it will also be filled if we get more rains,” he said.

The committee was informed by the Ministry of National Food Security that though there would be high production of cotton but 100 per cent target would not be achieved as Punjab had achieved 95pc and Sindh would achieve 96pc and so overall production of the cotton would be 95.5pc.

The committee chairman said that failing to achieve 100pc target would create problems for the All Pakistan Textile Mills Association and suggested that the government take steps to increase cotton production.

“Industrialists get tens of millions of rupees in loans from banks but farmers, despite holding 200 acres of land, are told that they can get up to Rs400,000 as loan. Currently, the cost of a tractor is around Rs1.6 million. Moreover, farmers have to pay for the labour, fertilisers and other services. The amount of loan, against land, should be revised,” he suggested.

A representative of Zarai Taraqati Bank Limited (ZTBL) said that during the last financial year Rs15 billion had been allocated for loans and Rs18bn was allocated for the current financial year.

The ZTBL representative said there was 92pc recovery of loans during the last financial year.

APP adds: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday accorded approval to a project proposed by the Minister for Water Resources Faisal Vawda and Water and Power Development Authority chairman retired Lt Gen Muzamil Hussain to resolve the issue of water in Sindh.

According to a PM Office press release, Mr Khan gave his nod while chairing a meeting on water resources and water issues in the country.

The meeting was also attended Water Resources Secretary Mohammad Ashraf and other senior officials.

The water resources minister will soon formally make the announcement about the project.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1498272>

QUARTER OF WORLD’S POPULATION FACING EXTREME WATER STRESS

AFP Updated August 07, 2019

WASHINGTON: Nearly a quarter of the world’s population lives in 17 countries facing extremely high water stress, close to “day zero” conditions when the taps run dry, according to a report released on Tuesday.

The Aqueduct Water Risk Atlas of World Resources Institute (WRI) ranked water stress, drought risk and riverine flood risk using a peer-reviewed methodology.

“Agriculture, industry, and municipalities are drinking up 80 per cent of available surface and groundwater in an average year” in the 17 worst affected countries, the WRI said.

“When demand rivals supply, even small dry shocks — which are set to increase due to climate change — can produce dire consequences” such as the recent crises in Cape Town, Sao Paulo and Chennai.

Qatar, Israel, Lebanon, Iran, Jordan, Libya, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Eritrea, the UAE, San Marino, Bahrain, India, Pakistan, Turkmenistan, Oman and Botswana made up the top 17.

“Water stress is the biggest crisis no one is talking about. Its consequences are in plain sight in the form of food insecurity, conflict and migration, and financial instability,” said WRI CEO Andrew Steer.

Another 27 countries comprised the “high baseline water stress” list and a full list can be found here:

<https://www.wri.org/our-work/project/aqueduct/>

The Middle East and North Africa are home to 12 of the most stressed countries, while India, which is ranked 13, has more than three times the population of the other 16 in its category combined.

“The recent water crisis in Chennai gained global attention, but various areas in India are experiencing chronic water stress as well,” said Shashi Shekhar, India’s former water secretary, adding that the tool could help authorities identify and prioritise risks.

Even countries with low average water stress can have dire hotspots, the report found. While the US ranks a comfortable 71 on the list, the state of New Mexico faces water stress on par with the UAE.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1498516>

PM OKAYS INDUS RIVER BARRAGE TO MITIGATE WATER WOES

Khalid Hasnain: Published on 08 Aug 2019

LAHORE: Prime Minister Imran Khan has formally accorded approval to Wapda to develop a water reservoir by constructing a barrage on the river Indus so as to address the long-standing water-related issues in Sindh (areas downstream Kotri Barrage and cosmopolitan city of Karachi).

The project located about 45km upstream of River’s outfall into sea, 65km south of Thatha and 130km east of Karachi city, has been named “Sindh Barrage” that is being dubbed a phenomenal mega scheme to address almost all water issues in downstream Kotri Barrage starting from sea intrusion to land erosion in delta, from adverse impact of climate change to loss of wetland habitats, mangroves and marine life, and from non-availability of freshwater for both irrigation and domestic use to mass exodus.

“It is really a unique project that will not only help the government finally end the water-related issues but also bring back the life in the area, which is no more due to sea intrusion, land erosion and migration of a huge population,” Wapda chairman retired Lt Gen Muzammil explained to Dawn on Wednesday.

“The PM, in a recent briefing, has also allowed us to start carrying out project’s feasibility study with immediate effect,” he added.

The Sindh Barrage Project was conceived and proposed by Wapda keeping in view the sea intrusion (Kotri due to non-availability or erratic / irregular availability of water, non-availability of freshwater for both irrigation and domestic use, exodus / migration of population, land erosion in delta and serious climate change impact and loss of wetland habitats, mangroves and marine life.

“Project objectives include water storage of 2.0 to 3.0 MAF to utilize 4.1 MAF of valuable resources, reduction in sea water intrusion and improvement in mangrove growth / marine life, irrigation water supply (5000 cusecs) to surrounding areas, improvement of ecology of Indus river downstream of Kotri, flood mitigation for surrounding 75,000 acres land and domestic water supply to Karachi and other towns (1000 MGD),” reads a presentation given to PM Khan by the Wapda chairman a couple of days ago.

It states that PC-II for feasibility study of the project would cost Rs350 million approximately.

The proposed project is scheduled to be completed in December 2024 by adopting a fast-track strategy. Wapda plans to commence the feasibility study next month followed by its vetting by international consultants by December 2020 and completion of detailed engineering design by December 2021.

Subsequently, construction of the project will start in January 2022 and complete in December 2024.

“We appreciate the PM for giving us a go-ahead to execute this important project that is aimed at resolving the long-standing water issues in Sindh,” the Wapda chairman said.

<https://reliefweb.int/report/pakistan/pm-okays-indus-river-barrage-mitigate-water-woes>

IRSA DETECTS WATER THEFT AT GUDDU, SUKKUR BARRAGES

By Khaleeq Kiani | 8/8/2019 12:00:00 AM

ISLAMABAD: A fact-finding team of water experts constituted by the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) has uncovered massive water theft, misreporting and malpractices, with the alleged involvement of irrigation staff, at almost all the measurement stations of Guddu and Sukkur barrages, resulting in up to 30 per cent water losses. The four-member 'high-powered discharge observation team' was constituted to 'ascertain excessive water losses' through onsite discharge measurement at Guddu, Sukkur and Kotri barrages.

The team comprising Irsa member from Punjab Rao Irshad Ali, Irsa member from Sindh Mazhar Ali Shah, Irsa operations director Khalid Idrees Rana and a chief engineering adviser's representative was assisted by the technical staff of Irsa, the provincial irrigation departments, and the water resources ministry through a third party, International Sedimentation Research Institute Pakistan (ISRIP) of Wapda.

In its final report submitted to the government, the team found massive misreporting, wrong measurement, theft and other irregularities in water discharges at almost all the randomly checked 13 measurement stations, a source in the ministry of water resources told Dawn.

The source added that the report also highlighted a very pathetic condition of canal maintenance.

The final report, also seen by Dawn, disclosed that while travelling with Balochistan Chief Engineer Abdul Sattar Lakhti along Desert Pat feeder on July 10, the Irsa members representing Punjab and Sindh noted 'therewere over 50 pipes (with diameters ranging between four and 10 inches along with electricity transformers and concrete water tanks) installed on the bank of the canal from head to tail at R.D. 38. This clearly indicated extensive water theft in broad daylight even on the main canal which must be checked' The team found about 6.25pc underreporting at Ghotki feeder, about 26pc 'exorbitant underreporting' at BS feeder, 14.3pc 'excessive underreporting at Indus River downstream Guddu and 3.3pc underreporting at Desert Pat feeder canal. As such, there was a total 'excessive underreporting' of 14.25pc or about 28,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) along Guddu Barrage from July 9 to 12. Besides, 13pc excessive underreporting was also noted at the Pat feeder canal, affecting Balochistan.

While examining the Sukkur Barrage water flow, a maximum 'exorbitant underreporting' of 29.72pc was recorded at Nara Canal. The report said the barrage authority believed the global positioning system could cause error in the measurement. Hence it was proposed by Dr Ali Asghar Mahesar that a rope could be used across the river for discharge measurement.

According to the observers, the barrage authorities 'wasted' about 36 hours of the Irsa team in having a discussion with them and then in the installation of a rope across the river before finally agreeing to use the GPS to maintain boat direction. The team observed the barrage authorities adjusted the downstream discharge during those 36 hours. All gate positions were observed showing water flowing over the gates.

The report concluded that it was established that about 27,589cfs (-14.25pc) was found misreported at Guddu Barrage. All the discharge activity was duly signed by all the stakeholders at the site.

It is also established that the Sindh irrigation department 'managed to manoeuvre the downstream Sukkur Barrage by wasting the time of about 36 hours to tie the rope across the river which was not possible and during the futile exercise it managed to adjust the discharge as being reported. Almost no difference was found at downstream Sukkur measured and reported discharges. The barrage authorities accordingly signed the discharge measurement sheets.

As per discharge measurement sheets, Nara Canal was drawing 21,486cfs against the reported flow of 15,100cfs (ie less reporting of 6,386 or about 30pc). The Sukkur Barrage authorities refused to sign the discharge measurement sheets, claiming that the current meter was not correct.

However, the same current meter was used to measure the discharge downstream Sukkur Barrage that all participants had signed because the difference was negligible.

Due to a disagreement of Irsa's Sindh member about the methodology for surprise or random selection of sites, the Irsa team decided to cut the visit short and abandon the discharge measurements of Kotri Barrage and canals.

Irsa's Sindh member was of the opinion that before moving ahead the Irsa team should intimate the daily schedule of discharge measurement to the barrage authorities instead of random selection of sites in the morning.

The report also noted that had the PID Sindh reported the correct discharges at Guddu Barrage, the conveyance loss would have been reduced from 21pc to 7pc, which clearly showed that excessive losses were being reported between Taunsa-Guddu reach. Similar position could have been established, if the discharge activities were allowed to be completed at Sukkur and Kotri barrages, the team opined.

The report 'strongly recommended that the position of misreporting' should be shared with the top leadership to check this malpractice.

According to the report, a similar malpractice had been pointed out by Irsa in its reports in 2016 and 2018. The team recommended that 'extensive water theft, on Desert Pat feeder, must be controlled by the Sindh government within the irrigation system'

https://epaper.dawn.com/DetailImage.php?StoryImage=08_08_2019_117_007

WATER CRISIS

Editorial August 09, 2019

WHEN the 1,000 to 1,500 protesters from Kharo Chan completed their ‘long march’ to Thatta in July, cries of “Karbala, Karbala” could be heard from amongst them. This was reportedly the third march of its kind since January — all part of an attempt to draw the government’s attention to the acute water crisis that is being faced by the coastal communities of Sindh. Marchers complained about the difficulty they had in simply accessing clean drinking water for themselves. For years, the Indus delta region has suffered from freshwater shortages and loss of land due to soil erosion. With a rising population, unequal distribution of resources and the pain of climate change being felt throughout the land, their cries turned louder. Sadly, they continue to fall on deaf ears. However, it seems that this predicament is not unique to them, but part of a worrying global trend. According to new data released by the World Resources Institute, 17 countries around the world have to contend with “extremely high” water stress — in other words, a quarter of the world’s population is at risk of running out of water. Besides Pakistan, the list includes Qatar, Israel, Lebanon, Iran, Jordan, Libya, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Eritrea, the UAE, San Marino, Bahrain, India, Turkmenistan, Oman, and Botswana. Several of the countries that are identified as ‘water-stressed’ face the dangers posed by two extremes of nature: floods on the one hand; and droughts on the other. For agriculture-dependent economies such as Pakistan, such erratic weather and rising temperatures spell disaster. In the past decade or so, we have witnessed both natural calamities. Together, they have created scores of climate change refugees in their wake and destroyed lives and property. But the reality of these extremes only further highlights the fact that the current water shortages are very much an issue of mismanagement of resources and the unnecessary wastage of water caused by shortsighted planning that does not take worst-case scenarios into account — until it is too late. For instance, groundwater is depleting at an alarming rate as it is not stored sensibly to see through difficult times. In a recent, rare appearance in parliament, the prime minister advised that we should “hope for the best, prepare for the worst” in the context of the increasingly hostile relations with India. One hopes that our policymakers extend this philosophy to the country’s water crisis as well.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1498902/water-crisis>

BALUCHISTAN GOVT TO RAISE WATER THEFT ISSUE WITH SINDH

By Mohammad Zafar Published: August 9, 2019

QUETTA : Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Kamal Khan Alyani presided over a meeting of ministers to review water issues harming the province’s green and agricultural belt.

The meeting expressed concerns over lack of water availability in Naseerabad due to theft by Sindh government that has been destroying agricultural land in Balochistan.

CM Alyani decided that a parliamentary group under his supervision would meet Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah to address the issue on urgent basis.

Former Balochistan chief minister and MPA Mir Jan Muhammad Jamali, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Water Resources Sardar Yar Muhammad Rind, provincial ministers Nawabzada Tariq Magsi, Umar Khan Jamali, Meer Saleem Khosa and Meer Muhammad Khan Lehri were also in attendance.

Briefing the session over water flow in Kirthar and Pat Feeder Canals, officials from irrigation department said that Balochistan had been facing shortage of 900 cusecs water, which has increased agricultural woes for the province. “We have not been receiving the water share from Sindh due to water thefts and mud that has been disturbing the flow toward Balochistan,” they said.

“Balochistan government will ensure provision of all necessary resources in order to address the water issue for Naseerabad, while commissioner of the division will be the focal person who would take into confidence all farmers regarding government decisions,” Alyani said.

Balochistan government has decided to embark re-modeling and desilting Pat Feeder Canal, while directed irrigation department to present plans for the projects.

The meeting agreed to shift Kirthar Canal’s regulatory system in Balochistan.

The provincial government approved two structures at Kachhi and Pat Feeder Canals and decided to approach federal government to commence construction on Phase 2 and 3 of Kachhi Canal.

The chief minister also inaugurated the newly-constructed expansion to the Quetta Airport Road and pledged to continue taking steps to ensure that Quetta returns to its past glory through beautification projects.

The Rs223 million worth project includes new street lights, pavements and a green belt along with the expansion and repair of the road.

“The expanded airport road will ensure smooth traffic flow on one of Quetta’s busiest thoroughfares along with increasing the beauty of the city,” Kamal said.

He also inspected other projects including the ongoing construction and expansion of several other thoroughfares.

There, the chief minister spoke to shopkeepers and residents of the areas where construction was taking place, and also solicited their opinion on the quality of material used in the expansion of the Joint Road.

Kamal said that the project regarding road expansion and beautification of Quetta city would continue under the Quetta Development Package, while the provincial government had also earmarked a sizeable amount in that regard.

The CM approved amendments in provincial government’s health reimbursement claims policy, allowing the health department director general to approve medical claims of Rs50,000 for government employees and their families.

The department’s secretary has been granted the power to approve medical claims of Rs100,000, while the chief secretary could approve medical claims of upto Rs2 million. Any claims higher than that amount would be directly approved by the chief minister.

A summary seeking amendments in the provincial government health reimbursement policy was submitted by the health department, which was approved by the CM.

The summary was moved in order to address the medical claims of government employees on immediate level.

Kamal said the provincial government has decided to dedicate Independence Day celebrations to people of Kashmir. He urged people to say special prayers for Kashmiris at Eidul Azha.

The CM was chairing a meeting to review security arrangements during the August 14 celebrations in Balochistan. Commissioners from all divisions participated in the meeting through video link.

The CM directed government departments to celebrate August 14 with full zeal and fervour and said the provincial government is taking full security measures for Eid and the Independence Day.

Discussing measure to ensure cleanliness during Eid, Kamal directed authorities to establish committees for collection and disposal of offal from across the city also asked the livestock department to install cameras at all cattle markets.

“Field officers of all departments would be held answerable as the government won’t tolerate any negligence in maintaining cleanliness during Eid,” Kamal said.

He announced that the provincial government would hold ceremonies and cultural functions on August 14

The chief minister directed divisional commissioners to maintain peace in their areas during Eid and August 14. He said from August 11 till August 15 emergency would be declared at all government hospitals and medical staff and doctors would perform their duties. The meeting agreed that all commissioners should visit their divisions regularly to review progress on development projects.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2031476/1-balochistan-govt-raise-water-theft-issue-sindh/>

EXECUTION OF RS36BN SCHEMES FOR SUKKUR, GUDDU BARRAGES KICKED OFF

The Newspaper's Correspondent August 10, 2019

LARKANA: The execution of twin giant schemes — Rehabilitation and modernisation of Sukkur and Guddu Barrages — with 80 per cent funding from World Bank, has been started.

This was stated by Irrigation Secretary Dr Saeed Ahmed Mangnejo who undertook an extensive visit to the sites along the right and left banks of River Indus.

Speaking at a press conference at the local press club on Friday, he said that the estimated cost of the two schemes was Rs36 billion. Giving a break up, he said the Guddu Barrage rehabilitation would cost Rs16bn and that of Sukkur Barrage Rs20bn. He said 80pc of the funding was being provided by World Bank.

Mr Mangnejo said that the remaining 20pc cost of Sukkur Barrage scheme would be shared equally by federal and Sindh governments.

He claimed that 20pc work on the Guddu Barrage scheme had been completed, adding that both the schemes were projected to be completed within the next three years but “we are trying to accomplish the task six months ahead of schedule”.

The irrigation secretary informed reporters that six gates of Sukkur Barrage were being manufactured at the Karachi Shipyard. The process of dismantling the islands that have developed at the barrage along the river’s course will be started soon, according to him.

In reply to a question about the status of talks between Sindh and Balochistan on water-sharing dispute, he said at the recent round of secretary-level talks in Karachi, it was felt that it was a technical issue that resulted in the dispute. He said that constant silting up of the beds of North Western Canal and Saifullah Magsi branch was found to be hampering water distribution between the two provinces. The system of measuring water installed at the distribution point was also not working properly, he noted.

Both provinces agreed in principle to either raise the canals’ banks or go for an extensive de-silting exercise to get the problems solved once and for all, he said.

Responding to a question about implementation of the 1991 Water Accord and the allegation that Punjab was stealing Sindh’s share in water, the secretary said Sindh had long been complaining about non-implementation of the accord. “We bear a 35-40pc shortage. Sindh government has concerns over this ... in order to get the issue resolved, a committee headed by the attorney general of Pakistan was formed and the committee has been holding meetings to study the ins and outs of the matter. It will hopefully present its report soon in the Council of Common Interests (CCI), where Sindh’s stance will prove correct.”

Accompanied by the chief engineer of the right bank and other officials, the irrigation secretary said that in the wake of water distribution issues and expected flood season, he undertook an extensive visit to specific sites to inspect dykes and vulnerable points along both banks of the Indus right from Guddu to Sujawal. In view of the flood season, leaves of irrigation staff had been cancelled so that they could keep a close eye on these dykes and vulnerable points. Mr Mangnejo said that work for the strengthening of dykes by constructing spurs and studs under different schemes was almost complete now. Due to the execution of these schemes, the Indus had changed its course from the right to the left bank at certain points, he said.

If this had not “been done, floodwater would have directly hit these dykes and caused difficulties,” he said.

According to the secretary, at present 282,000 cusecs of water is flowing downstream Sukkur and it may touch a maximum of 500,000 cusecs in the peak season. In case the volume of ice-melting is high and more water comes from India, this may cause a rise in water level.

Regarding water theft, he claimed that due to tough measures and registration of over 600 such cases, the department had succeeded in providing water to the tail-end areas of Warah, Shahdadkot, Saifullah Magsi, Johi (47 miles in length) and other irrigation channels. He recalled that a good number of unauthorised pipes installed in Saifullah Magsi branch to drive away Sindh's irrigation water to Balochistan had been removed.

Also, he said, Rangers' assistance was there to improve the water distribution system. "We are pondering over toughening the existing laws to deal with the water theft issue," he said, adding that a proposal for the establishment of an 'emergency response force' was also under study.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1499052/execution-of-rs36bn-schemes-for-sukkur-guddu-barrages-kicked-off>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM AUGUST 14th TO 18th 2019

WATER LEVEL IMPROVES IN MANCHHAR LAKE

The Newspaper's Correspondent August 16, 2019

DADU: Water level in Manchhar Lake rose to 110.5 feet reduced level (RL) on Thursday.

The improvement in the water level of the lake after a long time has been welcomed by fishermen.

Irrigation officials have released water into Manchhar Lake through Aral head, Aral tail canals and Danister Wah due to a rise in the level of water in River Indus.

Talking to Dawn, executive engineer of the irrigation department at Sehwan, Mahesh Kumar, said that on Thursday, level of water in Manchhar Lake had risen to 110.5 feet RL. It was 109.6 feet some three days ago, he added.

He said that 282,000 cusecs water was crossing at downstream Sukkur Barrage. Due to rising water level in the Indus at Sehwan, 3,500 cusecs water was released from Aral tail canal, 2,000 cusecs from Aral head canal and 550 cusecs from Danister Wah into the lake.

He said that further 2,000 cusecs of water was flowing into Manchhar Lake from Main Nara Valley Drain (MNVD) at zero point of Manchhar Lake. He said that level of water was rising in the lake and it would remain normal till the level of water reached 114 feet RL. It would become dangerous if the level reached 124 feet, he added.

He said that in the 2010 super flood, water had overflowed the embankments of Manchhar Lake when the level reached 122 feet RL and after the super flood in 2010, it touched 128 feet RL.

He claimed that patrolling was started along the Manchhar lake and all embankments were safe.

Manchhar Bachayo Ittehad chairman Moula Bux Mallah said that as soon as water level rose in the lake, the pollution started decreasing.

A local fisherman, Mustafa Meerani said that due to high pollution in the water of Manchhar Lake, fishing had been stopped. Fishermen had to face the worst economic crisis due to increasing pollution as different kinds of fish died.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1499709>

WAPDA CONCEIVES SINDH BARRAGE DOWNSTREAM KOTRI TO HELP RESOLVE PROVINCE'S PERENNIAL WATER ISSUES

Mohammad Hussain Khan August 17, 2019

HYDERABAD: The Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) has conceived the project of Sindh Barrage downstream Kotri Barrage to develop a reservoir by constructing a structure on the Indus to help resolve the province's perennial water issues, including sea intrusion.

Prime Minister Imran Khan has given a go-ahead to Wapda to start feasibility for the project, according to sources.

After conceptual study, Wapda is examining the nature of structure whether it could be a weir, a dam or a barrage and that is why it plans to carry out its feasibility and have it vetted through foreign consultants.

The project is planned at a location of 37-40km upstream from the sea or 160km downstream Kotri Barrage, the river's last controlling point, at the confluence of river and sea.

Wapda hierarchy has been working on it silently as it thinks Sindh government faces capacity issues but Wapda will be ready to support the latter if need be.

"Of course, we are ready to support Sindh government if they want our collaboration or assistance," Wapda chairman retired Lieutenant Gen Muzammil told Dawn over phone from Lahore.

"I believe a new civilisation will be born in that area over next 50 years if this multidimensional project is executed," he remarked.

'Equation reversed'

“We have reversed the equation of building barrage [over Indus] from up north to downstream Indus in south,” he said.

According to the chairman, “the project will prove to be more important than K-IV project in catering to water needs of the provincial capital’s increasing population,” he said and added “we will build protective bunds between right and left bank dykes of Indus to check [sea] intrusion. It will create a lake which will have a storage capacity double the gross capacity of Mohmand dam”.

The project aims to improve marine life, area’s ecology and check land erosion in deltaic region. Indus is said to be the world’s seventh largest delta. Sea intrusion has been a perennial problem for Sindh’s coastal areas of Thatta, Sujawal and Badin from where roughly 1.2 million people have migrated to other areas over last few decades because of a breakdown of agri-economy.

As a result, poverty has struck the deltaic areas that used to be rich in resources. Intruding sea has devoured millions of acres of fertile land over the past two to three decades. Different figures are quoted in this context like two to 2.8m acres as having been swallowed by the sea.

A noted expert of hydrology Dr Hassan Abbas had claimed during a visit to Hyderabad that “satellite images dating to the period between 1984 and 2016 showed that 24 acres a day are being devoured by sea and 67 acres a day remain under seasonal tide which is in fact not fit for agriculture”.

No authentic data

An authenticated data as to loss of fertile agriculture land eludes experts and perhaps that is the reason the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) in collaboration with Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources, Suparco and Pakistan Navy had conceived a Rs650m project titled ‘Monitoring of seawater intrusion along Pakistan coast (Balochistan/Sindh)’ in 2015.

“The project was okayed by Central Development Working Party but then it hit snags as the federal government did not grant its administrative approval,” former NIO director general Asif Inam told Dawn.

He had started working on it a couple of years back. “While sea level is rising due to climate change the delta is subsiding due to compaction of sediments and the phenomenon varies in Thatta, Badin and Karachi,” he said.

The Sindh government seems to be pursuing an identical project for Indus delta with multiple components.

A scheme, ‘Procurement of consultancy services for feasibility study of ‘Delta Barrage’ with off-taking canals, creation of lakes/reservoir and revival of ecosystem in coastal area’, has been conceived by Sindh government, according to sources.

It is reflected in annual development programme (ADP) 2019-20 and government notified an eight-member committee — headed by Wali Mohammad Naich, Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (Sida) managing director — to prepare and submit project cost-II.

The committee formed on July 2 has representation of Sindh Chamber of Agriculture (SCA), Sindh Abadgar Board (SAB) and Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF).

“Let the federal government support us if it is interested in it. We have been working on it for last several years and in this connection a number of briefings were given to relevant Senate standing committee headed by Dr Karim Khwaja on the project’s concept.

We plan to stop sea intrusion, supply water to Karachi, Badin, Tharparkar and store close to 3MAF water,” said CM’s special assistant on irrigation Ashfaq Memon.

Memon is a retired civil servant who served as secretary of irrigation in early 2000 and was part of the study by international panel of experts on release of flows downstream Kotri.

The downstream flows have been a persistent demand by experts and population that lives in the delta for the growth of mangroves, fish, shrimps, palla and other species and above all for sustaining the delta’s ecosystem.

Keharan jo Kolryoon is said to be the location in Thatta where government has found a narrow space in Indus for raising the structure. Sindh government believes the reservoir can store 2.5MAF water downstream Kotri during floods. Depending on the needs it might be usable for seven months or so in the barrage-cum-reservoir project to help convert brackish groundwater into sweet water.

Among its components, says Ashfaq Memon, are two canals with 2,000 cusecs discharge each initially on right and left side of the river to take water to Bhambhore and Thar.

After Bhambhore it can go up to Karachi and on left side it will cross Badin before reaching Thar and then ending up somewhere or in Sir Creek.

The project aims to convert brackish groundwater into sweet water aquifer.

The other part of the project, remarks the official, is “open area” for the development of “world-class sea entertainment” to boost economic activities. The area would be connected with roads that would run parallel to coastline, he disclosed.

The Sindh government intends to ensure additional water supplies to Karachi through the project. Currently, Karachi gets water through Kotri Barrage’s right bank Kalri-Baghar feeder. Around 1,200 cusecs has to be necessarily provided to Karachi through K.B. feeder even during water shortage.

It has been a consistent demand of Sindh that Karachi should get 2,400 cusec from “national pool” as it hosts populations from across the country thus Sindh must get water over and above its allocated share — 14.82MAF in

Rabi and 33.94 MAF in Kharif — under Water Apportionment Accord 1991. During shortage, water is drawn from other canals of Kotri Barrage to meet Karachi's requirement.

The project addresses sea intrusion, recharge of groundwater aquifer and revival of ecology of Indus delta, a declared Ramsar site, but without consulting stakeholders like agriculturists, fishermen and water experts it may not be advisable to embark upon it.

The stakeholders' experiences with other federally-funded projects like Nai Gaj Dam, Left Bank Outfall Drain, Right Bank Outfall Drain and Darawat Dam are not good. RBOD-II funded by federal government is being executed by Sindh government.

When Pervez Musharraf had launched it in 2001 it was slated to be completed by January 2006, yet since then work on it continues. Nai Gaj was to be completed in 2015 and now federal government is asking provincial government to share its cost.

“Our confidence in executing agencies too has shattered. When we are unable to manage our existing structure we are conceding newer ones. Stakeholders should discuss the project threadbare as it involves huge costs,” pointed out SAB vice president Mahmood Nawaz Shah. Having said that, he concluded, SAB would still need to understand what this project was all about.

Delta barrage or Sindh barrage are bound to raise eyebrows if the much-needed consultation is avoided and the project is thrust upon people.

Member of the Sindh government's committee on the delta barrage and fishermen's leader Mohammad Ali Shah says: “It is a false solution for revival of Indus delta. You need to keep the river flows unhindered as delta means free flows of rivers”.

He believes the water thus stored will be provided to Bahria Town.

“The river brings silt deposits to the delta which are blocked by barrages and now the remainder of it will be stopped by Sindh or delta barrage,” he claimed.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1499869>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM AUGUST 19th TO 25th 2019

WATER INFLOW IN SUTLEJ QUITE A HAPPENING

Majeed Gill August 19, 2019

BAHAWALPUR: The ‘abrupt arrival’ of water in the dried-up Sutlej river sent a wave of jubilation among the locals who celebrated the occasion.

As the news of the unexpected flow of water in the dried-up bed of Sutlej broke on Saturday night, a good number of people thronged the Empress Railway bridge over the river. People threw rose petals on the flowing water and a group of youngsters performed jhoomar.

The river remains dry most part of the year and is locally called a “sand river.”

A civil society activist, Akram Nasir, expressed his happiness over the flow of water in the river. He said the inflow had been seen after several years.

He said the erstwhile rulers agreed on the Indus Waters Treaty which made Seraiki Waseb a barren area due to water scarcity. He demanded that the current government take measures to supply water to the dried-up river to meet the growing demands of irrigation in the region.

Local politicians, especially those demanding separate provincial status for Bahawalpur, had several times during the previous years staged demonstrations in the riverbed asking for maintenance of the river.

EXEN Irrigation Liaquat Ali expressed his surprise over the flow of water in the river, saying India had not released water in the Sutlej. Had it been so, the water from Indian side would have reached Ganda Singhwala Headworks and then travelled to Sulemanki Headworks and Islam Headworks near Vehari before reaching near Bahawalpur.

“The water spillways (gates) at Sulemanki and Islam headworks may have been opened for the passage of the excess water which has travelled up to Bahawalpur Empress bridge leading to the further flow of the water in the river,” he said. He said it would be beneficial for the crops.

PLANTATION: Deputy Commissioner Shozeb Saeed on Sunday inaugurated ‘Plant for Pakistan’ campaign.

The DC, along with other officials and children, planted saplings on the premises of the Child Protection & Welfare Bureau on Yazman Road and later at the Government Technical High School.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1500264/water-inflow-in-sutlej-quite-a-happening>

SCA SEEKS BRIEFING ON SINDH BARRAGE TO ALLAY FEARS OF STAKEHOLDERS

The Newspaper's Staff Correspondent August 19, 2019

HYDERABAD: The Sindh Chamber of Agriculture (SCA) has hailed prime minister's approval for building Sindh Barrage downstream Kotri and said the federal government should arrange a briefing for growers' bodies and civil society organisations to allay their fears about the project.

At a meeting held here on Sunday under chairmanship of its senior vice president Aijaz Nabi Shah, the SCA noted that the federal government had announced construction of Sindh barrage 45km upstream Arabian Sea which was a welcome step but growers and civil society had some fears about the project.

The meeting proposed that the federal government should direct the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) authorities to hold a briefing for growers' bodies and civil society organisations. It said that such briefing must contain details as to total acreage of land to be brought under cultivation through off-taking canal of this barrage in Sindh and when this barrage's construction would be completed and become operational.

The SCA believed that barrage's construction was a positive step for Sindh's agrarian economy, but simultaneously expressed fears on it in the wake of reports that many federal-funded schemes remained incomplete so far.

Such schemes included Nai Gaj dam, water treatment plant in Sehwan, Right Bank Outfall Drain-II so it was necessary that a briefing should be organised in Hyderabad for success of Sindh barrage and to allay fears of stakeholders, the SCA said.

The meeting regretted that cotton's price remained Rs2,100 per 40kg against recent price of Rs4,000 because ginning factory owners had formed a cartel to exploit growers economically. It said that sugar cane growers were not given their payments to date. The SCA resolved that cotton's price should be fixed at Rs4,000 and payment of liabilities of sugar cane growers should be cleared.

The meeting called for providing relief to rain affected growers. The meeting was attended by Nabi Bux Sathio, Mir Abdul Karim Talpur, Nisar Memon, Mohammad Khan Sarejo and others.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1500320/sca-seeks-briefing-on-sindh-barrage-to-allay-fears-of-stakeholders>

POLITICS CREATING WATER SHORTAGES

Mohammad Hussain Khan Updated August 19, 2019

The tail-end areas of Sukkur and Kotri barrages face unending water shortage problems. Both barrages feed large swathes of agricultural lands in left bank areas — known as the breadbasket of Sindh — of the river Indus where cash crops like cotton, rice and sugarcane are produced. Mango and banana orchards also located here.

Farmers complain of water shortage in almost every Kharif season. Those who have lands in Kotri barrage's tail-end commands suffer the most. These are small or medium landowners who lack political clout in the existing governance structure as inadequate water flow problems are rare in the upper reaches of canals fed by these two barrages.

Kotri barrage's two canals — Akram Wah (a perennial canal that runs around the year) and New Phuleli (a non-perennial system which works for six months of the summer) — fall under the jurisdiction of the Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (Sida).

Water flows had improved at Guddu and Sukkur barrages last month. Given the recent rainfalls in Sindh, the Kotri barrage management decided to reduce flows in channels to avoid breaches or damages. This has upset growers who had started cultivating paddy after the recent respite.

Water shortage is a menace for tail-end farmers. They are destined to face severe water shortages during Kharif season because of a number of reasons including the shifting of the command area from Sukkur barrage to Kotri barrage, political influence, outdated irrigation system, official lethargy, direct outlets (DOs) and illegal water-lifting pipes. Farmers deeply mistrust Sindh irrigation department officials, which is why they often press for the deployment of paramilitary forces, such as Rangers, along the Rohri and Kotri barrage canals to control water theft and ensure its availability.

Farmers have filed dozens of cases before the Sindh High Court (SHC) to seek judicial intervention this summer. In a number of cases, the SHC has directed chief secretary Sindh to ensure the deployment of Rangers along canals to remove illegal pipes used for diverting water to some powerful landowners.

SHC has also ordered the re-examination of all DOs of Rohri canal by a committee of experts. The committee is to finalise its findings in two months for submission to the court.

Water shortages force irrigation authorities opting for a rotation programme that creates another set of problems. The canals are unable to carry water to tail-end reaches of their systems because of silting in canals and huge conveyance and water losses at field level that compromises water distribution further.

The chief minister's special assistant on irrigation Ashfaq Memon concedes that the farmers' woes are justified. "The government has planned reinforced cement concrete (RCC) works for DOs, watercourses and regulators under its Annual Development Plan (ADP) and this intervention will hopefully put an end to tampering with modules. Around 200 illegal pipes were from Akram Wah," he says.

Farmers mentioned in the SHC that 65 DOs are sanctioned in the Naseer brand of Rohri canal alone. A landowner who applies to the government for a DO claims that his land is not getting the water it needs, therefore he needs a direct source of water. While the claim requires verification, the process is a mere formality.

In theory, only a certain diameter of the pipe can be approved for a DO for the lifting of water which is restricted to certain times. In reality, specifications are not met and machines pump water till the land is irrigated fully. Experts considered such DOs with assured water supplies as disastrous for any canal's water flow regime.

Successive governments have allowed DOs as political favours to their men. Influential ones including Syeds, Legharis, Bachanis, Pitafis, Magsis, Marris, former members of law enforcing agencies, bureaucrats, police and other government functionaries are prime beneficiaries of DOs to get maximum water flows. They irrigate their lands completely at the cost of the small tail-end growers who have no choice but to wait for their turn to get water.

"Beneficiaries of DOs do not follow the recommended specifications to ensure that they get uninterrupted flow. It is the DOs that make us suffer as they remain fully functional around the year," complains Karamullah Saand, a co-petitioner in one of the recent petitions filed before the SHC. He refers to a previous survey report which says that DOs mostly draw 300pc to 500pc more water than what their designs permit.

Another leading cause of water shortage is the shifting of around 200,000 acres of agricultural lands from Sukkur barrage's command to Kotri barrage over the last several years owing to political influence.

The 200,000 acres that fall under Rohri's command now regularly draws water from New Phuleli and Akram Wah. "It is unfair that khatedars who have the first right to get water from Kotri barrage are ignored and lands under Sukkur barrage's command is given preference," remarks Sindh Chamber of Agriculture vice president Nabi Bux Sathio.

Under the Water Apportionment Accord 1991 water allocations for these areas are made for Rohri canal and Kotri barrage doesn't get additional allocations for its canals over and above the accord's estimations. However, unofficial figures indicate around 3,000 cusecs of water is diverted for these areas from Kotri barrage to make things difficult for tail-end farmers.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1500251>

MEDIUM TO LOW LEVEL FLOODS IN RIVER INDUS

OUR CORRESPONDENT AUGUST 19, 2019

HYDERABAD: Indus is flowing with a medium to low-level flood at the Guddu and Sukkur barrage while the water volume at the Kotri barrage is still in the normal range, According to the readings obtained from Flood Forecasting Division on Sunday, a medium flood is passing through the Guddu barrage where the inflow was recorded at 409,529 cusecs and the outflow at 368,529 cusecs.

The inflow at the Sukkur barrages, which is in a low flood situation, was recorded at 340,050 cusecs and the outflow at 281,250 cusecs while at the Kotri barrage at 188,462 cusecs and 163,737 cusecs, respectively. A single cusec equals to 646,000 gallons per day.

Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (SIDA) Managing Director Wali Muhammad Naich said that manned posts have been set up along the sensitive embankments of river Indus. He added that stones for pitching and other equipment required to reinforce the weak levees have also been stationed at sensitive locations.

https://epaper.tribune.com.pk/DisplayDetails.aspx?ENI_ID=11201908190184&EN_ID=11201908190061&EMID=11201908190037

SCA EXPRESSES CONCERNS OVER PROPOSAL OF NEW BARRAGE ON INDUS RIVER

By Our Correspondent Published: August 19, 2019

HYDERABAD: The Sindh Chamber of Agriculture (SCA), while welcoming Prime Minister Imran Khan's announcement of building a new barrage on Indus River in Sindh, has asked the federal government to take the province's stakeholders on board. A meeting of the SCA, chaired by its vice president, Syed Aijaz Nabi Shah, concluded on Sunday that the Centre should address the apprehensions of Sindh's farmers and other stakeholders before going ahead with the project.

The PM reportedly accorded approval to the barrage project proposed by the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA). The barrage, which will be named Sindh barrage, will store two to three million acre feet of water besides supplying 1,000 million gallons per day (MGD) to Karachi and 5,000 cusecs for irrigation through canals. Reducing sea intrusion in the coastal districts and improving the Indus River's delta are among the objectives of the barrage.

It will be constructed in Thatta district some 45 kilometres upstream from the point where the Indus falls into the Arabian Sea. The construction will start in January 2022 and will be completed by December 2024. If constructed, it will be the fourth barrage in the Indus after Guddu, Sukkur and Kotri barrages.

The SCA vice president said that agriculturists and civil society of Sindh have some concerns about the barrage. They want to know how many acres of land in Sindh's southern districts will be irrigated through water supplied from the barrage, he added.

"Although we consider the project a positive step towards helping Sindh's agriculture, we are at the same time concerned that WAPDA's other projects in Sindh are making an inordinate delay in completion," said Shah, referring to the Nai Gaj dam project in Dadu district and the Right Bank Outfall Drain (RBOD) project.

The SCA meeting pointed out the financial losses being sustained by cotton farmers as the crop's buying price has reduced to Rs2,100 per maund. The chamber demanded that cotton's support price should be fixed at Rs4,000 per maund.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2036854/1-sca-expresses-concerns-proposal-new-barrage-indus-river/>

RS540M EARMARKED IN PSDP FOR WATER PROJECTS

Muhammad Khan Utmankhail August 19, 2019

LORALAI: Provincial Minister for Industries and Commerce Muhammad Khan Utmankhail has said the incumbent government has allocated Rs540 million for additional water projects and pipelines in the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) for 2019,20

"Access to water in Loralai is my topmost priority," the minister said, while talking to reporters in Loralai district of Zhob division on Sunday.

The earmarked projects would help in overcoming the shortage of water in the district and adjoining areas to a great extent, he added.

"It is time to take practical steps," he said, whereas "past representatives were habitual of making tall claims". He added funds for health and education departments have also been allocated in the PSDP.

He said providing job opportunities to youth are also among top priorities of the government.

The minister, who is from the ruling Balochistan Awami party (BAP), said the party intends to expand its exposure to other parts of the country.

"Three MPAs from erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Fata) have joined our an MPA in Punjab," the BAP leader said.

On Kashmir, he said the freedom of Kashmir at any cost. "India has indulged in state terrorism in the Occupied Kashmir".

No matter to what extent New Delhi inflicts oppression upon Kashmiris, Khan said, it cannot weaken the freedom movement there. "The day is not far when the Kashmiris would succeed in getting independence," said Khan.

"Pakistan considers Kashmir as its jugular vein. The hearts of Pakistanis beat with the Kashmiris," he added. "Islamabad has unveiled New Delhi's oppression and revealed its true face to the world by highlighting the Kashmir issue on international forums.

India, Khan added, "In order to hide its failure it is trying to attack the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) to create a warlike situation. But Pakistan, exercising restraint, is striving on moral and diplomatic fronts and now this stance is being lauded in the US and throughout Europe".

The minister said India is also finding reasons to strike cluster bombs on AJK, which has also been confirmed by the All Parties Hurriyat Conference leader Syed Ali Gillani.

"Pakistan is an Islamic and atomic state," said Khan. He added Islamabad has always given a befitting response to India's oppression.

https://epaper.tribune.com.pk/DisplayDetails.aspx?ENI_ID=11201908190033&EN_ID=11201908190010&EMID=11201908190004

DISTRICT ADMINS ON RED ALERT AFTER INDIA RELEASES WATER INTO SUTLEJ

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter August 20, 2019

LAHORE: Without prior warning, India on Monday released over 100,000 cusecs of water into River Sutlej, inundating vast areas in Kasur district and spelling a human and farming crisis on both sides of the river bed. The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) had on Sunday issued significant flood forecast for River Sutlej, stating that the range of net discharge passing through Ganda Singh Wala would be 125,000 cusecs to a maximum of 175,000 cusecs.

Referring to the video broadcast of Ludhiana deputy commissioner in India on Sunday morning, the PDMA said the discharge of Sutlej had attained the quantum of 240,000 cusecs downstream Bhakra Dam by superimposing effect of 55,000 cusecs discharge by the spillways of Bhakra Dam and additional quantity added by the rivulets Sisewaan and Sawan. The PDMA further estimated that a discharge of 10,000 cusecs from Pong Dam will be added to Sutlej at Harike Headworks, generating net discharge of 250,000 cusecs upstream Harike Headworks.

In the absence of official information, the PDMA had predicted that the effects of the discharge would start reaching Ganda Singh Wala on Monday morning.

Chief Minister Usman Buzdar was informed about the release of water by India at a hurriedly called meeting and told that over 100,000 cusecs could likely pass through Ganda Singh Wala on Tuesday. The government has set up 81 relief camps in Kasur and other districts.

The CM directed for completing all precautionary measures in Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar, Lodhran, Vehari, Pakpattan, Okara and Kasur districts. He directed for ensuring evacuation of people from the riverbed and their relocation to safer places.

Mr Buzdar directed the irrigation and disaster management ministers to monitor the situation by visiting Kasur, Okara and other districts, adding that the irrigation secretary and PDMA director general should also monitor the relief activities personally. He said that he would also visit different districts to monitor the measures and relief activities. The chief minister said the federal and provincial departments should maintain a close liaison and stay vigilant to deal with any emergency. The district administrations should personally monitor the arrangements for dealing with any possible flood. The inflow and outflow of water should continuously be monitored and availability of medicines, vaccination and fodder for animals ensured, he asserted.

Punjab Irrigation Secretary Dr Ahmed Javed Qazi briefed the meeting about the situation in Sutlej, while the PDMA chief briefed about precautionary measures and availability of necessary tools and equipments.

Provincial ministers Mian Khalid Mehmood, Mohsin Leghari, secretaries of specialised healthcare and medical education and primary and secondary healthcare departments, livestock and rescue departments officials and others attended the meeting. Punjab minister Hashim Dogar, commissioners of Sahiwal, Multan and Bahawalpur divisions and deputy commissioners of Okara, Pakpattan, Bahawalnagar, Vehari, Bahawalpur and Lodhran attended the meeting through video link.

KASUR: The district administration has started preparing to deal with the repercussions of the swelling of Sutlej. Army and Rangers personnel have joined the flood teams. The administration has started convincing villagers to evacuate, while Rescue 1122 is providing transportation to over 300 villagers.

According to flood control centre, the water level at Talwar post was eight foot, while a low-level flood starts at 14 feet. Similarly, water level at Keekar post was 18.5 feet, which was below the low-flood level there.

The water flow near Mustayki village on Monday night was 28,000 cusecs, while it was about 30,000 cusecs at Pattan village. Bhikiwind village was also vulnerable due to a narrow riverbed.

Provincial minister retired Col Hashim Dogar and Lahore Commissioner Asif Bilal Lodhi visited the villages to review precautionary measures and ordered to facilitate the affected villagers and their livestock.

BAHAWALPUR: The irrigation department on Monday issued a high alert for people in the riverine areas of Sutlej in the district, said Irrigation Executive Engineer (Exen) Javed Tariq on Monday.

Talking to Dawn, the Exen said a warning had been issued to the dwellers on the banks of the Sutlej. He said the Punjab government swung into action following social media posts about the release of the water on Sunday night. It had asked authorities to take all preventive measures and asked the people of rural areas along the banks of Sutlej to move to safer places.

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner Shozeb Saeed, at a meeting he chaired here on Monday, directed the assistant commissioners of all five tehsils to immediately complete the arrangements to set up relief camps for the affected people in the riverine areas and shift the population, if affected, in any area.

BAHAWALNAGAR: The district management has issued a high alert to all departments to deal with a possible flood in Sutlej river.

According to Deputy Commissioner Shoaib Khan Jadoon, an emergency plan was devised to deal with flooding in the river's vicinity, adding that 15 flood relief camps had been established in these areas. Orders had also been issued to shift people living along the river belt to safe locations, he added.

Minchinabad Assistant Commissioner Rashid Iqbal told Dawn that due to their proximity with Head Sulemanki, the river belt areas in Minchinabad were severely affected by floods. He said that 72 mouzas lied along the river belt affecting 372 families, adding that focal persons had been designated to inform these people about flood threats. Announcements had also been made through mosques to urge people to shift their belongings and cattle to safe locations. He also said that officials from the health, livestock, agriculture and Rescue 1122 were available at the five flood centres to deal with any emergency. Any possible flooding would affect thousands of acres of rice paddy and cotton crops, he added.

Due to a threat of flood, an army contingent had been deputed along with rescue officials to an area of the Minchinabad river belt.

SAHIWAL: The level of water in upstream and downstream of River Sutlej at Head Sulemanki was recorded at 24,345 and 12,567 cusecs, respectively on Monday noon.

The water released from India was likely to reach Head Sulemanki within 48 hours. The local administration has issued warnings to residents of 22 villages in Pakpattan district. Flood warning messages were conveyed to locals through mosques, revenue and irrigation staff.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1500563/district-admins-on-red-alert-after-india-releases-water-into-sutlej>

WATER RELEASED BY INDIA: CM REVIEWS MEASURES FOR POSSIBLE FLOOD SITUATION

RECORDER REPORT AUG 20TH, 2019

LAHORE: After India released water into River Sutlej and Alchi Dam, the disaster management authorities of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have issued flood alerts. Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar on Monday chaired a high level meeting to review precautionary measures for the possible flood situation due to discharge of over 200,000 cusec water by India in River Sutlej.

The PDMA Punjab has issued a flood alert due to rising water levels in River Sutlej after India released water into the river. The Pakistan Meteorological Department (Met) has also issued a flood/weather advisory. According to the department, "very heavy to extremely heavy rainfall has been observed over the upper and lower catchments of Rivers Sutlej, Beas and Ravi during the last 72 hours".

Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar on Monday chaired a high level meeting to review precautionary measures for the possible flood situation due to discharge of over 200,000 cusec water by India in river Sutlej. The meeting also discussed rescue and relief operation in case of flood situation on both banks of the river.

The meeting was briefed that India has released water in Sutlej without any prior intimation and around one hundred thousand cusecs flood water is likely to pass through the Ganda Singhwala Headworks on Tuesday. It was informed that 81 relief camps have already been established in flood-prone areas.

Addressing the meeting, the CM directed the concerned authorities to ensure timely evacuation of people from affected areas.

He said people should be shifted to safer places and directed to provide all essential items in the relief camps and there should not be shortage of any item. The CM directed to complete all necessary precautionary measures in Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar, Lodhran, Vehari, Pakpattan, Okara and Kasur districts to deal with the situation that has arisen after release of water and added that evacuation of population should be ensured from the river-bed and the people should be timely relocated to safer places before the flood torrent. He directed the irrigation and disaster

management ministers to monitor the field situation by visiting Kasur, Okara and other districts, adding that the secretary irrigation and DG PDMA should also monitor the relief activities on the spots.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/08/20190820507357/>

SUTLEJ THREATENS TO OVERFLOW ITS BANKS

By Our Correspondents Published: August 20, 2019

LAHORE: The unannounced opening of waterways by India has created a possible risk of flooding in Sutlej River, Punjab.

Within the next 24 hours, 240,000 cusecs is expected to enter Pakistan through Ganda Singh Wala, a border village near Kasur, Punjab with fears mounting that the areas near Kasur, Pakpattan, Sahiwal, Okara, Bahawalnagar, Vehari and Lodhran will be hit by floods.

Meanwhile, the water level in Ravi River has witnessed a trifling rise, but there is no threat of flooding.

According to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority, Punjab officials, 150,000 cusecs is expected to pass through Ganda Singh Wala where currently the water flow has crossed 34,000 cusecs, while 130,000 cusecs through Head Sulemanki where the water flow is 29,000 cusecs, which is increasing.

According to the PDMA, the water flow capacity at the location of Head Sulemanki is 175,000 cusecs, while Ganda Singh Wala, from where the water would enter Pakistan, holds capacity of 50,000 cusecs.

PDMA focal person Nisar Ahmed told The Express Tribune that they were keeping a close watch on the water flow in Sutlej and other rivers.

“India has released water without prior information. We have received this information from different sources,” said the PDMA focal person. “Currently, the flood expected from India can cause normal flood in Sutlej River.”

He said on the directives of the Punjab chief minister, the people residing in the riverbed were being evacuated.

In view of the flood in Sutlej River, Buzdar summoned an emergency meeting in Lahore. He discussed the situation arising due to release of water in Sutlej River by India. The meeting also reviewed arrangements for relief activities.

The Chief Minister Secretariat spokesperson said Buzdar was personally monitoring the precautionary measures and relief activities aimed at dealing with possible threat of flood.

The chief minister has also issued necessary instructions to provincial administration and concerned departments, he added.

The provincial irrigation ministry and disaster management conducted a survey of Kasur, Okara and other districts and were keeping a continuous watch on the situation.

Eighty-one relief camps were set up in various districts, including Kasur.

On the other hand, the water level in Ravi River has started to rise due to the recent rains. People in large numbers reached Ravi River to look at the water. According to the Flood Forecasting Division, Lahore, there was no threat of flood in Ravi River and the water flow was below normal level.

Separately, Federal Minister for Water Resources Faisal Vawda said the Indus Water Treaty was not only a sign of peace in Pakistan and India but the whole region.

“If India violates the Indus Water Treaty, then according to the treaty, Pakistan will get complete justice,” he added.

On India turning the direction of rivers towards Pakistan, Vawda said, “Pakistan is focusing on the Indus Water Treaty and we are considering all options.

“According to Article 12 of the Indus Water Treaty, no country by itself can end the agreement. It can only end with the mutual consultation of both the countries.”

Vawda said, “Under the Indus Water Treaty, India is bound to inform Pakistan beforehand about the flood water, but it violated the agreement.”

Pakistan’s Indus Water Treaty commissioner has lodged a protest with the Indian commissioner.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2037122/1-flood-alert-issued-india-releases-water-sutlej-river/>

INDIA USING WATER AS WEAPON: WAPDA CHIEF

By Reuters Published: August 20, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Accusing India of waging “fifth-generation warfare”, the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) said on Monday New Delhi had failed to inform Islamabad about the release of water from a dam in Ladakh that could cause flooding across the border.

Wapda chairman Muzammil Hussain said that the unexpected release of water into the River Sutlej that flows from India to Pakistan was part of an attempt by New Delhi to flout a longstanding treaty between the countries.

“They try to isolate diplomatically, they try to strangulate economically, they’re trying to strangulate our water resources — and water automatically will have an impact on your economy, your agriculture and your irrigation,” Hussain said.

India was using its position upstream to wage “fifth-generation warfare” on the country, he added.

Emergency authorities were preparing on Monday for minor flooding in several areas in Punjab as a result of the unexpected rise in water flow.

“India did not communicate the release of water to Pakistan,” Khurram Shahzad, Director General of the Punjab Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), said.

An Indian government official said release of water was a “routine exercise” during the monsoon season. However, he added that poor relations between the two countries affected the information-sharing. “It was goodwill on our part that we used to share that information ... those days are gone.”

Hussain said Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had “threatened very clearly that he could stop water to Pakistan”, adding: “He couldn’t care less of (for) the treaties”.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2037402/1-india-using-water-weapon-wapda-chief/>

SIBI RESIDENTS DEMAND WATER

OUR CORRESPONDENT AUGUST 20, 2019

Resident of Sibi have urged the authorities concerned to take notice of the shortage of water as from last one week the area is deprived of clean drinking water.

According to details, there is no water supply in Allahbad, Ghareebabad, Chamar Karkhana, and Kali Dar Muhammad Hanbhi for the past one week.

Residents have put the blame on Public Health Engineering (PHE) department for the sheer mismanagement of water supply.

Locals have also complained that the water being supplied to a few areas even after several days is polluted and unfit for drinking. They have to travel from place to place to get water.

Social and political activists Kamran Fateh and Mir Muzaffar Nazar Abro have warned of protest against the PHE if the water issue is not resolved.

They said water is the basic human need and lack of water supply in intense heat and humidity is tantamount to killing people in agony.

https://epaper.tribune.com.pk/DisplayDetails.aspx?ENI_ID=11201908200094&EN_ID=11201908200031&EMID=11201908200015

NAI GAJ DAM CONSTRUCTION COST TRIPLED DUE TO DELAY, SENATE PANEL TOLD

Jamal Shahid Updated August 21, 2019

ISLAMABAD: A parliamentary body on Tuesday objected to delays in the completion of the Nai Gaj dam, the construction cost of which has escalated from Rs17 billion to Rs47.7bn in the last decade.

The Senate Standing Committee on Planning, Development and Reform was informed that the project, which started in September 2009, had been delayed due to changes in its design and financial problems.

“The matter has become quite complex in the face of the new water policy. The matter is sub judice and the best solution is to wait for the Supreme Court decision on the matter,” Planning, Development and Reform Secretary Zafar Hasan told the committee that had met to discuss the current status of the Nai Gaj dam in Dadu city, Sindh.

The senior official explained that there was a stalemate between the federal and Sindh governments over who would pay the difference between the original cost of Rs16.9bn in 2009 and the Rs26.23bn cost in PC-1, which was revised in 2012.

The official explained that it was the understanding of the federal government that financial delays were on the part of the Sindh government.

The meeting was told that in the revised PC-1 2018, the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) included additional components such as a power house, project colony, access roads, cost of spillways and pipeline to the Manchhar Lake, increasing the cost of completion of the dam to Rs46.73bn. It has been nine months since the second PC-1 was submitted for approval by the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecneec).

“Enceec has decided that the federal and Sindh governments share the escalated costs equally. However, the Sindh government insists that the federal government should bear the increased costs entirely,” Mr Hasan told the committee.

In his response, Sindh Irrigation Special Secretary Aslam Ansari informed the members that the government of Sindh was prepared to contribute its share for land acquisition and resettlement that amounted to about Rs1.8bn.

“However, the Nai Gaj project has been revised on account of deferred payments after which completion cost increased and secondly due to changes in design. The Sindh government has no stake, influence or interference in either of these items. The deferred payments should have been streamlined by the federal government after approval of PC-1. It is, therefore, unjustified to ask the Sindh government to pay the escalated costs,” Mr Ansari argued.

He said that the stance of the Sindh government had been submitted to the Supreme Court, which has taken notice of the issue. He reiterated that the Sindh government was ready to contribute its share for land acquisition and security. Committee chairman Agha Shahzaib Durrani reminded the planning secretary of the directive issued six months ago to initiate an investigation against those responsible for the delay in the Nai Gaj project.

“The committee also reminded the ministry on July 30 of an inquiry report but did not receive a reply. We direct the Ministry of Planning and Development to share the report within a week,” Mr Durrani said.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1500722>

STEPS REVIEWED TO END WATER SHORTAGE IN BALOCHISTAN

Saleem Shahid August 21, 2019

QUETTA: A top-level provincial government meeting was informed here on Tuesday that efforts were under way to end shortage of drinking water in the provincial capital and other areas of province through speedy completion of under-construction dams and water schemes.

The meeting reviewed pace of on-going water projects of the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP). Federal Secretary for Water Muhammad Ashraf told the meeting that water projects had been given special importance under the federal government's development programme for Balochistan as the federal government wanted to increase capacity of water reservoirs in the province.

He said that timely issuance of funds for these water schemes would be ensured by the federal government for speedy completion of these projects.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Jam Kamal Khan Alyani said that due to lack of dams thousands of feet of water was wasted in the province every year and if dams were constructed at appropriate places, flood water could be stored for its later utilisation for agriculture and drinking purposes.

Besides, he said, speedy construction of these dams would help increase underground water level in the province. The chief minister said that Balochistan was a vast province and completion of these water schemes would ensure prosperity of the people and improve their living standard.

Mr Alyani directed the formation of a coordination committee consisting of provincial and federal government officials to ensure fast completion of water schemes in the province.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1500721>

WATER RELEASED AS TARBELA DAM FILLED TO CAPACITY

The Newspaper's Correspondent Updated August 21, 2019

HARIPUR: The Tarbela Dam has been filled to its maximum conservation level and the surplus water is being flushed out through spillways and the tunnels, official sources told Dawn here on Tuesday.

"The reservoir touched its maximum storage capacity mark of 1,550 feet during early hours of Tuesday and the electricity generation also rose to 4,888 megawatts," said an official source, adding the total inflow of water was recorded at 23,6700 cusecs which became surplus and was being discharged through tunnels, service and auxiliary spillways in accordance with guidance of Irsa.

Following the filling of the reservoir the dam authorities opened the both service and auxiliary spillways in the afternoon and started flushing the surplus water, the sources said, adding a total of 236,700 cusecs of water was being received in the reservoir and 207,900 cusecs being discharged.

Official sources said the dam authorities would continue discharging the surplus water during next two weeks keeping in view the weather forecast and expected inflow of water.

The three tunnels of the dam, according to its design, have 17 operating power generating units which were generating 4,888MW electricity.

According to official sources, owing to melting of snow in the catchment areas of the Indus River which has world's four biggest glaciers, the inflow of water in the 97-sq kilometre reservoir increases simultaneously, facilitating it to touch the maximum storage capacity mark of 1,550 feet on Aug 20 every year. The reservoir's dead storage level is 1,386 feet.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1500705/water-released-as-tarbela-dam-filled-to-capacity>

INDIA FINALLY SHARES FLOODWATER DISCHARGE DATA

Intikhab Hanif | Khalid Hasnain Updated August 21, 2019

LAHORE: India has finally shared data related to floodwater discharges in the River Sutlej with Pakistan, pledging to fulfil its responsibility under the Indus Water Treaty of 1960.

However, it has refused to fulfil its responsibility under the Advance Flood Information Agreement (AFIA) signed in 1989 during the first government of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto in the wake of the 1988 floods in Pakistan, according to a senior official at the Pakistan office for Indus waters.

"They (Indian commissioner for Indus waters) contacted us on Monday night and shared data regarding floodwater discharge (50,000 cusecs) in the River Sutlej. He told us that since the treaty binds India to fulfil its responsibility of informing Pakistan about any such extraordinary situation, the information regarding discharges of 50,000 cusecs in

Sutlej is being shared under the same accord,” Pakistan’s Additional Commissioner for Indus Waters Shiraz Memon told *Dawn*.

He said on Tuesday morning Pakistan’s office of the commissioner for Indus waters also received a letter from its Indian counterpart stating that the data was being shared under the treaty. “However, they clarified that they are not ready to discuss or renew AFIA that was signed in 1989 that binds it to share with Pakistan the routine flood situation on a daily basis from July 1 to Oct 10,” Mr Memon quoted the letter as saying.

He said India had been avoiding renewal of this agreement for the past couple of months. Similarly, he said India even avoided sharing water flow data with Pakistan under the Indus Water Treaty since May this year. It finally shared it to some extent on Tuesday.

“Thirty years ago, Pakistan and India had signed AFIA under which the latter was bound to share water discharge data in the eastern rivers — Ravi, Sutlej and Beas — from July 1 to Oct 10 each year,” he added.

Mr Memon said the AFIA was signed keeping in view the release of 400,000 cusecs water in Ravi in 1988. “The IWC binds India to inform Pakistan in advance only if there is any extraordinary floodwater discharge/release situation.

So India fulfilled its responsibility in 1988 floods. Later, Pakistan had in 1989 requested India to have an agreement for sharing all sorts of flood-related data with Pakistan from July 1 to Oct 10 each year,” he added.

He said the Indian counterpart didn’t show any interest in conducting annual meeting under the treaty that was scheduled for May in New Delhi. “Though we continue giving them reminders in writing on a weekly basis regarding convening of the meeting under the treaty, they are using delaying tactics,” he said.

Meanwhile, River Sutlej is expected to be in high flood at Ganda Singhwala (Kasur) as water released by India from its dams will cross it during the early hours of Wednesday morning (today), says the Flood Forecasting Division (FFD) of the Pakistan Meteorological Department.

Water flow in the eastern river given to India under the Indus Water Basin Treaty depends on the releases by India from the river’s Bhakra Dam and Pong over River Beas, which merges into Sutlej in Kapurthala, Indian Punjab.

FFD chief meteorologist Dr Azmat Hayat Khan said on Tuesday India released 158,000 cusecs of water from both the dams, mainly from Bhakra Dam, around 24 hours ago. The FFD was expecting the releases in view of the chances of the filling up of both dams due to torrential rains over catchments of the rivers last week.

He said the discharge at Ganda Singhwala from where Sutlej enters Pakistan was 48,000 cusecs (low flood) at 4pm, adding that the level was rising and the discharge was expected to reach 100,000 cusecs by Tuesday evening. It is likely to peak to 140,000 cusecs (high flood) on Wednesday morning. The level will then start gradually falling afterwards.

The peak will reach Sulemanki on Aug 23. The discharge will initially be 70,000 to 90,000 cusecs (medium flood level) but is expected to increase to 130,000 cusecs (high flood) late in the night.

The flow at Islam Headworks will be around 70,000-100,000 cusecs (low/medium flood), starting from the night of Aug 26.

Officials in the Punjab government said the flow in Sutlej could be problematic for those settled in and round the riverbed. Nevertheless, all measures have been adopted to protect them.

The FFD said the Indus at Guddu was in medium, and at Taunsa and Sukkur in low flood. All major rivers will remain in low-to-medium flood over the next five to seven days. There are no chances of any significant rain during this week as the moist (monsoon) currents from the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal were cut off on Tuesday. The trough of westerly wave over Kashmir and adjoining areas also moved away eastwards.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1500716/india-finally-shares-floodwater-discharge-data>

WATER AGGRESSION

By Editorial Published: August 21, 2019

Water remains the bane of Pakistan – either there is not enough of it or there is far too much.

The Punjab and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa provincial disaster management authorities (PDMA) have issued flood alerts after India released water into River Sutlej and Alchi dam. Punjab’s PDMA on Monday issued a flood alert due to rising levels in the Sutlej after India released water, while the K-P and Punjab PDMA chiefs both said that India’s opening of Alchi dam’s outlets without prior notice could cause the Indus to flood.

Pakistan, meanwhile, would do well to take the Indians to court over their callous attitude to water management.

According to an Indian government official, interviewed by news agency Reuters, the release of water is a ‘routine

exercise' during the monsoon season and that the poor relations between the two countries has affected information-sharing. The official claims that it is only goodwill on their part that they share information with Pakistan, never mind the legal obligation under the Indus Water Treaty.

Fascism starts from the top, and it would appear that even water management bureaucrats are taking a page from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's book and spitting on the law, never mind the disregard for human rights. Even Pakistan's Permanent Commissioner for Indus Waters Syed Mehr Ali Shah says that India has reneged on key commitments including the annual exchange of flood-related information. India's release of water had already flooded areas around Kasur and Rajanpur, affecting hundreds of localities and damaging many acres of crops. More rain is expected in the Indian rivers in the coming days. Pakistan Meteorological Department has issued a flood warning, noting that very heavy rainfall has been observed over the upper and lower catchments of Sutlej, Beas and Ravi during the last 72 hours, meaning that the situation on the Pakistani side could severely worsen as there are already reports of floods in multiple parts of India due to the same rainy spell.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2038243/6-water-aggression/>

CHINESE JVS SUBMIT BIDS FOR BUILDING PART OF DIAMER DAM

The Newspaper's Staff Reporte Updated August 22, 2019

LAHORE: The Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) commenced on Wednesday the evaluation process for the bids submitted to it separately by two Chinese-led joint ventures for the construction of the part of the much-awaited Diamer-Basha Project.

"Finally we have begun process for evaluating technical bids of the JVs. We hope to complete this period as soon as possible," Wapda Chairman Lt General (retired) Muzammil Hussain told Dawn.

Wapda authorities received technical and financial bids from the JVs, comprising one foreign and one local firm each. These JVs include China Gezhouba Group Company — GRC JV and Power Construction Corporation of China — FWO JV.

The technical bids opened in the presence of the representatives will be evaluated in accordance with the bidding documents and the relevant procurement rules of the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) and the Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC).

"Since we have begun the evaluation process after receiving technical and financial bids from the aforementioned JVs till 11:00am on Wednesday, we plan to award the project to the successful bidder by end (December) of this year or early (January), next year," an official source in Wapda, who requested anonymity, told Dawn when contacted.

Wapda, in pursuance to the judgment of the Supreme Court and priority of the federal government, has been implementing Diamer-Basha and Mohmand Dam Hydropower projects. Construction work on Mohmand Dam Hydropower Project started in May this year, while work on Diamer-Basha it is likely to be initiated soon.

Construction of Diamer Basha dam project has been divided into two parts; the dam part and the power generation facilities. It will be constructed across River Indus about 40 km downstream of Chillas Town.

It is a multi-purpose project, aiming at water storage, flood mitigation and power generation. The project will have a gross water storage capacity of 8.1 million acre feet (MAF) and installed power generation capacity of 4,500 megawatt.

"Since the Diamer Basha and Mohmand dam projects are on our top priority, we want their completion within the stipulated time-frame," the Wapda chairman said.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1500962/chinese-jvs-submit-bids-for-building-part-of-diamer-dam>

BADIN FARMERS DECRY WATER SHORTAGE DESPITE FLOOD IN INDUS

A Correspondent August 22, 2019

BADIN: Leaders of several farmers' organisations have expressed deep concern over unavailability of water in the tail-end areas of Badin district despite flood in the Indus.

Talking to local reporters on Wednesday, Khalil Ahmed Bhurgari, Mir Noor Ahmed Talpur and Azizullah Dero of the Save Badin Action Committee deplored that most of the tail-end areas of the district were again facing the worst water shortage. The committee was formed a few months ago to launch a protest movement against the nagging water crisis in the district.

“The blockages erected in the bed of Phuleli Canal by the officials of Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (Sida) and irrigation department are the prime factors behind the fiasco,” they said, adding that officials were not releasing the required water in the canal system for fear of overtopping.

They made it clear that unless those blockages were removed, water flows could never be regulated in the tail-end areas of the district. They deplored the fact that on one hand there was flood in Indus River while on the other various areas of Badin district were without water meant for rice, chief crop of the district.

“This is a cruel joke with the farmers of Badin at the time of flood in rivers,” they added and demanded removal of incompetent officials who, they said, had miserably failed to regulate the flows of water.

They said that it stood proved now that the blockages were erected with the huge cost of Rs6 billion only to irrigate the lands of influential figures in the command area of Sukkur Barrage.

They told that farmers got some respite due to bounteous rains, but again began to face the shortage of water.

They claimed that irrigation minors of Shadi, Kadhan and Qazia sub-divisions were being provided with irrigation water under the process of rotation due to which rice crop was badly affected.

They urged the lawmakers from Badin to invite Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah to visit the tail-end areas of Badin district to assess the situation himself and ensure just distribution of water.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1500871/badin-farmers-decry-water-shortage-despite-flood-in-indus>

WATER INFLOW FROM INDIA SENATE BODY DIRECTS IN-CAMERA BRIEFING BY CONCERNED DEPTS.

August 22, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Water Resources has directed for an in-camera briefing by the concerned departments on water inflow from the Indian side in Pakistani rivers, which is causing floods in the country.

The committee met with Shamim Afridi in the chair where other members expressed concerns over the water inflow from the Indian side without prior intimation and inquired whether or not the Indus Waters Treaty has been violated. Commissioner for Indus Waters, Meher Ali Shah informed the committee that India continued to release water on Wednesday in Sutlej River. He further said that India intimated about water releases on August 19. However he urged the committee to hold an in-camera briefing on this sensitive matter. The committee directed for a detailed in-camera briefing in the next meeting.

The committee expressed concerns over the encroachments on flood waterways of all major and other rivers/ hill torrents and directed authorities to restrict further encroachments. The committee also recommended that the people who have encroached upon waterways of rivers should be resettled at safe places.

The senior officials of Minister of Water Resources informed the committee that as per River Act of Punjab province, approved in April 2016, such settlements are considered as encroachments and the Supreme Court of Pakistan (ICP) has already directed to remove such encroachments from the flood plain/ waterways of all major and other rivers/ hill torrents and settle the people at safe places.

The officials further said that Federal Flood Commission (FFC) is holding regular meetings and is pursuing the matter with the provinces for removal of such encroachments and restricting further encroachments in flood-prone areas. The committee took serious notice of the absence of chief secretary Balochistan from the meeting while discussing the progress report on a point of public importance raised by Senator Mir Kabeer Ahmed Muhammad Shahi, regarding compensation of affectees of Mirani Dam.

Senator Mir Kabeer Ahmed Muhammad Shahi said that a recommendation was made in the last meeting for summoning the responsible officers, which has not been paid heed.

He took serious note of lack of knowledge of the officers present in the meeting. It was asserted that these are delaying

tactics and that strict action must be taken against this. The committee recommended that chief secretary, secretary irrigation, secretary finance and deputy commissioner Kech be summoned in the next meeting and a privilege motion be moved against them if they fail to show up.

About the agenda item pertaining to relocation of Khazina Dam as well as reasons and rationale for reselection of the site, the committee was informed that Rs 300 million would be allocated from the provincial annual development plan for the purpose. The storage capacity of the new site would be 7 times more. The committee was requested to support this matter and give directives for inclusion of the budget in the provincial ADP. Chairman Committee Senator Shamim Afridi appreciated the progress.

While taking up the editorial of a daily newspaper published on 7th August, 2019 regarding damage caused by flood in the Indus River, the committee recommended that further encroachment of flood plains must be discouraged and a policy of flood plain regulation be formulated.

The committee also recommended that affectees must be compensated and relocated. The chief secretaries of all four provinces were summoned in the next meeting.

The meeting was attended by Senator Hasil Khan Bizenjo, Senator Muhammad Usman Khan Kakar, Senator Syed Muhammad Sabir Shah, Senator Mir Kabeer Ahmed Muhammad Shahi, Senator Mir Muhammad Yousaf Badini, Senator Walid Iqbal and senior officers of the Ministry of Water Resources and IRSA along with all concerned.—

TAHIR AMIN

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2019/08/22/3-page/797319-news.html>

INDIA KEEPS SILENCE ON WATER ACCORD RENEWAL

By Rizwan Asif Published: August 22, 2019

LAHORE: India may have finally provided Pakistan floodwater discharge data for the Sutlej River days after it released water from the Ladakh dam. But it is creating an immense headache for Pakistan's water authorities by refusing to renew a 30-year-old agreement to provide regular water flow information for the Sutlej, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi and Jammu rivers.

As Indus Water Commissioner Mehr Ali Shah downplayed concerns over the Sutlej flood situation before a Senate panel on Wednesday, insisting that Delhi had warned Islamabad about the release of water in a 'timely manner', Punjab Irrigation Minister Mohsin Leghari pointed to a larger problem with regards to data-sharing.

"Until two days ago, India did not release any data on water flow that it is bound to share under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)," Leghari complained while speaking to The Express Tribune. "And now, it is only releasing information for one location and that too, just once a day," he said.

The reason for the apparent obstinacy is India's reluctance to renew the Advance Flood Information Agreement (AFIA), sources in Pakistan's Indus Water Commission revealed. First signed in 1989 under Article 6 of IWT, which obliges both sides to regularly exchange water flow data, the agreement was renewed every year up until last year, they said.

Pakistan's Indus Water commissioner has already sent a letter to his Indian counterpart through both countries' foreign ministries but the latter has not formally responded so far, sources said. On the former's request, Pakistan's Foreign Office has sent a fresh letter of protest to Delhi.

Under AFIA, India was obligated to provide Pakistan water discharge data taken from nine specific locations on the Sutlej, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi and Jammu rivers from July 1 to October 10 each year. The frequency and regularity of the sharing of this data were governed by the magnitude of water flow. Under specific conditions, India was bound to share data at six-hour, three-hour and one-hour intervals.

For instance, India was required to record discharge data for Ravi River at Madhopur headworks and share it with Pakistan after every six hours if the flow of water ranged between 30,000 to 100,000 cusecs. India would have to share data every three hours if the flow exceeded 100,000 cusecs but remained below 2 million cusecs, and after every hour if it exceeded 2 million cusecs.

For Sutlej River, India would have to record and share data from the Rupur and Harike headworks. For Rupur, data was to be shared every six hours if the flow ranged between 50,000 to 150,000 cusecs, every three hours if it ranged between 150,000 and 250,000 cusecs, and every hour if it exceeded 250,000 cusecs. For Harike, India needed to release data to Pakistan every six hours if the flow ranged between 50,000 and 100,000 cusecs, three hours if it ranged between 100,000 and 150,000 cusecs, and every hour if it exceeded 150,000 cusecs.

Other headworks marked out in the AFIA include Akhnur for Chenab River, Jammu Tawi for Jammu River and the Beas and Bhakra dams for the Beas River.

According to water commission sources, over the last two days, India has shared data from only one location – Harike on Sutlej River. And if that was not enough, the data shared was incomplete and released only once a day. In the meantime, Leghari and other senior Punjab Irrigation Department officials said there is no threat of major floods for now. According to them, the water released by India has had the effect of filling up Pakistan's major dams to full capacity, reducing the country's water shortage by 14 per cent.

At the meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Water Resources on Wednesday, Indus Water Commissioner Mehr Ali Shah criticised India's approach to abiding with IWT, even though he insisted India that had informed Pakistan about the Sutlej floodwater discharge in a 'timely manner'.

"Indian authorities informed Pakistan about the release of water on August 19. On the first day, it released 158,000 cusecs and on the second, it released 190,000 cusecs," he told the panel.

Water Resources Secretary Muhammad Ashraf also informed the committee that there was no flooding as yet. "We want India to release 200,000 cusecs," he was quoted as saying. Responding to question, he said his ministry was reviewing statements regarding India violating IWT.

During a discussion on India's release of water in the Sutlej River, it was recommended that an in-camera meeting be held solely to deliberate on this topic.

The panel, meanwhile, expressed concerns over settlements on flood waterways and directed authorities to restrict further encroachment. It also recommended that the people living on these waterways be resettled at safe places. The water level in the Sutlej River at Ganda Singh Wala reached 18.8 feet with the flow crossing 55,000 cusecs, officials said on Wednesday, stressing that the flood posed no threat to the irrigation infrastructure while the condition of all safety embankments was satisfactory.

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) reported that about 18 villages in the vicinity of the Sutlej River are now underwater while three more villages have almost been evacuated. Officials expected medium flooding in the next six hours, while a high-level flood was expected in the next 24 hours when the flow was might top 150,000 cusecs.

According to the NDMA, the flood relay would pass Sulemanki Headworks on August 23, Islam Headworks on August 25 and would fall into the Chenab River on August 28 after passing through Panjnad River. The NDMA has

issued alert to all the concerned provincial disaster management authorities (PDMA), departments and the local communities.

On Wednesday the discharge at Head Sulemanki was recorded at 18,880 cusecs against its capacity of 325,000 cusecs, the Irrigation officials from the Multan Zone said. Executive Engineer Chaudhry Muhammad Zahid said that there was a low flood in Sutlej, while a normal flood level was observed in Chenab. He added that capacity of Sutlej was 300,000 cusecs, while the discharge at Ganda Singh Wala was 55,900 cusec on Wednesday afternoon. The NDMA has advised the relevant authorities to create awareness in the public, particularly those residing in and close to river banks and near watercourses not to venture on the flash flood routes, vacate dangerous buildings, remain away from electric wires and avoid swimming.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2039222/1-india-keeps-silence-water-accord-renewal/>

WSSP LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN TO RECOVER RS178.5M IN ARREARS

By Our Correspondent Published: August 22, 2019

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar district administration on Wednesday kicked off a drive to recover water and sanitation arrears worth Rs178.5 million from commercial defaulters.

Launched on request of the Water and Sanitation Services Peshawar (WSSP), teams of the service and the local police will conduct a joint campaign spread over two phases under the supervision of additional assistant commissioners simultaneously in all zones.

In the first phase, defaulters will be served with notices for payment of arrears within seven days. Should they fail to clear their arrears within the given timeframe, they will either be arrested or their property sealed under the second phase of the drive.

Officials said that the list of defaulters comprises some 1,936 commercial consumers including store owners, hotels, hostels, filling stations, wedding halls, offices, cinemas, banks, private and govt schools, educational institutions, markets, bargain centres, factories, water pumps and workshops.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2039174/1-wssp-launches-campaign-recover-rs178-5m-arrears/>

CM BALOCHISTAN CONSTITUTES PANEL TO OVERSEE WATER PROJECTS

By Our Correspondent Published: August 22, 2019

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Kamal has directed authorities to constitute a joint coordination committee in order to monitor water projects in the province.

Kamal issued this instruction on Tuesday while chairing a meeting called to review water projects for Balochistan under the federal Public Sector Development Program (PSDP).

Addressing the meeting, the CM said the provincial government has been utilising all resources to meet water need. He said after completion of new dams with the federal government's fund, the province would be able to store more water for agricultural needs.

“Due to lack of dams, millions of cusecs of rainwater is wasted but adequate dams on suitable locations would help us store more water for the province. The provincial government is closely monitoring implementation of water projects for Balochistan under the federal PSDP.”

He said Mangi Dam would end water scarcity in Quetta while Kachi Canal would ensure provision of water for green belt of Balochistan. “Agriculture is the backbone of provincial economy. Therefore, we have been working on projects to turn vast areas of Balochistan into agricultural land.”

The chief minister later directed authorities to form a joint coordination committee in order to monitor water projects. Earlier, Federal Secretary for Water Muhammad Ashraf briefed the meeting.

He said Prime Minister Imran Khan has directed Ministry of Water to ensure timely completion of water projects for Balochistan in order to fulfill water needs of the province.

The federal government has included 65 water projects for Balochistan in federal PSDP. These projects include 35 new and 30 ongoing schemes. The Centre has allocated Rs54,352.40 million for 35 new schemes while Rs161,092.16 million for ongoing schemes.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2039129/1-cm-balochistan-constitutes-panel-oversee-water-projects/>

‘BARRAGES IN SINDH MAY HAVE NORMAL FLOWS THIS WEEK’

The Newspaper's Staff Correspondent August 23, 2019

HYDERABAD: Keeping in view the water flow from Tarbela Dam, all three barrages of Sindh would be having normal flows and would not face any flood situation. Guddu Barrage would be having normal flows by Aug 25 and one day later Sukkur Barrage would get normal flows.

Guddu and Sukkur barrages are still having medium flood levels.

Estimates by Sukkur Barrage control room showed that floodwater, that was to reach from Sutlej River, would not be more than 60,000 cusecs to 70,000 cusecs when they enter Indus at Chachran Sharif after crossing Panjnad Barrage. Taunsa Barrage downstream flows are likely to drop from 185,098 cusecs (Aug 22) to 135,000 cusecs in the next few days when water flows (60,000 cusecs to 70,000 cusecs) from the Sutlej would fall in the Indus. Sutlej River flows have started reaching Panjnad where level is rising. On Aug 21, Panjnad had a downstream flow of 48,297 cusecs at 6am and on Aug 22 it was passing 55,045 cusecs at 6pm for Indus.

Inflows in Tarbela have dropped as reflected from last two days' flows statistics.

On Aug 21, water inflows of Tarbela were 183,000 cusecs and on Aug 22, it was having 163,000 cusecs. Sutlej water — released by India — would be reaching Chachran Sharif probably on Aug 28 or 29. Gauge at Chachran Sharif has dropped from 10.1 on Aug 21 to 9.6 on Thursday.

“There is a guesstimate that initially when Sutlej had started receiving water from India its level will be 23ft at Ganda Singh Wala, but it remains 19ft as per our information,” a control room official said.

He anticipates that there should be low flood levels at Guddu in the next 24 or 48 hours.

According to Sindh chief minister's special assistant on irrigation Ashfaq Memon, the Sindh government is not submitting indent of 160,000 cusecs at Chashma Barrage to the Indus River System Authority for Sindh's barrages as situation in the next couple of days would be completely normal and there would be no flood situation.

River water flows showed that Guddu Barrage was currently having medium level flows of 397,089 cusecs upstream and 362,839 cusecs downstream whereas Sukkur Barrage is also having medium flood level with upstream flows of 364,630 cusecs and downstream flows of 303,625 at 6pm. Kotri Barrage upstream discharge was recorded 181,944 cusecs and 144,639 cusecs downstream at 6pm on Thursday.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1501059/barrages-in-sindh-may-have-normal-flows-this-week>

CENTRE ANNOUNCES RS125BN SINDH BARRAGE PROJECT

Imran Ayub Updated August 24, 2019

KARACHI: The federal government announced on Friday an ambitious Rs125 billion Sindh barrage project on the River Indus, winning support from the provincial government to build a huge structure 45km from the sea in the south of Thatta and east of Karachi to address environmental issues of sea intrusion and land degradation.

The unusual consensus between the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf at the Centre and the Pakistan Peoples Party in Sindh was reached at a meeting presided over by Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah at the CM House. It was attended by a federal government delegation led by Minister for Water Resources Faisal Vawda, Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) Chairman retired Lt Gen Muzammil Hussain and senior officials from both sides. “The project would cost around Rs125bn,” said Mr Vawda while talking to reporters after the meeting. “We are quite sure that the prime minister will approve the funding. The good thing is that during the meeting the Sindh chief minister also agreed to share the cost if we need that in case of shortage from the Centre. But right now we are very much hopeful that the federal government would bear the cost of this project,” he added.

Earlier, a statement issued by the CM House after the meeting said the two sides had agreed to work for development of the country, resolve the water crisis in Sindh and lay foundation for welfare of the region as the project would meet the needs for the next several decades.

“Due to non-availability of water downstream Kotri sea intrusion has destroyed hundreds of villages in Thatta and Sujawal districts and badly affected the delta,” the statement quoted CM Shah as saying during the meeting. “As a result, wetland habitats, mangroves and marine life growth have not only come to a standstill but also vanished to a large extent. Hundreds of families have migrated from the areas in search of livelihood somewhere else,” it added. Mr Vawda and the Wapda chairman, while briefing the chief minister, said Indus was the largest river and lifeline of the country’s agricultural economy.

“Indus River flows with mild gradient one metre per 18km. Downstream Kotri annual flows have been recorded at 27.9 MAF (million acre feet) to the sea. Flood protection bunds exist on both banks of Indus River stretch and the flood plain is 8-12km,” the meeting was informed.

According to the statement, the Wapda chairman told the meeting that there was a plan to construct a 12-metre high barrage on the Indus at a distance of 45km from the sea. He said that dykes on both banks in flood plain would be four to nine metres high and the reservoir in flood plain from the barrage would be 160km upstream, adding that there would be two canals on each side for irrigation and drinking water in the coastal area.

Mr Hussain said the Right Bank Canal (RBC) would be constructed from Ghorabari to Gharo and the Left Bank Canal (LBC) from Sujawal to Golarchi.

At this, according to the statement, the chief minister suggested that the RBC should be built up to Dhabeji so that it could provide water to Karachi and the LBC should be constructed from Golarchi to Thar to provide drinking water to the people of Thar.

The Wapda chief told the meeting that around 56,500 acres of land would be acquired for the purpose — 55,000 acres for flood plain, 700 acres for the RBC and 800 acres for the LBC.

The chief minister was of the opinion that since both the canals would be taken up to Dhabeji and Thar, 80,000 acres of land would have to be acquired.

The meeting was told that a conceptual study by Wapda had been completed, while feasibility study would be done by September 2020, vetting by international consultants by December 2020 and detailed engineering design by 2021.

Construction work on the project would start in January 2022 and it would be completed by December 2024.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1501344/centre-announces-rs125bn-sindh-barrage-project>

BREACH IN CANAL DYKE INUNDATES FARMLAND, VILLAGES IN BADIN

A Correspondent August 24, 2019

BADIN: Sanhi Goni (canal) developed a 30-foot wide breach at RD-45 near Kadhan town on Friday, inundating standing crops over a vast area and flooding nearby villages.

Area people told reporters they had immediately informed irrigation department but no official turned up to plug the breach, hence, it kept widening and fast inundated all the villages in the vicinity including the villages of Mohammad Siddique Jamali, Abdul Rahim Bohar and others.

They said that they had started plugging the breach with the help of some low-ranking irrigation department staffers on self-help basis but they were facing great hardships in controlling the gushing waters.

In past few weeks, dykes of many irrigation outlets and drains have developed breaches, causing massive losses to farmers and villagers. Still, the department concerned is not taking serious steps to fortify the weak dykes.

Local leaders of farmer organisations held officials of both Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority and irrigation department responsible for the huge losses due to breaches.

They said that both the departments had miserably failed to regulate flows of water as per capacity of channels and properly maintain the dykes.

APP adds: Hyderabad Commissioner Abbas Baloch on Friday visited Sagiyoan-Matiari protective dyke near Bhanote in Matiari district to review flood situation and measures being taken to strengthen the embankment.

The commissioner who was accompanied by Matiari Deputy Commissioner Ghulam Haider Chandio was briefed by superintending engineer (irrigation) of Rohri Canal on strengthening of T-Spur with stone-pitching in order to make the dyke strong enough to sustain water pressure during expected flood in Indus river.

He directed the deputy commissioner to set up pickets at vulnerable points along the dykes and make available all required material, including machinery, stones and sand bags so that they could be used in case of emergency.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1501243>

SMALL DAMS PLANNED FOR DG KHAN AND FORT MUNRO

MUHAMMAD SALEEM AUG 24TH, 2019 LAHORE

The Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar chaired a meeting, here on Friday, which decided to construct small dams for the storage of water in DG Khan and Fort Munro. The meeting reviewed in detail development schemes pertaining to the southern Punjab districts. The meeting was given a briefing about public welfare projects and new schemes.

Addressing the meeting, the CM said that these water reservoirs would also be utilized for providing clean drinking water to the local community. He said that lining of Maneka Canal should be done on priority basis along-with plantation of trees on the adjacent land as well as a separate sewerage facility.

The CM said that machinery will be provided for improving solid waste management system in southern Punjab and added that immediate steps be taken to improve the condition of parks. "No compromise will be made on public welfare schemes and development schemes should be completed according to their given schedule," he said, adding: "Strict monitoring of development schemes will be continued."

The chief minister directed that 18 rest houses of Fort Munro should be properly renovated adding that this famous hill resort will be made the best tourist-spot having online booking facility.

Secretaries of irrigation, housing, sports and tourism and local bodies departments and others attended the meeting.

Moreover, on the directions of Chief Minister Usman Buzdar, the Punjab government has decided to issue 'Sehat Insaf Cards' to the provincial government employees. This card would help in providing treatment facility to the government employees up to Rs 725,000. The chief minister Usman Buzdar has condoled the death of Malik Asad Khan, son of former governor West Pakistan late Malik Ameer Muhammad Khan.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/08/20190824511119/>

CM, NA SPEAKER INAUGURATE MEGA WATER PROJECTS IN SWABI

The Newspaper's Correspondent August 25, 2019

SWABI: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mahmood Khan and National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser on Saturday inaugurated work on two mega water projects to ensure provision of drinking and irrigation water to the people of Swabi district.

These projects would cost Rs12 billion.

"The start of work on the Pehur High Level Canal Extension Project and Utla Dam is a proof that the government is working for welfare of the people," they said while addressing a ceremony held to inaugurate work on the Utla Dam project.

The chief minister said that Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf leadership fulfilled the pledge it had made with the people of the district during the election campaign.

“Water is life and the inauguration of work on the dam project is a step to provide potable water to people of the whole area,” he said.

Pehur High Level Canal Extension Project will cost Rs10.15 billion with a command area of 30,500 acres, including future extension of 10,930 acres.

The project will increase agriculture production from 5,000 metric tons to 115,000 metric tons. The project comprises 78km long canal system and it will be completed in three years.

The chief minister said that Gadoon Amazai which remained deprived of basic civic amenities would get the civic facilities on priority.

“The problems of the people of Gadoon Amazai that included health, roads and education would be resolved,” he declared. He announced to set up a modern hospital and two higher secondary schools for girls in the area.

Mahmood Khan claimed that the provincial government was focused on people’s welfare-oriented projects in the province and it had been working with complete determination for eradication of corruption from the society.

“Prime Minister Imran Khan wants a corruption-free Pakistan,” he said.

He said that former rulers were responsible for the prevailing economic mess in the country. He said that majority of former rules were now behind bars for their involvement in corrupt practices.

Speaking on the occasion, NA Speaker Asad Qaiser said that with the completion of Utla dam, the people of Utla village and its surrounding villages would no longer confront drinking water problem.

Mr Qaisar said that PTI had already completed record projects in the previous tenure in the province and now was expected to initiate and complete more projects.

He said that it was the first time that a huge project had been initiated at Gadoon Amazai by the government while the previous parliamentarians had ignored the people.

KP Governor Shah Farman, provincial information minister Shaukat Yousafzai and MPAs were also present on the occasion.

The Utla Dam is a drinking water project and the Pehur High Level Canal (PHLC) extension project an irrigation scheme. The cost of Utla Dam has jumped from Rs1 billion to nearly Rs2 billion due to delay in commencing work on this project.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1501496/cm-na-speaker-inaugurate-mega-water-projects-in-swabi>

REPAIRS START ON BREACH IN KHANPUR WATER CHANNEL

By Jameel Mirza Published: August 25, 2019

RAWALPINDI: A number of areas of Islamabad and Rawalpindi cantonment boards are longing for water as breach in embankment of Khanpur water supply channel has still not been repaired.

The citizens are facing extreme difficulties as all related institutions have taken the deadline of September 3 as the final word and are carrying out repairing work at turtle’s speed.

Apart from this, water theft from open water channel from Khanpur Dam to Sangjani water filter plant has become a routine practice. As the stealing attempts have become regular, the fortification wall of the water channel has gone weak due to the digging done for the water transfer.

All stakeholders’ including Capital Development Authority (CDA), Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB), Chakalala Cantonment Board (CCB) and Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) have also turned a blind eye to repairing of the water channel.

The channel undergoes silt cleaning once in a year only to gain media attention, which worsens the situation because a lot of water is wasted during the entire process.

All the institutions have converged focus on Sangjani filtration plant from where they receive their due share of water.

It is interesting to note that the related institutions have not even established a controlling authority for the project which is expected to fulfill water needs of twin cities for almost 20 years. CDA, being the acting controlling

authority, receives written complaints from other institutions every other day. Due to the lethargy of the institutions, the citizens are compelled to reach out to expensive water tankers to fulfill their needs.

Earlier, a breach in the left embankment of Khanpur Dam, supplying water to Sangjani filtration plant on Friday obstructed the water supply to various areas of Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

The 19.6km-long channel was damaged due to land sliding followed by the recent downpour.

The cantonment boards had directed the citizens to be careful in consumption of water and had also instructed them to store it until the channel was repaired.

RCB spokesperson had said that the repair work would be completed by September 3.

The areas facing water shortage after accident included Dhoke Hassu, Dhoke Matkal, Ratta Amral, Pirwadhai, Pindora, Double Road, Shamsabad, Mullpur and Sadiqabad.

The dam is a source of drinking water for the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Currently, 14.5 million gallons of water daily (MGD) is supplied to the CDA and eight and nine MGD to WASA and Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB), respectively.

The residents of railway co-operative housing societies decry the administration's decision to hike annual water charges to Rs7,200.

Following this, every household would now be liable to pay Rs600 per month in line with the charges.

Meanwhile, all nine housing societies under Pakistan Railways are already suffering from a severe water shortage, dilapidated roads and poor cleanliness. However, the condition of societies 5, 6 and those adjoining to Chakala Railway Station are comparatively in a better position in terms of water supply.

It has also been noted that elected representatives in these societies' have also become silent on the exorbitant rise. The officials of societies' administration were of the view that selling and purchasing in societies was facing a downturn while they had no other source of income than water charges. Owing to this, they said that annual water supply charges were hiked from Rs1,700 to Rs7,200 to cover expenses and generate revenue.

Meanwhile, the residents have rejected hiked charges and demanded that the administration reverse the decision. They said that the administration should initially ensure an uninterrupted water supply and improve cleanliness, dilapidated roads and street lights in the societies.

Further, cantonment boards are charging their residents with an amount of Rs225 monthly for a 5-marla house contrary to monthly water charges of Rs98 fixed by WASA.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2041545/1-repairs-start-breach-khanpur-water-channel/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM AUGUST 26th TO Sep 1st 2019 **EROSION KEEPS SITUATION AROUND DYKE IN LARKANA CRITICAL**

The Newspaper's Correspondent August 26, 2019

LARKANA: Though water level in the Indus in Larkana has started receding, the situation at the Old Abad dyke remains critical amid hectic efforts to keep it intact.

“Since Aug 15, we are facing an emergency situation here,” said a sub-engineer of the irrigation department working at the site on Sunday.

“The erosion was noticed on Aug 10,” the engineer, Tanveer Wadho, told this reporter, adding that active erosion of 1,700 feet long part of the dyke was being addressed. By doing a constant dumping of stone boulders along with soil to strengthen it, we had so far saved the dyke from being washed away, he said.

The dyke is the third protection line, he said.

Mr Tanveer said the erosion had eaten away 1,700 feet of the existing dyke. “The risk is not yet over; we are spending nights here to watch the river’s behaviour and are ready with the support staff and machinery to meet any eventuality.” Qurban Jatoi, resident of a nearby village, said he had seen a similar situation here during the 1983 and 2010 super floods but this one appeared even more dangerous. It is a big threat, he said, adding that more than a dozen villages — including Shahan Jatoi, Bablani Jatoi, Chachar, Gilsee Wara Bhutta, Nau Abad and Mitho Goth — were under threat and this was making us to spend sleepless nights.

A spur built in 2016 by the National Highway Authority to deflect River Indus water from this point to save the Larkana-Khairpur bridge was now creating problem for this dyke as it was obstructing the flow. The restoration work was on to save the dyke where the Indus was striking at 90-degree angle, the sub-engineer said.

The irrigation department had provided no special funds for flood-fighting, sources said.

At Moria loop bund, the Federal Flood Commission had approved a scheme of Rs201 million for building three spurs to push away the strong currents of Indus water, said Mr Jafferri, a sub-engineer of the Northern Dadu division, on Sunday.

Two T-shaped spurs had been completed while work on building a J-shaped spur was in progress; the work had come to a halt due to rise in water level, he said.

Recently, when 303,000 cusecs had passed from this point, it had submerged the shank of the J-spur, he said. The work was started in 2016 and was due to be completed by June 2019 but remained incomplete. He said that in 2017, when stone apron at this point was severely damaged by floods, the Sindh government on an emergency basis had approved a scheme costing Rs526 million for stone-pitching and apron.

In 2010 and 2015, some 1,100,000 cusecs and 700,000 cusecs, respectively, passed safely from this point, he said.

After 2015 floods, the river had begun changing its course from here and now it flows about 2.5 miles away from its older route on the right bank, Mr Jafferri said. Also, he added, the spurs built at Ruk, Nusrat Loop Bund and Akil loop bund had contributed to the deflecting of the river’s course. He said 176,000 cubic feet stone had been stocked alongside the dyke to fight any emergency.

“We have completed 95 per cent work of three J-spurs, stone-pitching and apron at Hakra dyke for which the Rs985 million scheme had been approved,” said Munir Morio, the executive engineer of Northern Dadu division on Sunday.

“We have to look after 86 miles dykes in the division besides supervising 65-miles second defence line, he said.

He disagreed with the reports of damage to the undertaken work at Hakra dyke but confirmed that erosion had appeared at new location near the ongoing work point; it was a new development. The erosion was noticed in 400 feet area and prompted the irrigation department to move heavy machinery without wasting time. Heavy boulders were dumped at the site of erosion and successfully controlled the situation from turning worse, he said. Though villagers had criticised the department’s lethargy, Mr Morio said work at the site itself was explaining our efforts. He said head of the J-head spur was in final stage as its earthen work had almost been completed while stone-pitching and apron was also completed.

When asked if irrigation department had released special funds for the flood-fighting works, he said ‘no’, and pointed out that flood-fighting was continuing.

It was learnt that during the last two seasons, the contractors who had completed the task at the Old Abad dyke had not yet been paid their dues.

The superintendent engineer of the Northern Dadu division, Haji Mohammed Ayaz Memon, verified the claim.

The engineering staff, currently busy in flood-fighting expect a drop in water discharge at Sukkur within the next 24 hours. The discharge on Aug 26 is anticipated at 126,000 cusecs and may continue to drop to 58,000 cusecs on Aug 31, sources in the irrigation department said on Sunday.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1501633/erosion-keeps-situation-around-dyke-in-larkana-critical>

PUNJAB HAS DEPOSITED RS455M AS WATER CESS, SC TOLD

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter Updated August 27, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court was informed by Additional Advocate General for Punjab Chaudhry Faisal Hussain on Monday that the provincial government had deposited Rs455 million in the water conservation account on behalf of different companies as cess for utilising underground water resources.

An SC bench headed by Justice Umar Ata Bandial was informed that Balochistan had also deposited Rs2.7m in the water conservation account.

But Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governments have yet to furnish any amount in the account.

The apex court had taken up a suo motu case regarding selling of bottled water extracted from underground sources without any charge and the quality and fitness for human consumption as well as a number of review petitions against the order of imposing water cess.

In its June 10 verdict, the court had ordered beverage and bottled companies to pay at least 20 per cent of the bills they have received for utilising the water resources in line with earlier imposition of Rs1 per litre cess for the extracted surface water.

“This is the degree of interest of Sindh,” Justice Bandial regretted. He asked Advocate General for Sindh Salman Talibuddin to use his influence in mobilising the departments concerned and observed that Sindh had a huge market but only pittance was coming than other provinces.

The Sindh AG, however, sought two weeks time so that he could come up with updated information after holding a meeting with the departments concerned.

The court asked the provinces to circulate the draft law developed by the federal government and convene meetings of relevant departments for a proper legislation regarding conservation of water resources and imposition of the cess on water usage.

Wasa-Punjab Managing Director Syed Zahid Aziz furnished a report before the apex court, highlighting how executive orders had been issued to implement installations of push-button faucets in all public and commercial premises for conservation of water.

The report explained that since the push-button faucets were not manufactured locally, installations of aerators/mist nozzles could be considered a good option as an alternative which might save 30 per cent of the water being used in public and commercial buildings.

But in compliance with the directives earlier issued by the apex court, the Wasa Lahore had engaged major manufacturers of sanitary fittings to initiate manufacturing of push-button faucets and aerators/mist nozzles. For five-star hotels, sensor control faucets had to be adopted as an alternative measure, the report said.

Justice Ijaz-ul-Ahsan, a member of the bench, however, asked the Punjab government to go for indigenous but innovative and workable solutions by involving engineering universities for eventual incremental benefit of the country in the long run.

About the recycling of water, the report explained that the water used for ablution in mosques and shrines was a potential area where by deploying simple and cost-effective methods, water can be reused.

Consequently, Wasa has identified 68 mosques in Lahore which were adjacent to parks. A model has been prepared and installed at Nimra mosque in Johar Town in which the water used for ablution is collected in an underground tank. And by deploying water pump and sprinklers, the same is used to irrigate parks adjacent to the mosque. Thus 2,500 gallons per day of ground water were being saved, the report highlighted.

Similarly, the Parks and Horticulture Authority, Lahore, is currently replicating this model to 58 mosques adjacent to the parks, whereas work on 50 mosques has been completed and is in operation. The Lahore Cantonment Board, Walton Cantonment Board and Defence Housing Authority have also identified the mosques adjacent to the parks in their jurisdictions and are replicating the model.

Moreover, the private and cooperative housing societies will also follow the Wasa model for reuse of ablution water in the parks or green belts adjacent to the mosques.

A scheme for reuse of ablution water from Data Darbar mosque has also been approved and funds have been allocated in the Annual Development Programme, 2019-20.

Since the wasteful use of drinkable water put a stress on the groundwater resources of the city, Wasa Lahore has disconnected water connections installed at car wash stations, the report said, adding that now the owners of car wash stations were required to install shallow well/ejector pumps at the upper aquifer which was not drinkable.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1501926/punjab-has-deposited-rs455m-as-water-cess-sc-told>

RS11BN DARAWAT DAM READY BUT SINDH YET TO TAKE IT OVER

The Newspaper's Staff Correspondent August 27, 2019

HYDERABAD: A 15-member delegation of the Sindh Chamber of Agriculture (SCA) on Monday visited Darawat dam in Jamshoro district and received a briefing from the project director about its utility and status.

Project director Lutufullah Shaikh told the delegation, led by SCA vice president Nabi Bux Sathio that the Sindh government was supposed to take over the dam from the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) by June 30 this year. However, he added, “the transfer of its administrative control is still awaited”.

Construction of the dam, a federal government-funded project, was started in January 2010 and completed in August 2014 by a Chinese company. The project has cost the government Rs11 billion. Located 135km north-east of Karachi and 70km west of Hyderabad, the dam has been built over a hill torrent, Nai Baran.

The SCA delegation comprising Haji Nisar Memon, Mohammad Khan Sarejo, Nawaz Ali Samejo, Mir Abdul Kareem, Agha Khadim, Qazi Anwar and others, besides Mr Sathio, suggested that Sindh government should immediately take over the dam so that the people of the province in particular and provincial government in general could benefit from this Rs11bn project.

The first revision of the project cost-I (PC-I) was approved at Rs9.3bn after it was conceived at Rs3.175bn in September 2009. PC-I was revised at Rs11.67bn by the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecneec). According to the original PC-I, Wapda was to establish pilot projects of high-efficiency system over 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.

According to Mr Shaikh, “the project is now awaiting transfer of operational control to Sindh government which was to take place by June 30, 2019 but it has not been done as yet”.

Mr Sathio quoted Mr Shaikh as telling the delegation that Sindh government’s planning and development department could not take control of the dam till the approval of SNE (schedule of new establishment) for the dam.

“Sindh chief minister should intervene and ensure approval of the SNE,” Mr Sathio said.

Wapda has set up several outlets with a main line canal and three distributaries which are to irrigate 25,000 acres on the right and left banks of the canal. The main line canal has a designed discharge of 156 cusec (cubic feet per second). It is stretched over an area of about 46km. The entire command area is to be connected with watercourses, to be built by the Sindh irrigation department.

The delegation members were of the view that handing over of the dam should not be delayed as it would benefit the people of Kohistan area, which fell in the home district of Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah.

The dam’s current storage capacity is 105 metres out of its optimum level of 112 metres. A water reservoir for irrigation purpose is available. The delegation noted that everything was ready but people could not benefit from the dam due to official red-tapism.

Mr Sathio was of the view that not only people would be able to get water from the pond area of 10,500 acres for irrigation, but Sindh government itself would earn millions by awarding fishing contracts after taking over the dam.

“We also suggest Sindh government transform the dam area into a recreational spot considering the location ie just 20km from the M9 Motorway,” he said.

He argued that in the West, all such sites were developed as tourists’ attraction spots.

“Sindh government can engage its tourism and forest departments for beautification of the site,” he further suggested.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1501816>

BREACH IN CANAL DYKE FLOODS 15 VILLAGES, FARMLAND

The Newspaper's Correspondent August 27, 2019

NAWABSHAH: Standing crops were washed away and at least 15 villages were inundated when a breach in the dyke of Sada Wah (irrigation channel) flooded a vast area near 60-Mile in Nawabshah on Monday.

Affected residents of Yousuf Dahiri, Ali Ahmed Zardari, Jawan Dahiri, Pir Bakhsh Brohi, Mohammed Alam Bhand, Ghulam Sarwar Zardari, Ali Murad Brohi, Nau Wakeel and other villages claimed that floodwater badly damaged the dyke which sustained about 100-foot-wide breach. They alleged that the irrigation officials concerned were immediately alerted but gushing water had already caused heavy losses by the time the repair and maintenance work was started.

Some of the villagers living close to the dyke, in Yousuf Dahiri village, claimed that the plugging material, machinery and labour force arrived as late as six hours after the breach occurred. They said scores of thatched houses in 15 villages were inundated by the deluge, which also washed away standing banana, sugar cane and other crops besides flooding vast agricultural fields.

Some other villagers, led by Manzoor Bhand, Ali Hasan Zardari, Abdul Kareem Dasti and Wahid Zardari, held a protest demonstration to condemn irrigation officials for their lethargy and indifference. They alleged that the sub-divisional officer (SDO) and his close associates actually closed watercourses to protect lands and crops of certain influential landowners of the area. This, they claimed, increased water pressure on the dyke ultimately causing the breach.

Meanwhile, Shaheed Benazirabad Deputy Commissioner Abrar Ahmed Jafar directed local revenue officials to go to the affected area and help the villagers. He himself visited the breach site and got the plugging work started.

He directed executive engineer of Nusrat division Niaz Memon to check dykes of all canals within his administrative region and ensure strengthening of any point found weak or vulnerable.

Mr Memon contended that the breach was 35 feet wide, and not about 100 feet wide as was claimed by the affected villagers.

The plugging and strengthening work was under way when the last reports came in late in the evening.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1501814/breach-in-canal-dyke-floods-15-villages-farmland>

WANTED: WATER ACCOUNTING

BR Research August 29, 2019

Is Pakistan truly facing a spectre of water shortage? The answer to this question has as many perspectives as there are water sector experts in this country. While it is beyond the scope of a newspaper to conclude this complex debate, let's attempt to lay groundwork based on available information.

To begin with, should water scarcity at all be a contested subject? After all, adequate availability of water (or lack thereof) is quantifiable – based on absolute volume of freshwater in the system and population of users. All indicators of water scarcity are thus ratios based on these two numerical quantities, and in principle need not cause a controversy where 'fair and balanced analyses should demand 'respect for both sides'.

On one hand are experts who point to indices such as Falkenmark indicator that define scarcity as a point where freshwater availability drops below thousand cubic-meters per capita. Based on population of 220 million, this indicator puts Pakistan's freshwater requirement at an estimated 180 million-acre feet (MAF), compared to current official estimate of 125-135MAF average annual freshwater supply. The latter figure includes freshwater abstracted from both surface and underground sources.

While the suitability of Falkenmark indicator as a universal measure of scarcity is itself hotly debated in the academia, hydrologists such as Dr. Hassan Abbas of COMSATS even contest the accuracy of official supply estimates.

According to Dr. Abbas, between 140-150MAF of freshwater flows annually from the rim stations on domestic rivers.

In addition, he estimates that the Indus basin groundwater aquifer stores at least 1,400MAF of water tables!

If correct, the underground aquifer of Indus basin alone is enough to cater to domestic water demand for the next eight to ten years, discounting any recharge through precipitation, surface run-off, or withdrawals from rivers system.

Yet, he does not argue for profligate model of water consumption. On the contrary, he estimates that Pakistan's total water requirement given existing population and level of agricultural and industrial production should be no more than 40MAF, of which non-agricultural water use is based on per capita requirement of fifty gallons per day, which he believes, is quite generous.

What does this 'alternate' set of facts mean for Pakistan's water sector paradigm? Contrary to the popular consensus that Pakistan should reduce cultivation of high-delta water thirsty crops such as rice, Dr Abbas is of the opinion that given the abundance of water resources, Pakistan's comparative trade advantage lies in 'virtual water export', and the country should exploit it to the fullest.

These opinions are consistent with a growing set of voices who stress that Pakistan's water sector challenge is one of inequity and not of shortage. While abundant in absolute sense, water availability is dearer for tail-enders and lower-riparian. Should the solution then be to rationalize water pricing to penalise waste?

Here, he disagrees. Instead of arguing for a water-pricing based model that could render Pakistan's struggling crop sector even more uncompetitive in global commodity markets, he argues for a 'pull-strategy'. Noting that even drip and sprinkle irrigation systems are a thing of the past, he argues that Pakistan's farming sector is ripe to adopt smart solutions such as soil-moisture management-based farming techniques, which could allow agri-exports to grow exponentially even given existing crop yields.

It is then no surprise that he argues against building of dams, and instead argues that proper management of riparian zone alone can yield 50MAF of water annually, equal to conceived storage capacity of country's river systems – that is, if all existing and planned dams were filled to full capacity.

While 2018 was the year when populist rhetoric looked set on turning Pakistan into a country of mega-dams, consensus finally seems to be developing on alternate and natural form of reservoirs.

The need of the hour is to evolve a similar consensus on water accounting, considering the extreme level of dissonance in academia and policy circles on accuracy of official estimates of country's freshwater supply.

While experts can continue to disagree on definitions of abundance and scarcity, any water policy will lack effectiveness if the quantity of resources is itself disputed. That task lies with Federal Flood Commission, which proud itself as the notified secretariat of National Water Council and custodian of National Water Policy.

<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/08/29/520408/wanted-water-accounting/>

ALL WATER ORGANISATIONS SHOULD BE HOUSED UNDER ONE UMBRELLA STRUCTURE

BR Research August 30, 2019

Dr Muhammad Ashraf is an agricultural engineer by profession. He received his PhD from University of Newcastle, UK and has served a 22-year long career in R&D of water resource management. Dr Ashraf has over 80 research publications to his credit, carried in both national and international journals of repute.

His primary areas of expertise include rainwater harvesting, irrigation system design, groundwater management, and wastewater management. Other than PCRWR, he has also worked with local as well as international organisations such as Pakistan Engineering Council, International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA).

He is currently serving his second stint as Chairman Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR), a research-oriented body under federal ministry for science & technology. In addition, he is also the editor of a journal called “Paddy and Water Environment”, an international research publication by Springer.

After the semi-drought conditions of last year, it appears that Pakistan faces a season of heavy monsoon rainfall where water availability may exceed domestic demand. BR Research sat down with Dr. Ashraf to understand whether the spectre of water scarcity persists, or the fears raised last year were exaggerated. Below are the edited excerpts of the conversation:

BR Research: PCRWR has usually made headlines in recent years for its research on quality of drinking water in the country. Is the organisation’s mandate limited to research on potable water, or as the name suggests, does its scope include all freshwater resources?

Dr Muhammad Ashraf (MA): PCRWR’s research and development mandate includes all domestic water resources, from surface- and groundwater management to rain-fed agriculture. As past chairmen of the organisation usually had formal training in chemistry, it is correct that the body of research work had become more inclined towards assessment of drinking water quality.

As is now widely known, over 93 percent of total surface water resources are utilised towards agriculture sector. In addition, twelve million hectares or forty percent of cultivable land is exclusively rain-fed and practices dryland agriculture.

In contrast, drinking water utilises no more than two to three percent of total resources. While the share of potable water appears underwhelming, its impact on human health, sanitation, economy, and ecosystem is disproportionately high.

Geographically, our focus of work spans the entire country, from data collection of glacial-melt in northern areas to study of seawater intrusion in Indus delta. PCRWR has regional offices in all strategic locations, including Quetta, Bahawalpur, Lahore, Peshawar, Tando Jam, Karachi, Muzaffarabad and Gilgit. Each office works on water sector issues unique to region’s geography.

For example, the one in Bahawalpur is in desert climate, and focuses on areas such as rain-water harvest, dryland and saline agriculture. In addition, 18 laboratories for testing of water quality are also located all over country.

BRR: Do you agree with the view that PCRWR should be housed in ministry of water resources instead of science & technology to ensure better coordination with other water sector organisations and avoid duplication of research and conflict of mandate?

MA: I believe that all public sector water-sector bodies should be housed under one umbrella organisation and have been arguing for this position for a long time. Having said that, there is difference of opinion on this issue. Those who disagree believe that ministry of science & technology is the custodian of all scientific research conducted in public sector domain. Viewed from this perspective, the opposition position holds some merit as well – as in principle, it ensures that R&D organisation may complement each other and avoid duplication of work.

Nevertheless, the challenges of the water sector are becoming increasingly more complex, from transboundary water sharing mechanisms to intra-provincial arrangements. The solution to these complex issues requires cross-sectoral expertise including but in no way limited to law, economics, and environment.

In this context, National Water Council is also being formed, which is hoped to function as the umbrella body that will allow collaboration between the disparate array of organisations that we see currently.

BRR: You spoke of an array of water-sector bodies that focus on specific areas. For example, FFC for floods; IRSA for canal systems management; WAPDA for water and power; and so on. Yet, no such organisation exists for groundwater, which arguably supplies one-third of total freshwater resources. Do you agree that this has led to a dearth of research on groundwater? Is it one of primary focus areas for PCRWR?

MA: PCRWR is probably the only organisation in the country that has extensively worked on mapping and investigation of underground aquifer. Over 30 reports have been published in past three years alone. For example, upper and Indus has been fully detailed, as has been FATA and the salt range belt. Work on mapping of groundwater in KP and Sindh is also underway.

Our work has indicated that groundwater is depleting in the regions surrounding the central and tail-ending areas of the canal command system, whereas the level of water table is more or less is same in the upper reaches of canals, because the recharge rate and losses are higher in those regions.

Moreover, aquifers are depleting most in urban regions, as groundwater abstraction caters to more than 90 percent of drinking water demand in the country. The mushroom growth of concrete-based infrastructure in cities mean that recharge rate is very low, even in regions such as Islamabad that have adequate rainfall.

However, beyond research and mapping, as a federal body PCRWR cannot play any role in regulation of groundwater resources as they are purely under provincial domain. For example, using the database of aquifer depletion developed by PCRWR, Punjab government has developed a framework for groundwater regulation. And I believe that's the model we must stick to.

BRR: You mentioned the disproportionate share of agriculture in consumption of country's freshwater resources. However, there is some confusion whether the sector consumes 90 percent of surface water resources, or whether that figure includes all groundwater resources as well.

MA: The consumption of surface water for drinking purposes is minimal and is limited to cities such as Hyderabad and Karachi, which are the only major urban centres dependent on surface water due to salinity of underground aquifer in coastal regions. In addition, more than sixty percent of groundwater is consumed by agriculture sector. Thus, almost all of surface water goes toward agriculture; as does three-fifths of groundwater.

BRR: Lets now come to the ongoing debate in policy circles as to whether the water sector faces a challenge of shortage or inequity of resource distribution?

MA: In 2016, I had published a paper that analysed Pakistan's available water resources based on all four major globally accepted indicators of scarcity. The paper noted that if Pakistan's freshwater resources were to remain

constant whereas population were to continue to grow, the country will approach absolute scarcity by 2025 as defined by various parameters.

The media turned it into a burning headline that read “PCRWR claims country to run dry by 2025”. While an obvious misquote, I believe it turned out to be a blessing in disguise. The media attention that water sector has received since then made sure that shortage of water took centre stage in policy circles. This ultimately also led to initiatives such as approval of national water policy; establishment of dam fund; and symposium on water council organised by Supreme Court.

Scarcity is defined as the gap between supply and demand. When resources are constant, while demand grows due to sheer increase in number of consumers, it will result in resource scarcity. I believe that’s a basic lesson of economics.

BRR: Outcomes of research on effectiveness of water pricing are actually very divisive. Recent research published by LEAD Pakistan on filtered and unfiltered water access in Faisalabad district indicates that price and income elasticity of water is very low. Does low demand elasticity not render water pricing useless as a tool to encourage conservation and discourage waste?

MA: Whenever water pricing is spoken of as a tool to rationalise consumption patterns, it does not refer to a mere two or three times increase from current abiana levels. Understand that the abiana rate currently charged in the agriculture sector is so low that even a four- or five-times increase will do very little in achieving behavioural change in existing wasteful consumption practices.

As long as water is available to consumer in abundance, wasteful consumption practices will continue. Instead, we need to introduce basic technology based smart solutions such as telemetry that are now very common in developed world. Such systems accurately regulate release and stoppage of water to a litre, and also charge the consumer accordingly.

BRR: It is often argued that the current major crop paradigm consists of water thirsty crops, whereas use of resource by livestock sector is also wasteful. In the interest of conservation, would you recommend a change in policy encouraging cultivation of crops that are relatively less water thirsty?

MA: We have already recommended restriction of rice, wheat and sugarcane cultivation for domestic consumption purposes only, and not as export-oriented crops. We need to focus on crop zoning. High water consumption crops such as rice and sugarcane need to be restricted to areas that have sufficient provision of water. For instance, rice or sugarcane cultivation in Southern Punjab needs to be discouraged.

If abstraction of water for these crops in areas naturally deficient in water is continued, we risk exposing the soil in these areas to salinisation. This has already started to happen in Sindh, which will take at least a decade of efficient practices to reverse.

BRR: Is absolute water scarcity index a good measure to gauge scarcity or should geographical terrain be considered along with other climate related factors?

MA: A combination of different models is used to deduce water scarcity inclusive of absolute water scarcity, water poverty index, physical and economical water scarcity. Of importance is the spirit behind physical and economical water scarcity; it helps in appreciating the need for infrastructure and investment that can leverage and utilise the physical presence of water.

<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/08/30/520712/all-water-organisations-should-be-housed-under-one-umbrella-structure/>

FOUR DADU VILLAGES FLOODED AS CANAL DYKE DEVELOPS BREACH

The Newspaper's Correspondent August 31, 2019

DADU: A 100-feet-wide breach occurred in Dadu canal at village Bandhi Sial, some five kilometres away from Dadu city, inundating four villages of Bhai Khan Lashari, Pandhi Sial, Bachal Khoso and Jatoi Goth, and 2,000 acres agricultural land while flooding 25 fish ponds.

Dadu irrigation (southern division) Executive Engineer Khushi Mohammad Shaikh said that owing to increasing water level in Dadu canal, the breach had occurred. He said that efforts were made to plug the breach and water had been reduced from the head of Dadu canal. Flood-fighting material was provided at the spot, he added.

Bachal Khan, a villager of Bachal Khan Khoso, said that suddenly the breach had occurred in Dadu canal and flooded four villages and five fish ponds. The villagers had shifted their families to Larkana-Sehwan Bund, he said.

Sukkur Barrage chief engineer Saeed Ahmed Jagirani also visited the breach site, accompanied by other officials. Meanwhile, the 30-feet-wide breach which had developed in Kuddan Shakh on Thursday at village Walidad Chandio near Khairpur Nathan Shah had been plugged. It has inundated eight villages and 5,000 acres of land.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1502662>

QUENCHING THIRST: SOLAR-POWERED SOLUTION TO SINDH'S DRINKING WATER NEEDS

By Hafeez Tunio Published: August 31, 2019

KARACHI : Providing clean drinking water is something many of Sindh's government schools and health facilities have long struggled with. Luckily for them, the provincial government has a noble, albeit ambitious plan: it will equip all of them with water purifiers powered by nothing more than the sun.

According to Sindh officials, the plan to install solar-powered reverse osmosis (RO) filtration units in government schools and health facilities have been devised in compliance with the orders of the Supreme Court-mandated water commission.

The plan, they said, has been divided into phases. In the first, 4,000 of Sindh's roughly 43,000 government schools and 1,300 of the province's health facilities will be equipped with the RO filtration units.

"The PC-1 for this initiative is almost complete. We have decided to allocate Rs2 billion to the first phase of this plan and will release Rs500 million in the current fiscal year," Public Health Engineering Department Secretary Roshan Ali Shaikh told The Express Tribune. "Once installed, these solar-powered water filtration units should provide residents of areas with contaminated water supply with clean drinking water while running off the power grid."

Sindh government sources said the public health engineering department has asked the provincial government's education and health wings to identify schools and health centres that are struggling to provide potable water. In many remote areas, such as Thar, Kachho and Kohistan, residents spend much of their day fetching water from distant water sources, they said. According to them, the scheme should provide them with easy access to clean drinking water, making their lives considerably easier.

"We are also devising a plan on how to maintain these plants," said Shaikh. "The public health engineering department is also going to build model villages with economically sustainable housing projects in Thar and other districts," he added.

"Thar, in particular, is unique in terms of contrast. Although rich in mineral resources and possessing great tourism potential due to its natural beauty, its residents suffer serious food security, health, education and livestock issues," noted Shaikh. "That is why the Sindh government has pinpointed this area in particular for model villages."

Outlining the vision for these model villages, the public health engineering secretary said: "We have an integrated and a holistic strategic approach. Each model village will have a community water tank for human consumption and a pond for livestock water needs. Every village will also have RO filters, health facilities, and every house in the village will come with a kitchen, garden and a pitcher-irrigation system for fruit trees and vegetables."

He added that the government also plans to introduce joint fodder cultivation under village community supervision and set up training centres for prospective artisans in coordination with the social welfare department and NGOs.

Speaking to The Express Tribune, Sindh Public Health Engineering Minister Mir Shabbir Ali Bijarani complained that "some sections of media highlight negative stories from the province, ignoring the positive work we are carrying out, especially in Thar."

"We are working on water security in Thar by dividing it in seven zones. Our department has devised a plan so that people can get potable water at doorsteps," he said, insisting that the construction and revamp of rural drainage and water supply schemes is the Sindh government's priority.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2046083/1-quenching-thirst-solar-powered-solution-sindhs-drinking-water-needs/>

SINDH GOVT FINALLY FORMS EXPERTS' COMMITTEE FOR RE-EXAMINING DIRECT OUTLETS OF ROHRI CANAL

Mohammad Hussain Khan September 01, 2019

HYDERABAD: After a lapse of an entire month, Sindh government finally notified on Friday a committee of irrigation experts for re-examining all direct outlets (DOs) of Rohri Canal in line with Sindh High Court's directives. The notification was issued only after tail-end growers impressed upon Sindh Chief Secretary Mumtaz Ali Shah to form the committee through a notification in compliance with orders of a division bench of the Hyderabad circuit of the SHC comprising Justices Salahuddin Panhwar and Adnan Iqbal Chaudhry.

According to the Aug 30 notification, the committee comprised Mukhtiar Abro, superintending engineer of Rohri Canal; Zareef Khoro, project director of Chotiari Dam; Mansoor Memon, director of Nara Canal Area Water Board, and Prof Dr Kamran Ansari of Mehran University of Engineering and Technology (MUET) Jamshoro.

The committee as per its terms of reference (ToRs) would examine modules of all watercourses and all direct outlets of Rohri Canal from Sukkur to Khairpur Gamboh and Tando Mohammad Khan subdivisions.

The case in question was fixed for hearing on Sept 6 in SHC. A number of tail-end growers had filed petitions in the court, seeking water supplies for their farmlands.

“We met the chief secretary on Friday and then the notification was issued. The committee as per court’s order is to submit its report within two months. The notification was not issued until Aug 30 when we met the CS,” said Pir Bux Hashmani, one of the petitioners.

He and Karamulalh Saand, both tail-end growers of Rohri Canal, met the CS and apprised him of the unusual delay in the issuance of notification. Mr Hashmani is president of Tail Abadgar Tanzeem, Khairpur Gambogh subdivision of Rohri Canal. The massive canal system branches out from Sukkur Barrage on the left bank of Indus River and feeds lands up to Badin district after covering a huge distance.

“We approached Inspector General of Police (IGP) Sindh in the light of the Aug 30 order passed on a petition (Saleem Leghari vs SE Rohri Canal) seeking provision of police assistance to magistrates and engineers concerned for removal of illegal lift machines, pipes, modules etc from canals in question,” he said.

The court order requires senior superintendents of police of Sukkur, Khairpur Mirs, Naushahro Feroze, Sanghar, Matiari, Mirpurkhas, Hyderabad, Tando Mohammad Khan, Tando Allahyar and Badin to provide escort to magistrates and engineers in this regard.

Water flows in tail-end areas of Badin have not improved yet as irrigation authorities claim they have reduced flows in Rohri Canal as a precautionary measure due to ongoing monsoon season and ongoing rains.

“Net result of the reduction in water flows is that our areas are severely affected,” said Mr Hashmani. Even when the river was having medium floods a couple of weeks back the land in Khairpur Gambogh subdivision was thirsting for water. Actually, irrigation authorities were forced to reduce water flows during floods as the river deposited massive silt in canals, he said.

Karamullah Saand said that he was told by the engineer concerned that modules’ dimensions in Naseer Canal division — last of Rohri Canal system’s five divisions — had been corrected. “But we can verify it only after Rohri Canal gets full supplies. If we get water supplies without any rotation programme that means that modules’ dimensions have been corrected,” he said.

Irrigation department officers had informed the court that they had repeatedly requested deployment of Rangers but despite requests they were not deployed and grievance of tail-enders remained unattended.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1502805>

SEPTEMBER, 2019

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM SEP 2nd TO SEP 8th 2019

CDWP MAY APPROVE ‘FIRST PROJECT’ TO SUPPLY POTABLE WATER TO LAHORE

Khalid Hasnain September 03, 2019

Lahore’s first Water and Wastewater Management Project — construction of clean drinking water treatment plant near Bambawala-Ravi-Bedian (BRB) Canal.

Under the project, the Water and Sanitation Agency (Wasa) will ensure provision of clean drinking water to around 1 million consumers (approximately 10m people) living in north Lahore, especially those residing in localities near the GT Road, including Baghbanpura, Mughalpura and Shadi Pura, after treatment of 100 cusecs of canal water from BRB that will be made available by the irrigation department.

“Since the Provincial Development Working Party (PDWP) of the planning & development department had approved this Rs19.9 billion project in March, this year, the Punjab government forwarded it to the federal government in June for approval. So, now, this project will be taken up by the central development working party (CDWP) in its meeting to be held on Sept 3, on Tuesday (today) in Islamabad. And we are much hopeful that the CDWP would approve this and send it to the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecneec) for final approval,” a senior Wasa official explained while talking to Dawn on Monday.

Envisaged by Wasa about two years ago, the Punjab and federal governments had approved its project concept-I (PC-I) during the last quarter of 2017. After approval, the PC-1 was shared with the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) that finally agreed to fully fund it through a soft loan. Later, the pace of work on the project’s approval by the Punjab government for its execution slowed down because of the pre-election political uncertainty in 2018. Similarly, it remained slack during the whole year since the new government took time to understand the routine business of the government. However, it finally took up various pending issues and its PDWP approved this important project in March 2019. It had sent the project to CDWP (federal government) for approval in June, this year. And finally the CDWP included it in agenda items of its meeting scheduled to be held on Tuesday (today).

Besides this, the project was stalled since long as the authorities thought its cost could be reduced if Wasa was supplied water from the BRB Canal at Batapur rather than its point situated across the River Ravi. But, later, the department in January, this year agreed to allow Wasa to get the canal water from the Batapur (GT Road) that reduced

the cost of laying of 7km-long or so pipelines. The department had earlier selected the canal's point that comes after crossing of the Ravi but the experts went against it and suggested Batapur point.

“Of the total cost (Rs19.9 billion), Rs5 billion would be given to irrigation department for making arrangements to supply water to the treatment plant, which would be established at Bhaini village (near Batapur) after pumping it out from the BRB Canal. The department would also get some repair/upgradation work done at Siphon within this budget. The remaining Rs14.9 bn would be spent for establishing new infrastructure (laying pipes, new connections etc),” the official added.

To a question, he said over 33 litres of the treated water would cost Rs1 to Wasa but the agency would supply 100 litres of drinking water to the consumers on subsidized rates of Rs1. The approximate quantity to be supplied to consumers through the new arrangement would be 50 million gallons per day, he claimed. To another question, he said the water to be supplied would be just like mineral water and would contain certain amount of chlorine. There would be no chance of presence of arsenic in that water, he claimed.

“The new arrangement would also reduce burden on the tube-wells supplying water to the people in the target areas. Once this project becomes functional, the tube-well operation would squeeze to one hour only from 14-16 hours daily. The tube-wells would only be operated for 12-14 hours during December and January (21 days) — during the canal's closure for annual desilting campaign. Similarly, it would help us control the depletion of underground water,” the official maintained.

Talking about Phase-2 of the project that would focus on the areas near Thokar, he said Wasa would not only supply clean drinking water to a large population living in southern Lahore, but also ensure return of 100 cusecs to the irrigation department after treatment of the 100 cusecs of sewage or wastewater. For this purpose, a water treatment plant would be installed at Qatar Band Road (near Thokar) where Wasa would treat 100 cusecs of wastewater and then put it into the Lahore's main canal. “In this way we will return the water we would get from irrigation department,” he added.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1503148/cdwp-may-approve-first-project-to-supply-potable-water-to-lahore>

CENTRE, SINDH TO FORM COMMITTEE FOR K-IV WATER PROJECTS

Habib Khan Ghori Updated September 03, 2019

KARACHI: The Sindh and federal governments have decided to constitute a joint committee to review the K-IV projects technical report prepared by Nespak so that the project could be carried forward, it was decided on Monday. The National Engineering Services Pakistan Ltd Company (Nespak) has estimated the cost of the project to be around Rs120 billion but sources say it could actually cost Rs 150 billion because of the devaluation of the rupee against the US dollar.

The members who will be part of the technical committee, five each from the Sindh and federal governments, would be notified by the planning commission, sources said.

This decision was taken at a high-level meeting which was attended by Federal Minister for Planning and Development Khusro Bakhtiar, Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission Jahanzaib Khan, Planning Secretary Zaffar Ahsan, Member of the Planning Commission retired Maj Gen Zahir Shah at Chief Minister House. Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah was assisted by Governor Imran Ismail, Local Government Minister Syed Nasir Shah, Labour Minister Saeed Ghani, Chief Secretary Mumtaz Shah, Chairperson Planning and Development Nahid Shah, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Sajid Jamal Abro.

The Frontier Works Organisation (FWO) delegation was led by Director General Major General Inam Haider, Brigadier Abdul Sami of 5 Corps, Brigadier Abeer and others.

Managing Director of the Water Board Asadullah Khan, K-IV Project Director Asad Zamin and Planning and Development officers concerned also attended the meeting.

At the meeting, the Sindh CM suggested constituting a joint team of the provincial Planning & Development Department and Planning Commission of the federal government to review the technicalities of the report to be submitted by Nespak by the end of the current month. The participants of the meeting agreed at the suggestion and which would be notified by the federal Planning Commission.

Nespak officials said the project would cost around Rs120 billion. At this, the chief minister said it would cost Rs150 billion because of the devaluation of the rupee against the US dollar. Moreover, officials said a 50-MW power plant has also been proposed for the project. The consultant has almost finalised the PC-I of the power project.

Meanwhile, the CM said that K-I and K-II/III had designed the capacity of 480 MGD which been reduced by 100 MGD due to silt and other technical issues. He proposed conducting a separate study to improve the capacity of K-I and K-II/III projects.

Mr Shah told the federal government representatives that water was an issue of life and death for this megalopolis city. “We started K-IV so that it could be completed but over 15 years have passed and it seems it would take a few years more,” he said.

Minister Bakhtiar suggested installing desalination plants in the city to cater urgently to the need for water but it would take two to three years to complete, he said. The chief minister replied his government was ready to install desalination plants in the city if the federal government extended financial support. The federal minister assured the chief minister of his support and urged him to submit the necessary proposal for approval.

Briefing the attendees at the meeting Major General Haider of FWO said that the 11-metre-deep canal being constructed from the Keenjhar lake had a length of 121 kilometres. Out of which the canal would flow in gravity up to 91km. The civil work of the canal was 70 per cent finished. There were some alignment issues on which Nespak was working to conduct third party assessment, he said.

Nespak representatives Jawaid Mir, Mirza Asif Baig and Mohammad Afzal said they might suggest modifications to the existing alignment of the canal. “We are conducting a geo study of the canal embankment to see whether it would be able to sustain the pressure of 660 MGD water. We will complete the study by the end of the current month and then submit it to the provincial government.”

Minister Bakhtiar said the project, which was at an advanced stage, needed another technical review by an expert team.

Earlier, the chief minister took Minister Bakhtiar, Governor Ismail to Lake Keenjhar, some 30 kilometres from Thatta city, at the intake point of the K-IV project by helicopter. They visited the site of the mouth of the project which was developed inside the canal at 257 metres from the soil area, the canal, the conduits and the bridges constructed so far where were also briefed by FWO engineers.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1503237>

WWF, AFGI AND SEPA MARK WORLD WATER WEEK

RECORDER REPORT SEP 3RD, 2019 KARACHI

World Wide Fund for Nature Pakistan (WWF-Pakistan), Artistic Fabric and Garments Industries (AFGI) and Sindh Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) jointly celebrated World Water Week to raise environmental awareness and sensitize people about conservation of freshwater resources in the country. The celebrations started on 25th Aug and concluded on Monday 2nd Sep at an event organised at Rehri Goth.

People included representatives from WWF, AFGI and a large number of community members participated in the event. Speakers discussed water issues and emphasized the need to develop coherent water policies and action plans that can help achieve sustainable development goals. The theme of World Water Week this year was Water for Society - Including All.

Speaking on the occasion, SEPA technical director Munir Abbasi said the Sindh government is at the last stage of finalizing water and climate policies, which will be published soon. He said SEPA is committed to ensuring compliance of provisional water related laws and policies by industries and other stakeholders. He was of the view that awareness raising events and campaigns at the local level should be conducted as they help manage water resources effectively.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/09/20190903515030/>

ADDRESSING WATER SCARCITY

M Ziauddin September 4,2019

According to the OECD estimates, more than 40% of the world’s population lives in water-stressed areas, and water demand is expected to rise 55% over the next 30 years. By 2050, 240 million people will lack access to clean water, and 1.4 billion will be without access to basic sanitation under a business as usual scenario. The access to and supply of water is likely to become even worse due to the impact of climate change. This impending water crisis requires immediate action.

While acting together so the world does not go thirsty, the OECD is addressing growing challenges in water scarcity, floods, pollution and rising demand by helping to ensure that water management is inclusive and effective.

“Water is becoming scarce, and it has impact, real impact, on the livelihood, on the well-being, on the health, on the sustainability of people, and this is our biggest challenge. We should get our act together and get going because the price of inaction is much higher than the price of action.”— Peter Glas Chair of the OECD Water Governance Initiative

In the opinion of OECD, water crises are often governance crises, but not everybody knows what water governance is or how important it is to cope with water challenges. Water governance is a means to cope with the challenges of too much, too little and too polluted water, and to ensure that people around the globe have quality access to safe drinking water and sanitation. Water governance is said to be the set of rules, practices, and processes through which decisions for the management of water resources and services are taken and implemented, and decision-makers are held accountable. Beyond defining what should be done, water governance is about who does what, at which level of government, and how.

In 2015, the OECD launched the Water Governance Principles, designed to promote coherent and integrated policy responses to water challenges. To date, over 40 countries and 170 stakeholders from the public, the private and the non-for-profit sectors have endorsed the principles.

The OECD Water Governance Principles help frame the key conditions for effective, efficient and inclusive water policies and provide a tool for countries to understand whether their water governance systems are working or where change, reform or action is needed. The OECD also developed a tool, the Governance Indicator Framework, for concerned parties to understand the performance of water governance systems at city, basin, regional or national scales. The Principles were designed following many years of field experience and a bottom-up process with the international multi-stakeholder network.

The OECD principles on water governance:

Principle 1. Clearly allocate and distinguish roles and responsibilities for water policymaking, policy implementation, operational management and regulation, and foster co-ordination across these responsible authorities.

Principle 2. Manage water at the appropriate scale(s) within integrated basin governance systems to reflect local conditions, and foster co-ordination between the different scales.

Principle 3. Encourage policy coherence through effective cross-sectoral coordination, especially between policies for water and the environment, health, energy, agriculture, industry, spatial planning and land use.

Principle 4. Adapt the level of capacity of responsible authorities to the complexity of water challenges to be met, and to the set of competencies required to carry out their duties.

Principle 5. Produce, update, and share timely, consistent, comparable and policy-relevant water and water-related data and information, and use it to guide, assess and improve water policy.

Principle 6. Ensure that governance arrangements help mobilise water finance and allocate financial resources in an efficient, transparent and timely manner.

Principle 7. Ensure that sound water management regulatory frameworks are effectively implemented and enforced in pursuit of the public interest.

Principle 8. Promote the adoption and implementation of innovative water governance practices across responsible authorities, levels of government and relevant stakeholders.

Principle 9. Mainstream integrity and transparency practices across water policies, water institutions and water governance frameworks for greater accountability and trust in decision-making.

Principle 10. Promote stakeholder engagement for informed and outcome-oriented contributions to water policy design and implementation.

Principle 11. Encourage water governance frameworks that help manage trade-offs across water users, rural and urban areas, and generations.

Principle 12. Promote regular monitoring and evaluation of water policy and governance where appropriate, share the results with the public and make adjustments when needed.

Since 2011, the OECD has also reviewed, at the request of government, the water policies of several countries and proposed recommendations for water reforms.

Pakistan, meanwhile, is feared to be running out of water by 2025, or droughts of unprecedented proportions are going to hit the country within five to seven years.

Therefore, Pakistan would do well to adjust its water management plans and programmes in the light of the above mentioned OECD principles on water governance.

Pakistan has already been advised by experts to shift its focus to managing water demand and producing more from each drop of water. The problems in irrigation are said to be more to do with inefficient and unfair distribution of the water, and low productivity in terms of the yield and value of crops per unit of water used.

According to USAID's Factsheet 2017, Pakistan is now a food-surplus country. But this food surplus annually consumes 104 million acre feet (MAF) of water. Wastage of water in Pakistan's irrigation is said to be one of the highest in the world. Indian Punjab produces 30 per cent more with the same quantity of water while California 50pc more.

Great strides have been made world -wide since the early 1990s and today's water-saving technologies can enable our farmers to produce surplus food using less than 50 MAF of water.

There needs to be, therefore, more focus on better irrigation service delivery and better on-farm water management, coupled with improvements to boost productivity. With a rapidly growing population, Pakistan will inevitably become more water scarce in a relative sense. But Pakistan can become water secure through efficient and sustainable resource management, improved service delivery, and better risk mitigation.

The flows to the sea are commonly seen as wastage. Average flow to the sea has been falling for more than 80 years. Firstly, the eastern rivers were diverted to India and then storages were constructed in Pakistan. Average annual flow to the sea has been reduced by more than 80 percent. Any more reduction in the flows to sea by construction of new dams is likely to cause the sea to invade the delta and destroy its fertility.

According to international standards, 35 gallons per capita per day is enough for a healthy lifestyle. If we want to supply this amount of water to every citizen in the country, all we need is 12 MAF. Including the generally accepted 30pc losses in water supply systems, the domestic requirement for 207 million individuals does not exceed 17 MAF. Pakistan's industrial consumption is under 10 MAF. So, the actual water requirement to fulfill all domestic, industrial and food security needs is less than 77 MAF including 50 MAF for agriculture, whereas the country's river flows alone contribute an average of 145 MAF of water annually.

The problem, therefore, lies in our consumptive patterns: 104 MAF goes into irrigation, out of which 54 MAF is preventable wastage.

In most cities, domestic and industrial needs can be met by investments in proper aquifer management, prevention of pollution in aquifers and streams, correct handling of storm water run-off, and appropriate disposal of sewerage effluents.

A paradigm-shift from supply management through mega structures to demand management through an integrated suite of water supply and irrigation technologies, policies, legislation, institutions, capacity building, water pricing and business models, etc., could be the game changer in the region.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2019/09/04/18-page/799603-news.html>

200 MGD OF WATER FOR KARACHI: SINDH CM FOR CONSTRUCTION OF CANAL FROM GUJJO TO PIPRI

RECORDER REPORT SEP 5TH, 2019 KARACHI

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has decided to construct a separate canal from Gujjo to Pipri to provide 200 MGD additional water to Karachi and also ordered the water board to reduce its 30 percent line losses so that 58 MGD water could also be saved for the city.

He took the decision while presiding over a meeting of Karachi Water Board on Wednesday to explore ways and means to improve capacity of the existing system of K-I, II and III under which the city received water. The meeting was attended by Minister Local Government Syed Nasir Shah, Chairperson P&D Nahid Shah, PSCM Sajid Jamal Abro, MD water Board Asadullah Khan and Chief Engineer.

Briefing the Chief Minister, MD water Board Asadullah and Local Government Minister Syed Nasir Shah said that the current water demand of the city was 1200 MGD against which total water supply was around 406 MGD. To this, the Chief Minister said that the situation necessitates to plan, design and implement the water supply projects on war footings.

MD Water Board said that different systems of bulk water supply provide 406 MGD to the city. They include K-I, 280 MGD, K-II, 100 MGD, K-III, 100 MGD, Hub source, 100 MGD. This comes 580 MGD against which total losses have been calculated at 30 percent, means 174 MGD.

To a question, the MD said that water allocation for Karachi was 650 MGD. Then the Chief Minister asked him about the designed capacity of Kinjhar-Gujjo (KG) Canal, he said it was 650. At this chief minister said that when the system has allocation and capacity of 650 MGD why the water board was not improving its system. He said that if the system was improved the water board would be able bring 200 MGD in the system and if the losses of 174 MGD were reduced by 10 percent it would further save 58 MGD. The chief minister directed water board to construct a canal from Gujjo to Pipri with a capacity of 250 MGD water from where it would be pumped in the system already functional in the city.

Minister Local Government Syed Nasir Shah said that the project would cost around Rs11 billion. Contracts for some of its portion were given for constructing 135 MGD capacity canal. Murad Shah said it would be of 250 MGD canal. "I would arrange funds but this city needs water and other projects are getting late," he said.

Local Government Minister told the meeting that Pakistan Steel Mill was withdrawing 28 MGD, Port Qasim 7 MGD. At this the chief minister said that Pakistan Steel Mills was not functioning, therefore their requirement must be reassessed. "We are giving four MGD to DHA which is much bigger than the area of Steel Town/Gulshan-e-Hadeed population, therefore steel mill requirement must be assessed once again," he said.

To another question, the MD Water Board told the chief minister that 50 percent losses have been recorded from 100 MGD supply from Hub. The chief minister said that these losses must be reduced to five to eight percent.

SENATE PANEL TOLD: RS 300 BILLION-350 BILLION NEEDED FOR K-IV AND OTHER KARACHI PROJECTS

NAVEED BUTT SEP 7TH, 2019 ISLAMABAD

Minister for Planning, Development and Reform Khusro Bakhtyar Friday informed the Senate Standing Committee on Planning, Development and Reform that Rs 300-350 billion are required for K-IV water supply and others projects to address the issues of water, sewerage and sanitation in Karachi.

The committee met with Senator Agha Shahzaib Durrani in the chair here at Parliament House. The committee discussed the current status of K-IV water project, 44 new schemes in PSDP-2019-20 and others.

While briefing the committee on current status of K-IV Water Supply project, the minister said that Rs 300-350 billion would be required in five to seven years to address the issues of water, sewerage and sanitation of Karachi.

The committee also expressed serious concern over increase in the cost of K-IV water project from Rs 25 billion to Rs 120 billion, which is almost five times higher than its initial estimated cost in 2004.

The committee was also given a briefing on the current status of K-IV Water Project regarding the flaws in the alignment proposed by consultants and challenges being faced in transmission and distribution channels of water.

The minister told the committee that meetings were held a few days ago with the government of Sindh and the matter was discussed at length.

He said that NESPAK presented the initial K-IV design review findings and will propose design improvements after completion of its technical study by end of September 2019. He said that NESPAK will submit complete feasibility study of technically viable and economically feasible solution of K-IV project to the government of Sindh within two months. He said that Joint Technical Review Committee will review and assess the NESPAK report.

The committee directed that TORs of this joint committee should be shared with this committee of the Senate.

The chairman committee emphasized on the need of paying due consideration to consultants hired for such projects as they later contribute in cost escalation and extended timelines. The committee also observed that huge responsibility lies on the Ministry of Planning that vets all the projects and it must have responsible people for this job. He directed the ministry to investigate the delays and irregularities in K-IV project and penalise the responsible people.

The committee also expressed serious reservations over inclusion of 44 non-approved schemes in Public Sector Development Program (PSDP)-2019-20.

The committee chairman said that these schemes never appeared in PSDP presented to the Senate and this committee. The committee during its meetings on PSDP-2019-20 proposals had been assured that new projects under provincial domain and unapproved projects will not be included in the PSDP. The committee also observed that the committee had been assured that no project will be funded from PSDP which is to be funded by SDGs; however, no recommendation of the Senate was entertained at any time.

Despite all these assurances, 44 unapproved projects were included in new PSDP book which were never presented in the Senate. He further said that inclusion of such projects in PSDP is unconstitutional.

The secretary Planning, Development and Reforms told the meeting that the PSDP for the current financial year amounted to Rs 701 billion and the amount has not been increased. He said that new schemes were included after seeking approval from the National Economic Council (NEC). He said that while staying in the same amount, some new schemes were added considering the needs in less-developed areas but no one was added after the Parliament passed the finance bill. He said that consultations keep going on at all stages and with all stakeholders including parliamentary committees and so some changes were made after consultations were made with this committee.

Even, Leader of the House in Senate Senator Shibli Faraz also expressed concern over the procedure adopted for finalization of the schemes. The chairman constituted a sub-committee comprising Senators Mir Kabeer Muhammad Shahi, Rukhsana Zuberi and Hidayatullah to probe this matter.

While discussing the draft Energy Policy 2019, the committee asked Alternative Energy Development Board (AEDP) to share the draft with the committee for its input and also asked for an extensive briefing on what incentives are being provided to investors for renewable energy sector.

Durrani was of the view that the directions were also given in the last meeting to make the new draft an investor friendly and it should offer incentives to businesses as well as overseas Pakistanis so that they can help make Pakistan's energy grid a good mix of renewable and non-renewable energy.

About the renewable energy, Shibli Faraz was of the view that renewable energy is being discouraged intentionally and many people who came to invest in this sector are going away again. He said that investors have to be incentivised as there is a strong lobby that is active in this regard and doesn't want their businesses get affected.

On the matter of extensive amounts being paid as subsidy to tube wells in Balochistan, the committee observed that there should be a permanent solution to this by either solarising the tube wells or some other solution.

The minister told the meeting that in this matter lead will have to be taken by power ministry while ministries of finance and planning will assist.

The committee decided to call a joint meeting of power and planning ministries and government of Balochistan to discuss the matter and recommended the officials to come up with as many business proposals for the matter as the ministry of power can. The committee was told that feasibility study on water table situation will be completed by March 2020 and then a work plan will be formulated.

The committee was given a briefing by DG Gwadar Development Authority on necessary facilities of fresh water treatment, water supply and distribution system in Gwadar.

It was told that current daily demand of the city stands at 7.48 MGD and supply is 2.5 MGD. With completion of Shadi Kour Dam transmission line, the city will manage to get additional 5 MGD. However, the distribution network to supply the water at home is still not in place and the infrastructure which was to be established in phase 3 of the project will have to start simultaneously.

The committee appreciated GDA for timely completion of phase-I and the progress of Phase-II of Gwadar drinking water supply scheme. The committee also asked GDA to submit a revised PC-I of the Phase-III to Planning Commission and committee within ten days and asked the Ministry of Planning to prioritize its funding so that work on this project can be expedited.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/09/20190907516037/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM SEP 9th TO 15th 2019

RS400M WATER TAX YET TO BE RECOVERED FROM LANDLORDS, FARMERS

The Newspaper's Correspondent September 09, 2019

MIRPURKHAS: Farmers organisations of the irrigation department have failed to recover Abiana (water tax) dues, which have reached Rs400 million over the years, from defaulting landlords and farmers, causing huge losses to the government exchequer.

Sources told Dawn here the other day that under the rules of Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (Sida) the farmers organisations had been formed in areas along distributaries, minors and channels to ensure the maintenance, desilting and strengthening of dykes to preclude the danger of breaches during heavy rainfall and flood season.

The organisations were bound to recover the Abiana from landlords and farmers and they were to keep 40 per cent of the total collected tax while 60 per cent went to Sindh government. The organisations spent the amount on maintenance and repair of channels, distributaries and minors, said the sources.

But thanks to inefficiency of the office-bearers of FOs, the Abiana had not been recovered from farmers and landlords over the past several years till the dues mounted to about Rs400 million.

However, now director of Nara Canal Area Water Board Mansoor Memon has launched a drive for the recovery of Abiana. On his directives, water supply to many defaulting landlords and farmers have been closed and watercourses sealed till clearance of dues.

The sources said that irrigation department's engineers and staff had intensified the recovery campaign in the command area of lower Nara Canal.

Nara Canal Area Water Board manager Rasheed Ahmed Maher said that so far Rs30 million dues had been recovered. "We have fixed target of Rs70 million. So, the campaign will continue till the target is achieved".

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1504260>

WATER FOUND IN ATMOSPHERE OF PLANET BEYOND OUR SOLAR SYSTEM

SEPTEMBER 12, 2019 / 3:17 AM / UPDATED 21 HOURS AGO

LONDON (Reuters) - Scientists for the first time have detected water in the atmosphere of an Earth-like planet orbiting a distant star, evidence that a key ingredient for life exists beyond our solar system, according to a study published on Wednesday.

Water vapor was found in the atmosphere of K2-18b, one of hundreds of “super-Earths” - worlds ranging in size between Earth and Neptune - documented in a growing new field of astronomy devoted to the exploration of so-called exoplanets elsewhere in the Milky Way galaxy.

More than 4,000 exoplanets of all types and sizes have been detected overall.

The latest discovery was reported in research by a team of scientists at University College London (UCL) published in the peer-reviewed journal Nature Astronomy.

“We found water,” UCL astrophysicist Ingo Waldmann told Reuters of the breakthrough, revealed from observations made with the Hubble Space Telescope, which analyzed starlight filtered through K2-18b’s atmosphere.

More precisely, it marks the first time scientists have found water in the atmosphere around a super-Earth - as opposed to a gas giant - orbiting a star within its “habitable zone,” just the right distance for liquid water to potentially exist on the surface.

Angelos Tsiaras, an astronomer at UCL, said the team is focusing its attention on identifying exoplanets with conditions similar to those on Earth.

“But of course this is not in order to find a place where we could go. This is still science fiction,” Tsiaras said, noting that K2-18b orbits a dwarf star in the constellation Leo that lies 100 light years from Earth.

While light from the sun takes several minutes to reach Earth, light from K2-18b’s star takes a century to reach our planet, “so for us to travel there is impossible,” he said.

“Given it’s so far away we don’t really have any other choice but stay on our own Earth, so it’s important to make Earth great again rather than looking for an alternative to go to,” Tsiaras said.

Aside from the tremendous distance separating Earth from K2-18b, the exoplanet is likely exposed to far more radiation than Earth, diminishing the prospects for life evolving there.

However, the discovery brings astronomers closer to answering the fundamental question of how unique Earth is in the universe, the scientists said.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-science-astronomy-water/water-found-in-atmosphere-of-planet-beyond-our-solar-system-idUSKCN1VW2TJ>

PERPETUAL ISSUE: LEAKS IN THE SYSTEM CREATE WATER CRISIS IN KARACHI

By Syed Ashraf Ali Published: September 15, 2019

KARACHI: As the economic hub of Pakistan and the sprawling capital of Sindh, Karachi, struggles with a myriad of problems that are common to big cities across the world. Certain issues, however, continue to make life a living hell for its citizens, particularly the never-ending water crisis.

Even though the Hub Dam – one of the two main sources of water supply to the city – has been filled up to 321 feet after the recent monsoon rains, Karachi is still facing the worst water crisis in its history.

According to the Hub Dam administration, at present, the dam has enough water stored to be able to supply 100 MGD to Karachi till December 2020. However, the city continues to suffer a shortage of water because of multiple leakages in the Hub Canal, resulting in the supply of only 70 MGD of water to the city. The remaining 30 MGD is being wasted daily.

Karachi has been getting its due share from the Hub Dam since March this year and to date, an estimated 4.5 billion gallons of water has been wasted. The Sindh government and the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB), however, are least bothered about the issue and the necessary repair work required to prevent leakages is yet to be started.

According to a survey conducted by The Express Tribune, leakages have occurred in the Hub Canal because of the regular wear and tear and the problem has only worsened because of negligence. Water leaking from the canal is not only being wasted but it is also damaging the agricultural land surrounding the Hub Canal.

Locals complain that apart from the issue of leakage, water theft from the canal has also been rampant for the past many years. To water their lands, influential farmers steal water from the canal by installing pipelines.

The survey also revealed some structural problems with the canal because of which water flows out and accumulates in various potholes that are situated at various spots throughout the length of the canal.

Once the large potholes are filled with water, they soon turn into ponds which many villages and goths use to water their lands. Even water tankers refill through these ponds and later sell water to the residents of Karachi at very expensive prices.

It is pertinent to mention that owing to the lack of rains, the Hub Dam never received water with full pressure for the past four years and the maximum amount received was 90 MGD. On the other hand, the minimum amount received was 20 MGD. At times, there was no water supply to the dam but relevant authorities took no steps to repair the damage.

While residents complain of acute water shortage, the Hub Dam administration claims that 100 MGD of water is being provided to Karachi since March this year. The monsoon season will continue till the end of September and – with the expected rains – the water level may rise to its full capacity. If the Hub Dam fills up completely, it can provide 100 MGD of water to Karachi for the next three years.

An engineer of the water board, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said that the water board invited tenders for repair work twice but, both the times, the contractors did not fulfil the requirements. As a result, the tenders were cancelled and the development work could not be started.

The first tender was issued in December last year, while the second one was announced in May this year. However, owing to the strict terms and conditions of the contract, no construction company showed any interest.

The water board engineer also explained that the Hub Canal is 30 kilometres long, of which the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) has control over eight kilometres, while the remaining 22 kilometres of the canal comes under KWSB.

According to the official, it cannot be ascertained as to how much water is exactly being wasted on a day-to-day basis because flow meters are not installed in the Hub Dam. The system of flow meters is also absent from the Hub Pumping Station, therefore, the correct data cannot be given. However, according to an estimate, 30% of water is being wasted.

Commenting on the strict terms and conditions mentioned in the tenders issued by the water board, the official said that the conditions were only based on the rules set by the Sindh Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (SEPPRA).

“The Hub Canal will have to be shut down for three months for its repair due to which water supply to Karachi will have to be suspended,” he stated.

He also said that the repair of the canal is not the real solution as an alternative stream system must be introduced to link the Hub Dam to Karachi.

“For the purpose, a new project is being prepared. After the PC-1 and design of the new project are prepared, it will be sent to the Sindh government for approval.”

Answering a question related to water theft, he said that the water board has started taking action against miscreants with the cooperation of the Manghopir Police Station.

“As soon as a complaint is received, prompt action is taken against the miscreants, however, the stream system is very long and the water board tries to monitor it as much as it can, but sometimes the culprits easily get away with their misdeeds,” he said.

“The board has also taken action against the tanker mafia, while repair on a small scale has been commenced for strengthening the canal. With consultation from experts, an alternate water system from Hub Dam to Karachi is being considered and steps are being taken for the system’s improvement.”

The engineers at the Hub Dam said that the WAPDA has installed gadgets at the distribution points. With the help of these gadgets, water is supplied in a small or high quantity.

“By reading these gadgets, the amount of water wasted can be estimated,” an engineer, who refused to disclose his name, said.

The WAPDA administration was providing 100 MGD of water to Karachi but during the rains and on some other occasions, the water supply was reduced on the request of the water board.

However, from March 2019 to present, the Hub Dam is providing 100 MGD to Karachi continuously. “The WAPDA is bound to supply 100 MGD of water to Karachi and it is dispensing its responsibilities completely.

The administration of the Hub Canal, however, is with the water board,” the engineer said. “If Karachi is facing a shortage of water owing to wear and tear of the canal, then its responsibility rests with the water board,” he said.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2056804/1-perpetual-issue-leaks-system-create-water-crisis/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM SEP 16th TO 22nd 2019

SINDH’S LANGUISHING WATERWORKS

Mohammad Hussain Khan September 16, 2019

The federal and Sindh governments have conceived identical water projects over Kotri barrage, downstream the Indus. The Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) has devised the ‘Sindh Barrage’ project, 45 kilometres upstream, at the confluence of the Indus and the Arabian Sea in Thatta district.

As per Wapda’s conceptual study, the barrage would help check sea intrusion, store water from the Indus and revive the ecology of the delta that is dying at a fast pace.

Furthermore, it could supply drinking water to Badin, Tharparkar and Karachi through off-taking canals. Interestingly, the Sindh government has formulated a similar project, ‘Delta Barrage’, in its Annual Development Programme 2019-20. Both the governments have reached a rare understanding over this Rs120 billion project last month.

While this project has yet to commence, the fate of three other vital water projects in Sindh — two of them storage-oriented — hangs in balance. Delays have led to cost overruns.

This has prompted the apex court to take notice of two of them — Right Bank Outfall Drain-II (RBOD-II) and Nai Gaj dam. The Supreme Court has set November 2019 as the completion deadline for RBOD-II. The third project of Darawat Dam stands completed, requiring the Sindh government’s attention for operational control.

Nai Gaj dam, with 0.30 million acre feet (MAF) storage capacity and 4.2 megawatt power generation capacity, is a federally funded project. It is being built on a hill torrent called ‘Nai Gaj’ in local parlance, in Dadu district.

While the dam was intended to irrigate 28,800 acres of land, it lies incomplete since its inception in 2012. Its tentative completion date is in 2020. Its second revised project cost (PC-I) of Rs47.73bn is awaiting the approval of the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecne) since January 2019.

The row between the Sindh and the federal government pertains to the cost of the dam against the background of the 18th amendment. The federal government argues that since Sindh is the lone beneficiary, it should share the cost while the Sindh government views strongly differ.

The cost of the project keeps fluctuating as well. Only Rs11bn out of 26bn — around 40pc of its first revised cost — has been released so far. In 2009, the cost of the project was Rs16.92bn but was revised upwards to Rs59bn in 2012. After the Central Development Working Party slashed down its components, the cost came down to Rs34bn. Ecne eventually brought the cost further down to Rs26.236bn in 2015.

Cost escalation led to another revision to Rs47bn in 2016. Ecne, according to Wapda's website, deferred the revision due to the Sindh government's decision on cost sharing in January 2019.

Chief Minister Sindh's special assistant on irrigation Ashfaq Memon is not persuaded by the federal government's 'cost sharing argument'. He contends that the federal government in the past has executed projects for the welfare of a single province and Sindh should not be an exception.

"Sindh will honour its commitment as per the original PC-I regarding the cost of land acquisition, security and resettlement that was first revised to Rs1.9bn. We will bear the same if the revision is agreed at Rs47bn by Ecne."

Work on the dam remains suspended till it gets Ecne's nod. The dam will feed Manchhar Lake through a 50 cusec underground water supply line to keep the lake alive.

The rain-fed Darawat dam is a vital project for Sindh that Wapda completed in 2014. However, it has yet to be handed over. One argument is that Sindh's irrigation officials intend to inspect the dam's behaviour once it attains optimum storage of 112 meters. The current storage, after the recent monsoon rains, is 106 meters against the dead level of 104 meters. Wapda insists it is not bound by anything after the defect notification period (DNP) ends.

"We are pressing Sindh to take over its operational control. The project's DNP which holds the contractor responsible for a dam's operation or anything that happens to the project ended in 2016. It was extended for a year till 2017. Now Sindh should come forward and take over its management", says Hyderabad-based Wapda's GM (South) Naeem Arif. The Sindh government has to develop the command area of Darawat dam on 25,000 acres which is to be distributed among landless peasantry, preferably women as per the then PPP's federal government. A committee, Mr Memon says, has been formed by Chief Minister Murad Shah to expedite work for the distribution of the land.

The 273km long RBOD-II project started in 2001 at a cost of Rs14bn. It was supposed to be completed in 2006. The RBOD-II project was the worst hit amongst these three projects in terms of delays and cost overruns. At Rs62bn, its current cost is three times higher than its initial estimated cost.

A Rs4.5bn scam has surfaced in relation to this project, involving that Sindh irrigation department officials. A formal inquiry is underway after a departmental probe.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1505440/sindhs-languishing-waterworks>

PAK WATER & ENERGY EXPO TO BE HELD IN NOV

RECORDER REPORT 2019/09/21

KARACHI: The fourth Pak Water & Energy Expo (PWE), exhibition & conference will be held from 5-7th November, 2019 at expo centre Karachi.

Over 60 companies from Turkey, China, Germany, Spain, Taiwan, and Malaysia and within Pakistan will exhibit their latest technology and products at more than 100 stalls during the event. Organisers are expecting around 40 million business ventures during this exhibition.

Pak water and energy expo 2019 is the only and proactive platform for water and energy industry. This expo offers all exciting business opportunities to exhibitors to showcase their products and technologies as well as trade visitors from water and energy industry to interact under one roof.

It is the fourth edition and being held for the third time in Karachi. Last exhibition was held in Lahore and had tremendous response from the exhibitors and was well visited by a large number of visitors from the industries, said Kamran Abbasi, Director Prime Event.

The event is exclusively focused on water and energy as both are crucial elements of every plant utilities and equally important for the sustainable economic development, wellbeing of public and prosperity of the country, he underlined.

Kamran Abbasi said that exhibitors will participate from various industries like water technologies, waste water solutions, power generation, transmission and distribution, renewable energy, sustainability and green engineering, automation and instrumentation etc..

We are expecting a large number of corporate visitors from different sectors including power generation, beverage industries, builders and contractors, chemical plants, distillery/brewery units, dairies and milk producers, educational establishments, environmental establishments, engineering organisations, environmental consultants, environmental protection agency, fertiliser manufacturers, food processing units and many more, he added.

He further said that this exhibition provides excellent opportunities to all water professionals and stakeholders to keep themselves abreast of the latest advancements in their particular fields and augment their knowledge by exchanging views and experiences with their colleagues. Arranging such exhibition will yield fruitful results and provide a platform for the interaction among all the stakeholders, he maintained.

Kamran Abbasi was of the view that there is a dire need of not only imparting the awareness about importance of efficient water distribution and treatment but also to treat waste water and make it reusable for other non-potable activities.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2019/09/21/15-page/802084-news.html>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM SEP 23rd TO SEP 29th 2019

INNOVATIVE IDEAS SOUGHT TO END WATER SHORTAGE IN BALOCHISTAN

By Muhammad Akbar Notezai | 9/26/2019 12:00:00 AM

QUETTA: Balochistan Minister for Irrigation Nawabzada Tariq Magsi has asked engineers, researchers and scientists to come up with smart and innovative ideas and suggest new technologies to improve irrigation efficiency and enhance water productivity, particularly in agriculture and livestock sectors.

Many countries have developed plans and adopted smart technologies to tackle depleting and scarce water resources, the minister said at the `Fourth Invention to Innovative Summit`, which concluded here on Wednesday.

The theme of the summit, which was organised by the University of Balochistan, was `Buy and Sell Technology`. According to Mr Magsi, who was the guest of honour at the inaugural ceremony, Pakistan`s economy is propelled mainly by the agriculture and agro-based industry. But, he said, `With every passing day the need to build water reservoirs is being felt more than ever.

Water availability for agriculture, industry and even for household purposes was depleting and it was apprehended that Pakistan might become a water-stressed country if urgent remedial measures were not taken, he added.

Saying that the government besides building large dams was striving for water conservation and efficient management, the minister urged young researchers and engineers to suggest smart technology and modern ideas to enhance water productivity. He added that Balochistan had a huge potential for development of agriculture, especially fruit and vegetables, fisheries and livestock.

He reminded the participants of the summit that Balochistan in terms of area was the largest province of Pakistan. `It is rich in natural resources, having large deposits of hydrocarbons and metallic minerals,` he said, adding that its coastal areas, particularly Gwadar port, offered great opportunities for socioeconomic development of the province as well as for the whole country.

By hosting this event, the government had showed its commitment to engage the industry, the people and all stakeholders to take the country, especially Balochistan, towards economic sustainability.

He said this summit and its thematic sessions would be informative for the participants and would play an important role towards creating awareness about `innovative Balochistan`. He said: `The summit will provide a useful platform for entrepreneurs, scientists and academia of Balochistan for sharing strategy, innovative ideas, policies and plans with development partners and other participants for constructive discussions and fruitful outcomes`.

https://epaper.dawn.com/DetailImage.php?StoryImage=26_09_2019_005_001

SINDH GOVT ANNOUNCES ‘GRAND OPERATION’ AGAINST WATER THEFT

By Our Correspondent Published: September 27, 2019

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Secretary Mumtaz Ali Shah has said that the provincial government has launched a ‘grand operation’ against water theft in the city. The operation is aimed at curbing water theft through illegally operated hydrants and pipelines.

The move was announced in a meeting, headed by CS Mumtaz Ali Shah, and attended by Local Government Secretary Roshan Ali Shaikh, Karachi Commissioner Iftikhar Ahmed Shallwani, Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB) Asadullah Khan and representatives of Pakistan Army and Rangers.

The Karachi commissioner and KWSB chief presented an overview of the previous and ongoing efforts against illegal water hydrants in the meeting.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2066182/1-sindh-govt-announces-grand-operation-water-theft/>

OCTOBER, 2019

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM SEP 30th TO OCT 6th 2019

SINDH’S WATER WOES

Meer M. Parihar September 30, 2019

PERHAPS for the first time in the country’s history, a plan for the construction of a multibillion-dollar barrage on the Indus River was conceived and approved in less than a month.

A brainchild of the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda), the Sindh Barrage is an attempt to resolve chronic water shortage in the coastal districts of Sindh. However, the haste and secrecy with which the project has been approved by the federal and provincial governments is baffling.

A short promotional video of the proposed Sindh Barrage — to be built at a cost of Rs125 billion, around 45 kilometres away from the outfall where Indus River falls into the Arabian Sea — is available on the Wapda website. In the video, the Wapda chairman is seen standing on the construction site, with the Indus River behind him. In the video, he cites controlling aggressive sea intrusion; irrigation of 75,000 acres of land in Thatta, Sujawal and Badin; and reviving the rich mangrove wetlands as reasons for the construction of Sindh Barrage. He also alludes to a potential plan of converting the 167 km-long river belt — between Kotri Barrage and the proposed Sindh Barrage — into a water reservoir, which could become “one of the longest lakes in Asia”.

To achieve these objectives, Wapda intends to construct a 12-metre-high barrage, raise the bank of Indus River to 9m, while also widening the river belt up to six kilometres. It also plans to dig two canals on the left and right side of the proposed barrage. Construction is set to begin in December 2022 and is expected to end by December 2024.

The plan may sound well in theory but it has many flaws. One of the primary factors that decides the feasibility of Sindh Barrage is the availability of water downstream Kotri. Wapda believes that this can be managed by regulating the outflow from Kotri Barrage to be slightly more than 10 MAF (million acre feet) to ‘control’ sea intrusion.

However, there are two caveats to this solution: first, experts have been arguing for years that an inflow of only 10 MAF from Kotri to the Indus delta is insufficient to push back the inflow of the Arabian Sea, and prevent destruction of riverbeds and agricultural land. Second, according to Wapda’s own figures, around 9,000 km of the coastal belt has already been affected by sea intrusion, proving that the flow of water downstream Kotri has remained inadequate over the years.

The Sindh government has conveniently foregone any risk analysis before approving this project. But once construction begins, it will have to rehabilitate hundreds of families who are displaced from areas close to the construction site. The number of displaced families will be far greater if the plan for converting the river belt downstream Kotri into a lake goes ahead, as the proposed lake will span over at least four districts between Kotri and the Indus Delta — Thatta, Sujawal, Tando Mohammad Khan and parts of Jamshoro.

Once the barrage is built, constant seepage of water from the reservoir will destroy agricultural land in adjoining areas. On the other hand, permanent blockage of the flowing river will give rise to other grave problems. For starters, it will put a number of areas around and downstream Kotri Barrage, including Hyderabad, at the persistent risk of flooding.

Second, formation of silt dunes and the presence of heavy sediment in the large body of water will hamper the flow of the river that, if stopped, will find alternate paths to spill. This might not only result in the Indus changing its course, but also altering the geography and topography of areas downstream Kotri Barrage.

As for Wapda's plans to construct two canals on either side of the Indus River to irrigate 75,000 acres of agricultural land, if the authority had done proper research, it would have realised that not a single acre of cultivable land in the coastal belt of Sindh is out of the command of the existing canal network.

The death of the Indus delta and loss of agricultural land due to sea intrusion, and the workability of a solution to this problem come down to the availability of river water. Over the years, irregular allotment of agricultural land downstream Kotri, and theft and pilferage from the existing canal network, have compounded the chronic water shortage in Badin, Sujawal and Thatta, causing lasting damage to these districts. Water resources in Pakistan require effective management, rather than ambitious projects that ignore ground realities. Constructing a barrage on a river with insufficient water will hardly serve any purpose, other than exacerbating the process of sea intrusion and accelerating the death of Indus delta.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1508150/sindhs-water-woes>

CITIZENS OF KARACHI PROTEST WATER SHORTAGE, LOAD SHEDDING

By Our Correspondent Published: September 30, 2019

KARACHI: Residents of areas located in the suburbs of Karachi staged a demonstration against water shortage and unannounced load shedding on Memon Goth Road on Sunday.

According to the protesters, water is not being supplied to numerous villages, including Old Thana, for the past 20 years, and unannounced load-shedding further adds to the residents' problems.

They claimed that they have time and again approached authority figures, including MNAs, MPAs and Karachi District Council Chairman Salman Abdullah Murad, and informed them of their problems but no action has been taken to resolve their issues.

They said that areas that fall in the suburbs of Karachi are being neglected.

Residents of these areas crave for every drop of water and their routine life is disturbed because of load shedding, said the disgruntled protesters. They have demanded that the Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah take notice of their problems and take immediate measures for their resolution. Otherwise, families residing in the affected areas will stage a sit-in on the National Highway, they said.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2068338/1-citizens-karachi-protest-water-shortage-load-shedding/>

WATER SHARE ROW: SINDH GOVT 'MISREPORTED' WATER FLOW FIGURES, SAYS IRSA

By Rizwan Asif Published: October 1, 2019

LAHORE: Sindh and Punjab have long been at odds over water from the Indus River, with the former regularly accusing the latter of not releasing its due share. But high-level investigations by the country's top irrigation authority point to an attempt at a cover-up by the Sindh government to strengthen its position on the dispute.

The Indus River System Authority (Irsa) and the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda), which have been jointly probing the matter, have finalised their findings and sent them to the Ministry of Water and Power. The final investigation report, a copy of which is available with The Express Tribune, revealed that the Sindh Irrigation Department deliberately manipulated figures to support its stance that the province was getting less than its due share of water. It also pointed out that Sindh irrigation officials did not cooperate with Irsa and Wapda investigators.

The report alleges that Sindh irrigation authorities pursued a deliberate policy of misreporting water volume figures recorded between the Taunsa and Guddu barrages. It confirmed that the both in 2016 and 2018, the Sindh government provided incorrect water flow data. The document revealed that the water figures Sindh officials recorded at Guddu Barrage were 14.25 per cent less than the actual volume and the number they jotted down for water volume at the Nara Canal of Sukkur Barrage were 29.7 per cent less than what it should have been.

The report added that Sindh officials also habitually neglected the rules and regulations for water measurement set by Irsa and Wapda. It also noted that teams sent to rectify water discharge issues at certain points were denied access. Regarding hurdles Sindh officials created during the course of the probe, the report noted that investigators were asked to give advance notice for visits in a bid to prevent snap checking. The Sindh officials also opposed a plan to check water volume at Sukkur Barrage using GPS satellites. After investigators spent 36 hours attempting to measure the volume using traditional methods, the provincial officials suddenly consented to using satellites for measurement. The report asserts that the delay was ‘intentional’ to allow Sindh officials to ‘manage’ other sites before they could be investigated.

Sindh’s member in Irsa also created hindrances for the investigation team, the report revealed. The senior official’s insistence that investigators provide a schedule beforehand forced investigators to call off a visit to the Kotri Barrage, it noted.

The final report also called on Sindh irrigation authorities to take measures to prevent extensive water theft in different parts of the province.

The investigation team was formed after the Punjab Irrigation Department sent a letter to water and power ministry accusing Sindh authorities of misreporting water data. With the team’s report now finalised, the Punjab government have sent another letter to ministry demanding action against Sindh officials involved in the attempted cover-up. The fresh letter also rejects the Sindh Irsa member’s suggestion of hiring a private company for a water audit by pointing out that such a move is not allowed under the Irsa Act. It also urges Sindh authorities to provide true and accurate water data.

Speaking to The Express Tribune, Punjab Irrigation Minister Mohsin Leghari said the Irsa Act was formed with the consensus of all provinces, making it binding on all of them to work with complete integrity. “We hope the federal government will now take measures dictated by law against the officials involved in misreporting of data,” he added. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2069168/1-water-share-row-sindh-government-misreported-water-flow-figures-irsa/>

WATER AVAILABILITY SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER THAN LAST YEAR

Khaleeq Kiani Updated October 02, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Despite a 15 per cent shortage, the country’s water availability during the current Rabi season has been estimated to be significantly higher than last year.

This was concluded by the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) at a meeting of its advisory committee held here on Tuesday. The meeting, presided over by Irsa Chairman Sher Zaman Khan (member for Balochistan), noted that there would have been no shortage if the country had enough storage capacity and called upon the government to build reservoirs on a war footing.

“If adequate storage capacity had been available, the surplus water of 11.65 million acre feet (MAF) released downstream Kotri during Kharif 2019 could have been stored to eliminate the expected shortage of 15pc in Rabi 2019-20, after meeting the ecological and sea intrusion needs,” Irsa said, adding that it was “unanimously agreed that additional storages should be constructed wherever feasible on the rivers”.

The committee was informed that water availability in the Rabi season would also be better than the average of last 10 years. The committee was of the opinion that the shortage could easily be overcome through better management and irrigation practices. The committee was called to chalk out the Rabi 2019-20 (Oct-March) anticipated water availability criteria.

The meeting was attended by all four members of Irsa from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, Punjab and the federal government, besides representatives of the Federal Flood Commission, provinces and Water and Power Development Authority.

The committee observed that the actual Rim Station inflows of 104.82 MAF were only one per cent less than the forecast volume of 106.17 MAF. It expressed satisfaction that the actual provincial withdrawals remained at 65.23 MAF against the anticipated withdrawals of 66.80 MAF — only 2pc less. The actual system losses were 14.10 MAF as compared to the anticipation of 15.74 MAF and downstream Kotri releases were 11.65 MAF.

The committee forecast 24.14 MAF of water availability through river flows and about 10.268 MAF in storages. Based on the Rim Station inflows plus available storage of 10.268 MAF minus the expected system losses of 2.38 MAF and minor unavoidable flow downstream Kotri, the approved availability at respective canal heads is likely to be

31.45 MAF. As such, the share of Punjab was worked out at 16.93 MAF and that of Sindh at 12.78 MAF. The share of KP was calculated at 71,000 acre feet and that of Balochistan at 1.03MAF.

The meeting noted that the likely availability of 31.44 MAF was higher than last year's 24.76 MAF and 10-year average of 29.80 MAF. The basin-wide shortage was approved at 15pc which was significantly lower than the previous Rabi (2018-19) shortage of 32pc.

It was agreed that the projected shortages were manageable and hopefully the cropping targets for Rabi 2019-20 would be achieved by applying efficient and best water management practices. It was decided that the provinces, while remaining within the indicated shares, would submit their withdrawal plans within 15 days.

Regarding Irsa technical committee's recommendation for carrying out studies relating to system losses, lag-times and cropping patterns due to climate change, the advisory committee decided that these would be done within a year and the terms of reference would be prepared in consultation with the provinces.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1508479>

RABI SEASON: PUNJAB, SINDH TO FACE 15 PERCENT WATER SHORTAGE: IRSA

MUSHTAQ GHUMMAN OCT 2ND, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Advisory Committee of Indus River System Authority (Irsa) on Tuesday forecast 15 per cent water shortage for Sindh and Punjab in Rabi season 2019-20, starting from October 1, 2019 to continue till March 31, 2020. The anticipated shortage figures were finalised at a meeting of the Irsa Advisory Committee convened to chalk out Rabi 2019-20 (October-March) anticipated water availability criteria. The meeting was presided over by Sher Zaman Khan, Chairman/ Member Irsa Balochistan.

Irsa Advisory Committee reviewed the Kharif 2019 data and observed that the actual Rim Station inflows of 104.82 MAF were only 1 per cent less than forecast volume of 106.7 MAF. The committee expressed satisfaction that the actual provincial withdrawals remained at 65.23 MAF against anticipated withdrawals of 66.80 MAF ie only 2 per cent less. The actual system losses were 14.10 MAF as compared to anticipation of 15.74 MAF and downstream releases were 11.65 MAF.

Irsa Advisory Committee discussed the recommendations of Irsa Technical Committee meeting held on September 25, 2019 and approved likely anticipated water availability of 24.15 MAF at rim station during Rabi 2019-20 of which Indus@ Tarbela will be 8.79 MAF, Kabul@ Nowshera, 4.62 MAF, Jhelum @ Mangla 5.27 MAF, Chenab @ Marala 4.47 MAF and eastern rivers contribution at 1.00 MAF.

Based on the rim station inflows plus available storage of 10.268 MAF minus the expected system of 2.38 MAF and minor unavoidable escape downstream Kotri, the approved availability at respective canal heads is estimated to be 31.44 MAF of which the share of Punjab will be 16.93 MAF, Sindh, 12.78 MAF, KP (CRCB), 0.71 MAF and Balochistan , 1.03 MAF. Balochistan and KP are exempted from shortages.

The likely availability of 31.44 MAF was significantly higher than last year's availability of 24.76 MAF and considerably higher than 10-year average of 29.80 MAF. The Basin-wide shortage was approved at 15 per cent which was significantly less than previous Rabi (2018-19) actual shortage of 32 per cent.

It was agreed by the participants that the likely projected shortages were manageable and hopefully the cropping targets for Rabi 2019-20 would be achieved by applying efficient and best water management practices. It was also decided that remaining within the indicated likely shares the provinces would submit their withdrawal plans within 15 days.

The forum unanimously agreed that additional storages should be constructed wherever feasible on the rivers. If adequate storage capacity had been available, the surplus water of 11.65 MAF released downstream Kotri during Kharif 2019 could have been stored to eliminate the expected shortage of 15 per cent in Rabi 2019-20, after meeting with ecological and sea intrusion needs.

Regarding recommendation of Irsa technical committee to discuss studies relating to system losses, lag-times and cropping patterns due to climate change, Irsa Advisory Committee decided that Irsa may get the studies carried out within a year. The ToRs would be prepared in consultation with the provinces.

The following officials attended the meeting were, Engineer Raqib Khan, Member Irsa KP, Engineer Rao Irshad Ali Khan, Member Irsa Punjab, Engineer Syed Mazhar Ali Shah, Member Irsa Sindh, Saif Anjum, Secretary Irrigation Punjab, Engineer Aslam Ansari, Special Secretary (tech) Irrigation, Sindg, Dr Muhammad Anjum Ali, DGA(Ext)

Agriculture Department, Punjab, Engineer Ismail Daudpota, Director (Reg) Irrigation Department, Balochistan, Engineer Riaz Ahmed Baloch, S E, Patfeeder Canal, Irrigation Department, Balochistan, Engineer Zahoor Muhammad, S E(H/Q) Director Hydrology Deptt, KP, Naseeb ur Rehman Kattak, Director OFEM, Agriculture Department, KP, Zulfiqar Hussain Shah, Director (WRMD), Wapda, Engineer, Masood Ahmad, Deputy Director, Irrigation Department, KP, M H Siddiqui, Consultant, Irrigation Department, Punjab and Khalid Idress Rana, Director(Operations), Irsa.

<https://fp.brecorder.com/2019/10/20191002523058/>

2ND PHASE OF KACHHI CANAL UNDER WAY IN QUETTA

By Our Correspondent Published: October 2, 2019

QUETTA: Provincial Chief Secretary Capt (retd) Fazeel Asghar has urged upon the government officials to keep their doors open for the people and address their issues on a priority basis.

He shared these views while chairing a meeting of Pakistan Citizens Portal in Quetta.

“The government employees should show sincerity in their work as, without dedication, we cannot solve the problems of people,” Asghar said.

“Balochistan government is taking serious steps to make access to education, health and clean drinking water easy.

We are committed to addressing the issues of people and want to provide relief to them at their doorsteps,” he added.

The chief secretary directed the divisional commissioners to constitute committees under assistant commissioners to monitor the progress and quality of development projects.

He said that monthly meetings would be held to check the implementation and action taken against public complaints lodged through Pakistan Citizens Portal.

Separately, while chairing a meeting on Kacchi Canal, the chief secretary remarked that following the completion of the project, the province would usher in a new era of development that would increase the agricultural production manifold and boost the economy of the province and improve the quality of life of a common man.

The meeting was informed that the first phase of the Kachhi Canal had been completed through which 102,000 acres of land would be cultivated, while work on the second phase was underway.

He directed the authorities for timely completion of all projects including the Kacchi Canal and warned that compromise on quality of work would not be tolerated.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2069967/1-2nd-phase-kachhi-canal-way-quetta/>

AAB PAK AUTHORITY TO PROVIDE CLEAN DRINKING WATER: DC

Staff Reporter October 06,

RAWALPINDI: Deputy Commissioner Saifullah Khan Dogar on Saturday said that the Punjab government had established Aab Pak Authority (APA) to provide clean drinking water to the citizens and improve water supply system in the city.

Deputy Commissioner Saifullah Khan Dogar, who is also the chairman of the APA, was addressing a meeting of the authority.

Punjab Minister for Literacy and Informal Education Raja Rashid Hafiz was also present on the occasion.

He said the authority would repair old water schemes and launch new ones.

The DC said MNAs and MPAs would be members of this authority.

He said parliamentarians’ proposals for improving water supply in their areas would be implemented without any delay.

Punjab Minister for Literacy and Informal Education Raja Rashid Hafiz said that the Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar was struggling to complete public welfare project at fast pace and this programme had been launched to control diseases and ensure clean environment.

MNAs Sh Rashid Shafique and Sadaqat Abbasi informed the meeting that the authority was working to provide healthy environment to the common man and this authority would ensure to provide clean drinking water.

They said all projects in Rawalpindi under this authority would be completed as per public aspiration.

WATER CRISIS MAJOR RISK TO BUSINESS IN SOUTH ASIA: WEF

Amin Ahmed Updated October 06, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Water crisis is the biggest risk for doing business in South Asia, according to the World Economic Forum (WEF).

In an 'Insight Report' on the 'Regional Risks for Doing Business, 2019', the Davos-based forum identified ten risks for South Asia, namely: water crises, terrorist attacks, manmade environmental catastrophes, failure of urban planning, energy price shock, deflation, unemployment or under-employment, state collapse or crisis, fiscal crisis and asset bubble.

At a country level, water crises ranked as the topmost risk in India, second in Pakistan and fourth in Sri Lanka. The issue has been described as a "problem of scarcity amid abundance" in South Asia — despite major trans-boundary rivers, residents in many places must queue for limited supplies of drinking water.

According to the report, water also presents geopolitical challenges in the region; while there are bilateral arrangements on the Indus between India and Pakistan, and Ganges between India and Bangladesh, water is a potential weapon in cross-border disputes, as countries have at times threatened cutting off flows because of outbreaks of violence in disputed territories. Additionally, China, from where the headwaters of several major rivers sit, has been building hydroelectric dams that have caused political friction, particularly with India.

Pakistan has the fourth highest rate of water usage in the world, yet at the same time the country is close to being classified as "water-scarce".

Part of the underlying challenge is that the country lacks proper infrastructure to deliver clean drinking water to its population. Furthermore, because most of the country's water comes from a single source — the Indus system, it is at a risk of disruptions from extreme weather events, which will only grow more pronounced as a result of climate change.

The region is home to around a quarter of the global population but has less than five per cent of the world's renewable water resources. Low per-capita water availability and a high relative level of water use make South Asia one of the most water-scarce regions.

Additionally, water storage is low by global standards, making it difficult to manage the floods and droughts that afflict the region and that are expected to increase with climate change.

The issue of transnational tension can be seen in the ranking of "terrorist attacks" as the second leading risk in the region.

"Manmade environmental catastrophes" ranked third, as the region is home to three of the world's four most polluted countries — Bangladesh, India and Pakistan — according to Greenpeace. Fifteen of the world's 20 most polluted cities are in India with Dhaka is also on the list.

The fifth risk, "energy price shock", was ranked the leading risk on a country level in Pakistan and Bangladesh. The ranking reflects the fact that there is a rising demand for energy in South Asia as populations and economies grow, yet the region is a net importer of crude oil.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1509279>

RALLY HELD AGAINST LACK OF DRINKING WATER, BASIC AMENITIES IN JACOBABAD

Correspondent October 06, 2019

THE rally for basic amenities passes through a street in Jacobabad on Saturday.—Dawn

SUKKUR: Activists of several organisations took out a rally in response to a call for protest given by Shehri Ittehad in Jacobabad on Saturday against shortage of potable drinking water and absence of other basic amenities.

They issued an ultimatum to the administration and said they would launch protest movement and observe token hunger strike at DC Chowk on Saturday if the city was not supplied drinking water till Friday.

The rally was attended by citizens, leaders and members of Chamber of Commerce, Hindu General Panchayat, Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf, Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl, Pakistan Peoples Party-Shaheed Bhutto, Mehran Social Forum, Majlis-i-Wahdatul Muslimeen, Sarrafa Union, Electric Union, Domki Welfare Association and City Forum. The rally marched on different roads before reaching the press club where the participants held a sit-in, suspending traffic on both sides of the road.

The protesters' leaders said the city lacked basic facilities. The Rs1.25 billion water supply scheme was to be completed in 2017 but had not been made functional yet. Work on the scheme had been started with the cooperation of USAID and so far Rs3.25bn had been spent on it but sadly it had not so far been able to supply water to citizens, they said.

They said that citizens were compelled to purchase unhygienic drinking water from vendors selling water on donkey carts. The state of affairs in the health department was so bad that there was not even a tablet of headache available in civil hospital and Jacobabad Institute of Medical Sciences, they said.

They said that due to absence of emergency facilities and trauma centre, patients with even minor injuries were routinely taken to Larkana hospitals and the poor were compelled to bear huge travel expenses to Larkana even for the treatment of seasonal fevers.

They said that poor patients were forced to get medical treatment at costly private hospitals and clinics because there were no doctors and medicines available in government healthcare centres in Jacobabad.

They said that billions of rupees were released for the development of Jacobabad but half of the amount was allegedly usurped by elected public representatives. Roads and government buildings had become dilapidated because of massive corruption in the funds for their repair and reconstruction.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1509163/rally-held-against-lack-of-drinking-water-basic-amenities-in-jacobabad>

SAB DEMANDS APPOINTMENT OF FEDERAL MEMBER IN IRSA FROM SINDH

Staff Correspondent October 06, 2019

HYDERABAD: Sindh Abadgar Board (SAB) on Saturday expressed its concern over delay in the appointment of federal member from Sindh in the Indus River System Authority (Irsa), saying that the delay was a violation of the authority' rules and regulations.

The meeting was presided over by SAB president Abdul Majeed Nizamani and attended by Syed Mehmood Nawaz Shah, Dr Bashir Nizamani, Zulfiqar Yousufani, Fida Hussain Thebo, Imran Bozdar and others office-bearers.

The meeting also urged the provincial agriculture department to convene a meeting of the Sugar cane Control Board (SCB) to fix the indicative price of the crop as cane crushing season was drawing closer.

The meeting noted that currently Irsa's federal member belonged to Punjab and his appointment was made on a temporary basis. It said that Sindh had always doubted intentions of Punjab as far as fair distribution of water was concerned because, according to it, Punjab had always committed excesses against Sindh in this regard. The appointment of the federal member from Punjab, it added, reinforced Sindh's doubt.

It said that Sindh was a tail-end province and it had never received a fair share in water distribution. "It is Sindh's right to demand appointment of the federal member at Irsa from this province on a permanent basis," the meeting stressed, and recalled that former president General Musharraf had also recognised the right and got a federal member from Sindh appointed.

It noted that the process of cane crushing had always been delayed by millers due to delay in the holding of the SCB's meetings every time.

It stressed that sugar millers must be bound to start cane crushing on time and in accordance with the schedule mentioned in the Sugarcane Factories Control Act, 1950.

The meeting said that delayed commencement of crushing affected sugar cane harvesting and growers, who had to clear their lands for wheat sowing next. Not only cane growers suffered heavy economic losses, but the delays caused loss to Sindh's economy, it added.

The SAB meeting also expressed its concern over illegal deductions in the weight of paddy crop on the ground of moisture by rice millers, saying that millers were depriving growers of their rightful rate. It urged the government to take notice of the issue and restrain rice millers from making such unfair deductions. It said that if moisture was found

in the crop, then its level be determined with a meter so that the loss in terms of moisture was not borne either by growers or millers.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1509162>

LOCALS FORM ‘SAVE LARR ALLIANCE’ IN PROTEST AGAINST SINDH BARRAGE

By Our Correspondent Published: October 6, 2019

HYDERABAD: The Sindh barrage, a proposed irrigation structure on Indus River in Thatta, 45-kilometres upstream of the Arabian Sea, has started to stir opposition among the local people who have been suffering from an acute water shortage for years. The notable persons of Larr, the region comprising Thatta, Sujawal, Badin and Tando Muhammad Khan districts, formed a platform titled ‘Larr Bachayo Ittehad’ [Save Larr Alliance] on Saturday.

At a press conference in Thatta, Ittehad’s Convener Obhayo Khan Khushk, a literary person, unequivocally rejected the barrage proposal. “We consider it a project which will destroy Larr,” argued Khushk. “We will prepare the people for a long struggle against this project.”

Prime Minister Imran Khan announced the construction of the barrage, which will be the fourth barrage if constructed in Sindh after Guduu, Sukkur and Kotri barrages, two months ago. The provincial government of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) also agreed to the proposed project.

The federal government claimed that the purpose of the barrage will be to check unremitting sea intrusion which has devoured tens of thousands of cultivable agricultural land in the coastal district. The barrage will also supply additional water to the coastal districts besides Tharparkar.

The government has planned to acquire 56,500 acres land for the barrage, including 55,000 for the flood plain, 800 acres for a left bank canal and 700 acres for a right bank canal. The Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) will complete the feasibility by September 2020 and the project will be initiated in January 2022 and completed by December 2024.

“The Sindh government is supporting a flawed barrage plan of WAPDA,” Khushk contended. He pointed out the Left Bank Outfall Drain and Right Bank Outfall Drain, two mega projects of draining Punjab and Sindh’s saline water towards the sea, as the failed projects of WAPDA which destroyed hundreds of thousands of acres land in Sindh including the Manchar lake.

He claimed that the barrage will increase waterlogging and salinity in Larr’s districts. “It’s a flawed concept that the barrage will stop sea intrusion. The intrusion can be stopped if the required water is released in the downstream of the Kotri barrage,” he said. “Larr’s problem isn’t the construction of a new barrage or new canals but releasing the due share of water from the Kotri barrage in the river’s downstream.” Khushk also rejected the notion that the barrage will help restore the delta. A retired irrigation official Mir Muhammad Parihar and Sindh Liberation Front’s chairman Nawaz Khan Zaunr are other office bearers of the alliance. Khushk said the Ittehad will soon launch a campaign to take the other stakeholders including the legislators and elected representatives on board against the project. The alliance will also hold technical briefing sessions.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2073154/1-locals-form-save-larr-alliance-protest-sindh-barrage/>

RAWALPINDI GETS SAFE WATER AUTHORITY

By Our Correspondent Published: October 6, 2019

RAWALPINDI: In a bid to ensure availability of safe drinking water to people, the Punjab government has introduced Saaf Aab Authority or clean water authority.

The authority has been formed at district level for grassroot access to people across the province.

The inaugural meeting of authority was held under Rawalpindi Deputy Commissioner (DC) Saifullah Dogar on Saturday.

During the meeting, DC was told that national and provincial lawmakers would be members of committee while the aim of formation of authority was provision of clean drinking water to people.

Dogar was apprised SAA will ensure repair of all old water supply lines while new lines would be installed too with inclusion of community members.

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 7th TO 13th 2019

WB TEAM APPRECIATES TIMELY COMPLETION OF WATER SECTOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Staff Correspondent October 07, 2019

HYDERABAD: A visiting World Bank delegation has appreciated timely completion of Water Sector Improvement Project (WSIP), which has greatly helped Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (SIDA) to ensure availability of water in tail-end areas of canals.

Sida chairman Abdul Basit Soomro said while talking to the bank officials working in water sector at a hotel here on Saturday night that WSIP had improved water availability in tail-end areas.

He said that Sida had formed 350 farmers' organisations (FOs) in three area water boards to promote participatory irrigation system. The FOs had the best team for community mobilisation and project management and timely completion of WSIP was its clear example, he said, adding that it was imperative that irrigation system should be handed over to farmers and should not be left to bureaucracy.

WB's lead water resources management specialist Greg Browder said that the bank was providing all possible help to Pakistan for the development of its different sectors and appreciated WSIP's timely completion which had enabled Sida to ensure water flows reached the tail-end areas.

Sindh Chamber of Agriculture general secretary Zahid Bhurgari said that Mithrao Canal was the worst managed water channel under Sida and it did not have capacity to carry its designed discharge but after the works were executed under WSIP water flows were reaching farmers in the tail-end. Farmers had cultivated their land in the canal's command area after 30 years, he said.

Sindh Abadgar Board representative Umer Farooq informed visiting WB officials that Sindh's irrigation system faced multiple issues but since completion of the works many of the issues were now being resolved mainly due to participatory irrigation system.

On Sunday, the WB officials visited Tando Mohammad Khan to inspect 30-Mile regulator on Phuleli Canal where work had been completed under WSIP. They also visited Maakhi Complex regulator in Sanghar district where officials briefed them about the two works.

The delegation visited head and cross regulators built under WSIP over Nara Canal of Sukkur barrage.

WSIP director Jamal Mangan informed the bank officials that Nara Canal's rehabilitation works had been completed in two phases between 2011 and 2014. The works included the canal's rehabilitation, head regulators and three fall structures which led to considerable improvement in Sanghar, Badin, Mirpurkhas and Umerkot, he said.

He said that not only water availability had improved but silt deposition had been reduced in the canal and its water carrying capacity had improved.

He maintained that water regulation had improved and water remained available for 50 days in Umerkot and Mirpurkhas instead of 40 days. Farmers got water after three decades following Mithrao Canal's rehabilitation and growers cultivated their land, he said.

About Phuleli Canal, Mangan said that water flows were affected before remodelling of Phuleli due to old structures of the canal, whose banks were eroded due to pressure of water flows.

He said that all the defects were done away with in new structures and these works had given new lease of life to the canal. Water travelling time had also been reduced, he said.

The WB delegation then visited Akram Wah. Director of left bank canal area water board, Mir Ghulam Ali Talpur and growers' leader Umer Farooq informed the delegation that Akram Wah had design discharge of 4,500 cusec but during construction of the canal it could not get the design discharge due to a technical fault.

They said that since it was a lined channel its structures had fallen into the canal with the passage of time which were causing obstruction in the flow. Now, Akram Wah's water was being given to Phuleli from Kotri barrage and it was carried up to Alipur regulator for further distribution in Akram Wah's command area.

The WB delegation included senior water resources management specialist Lucy Lytton, Toru Konishi, task team leader WSIP and Michael Haney. Sida managing director Wali Mohammad Naich, general manager Jai Ram, Ehsan Leghari, Ahmed Junaid Memon and others were also present.

SINDH GOVT SEEKS WB'S APPROVAL TO RESTORE AKRAM CANAL

By Our Correspondent Published: October 7, 2019

HYDERABAD: The Sindh government, through Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (SIDA), has sought the World Bank's (WB) approval for restoring Akram Canal and conducting feasibility studies of Manchar Lake, Dadu Canal and Rice Canal.

A six-member delegation of WB met the officials of SIDA at a hotel in Hyderabad on Sunday, to discuss the progress of the completed projects as well as the new plans.

The delegation was later taken for a visit to the canals in Tando Muhammad Khan, Sanghar and Hyderabad. Senior Water Economist Toru Konishi, Global Water specialist Gred Bowder, Practice Manager Michael Haney, Senior Water Resources Management specialist Lucy Lytton, Lead Water Resources Management specialist Francios Onimus and Water Resources specialist Basharat Ahmed Saeed were part of the delegation. SIDA saved \$10 million from the WB-funded Water Sector Improvement Project (WSIP) extension, which started in March 2015. The authority will utilise the saved amount for the feasibility studies, subject to the bank's approval.

Left Bank Canal Area Water Board Director Mir Ghulam Ali Talpur, who briefed the WB officials at Akram Canal, said that the canal's designed capacity was 4,500 cusecs. However, its capacity suddenly reduced to 3,714 cusecs immediately after its construction. "With the passage of time, the canal's concrete slabs fell on its bed further reducing the discharge capacity," he said.

The 116-kilometer long canal irrigates the agricultural lands in Hyderabad, Tando Muhammad Khan and Badin districts. It also supplies water to Hyderabad Development Authority's filtration plants and to Sindh Industrial and Trading Estate (SITE) Limited. It irrigates through a network of five branch canals, six distributaries, 34 minors, 1,483 watercourses, 196 pumping machines and 66 pipes outlets. SIDA has planned to remodel the canal to enhance its capacity to 6,000 cusecs. The director said that at present, SIDA is channelling the water share of Akram to Phuleli Canal, to supply water to the former's command area.

SIDA Chairman Engr Abdul Basit Soomro told the delegation that three area water boards and 300 farmers' organisations (FOs) have been operating under the authority. "The SIDA project management and community mobilisation team has been doing its job efficiently," he said, adding that the success of the irrigation system is based on the transfer of irrigation management from the bureaucracy to the local farmers.

WB officials were informed that SIDA has been trying to restore more than a century-old irrigation system in Sindh. SIDA's officials cited the successful restoration of several canals in the province and resumption of water supply to the tail-end areas of those canals to boast their performance.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2073665/1-sindh-govt-seeks-wbs-approval-restore-akram-canal/>

PAKISTAN: K-P PLANS 32,000 WATERCOURSES

By APP Published: October 7, 2019

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has decided to construct 32,000 watercourses with the allocation of Rs50 billion during the next four years to bolster agriculture and food production in the province.

Provincial Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Mohibullah Khan told APP that the Government has developed an Integrated Agriculture Development Programme (IADP) with a record allocation of Rs 85 billion under which 32,000 watercourses costing Rs 50 billion would be constructed by 2023.

He informed that about 75,000 irrigation watercourses were currently available in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa out of which only 25,000 were constructed during the last 73 years.

The Minister said the department has taken a principled decision to construct the remaining watercourses to control wastage of water besides providing smooth irrigated water to the tail end farmers.

Mohibullah Khan said the government has started work on the mega programme to utilize the water of the Gomal Zam Dam in South Waziristan for irrigation of thousands of acres barren lands in southern districts including Tank, DI Khan, Lakki Marwat and erstwhile Fata.

The minister said the main canal of the Gomal Zam dam has been made operational in which irrigation water was released with the capacity to irrigate one lakh acres land in these areas.

He maintained that work on the dam's second canal has been accelerated that after completion would irrigate another one lakh acres barren and infertile land in South Waziristan and southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

<https://desertification.wordpress.com/2019/10/07/pakistan-k-p-plans-32000-watercourses/>

CM OKAYS \$1.6BN WATER & SEWERAGE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME FOR KARACHI

Habib Khan Ghori Updated October 08, 2019

KARACHI: Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Monday gave approval for the launch of a \$1.6 billion Karachi Water & Sewerage Improvement Programme to make the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KSWB) operationally, financially and institutionally viable. The share of the World Bank and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank in the project would be 40 per cent each while the government contribution would be 20pc.

He also agreed to work with a Turkish company on the public-private partnership (PPP) mode to integrate solid waste management under which the company would be responsible to collect trash door to door, transfer garbage to the garbage transfer stations (GTS) where the rubbish would be segregated as municipal waste, hospital and industrial waste. The reusable waste would be utilised for power or gas generation and production of fertiliser and the remaining trash at the landfill site would be set on fire in an “environmentally-friendly manner”.

The decision to make the KWSB viable was taken by the chief minister while presiding over a meeting held here at CM House. The meeting, attended by Local Government Minister Syed Nasir Shah, P&D chairperson Naheed Shah, KWSB DG Asadullah Khan and other officers concerned, decided to raise the KWSB operational capacity to deliver to all of its customers safe and a reliable water service on a sustainable basis.

There are four components of the project to be completed in phases pertaining to reforms, securing sustainable water supply and sanitation, management and studies and hiring services of professionals.

The chief minister asked Local Government Minister Nasir Hussain Shah to work out details for initiating implementation of the project. He also formed a steering committee to monitor the work. The reforms includes overhauling the HR policy and service rules, improve communication strategy, capacity-building, budget, financial management, improvement in revenue collection and improving customers relations.

In its phase-II, which will cost \$685 million, around 195 million gallons daily (mgd) additional water would be made available for the city. It will include the 100mgd bulk water supply scheme from Haleji to Pipri, and additional 50mgd water supply through the existing bulk system from the Keenjhar Lake to Pipri.

The chief minister said that he would try to start additional water supply schemes much before time so that maximum water could be made available for the city.

Presiding over a separate joint meeting of Turkish Company, OZPAK J.V (A Clean World), led by its chairman Abdul Kadir Turan and the Sindh Solid Waste Management Board, CM Shah said he was keen to introduce integrated solid waste management under which collection, segregation, transfer to GTS, treatment and then dumping at landfill be made as per an “integrated system”.

The chief minister, who was assisted by ministers Saeed Ghani, Nasir Shah, Imtiaz Shaikh, and others, said that he had a plan to develop integrated solid waste management.

Nasir Shah said the Turkish company was doing cleanliness work in Lahore and was interested in working with the Sindh government in the area of solid waste management in Karachi.

Mr Shah said that his government was ready to allocate six “modern” GTs on the PPP basis if any company was interested; otherwise the provincial government would develop them from its own resources.

The company told the chief minister that they were doing a good job in Lahore and Karachi would give a different look when they would start their work in the metropolis. At this the chief minister said that he was ready to allocate them two districts for garbage lifting but they would have to participate in the bidding or file their unsolicited proposal.

The Turkish company said that they were ready to work with the Sindh government on the PPP mode.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1509550>

SENATE PANEL CALLS FOR PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT OF NAI GAJ DAM

By Haseeb Hanif Published: October 8, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Planning Development and Reforms has directed the ministry concerned that the Planning Commission should send its team for physical assessment of the Nai Gaj dam and present a report on the progress on the project before the committee.

The meeting, chaired by Chairman Agha Shahzaib Durrani at the Parliament House, also demanded of the ministry to present details about the start of the development projects, its progress and increase in the costs because of the delay in them.

Discussing the issue of delay in the construction of the Nai Gaj dam, the chairman expressed resentment over the delay in the inquiry report.

The Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) authorities told the committee that the Nai Gaj dam project – started in 2012 – was supposed to complete by 2015. The delay was caused by less release of development funds, they added.

The Planning Commission authorities said the cost of the revised PC-I of the project has reached Rs47 billion, an Rs20 billion increase from the approved Rs26 billion in PC-I in 2012.

They asked how the funds could be released if there was no physical progress. The commission released as much as Rs18 billion by 2019 whereas the finance department released Rs11 billion.

Chairman Durrani said: “You [Planning Commission] have been paid 46 per cent of the payment.” To this, the authorities said the feasibility report of the plan has not been completed yet.

The committee directed the Ministry of Planning that the Planning Commission should send its team to the Nai Gaj dam for assessment of the physical progress of the project and present a report to the committee.

The Alternative Energy Development Board in its briefing to the committee said that under the new alternative energy policy at least 20 per cent of the electricity will be shifted to alternative energy sources by 2025.

AEDC CEO Rana Abdul Jabbar said: “More than 2,000 consumers across the country have shifted to net metering.” The committee advised that a comparative analysis of the alternative energy of 2006 and 2019 be presented to the committee.

The committee and the commission will jointly issue a show-cause notice to the relevant authorities on their absence from the meeting who was supposed to brief the committee on the up-gradation of the Durga Shobzai to Taunsa Road in Balochistan.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2074525/1-senate-panel-calls-physical-assessment-nai-gaj-dam/>

WATER SCARCITY

By Editorial Published: October 8, 2019

A new World Economic Forum (WEF) report posits that water crises are among the most significant risk factors in doing business in South Asia. Water, according to the report based on a survey of over 12,000 business leaders from around the world, presents the greatest challenge to business in India and is the second-biggest risk in Pakistan.

Incidentally, the only greater risk for Pakistan, according to the report, is “energy price shock”, a reference to the rising demand for energy as populations and economies grow. Pakistan is heavily dependent on imports to meet demand, and because the sector is highly subsidised, governments bear most of the repercussions of market fluctuations.

As for water, the report quotes a description of the issue as “a problem of scarcity amid abundance”, explaining that despite the presence of major rivers, many citizens must queue for limited supplies of drinking water. It notes that South Asia is home to around a quarter of the global population but has less than 5% of the world’s renewable water resources. Low per-capita water availability and relatively high levels of water use are also troubling, with Pakistan having the fourth-highest rate of water usage in the world, despite being on the brink of officially being tagged as “water-scarce”.

The lack of proper infrastructure to deliver clean drinking water is highlighted as a significant problem, while dependence on a single source – the Indus system – makes the country more at risk of disruptions from extreme

weather events, which will only increase and grow harsher due to climate change. The report also brings up the geopolitical challenges presented by water scarcity. “Water is a potential weapon in cross-border disputes, as countries have at times threatened cutting off flows because of outbreaks of violence in disputed territories.”

Many have gone hoarse exhorting the government to address water waste, but amid an ever-evolving list of challenges, this one keeps getting pushed down on the agenda. It is easy to cast blame on India. It is much harder to convince the agricultural elite to reduce water waste and work to improve supply efficiency. But, to quote Hillel, if not now, when?

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2074263/6-water-scarcity-2/>

MURAD PROTESTS OVER DELAY IN APPOINTMENT OF IRSA MEMBER FROM SINDH

Hasan Mansoor Updated October 09, 2019

KARACHI: Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah stated in the Sindh Assembly on Tuesday that the federal government was not implementing the Water Accord in its true spirit, which was evident from the fact that it was not appointing its member on the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) from Sindh.

“There are huge problems Sindh is facing because of water shortages,” said the chief minister while making his policy statement in the assembly with Speaker Siraj Durrani in the chair.

He read out an order by the federal government issued in 2000 in which it was confirmed that the individual who would represent the centre would be taken from Sindh.

“This order was issued in 2000, which has not yet been revoked,” said CM Shah, adding that despite the order the federal government had been avoiding to appoint its representative from Sindh for the past many years, which was set out to ensure the preferential right of water for the lower riparian.

He said since the order was issued, federal government’s member on Irsa had been from Sindh; however, his provincial government had written letters to the past two governments since 2017 in which “we expressed our concerns over delay in appointment of Irsa’s representative for the federal government from Sindh”.

The first such letter was written in 2017 during the PML-N government, and the latest letter was written in July this year mentioning the fact that no such appointment had been made thus far.

“To make it more convenient for the federal government, we sent names of three candidates. I wrote a letter to the prime minister in which those names were mentioned again, yet none of them has been considered.”

He said he had recently read a newspaper report in which an individual having no link with Sindh was mentioned as being appointed the federal representative for Irsa.

He said a committee headed by the minister for water resources, who too belonged to Sindh, had recommended an individual as Irsa member who did not belong to Sindh.

“Soon after reading that report I wrote a letter to the PM in which I told him that why the federal government was acting like that when its representatives for Irsa had been from Sindh in the past; even the prime minister contested election from Sindh and his minister for water resources is elected from Sindh. Then why they are doing injustice to Sindh?”

“I had raised this issue in a meeting of the Council of Common Interests in April last year on which the then PM had formed a high-level committee headed by the attorney general with law ministers and advocates general of the four provinces its members along with some federal ministers.”

“What is happening is utter injustice to Sindh; and no such thing happened even during dictatorships in the country.”

He said the Council of Common Interests (CCI) was empowered to tackle such matters and not the federal government.

He said he had received no reply from Islamabad to his correspondence. So, he had decided to inform the house about these matters every time he would take up such issues with the federal government.

He said similar injustices were being done with other provinces as well on a variety of issues, adding: “If other provinces are not raising their voice on those matters then what can I do except protest on injustices being directed at us”.

He said the resolution on the Karachi Circular Railway issue, which was passed a day earlier, had been sent to Islamabad.

He said ex-president Asif Zardari had initiated the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which was ably followed up by prime minister Nawaz Sharif's previous government, however, at present CPEC was halted.

“Work on the CPEC projects is completely halted at present; and the situation is so critical that the federal minister [for] planning had to appear on TV to say that these projects have not been stopped for good.”

He said Pakistan was a federation with four federating units and it required tackling issues jointly; adding he had heard that the prime minister would discuss the coal issues during his China visit, but “it has not been discussed with us”.

He said he did not know about the composition of the CPEC Authority, which had been established through a presidential ordinance.

During the Question Hour session, Women Development Minister Shehla Raza responded to a question by the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf's Seema Zia, in which she said the website of the Sindh Commission on the Status of Women had not been updated since October last year.

Answering another question asked by Sidra Imran, the minister said the key area for the women development ministry was women economic empowerment for which annual development programme schemes had been implemented in the province, which directly and indirectly supported women's economic emancipation.

She said the ministry in coordination with nongovernmental organisations and line departments helped engage skilled women to display their products in many exhibitions across the province.

She, however, said no trade exhibitions were organised by her ministry for skilled women entrepreneurs of Sindh as such exhibitions were the mandate of the industries ministry and the chambers of commerce and industry.

She said women cells had been established in Karachi South's 34 police stations. Similar cells had been set up in Matiari and other districts.

She said the ministry's efforts had led to stopping 58 marriages of children.

The Pakistan Peoples Party's Nadir Magsi said the number of marriages of children aged less than 18 years was much more than the minister's statement showed.

“Your department knows very little about this menace; which is universally being practised in our rural areas. You will have to evolve an effective mechanism to stop such marriages,” said Mr Magsi.

Khurram Sher Zaman's adjournment motion vis-à-vis hike in flour prices was opposed by the government, which declared it out of order.

Similarly, the house rejected the motion by Grand Democratic Alliance's Nand Kumar, in which he wanted leave of the house to introduce a private bill, The Criminal Law (Protection of Minorities) Bill, 2019.

Local Government Minister Nasir Shah said the bill had earlier been passed by the house, but it was returned to the government after the governor raised certain objections to it. The bill was under the cabinet's consideration.

The PTI's Adeel Ahmed moved a resolution which recommended that the departments and individuals responsible for the ill planning and faulty execution of the bulk water supply project, K-IV, “must be identified and taken to task”.

“The house also resolves that the Sindh government must initiate an alternative water supply project for Karachi to save the city from water shortages.”

The PTI's Haleem Adil Sheikh and Minister Nasir Shah spoke briefly on the resolution before it was adopted by the house unanimously.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1509750/murad-protests-over-delay-in-appointment-of-irsa-member-from-sindh>

GOVT DECLINES TO HAVE TWO IRSA MEMBERS FROM SINDH

Khaleeq Kiani Updated October 10, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Brushing aside a decision made by former president retired Gen Pervez Musharraf about two decades ago, the federal government on Wednesday refused to have two members from Sindh in the five-member Indus River System Authority (Irsa).

“The Chief Executive Order of 2000 granting Sindh the favour of nominating Federal Member in addition to the one already appointed by it was unauthorised and illegal,” said the water resources ministry in a statement, adding the “Irsa Act was not accordingly amended in the light of the Martial Law-era executive order”.

It said that Federal Minister for Water Resources Faisal Vawda had taken exception to the statement by the chief minister of Sindh on the issue of nomination of one additional Irsa member exclusively from the province. “The appointment of an additional member from Sindh is not covered under the Irsa Act, 1992 as each province can nominate [just] one member,” said the statement.

The post of federal member of Irsa has been looked after on an acting charge basis since 2010 by chairman of the Federal Flood Commission (FFC) or chief engineering adviser because of Punjab's protest against nomination of two Irsa members by the Sindh government. Between 2000 and 2010, the post of the federal member was filled on the recommendations of the Sindh government.

Some quarters within the federal government privately argue that Gen Musharraf amended the Irsa Act through an executive order in 2000 to shift the Irsa headquarters from Lahore to Islamabad and that his decision to allow Sindh to nominate someone for the post of federal member of Irsa was aimed at persuading the province to withdraw its opposition to the proposed Kalabagh dam.

Because the basic objective remained unfulfilled and the Punjab government stepped up its opposition to appointment of two Irsa members from Sindh, the PPP-led government in 2010 did not appoint a member on Sindh's advice and instead allowed the post to be filled automatically by the FFC chairman under the Irsa Act.

A couple of months ago, the Sindh chief minister sent the names of some nominees to the prime minister for selection of a federal member of Irsa. And the prime minister's principal secretary advised the water resources ministry to move a summary for approval in the light of Sindh's nominations.

The ministry then sought comments from Irsa which agreed that under the 2000 decision of the chief executive, which was also upheld by Irsa, its federal member should come on the advice of Sindh.

According to the sources, the ministry also asked the law division if such an appointment was covered under the Irsa Act. The law division noted that while the executive order had not been rescinded, the Irsa Act had not been amended either.

The establishment division advised that a committee led by the water resources minister should resolve the matter and send the names of a suitable panel of nominees to the prime minister for his decision on the matter.

On Wednesday Mr Vawda said the executive order of Gen Musharraf had "already been suspended by the Supreme Court of Pakistan which had allowed the federal government to nominate its own member to Irsa to ensure neutrality and credibility of the regulatory authority".

He said Punjab had expressed strong reservations over the appointment of two Irsa members from Sindh while no one represented the federal government/federation.

He said the prime minister had already considered the Sindh chief minister's request and directed Mr Vawda to fill the post of federal member of Irsa strictly in line with the stipulations of Irsa Act, for which the ministry has started the process of nomination.

The minister said he was "open to lawful suggestions but not for dictation" and emphasised that "both the Irsa Act and the judgement of the Supreme Court clearly empower the federal government in this regard which will accordingly exercise its legal authority".

He said his ministry and the Prime Minister Office would "always uphold the law and abide by the Acts of Parliament instead of resorting to political expediency".

A day earlier, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah had alleged on the floor of Sindh Assembly that the federal government was not implementing the water accord in its true spirit, which was evident from the fact that it was not appointing Irsa member from Sindh.

The Irsa law requires that the post of Irsa chairman be held by members from Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab, Sindh and the federal government, in that order, for a period of one year. The law also envisages that Irsa will have five members, each representing one of the provinces or the federation. It also says that the FFC chairman will function as the federal member in the event the post falls vacant for any reason.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1510028/govt-declines-to-have-two-irsa-members-from-sindh>

WB TEAM VISITS MANCHHAR LAKE, MNVD

Correspondent October 10, 2019

DADU: A 14-member delegation of World Bank inspected various parts of Manchhar Lake and Main Nara Valley Drain on Wednesday during its ongoing visit of the projects funded by the bank.

The team led by Michael Haney visited Manchhar Lake at RD-62 (reduce distance), the lake's bund, Zero Point and MNVD and took keen interest in the fish market on the bund near Bubak.

Irrigation officers concerned including superintendent engineer Sajid Ali Bhutto briefed the team on rehabilitation of the lake and historic sources of water like hill torrents, Nai Gaaj Nullah and MNVD that supplied water to the lake round the year.

The team comprised Dr Greg Browder, lead water and sanitation specialist; Dr Lucy Lytton, senior groundwater specialist; Lixin Gu, program leader; Toru Konishi, team leader for ongoing Water Sector Improvement Project and Sindh Barrages Improvement Program (SBIP).

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1509918/wb-team-visits-manchhar-lake-mnvd>

MOHMAND, BHASHA DAMS, SINDH BARRAGE PRIORITY PROJECTS: WAPDA CHIEF

By RECORDER REPORT on October 12, 2019

WAPDA Chairman Lieutenant General Muzammil Hussain (ret'd) has said that harnessing water and hydropower resources is a must for water, food and energy security of Pakistan. In the wake of initiating construction work on Mohmand Dam this May, Diamer Bhasha Dam and Sindh Barrage are the two priority projects for WAPDA, he added.

He was briefing a delegation of National Security Workshop, under the aegis of National Defence University (NDU) Islamabad about the global water scenario and development projects of WAPDA in water and hydropower sectors. The delegation was headed by Major General Asif Ali, visited WAPDA House today. The delegation comprised of Senators, Members of the National Assembly, Members of the Provincial Assemblies, Bureaucrats, Ambassadors and Senior Officers from the Armed Forces.

In addition, he said, WAPDA has also been expeditiously working on a number of projects to improve water situation in the country and add a sizeable quantum of hydel electricity to the National Grid. For optimal utilization of water resources, WAPDA has devised a comprehensive strategy, through which various projects will be completed in a phased manner under short, medium and long term plans.

The delegation was informed that WAPDA plans to add five Million Acre Feet (MAF) to water storage and 4600 Megawatt (MW) hydropower generation in short term up to 2025; another eight MAF water storage and 16000 MW power generation in medium term up to 2030 and 28 MAF water storage and 18400 MW generation in long term up to 2050 with completion of its various projects. However, prompt decisions at all levels and availability of adequate funds are key to implementing short, medium and long term projects in accordance with their timelines, he added. WAPDA Chairman, dilating upon the water challenges, said that a major paradigm shift to the existing development mechanism in Pakistan is direly needed to thwart the looming water crisis and handle the monster of circular debt in power sector. There has to be innovative financing strategies with less dependence on the Government, institutional robustness and capacity building of local Consultants besides policy, technology, entrepreneur interface.

WAPDA Chairman also responded to the queries raised by members of the delegation during question-answer session. Later, NDU delegation head and WAPDA Chairman exchanged souvenirs as memento to the visit.

<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/10/12/530075/mohmand-bhasha-dams-sindh-barrage-priority-projects-wapda-chief/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 14th TO 20th 2019

MODI SAYS WILL STOP WATER FROM FLOWING INTO PAKISTAN

October 16, 2019

KARACHI: At an election rally in India's Haryana state, prime minister Narendra Modi said that India would not allow "its share" of river water to flow to Pakistan. He alleged, 'For 70 years, the water which belongs to India and the farmers of Haryana flowed to Pakistan. Modi will stop this water (from flowing into Pakistan) and bring to your houses. Modi aapki ladai ladega (Modi will fight your battle),' according to Times of India.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2019/10/16/1-page/805672-news.html>

GOVERNMENT TO CONDUCT THIRD PARTY VALIDATION ON WATER DISTRIBUTION, NA BODY TOLD

By TAHIR AMIN on October 16, 2019

The federal government has decided to conduct a third party validation on water distribution to Punjab and Sindh to remove mistrust between the two provinces, which are blaming each other for water theft.

This was revealed by Chairman Indus River System Authority (IRSA) Sher Zaman while briefing the National Assembly Standing Committee on Water Resources which met here with Nawab Muhammad Yousuf Talpur in the chair on Tuesday.

The committee met to review the land acquisition issues of Dasu Hydropower Project, implementation status of earlier recommendations of the committee, water distribution and its shortages to the provinces.

Zaman said that Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) would conduct the third party validation to which provinces have given their consent.

The parliamentary panel was informed that land acquisition cost of Dasu Hydropower Project has revised upward from Rs 19 billion to Rs 37 billion. The Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC) has approved revised land acquisition cost for Dasu Hydropower Project worth Rs 37 billion.

Briefing the panel, Member WAPDA Zahid Khan Durrani said that the WAPDA would arrange additional cost of Rs 18 billion from its own equity and local commercial financiers.

He said the Senior Member Board of Revenue (SMBR) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had already committed that the district administration would complete the land acquisition for priority areas (1,247 acres of land) within six months and remaining land acquisition would be done within one year after the approval of revised land cost by the ECNEC.

He further apprised that the ECNEC in its meeting held on October 2, 2019 approved revised land acquisition plan on the proposal of the ministry but minutes are awaited. He requested that the SMBR KPK may be directed to fulfill his promise for acquisition of land to start the project as per proposed plan without any delay.

Chairman IRSA Sher Zaman briefed the committee about anticipated water availability for Rabi crop 2019-20 and rim stations inflows during Kharif season 2019.

The committee was informed that it has been anticipated that 15 percent water shortage for Sindh and Punjab in Rabi season 2019-20, starting from October 1, 2019, will continue till March 31, 2020. Balochistan faced 30 per cent and Sindh 7 per cent shortage of the anticipated water during the Kharif season (April-September 2019).

Zaman said that water availability of 24.15 MAF at rim station is anticipated during Rabi 2019-20. Based on the rim station inflows plus available storage of 10.268 MAF minus the expected system of 2.38 MAF and minor unavoidable escape downstream Kotri, the approved availability at respective canal heads is estimated to be 31.44 MAF of which the share of Punjab will be 16.93 MAF, Sindh, 12.78 MAF, KP (CRCB), 0.71 MAF, and Balochistan, 1.03 MAF. The likely availability of 31.44 MAF is significantly higher than the last year's availability of 24.76 MAF and considerably higher than the 10-year average of 29.80 MAF. He said that currently additional over 4 MAF water is available in the reservoirs as compared to the last year.

Secretary Water Resources Muhammad Ashraf told the committee that the Council of Common Interests (CCI) has already approved water policy in April 2018. Under the policy, water storage capacity in the country would be enhanced to store additional 10 million acre feet (MAF) by 2030, he added. Out of total, around 7.1 MAF water would be stored through the construction of Diamer-Bhasha and Mohmand Dams while remaining by small storages dams in all provinces, he said.

Regarding Naulong Dam, the committee was told that revised PC-1 of the project has been submitted to the Planning Commission for approval.

Regarding the provision of water to Bahawalpur, the secretary irrigation Punjab informed the committee that additional water is not available in the system and water is being provided to Bahawalpur as per its share. Additional water can only be provided in case of more storage capacity, he added.

The committee showed its displeasure to the secretary irrigation of all four provinces due to their lower level representation in the committee meeting on the agenda item regarding the IRSA to brief the committee on water distribution amongst the provinces and its shortages. The chairman IRSA and other members briefed the committee but due to non-availability of secretaries of irrigation departments from all four provinces, a subcommittee was constituted and the provincial secretaries of irrigation were directed to appear for their input that would be made part of the report of the sub-committee.

The committee deferred the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (Amendment) Bill, 2019 due to absence of its mover.

A sub-committee was constituted on the proposal of the secretary Ministry of Water Resources and on the request of the members of last subcommittee as the timeframe of 30 days of said subcommittee lapsed but it could not complete the assigned task.

While responding to the observations of MNA Ali Nawaz Awan, the chairman of the committee enhanced the terms of references (TORs) of the new sub-committee with observation that the said member may be invited as special invitee in the meeting of the subcommittee for taking the CDA on board. The said sub-committee will report to the subcommittee on water resources within 30 days as per rule.

The meeting was also attended by MNAs including Fazal Muhammad Khan, Ali Nawaz Awan, Sheikh Rashid Shafique, Muhammad Afzal Dhandla, Muhammad Farooq Malik, Javed Iqbal, Naureen Farooq Khan, Nuzhat Pathan, Khalid Hussain Magsi, Maryam Aurangzeb, Ehsan-ur-Rehman, Muhammad Hamid Hameed and senior officials of the Ministry of Water Resources and other concerned departments.

<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/10/16/531297/government-to-conduct-third-party-validation-on-water-distribution-na-body-told/>

ECNEC APPROVED DASU HYDROPOWER LAND ACQUISITION COST

By APP Published: October 16, 2019

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Standing Committee on Water Resources Tuesday was informed that the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (Ecneec) had approved revised land acquisition cost for Dasu hydropower project worth Rs37 billion.

The committee, which met with Nawab Muhammad Yousuf Talpur in chair reviewed land acquisition issues of Dasu Hydropower Project, implementation status of earlier recommendations of the committee, water distribution and its shortage to the provinces.

Briefing the NA panel, Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) member Zahid Khan Durrani said that the authority would arrange additional cost of Rs18 billion from its own equity.

He said the senior Member Board of Revenue (SMBR) Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa had committed that the district administration would complete the land acquisition for priority areas (1,247 acres) within six months and remaining land within one year after the approval of revised land cost by the Ecneec.

Water Resources Secretary Muhammad Ashraf told the committee that the Council of Common Interest (CCI) had already approved water policy in April 2018.

He said that under the policy, water storage capacity in the country would be enhanced to an additional 10 million acre feet (MAF) by 2030.

Out of the total around 7.1 MAF water would be stored by constructing Diamer-Bhasha and Mohmand dams, while the remaining in small dams in all provinces.

Meanwhile, the committee was told that revised PC-1 for Naulong Dam had been submitted to the planning commission for approval.

Speaking about the provision of water to Bahawalpur, Punjab irrigation secretary informed the committee that additional water was not available due to storage capacity constraints and that the city was being given its due water share.

Indus River System Authority (Irsa) Chairman Sher Zaman briefed the committee about anticipated water availability for Rabi crop 2019-20 and rim stations inflows for Kharif season 2019. He said that currently additional over 4MAF water was available in the reservoirs as compared to last year.

The committee deferred the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (Amendment) Bill 2019 due to absence of its mover.

The meeting was attended by MNAs Fazal Muhammad Khan, Ali Nawaz Awan, Sheikh Rashid Shafique, Muhammad Afzal Dhandla, Muhammad Farooq Malik, Javed Iqbal, Naureen Farooq Khan, Nuzhat Pathan, Khalid Hussain Magsi, Marriyum Aurangzeb, Ehsanur Rehman, Muhammad Hameed and senior officials of Ministry of Water Resources and other concerned departments.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2080479/1-ecneec-approved-dasu-hydropower-land-acquisition-cost/>

MODI'S THREAT TO STOP WATER FLOW DRAWS FO RESPONSE

Baqir Sajjad Syed October 18, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office warned India on Thursday that any move to block the flow of water to Pakistan under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) would be considered “an act of aggression”.

FO Spokesman Dr Moham-mad Faisal at his weekly media briefing reminded India of Pakistan’s “exclusive rights” under the IWT to receive water from the Indus, the Chenab and the Jhelum rivers and said that “any attempt to divert flows of these rivers will be considered an act of aggression and Pakistan has the right to respond”.

He said Pakistan would exercise the appropriate options available to it.

The spokesman was responding to a statement by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during an election rally in Haryana, in which he said: “For 70 years, water that belonged to Haryana’s farmers and us flowed to Pakistan. ... But, this Modi will stop that water and bring it to your houses. I have already started working on it. The water belongs to India and farmers of Haryana.”

Blocking Indus water flow to be an act of aggression, India warned

Dr Faisal said that such irresponsible statements reflected India’s aggressive designs and prove that it had no regard for human rights and international obligations.

It is feared that agriculture, hydropower generation and environment in water-stressed Pakistan could suffer if India restricted the water supply.

In reply to a question about Kashmir, the spokesman said that the Modi government’s move to annex occupied valley in August has “led India into a cul de sac”. The Indian government, he said, was not only facing international criticism, but was also being severely criticised at home.

“India has been cornered and isolated because of its atrocities and gross human rights violations in India-occupied Jammu & Kashmir,” he maintained.

Commenting on the Ayo-dhya dispute in which the Indian Supreme Court has reserved its verdict, the spokesman expressed the hope that the judgment would “reflect sentiments of the Muslim minority in India”.

Dr Faisal confirmed that the upcoming visit of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan had been postponed.

Mr Erdogan was expected to visit Pakistan on October 23.

The spokesman did not give any reason for the postponement of the visit, but it is believed that the visit is being re-scheduled because of Turkish operation against Syrian Kurds and Turkey’s rising tensions with the US.

Expressing solidarity with Turkey, the spokesman said: “Turkey has remained a victim of terrorism for a long time and we need to recognise its legitimate security concerns.”

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1511487>

SINDH PROTESTS IRSA’S PERMISSION FOR HYDROPOWER PLANT ON CJ CANAL

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter October 20, 2019

KARACHI: Sindh government on Saturday lodged protest over Indus River System Authority’s controversial permission to the authorities in Punjab for developing a 25 MW hydropower project on Chashma-Jhelum Link Canal. “Irsa should revoke the biased decision forthwith; else, we’ll protest at all available forums,” said Sindh Minister for Agriculture Ismail Rahu while speaking to reporters at his office.

Irsa has issued a no-objection certificate to M/S CJ Hydropower (Pvt) Limited for developing the project on the CJ Link Canal.

A spokesman for the authority said the decision was taken by four to one majority votes at a meeting as the member from Sindh dissented on the basis that the CJ Canal was an intra-provincial canal and it did not come under Irsa’s purview.

Mr Rahu warned Irsa to act within its mandate as “it has no right to interfere in the matters pertaining to provinces. Sindh government rejects this decision and will not allow Punjab to develop the power plant”.

He said that Sindh was already suffering seriously from water shortages and now “Irsa is hatching conspiracy to make our province barren and infertile”.

Mr Rahu said the action taken at the behest of the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf government and its allies in the federal government was appalling.

“Sindh will not accept theft of its water. The federation has made a joke of such a serious issue as a group of conspirators sitting in Islamabad has made it a habit to routinely take decisions against Sindh’s interests,” he said. He said that provinces were autonomous in many fields after the passage of the 18th Amendment, thus, “Punjab cannot build the power plant without permission of Sindh”.

The minister claimed that Irsa was “involved in the theft of Sindh’s share in Indus”.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1511777/sindh-protests-irsas-permission-for-hydropower-plant-on-cj-canal>

PUNJAB GOVERNMENT TO SHUTDOWN SAAF PAANI COMPANY

By RECORDER REPORT on October 20, 2019

The Punjab government is set to shut down Saaf Paani Company, both in the South and North zones, sources said. According to the sources, the relevant department has sought legal opinion from the provincial law department.

They said the Board of Directors of the Housing department has recommended shutting down of the company and a summary has been forwarded to the Chief Minister Secretariat accordingly.

According to the summary, a new board should also be constituted after shutting down the company, which was constituted by the previous Punjab government of PML-N. All the assets of the company would be transferred to the Aab-e-Pak Authority, said sources.

<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/10/20/532792/punjab-government-to-shutdown-saaf-paani-company/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 21st TO 27th 2019

SINDH WILL MOVE ALL FORUMS FOR DUE SHARE OF WATER, SAYS RAHU

A CORRESPONDENT PUBLISHED OCT 21, 2019 07:08am

BADIN: Sindh Minister for Agriculture Mohammad Ismail Rahu on Sunday said the provincial government would take the issue of adequate water for Rabi crops to all available forums if its due share was denied.

Speaking to local reporters in his native town, Rahuki, the minister deplored the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) for allowing installation of a power plant on the Chashma-Jhelum link canal despite strong reservations expressed by Sindh. He also condemned the federal government for its “complicity” in the matter.

The minister asked the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) government to mend its ways and stop meting out step-motherly treatment with smaller federating units.

He told Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) workers, gathered around him, that there was no threat to the provincial government from PTI’s moves to dislodge it. He said PTI did not have the mandate to rule over the province and deprive the people of Sindh of their legitimately elected leadership.

He said the federal government was doing all this to create unrest among the people of Sindh who were opposing all its negative decisions. Mr Rahu said that the Sindh government, despite limited resources at its disposal, was doing its best to address pressing issues of people.

The minister also held a meeting with paddy growers and rice millers to discuss their issues and take a decision on a fair rate and weight deduction.

He sided with paddy growers on the weight issue saying that it was unfair to effect deduction of three-five kilos in each consignment on the pretext of moisture. Being a grower, he said, he wanted growers to get a fair rate of their crop as well. “The same is my approach in the case of sugar cane growers and sugar mills’ owners in their similar dispute,” Mr Rahu said.

He held out the assurance that he would be able to get the disputes settled amicably.

He said he had already directed the officials concerned to keep in touch with growers and millers to ensure that growers got fair rates of their crop.

He said it would be better for both sides to sit together and sort out their issues.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/amp/1511949>

ALL ABOUT WATER: MANAGING THE FLOWS

By Shahid Javed Burki Published: October 21, 2019

The issue of water — storing it, regulating its use, managing its flow — is so important that it would take more than one newspaper article to deal with most of its aspects. I will write two or three articles in this space and run them sequentially to cover some of the more important issues that should inform the making and implementing of public and private policies pertaining to water.

Water is back in the news again for two reasons. The first one is because of the likely consequences of global warming. The second because of the implied threat as reported in the press in Pakistan. According to this, the Indian Prime Minister has threatened that he will stop the flow of water into Pakistan if the leadership in his neighbouring country does not fall in line with the Indian policies adopted in the part of the Kashmir state New Delhi controls. Both water crises for Pakistan are man-made. The first is because of centuries of activities by human beings who were adding to the accumulated global warming gases that are now playing havoc with the climate. The second has been caused by the Indian leadership that believes that nothing would come in its way to impose Hindu extremist rule on a country that has some 20% of the population belonging to faiths other than Hinduism. Most affected is Kashmir, the only Muslim majority state in the country.

Pakistan's Imran Khan has used several international forums to highlight the problem in Kashmir. His campaign has been picked up by the Western press — no doubt the reason for the Indian Prime Minister's threat to interfere with the flow of water into the rivers that enter Pakistan from India. These flows are guaranteed by an international treaty. What would happen if India disregards it? The question is hard to answer but highlights the reason why Pakistan needs to focus its public policy on managing water flows.

Before getting into that, I will provide a quick overview of how the press in the West is responding to India's actions in Kashmir. This will provide some indication of how the West may interact with any unwarranted action by India on water that would affect Pakistan. But having a sympathetic press is not enough; only state actions would persuade the Indian leadership to mend its ways.

The press in Britain and the United States, after paying little attention to the harsh measures adopted by the Modi government after changing the status of Kashmir, began to take note of what was happening in India's only Muslim majority state. The New York Times carried on its front page a story that detailed the common people's suffering as a result of the government-ordered clampdown. On the front page of its issue of October 7, the newspaper started its long story by mentioning the case of a young man who was bitten by a krait, a poisonous snake, but couldn't receive medical attention. His mother went from city to city, in search of help. He died when antivenin couldn't be found. "Two months after the Indian government revoked Kashmir's autonomy and imposed harsh security measures across the Kashmir Valley, doctors and patients here say the crackdown has taken many lives, in large part because of government-imposed communication blackout, including shutting down the internet", wrote Sameer Yasir and Jeffrey Gettleman.

The journalists gave several accounts of the stress common people were facing. They wrote: "A new group on the messaging service WhatsApp, called Save Heart Initiative, that had helped more than 13,000 cardiac emergencies had been celebrated in the Indian media as a Kashmiri success story has been rendered virtually defunct. Hundreds of Kashmiri doctors even some in the United States were part of the group, uploading electrocardiograms and other vital information and then getting life-saving advice from one another. With no internet in the Kashmir Valley, doctors there can't use it." The amount of stress caused by India's Kashmir moves would be nothing compared to the damage it could do by curtailing the flow of water into Pakistan.

Getting back to the issue of water management in Pakistan, I will use the work done by a committee headed by Sartaj Aziz when he was in charge of the Planning Commission. The group wrote a report titled "Water is the Soul of the Earth: National Water Policy, 2018". The final report was signed by Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, then prime minister of Pakistan; Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, then chief minister of Punjab; Syed Murad Ali Shah, Chief Minister of Sindh; Pervez Khan Khattak, then chief minister of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa; and Mir Abdul Quddoos, then chief minister of Balochistan. The fact that it was a consensus document was in of itself an achievement since the provinces had not been able to agree among themselves or with the federal government on how to divide the water that had flowed through the Indus River system. Among the 15 areas of concern relating to water and its uses identified in the report, one of the more important was the following: "Different regions in the country are endowed differently with different

water availability in terms of precipitation, surface flows and ground water and there is increased stress on the sharing of water resources.”

The report on its very first page sounds an alarm. “With rapidly growing population, Pakistan is heading towards a situation of water shortage, and by corollary, a threat of food insecurity. Per capita surface water availability has declined from 5,260 cubic meters per year in 1951 to around 1,000 cubic meters in 2016. This quantity is likely to further drop to about 860 cubic meters by 2025, making our transition from “water stressed” to a water scarce country. (The minimum water requirement to avoid food and health implications of water scarcity is 1,000 cubic meters per capita per year.) The situation calls for rapid development and management of the country’s water resources on a water footing.”

While the sharp increase in the size of the population was an important contributor to the water problem the country was facing, there were two other equally important reasons for the growing water stress. The first had been recognised for a long time. It was the inefficient use of water in the rivers, canals and fields. The other was the failure of the various governments to construct storage dams. I remember a study authored by Syed Salar Kirmani who, having served as Wapda’s chief engineer, joined the World Bank. In the study he estimated that Pakistan wastes some 50% of the water it receives in its rivers; it could solve some of the water problem by reducing the level of waste. I’ll come to that subject in the article in this space next week.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2083761/6-water-managing-flows/>

PA SLAMS CENTRE FOR NOT APPOINTING IRSA MEMBER FROM SINDH

Tahir Siddiqui Updated October 23, 2019

KARACHI: The major opposition parties in the Sindh Assembly, including the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf, supported the Pakistan Peoples Party in the house against the decisions of the PTI-led coalition in the Centre as the provincial lawmakers unanimously adopted two resolutions condemning the appointment of a federal government representative in the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) and the removal of former skipper Sarfaraz Ahmed from the national cricket squad.

At the outset of the assembly session, Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah rose in his seat to seek Speaker Agha Siraj Durrani’s permission to invite the attention of the house towards the appointment of Irsa member from Punjab instead of Sindh.

“It is a matter of grave concern and highly deplorable that the prime minister did not give any importance to the protest and reservations of this house on the appointment of Irsa’s federal government representative from Punjab,” he said.

The chief minister said the federal cabinet approved the appointment of Irsa member, who belonged to Punjab, despite the fact that there were six ministers, three advisers and two special assistants belonging to Sindh in the federal cabinet. “Three of them who are Sindhi-speaking even did not attend the cabinet meeting that took the decision against the interests of Sindh,” he said.

Another unanimous resolution criticises PCB for removing Sarfaraz Ahmed from cricket team captaincy

Quoting a member of the federal cabinet, Mr Shah revealed that he was told that not a single word was uttered on the issue by the cabinet members belonging to Sindh. “It is for the first time since 1999 that the federal government representative member of Irsa did not belong to Sindh,” he said, terming it an attempt to usurp the province’s rights. He said he had raised the issue during Monday’s session and requested the opposition members belonging to the PTI, Grand Democratic Alliance and Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan to take up the issue with the prime minister during his visit to Karachi on the same day.

The chief minister said that he was told that the opposition members did voice concern of the provincial lawmakers in their respective meetings with the prime minister. “Despite this, the controversial appointment was made unilaterally,” he said.

Mr Shah said he had got a resolution drafted and would like the house members to adopt it unanimously to show their reservation over the federal government’s decision that was bound to lead to a sense of deprivation in the people of the province.

He also asked the members of the PTI, MQM-P and GDA to seek an explanation from the federal minister belonging to their respective parties that how they remained silent spectators when the federal cabinet approved the controversial appointment.

The chief minister read out the draft of the resolution and asked the opposition members if they supported it.

PTI member Haleem Adil Sheikh rose to announce that his party supported the interests of the province, but the treasury benches were trying to give the impression that only they had Sindh's interests close to heart.

Leader of the Opposition Firdous Shamim Naqvi stood up to say that the PTI acknowledged the preferential right of water for the lower riparian and suggested some amendments in the draft of the resolution.

The chief minister welcomed the amendments in the draft resolution, which was later read out by PPP member Ghanwer Ali Khan Isran, PTI member Haleem Adil Sheikh and MQM-P member Kunwar Naveed Jamil.

The resolution read: "This house is aggrieved by the unilateral and arbitrary act of Federal Government of appointing its nominee as member Irsa outside Sindh, which is negation and direct contravention of the past practice of the Federal Government since 1999. The objective of the decision of Federal Government in 1999 was to protect the interest of people of Pakistan living in lower riparian. The house demands the provincial government to immediately take up this issue with the Federal Government and get this unilateral and arbitrary decision withdrawn".

MQM's Kanwar Naveed Jamil, GDA member Husnain Mirza, Haleem Adil Shaikh, GDA member Shaharyar Mahar, MQM-P member Mohammad Hussain, PPP member Heer Ismail Soho, MQM-P member Khwaja Izharul Hasan and Firdous Shamim Naqvi spoke on the issue and said they fully supported the resolution against the federal government's decision.

MQM-P's Mohammad Hussain moved a resolution against the removal of Sarfaraz Ahmed from captaincy of the Pakistan cricket team.

The resolution said: "This house condemns the act of removing Mr Sarfaraz Ahmed from captaincy of Pakistan cricket team by Pakistan Cricket Board authorities and also dropping him from the team membership. This house resolves and recommends to the Government of Sindh to approach the Federal Government [to] take action against the PCB authorities for taking such discriminatory decision".

Speaking on the resolution, Mr Hussain said that a "lobby" was active against the former skipper who had a brilliant record.

The speaker adjourned the session to Friday.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1512324/pa-slams-centre-for-not-appointing-irsa-member-from-sindh>

IRSA'S NOD FOR POWERHOUSE ON CJ LINK CANAL WIDENS CENTRE-SINDH GULF

Mohammad Hussain Khan Updated October 23, 2019F

HYDERABAD: While controversy over nomination of a federal member in the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) from Sindh is not yet resolved by the federal government, another dispute hit Sindh after Irsa issued a no-objection certificate (NOC) to Punjab to establish 25MW powerhouse on the Chashma-Jhelum (CJ) Link Canal, which Sindh fears may virtually make CJ a perennial channel.

It has given rise to acrimony between Punjab and Sindh, the lower riparian in the Indus River system, once again.

Sindh's member in Irsa Syed Mazhar Ali Shah, a retired civil servant, has given his dissenting note on the proposal that has been incorporated in the NOC issued on Oct 18.

Irsa had surprisingly first declined to issue an NOC in its Oct 9 meeting for the project in view of a 3:2 majority vote.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa member had subscribed to Sindh's view in the meeting that the CJ was an interprovincial canal, according to the meeting's minutes. "The Irsa chairman agreed with the contention of member Sindh," read Oct 9 minutes.

But then a sudden change of heart was seen in the Oct 17 meeting after all provincial members disagreed with the view of Sindh's member and Irsa issued the NOC. "God knows better what prompted the member KP and member Balochistan/Irsa chairman to change their views suddenly," said Sindh's member.

"CJ Link Canal is an interprovincial canal and as such it does not come under purview of Irsa," said the NOC document. It appeared that it is a conditional NOC which said that "however, Irsa does not commit or guarantee any water releases exclusively for power generation in CJ Link Canal".

Given history of water disputes between upper riparian Punjab and Sindh, such an NOC has not gone well with Sindh. “We believe it an attempt to convert CJ Link Canal into a perennial canal to enable Punjab [to] draw water from river Indus in the garb of its share at a cost of shortage in Sindh,” said an irrigation officer who is well-versed in Sindh’s water issues.

The decision for the NOC was taken with 4:1 majority vote as member Punjab, federal member (who is chairman of the Federal Flood Commission in the absence of permanent member), member KP and Irsa chairman cast votes in favour of the NOC.

According to Mr Shah, the Irsa chairman casts his vote when there is a tie. “Since three votes went for the NOC, the chairman voted for it too. So mine’s was the only [one] against it,” said Mr Shah. Sindh’s member observed that the CJ was an interprovincial canal and an NOC from Sindh was mandatory. Secondly, he said, Irsa was not mandated to issue the NOC. “That’s why it is a defective document. The Irsa chairman has said that being water regulator, Irsa is not committing any water releases exclusively for power generation in CJ Link Canal. When water flows are not guaranteed then why the document [NOC] is issued?” wondered Mr Shah.

Discussing legal implications, Sindh’s former advocate general Zamir Ghumro pointed out that any law’s interpretation could not be decided through a majority vote. “It is judiciary that has to interpret law and the matter should go to the Council of Common Interests (CCI) and National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) as well,” said Mr Ghumro.

Irsa is supposed to regulate interprovincial water distribution under Irsa Act 1992 enacted in the light of Water Apportionment Accord 1991 which explained 10 daily allocations among provinces round the year. Given Water Accord 1991, Sindh has close to 50 per cent share in the overall distribution of water — 48.76MAF in Kharif and Rabi when compared with 55.94 MAF of Punjab for two seasons. KP and Balochistan have nominal shares out of the total water distribution worked out at 114.35MAF in the accord.

“How can such an NOC be issued when Sindh being major shareholder in interprovincial water distribution has serious reservations on very genuine and legal grounds?” said an irrigation officer. He added that CJ Link Canal was part of Indus replacement works executed following signing of Indus Water Treaty 1960. These works included Mangla and Tarbela dams built in the post-treaty scenario. “Punjab has constructed nine such works though [without] Sindh’s understanding,” he contended.

The 22,000 cusecs capacity CJ link, which also feeds Greater Thal Canal, gets water from the Indus to take water flows to agricultural lands which were to be fed primarily from Mangla Dam, built on Jhelum River. Punjab gets its allocated share of water from the Indus through CJ Link Canal during Kharif when Sindh needs to meet its farmers’ demands for early Kharif sowing.

Punjab does not get its share of water from Mangla which Wapda fills during April-May period. Sindh’s stance is always that the CJ link should not be opened during this period and Punjab should be provided its share from Mangla Dam so that water requirements of Sindh from Tarbela Dam — built on the Indus — for early sowing of cotton and summer crops are met. But Sindh is always given the cold shoulder.

Sindh’s worries are that if the NOC is issued for power plant, it means Punjab would be requiring water round the year and thus CJ Link Canal would become a permanent water channel, which is why Sindh can never support such proposition. During Kharif season, Irsa mostly announces 30pc to 40pc water shortage which in case of Kotri Barrage — the last controlling point on the Indus — remains 75pc due to system losses.

And if a power plant is to be set up on CJ Link Canal, it would certainly be needing water flows and Sindh’s farmers would be justified to assume that they would not be getting water even for Rabi season for winter crops.

Abrar Kazi, who conducted research on Sindh’s water issues and wrote a book, believed that Sindh needed water when Wapda preferred filling Mangla Dam. “It is just like this that Wapda stores water, but doesn’t satiate a thirsty man. It happens every year,” he said.

Sindh is already embroiled in a controversy with the federal government over nomination of a federal member from Sindh. The federal water resource minister has refused to accommodate two members from Sindh in Irsa whereas Sindh said that in line with an executive order of Gen Pervez Musharraf that had been given legal cover in 17th Amendment the federal member was also to be appointed from Sindh.

A.G.N. Abbasi-led Technical Committee on Water Resources — formed by Gen Musharraf — had also questioned criteria of operation of link canals (Chashma-Jhelum and Taunsa-Panjanad) and Mangla Dam’s filling. The report said that water was stored in Mangla during shortage periods and spilled over/wasted in periods when it is surplus. “Stored water in Mangla is not fully utilised in the subsequent Rabi season in many years. This is highly regrettable,” said an excerpt from the report.

WORK ON 496MW HYDEL PROJECT SOON

By RECORDER REPORT on October 23, 2019

Korean Hydro & Nuclear Power, a public sector South Korean energy company will start work on 496MW Spot Gah Hydel Power Project under the Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode soon.

The provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Korean company has already signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The completion of the project on one hand will bring investment to the tune of millions of rupees and on the other hand will generate new opportunities of employment. It will also generate cheap electricity to help bring the country out of the prevailing energy crisis.

In this connection, Adviser to CM on Energy and Power, Himayatullah Khan presided over a high-level meeting with a delegation headed by the Senior Manager Korea Hydro & Nuclear Power Company, Choi Hyun Joon here on Tuesday. Besides, Secretary Energy, Mohammad Zubair Khan, Additional Secretary Energy, Zafarul Islam Khattak, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organization (PEDO), Zahid Akhtar and Chief Planning Officer (CPO), Zainullah Shah.

The meeting was told that last year Spot Gah, Hydro Power Project had signed a MoU for starting work on the energy project under the public-private partnership. In that project, the share of private sector is 74% while Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will invest 25% and only 1% will be invested by the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA). However, the feasibility and design of the project will be updated before the launching of practical work. Talking to the delegation, the Secretary Energy and Power, Mohammad Zubair Khan welcomed the starting of work by the Korean company on the hydel power project in Kohistan. However, he said that starting formal work; suggestions will be prepared in connections with signing formal agreement and government level decision.

On this occasion, the Adviser on Energy and Power, Himyatullah Khan told that the project will be completed within a period of five years that would be first-ever big hydel power project to be completed under the public-private partnership mode. The project will earn a receipt of Rs 3 billion per annum for the province.

He assured the Korean delegation that a proposal regarding beginning of work on the project will be presented to the Chief Minister in next few days that would be followed by launching practical work.

<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/10/23/536924/korean-company-to-begin-work-on-496mw-hydel-project-soon/>

‘INDUS SECOND MOST PLASTIC-POLLUTED RIVER IN THE WORLD’

Staff Reporter Updated October 24, 2019 **KARACHI:** While Pakistan’s plastic manufacturing industry is thriving at an average annual growth rate of 15 per cent, campaigns aimed at making countries and oceans plastic-free are gaining strength across the world.

An estimated 624,200 tonnes of plastic is being produced annually in Pakistan, home to some 6, 000 plastic products’ manufacturers. The Indus River contributes 164,332 tonnes of plastic waste (to the sea) annually.

These points were raised at a seminar titled ‘An approach to the solution of plastic pollution’, which was organised on Wednesday in memory of Prof Mustafa Shameel by the Office of Research, Innovation and Commercialization at Karachi University (KU).

Highlighting the hazards of plastic, Dr Anjum Nawab, assistant professor at the KU’s department of food science and technology, said major chemicals used in the manufacturing of plastic were highly toxic and cannot be digested by the earth even in centuries, which was why it posed a serious threat to living beings of all species on earth.

Toxic chemicals contained in plastic, according to her, cause neurological problems, cancer, birth defects, hormonal changes, gastric ulcer, thyroid problems and cardiovascular diseases.

To address plastic pollution, she suggested the strategy of reducing (the use of) and reusing (non-toxic plastic containers) plastic products.

She also recommended the use of different types of biodegradable plastics.

Sharing some data during her presentation, Shahzeen Pervaiz representing the World Wide Fund for Nature-Pakistan said annually almost eight million tonnes of plastic entered oceans globally, which meant plastic accounted for 60 to 80 per cent of marine garbage.

“The Indus River is the second most polluted river with plastic in the world while the first, third and fourth polluted rivers belong to China. The Nile River in Africa is fifth in this list,” she said.

According to her, the PET (polyethylene terephthalate) plastic widely used for packing food, beverages, especially soft drinks, juices and water, is not biodegradable and contaminates waterways and causes death of marine animals when they ingest it.

She also spoke about the campaign launched by UN Environment (UNEP) and its partners working closely with African governments to establish policies and create programmes that were geared towards a plastic-free continent. In 2017 UNEP launched CleanSeas, with the aim to engage governments, the general public, civil society and the private sector in the fight against marine plastic litter, she pointed out.

Acting KU Vice Chancellor Prof Khalid Mahmood Iraqi talked about the role society could play in tackling plastic pollution.

“We must reduce the use of plastic to zero and adopt alternate means. People should cooperate with authorities to promote plastic-free practices,” he said.

Dr Hina Shehnaz, an assistant professor at the department of environmental sciences at Sindh Madressatul Islam University and ORIC director Prof Alyia Rehman also spoke.

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1512547/indus-second-most-plastic-polluted-river-in-the-world>

INDUS WATERS TREATY: PAKISTAN TO FIGHT ITS CASE AT PROPER FORUM: FO

By ALI HUSSAIN on October 24, 2019

Foreign Office Wednesday said Pakistan will fight its case at an appropriate forum in light of its rights under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) if India proceeds with its plan to stop the country's waters.

Foreign Office spokesperson Dr Mohammad Faisal told during his weekly media briefing that the IWT between India and Pakistan was facilitated by World Bank.

“We are exercising all rights provided in the agreement. In case, India takes any steps that violate the Treaty, Pakistan will exercise all options available in the Treaty to counter Indian moves,” he warned.

Modi last week threatened to stop Pakistan's water by diverting it to Haryana, adding that he has already started work on it. Quoting Modi's speech, he said “For 70 years, water that belonged to Haryana farmers and to us flowed to Pakistan... But this Modi will stop that water and bring it to your house. I have already started working on it. The water belongs to India and farmers of Haryana. That is why Modi is fighting this for you.”

To a question, he said Pakistan will participate in quadrilateral peace process, involving China, Afghanistan and Russia, on the Afghan peace process to be held

He said Pakistan has been a part of all efforts and processes to discuss and facilitate peace and reconciliation efforts in Afghanistan.

He said Pakistan's role is particularly noteworthy in crystallizing international convergence for a peaceful solution in Afghanistan.

Pakistan had participated in the first round of four-party talks in Beijing July last, he said, adding that the next round is being held in Moscow at an opportune moment, as it would provide an important opportunity to review the currently stalled peace process.

He said Pakistani side will be represented by additional secretary, Afghanistan and West Asia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in the meeting.

“Pakistan will continue its endeavors through wholehearted support as its part of shared responsibility, for making the international peace efforts successful in Afghanistan,” the spokesperson added.

The Moscow meeting will be followed by another round of intra-Afghan dialogue in Beijing being hosted by China on Oct 28 and 29. A 25-member Afghan delegation led by the country's vice president will participate in the dialogue in which Taliban delegation led by Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar will also participate.

About Kartarpur Corridor, Dr Faisal said Pakistan and India are likely to sign agreement on Kartarpur Corridor today (Thursday).

“As of now, Pakistan and India would sign the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor on Thursday (today). We are fully ready to functionalise the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor on our side,” he said, adding that details of the agreement will be shared with the media once signed.

He further said Sikh Yatris will be permitted to visit the Gurdawara Kartarpur Sahib from morning till evening, adding that specific details about the timings, etc, would be released after signing of the agreement.

“Currently, we are in the process of devising a mechanism to charge \$20 per visitor per visit, as service charges,” he added.

About the visit of the foreign diplomats given to the Line of Control (LoC) on Tuesday, he said that the diplomats based in Islamabad were given a visit to the LoC, especially to town of Jurra, which took the major brunt of Indian artillery and fire.

He said that diplomatic corps and the media witnessed that many shops have been completely burnt. The fire started at 10pm on Sunday, Oct 20 and continued till 4am of next day. Resultantly, more than 25 houses were destroyed and many others were damaged, he added.

He told that the diplomats and media personnel including the international media freely interacted with the residents of the area and also filmed the situation on the ground.

He said the Indian Charge d'affaires was also extended an invitation on 20th Oct and asked him to share details, including the longitude and latitude of the alleged locations or any other evidence regarding the Indian army chief's claims and also invited him to accompany other diplomats to visit the alleged 'launch pad' area.

“However, we did not receive any response from the Indian side so far. We wanted that the India should have visited the area pointed out by their army chief so that this tendency of allegations should be stopped,” he added.

He further said the real issue is to resolve the Jammu and Kashmir dispute as per the resolutions of the UNSC and the will of the Kashmiri people. “Until and unless this issue is resolved, peace and stability in South Asia will remain elusive,” he added.

The spokesperson said Pakistan's position on Kashmir is very clear and unchanged. He said the resolution of this dispute lies in the aspirations of the Kashmiri people as per the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. Condemning Indian blatant human rights violations in Occupied Kashmir, he said the humanitarian nightmare in the held valley is worsening with continued military lockdown and complete communications blockade.

FO spokesperson said eight million people in occupied Kashmir remain cut off from the rest of the world. He said that these inhumane and unilateral actions by India are continuing in spite of international condemnation.

To a question about Malaysian President Mahathir Mohamed's stance on Kashmir dispute, the spokesperson said Pakistan is proud of its Malaysian brothers and sisters.

Responding another query, he reiterated Pakistan's stance saying that affairs of Hong Kong is an internal matter of China. He said Pakistan is committed to One China policy.

He said Pakistan believes the measures taken by China and Hong Kong are aimed at safeguarding national sovereignty and Hong Kong's stability and prosperity.

<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/10/24/537279/indus-waters-treaty-pakistan-to-fight-its-case-at-proper-forum-fo/>

NUST HOLDS HIGH-LEVEL ROUNDTABLE ON WATER

By RECORDER REPORT on October 26, 2019

NUST Institute of Policy Studies (NIPS), one of the leading university-based think tanks of Pakistan, organised a high-level roundtable, “Managing the Waters: Appraising the Problems & Ways Forward,”. Besides policy researchers, academics and students, the roundtable was attended by eminent personalities and experts from Balochistan, Punjab and Sindh. It dealt at length with the problems and challenges associated with national water resources development, management and governance.

In his opening remarks, Lieutenant-General Naweed Zaman (Retd), Rector NUST & Patron NIPS, stated that the inefficient use of water across the board had, inter alia, caused Pakistan to become a severely water-stressed country. He said the current unsustainable patterns of national water use, if not revised radically, could make Pakistan water-scarce in future.

He advised that a water-saving approach is required to be promoted at all levels of society. The Rector also highlighted the contribution of NUST to awareness-raising through regular community and youth initiatives aimed at efficient water consumption by individuals and households.

Engr Suleman Najib Khan, a noted water expert, in his meticulously researched presentation, exposed India's blatant water aggression as well as the flawed nature of the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty which, in his estimation, was never meant to be a Pakistan-friendly treaty.

He further said that Pakistan should aggressively highlight the issue on international platforms.

Dr Muhammad Ashraf, Chairman Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR), presented the problems of Pakistan's inland water resources.

He said Pakistan had the fourth largest groundwater resources in the world after India, the US, and China but they were not the best managed. He maintained that the construction of small and medium dams was needed along with large dams, adding there was a further need to increase water use efficiency by at least 30 percent by producing more crop per drop through use of new technologies.-PR

<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/10/26/538095/nust-holds-high-level-roundtable-on-water/>

CM MEETS CHINESE DELEGATION TO DISCUSS CITY'S WATER WOES

By Our Correspondent Published: October 26, 2019

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said that if Karachi moves [in terms of the economy], the whole country moves, therefore, Karachi has to develop faster.

Addressing an eight-member delegation of a Chinese state-owned company, Energy China, which called on him at CM House on Friday, Shah said that he was making all efforts to make Karachi livable again and to restore peace and prosperity by utilising local resources and the expertise of donor agencies as well as their resources.

The delegation, led by Energy China President Luo Bixiong, met with the CM to discuss ways to work with the Sindh government in Karachi's water sector.

The meeting discussed the K-IV project which has been temporarily halted to make changes in its design. "The national engineering firm, Nespac, is working on its design and as soon as it is finalised work would begin," said Shah.

The CM pointed out that Karachi is a city of 17 million people and its water requirement has been estimated at 1,200 million gallons per day (MGD) but it has been receiving only 500MGD. "We are working on different options to increase the bulk water supply to the city so that its [Karachi's] domestic and industrial requirements can be met," said Shah.

He informed the Chinese delegation that the Sindh government was working with the Frontier Works Organisation (FWO) on phase-I of the K-IV project. The Chinese firm expressed interest to work in phase-II and III of the project. The delegation proposed that the K-IV project could be included in the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects if its cost was too high.

The Hub River source conveyance system was said to have its faults and flaws which made its recorded line losses higher than what was deemed acceptable. The Chinese company expressed interest in improving the system from Hub source to Karachi.

At the CM's request, the delegation said they would work out the estimated cost and other details of installing a 100MGD desalination plant in Karachi. Besides, the meeting discussed the possibilities of treatment of Malir River wastewater so it could be used for industrial purposes.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2087335/1-cm-meets-chinese-delegation-discuss-citys-water-woes/>

WASA ALMOST DOUBLES MONTHLY WATER CHARGES

By Qaiser Shirazi Published: October 27, 2019

RAWALPINDI: The Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) has increased monthly water charges for commercial and residential consumers.

The water bills for hotels, ice depots, stores, plazas, cinema houses, laundry services, beauty parlors, barber shops, petrol pumps, service stations, cottage industries and factories have been increased by the agency in a bid to meet its expenses.

According to minutes of a recent meeting held by WASA authority, the revision has been made after a unanimous decision. As per sources, there would be no billing for mosques and other holy sites.

Water rate for residential units up to five marlas has been increased from Rs98 to Rs225 monthly while housing units between five and seven marlas will be charged Rs400 monthly after an increase of Rs160.

Similarly, the residents living in houses between seven and ten marlas will be paying Rs500 after an increase of Rs220 while bills for units between 10 and 15 marlas has been increased to Rs650.

Residential plots between 15 and 20 marlas will be charged Rs800 after an increase of Rs375 while those between 20 and 25 marlas will be charged Rs1,000 onwards from previous Rs625. The residential units sizing between 25 to 30 marlas will pay Rs1,200 instead of Rs688 under water charges while those between 30 marlas up to two kanals will pay Rs1,450 from the previous rate of Rs795.

The residential units over two kanals will pay Rs1,500 monthly instead of Rs833. In Sohan Village, houses up to 10 marlas will be billed Rs150 instead of Rs94 charged earlier while homes with sizes over 10 marla will pay Rs300. Meanwhile, water bills for commercial units have also been hiked under which petrol pumps will be charged Rs15,000 instead of their previous monthly bill of Rs8,829. Likewise, water bill for service stations has been hiked to Rs12,000 monthly from instead of previous charges of Rs7,063.

WASA has increased the water bill for cinema houses to Rs5,000 monthly from previous rate of Rs3,531 while for laundry service providers, the charges have been escalated to Rs10,000 monthly from Rs2,500.

The small barber shops will pay water consuming charges of Rs1,000 monthly while a shop with at least seven workers would have to pay Rs7,000 monthly.

The water charges for crockery, bakery and general shops have been increased from Rs375 to Rs1,500 monthly while big and departmental stores and cash and carry marts will be charged between Rs5,000 to Rs10,000 depending on their consumption.

The water charges for soda and bottle making factories have been hiked to Rs6,000 from Rs2,119.

In the categories of industries, cottage industry will pay Rs1,000 monthly while for a medium-sized industry, the charges have been set as Rs1,500.

The monthly water charges for tent shops will vary between Rs1,000 to Rs3,000 while restaurants would pay up to Rs5,000 according to their category.

The water charges for wedding halls and marquees would vary according to the size of their staff. An establishment with a staff of 20 people would pay Rs1,000 while Rs3,000 would be charged from those with 60 member staff. For staff exceeding 60 people, the water charges have been fixed at Rs5,000.

Further, the private schools have also been divided into eight categories which will be charged between Rs800 – Rs3,000 monthly.

The same pattern will be followed for the hospitals which will be charged from Rs500 to highest Rs15,000, according to the category they fall in.

The charges for public toilets have climbed to Rs1,000 from Rs883 while the water bill for ice factories has been increased from Rs5,298 to Rs7,000 monthly.

The authority will start preparation of water bills according to new rates after approval of Punjab Chief Minister (CM) Usman Buzdar. The decision is expected to bring more difficulties for people who are already suffering from inflation.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2087959/1-wasa-almost-doubles-monthly-water-charges/>

PUNJAB GOVT DETERMINED TO PROVIDE CLEAN WATER

By Our Correspondent Published: October 27, 2019

LAHORE: Punjab Governor Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar has reiterated his government's resolve to provide safe and clean drinking water to entire population of Punjab. At the same time, he acknowledged that 80% of the province's population is consuming unsafe drinking water

Presiding over a meeting of Punjab Aab-e-Pak Authority (PAA), Sarwar, who had been appointed as patron-in-chief of the authority through the Act of Parliament, said the body had been formed to provide clean drinking water to the masses. "As per promise, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government is committed to provide clean drinking water to masses during next four to five years."

He indicated that private companies who are selling drinking water in Punjab will be issued a licence after investigation and inquiry by the PAA. A record of all the government and private filtration plants in Punjab is being compiled to check the quality of water being provided by them.

The meeting reviewed progress of ongoing spadework being completed by the newly constituted authority which aims to provide clean drinking water to 110 million people. In partnership with the private sector, the authority will install water filtration plants in different neighbourhoods, schools, hospitals, jails and other public places.

Sarwar, who coined the idea of installing water filtration plants for provision of clean drinking water to masses across Punjab, said that 80% of the province's population is consuming unsafe drinking water. "Over 1.1 million people die annually due to water borne diseases, he highlighted. The governor added around 0.2 million children are being reported to be taken to public hospitals due to water borne diseases. "Nearly half of the patients in public hospitals are being admitted due to waterborne diseases," he lamented.

He regretted the fact that many died every year by consuming polluted water, while others were affected by hepatitis and different fatal waterborne diseases.

The idea of setting up filtration plants to provide safe drinking water to masses across the province was floated by Sarwar himself. He had given a detailed presentation to Prime Minister Imran Khan when he visited Lahore in November last year.

Last month, the Governor announced names of PAA board of governors. He nominated General (Retd) Ahmad Nawaz Saleem Mela as chairman, while the housing and public health secretary has been appointed as chief executive officer of the authority. Gohar Ijaz had been nominated as head of PAA Central Punjab and would also head the human resource (HR) department. At the same time, Mian Talat Mahmood would head the finance committee and Rabia Zia would take charge of North Punjab Authority and social media.

South Punjab Aab-e-Pak Authority would be headed by Faisal Mukhtar, while Khurram Mukhtar would take charge of the procurement committee. All these office holders will also assume responsibility of board members of the Punjab PAA. Along with the aforementioned members, Local Government Secretary Syed Waseem Raza, Planning and Development Secretary Muhammad Ramzan, Finance Secretary Abdullah Khan Sumbal, and Housing and Public Department Secretary Naseem Sadiq will also be board members of the authority.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2087859/1-punjab-govt-determined-provide-clean-water/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM OCT 28th TO NOV 03rd 2019

PAK WATER & ENERGY EXPO TO BEGIN ON NOVEMBER 5

By RECORDER REPORT on October 31, 2019

Over 60 companies from USA, France, Germany, Turkey, China, Taiwan, and Malaysia and within Pakistan will exhibit their latest technology and products at more than 100 stalls during fourth Pak Water & Energy Expo (PWE), exhibition & conference scheduled to be held from 5-7th November, 2019 at Expo Centre Karachi.

It is fourth edition and being held third time in Karachi. Last exhibition was held in Lahore and had tremendous response from the exhibitors and was well-attended by a large number of visitors from the industries, said Kamran Abbasi, Director Prime Event Management.

As part of this event, Mehran Engineering University will conduct a one-day conference on 6th November in collaboration with the US Pakistan Centre of Advanced Studies in Water.

Pak Water and Energy Expo, 2019 is the only and proactive platform for water and energy industry. This expo offers all exciting business opportunities to exhibitors to showcase their products and technologies as well as trade visitors from water and energy industry to interact under one roof.

Kamran Abbasi said that exhibitors will participate from various industries like water technologies, waste water solutions, power generation, transmission and distribution, renewable energy, sustainability and green engineering, automation and instrumentation etc.

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<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/10/31/539716/pak-water-energy-expo-to-begin-on-november-5/>

WATER WORTH \$2BN GOES DOWN THE DRAIN ANNUALLY

RECORDER REPORT October 31, 2019

LAHORE: 64 per cent of Pakistanis are deprived of safe and clean drinking water while the country wastes \$2 billion worth of water in the sea every year.

Per capita surface water availability has declined from 5,260 cubic meters per year in 1951 to around 1,000 cubic meters in 2016. The availability is predicted to drop to about 860 cubic meters by 2025 and making Pakistan a water scarce country.

This was observed at the fourth Annual Pakistan Water Stewardship Network (PWSN) meeting held here on Wednesday. Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) hosted the meeting in collaboration with WWF-Pakistan, Nestle Pakistan and Planning and Development Department (P&D), government of Punjab in Lahore.

This year's network meeting objectives were to ensure multi-stakeholder ownership for the Water Stewardship Strategy in Pakistan along with the creation of a dedicated team of water stewards who will work towards scaling up AWS in Pakistan. Fundamentally, water remains a global issue with local context indicating that it is crucial to involve local experts, networks, and stakeholders whose engagement through the PWSN meeting will steer water stewardship in Pakistan. Usually, in the water sector debate, the private sector is missing but through AWS it gives all major stakeholders to sit at one place and discuss their similar water challenges.

Adrian Sym, Chief Executive, AWS said, "Each time I visit Pakistan I am impressed by the energy and commitment to address key water challenges. This commitment has never been needed more, and the PWSN meeting has the opportunity to be a vehicle to bring together different perspectives and drive water use that meets the diversity of needs for people and nature. The leadership is shown through PWSN also gives me great encouragement and fuel to ensure that our members and partners in other countries follow the example being set in Pakistan."

Sohail Ali Naqvi, Manager Freshwater, WWF-Pakistan said, "Water stewardship has become a necessity for Pakistan, considering daily water availability, and implementing the Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) is not a choice any more. WWF-Pakistan aims to promote environmental conservation and efficient use of natural resources. Through the AWS standard, WWF-Pakistan is helping and supporting the private sector to implement responsible practices that can improve water efficiency, reduces water usage, and address shared water challenges for better basin governance, consequently benefiting people and nature."

Aatekah Mir Khan, Manager Public Affairs, Nestlé Pakistan said, "Nestle Pakistan is proud to be the first company in Pakistan to implement the AWS standard at our sites.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2019/10/31/16-page/808132-news.html>

WB APPROVES FUNDING FOR KARACHI WATER AND MOBILITY PROJECTS

Habib Khan Ghori November 02, 2019

KARACHI: The World Bank on Friday gave approval to \$1.93 billion new projects of the Sindh government, including rehabilitation of Guddu and Sukkur barrages, and revamping of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board. Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah got this approval during a meeting with a World Bank team led by Bank president David Malpass while discussing \$2.77bn ongoing projects here at CM House.

The chief minister said that on their request the World Bank undertook a Karachi Diagnostic Study in 2016 leading to Karachi Transformation Strategy which developed a holistic plan to revitalise the city.

"This plan has helped roll out dedicated reforms and investments in the water and sanitation; urban transport system; and local government governance. These investments having bearing on business environment are expected to impact ease of doing business which is bound to make Karachi the preferred choice of businesses," Mr Shah said.

Referring to the newly signed \$230 million 'Competitive and Liveable City of Karachi' project, Mr Shah said the provincial government planned to initiate local government institutional reforms in all six DMCs and the KMC. This funding for improving the urban and municipal infrastructure at DMC level is expected to upgrade liveability and simultaneously improve the governance of local government institutions.

He said that Karachi Water Services Improvement Project is a \$1.6bn programme to be rolled out in three phases. Its first phase of \$100m has been approved. This envisages institutional reform of the KWSB; strengthening its HR; technical capacity and improving its planning.

Discussing way forward under Phase 2 of Karachi Water Services Improvement Project, Mr Shah said the Sindh government planned to focus on major investment priorities such as bulk water supply system for Karachi from the Indus and from Hub Dam; improvement in water and sanitation network and augmentation works; Malir basin sewerage conveyance and filtration plants.

“We want to explore possibility of using Phase 1 financing kept for priority works to be used for bulk water supply system from Keenjhar resource,” he said. It was agreed in the meeting.

Discussing the under-execution \$98m Karachi Neighbourhood Improvement Project pertaining to improving urban infrastructure and creating greater public spaces, the chief minister said it would guide Sindh in rolling out reforms and investments for local governments.

The World Bank approved \$381m Karachi Urban Mobility Project and directed the Sindh government to start its implementation.

The chief minister said that combined with Red line BRT, Green Line, Orange Line, and Karachi Circular Railway, the mass transit system would provide Karachi seamless connectivity between residential districts, business districts, industrial estates, and ports.

\$328m financing for Sukkur, Guddu barrages approved

The chief minister through a presentation highlighted the importance of rehabilitation of the Sukkur Barrage for the country, which is considered lifeline of the rural economy and similarly Guddu Barrage, which is also important for agro-economy of the province.

He said that there was a proposal to construct a new barrage at Sukkur but it would be a huge project in terms financial implication. As such the provincial government had decided to rehabilitate the Sukkur and Guddu barrages.

The WB team agreed to finance \$328m for rehabilitation of both the barrages.

Published in Dawn, November 2nd, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1514311/wb-approves-funding-for-karachi-water-and-mobility-projects>

NESPAK GETS ADB-FUNDED BALOCHISTAN’S WATER SECTOR PROJECT

By RECORDER REPORT on November 7, 2019

National Engineering Services Pakistan (NESPAK) Private Limited has won project design, construction supervision and implementation support of the ADB-funded Balochistan Water Resources Development Sector Project (BWRDSP) through national competitive bidding; this was stated by Dr. Tahir Masood, Managing Director NESPAK here on Wednesday.

The project will support implementation of integrated water resources management policy of the Government of Balochistan. The policy provides a comprehensive framework for the province to address the issues of water management and development in the context of basin approach, with water harvesting, and groundwater recharging as an integral part of watershed management. The proposed project will address the issues of water management and will enhance agricultural production by construction of a dam (Siri Toi Dam) and rehabilitation/extension of 10 irrigation schemes in Zhob and Mula river basins.

The proposed project will construct and improve irrigation land of about 16,592 hectares and benefit about 42,900 farmers in the Balochistan province. The duration of the project is five years.

Meanwhile, a NESPAK-8.2 OZI JV was awarded NTDC's contract for “Solar Water Pumping in Balochistan – A Feasibility Study.” As an initiative towards energy and agricultural sectors reforms in Balochistan, NTDC on behalf of Ministry of Energy (Power Division) has entrusted NESPAK led JV with the task to conduct a comprehensive feasibility study for Solarization of 10,000 tube wells located in various Districts of Balochistan. The 5-month study will encompass a number of issues related to Balochistan endangering the sustainability of its eco-system.

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<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/11/07/542272/nepak-gets-adb-funded-balochistans-water-sector-project/>

SINDH GOVERNMENT ACCUSES IRSA OF DISCRIMINATION

By MUSHTAQ GHUMMAN on November 7, 2019

Sindh government on Wednesday hurled serious charges of discrimination against Indus River System Authority (Irsa) in water distribution and urged withdrawal of No Objection Certificate (NOC) of the proposed 25MW Hydropower Project on Chashma Jehlum Link Canal.

Presided over by Nawab Yousuf Talpur, the National Assembly Standing Committee on Water Resources also expressed displeasure at the non issuance of production orders of Asif Ali Zardari and Khawaja Saad Rafique.

Giving the viewpoint of Sindh government on 25MW hydropower project, Special Secretary Irrigation, Aslam Ansari said that issuance of NOC by Irsa was illegal. He argued that setting of hydropower project at Chashma Jehlum Link Canal was to use backdoor to operate CJ link. He said, if 10,000 cusecs water is released to operate this plant, 50 percent of the water will be wasted before reaching Sindh.

He said, in the concluding para of NOC, Irsa says that it does not commit water released exclusively for power generation in CJ Link Canal which implies that the regulator is indicating that it cannot release water in CJ Link Canal over and above whatever water is already being released for 15 days or 100 days, questioning how the feasibility of the project would be conceived.

He said, according to para fourteen of the Irsa Act, issuance of NOC for the project was the prerogative of provincial government.

"Irsa does not have the jurisdiction of issuing any such NOC. First NOC should come from the provinces. The water regulator can only decide on what falls under Irsa Accord with majority vote on all issues," he added.

According to the Irsa Act, the role of Irsa is only to review rivers and water operational matters.

He said, the Sindh government has had reservations from the beginning as the three-tier formula is the replacement of Water Accord 1991. He said no criterion for operation of CJ Link Canal has been formulated so far by Irsa.

"When we raise objections, we are asked to approach the Council of Common Interests (CCI)," he said, adding that such a stance is akin to saying that we will engage in terrorism and if you have any objection you should approach anti-terrorism court or police station. This approach is not right."

Chairman Standing Committee stated that this project also came under discussion a few years ago. However, later the proposal was dropped. He also complained that Irsa is taking decisions on major vote i.e. 4/1 which is unfair. Special Secretary Irrigation Sindh further argued that Irsa always seeks Chief Minister Sindh's consent prior to opening the CJ Link Canal but for issuance of NOC hydropower project he was not taken on board.

The representative of Punjab government informed the committee that so far Irsa has issued NOC for the project, acquisition of land and feasibility study will come at a later stage. Chairman Irsa justified the issuance of NOC.

However, Standing Committee directed Irsa and Sindh government's representative to sit together and deliberate on this issue and submit a report to the committee.

The committee also discussed the issue of non production orders of former President Asif Ali Zardari and Khawaja Saad Rafique. Secretary Committee stated that he processed the file in the light of production orders signed by the Chairman but he has not received the file from the Secretary Assembly. However, confusion was evident in identifying the relevant Secretary – Secretary National Assembly or Secretary Committee.

Khawaja Asif said that it was the prerogative of the Chairman of the Standing Committee to issue productions orders of any member of the committee.

Ali Nawaz Awan suggested that National Assembly's Law section should be consulted to sort out confusion on the word Secretary.

According to official statement, Irsa has the view that Indus river system was apportioned through Water Accord 1991 and its para 14 (d) provide the freedom to the stakeholders to modify system-wise and period wise uses within their allocations so the NOC in question was issued accordingly under the Irsa Act. However, he suggested that aggrieved party has all right within the section 8(3) of Irsa Act to approach the Council of Common Interest (CCI) against the decision of Irsa. The Secretary M/o Water Resources informed the Committee that as the NOC was issued by Irsa under the Irsa Act, so the recommendation of the committee to cancel the NOC is not based on the facts.

The Committee unanimously suggested that the Council of Common Interests (CCI) may be called at the earliest to discuss the said issue and till such date the further processing of the project in question may be stopped as the Sindh Assembly has also passed the unanimous resolution on the disputed issue. The Committee also suggested that Irsa may consult the Government of Sindh on the disputed matter of NOC. The Committee while discussing the agenda

item iv regarding small and medium dam under construction and planning stage for twin city was deferred with the view that the matter may be placed before the sub-committee already appointed by the Standing Committee on Water Resources during its last meeting by enhancing the ToRs i.e i) Non release of outstanding operations and maintenance (O&M) Charges by the Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB), Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) and Water and Sanitation Agency Rawalpindi (WASA) in respect of Metropolitan Water Supply Project, Khanpur. ii) Proposed small and medium dam (under construction and at planning stage) for Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

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<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/11/07/542259/sindh-government-accuses-irsa-of-discrimination/>

INDIA PURSUING ‘WATER OFFENSIVE’ AGAINST PAKISTAN

By Muhammad Ilyas Published: November 7, 2019

LAHORE: With Pakistan-India ties at their lowest ebb due to the Narendra Modi government’s unilateral decision to strip Occupied Kashmir’s special status, New Delhi seems to be pursuing a ‘water offensive’ against Islamabad.

A top Indus Water Commission official warned that Indian authorities are pressing ahead full steam with projects on the Indus River and its tributaries that pose a serious threat to Pakistan’s water security and could prevent the country from receiving its due share. He pointed out that New Delhi had so far responded with a cold shoulder to several requests for a joint survey of the aforementioned schemes.

“We have written seven letters to our Indian counterparts since 2014 asking to be allowed to inspect these projects, particularly the new reservoirs New Delhi is building,” Additional Indus Water Commissioner Sheraz Memon told The Express Tribune. “As usual, all we have gotten in return is silence.”

According to Memon, there are as many as six dams India is currently building on the Chenab River that Pakistan has not been taken into confidence over. “The projects we have not been allowed to visit include the Pakal Dul and Ratle dams being built on the Chenab River,” he said. “We have also not been allowed to inspect the Wular Barrage, being built on Jhelum River.

“And then there is Kishanganga, of course. Not only has India not let us inspect it, it has not shared the design details either. We have not been provided design details for Ratle Dam as well,” he added.

“Memon revealed that officials from Pakistan’s Indus Water Commission did hold two-day talks with their Indian counterparts in August. “However, Indian officials had a negative attitude throughout the moot and ultimately, they deviated from the agenda,” he said.

“Indian officials did inform us about the floodwater discharge in the Sutlej River from their side in the meeting, but this information was two months too late by that time. Such an attitude on India’s part is criminal.”

Speaking about the Kishanganga Dam issue, Memon said Pakistan approached World Bank as a last resort after India ignored several requests for the sharing of design details. “The World Bank, as we know, advised us to accept the offer for a neutral expert. Although New Delhi endorsed this option at first, it ultimately backed away from it. Till now, it has held no talks with us on the matter,” he added.

Speaking to The Express Tribune, Barrister Ali Zafar said he pursued the matter fervently during his tenure as information minister. “I compiled a detail report on the Kishanganga issue and also spoke with World Bank officials on the appointing of a neutral expert to review Indian projects on the Indus River and its tributaries,” he said.

“We also wrote to Indian authorities several times, but they have been persistently quiet on these issues,” he added. Going forward, he urged the government to approach the World Bank and United Nations Commission on Human Rights to raise the profile of Pakistan’s water concerns globally.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, some Indus Water Commission officials said at least part of Pakistan’s present predicament was because of the body’s reluctance to obtain the services of professionals in the field. According to them, a positive step currently underway is to move the Indus Water Commission’s headquarters from Lahore to Islamabad so that it can engage with diplomatic circles better.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2095116/1-india-pursuing-water-offensive-pakistan/>

NOVEMBER, 2019

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM NOV 04th TO NOV 10th 2019

DIAMER BHASHA, MOHMAND DAMS' CONSTRUCTION TO START SOON: WAPDA CHIEF

By RECORDER REPORT on November 6, 2019

The Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) Chairman Lt-Gen Muzammil Hussain (retd) said that Wapda is committed to constructing Mohmand and Diamer Basha dams as early as possible. Expressing satisfaction over the pace of development on Mohmand Dam, he said that construction activities on the project have gained momentum in the wake of its ground-breaking by the prime minister in May this year. He further said that evaluation of proposal for consultancy services as well as bids for award of Diamer Basha Dam civil works are at an advanced stage. Following award of consultancy services and civil works, construction on Diamer Basha Dam is likely to start in next three to four months. While thanking the ICDBMD for the support, the chairman said that the Dams Committee has been tremendously contributing towards implementation of the vital projects of Diamer Basha and Mohmand dams.

The Implementation Committee on Diamer Basha, Mohmand Dams (ICDBMD) on Tuesday presided over a meeting to discuss various matters relating to land acquisition and resettlement, procurement and financing of both projects. ICDBMD sub-committees on land acquisition, finance and procurement for Diamer Basha and Mohmand Dams made their presentations on the respective issues during the meeting.

Gilgit Baltistan (GB) senior Member Board of Revenue, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Secretary Board of Revenue, Deputy Secretary (Budget) Finance Division, Deputy Secretary (Finance), Adviser (Development Budget) Ministry of Planning, Senior Joint Secretary (EAD), Joint Secretary (Water) Ministry of Water Resources, Deputy Secretary PM Office, Commandant Mohmand Riffle, Commissioner Hazara Division, Commissioner Diamer Astore Division, Deputy Commissioners Mohmand, Bajaur, Charsadda, Upper Kohistan and Chilas, Public Procurement Regularity Authority (PPRA) representative, Member (Finance) Wapda, Adviser (Projects) Wapda, GM (Land Acquisition and Resettlement) Wapda, GM (Diamer Basha Dam Project), GM/PD (Mohmand Dam), GM (Finance) Power and others attended the meeting.

Later, the sub-committee on Land Acquisition for Mohmand Dam briefed the meeting that the priority land for the project has already been acquired, while the process for acquisition of remaining land, being made in a phased manner, is expected to be completed in couple of months. The sub-committee on Land Acquisition for Diamer Basha Dam apprised the meeting that more than 32,000 acres of land for the project has been acquired so far. The meeting was further briefed that confidence building measures (CBMs) worth Rs 14 billion as social and environmental safeguard are being implemented for health, education, energy and infrastructure development in the project area. The sub-committee on Procurement made a detailed deliberation about the procurement processes for Mohmand and Diamer Basha Dams, while the sub-committee on Finance informed the meeting of the financial models for both projects with lesser reliance on public exchequer and more focus on alternate financing strategies including indigenous resources and commercial financing.

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<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/11/06/541899/diamer-bhasha-mohmand-dams-construction-to-start-soon-wapda-chief/>

PTI GOVERNMENT, TOO, INSENSITIVE TO WATER ISSUE ?

By MUSHTAQ GHUMMAN on November 10, 2019

The incumbent government, like its predecessors, continues to be insensitive to water scarcity in the country as neither new reservoirs are being planned on Indus nor sufficient progress has been witnessed in Diamer Bhasha despite the fact that storage capacity of Tarbela reservoirs has depleted by 38 percent (by 3.6 MAF) – to 6 MAF from 9.6 MAF. The government allocated Rs 70.348 billion for water sector in the federal budget 2019-20 of which Rs 20 billion has been earmarked for Diamer Bhasha and Rs 15 billion for Mohmand Dam. Of Rs 70 billion, Rs 51 billion has been allocated to Wapda whereas Rs 19 billion will be spent by provinces.

Well-informed sources told Business Recorder that the government has allocated about Rs 20 billion to procure land for Diamer Bhasha Dam, work on which has been painfully slow due to financing constraints. The World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and China have already refused to be part of the project due to the disputed Northern areas. The cost of Bhasha Dam with gross storage capacity of 8.1 MAF has increased to \$16 billion from \$12 billion. PC-I for Diamer Bhasha Dam's water reservoir was estimated at Rs 474 billion and was approved by ECNEC on April 17, 2018. Subsequently after the inclusion of 15 MW Tangir HPP, the revised cost of this component of PC-I amounted to Rs 479.686 billion approved by ECNEC on November 14, 2018.

Around \$ 3.5 billion were required for the construction of Mohmand Dam project, the second mega hydropower project, storage capacity of which was 1.293 MAF. Allocation for Mohmand Dam was just Rs 15 billion. However, storage capacity of Mangla reservoir has been enhanced by 1.9 MAF from 5.4 MAF to 7.3 MAF.

An official told BR that Wapda, in its report submitted to Supreme Court has already stated that contract of Diamer Bhasha will be awarded by December 2019.

He said Wapda has gone for international bidding for the project, adding that 14 or 15 companies have submitted bids which are being evaluated. The project will be awarded in accordance with PPRA Rules.

Three large dams constructed in the 1960s and 1970s – the Tarbela on the Indus, the Mangla on the Jhelum, and the Chashma on the Indus – account for most of the built water storage reservoirs in Pakistan.

Designed primarily to supply water for irrigation, the original combined live storage capacity of these dams was 19.4 billion cubic meters (Tarbela, 12 billion cubic meters; Mangla, 7.3 billion cubic meters; and Chashma, 0.87 billion cubic meters).

According to the World Bank, it is commonly believed that Pakistan has inadequate water storage, and that new reservoirs will dramatically enhance water supply. Planned new reservoirs will provide limited additional supply – and of lower reliability. Reservoirs buffer inflow variations to stabilize supply. Existing reservoirs adequately buffer inflow variations between years, although supply shortfalls in Rabi are common. New reservoirs would improve the reliability of Rabi supply. But given the severe environmental degradation of the lower river and delta, partly caused by high water withdrawals, any increase in withdrawals, especially in drier years, must be carefully assessed in terms of additional environmental degradation.

The volume of sediment accumulated in the reservoir is now too large for practical removal. Construction of Diamer Bhasha Dam upstream of Tarbela will create a sediment trap, thus incrementally reducing Diamer Bhasha live storage but significantly slowing the sedimentation rate of Tarbela.

Mangla Dam was enlarged between 2005 and 2009 (at a cost of around \$1 billion) adding an additional 3.6 billion cubic meters of live storage. Due to continued sedimentation, combined live storage is estimated to be around 16 billion cubic meters. Diamer Bhasha Dam, at preliminary construction stage and with an estimated total cost of around \$16 billion, will add 7.9 billion cubic meters of live storage. At projected completion in 2023, total system storage will be around 21 billion cubic meters. The ongoing loss of storage because of sedimentation costs tens of millions of U.S. dollars per year.

According to Ministry of Water Resource, the impact of climate change in intensification of floods, erratic monsoon rain, and droughts are major concerns for Pakistan. Other likely affects on water resources could include: (i) recession/boom of the Himalyan, Karakoram and Hindukush glaciers, threatening water inflows into Indus River System; (ii) increased siltation of dams and reservoirs caused by more frequent and intense floods; (iii) shorter duration of snowfall and its prolonged melting brining drastic changes in mass balances; (iv) increase in the formation of Glacial Lakes Outburst Flood(GLOF); (iv) increased intrusion of saline sea water in the Indus delta adversely affecting coastal agriculture, mangroves and fisheries; (vi) rising temperatures resulting in enhanced heat and water-stress conditions particularly in arid and semi-arid regions, leading to reduced agriculture productivity; and (vii) with rise in temperature as result of climate change, crops will require more water due to excessive evaporate inspiration, cattle consume more water and human consumption would also increase.

The sources said, out of 112 projects, 61 are ongoing and being executed by Wapda whereas 51 schemes are new and developed by provincial governments. The total estimated cost of 112 water sector projects has been calculated at Rs 1.125 trillion. Ministry of Water Resources argues that allocation for water sector projects should be enhanced to Rs 150-200 billion per annum from Rs 70 billion to complete the projects in accordance with timeframe.

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<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/11/10/543145/pti-government-too-insensitive-to-water-issue/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM NOV 11th TO 17th 2019

NAI GAJ DAM PROJECT: WAPDA BLAMES MOPD&R FOR DELAY, COST ESCALATION

By ABDUL RASHEED AZAD on November 16, 2019

Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) has blamed Ministry for Planning, Development and Reforms for causing delay and subsequent cost escalation in Nai Gaj dam project. Senior WADPA officials while briefing the Senate Standing Committee on Planning, Development and Reforms, which held here on Friday under the chairmanship of Senator Shahzeb Durrani, said that Nai Gaj dam project was hit by different controversies from initial stages.

They said that the construction cost in beginning was estimated at Rs 59 billion and the plan was sent to the Ministry of Planning, Development and Reforms for approval which reduced the construction cost to Rs 26 billion but over the years out of Rs 26 billion allocation, the commission has released only Rs 5 billion for the project.

The Senate standing committee discussed the current status of the Nai Gaj dam in Dadu, Sindh, the provincial wise distribution of HEC scholarships and delay in the construction of family suits of Parliament Lodges. The committee also discussed the implementation status of its previous recommendation for supplying clean water to Gwadar and PSDP allocations in this regard. The committee was informed that work on Nai Gaj dam was started in September 2009 but was delayed due to changes in its design and financial problems.

The WAPDA official informed the meeting the contract was awarded in 2013 and the project was supposed to be completed in three years. In 2015 the PC-I of the project was revised but the work was not started. The meeting was told that in 2018 once again the PC-1 was revised.

The committee was informed that WAPDA included additional components such as a power house, project colony, access roads, cost of spillways and pipeline to the Manchar Lake, increasing the cost of completion of the dam to Rs 46.73 billion.

Official of the Planning Ministry informed that work has been stopped on the project since 2018. The PC-1 will be submitted for approval by the Executive Committee of National Economic Council (ECNEC). It was further informed that out of 7,507 acres of land for the project, the government of Sindh has given only 303 acres of land. Sindh is also not ready to pay its 50 percent share of the project. The chairman committee asked him to stop talking and find a solution for the problems.

Senator Rukhsana Zubairi said that action should be taken against those who have caused delay in the project. Senator Rana Maqbool Ahmad said when funds are not available, new projects should not be started.

Agha Shahzeb Durrani showed his displeasure over delay in providing the monitoring report of the project. He said that eight months ago the committee had issued clear instruction that Planning Ministry and WAPDA should dispatch their monitoring teams to the Nai Gaj and provide report to the committee. However the directives were not implemented, he added.

The matter of 300 scholarships in 50 different sectors was also discussed and the chairman of the committee said that no progress was made on the issue. He said that the committee had recommended these scholarships for women to make them more powerful. The officials of the HEC said that they will provide detailed report in this regard in the upcoming meeting.

The committee was also briefed about the revised renewable energy policy 2019 and it was informed that it will be presented during the next cabinet meeting.

On the issue of clean drinking water to Gwadar, the committee was informed the project was underway and 45 percent work has been completed. The committee was informed that the Planning Commission has not released any funds during the first quarter of 2019.

The committee was informed that during the last 17 years, a total of 243,731 scholarships have been granted to Master, MPhil and PhD students.

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<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/11/16/544878/nai-gaj-dam-project-wapda-blames-mopdr-for-delay-cost-escalation/>

COMMISSIONER ASSURES WATER SUPPLY

OUR CORRESPONDENT NOVEMBER 16, 2019

QUETTA. Quetta Commissioner Usman Ali Khan noted inactive tube wells in the district and vowed to ensure speedy measures to activate them.

Khan expressed this during a meeting with representatives of Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) in which the latter briefed him progress of the department.

The representatives of WASA include Chiltan and Zarghoon chief directors, executive engineer, sub divisional officer and director finance and administration.

To overcome the shortage of water in the capital city and to active tube wells, Khan said that dues must be cleared. "Government will clear all dues of WASA helping to improve the performance," the commissioner said while replying complaints of the representatives related to the payment.

The commissioner directed WASA to ensure utilization of available resources for clean supply of water to people of Quetta. Khan reviewed the department's six-month budget for the fiscal year 2019-20 and vowed to ensure the approval of funds for the upcoming months.

https://epaper.tribune.com.pk/DisplayDetails.aspx?ENI_ID=11201911160200&EN_ID=11201911160069&EMID=11201911160021

BIDS INVITED FOR GHAZI BAROTHA WATER SUPPLY PROJECT'S CONSULTANCY

By Our Correspondent Published: November 16, 2019

RAWALPINDI: A tender has been issued for hiring a consultant for Ghazi Barotha water supply project.

The project has the capacity to meet the water supply needs of the twin cities for the next 100 years.

The tender process for hiring consultants will be completed in three months, while foundation stone for the project will be laid in a ceremony marked in March 2020, officials told The Express Tribune.

A committee on Ghazi Barotha Project, consisting of elected public representatives, has also approved publication of the tender. The committee includes MNA Asad Umar, Parliamentary Secretary Sheikh Rashid Shafiq and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on CDA Ali Nawaz Awan.

Federal Minister for Railways Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed also confirmed that the tender for the Ghazi Barotha project has been issued. The Rs80 billion project is set to supply 200 million gallons per day (MGD) water to the twin cities. Out of this, 100MGD will go to Rawalpindi city and cantonment areas and 100MGD will to Islamabad. The first phase of the project will be completed in two years by 2022.

An 80-inch diameter pipeline of 60km will be laid from Ghazi Barotha Hydropower Plant to the confluence of the twin cities. Federal, Punjab governments have already approved the project while a formal MoU has also been signed in this regard between CDA and RDA.

Published in The Express Tribune, November 16th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2100563/1-bids-invited-ghazi-barotha-water-supply-projects-consultancy/>

SINDH GOVT SETS UP BODY TO RE-EVALUATE K-IV PROJECT AFTER NESPAK OBJECTIONS

Imran Ayub Updated November 17, 2019

KARACHI: As the fate of the Greater Karachi Water Supply Scheme, also called K-IV, hangs in the balance, the Sindh government has set up a technical committee to re-evaluate the project after the state-owned National Engineering Services Pakistan (Pvt) Ltd company (Nespak) raised objections over its design. The multibillion-rupee scheme, meant to meet the water needs of Karachiites, has remained a distant dream even after more than eight years of its formal launch, officials and sources said on Saturday.

The Sindh government had last month confirmed the reports that Nespak had raised objections over the design and announced its plan to set up a technical committee to review the project while taking the objections raised by the state-

owned engineering company into account. The fate of the project, the sources and officials said, depended on the committee's findings and final report which it expected to compile within a month.

Headed by the Sindh local bodies secretary with the managing director of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board, the project director of K-IV, an officer of Pakistan Army from Corps V, a senior official of the planning and development department and senior faculty of the NED University of Engineering and Technology and Mehran University as its members, the committee is ready to start its job.

However, the question haunts many Karachiites in line with the apprehensions expressed by different segments of society and political parties whether the provincial government was going to abandon the project half way or willing to find a way out for the scheme. The provincial secretary for local government, Roshan Ali Shaikh, who was heading the technical committee, was hopeful that the project would meet success and it would "definitely" serve the purpose.

"We are very much hopeful to complete our job within a month," Mr Shaikh told Dawn. "The committee has mandate to re-evaluate the project but it doesn't mean that it has lost its significance or is being further delayed. There are only a few technical issues which emerged after the Nespak report. We hope that these technicalities can be sorted out through different ways and we firmly believe that the outcome would be positive."

According to information available on the website of the Frontier Works Organisation, which is building the giant scheme, the supply project is 121 kilometres long, that includes a 94km canal, 18km siphon and 773-meter intake and 81 culverts. It says that the project envisages an alternative route and corridor to serve Karachi's water needs for the next 50 years which will reduce the shortage of water in the area and provide 1,200 cusec or 250mgd to it.

The project was formally launched in 2011. However, multiple causes have delayed its completion and increased its estimated cost to Rs150 billion. The authorities, however, this time claim to have completed their "homework" and would not let the project get delayed further.

"Let me tell you that the provincial government is really very serious this time," said Mr Shaikh, the provincial secretary for local government and chairman of the recently-formed technical committee. "It's not only the K-IV but there are several other projects which the government is taking up with a clear resolve that they all have to be completed and no one is going to be abandoned. Resolving the water issue for Karachi and its people is a challenge and the government is confident to meet it with success."

Published in Dawn, November 17th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1517100/sindh-govt-sets-up-body-to-re-evaluate-k-iv-project-after-nespak-objections>

DYKE BREACHES CAUSE FLOODING, DESTROY CROPS

Dawn Report November 17, 2019

MIRPURKHAS: Many villages and standing crops over hundreds of acres were washed away following dyke breaches in two irrigation channels in Mirpurkhas and Shaheed Benazirabad (formerly Nawabshah) districts on Saturday.

Affected villagers in Mirpurkhas said that a breach occurred in the dyke of Mureed branch (irrigation channel) near Digri town after which water with intense pressure forced its way into the cultivated areas and Karam Ali Nohani, Bhoro Khan Nohani, Yaqoon Nohani and several other villages.

They said the breach gradually widened to 20 feet before they could start plugging work. Several hours later, local irrigation officials along with the required material and labourers joined them to mend the dyke, they added.

The villagers said that crops over an estimated 500 acres were destroyed and knee-deep water was now standing in most of the affected areas.

NAWABSHAH: The dyke of James minor (irrigation channel) also developed a 60-foot wide breach near Daur town in Shaheed Benazirabad district on Saturday.

Affected people said their families had to be moved to places away from the flood-hit lands.

Dinari, Imamdin Keerio, Maajan and two other villages came under gushing water which swept away standing crops over several hundred acres, affected villagers said.

They said they had sent a distress call to the local irrigation officials but without any response. A number of villagers were busy doing plugging work till late in the evening.

Published in Dawn, November 17th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1517094>

CHASHMA-JHELUM HYDEL PROJECT: SINDH SCURRIES FOR RESPONSE TO IRSA CHALLENGE

By Hafeez Tunio Published: November 17, 2019

KARACHI: The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) has thrown down the gauntlet to Sindh it seems.

Both the province's government and the opposition have been on one page when it comes to opposing the construction of a hydroelectric project on the already contentious Chashma-Jhelum (CJ) Link Canal which the federal body granted clearance to on October 17.

The Sindh government has strongly protested the IRSA move, terming it unconstitutional and beyond the authority's mandate. The Sindh Assembly passed a unanimous resolution condemning IRSA for green-lighting the controversial 24 megawatt energy project and MPAs from the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) took the matter up with the prime minister.

Not even a provincial assembly motion, however, was enough to sway the federal body from its decision. In what appears to be an open challenge, the IRSA chairperson rebuffed the move a few days ago, saying: "IRSA is not bound to obey the orders of any assembly or institution." Calling the Sindh Assembly resolution 'unnecessary meddling' into IRSA affairs, he added that the motion carried no weight whatsoever.

That the IRSA chief's latest statement has irked both the Sindh authorities and the lawmakers goes without saying. For now, however, neither of them seem to have any meaningful response lined up.

Speaking to The Express Tribune, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) MPA Heer Ismail Soho said she has moved a privilege motion against the IRSA chairperson in the Sindh Assembly which will be taken up very soon. "PPP lawmakers will demand action against him. Calling a resolution of the Sindh Assembly 'unnecessary' not only constitutes a sheer breach of the privilege of this august house, but also leads to a violation of the people's mandate reposed in their representatives in this house," she stressed.

Soho insisted that the Punjab government and the IRSA authorities had already flouted the law by building the CJ Link Canal and were now involved in a further violation. "How can one build a power plant on a flood canal? How can IRSA grant a no-objection certificate to a project that falls under the purview of the Council of Common Interests and the Inter-Provincial Coordination Department," she asked.

The CJ Link Canal has been a bone of contention between Sindh and Punjab for years now. Sindh government officials have accused the Punjab government and federal bureaucracy of conspiring to change the flood canal's status from non-perennial to perennial. The former have repeatedly accused IRSA of allowing the release of water in the canal during non-flood times. They claim the plan to build a powerplant on the canal is the latest attempt to switch the canal's status.

The spokesperson for the Sindh Chief Minister House said that the chief minister has written a number of letters to the prime minister, the Ministry of Water and Power, and the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA), but to no avail.

"Sindh being in the lower riparian will face severe water scarcity if a power plant is built on the CJ canal. The project will result in more water flowing through this canal which will disrupt the lives of those live in the Indus Delta," he said.

The spokesperson added that for now the federal government seems unwilling to convene a CCI meeting. "The chief minister will take this issue up at the forum whenever one is held."

The proposed hydroelectric plant on CJ Link Canal is being built by a private company hired by the Punjab government and is estimated to cost \$59 million. It is expected that construction will be complete in three years' time. Published in The Express Tribune, November 17th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2101021/1-chashma-jhelum-hydel-project-sindh-scurries-response-irsa-challenge/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM NOV 18th TO 24th 2019

GOVT, OPPOSITION AGREE TO FORM PRIVILEGE COMMITTEE AGAINST IRSA CHIEF'S REMARKS

Hasan Mansoor Updated November 19, 2019

KARACHI: The Sindh Assembly on Monday formed a seven-member special committee to deliberate upon an adjournment motion which expressed serious discontent over a statement of the chairman of the Indus River System Authority through which he refused to give importance to a resolution demanding just distribution of water among the provinces.

The motion was moved by Pakistan Peoples Party lawmaker Ghulam Qadir Chandio, who is also the chairman of the Sindh Public Accounts Committee, and his fellow lawmaker Noor Ahmed Bhurgari.

The movers referred to a report published in a section of media that said Irsa Chairman Razeed Khan remarked during an in-camera meeting of the members of the authority that Irsa "is not subjected to any assembly or institution and the [Sindh Assembly's] resolution carries no weight as it is unnecessary and constitutes meddling into the affairs of Irsa". Mr Chandio expressed his disappointment over the reports and said it was tantamount to humiliating the elected forums like the Sindh Assembly.

Asking for summoning the Irsa chief before a privilege committee of the house, Mr Chandio requested the chair to launch a debate in the provincial legislature over the issue with the objective to devise a consensus decision on it.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mukesh Kumar Chawla said a special committee comprising lawmakers from the treasury and opposition benches would be formed to debate the matter.

Opposition Leader Firdous Shamim Naqvi did not object to the matter as he said the house should ensure that the response from the Irsa chairman should be in writing. "The written response will be a document that we could present wherever needed."

He said the opposition was in agreement with the treasury benches in establishing a privilege committee.

Deputy Speaker Rehana Leghari asked the opposition and treasury sides to submit their nominations for the committee.

Four members of the committee are from the ruling PPP and three members from the opposition.

Sharjeel Memon, Aziz Junejo, Qasim Soomro and Imdad Pitafi will represent the treasury benches, while Aslam Abro, Mohammad Hussain and Shaharyar Maher would be from the opposition.

Ms Leghari spelt out brief terms of reference for the committee, which required summoning the Irsa chairman and asking him to explain his remarks.

The committee has been given two weeks to submit its report before the house.

Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf's Adeeba Hasan asked the home department as to what steps it had taken to publish the report of the domestic violence cases in the province.

The home portfolio is with the chief minister and in his absence Minister Chawla responded to the question.

He said the government had begun working on establishing district committees to handle the alarming incidence of domestic violence.

"These committees will soon be established in every district," he said.

He said that the government was sincerely taking measures to stop such incidents of violence from occurring.

PTI's Ali Khurshidi said juices made of hazardous chemicals and carrying dangerous ingredients were commonly being sold in various parts of Karachi.

He said people in Sindh were already in danger of various viral and infectious diseases like dengue, rabies and hepatitis etc. And the sale of such substances in the name of juices and foods had put their lives in even greater peril. He said such drinks were commonly available in thickly-populated impoverished neighbourhoods and it left a question mark on the performance of the provincial food authority. "People are dying because of the use of such edible items, which by any standards are not edible."

Food Minister Hari Ram Kishori Lal said his ministry was aware of such issues and had already taken certain measures to curb such activities and arrest those involved in manufacturing those juices and foods. "We are taking action against all those involved in these crimes and a number of persons involved in manufacturing of these items have been arrested already."

He appealed to the house and the public at large to inform the food department if they found any such items in their surroundings.

Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan's Rabia Khatoon in her calling-attention notice pointed out about growing unemployment in Sindh, particularly in Karachi and Hyderabad.

Industries and Commerce Minister Jam Ikram Dharejo said there were two sources of generating employment — public and private sectors.

He said the provincial government had recruited people through Public Service Commission, but the private sector was not healthy enough to offer good number of jobs because of issues created by “non-cooperation” of the federal government.

He said various economic zones could not be developed because of Islamabad’s non-cooperation. “Because of the flawed economic policies of the federal government, unemployment is in on the rise and people are hugely distressed.”

He said the provincial government’s “sincere” efforts to offer jobs to most unemployed youth could not succeed because of lack of support of Islamabad.

MQM-P’s parliamentary party leader Kanwar Naveed Jameel spoke about media reports that dozens of children at a private school in Korangi allegedly fell sick after they were administered an anti-typhoid vaccine.

Minister Chawla said the provincial health minister was visiting abroad, but the issue was being handled on a priority basis.

PTI’s Rabia Nizami said parents’ permissions should be necessary before vaccinating children.

Opposition Leader Naqvi claimed on a point of order that more than 186,500 people were bitten by dogs across Sindh during the last one year.

Referring to a six-year-old boy of Larkana, who was bitten by six dogs and is currently under treatment at the National Institute of Child Health, he questioned the government’s tall claims regarding bringing improvement in the healthcare system.

“That unfortunate child neither got a good hospital nor an ambulance to reach Karachi,” he said.

During his speech, murmurs were generated by the treasury benches at which a number of PTI lawmakers rose to defend their leader, but virtually ended up increasing the pandemonium that led the chair to adjourn the session for the day.

Published in Dawn, November 19th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1517471/govt-opposition-agree-to-form-privilege-committee-against-irsa-chiefs-remarks>

INDUSTRIALISTS URGED TO CLEAR WATER DUES

By RECORDER REPORT on November 20, 2019

Chairman Hyderabad SITE Association of Trade and Industry Mazhar-ul-Haq Choudhry has urged industrialists to clear their water arrears in order to avert the suspension of supply in SITE Hyderabad.

In a statement issued here on Tuesday, he said the industrialists having more than one industrial unit are not paying their water dues in time resulting suspension of water supply in Hyderabad SITE from irrigation department which causing great inconvenience to small industrialists who are operating small units and depositing water bills in time. He called upon the big industrialists of the area to pay their water dues regularly and in time so that miseries being faced by the small industrialists due to water suspension could be averted. He also appealed to management of SITE Limited to evolve a comprehensive strategy for recovery of outstanding water dues from defaulters instead to switch off the water regulator of the area.

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<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/11/20/545959/industrialists-urged-to-clear-water-dues/>

IWMI’S TRAINING FOR WATER PROFESSIONALS BEGINS

By RECORDER REPORT on November 20, 2019

A four day training programme for mid-level water professionals of Pakistan here on Tuesday has begun under auspices of International Water Management Institute (IWMI).

The capacity building workshop titled “Technological Innovations for Water Management in 21st Century” focuses on technological innovations and use of instruments for flow measurement.

Federal Secretary Water from the Ministry of Water Resources, Muhammad Ashraf gave the opening remarks and stressed on the need to promote Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) across the country.

According to Mohsin Hafeez, Country Representative, IWMI Pakistan, “IWMI has already established Indus Telemetry, a collaborative partnership with Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR).

IWMI has successfully installed telemetry systems in 10 canals in all provinces. This will help to provide accurate information regarding water flows in real time and improving coordination through reducing inter-provincial mistrust on water availability.â€•

The workshop is organized under the World Bank supported project titled â€œWater Sector Capacity Building & Advisory Services Projectâ€• .

IWMI has designed the training programme in consultation with the Water Resources Ministry for 25 water professionals at IWMI office in Lahore. The aim of the training is to build capacity of the water professionals to carry out their routine operations related to flow measurement and provide them with knowledge of international best practices which can transform these state institutions.

The discourse on water in Pakistan is dominated by engineers and, as such, on inter-provincial waters, it is often attributed to a singular root cause, the lack of accurate flow measurement, telemetry in the vernacular. IWMI has had considerable previous experience in installing, commissioning and maintaining instrumentation, as well as keeping good quality serviceable equipment in stock.

The training specifically address the Project Development Objective (PDO) of WCAP which states, â€œEnhanced capacity of institutions to manage water resources using modern tools, techniques and methodologiesâ€• . The training will target the middle career water professionals and expose them with the latest tools, innovations and techniques for flow data collection, archival and disseminations.

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<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/11/20/545943/iwmis-training-for-water-professionals-begins/>

UNDERSTANDING WATER ECONOMY OF MAJOR CROPS

By RECORDER REPORT on November 20, 2019

A lot of noise surrounds the water intensiveness of Pakistan's agriculture sector. Noted experts in water sector research – both from academic and public policy areas – have highlighted that the farming segment consumes over 90 percent of Pakistan's total available water resources.

Because Pakistan's major sources of export earnings are heavily skewed toward commodity-based rice and cotton-based textile, it has been argued that the country is engaging in virtual export of water.

This is because cultivation of major crops depends largely on irrigation water, which is both mispriced and fails to ensure even the recovery of operating and maintenance expenditure, let alone the true economic cost due to sub-optimal allocation of a finite resource.

Pakistan grows water-thirsty crops such as rice in desert conditions, yet it is considered an acceptable trade-off as it yields valuable foreign exchange. However, greater scrutiny exists for crops grown only to meet domestic consumption requirement. In this respect, Dr. Shahid Afghan of Punjab Sugarcane & Research Development Board in a conversation with BR Research noted that the annual water consumption by sugarcane crop is equivalent to storage of Mangla dam.

It is also correct that sugarcane has one of the highest deltas of water, calculated as a product of number of irrigations required (number of times water is applied from sowing to harvest) and volume of water applied per irrigation.

In fact, delta of water for sugarcane is equivalent to rice, universally accepted as the most water thirsty crop. Unlike sugarcane, however, rice and cotton crops are not protected by support price mechanism, in order to maintain their export competitiveness.

At a time when the country is facing extreme volatility in water availability due to changing weather patterns, should cultivation of water-thirsty crops with lower value-add be discouraged? Such views, while earnest, may be divorced from ground realities.

As Dr. Afghan argues, shifting cropping patterns are a result of better farm economics – a consequence of higher return on investment on sugarcane – and its greater resilience to extreme weather events such as floods, compared to highly sensitive crops such as cotton. It may also be inaccurate to single out mis/under-pricing of irrigation water as the only reason for excessive cultivation of water-thirsty crops such as sugarcane.

As water volatility increases, decisions regarding annual crop output target must be based on a holistic view of water-intensiveness of competing crops, domestic consumption requirements, export imperatives, but most importantly, farm-level incentives.

The policy questions to consider thus are as follows. How can the strategic objective of cotton acreage expansion be achieved when price distortions exist on competing crops such as sugarcane? As Fig – 02 shows, sugarcane yields highest revenue per acre for growers, and is only second to maize among kharif crops in value per volume of water consumed. But that may be a function of higher-than-market support price, and not of crop competitiveness. More importantly, as Fig 04 and 05 illustrate Pakistan's crop acreage in both rabi and kharif season continues to be heavily dependent on water availability. Absence of high yielding and drought tolerant varieties – across all major crops – means that crop productivity suffers even with a five percent change in surface water availability. Yet drought years are only one manifestation of extreme weather patterns resulting from climate change. As preliminary reports of productivity losses during ongoing season has shown, domestic varieties – especially cotton – are equally susceptible to excess water availability.

When a sector contributing only 20 percent of GDP consumes 80 percent of its water resources, fair accounting and recovery of cost of inputs such as irrigation water cost must be ensured.

But more importantly, an inclusive approach needs to be adopted which does not view competing crop production as a zero-sum game, but instead focuses on maximizing productivity, such that finite availability of cultivable land and irrigation water are no longer the primary determinants of agricultural output.

Fig 01 & 02 – A & F, and average Surface Water Availability (Fig 03) – Economic Survey, 2019 (hectares converted to acres)

B, C & D – based on data provided by Sugarcane Research & Development Board, Punjab

G – Wheat and sugarcane: support price of Rs1,300 per 40kg for wheat, and Rs180 per 40kg for cane used as proxy; Cotton: average of market prevailing seed cotton rates per 40kg used as reported by Business Recorder November 19, 2019; Maize: average of per 100kg rates as reported by AMIS;

Rice: highly crude estimate based on weighted average of prevailing market rates for various varieties ranging between Rs3,000 per 100kg for IRRI to Rs14,000 per 100kg for Super Basmati as reported by AMIS as at November 19, 2019, rice estimate is for comparison purposes only and should not be construed as actual market rate. E and I are BR Research estimates; 12acre-inches equals 1 acre-foot;

Fig 03 – Mangla and Tarbela dam storage capacity in million-acre feet as per WAPDA website. Optimal requirement of farming sector is as per discussions with leading voices in the sector: Dr Hassan Abbas, COMSATS and Ali T. Sheikh, ex-CEO LEAD Pakistan.

Fig 04 & 05 – Definition of rabi & kharif crops included is as per PBS crop calendar. Area under Rabi crops include – barley, gram, rapeseed, tobacco and wheat; Area under Kharif crops include – cotton, rice, sugarcane, maize, bajra, searum, & jowar (used as proxy as per 'Area under important crops' section from Annual Economic Survey). Water availability as per Annual Agriculture Statistics of Pakistan.

<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/11/20/545919/understanding-water-economy-of-major-crops/>

VIGILANCE IMPROVES KHANPUR DAM WATER SUPPLY

By Our Correspondent Published: November 20, 2019

RAWALPINDI: The water supply to garrison city from Khanpur dam has returned to normal on Tuesday after Capital Development Authority (CDA) increased vigilance of the open water supply channel.

The residents of cantonment areas were facing extreme difficulties as they were suffering a cut of three million gallon per day (MGD) of water supply from Khanpur Dam.

The reduction was due to water theft from 18-kilometre long open water channel. There was no security mechanism for the channel, due to which water theft had become a routine.

The dam was a source of drinking water for the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Currently, eight million MGD was supplied to the CDA.

Published in The Express Tribune, November 20th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2102939/1-vigilance-improves-khanpur-dam-water-supply/>

WATER DIVERSION BY INDIA DELAYS 1,124MW KOHALA PROJECT

By Zafar Bhutta Published: November 23, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Kishanganga Hydroelectric Plant has started to have an adverse effect on Pakistan as work on 1,124MW Kohala Hydropower Project being built on the River Jhelum in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) has come to a halt due to diversion of water by India.

Kohala Project is part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

India has built the Kishanganga plant on the River Neelum Jhelum by diverting water flows that has caused issues of environmental flow to Pakistan. Pakistan and India have fought a legal battle over Kishanganga at the International Court of Arbitration.

Along with a host of issues with the Chinese developer of this project, water flows have been a major issue in completing the Kohala project. The government has now approved a revised plan of water flows to resume work on the project.

The 1,124 MW project is being developed by Kohala Hydropower Company Private Limited. China Three Gorges Cooperation, IFC and Silk Road Fund are sponsors of the project under the Policy for Power Generation Projects 2002 on a built, own, operate and transfer (BOOT) basis.

The company was issued the Letter of Support on December 31, 2015 which was amended subsequently pursuant to which it is required to achieve financial closing by December 31, 2019.

The project was at an advanced stage towards achieving financial close when the AJK government stopped its due facilitation for land acquisition and related matters in July 2018 demanding a substantial increase in environmental flow of the project from the already approved level of 30 cumecs in the River Jhelum.

This demand was made amid concerns raised by people of Muzaffarabad after the 969 MW Neelum Jhelum hydropower project reduced the environmental flow in the River Neelum to mere 9 cumecs due to which sewage discharge and social environmental issues erupted in and around Muzaffarabad city.

This became a socio-political issue due to which development work of the project is halted since. The issue was considered at the highest level and on direction of the prime minister of Pakistan, Ministry of Water Resources prepared a report wherein certain recommendations had been made to address environmental flow issues.

In view of the report of Ministry of Water Resource on environmental issue, the company and the AJK government had agreed that minimum release below Kohala dam be made equivalent to 42 cumecs by maintaining the environmental flow of 30 cumecs and releasing additional flow of 12 cumecs from the spillway/bottom outlet/environmental flow generator as become available in in the River Jhelum due to diversion of River Neelum at Kishanganga plant.

These additional water releases will reduce water availability for power generation and slightly increase in project tariff depending on water availability in the river during each year, hence may require approval from the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra).

The Private Power Infrastructure Board (PPIB) had already endorsed this change and recommended it for consideration and approval of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the cabinet. The ECC has decided that the minimum release below Kohala Dam be made equivalent to 42.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2105163/2-water-diversion-india-delays-1124mw-kohala-project/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM NOV 25th TO DEC 01th 2019

MINISTER INAUGURATES DAM IN SANJAVI

By Our Correspondent Published: November 26, 2019

QUETTA: Balochistan Minister for Public Health and Engineering Noor Muhammad Dummar inaugurated a dam and Karez in Sanjavi and said the province has been facing an acute shortage of water.

“Out of all the provinces, Balochistan is facing the bleakest prospects when it comes to water security,” he said.

Dummar added that Balochistan is the most neglected and backward province of the country and has been hit by severe water crisis since 2010. The importance of water, according to him, can be ascertained from the fact that it has been regarded as a potential source of national power for a sovereign nation.

He affirmed that according to some estimates, the province will face chronic water shortages in the coming years if the government continues to ignore the issue.

Dummar said that the Municipal Committee proposal has been approved, and very soon the construction of playground project will also be started.

Earlier, Dummar said serving people of his constituency is an obligation and he will continue efforts to solve their problems.

“I do not favour anybody but the people, they have elected me so I have to repay them,” vowed Dummar during lunch hosted in his honour by the Chairman Shams Foundation Shams Hamzazai.

“My doors are always open to solve the problems of the poor,” he said, adding that there were problems with the supply of drinking water due to load shedding.

“Two large generators have been provided to PHE Loralai to solve these issues and to ensure improved supply,” Dummar said.

Published in The Express Tribune, November 26th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2106504/1-minister-inaugurates-dam-sanjavi/>

POLITICAL WILL NEEDED TO ADDRESS WATER, SANITATION ISSUES: EXPERTS

11/27/2019 12:00:00 AM

ISLAMABAD: Due to rapid urbanisation and lack of adequate investments in water and sanitation infrastructure, around 79 million people lack decent toilets in Pakistan and over 53,000 children under the age of five years die of diarrhea each year.

However, experts working in the field have expressed the confidence that the situation would change speedily in the near future.

“Political will to address water, sanitation and hygiene (Wash) is visible,” said Tim Wainwright, the chief executive for WaterAid, a UK-based INGO working in the Wash sector. It has several projects in Pakistan, including partnership in the Clean Green School Programme (CGSP), a pilot project launched in Islamabad.

Under the CGSP, students of 423 public schools in the federal capital will study comprehensive activity-based and child-friendly curricula on climate and environmental education.

Talking to media here on Tuesday, Mr Wainwright said governments in the developing world, including South Asia, should invest more in human development.

“But such issues including water and sanitation are not much appreciated among the electorates. However, we see the realisation at the political level in Pakistan,” he added.

Mr Wainwright along with Tim Clark, the chairman Board of Trustees WaterAid, is in Pakistan to attend the launch of Pakistan Clean Green Index inaugurated by Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday.

Mr Wainwright said the target of WaterAid was that all residents of the world should have clean water, hygiene and decent toilets by 2030.

“We convince governments to change laws, link policymakers with people on the ground, pool knowledge and resources and rally support from people and organisations around the world, making a lasting change on a massive scale.

He added that the growth of social media had helped put pressure on authorities but small towns and rural areas lacked capacity to manage water and sanitation issues.

Apart from the pilot project in Islamabad, WaterAid has a flagship programme in Muzaffargarh in southern Punjab and due to its efforts the district will be open defecation-free in coming months.

Meanwhile, Mr Clark said with sixth largest population and increasing urbanisation Pakistan was prone to natural disasters too.

“There is a need to develop awareness and take local communities onboard so that they own the Wash-related projects and manage them.

He added that the government planning should be based on local cultures, demography and ground realities.

According to WaterAid, one in three people in the world do not have a decent toilet of their own while one in nine do not have clean water close to home. Kalbe Ali

https://epaper.dawn.com/DetailImage.php?StoryImage=27_11_2019_004_003

ALVI CALLS FOR STRENGTHENING COORDINATION AGAINST WATER, FOOD CRISES

Staff Reporter Updated November 27, 2019

KARACHI: President Dr Arif Alvi has called for reinforcement of interprovincial coordination to mitigate the crises of water and food insecurity in Pakistan.

He advocated for provincial consensus on implementation of a water policy to meet the growing demands of food, water and energy in Pakistan.

The president was speaking at the 4th Karachi International Water Conference (KIWC) on the theme of 'Water-Energy-Food Nexus: Pakistan's Agenda for the 21st Century' organised by the Hisaar Foundation at a local hotel here on Tuesday.

The president showed his concern on the implications of global warming. He said that a network of partnerships on water and food security involving private sector, government, civil society, media and people of Pakistan was the need of the hour.

At a water conference, the president expresses concerns over implications of global warming

"We live in a time where our children are rightfully holding us accountable for our mistakes in failing to take care of the environment. They expect us to protect natural resources and leave them a legacy on which to build a water- and food-sufficient society," he added.

The president advised the organisers of the conference to invite the agriculture and water ministers of all four provinces, including federal ministers, in the next event to give government ownership to this agenda.

"These ministries can take a leading role in devising solid strategies to avoid the risks of drought and flood-like disasters in the country," he said.

The KIWC takes place in Karachi after every two years.

Published in Dawn, November 27th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1518995/alvi-calls-for-strengthening-coordination-against-water-food-crisis>

NA BODY REFERS CHASHMA-JHELUM CANAL DECISION TO CCI

Staff Reporter November 30, 2019

ISLAMABAD: A parliamentary panel on Friday directed the Ministry of Water Resources to take up a decision on an inter-provincial dispute over the construction of a power project on Chashma-Jhelum Link Canal with the Council of Common Interests (CCI).

The National Assembly Standing Committee on Water Resources led by Muhammad Yousuf Talpur did not confirm the minutes of its previous meeting over the issue and directed the matter should first be placed on the agenda of CCI meeting due on December 11.

The committee was also briefed on Diamer Basha and Mohmand Dam Fund, as well as on the master plan for water conservation. It was reported by the concerned officials that some Rs12 billion has been collected under the dam fund created by former chief justice of Pakistan and were still in the accounts of the apex court.

The committee directed that latest position of the total funds collected along with the breakup of expenditure incurred on advertisement campaigns through electronic and print media be provided in detail to the committee in the next meeting.

The committee also decided to write to Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra) for details on the duration and cost of running advertisements for dams' fund.

Mr Talpur said the Sindh government had strong objections to the construction of 25MW hydropower project on Chashma-Jhelum Link Canal being planned construction by Punjab and cleared recently by the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) through a majority vote. He noted that earlier the Sindh chief minister had also objected to the project. PTI MNA Ali Nawaz Awan said the matter should be referred to the CCI since it is the relevant and highest inter-provincial forum on such subjects.

The committee was informed that the CCI is scheduled for December 11. Maryam Aurangzeb of PML-N also supported the proposals, saying the project had become controversial and should be forwarded to CCI.

MNA Riaz-ul-Haq said that it was also proposed in the previous meeting that matter of hydropower project on Chashma-Jhelum Link Canal will go to the CCI.

Federal Secretary Water Resources Mohammad Ashraf said that the project was being built on Punjab's share of water and every province had the right to put hydroelectric power out of its water share in its territories.

Published in Dawn, November 30th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1519636/na-body-refers-chashma-jhelum-canal-decision-to-cci>

ASAD CALLS FOR SHORT, MIDTERM OPTIONS FOR CITY'S WATER PROBLEMS

APP November 30, 2019

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reform and Special Initiatives Asad Umar on Friday emphasised the need for short and midterm options to ensure water supply for Karachi on an urgent basis.

The minister chaired a meeting convened to discuss the interventions aimed at addressing the water issue of the metropolis, said a statement issued by the ministry for planning, development and reform.

The current status of the K-IV water supply project was also reviewed during the meeting.

Planning Secretary Zafar Hasan, chairperson of the P&D Board Sindh Naheed S. Durrani and senior officials of the federal and provincial governments attended the meeting.

The minister said that the federal government would continue to work with the provincial government to resolve the issues of provision of clean drinking water to residents of Karachi and every possible help would be extended in this regard.

He added that a robust strategy was required to permanently resolve the issue of water shortage in the cosmopolitan city.

Ms Durrani gave a detailed account of the K-IV project and the Sindh government's efforts to take the scheme forward.

She said they were working on different options to increase the bulk water supply to the city so that its domestic as well as industrial requirements could be met.

Published in Dawn, November 30th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1519605>

STAKEHOLDERS URGED TO RESIST ANY NEW DAM OR BARRAGE OVER INDUS

Ghulam Hussain Khawaja December 01, 2019

THATTA: Water experts, environmentalists and leaders of various nationalist groups speaking at a water conference held in the local press club on Saturday urged all stakeholders to intervene to prevent the building of new dams over River Indus as this would have serious repercussions.

The speakers were of concerted view that if any new dam was built, this would totally destroy Indus delta and cause further degradation of the region's ecology. Moreover, they said, a decision to build a dam or barrage over the river was bound to widen the gulf between Punjab and Sindh — two major federating units — which would be detrimental to the country's interest.

They said all stakeholders should sit together to discuss and resolve the issue as people of Sindh opposed the very idea of building any dam or barrage over Indus.

Those who spoke at the conference included Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum (PFF) chairman Mohammad Ali Shah, former Sindh irrigation secretary and a water expert Mir Mohammad Parhiar, Jeay Sindh Tehreek-Karnani (JST-K) general secretary Prof Mushtaq Mirani, JST-Safdar Sarki group leader Sorhe Sindhi, Fateh Channa, Engineer Obhayo Khan Khushik, Abdullah Murghar, Sarwar Palijo and Shahzado Otho, besides the host, Nawaz Khan Zaur.

In his keynote speech, Mr Zaur shed light on all aspects of the issue and described the very concept of new dam as the first step towards inviting a man-made crisis in the province. He said it seemed to be aimed at usurping Sindh's natural resources and depriving its population of their livelihood and mainstay, ie agriculture. Proponents of the idea

wanted to gain practical hold of the deltaic region, he said, and warned that Sindh would never accept such a plan evolved under a hidden agenda in the name of “national interest”.

He repeated all Sindhi nationalist groups’ demands that Sindh’s due share in water and flow of required quantum downstream Kotri be ensured. Besides, he added, the authorities concerned should take steps to restore the entire natural route of water in this province. This, he said, was necessary to maintain and strengthen harmonious relations between each of the federating units.

PFF chairman Mohammad Ali Shah told the audience that no doubt Pakistan was equally facing a shortage of water along with a number of other countries of the world but the issue here was one of judicious distribution and sharing of Indus water. He described the ongoing practice of water distribution as “controlled mechanism” to the disadvantage of smaller federating units. “No official excuses are acceptable to most stakeholders,” he said.

Mr Shah pointed out that out of 292 major rivers of the world, Indus and only two others had a delta along their routes. “Indus fills the delta in the twin districts of Thatta and Sujawal,” he said, adding that “due to sea intrusion along Sindh’s coastline over the last three decades, more than 1.7 million acres of fertile land has vanished”.

The PFF chairman went on to say that sea intrusion was also destroying mangroves forests and fish and shrimp hatcheries, besides causing rapid hyper-salinity. He pointed out that migration of fishermen communities from the affected coastal areas was going on for decades. The local population could not bear the situation anymore, he added. Former irrigation secretary Mir Mohammad Parhiar gave his opinion that construction of the proposed Sindh barrage would prove counter-productive. He felt that the purpose of floating the idea was to facilitate execution of controversial mega project of Zulfikarabad.

Referring to Wapda’s claim that 27 million acre feet (MAF) water had been released into Indus, Mr Parhiar said it was meant to befool the people of Sindh. As a matter of fact, only 10 MAF was released, he claimed, and argued that how could such a huge quantum of water downstream be released amid a water crisis that the entire country was faced with.

Technocrat Haleem Magsi, Prof Mushtaq Mirani, Sindh Culture Forum chairman Sadiq Lakho and others were of the view that climate change, melting of glaciers and lack of water management in public and private sectors as well as lack of awareness in masses were other factors contributing to the water crisis.

They called for evolving and implementing of wise policies to effectively overcome the crisis.

Published in Dawn, December 1st, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1519779/stakeholders-urged-to-resist-any-new-dam-or-barrage-over-indus>

EXPERTS HIGHLIGHT IMPLICATIONS OF ABSENCE OF SINDH WATER POLICY

By Our Correspondent Published: December 1, 2019

HYDERABAD: United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (UNFAO) official Junko Nakai has said excessive use of pesticides and release of saline farm water in the fresh water bodies have been contaminating rivers and aquifers in Sindh. Speaking at a workshop at the Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority’s (SIDA) office in Hyderabad on Friday, she said the toxic contamination of water has been causing a range of illnesses among the local people.

The UNFAO’s official also pointed out the absence of a water policy for Sindh. The policy, she said, is required to ensure just distribution of water not only among the farmers but other sectors, like energy, industry, livestock, fisheries, as well as domestic consumers.

“There are no statistics [available] to the irrigation authorities to [help them] decide how much water each of the sector requires and is to be given,” she observed. “There is no system for ensuring just and transparent distribution of water either.” She said the absence of an equality-based policy has given rise to social problems relating to water [unequal distribution].

Nakai said, on one hand, demand for water in the domestic sector has increased due to population growth in urban areas, and on the other, the problem pertaining to the supply of unclean drinking water has surfaced. “The low discharge of water in the sea from the rivers has led to sea intrusion in coastal areas and environmental changes are also affecting the availability of water.”

Nakai said the irrigation and other departments involved in water supply, filtration and drainage are marred by a lack of cooperation.

SIDA Managing Director (MD) Wali Muhammad Naich said shortage of water has caused an imbalance in the supply. “Environmental changes are directly affecting water and agriculture,” he added.

He acknowledged that a lack of effective drainage system has been causing pollution in rivers, canals and fresh water bodies in the province.

Naich said an overarching water policy for Sindh is being prepared which will address all aspects related to the subject of water. SIDA Transition General Manager Farzana Syed said the water policy is being formed in collaboration with the World Bank.

SIDA Research and Development General Manager Muhammad Ahsan Laghari said unlike other policies, the province’s water policy is not being prepared behind closed doors. “Rather, all the stakeholders are being engaged and their input is being sought.” He said that consultative workshops are being organised in all districts of Sindh to seek recommendations for the policy.

Published in The Express Tribune, December 1st, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2109626/1-experts-highlight-implications-absence-sindh-water-policy/>

DECEMBER, 2019

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 02nd TO 08th 2019

HIGH AND DRY: HALF OF K-P LEFT WITH NO CLEAN WATER TO DRINK

By Ahtisham Khan Published: December 3, 2019

PESHAWAR: Despite its many natural streams, clean drinking water is fast becoming a scarce resource in K-P as rivulets run dry and underground water bodies become too polluted for consumption.

In the wake of K-P’s emerging water crisis, the consumption of contaminated groundwater has led to a dramatic increase in diseases such as Cholera, Typhoid and Dysentery in the province.

According to a recent water quality report by Pakistan Council of Research and Water Resources (PCWR), almost half of the union councils in K-P are left with no option but to consume contaminated drinking water, which displays perilous levels of arsenic, chloride and fluoride compounds and harmful bacteria.

The report further reveals that water samples particularly from parts of Shangla, Abbottabad, Mansehra and Upper Dir was found to be rich in arsenic and calcium, making the water unsafe for consumption. 16,000 to

“Until last year, there were around 12,000 and 5,550 registered cases of Hepatitis C respectively. However, the number has now increased to 16,000 and 7,000 in the province in ten months,” informed the In Charge Hepatitis Control Program K-P, Dr Nasir Jamal.

“These numbers exclusively represent cases registered in government hospitals, whereas the actual number of patients might be in millions,” he added.

The reason for the surge in Hepatitis cases cites Dr Jamal, is rooted in the consumption of low-quality food and contaminated water, which can prove to be fatal if not diagnosed and treated in time.

According to Asmatullah, a resident of Tank district, K-P’s water infrastructure hasn’t seen any major upgrade since the British times.

“The rusted pipes and leakages in the battered water lines have created a condition where women have to walk several miles to fetch a pail of water,” he told The Express Tribune.

“A water tanker in the province costs around Rs1,800, making it inaccessible to the majority of the population and the poor are left to rely on polluted groundwater and rainwater storage to meet their daily needs.”

Malikzada, who belongs to Takht Narti tehsil of Karak, believes that politicians have long used the lure of clean drinking water to gather votes from the people of K-P, but very little has been done to address the province’s burgeoning drinking water crisis.

“Because of the outdated water infrastructure and the lack of river and canal systems, people here have to adopt arduous ways to fetch water from far-flung areas; some even travel on foot up to two kilometres or ride donkeys to fetch water.”

However, the water issue is not limited to far-flung areas and has even affected metropolitan cities like Peshawar. Hayatabad, a posh residential area in the provincial capital relies on boring and drilling to siphon groundwater.

But amidst declining ground-water levels, siphoning water via boring has proved to be increasingly difficult in the area.

Whereas, lab tests for water in Chimkani revealed groundwater in the area to be saline, contaminated and unsuitable for drinking.

The spokesperson of Water and Sanitation Company which works within a department of local government, M Hasan, while talking to The Express Tribune, revealed that they've prioritised the provision of clean drinking water to the citizens of Peshawar.

According to Hasan, there are currently 512 tube wells capable of providing clean water to Peshawar, whereas 300 Kilometres of worn-out pipelines have been replaced to prevent further contamination and wastage.

"While our complaint teams are trying their best to resolve the water issues in urban areas, we have no way of analysing water quality in rural areas," he admitted.

However, despite the department's righteous intentions, Hasan believes there isn't much they can do to address water issues in areas which fall out of the department's jurisdiction.

"Our efforts are limited to town one and three of the city, while other towns fall under the authority of the local government."

Addressing the shortfalls of local government, Hasan cited ill-planning during Musharraf's tenure as the starting point of K-P's burgeoning water crisis.

It was during that time, the spokesperson elaborates when clean drinking water pipelines were laid in polluted rivulets across the urban outskirts.

Although, according to him approximately 300 kilometres of old, rusted pipelines have been replaced but still, some 300 kilometres of dilapidated pipelines are yet to be changed and pose severe health risks to the population of Peshawar.

"In the future, we hope to replace all metal and concrete pipelines with modern plastic pipes as per international standards and gradually extend our departments jurisdictions to all UCs of Peshawar, which would help ameliorate the water and sewage issues in the city," Hasan told The Express Tribune.

Published in The Express Tribune, December 2nd, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2110112/1-high-dry-half-k-p-left-no-clean-water-drink/>

50 MILLION PEOPLE HAVE NO ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER, SEMINAR TOLD

By ABDUL RASHEED AZAD on December 4, 2019

Speakers at a seminar while stressing the need for water conservation have revealed that almost 50 million people in Pakistan have no access to safe drinking water.

While speaking on 'Water Conservation Methods,' organized by Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) here on Tuesday, they attributed around 40 percent of annual deaths to contaminated water. They further said that in Pakistan 90 percent of total water is used in agriculture sector, 7 percent in industrial sector and only 3 percent is being used domestically.

The seminar among others was attended by Engineer Shamsul Mulk, former chairman WAPDA, Dr Nadeem Ul-Haq, Vice Chancellor (VC) PIDE, Engineer Naeem Qureshi, consultant, Syed Abu Ahmad Akif, former federal secretary, and Dr Zaigham Habib, consultant.

Speaking on the occasion, Engineer Shamsul Mulk said that construction of new hydel dams, including Kalabagh dam, is vital to control massive loss of water during monsoon and to meet growing energy and agricultural needs of the ever increasing population of the water-starved country.

Terming Kalabagh dam a technically most feasible project, he said the construction of new dams including Kalabagh and Diamir-Bhasha is inevitable to overcome the acute energy shortage and to tackle water situation currently being faced by the country.

"Dams are necessary to feed increasing population, increase the cultivation area, boost industrial output and save the country from becoming a desert," he said.

He said that as per Indus Waters Treaty, India can't stop water flows to Pakistan but the authorities in Pakistan lack willpower and decision-making powers which are critical for the construction of mega water reservoirs. He said that every important water reservoir building project in Pakistan is not approved in Islamabad but in New Delhi, saying

India and other global powers will never allow Pakistan to become self-sufficient in any field. He said it is the need of the hour for the authorities in Pakistan to shun political differences and develop unity among all the provinces for construction of mega water reservoirs, saying without electricity, gas, vehicles and trains, people can stay alive but without water life is impossible.

He said Kalabagh Dam was planned with an annual generation capacity of 12 billion units of electricity, at a cost of Rs 1.2 per unit, but due to incessant delays in its construction, Wapda fulfilled demand by generating electricity by using expensive fuel, which cost the nation around Rs 192 billion annually.

He said China and India had built 22,000 and 4,500 small, medium and big dams respectively, but Pakistan has comparatively constructed very little number of dams despite having huge water potential stretched from Himalya Mountains to Karakoram and Hindukush regions.

While regretting over not taking issue of construction of new dams seriously, the former chairman Wapda said it is unfortunate that not a single dam was constructed after Tarbela Dam by any government in the past, and resultantly the country is now at the edge of water crisis.

The underground water level would further drop in the coming years, which would create a lot of problems for the people seeking potable water and this serious issue could be tackled only with the construction of new water reservoirs in the country.

Dr Zaigham Habib, a water expert, said water and energy crisis are taking a heavy toll on economy and agricultural growth, therefore, water should be conserved at all costs, including the rainwater, by building new dams. She also talked about cost benefit analysis of building mega water reservoirs and not conserving the water by putting example of Johannesburg city, wherein people are hit by serious water crisis.

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<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/12/04/550182/five-0-million-people-have-no-access-to-safe-drinking-water-seminar-told/>

PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY TOLD SINDH GOVT SUPPLIES 2.4M GALLONS OF WATER TO BAHRIA TOWN AT RS7.512M PER MONTH

December 05, 2019

KARACHI: The Sindh Assembly Wednesday learnt that the Sindh government supplies 2.4 million water gallons to Bahria Town Karachi for Rs7.512 million per month.

During a question and answer session, which was about the Sindh Local Government Department's affairs, provincial legislature came to know that Karachi Water and Sewerage Board supplies water to Bahria Town every month.

Parliamentary Secretary Local Government Department, Saleem Baloch told lawmakers that the government fetches Rs Rs7.512 million per month from the water connection.

The Q&A session that had exclusive time allocation of one hour ended in just five minutes as five of the questions was postponed due to lawmakers' absence. The house started its business one and a half hour late from its schedule but found very thin attendance. Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho, Sindh Health Minister, told the house that 14 dialysis machines out of 20 at Larkana's Chandka Medical College are operational. The defected machines, she said, are being revamped.

She said that the 11 new dialysis machines need RO plant to run, while replying to PTI's minority legislator Sanjay Gangwani, who claimed in his call attention notice that the concerned hospital in Larkana has no machines to carry out patients' dialysis. He said that there are 250 registered patients at the hospital who are facing difficulties due to defected RO plants. He said that only 40 patients are being provided medical treatment. "Once the RO plants start working the dialysis machines will also become operational," the health minister assured the house, adding that more such machines will also be provided to the hospital.

The house also introduced the Sindh Agriculture Produce Markets (Amendment) Bill 2019 but turned down Khurram Sher Zaman's adjournment motion on poor law and order in the city. According to the motion 12 people have been murdered in target killing incidents so far this year. Sindh Energy Minister Imtiaz Shaikh claimed the government has restored peace in the city under the leadership of Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and defended the killing by saying that such number of killings even happen in London every year.

<https://epaper.brecorder.com/2019/12/05/5-page/813588-news.html>

WSSP DRAFTS WATER, SANITATION MASTER PLAN

By Our Correspondent Published: December 5, 2019

PESHAWAR: To improve the water and sanitation services in the city apart from ensuring the sustainability of the organization, the key water and sanitation organization in the city plans to prepare a new master plan under which it has identified some 250,000 previously unregistered households which will be registered with the company.

This was disclosed by the Water and Sanitation Services Companies (WSSP) in a statement on Wednesday.

The households have been identified during an 18-month-long Customer Perception Survey which ends this month.

The survey is part of the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Water Governance Programme (K-PWGP), which is being funded by the Swiss Development Corporation.

Launched in October 2018, the survey documented current and future water and sanitation needs of 67 union councils (UCs) of Peshawar, including 45 urban and 22 rural union councils.

During the survey, the WSSP identified as many as 90,000 unregistered households in Zone-A, which comprises nine urban union councils. A further 80,000 houses were identified in Zone-B, providing services to 21 union councils.

Similarly, 64,000 households were identified in seven UCs under Zone-C. Another 26,000 households were identified in seven UCs of Zone-D.

“Registration of these households will be a step towards financial self-sustainability and lead towards improvement in services,” said WSSP Chief Executive Officer Syed Zafar Ali Shah.

Under the water governance programme, which will continue for two years, the WSSP built the capacity of its field and management staff operational and management for the better services delivery.

To meet the future needs of its growing consumer base, the sanitation company started working on a master plan under the K-PWGP.

The plan will help WSSP assess water supply needs and quantity of waste generation, keeping in view the current increase in the number of consumers until 2048.

One of the key needs identified is the collection and disposal of waste. The company said that it currently disposes of around 780 tonnes of waste daily. This is expected to rise to 1,117 tonnes by 2048.

“WSSP will improve its resources such as manpower and machinery in light of the recommendations proposed under the Master Plan to efficiently caters to needs of consumers,” Shah said.

The survey also highlighted the requirements of households in 22 rural union councils, including the number of tube-wells required and the quantity of waste generation till 2048.

Under the plan, it has been proposed to redesign the drainage system. Sites for setting up sewerage treatment plants have also been proposed. It has been recommended that sites for these waste treatment and transfer stations should be acquired in different localities.

Moreover, a robust business plan was finalised to make the utility financially self-sustainable.

For mass sensitization on water conservation and sanitation, the WSSP has set up a separate wing called Citizen Liaison Cell. The cell will hold awareness workshops and sessions to engage with the community to keep the city clean.

The company set up community awareness departments to sensitise community regarding hazards of dumping of waste at improper places.

Published in The Express Tribune, December 5th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2111904/1-wssp-drafts-water-sanitation-master-plan/>

GOVT TO RAISE WATER DISPUTE AT CCI MEETING

By Mohammad Zafar Published: December 5, 2019

QUETTA: Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Kamal Khan Aliyani on Wednesday pledged to raise province’s stance in the next Council of Common Interest (CCI) meeting over its claim on its natural resources in light of the 18th Amendment.

Balochistan government has decided to secure province’s rights and interest in the exploration of oil, gas and other reserves.

Kamal directed secretaries to review all legal and technical aspects regarding the government’s case in this regard.

“The incumbent government will secure provincial rights and public interest at every forum, thus a strong stance would be adopted in the next CCI meeting,” Kamal told the meeting.

Provincial ministers Zahoor Buledi, Mir Asad Baloch, Engineer Zamrak Khan Achakzai, Mir Nasebullah Marri, Muhammad Khan Lehri, Chief Secretary Balochistan Fazeel Asghar and provincial secretaries were present on the occasion.

The meeting agreed on establishing a commission and reaching a consensus of all stakeholders regarding the release of licence and registration over Pakistan Standard Quality Control Authority.

The provincial government also decided to call a Task Force meeting in view of the burgeoning population in Balochistan.

The chief minister vowed to raise water issue between Sindh and Balochistan under the 1991 IRSA treaty as well. Earlier, Kamal expressed satisfaction over 16-month performance of the ruling Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) and reiterated the need for timely completion of development schemes in the province.

He was addressing senior party leaders and workers at the BAP Secretariat in Quetta, adding that though BAP was a newly formed party, with a better mechanism, it has put Balochistan on the development track.

“Being a fairly new political party, BAP accepted the challenge to revamp a dilapidated governing structure in Balochistan and succeeded in implementing good governance,” said Kamal, adding that the incumbent government unveiled an effective policy which is strengthening Balochistan’s economy.

He further said the government has allocated equal uplift funds for all the districts to carry on an equal development process across the province.

“All coalition parties in the provincial government are utilising their earnest efforts for Balochistan’s progress,” Kamal maintained.

Citing fiscal budget for 2019-20, the CM said for the first time in the history of Balochistan, annual budget was being utilised for public’s relief, explaining that in July 2019, the government commenced tendering of all schemes, while weekly meetings were also being held to review progress on on-going and new projects.

“BAP is representing Balochistan, hence our performance would enhance the party’s status among the people of the province,” Kamal added, as he directed party leaders and workers to intensify efforts to spread the party’s network in every corner of the region.

Stressing upon unity and discipline within the party, he added that fortunately, along with having representation in the Senate and the parliament, now the BAP has elected members in KPK Assembly as well.

Secretary General of Balochistan Awami Party Senator Manzoor Kakar and senior party leaders also addressed the gathering.

Published in The Express Tribune, December 5th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2111889/1-govt-raise-water-dispute-cci-meeting/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 09th TO 15th 2019

NBP RE-INVESTED RS12BN COLLECTED AS DAM FUND, SC TOLD

Iftikhar A. Khan December 13, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court was informed on Thursday that the National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) had re-invested an amount of Rs12 billion collected as the Diamer-Bhasha dam fund.

A representative of the NBP told a five-judge bench of the Supreme Court hearing the case that the amount had been re-invested on Nov 21 and profit on the amount was due by Feb 27, 2020.

The court, while referring to complaints of non-collection of fund, directed the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) to “remove obstacles” in the way of transfer of donations by overseas Pakistanis for the dam fund and submit a report on the matter.

“Overseas Pakistanis want to contribute to the dam fund but banks are not collecting [donations],” Justice Ijazul Ahsan remarked and said that the SBP should look into the complaints.

Court asks State Bank to bring back funds stuck with embassies abroad

“All Pakistanis should be able to donate towards the dam fund,” the court observed.

Justice Gulzar Ahmed, who was heading the bench, said the fund had been established on the orders of the Supreme Court and asked as to which banks were disobeying the apex court’s orders.

He also said there were reports of a “huge amount” of money which was contributed to the dam fund that had not been transferred to Pakistan. He asked the SBP lawyer to remove the obstacles and bring back the money currently stuck with the country’s diplomatic missions abroad. “All Pakistani banks should resolve issues in the transfer of funds,” said Justice Ahmed.

Justice Ahsan observed that there were reports that private banks were not collecting donations for the dam fund, despite the fact that it was a direct order from the Supreme Court.

The bench also reviewed a progress report submitted by an implementation committee formed on the apex court’s orders.

The bench noted that two tribes had raised a dispute over the land which was bought from them by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and was then handed over to the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) to work on the dam project.

The counsel for the tribes told the apex court that “90 per cent of the land” that had been acquired for the project belonged to their clients and argued that the government was not paying the right price for it.

Wapda’s lawyer Saad Rasool told the court that the dispute was between the government and the tribes and the authority was not a party to it. He added that the government has already handed over 900 acres of the land to Wapda. “You shouldn’t ask for price that is four times more than the land is worth,” the bench advised and added that the court cannot resolve the matter of the land’s price and pointed out that it was the KP government which was acquiring the land and not Wapda. The court directed the tribes to go to the “relevant forum” to resolve the matter and wrapped up the matter.

The total land required for the project is 37,419 acres which included 19,062 acres of state and 18,357 acres of private land under cultivation, barren and other uses. A sizeable number of government, community and business infrastructures will be affected by the project.

During the course of hearing, Wapda told the court that the government had not yet released Rs200 billion. The court directed the secretaries of the ministries of power and finance to release the funds.

Published in Dawn, December 13th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1522015/nbp-re-invested-rs12bn-collected-as-dam-fund-sc-told>

SEPARATE WATER SUPPLY SYSTEMS SOUGHT FOR URBAN, RURAL AREAS

The Newspaper’s Staff Correspondent December 13, 2019

HYDERABAD: Separate water supply systems should be put in place to address complaints of people living in urban and rural areas because both populations have different dimensions of their water-related problems.

This was suggested by Water and Sanitation Agency (Wasa) director finance Mohsin Jafri at a meeting of the advisory committee of the Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (Sida) held on Wednesday to discuss the draft of Sindh’s water policy. Sida’s Managing Director (MD) Wali Mohammad Naich chaired the meeting.

He pointed out that before the water policy was finalised, necessary amendments should be made in water-related laws considering the present-day needs.

The Sida MD said that due to climate change and rising temperature, water availability was getting scarce.

Considering those changes in weather patterns, Sindh government’s Planning and Development Board (P&DB), irrigation department and Sida had been working on a draft of water policy since 2017. Sida was leading the process and proposals were sought from different civil society organisations, growers’ bodies at workshops organised in different districts and those activities were still continuing, he said, adding that water stakeholders were part of the advisory committee.

Sida’s general manager (GM) for research Ehsan Leghari informed the meeting that the Sindh government had formed a steering committee to work on that objective. Sida’s consultations with the stakeholders and study would be shared with the Sindh government for water policy, he added.

GM (transition) Farzana Abbasi informed the meeting that the policy being drafted would help resolve all problems relating to the water sector. It would enable government to come up with a vision for the sector, she said, adding that the water policy would address issues of surface and groundwater reserves and ensure availability of water for consumers.

The meeting also approved proposals to conduct study on the socio-economic issues of Manchhar Lake by Mehran University of Engineering and Technology (MUET) and study by Sindh Agriculture University (SAU) Tandojam on modern technologies to store water for the agriculture sector.

Sindh Chamber of Agriculture general secretary Zahid Bhurgari said that sustainability of every policy was linked with funds' availability. He said that many organisations, which were consumers of Sida, were not paying their bills, adding that there were consumers who got water from Sida for lesser tariff and then sold it at higher rates. He said the water policy should also resolve that matter.

Wasa's director finance said that the authority perforce released drainage water into freshwater bodies and therefore it was necessary that a drain should be built parallel to canals to take waste water to the outskirts of the city and the same should be released into canals after treatment.

He said four water filtration plants were built, but Wasa did not have any budget for their recurring expenditure on maintenance.

Sindh Agriculture University's Prof Dr Munir Mangrio said the university had already conducted a study and experiment on water conservation.

The meeting opposed construction of dam to close those sources which supply water to Manchhar Lake and release of effluent of Main Nara Valley Drain (MNVD) after its treatment into the lake. It said that all those hill torrents that served as freshwater sources of the lake should not be closed.

Officials of all related departments, organisations and other stakeholders attended the meeting.

Published in Dawn, December 13th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1521946/separate-water-supply-systems-sought-for-urban-rural-areas>

DAM FUND AGAIN

Editorial December 14, 2019

FROM the remarks made by a few judges of the Supreme Court, it seems that interest in the dam fund might be revived all over again.

The fund was originally set up in July 2018, ostensibly to collect funds for the Diamer-Bhasha and Mohmand dams, and the website of the Supreme Court specifically solicited donations in the name of the construction of these reservoirs. A few months later, the newly elected Prime Minister Imran Khan added his voice to the call for donations, especially urging overseas Pakistanis to contribute to the effort to raise funds via voluntary donations for an infrastructure building enterprise that was slated to cost upward of Rs1.4tr for the Diamer-Bhasha dam alone.

To date, a little over Rs11bn has been collected, mostly from domestic contributions, and many of those made by deducting the pay of salaried people, including within the armed forces. Since the retirement of chief justice Saqib Nisar, who had launched the venture with much zeal, all parties lost interest in the fund and donations petered out to nearly zero.

In its detailed judgement on the dam fund case, the court had specifically written that the funds would not be used for any purpose other than paying for the construction of the dam — something that is expected to take a decade, if indeed the venture ever reaches that stage. So the National Bank made arrangements for placement of the funds in treasury bills until then.

Now the court wants to know why the donations have halted, and particularly why overseas Pakistanis have not deposited larger sums. State Bank data shows that of the Rs11.75bn collected thus far, only Rs1.7bn appear to be from overseas Pakistanis. It seems that the impression, going by the court's questions, is that overseas Pakistanis are facing hurdles in transferring funds into the accounts where donations can be accepted. So the State Bank has been ordered to take appropriate action to remove these hurdles, whatever they may be.

It needs to be repeated once again that the entire project is not only a futile attempt, but completely off the mark when it comes to the question of infrastructure finance.

The dam fund is now a confused and haphazard exercise that has done more harm than good by absorbing too much of the state's attention as well as giving the people the questionable impression that the government will use their donations for funding the dams.

It is high time to wrap the whole thing up, and consider placing the funds collected thus far into the construction of small dams in Balochistan instead. That way at least the spirit under which the donations were sought, and

commitments made, can be lived up to. It is evident that the venture should never have been launched in the first place.

Published in Dawn, December 14th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1522209/dam-fund-again>

SINDH CM VOWS TO RESOLVE WATER DISTRIBUTION ISSUE

By Our Correspondent Published: December 14, 2019

QUETTA: The Balochistan chief secretary has apprised the Sindh chief minister of the problems being faced by the province in receiving its share of water from Pat Feeder and Kirthar canals.

According to a statement issued by the information department of the Balochistan government on Friday, Murad Ali Shah has assured Capt (ret'd) Fazeel Asghar of full cooperation in resolving the water distribution issue.

“The Sindh government will cooperate with Balochistan and [its] due share will be considered,” said the chief minister while chairing a meeting at the CM Secretariat in Karachi on Friday.

Both the chief secretaries of Balochistan and Sindh, irrigation minister for Sindh and other officers were in attendance. A three-point agenda was discussed: inequitable distribution of Hub Dam water, encroachment on Pat Feeder Canal and short supply of water from Pat Feeder and Kirthar canals.

Murad directed the Sindh technical departments with devising a viable water distribution plan to address the reservations of Balochistan.

CM Murad was apprised by Chief Secretary Asghar that Balochistan was not receiving its share of water from Sindh. “Since 1991, Balochistan has not gotten its due share of water from Pat Feeder, Kirthar, Uch and Manuthi canals,” informed the chief secretary.

He raised the issue of inequitable distribution of Hub Dam storage water between the two provinces, saying 71% of the dam’s catchment area falls in Balochistan, whereas only 29% in Sindh but still the apportionment of water has not been made accordingly. “Balochistan has been allocated 36% while Sindh is getting 63.44%,” he added.

Published in The Express Tribune, December 14th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2117416/1-sindh-cm-vows-resolve-water-distribution-issue/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 16th TO 22th 2019

WATERCOURSES TO BE BUILT FOR DERA BARREN LANDS: CM

Bureau Report December 16, 2019

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Mahmood Khan has said that watercourses would be built to bring barren lands under cultivation in Dera Ismail Khan district.

He directed to initiate work on Chashma Right Bank Lift Canal (CRBC) project which would be made possible jointly by the agriculture and irrigation departments. He said that this project would help to irrigate more than 300,000 acres of agricultural land.

He was talking to a delegation from DI Khan led by Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs Ali Amin Gandapur here on Sunday, said an official statement.

Mahmood Khan informed the delegation that proposed Peshawar-DI Khan expressway would enhance commercial and economic activities in the area.

He said that with the completion of Gomal Zam Dam project, water supply would be available to rural areas. The meeting was briefed about the upgradation of agriculture faculty to the level of agriculture university, establishment of nurseries for fisheries, watercourses, CRBC project, road infrastructure maintenance, drinking water problems and other important issues of DI Khan.

The chief minister asked the deputy commissioner of DI Khan and local government officials to resolve the issues of drainage in the city on priority basis. He also directed to resolve problem of drinking water in Tank, adding that the schemes in this respect had already been identified.

He directed the deputy commissioner, Tank, to ensure implementation of all development schemes in consultation with elected representatives. About the projects in education sector of DI Khan, it was stated that Rs360 million had

been allocated for 85 different schemes in the education sector. It was added that establishment of 11 new primary schools had been completed while work on four remaining schools was underway.

Five mosque schools have been converted into regular schools while one is in the tendering phase. Similarly, five primary schools have been upgraded to middle level and five high schools to the higher secondary level.

Moreover, two schools have been completed as part of the rehabilitation plan of schools while work on remaining four such schools is also in progress.

Mahmood Khan said that provision of doctors and other allied staff for new wards of DI Khan hospital would be ensured on priority. He said that the provincial government would ensure availability of required staff in all hospitals of the province.

Published in Dawn, December 16th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1522547/watercourses-to-be-built-for-dera-barren-lands-cm>

PER CAPITA WATER AVAILABILITY COMES DOWN TO 908 CUBIC METERS: WAPDA CHIEF

By RECORDER REPORT on December 19, 2019

WAPDA Chairman Lieutenant General Muzammil Hussain (retd) has said that per capita water availability in the country has come down from 5650 cubic meter in 1951 to an alarming level of 908 cubic meter per annum, pushing us to the stage of water-scarce country.

He was briefing a delegation of the PAF Air War College, Karachi, headed by Air Vice Marshal Zulfiqar Ahmed Qureshi on Wednesday. During the visit, the delegation was briefed about the water scenario, development plans and future challenges in water and hydropower sectors.

He said Pakistan can store only 10 percent of its annual river flows against the world average of 40 percent. Ironically, instead of increasing water storage capacity, Pakistan has lost about one-fourth storage of the dams. The live water storage capacity that used to be 16.26 million acre feet (MAF) in 1976 has reduced to 13.68 MAF, which equals to only 30 days carry over capacity. India has carry over capacity of 170 days, Egypt 700 days and America 900 days. The carry over water storage capacity has to be increased from 30 days to 120 days. Likewise, the ratio of low-cost hydel electricity also requires to be drastically improved. The situation can be improved by putting a robust development mechanism in place, said the Chairman.

Elaborating the strategy for harnessing water and hydropower resources, the Chairman said that WAPDA is committed to adding five MAF to water storage and 4600 MW hydropower generation by 2025 and eight MAF water storage and 16000 MW power generation up to 2030 by completing various projects. Prompt decision making by the all concerned and availability of adequate funds are key to implementing these projects, he added.

The Chairman said that Mohmand Dam, commenced in May 2019, is progressing in accordance with the schedule, while construction on Diamer Bhasha Dam will also start very soon. Both dams will have a cumulative gross water storage capacity of 9.3 MAF and power generation capacity of 5300 MW, he further said.

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UNDERGROUND CONTAMINATION: NOT A DROP WORTH DRINKING IN QAMBAR-SHAHDADKOT

By Hafeez Tunio Published: December 19, 2019

LARKANA: In Sindh's Qambar-Shahdadkot district, many of its over 1.5 million villagers have to walk for hours to fetch water. Clean and readily accessible water is the basic right of every human being, but for many people in Sindh, it is still a luxury.

The Express Tribune recently carried out a survey in 20 villages of Bohar Union Council which revealed that water, obtained through pumps installed in homes, is salty and brackish. Water samples were collected from all the 20 villages and a TDS meter, which indicates the total dissolved solids (TDS) of a solution, was used to check the quality of water. Shockingly, 95 per cent of samples were found to be unfit for human consumption.

The bad quality and taste of water compel villagers to use pumps installed far away from the village, particularly in agricultural lands or near the banks of canals as the quality and taste of water there is comparatively better, as shown by the TDS meter.

The survey showed that in Thorhi Bijar village of Qambar tehsil, not a single house out of a total of 400 houses had access to clean drinking water. Per the meter reading, the concentration of TDS in water obtained from the village ranged from 150 to 250 parts per million (PPM) against the normal level of 50 to 300 PPM.

"We used to get fresh water in our homes a long time ago. Unfortunately, water from both the well and the hand pump in our house has turned brackish and there is also an unpleasant smell in the water," said Abdul Malik, a villager. "My entire family has to walk for miles to get water from the hand pumps set up in agricultural lands. In the summer, we have to go there thrice a week while in winter, we make one trip per week to the pumps to fulfill our drinking needs." Inamul Haq, a primary school teacher from the village, insisted that his hand pump provides good quality of water as compared to the rest of the village. However, his claims were proved to be false as the meter showed 2,600 PPM of TDS in the water – far beyond the normal range.

"My wife has a stone in her right kidney. I have no idea whether it is because of the water or because of some other reason. From today onwards, we will give up drinking water from our hand pump," he said.

The villagers said that many of them suffer from kidney-related diseases, but due to lack of awareness and resources, they have resigned themselves to fate instead of demanding a solution.

"I am suffering from kidney disease but Allah will help me," said Sharaf Uddin, a farmer.

Meanwhile, hundreds of people were seen queuing near hand pumps located next to a canal in Ghailo Khoso village during the survey. The hand pumps are the only sources of freshwater for the entire village, comprising about a hundred households.

The TDS level of the water obtained from the hand pumps stood at 400 PPM, while around 20 samples were collected from throughout the village to check the contamination level. The results revealed that all the samples had a TDS level ranging from 2,000 PPM to 3,100 PPM, making the water completely unfit for consumption.

Similarly, drinking water samples collected from Drigh Soomar Chandio, Gharhi Kartio and Chana, among other villages, were found to be contaminated. Most of the people in these villages, though, are compelled by poverty and a lack of resources to drink this unclean water.

"There is a dire need to conduct a survey on kidney patients in this district because contaminated water has aggravated the problem in almost every village," said Dr Lal Mohammad Junejo, who works at the Basic Health Center (BHU) located in Thorhi Bijar village. "Every day, we receive many patients with complaints of diarrhoea and kidney problems."

Speaking to The Express Tribune, some local activists demanded that the government provide them with solar-based reverse osmosis (RO) plants or drinking water schemes so that people can have access to clean drinking water.

"We have heard that the Sindh government is providing RO plants to BHUs and government schools. We request the authorities concerned to provide us with one of them for our BHU too," Dr Junejo said.

The majority of the people who spoke to The Express Tribune complained that their elected representatives had never visited them after the last general elections. Per sources, Aamir Magsi of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) had won

the national assembly seat, while Sardar Chandio was elected as a member of the provincial assembly from the constituency.

Despite numerous attempts, neither Magsi nor Chandio could be contacted. However, the chairman of the Qambar district council, Qasim Khoso, said that the government could not provide RO plants or any other water schemes in the affected villages due to a lack of resources and funding.

Published in The Express Tribune, December 19th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2120739/1-underground-contamination-not-drop-worth-drinking-qambar-shahdadkot/>

WATER DISTRIBUTION

By Editorial Published: December 22, 2019

PTI lawmakers from Karachi have asked the prime minister to give the distribution of water in the mega city under the charge of Rangers to resolve the water crisis. Now it is the sole mandate of the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board, which is under the direct control of the PPP-led Sindh government. Proper distribution of water has been a long-persisting issue in the most populated city of the country. The demand by the PTI seems to be driven by good intentions, as they see that the continued water crisis in the city is resulting from collusion between the tanker mafia and corrupt officials within the KWSB. The PTI legislators recently had a meeting with the PM in Islamabad where they discussed Karachi's pressing issues like the growing water shortage, deteriorating public transport, very bad state of cleanliness in most parts of the city, broken roads, street crimes and shortage of gas. The PM has taken notice of the grievances and he will likely visit Karachi soon.

The distribution of water in the city was in control of Rangers till a few years ago. Then the water supply situation was not as bad it is now. Now the provincial government's response to the proposal is to be seen. As things stand the performance of the KWSB in both water supply and solid waste disposal has been unsatisfactory. It is generally acknowledged that there is enough water to meet the city's needs, and it is corruption and incompetence that are responsible for the shortage; it is because of an inefficient delivery system. This is borne out by the fact that plenty of water is available through tankers and other water sellers.

Karachi is facing a plethora of issues. Even impartial observers can say a 'soft destruction' has taken place in the city. Things can take a turn for the better only if there is political will. There is a serious shortage of logic.

Published in The Express Tribune, December 22nd, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2122605/6-water-distribution/>

NEWS COVERAGE PERIOD FROM DECEMBER 23rd TO 29th 2019

MULTAN'S BRITISH-ERA WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM DYSFUNCTIONAL

By APP Published: December 23, 2019

MULTAN: The old Over Head Reservoir (OHR) and the first water supply system with a capacity of 40,000 gallons introduced during the British era for the city, is one of the 21 dysfunctional water tanks for a long time.

Constructed in 1932 with steel plates as per WASA record at water works road near Lohari Gate, around 80-year-old OHR, commonly known as a water tank, was used to supply water for the residents of walled city by 2015 before it was dysfunctional.

The Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) sources told APP on Sunday that the tank was 80 feet high from the ground level which can store 1,800,000 litres of water with a complete network of water supply. According to sources, the OHR was closed in 2015 due to leakage which was the cause by dengue growth.

The OHR was used to supply water to 5 hydrants before its closure, the sources said, adding that the rest of the 20 OHRs have a capacity of 100,000 gallons that have been non-functional for the last decade. The OHRs were built at Gulghast market, TB Road, Shah Shams Colony, W- D- G- blocks of Shah Rukne Alam Colony, Mumtazabad, Qasimpur Colony, Timber Market, Naqashband Colony, Multan Board Office, Langay Khan Bagh, Tukhlaq Town Hassan Parwana Colony, and MDA Road.

WASA Deputy Director Abdul Salam confirmed that all 21 OHRs had been dysfunctional for a very long time and water was being supplied directly to citizens. The repair of all OHRs had been proposed in Annual Development

Programme (ADP) 2019-20, he said, adding that 20 OHRs went dysfunctional almost a decade ago due to some reasons while the one at Water Works Road went non-functional in 2015.

The deputy director said that the water was stored in OHR and was supplied to the general public. When the level of water lowers down, the tank was filled again from tube wells connected to the OHRs.

Replying to a question, he said that though fire-fighting was the job of Rescue 1122 and Fire Brigade, WASA helps these departments in case of emergency by providing water from its five fire hydrants through turning on tube wells. He said the WASA could improve water supply in the city if all the OHRs were made functional. WASA was supplying water thrice a day for two hours each time, he said.

Municipal Corporation Multan (MCM) CO, Shahid Iqbal said that he joined his office over an hour years ago and had no information about it. Riaz Khan, an old dweller of the walled city, said that the water reservoir was much beneficial for clean drinking water for them. He added that at times, they do not get water thrice a day from WASA which causes problems especially for household women who have to wash clothes and cook food every day.

Muhammad Yousuf, an octogenarian resident of Ghanta Ghar told APP that OHR at waterworks road existed since his childhood. He urged the authorities concerned to make all OHRs functional at the earliest.

Published in The Express Tribune, December 23rd, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2123212/1-multans-british-era-water-supply-system-dysfunctional/>

CENTRE TO CONSULT PROVINCES ON GAS ROYALTY, WATER DISTRIBUTION

The Newspaper's Staff Reporter December 24, 2019

ISLAMABAD: The Centre on Monday decided to take the provinces on board on issues of royalty on gas, distribution of water and appointment of chairman and members of the Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda).

The decisions were taken at a meeting of the Council of Common Interests (CCI) presided over by Prime Minister Imran Khan. It was attended by chief ministers Usman Buzdar of Punjab, Mahmood Khan of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Syed Murad Ali Shah of Sindh and Jam Kamal Khan Alyani of Balochistan.

The meeting approved all conditions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for Extended Fund Facility (EFF) for Pakistan 2019-22 structural benchmark and performance criteria, including amendment to the Oil & Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) Ordinance 2002. Under the decision, Ogra will be empowered to implement the gas tariff to be set by it.

CCI decides to take provinces on board over appointment of Wapda chief

A proposal was placed before the CCI regarding issuance of census result/notification, but it was deferred due to reservations expressed by Sindh over the new census results on the basis of which fresh delimitations were carried out before the 2018 general elections.

Sindh had already expressed concern that less than actual population was shown in the province in the last census conducted in 2017.

According to an official press release issued late in night, the most competent person will be appointed Wapda chairman.

It may be mentioned that Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Information Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan told a press conference after the seven-hour CCI meeting that the chairman and members of Wapda would be appointed in consultation with the provinces. The chairman would be picked from the four provinces on rotation, she added. The CCI meeting decided to form a committee for fair distribution of water among the provinces and a modern telemeter system would be introduced to know the quantity of water in reservoirs.

It was decided that the provinces would be given Rs105 billion under the head of net hydel profit to be adjusted by the National Electric Power Authority (Nepra). The CCI decided to launch the devolved programme of health and population welfare in the provinces to control the growing population in the country.

The meeting approved Alternative and Renewable Energy-2019 under which the provinces can make their own projects to meet the growing demand for electricity.

The Centre will make decision regarding workers' pension and other benefits in light of the international practice.

"We cannot allow our workers to suffer. I feel that this should be done at the federal level so that the rights of workers are duly protected," the prime minister was quoted as saying.

On the issue of declaring liquefied natural gas (LNG) as gas or petroleum product, PM's aide Nadeem Babar was asked to resolve it in consultation with Sindh.

The CCI approved the formation of a committee for expanding and interpreting Articles 158 and 172 of the Constitution relating to royalty on gas and abandoned and owner-less properties, minerals, oil and gas, etc.

The meeting approved amendments to the Petroleum Exploration and Production Policy 2012 and decided that on the issue of exploration and production licences or their renewals, provinces would be taken on board and they would be made partner in the process.

On the sidelines of the meeting, Prime Minister Khan met the Sindh chief minister and discussed with him issues relating to development of the province.

When the meeting was in progress, PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said at a press conference in Karachi that the Sindh chief minister would apprise the prime minister of problems confronting the province. "I hope the prime minister does not only listen to him [CM] but also does something to solve the problems," he added.

Published in Dawn, December 24th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1524046>

INDIA UNVEILS PLAN TO TACKLE WATER SHORTAGES

Reuter December 26, 2019

NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday launched a 60 billion rupee (\$842 million) plan to tackle water shortages in the country's seven heartland states where agriculture is a mainstay.

India, the world's second-most populous country, faces the worst long-term water crisis in its history as demand outstrips supply, threatening farm output and overall economic growth in Asia's third-largest economy. Almost every sector of the \$2.6 trillion economy is dependent on water, especially agriculture, which sustains two-thirds of India's 1.3 billion people.

"Water shortages in the country not only affect individuals and families; the crisis also has an effect on India's development," Modi said. "We need to prepare the new India to deal with every single aspect of the crisis."

The plan launched by Modi would help replenish ground water and boost overall availability in Rajasthan, Karnataka, Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat states, which produce staples such as rice, wheat, sugar and oilseeds.

India is the world's leading producer of an array of farm goods, and nearly 60pc of the irrigation for agriculture comes from ground water, mainly through electric water pumps.

Published in Dawn, December 26th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1524429/india-unveils-plan-to-tackle-water-shortages>

HYDROPOWER PROJECTS: PM GIVEN BRIEFING

By RECORDER REPORT on December 27, 2019

The completion of important dams and hydropower projects, including Mohmand Dam, Dasu Hydropower Project, Tarbela Four (Extension) and Diamer Bhasha Dam by 2027 would bring in 9620MW of additional electricity and 11.3 million acre feet of water in the country.

This was informed to Prime Minister Imran Khan Thursday during a meeting, which reviewed the progress on important hydropower projects and the related matters.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Water Resources Muhammad Faisal Vawda, Secretary Water Resources Muhammad Ashraf, Water and Power Development Authority (Wapda) Chairman Lt-Gen Muzammil Hussain (Retd) and others.

The meeting was informed that due to the above projects, over Rs 23 billion would be spent on social development which in turn would help create 23,000 job opportunities.

The prime minister was told that the construction of Mohmand Dam, which started in mid 2019 and to be completed by 2024, would enable the country to store 1.2 million acre feet of additional water and generate 800 mega watts of additional electricity.

It was further informed that the Dasu Hydropower Project (Phase 1), to be started in 2020 and completed in 2024, would help generate 2360MW of additional electricity. Similarly, the Dasu Hydropower Project (Phase 2), to be started in 2025 and completed in 2027, would make available another 2160 mega watts of electricity. The meeting was told that the construction of Diamer Bhasha Dam, which would start in 2020 and complete in 2027, would enable the country to store an additional 8.1 million acre feet of water and generate 4500 mega watts of additional electricity.

Regarding the Terbela Four (Extension) Project, the prime minister was informed that the World Bank had termed it the most successful project, which had been completed timely and at a low cost.

As regards the Dasu Hydropower project, the Wapda chairman apprised the prime minister that the issue of availability of land for the project had been resolved.

About the Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project, Lt-Gen Muzammil(Retd) informed the meeting that the project, after its completion in April 2018, was running and had so far generated 6.2 billion units of electricity. The project had added electricity worth Rs 54 billion to the national grid, he added.

Giving a detailed briefing on the construction of Diamer Bhasha Dam, he said the project would enable 6.4 million acre feet of live water storage, besides making available 18.1 billion units of renewable energy per annum.

The prime minister, while expressing his satisfaction over the progress on hydropower projects, said enhancing the water storage capacity and generating cheaper electricity were among the government's priorities.

He said the effective use of precious natural resources like water played a pivotal role in agriculture and the country's economic development.

The prime minister said cheaper electricity would not only help overcome the shortage of electricity but also promote the industrial sector and make the country's products competitive in the international market.

The government was committed to ensure uninterrupted completion of the projects and would extend all possible assistance in that respect, he added. The prime minister directed the relevant ministries to give special priority in addressing the issues relating to the hydropower projects, keeping in view their importance in the country's economic development.

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<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/12/27/556748/hydropower-projects-pm-given-briefing/>

COMPLETION OF DASU PROJECT LINKED TO AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS

By MUSHTAQ GHUMMAN on December 27, 2019

Secretary Ministry of Water Resources, Muhammad Ashraf said on Thursday that if 4,320MW Dasu hydel project is completed on schedule, it would be a miracle.

He was giving a briefing to the Senate Committee on Water Resources headed by Senator Shamim Afridi. The committee was furious at the absence of Chairman Wapda, Lt-Gen Muzzmal Hussain (retd) yet again and decided to move privilege motion against him in the House. The estranged senators Rana Muqbool Ahmed Khan and Sassui Paliyo announced to move a privilege motion. Senator Pir Sabir Shah and senator Brig John Kenneth Williams (retd) supported the proposal.

Secretary Water Resources urged the Standing Committee to ensure timely release of funds allocated in the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) so that projects are completed in accordance with the timeline.

"The reason for delay in projects is due to non release of funds. The completion of Dasu project by February 2025 is linked to availability of funds," he added.

In reply to a question raised by senator Waleed Iqbal about purchase of land for the project, the secretary Water Resources said that there was no issue after the increase in amount from Rs 486 billion to Rs 511 billion as the affectees were asking for the same rates for their land which were paid to the affectees of Diamer Bhasha dam. Federal Cabinet in October 2019 approved revised land acquisition cost amounting to Rs 36.914 billion on account of revised land rates and compensation for developments (built up property etc) made in project area after imposition of section-4 of Land Acquisition Act-1894.

Total required amount for the project is 9,875MW. The authorities have already acquired 742 acres of land, whereas land awards of 1,277 acres will be made till March 2020, 1,407 acres by June 2020, 6,449 acres by end of December 2020. The Project Director stated that if Diamer Bhasha dam is constructed, life of Tarbela Dam will be extended by

30 more years. He said, Diamer Bhasha is a very important project and if it is not constructed, run on the river projects like Dasu will also be silted.

The project commenced in June 2017. Its original completion date was February 2025 which has been revised up to February 2025 due to acquisition of land issues.

Giving briefing about preparatory work, the committee was informed that 10 contracts amounting to Rs 50 billion relating to project colony, relocation of Karakorum Highway (KKH), access roads, 132 transmission line activities are in progress.

For main works, two contracts (dam and powerhouse) amounting to Rs 180 billion has been awarded. Construction activities on diversion tunnels and underground works areas are in progress.

The committee was further briefed that contract agreement with M/s General Electric-PowerChina Zhongnan JV was signed on November 25, 2019.

The committee on Water Resources in its meeting directed Irsa and all provincial irrigation departments to provide details about water distribution mechanism among the provinces and all rules and systems in place.

While discussing the matter of the land lost due to sea intrusion on different coastal districts of Sindh so far and the construction of Sindh barrage and its impact on reduction of sea intrusion the committee decided to move a privilege motion against the chairman Wapda on his continued absence from the committee.

While discussing the present status of Phase-II of the Greater Thal Canal Project the committee was told that Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been approached for financing the project and the project will change the living conditions of the people and will bring prosperity through a better canal system in the area.

The committee was also given a briefing on construction of five small dams in Balochistan: Sharan Dam in Sherani, Zama Khulgi Dam, Baratkhel Cheena Dam, Urgus Dam and Kum Khurasan Dam in Killa Saifullah. The Committee decided to write to provincial government and also directed the federal ministry to do the same to expedite the process of sending PC-1 of the projects to the federal government for approval.

Among others the meeting was attended by senators Muhammad Usman Kakar, Rana Maqbool Ahmed, Sassui Palijo, John Kenneth Williams, Syed Sabir Shah, Waleed Iqbal, Secretary Water Resources, representatives from Wapda and irrigation departments.

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<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/12/27/556724/completion-of-dasu-project-linked-to-availability-of-funds/>

PROVINCES PRESENT CONTESTED VIEWS TO ADDRESS WATER SHORTAGE

Imtiaz Ali Updated December 28, 2019

KARACHI: Adoption of the 'three-tier formula' and 'historic use' were being preferred by Punjab to address the water shortage crisis in the country, while Sindh was opposing it, contending that it was violation of the Water Accord of 1991 and that the Indus River System Authority (Irsa) had no powers to modify the accord.

Irsa was of the view that till construction of new water reservoirs to increase water storage facility in the system up to 114 MAF (million acre feet), the existing arrangement about distribution of water among the four provinces initiated in 2003 should continue.

Balochistan complained that it was not getting due share of water and Sindh was passing on shortfall to it, while Khyber Pakhtunkhwa maintained that it was facing 34 per cent shortage of water annually as it had no infrastructure. Irsa insists present arrangements of water sharing should continue

These were some of the contested views presented by the four provinces and Irsa before a committee appointed by the prime minister. The committee, led by Attorney General Anwar Mansoor Khan, had recently submitted its recommendations for addressing the water crisis to the Council of Common Interests (CCI).

The Punjab government contended that it was utilising over 54 MAF of water in 1977-82 out of a total usage of over 102 MAF by all the provinces and this was over 53pc of the total usage.

Under para 2 of the Water Accord (114.35 MAF), Punjab's share increased to 55.94 MAF but the percentage reduced to 48.9pc.

"Punjab agreed to this reduced percentage if the available supply increased to 114.35 MAF to ensure planned future development of agriculture."

It pointed out that water supplies were not increased to 114.35 MAF and it was being asked to draw 4.2pc less water.

It argued that “the proportions mentioned in para 2 of the Accord are based on volume of water which was never available and, therefore, the proportions mentioned in it (para 2) become impractical”.

It believed that if 102.73 (average system uses) were to be distributed as per para 2, Punjab would be in the ‘least advantageous position’, as it would lose 4.25 MAF of water, while Sindh would get more than the existing uses.

“The distribution of available supply according to para 2 would only be possible when the available supply is enhanced to 114.35 MAF by constructing new storage reservoirs,” argued Punjab.

Sindh maintained that the water distribution among the provinces should be made as per the shares mentioned under para 2 of the Accord instead of ‘historic uses or three-tier formula adopted by Irsa’.

It advocated that the Water Accord should be implemented in letter and spirit to ensure the due share of water and for this purpose, it had made host of demands.

The province suggested that in times of shortages and surpluses, water should be distributed as per the CCI decision dated Sept 16, 1991, where it approved 10 daily system-wise allocations, which were part and parcel of the Accord. Besides, shortages and surpluses should be shared by all stakeholders ‘on all Pakistan basis proportionately’.

Furthermore, Sindh did not agree with Punjab that the newly calculated 10 daily statements can only be used after ‘protecting existing uses and deciding on future shortages’.

The province believed that the 1977-82 historic data acted only as the ‘guideline’ for the preparation of 10 daily average as provided by para 14 (b).

It pointed out that after formation and approval of 10 daily statements as part of the accord, the 1977-82 average system uses have been acted upon and no more available.

“It would not be appropriate to link development of future storages with this provision of the Accord,” argued Sindh, adding that this was decided by the CCI on Sept 16, 1991, which was also endorsed by the law division on Oct 16, 2000.

Sindh also believed that the jurisdiction of Irsa was limited to ‘implementation of the Accord’ and it did not have the authority to modify it (Water Accord).

The province demanded that “any deviation in the Accord by so-called majority shall be beyond the competency of Irsa and be prohibited in future”.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa said that it had no storages and was experiencing 34pc of shortage annually by not utilising its full share of water owing to lack of infrastructure and the balance water was being utilised by other provinces.

KP had demanded compensation of Rs97.87 billion on account of utilising of its balance water by other provinces from 1992 to 2017.

It had also proposed to bring an amendment to the Accord as there was no provision for compensation of the water used by other provinces in it (Water Accord) and Irsa Act.

Balochistan said that it was not getting its due share of water and since 1992, Sindh had been passing on heavy shortages to it. Resultantly, it added, Balochistan faced shortfall of 43pc from 1992 to 1999 while during the said period Sindh faced average shortfall of 8pc and on average 46.94 MAF of water escaped below Kotri Barrage.

It maintained that “the lopsided distribution by Sindh compelled Irsa to exempt Balochistan from sharing of shortages”.

It pointed out that on account of exemption granted to it by Irsa, the province had faced an average shortfall of 28pc during 2000-2017, while Sindh faced shortfall of 19pc and on average 14.10 MAF of water escaped below Kotri Barrage.

Irsa advocated that its present arrangements for sharing of water should continue as they are ‘based on accepted water distributional principles and sound engineering judgment’.

It believed that if the water is distributed as per para 2 of the Accord without improving water availability in the system by constructing dams, the actual average system uses (of 1977-82) of Punjab could not remain protected, which was ‘against the spirit of the Accord’.

Published in Dawn, December 28th, 2019

<https://www.dawn.com/news/1524804/provinces-present-contested-views-to-address-water-shortage>

YEAR 2019 TURNS OUT TO BE HISTORIC FOR HYDROPOWER, WATER SECTORS

By RECORDER REPORT on December 28, 2019

The year 2019 turned out to be a historic one for development of water and hydropower resources in Pakistan, as record generation of hydel electricity was supplied to the National Grid during the year, besides initiating construction work on Mohmand Dam in May this year after five decades.

The hydel power stations owned and operated by WAPDA provided 34.678 billion units of hydel electricity – highest-ever contribution – to the system in 2019. This quantum of generation is 6.321 billion units more if compared with that of the last year i.e. 28.357 billion units.

The optimal operation of three hydropower projects, completed last year in a phased manner, proved to be a good omen for hydel generation in the country, since these projects alone generated 9.372 billion units cumulatively during their operation in 2019. This includes 4.741 billion units from Tarbela 4th Extension Hydropower Project, as many as 4.519 billion units from Neelum-Jhelum Hydropower Project and 0.111 billion units from Golen Gol Hydropower Project. Rest of generation was contributed by other hydel power stations with Tarbela Hydel Power Stations 10.831 billion units, Ghazi Barotha 6.594 billion units, Mangla 4.005 billion units and others 3.986 billion units.

Hydropower is the cheapest and most environment-friendly source of electricity. The contribution of WAPDA hydel electricity to the system greatly helped the country in meeting electricity needs and stabilizing the electricity tariff for the consumers during the year.

In addition to record hydel electricity generation in 2019, WAPDA also succeeded in achieving vital targets for construction of mega dams to avert looming water crisis in the country. In this regard, the construction of Mohmand Dam commenced on May 2, 2019. Mohmand Dam is the first mega multi-purpose dam undertaken during the last 51 years after Tarbela Dam, construction of which was started way back in 1968.

Similarly, the tedious evaluation of bids for consultancy services as well as construction works of gigantic Diamer Basha Dam is almost complete. Construction of this mega project is likely to start in next two months. Yet in another significant development, the Prime Minister has also approved Sindh Barrage Project this year to address water-related issues downstream of Kotri Barrage.

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<https://www.brecorder.com/2019/12/28/557006/year-2019-turns-out-to-be-historic-for-hydropower-water-sectors/>

PERPETUALLY IN THE PIPELINE: 10 YEARS ON, KARACHI STILL HOPES TO AVAIL FULL WATER SHARE

By Syed Ashraf Ali Published: December 29, 2019

KARACHI: With its more than 16 million-strong population, Karachi faces many problems that are often inherent to cities its size in the developing world. Its never-ending water crisis, however, has made life nothing short of an ordeal for its people.

Not only do residents need an uninterrupted supply of water for their daily domestic use but considering Karachi's status as the economic hub, its industries also need millions of gallons of water every day.

The city faces an acute shortage of water irrespective of the season. Even when its dams get full to the brim during the monsoon season, the problem persists.

Over the past decade, the population of the city has doubled, yet authorities have failed to increase the supply of water. Due to the criminal negligence of the Sindh government and the Karachi Water and Sewerage Board (KWSB), two major water-supply projects under K-IV – that were designed to supply 260 million gallons and 65 million gallons per day – have been hit with unnecessary delays. For the past three years, no progress has been seen and the completion of the projects remain a distant dream. At the same time, the up-gradation of the Dhabeji Pumping Station is also stuck in the pipeline.

Karachi needs 1,200 million gallons of water daily to sustain the needs of its population. However, the city is only supplied with 406 million gallons of water per day. Under the distribution system of the water board, 364 MGD and 42 MGD of water is provided for domestic use and the industries, respectively.

According to the information contained in documents obtained from the water board, together with the discussion held with relevant engineers, it has been learned that the approved quota for water from the Keenjhar Lake is 650 MGD. However, due to a lack of capacity in the canal system as well as in the pumps of the Dhabeji station, the total allocated amount of water is not being provided to Karachi. Instead, the city only receives a total of 510 MGD of water from the Keenjhar Lake per day, which includes 450 MGD to the Dhabeji Pumping Station, 30 MGD to the Garo Pumping Station, 25 MGD to the Pakistan Steel Mills and five MGD to the Port Qasim Authority.

As a result of the monsoon rains, a lot of water was stored at the Hub Dam due to which 100 MGD water was being supplied to Karachi. However, only 70 MGD of water reaches the Hub Pumping Station because 30 per cent of water is wasted due to the dilapidated condition of the Hub Canal. According to an estimate, billions of gallons of water has so far been wasted because of the perpetual leaks in the canal. For the past 10 years, the openings on both sides of the canal have been broken but no concrete efforts were made to fix the issue.

Similarly, throughout the decade, some years faced low rainfall because of which the Hub Dam had dried up and the water supply to Karachi was reduced to zero. That was the best opportunity for the authorities to carry out the required repair work in the canal, but the officers of the water board seemingly procrastinated and did nothing to fix the issue. Per its approved legal share, Karachi should be provided with a total of 750 MGD of water from the Keenjhar Lake and the Hub Dam but due to a lack of capacity in the water board's canal system, together with a lack of capacity in the pumps at the Dhabeji Station and the breakage in the Hub Canal, only 580 MGD of water reaches the pump houses.

The tragedy is such that the citizens of Karachi do not even get the remaining 580 MGD because of leaks and water theft which leads to a loss of 30 per cent water, which makes 174 MGD. That leaves only 406 MGD of water in the water board's system and the citizens of Karachi have to survive with this meagre quantity of water.

The last project to supply additional water to Karachi through the Keenjhar Lake was completed by the former city government during the time of the former president General Pervez Musharraf. The 100 MGD project, titled K-III, began in 2004 and was completed in a record time of two years. In 2010, the city government system was abolished as a result of which the control of the water board was handed over to the Sindh government. Since then, the performance graph of the water board been on a constant decline.

Throughout the decade, the water board initiated three major water-supply projects; the up-gradation of the Dhabeji Pumping House was started in December 2016, costing Rs1.6 billion to install six new pumps within two-and-a-half years. However, due to the incompetence of the engineers, the project was delayed for six months. Finally, the project is its final stages of completion and is expected to start in January 2020. The completion of the project will add 40 MGD of water for Karachi.

Due to the negligence of the water board officials, the excess water project worth 65 MGD has been delayed for the past three years, which was approved by the Sindh government in 2014. The inability of the engineers can be gauged from the fact that the cost of the project could not be ascertained when PC-1 was created, which was worth Rs5.9 billion.

When the water board started the construction of the project in 2017, ground facts were discovered and a revised PC-I was sent to the Sindh government, which was worth Rs11 billion. The Sindh government is yet to approve the revised PC-1.

In 2019's financial budget, the Sindh government allocated only Rs500 million for the project. Per the plan, the project has to be finished in 18 months, but even after three years, only 15 per cent of work has been done.

The K-IV is the most important water development project for Karachi. The construction work of this project started in 2016 which incurred a cost of Rs25.5 billion at the start. For the purpose, the federal and provincial governments have approved an equal contribution to the budget. The project was scheduled to be completed in 2018.

However, due to the pressure from various stakeholders, there was a change in the design which led to a sharp increase in cost. The Sindh government has handed over the task to the National Engineering Services Pakistan (NESPAK) to scrutinise the sudden change of design and the resultant increase in cost.

Published in The Express Tribune, December 29th, 2019.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2126722/1-perpetually-pipeline-10-years-karachi-still-hopes-avail-full-water-share/>