

Minutes of the 11th Meeting of Task Force for Interlinking of Rivers held on 18th October, 2019 at New Delhi

The Eleventh Meeting of Task Force for Interlinking of Rivers was held on 18th October, 2019 at New Delhi under the chairmanship of Shri Sriram Vedire Chairman, Task Force & Advisor, Ministry of Jal Shakti. List of the participants is at **Annex-I**.

While welcoming the participants, Chairman, Task Force for Interlinking of Rivers conveyed that the present Government is very keen to implement the National Perspective Plan for Water Resources Development in the country. He also highlighted about the objective of the meeting to review the Himalayan Component of National Perspective Plan (NPP), which was formulated during early eighties which depends on the consensus of neighbouring countries of Nepal and Bhutan. The Chairman then requested Director General, NWDA to take up the Agenda items for discussion.

At the outset, Director General, NWDA informed that Shri B N Navalawala former Chairman, Task Force for Interlinking of Rivers & Chief Advisor, Ministry of Jal Shakti relinquished as Chairman of Task Force and subsequently Shri Sriram Vedire, Advisor, Ministry of Jal Shakti has been appointed as Chairman and on behalf of the members, he welcomed the new Chairman and thereafter taken up agenda.

Item 11.1: Confirmation of minutes of 10th meeting of Task Force for Interlinking of Rivers held on 5th October 2018 at New Delhi

Director General, NWDA informed that the minutes of tenth meeting of the Task Force for Interlinking of Rivers (TF-ILR) held on 05.10.2018 at New Delhi were circulated to the members vide letter dated 18.10.2018. Since no comments have been received from any of the members, the Minutes of tenth meeting of the Task Force for Interlinking of Rivers were confirmed as circulated.

Item 11.2: Integration of Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal (P-K-C) Link as proposed under Peninsular Component of NPP with proposed Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project (ERCP) of Rajasthan

The Director General, NWDA briefed about the present status of Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal (P-K-C) Link as proposed under Peninsular Component of NPP and the proposal to integrate the same with Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project (ERCP). He further informed that the Detailed Project Report (DPR) of

ERCP has been prepared by WAPCOS for Government of Rajasthan and is presently under appraisal by Central Water Commission (CWC). Shri Shambhu Azad, Chief Executive Director, WAPCOS has made a presentation on ERCP. After deliberation, following decisions were taken.

1. The Chairman Task Force for ILR may initiate discussion with Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh in this regard.
2. WAPCOS should work on the technical components (like hydrology, yield series and working tables etc.) of integrating both ERCP and PKC and present them to the Task Force through NWDA.

Item 11.3: Review of link proposals under Himalayan Component of NPP

The Director General, NWDA briefed about the present status of 14 links (13 link + 1 alternative link) under Himalayan Component of National Perspective Plan (NPP) which have been identified for preparation of Feasibility Reports. He further indicated that 7 upper links are having international dimensions involving Nepal and Bhutan and remaining links depends on upper link. NWDA through Ministry of Jal Shakti has approached Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) from time to time for seeking permission from Nepal and Bhutan Governments for S&I work in Nepal and Bhutan respectively. MEA has informed that cooperation in the field of water resources with Nepal has consistently been a very sensitive subject and need to be handled carefully. Regarding Bhutan the MEA informed that when the mega project (ILR programme) is still in a conceptual stage, taking up S&I work in the territory of Bhutan could lead to avoidable complications and adversely affect the close bilateral relations which rest on mutual trust and confidence unless the link projects are considered bilaterally. He further informed that NWDA is preparing the feasibility report of Manas-Sankosh-Teesta-Ganga Link (MSTG).

Shri J. Chandrashekar Iyer, Commissioner FM, Department of Water Resources, RD&GR, Ministry of Jal Shakti explained the past and present scenario of various engagements of our country with Nepal. He informed that intensive negotiation between India and Nepal are taking place for past 20 years, due to which differences between the countries have narrowed down substantially and is optimistic in getting the issues resolved. However, at present, dialogue with Nepal is confined to only Pancheswar Project.

Shri Vaseem Ashraf, Senior Joint Commissioner (B&B), Department of Water Resources, RD&GR, Ministry of Jal Shakti briefed about India's engagement with

Bhutan regarding Sankosh Hydro-electric project, a bi-national Multi Purpose Project. He informed that the DPR of Sankosh Hydro-electric project has been prepared by THDC. The negotiation for implementation of Sankosh Hydro-electric project is in progress with Bhutan. He indicated that there is no mention in present talks with Royal Govt. of Bhutan regarding planning of these water release for diversion through Manas-Sankosh-Teesta-Ganga Link. This needs to be included in the negotiation with Royal Govt. of Bhutan. Shri Vaseem Ashraf further informed that regular meetings for Sankosh project with Royal Govt. of Bhutan are progressing in positive direction.

Shri Chandan Mahanta, Member of the Task Force for ILR requested to explore the possibility of initiating the Manas-Sankosh-Teesta-Ganga Link from Arunachal Pradesh i.e. beyond Manas.

After briefing from both Mr. Chandrashekhar Iyer and Mr. Vasim Ashraf the below mentioned facts were observed by the Task Force as realistic and true:

1. For the Sarda Yamuna link (and subsequent links dependent on it), the originally planned quantity of water from Pancheshwar Project (from Nepal) for diversion was 17.9 BCM. At present, only two BCM can be transferred through this link in ideal scenario. Even in case of this 2 BCM, the issue for ILR diversion needs to be discussed through MEA.
2. For the Ghagara- Yamuna Link, original contemplated water quantity for ILR was 28.4 BCM (15.5 BCM from Chisapani dam located completely in Nepal and 11.2 BCM from other sources). Feasibility Report of Chisapani dam was prepared in 1990's by Nepal as standalone multipurpose project and not meant for ILR. Nepal is not aware of ILR concept of India. Nepal declared this area as a highly eco-sensitive zone. If negotiations with Nepal on Pancheshwar Project succeeds, then Ministry of Jal Shakti can request MEA, GOI to negotiate with Nepal on this. Till such time realistic Pre-feasibility studies of various alternatives need to be carried out.
3. For Kosi-Mechi and Kosi-Ghaghara links, the original contemplated water quantity was 13 BCM. This water would come from storages envisaged at Kosi high dam and chetra barrage, both completely in Nepal. 113 km alignment of Kosi-Mechi link and 278 km alignment of Kosi Ghaghara link lies totally in Nepal. As of now, Nepal is not aware of these ILR plans of these two links including the storages or alignment canals. These links are to be discussed with Nepal through MEA, GOI by Ministry of Jal Shakti.
4. As far as MSTG link from Bhutan is concerned, it is observed that Manas Dam (contemplated water 17.5 BCM for ILR) is not possible. Sankosh Dam (with

contemplated water of 10.4 BCM) is a possibility if Bhutan agrees to India's request that water released from the Sankosh hydro Electric Project can be used by India. So far no such request was made by India to Nepal. In a recent meeting held by Shri Sriram Vedire, Chairman of the Task Force on ILR in his capacity as Adviser to the Ministry of Jal Shakti with the Commissioner (B&B), the Commissioner was requested to add the "requisition to Bhutan regarding allowing utilization of waters by India released from the hydro power dam" as a clause in the MOU being discussed with Bhutan. Once this request is made and this clause becomes part of the MOU, then only these waters can be utilized for ILR by India. As far as utilisation of 7.7 BCM of water from intermediate rivers (Aie, Raidak, Torsa and Jaldhaka) is concerned, the issues with Bangladesh are to be resolved so that these waters can be made available for ILR.

After deliberating various bilateral aspects, following decision were taken.

- i. Ministry of Jal Shakti may approach Ministry of External Affairs for initiating dialogue with Nepal for taking up the link projects under Himalayan components having International dimensions with Nepal apart from Pancheshwar project.
- ii. Ministry of Jal Shakti may approach Ministry of External Affairs for initiating dialogue with Royal Govt. of Bhutan for taking up the link projects under Himalayan components having International dimensions with Royal Govt. of Bhutan.
- iii. Provision of water diversion from Sankosh to Manas-Sankosh-Teesta-Ganga Link is to be included in the negotiation with Royal Govt. of Bhutan.
- iv. Provision of water transfer to Manas-Sankosh-Teesta-Ganga Link from Jaldhaka and Torsa to be included in talks with Bangladesh.
- v. A representative of appropriate level from Ministry of External Affairs may be included in the Taskforce for Interlinking of Rivers.

Item 11.3: Any other Item with the permission of the Chair

It was agreed to include Shri S Masood Husain, former Chairman, CWC as member of the Task force.

Meeting ended with the vote of thanks to the chair.

List of Participants of the Eleventh meeting of the Task Force for Interlinking of Rivers held on 18th October, 2019 at 11:00 AM in the Conference Hall, 1st Floor, DoWR, RD & GR, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Shram Shakti Bhawan, Rafi Marg, New Delhi.

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| 1. Shri Sriram Vedire
Advisor, Ministry of Jal Shakti
Chairman, Task Force for ILR | Chairman |
| 2. Shri Arun Kumar Sinha
Chairman,
Central Water Commission. | Member |
| 3. Shri A.D. Mohile
Former Chairman,
Central Water Commission. | Member |
| 4. Shri M. Gopalakrishnan
Former Secretary General, ICID &
Former Member, Central Water Commission | Member |
| 5. Dr. Shobha (Vrushali) Waghmare
Social Worker,
Working for Sinchan Sahyog, Maharashtra. | Member |
| 6. Shri Chandan Mahanta
Head of Department, Civil Engineering,
IIT, Guwahati. | Member |
| 7. Shri M.K. Srinivas
Director General,
NWDA | Member-Secretary |

SPECIAL INVITEES

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| 8. Shri J. Chandrashekhar Iyer
Commissioner (FM),
DoWR, RD & GR. | Special Invitee |
| 9. Shri Vaseem Ashraf
Senior Joint Commissioner (B&B),
DoWR, RD & GR | Special Invitee
Representing
Commissioner (B&B),
DoWR, RD&GR |
| 10. Shri Shambhu Azad
Chief Executive Director,
WAPCOS. | Special Invitee |

OTHER OFFICERS

11. Shri S.K. Haldar
Member (WP&P),
Central Water Commission
12. Shri Atul Jain
Chief Engineer (PAO),
Central Water Commission
13. Shri R.K. Jain
Chief Engineer (HQ),
NWDA
14. Shri K.P. Gupta
Director (Technical),
NWDA
15. Shri Muzaffar Ahmad
Superintending Engineer ,
NWDA
16. Shri D.M. Raipure
Director (NWP),
Central Water Commission
17. Shri Rajesh Kumar
Director (ISM),
Central Water Commission
18. Shri A. K. Sinha
Director, Hyd(Central),
Central Water Commission
19. Shri Rakesh Kumar Sharma
Deputy Director,
NWDA
20. Shri Anil Kumar Jain
Deputy Director,
NWDA
21. Shri P.V. Baiju
Consultant,
NWDA