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POOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT IS THE CITY'S BIGGEST DRAWBACK, SAYS DCP (TRAFFIC) SARANG AWAD | 9



Water stock in dams lowest in 3 years

Long Spells Of Rain Needed To Fill Reservoirs: Officials

Sarang.Dastane
@timesgroup.com

Pune: Here's why concern about poor rainfall in the city and the surrounding areas is turning into unease — water in the reservoirs of the four dams that supply drinking water to the city is at the lowest level recorded in the last three years.

On Thursday, the collective stock was at 15.07 TMC, just 51% of the total 29 TMC. Around the same time during the monsoon season in the last four years, storages had crossed the 70% mark. The dams were full in 2013.

This year, rains were consistently weak through July in south India as well as in the subdivisions in such as Marathwada and Madhya Maharashtra. From July 1 till 29, the southern peninsula recorded the highest rainfall deficiency in the country, at 46%.

There have been scanty rains in the catchment areas in July and August. Storages in the reservoirs of Temghar, Varasgaon and Khadakwasla have not even touched the half-way mark even though the monsoon arrived on time. Only Panshet holds 65% stock.

Officials in the irrigation department said long spells of rain in the catchments necessary for accumulation of rain water in the reservoirs were missing in July and in the first two weeks of August. The catchments generally register good spells in July and August. However, this time rainfall has remained scanty. Only heavy spells will swell the water levels, officials said.

Sources in the department say these dams reach their maximum capacities around August 15. In 2011, water stock in the four dams was at 85%, in 2012 it was at 71%, in 2013 all the dams were full while in 2014 storage was at 88%. This year's storage has been less by almost 10 TMC against last year's 25.82 TMC.

The city lifts about 14.5 TMC water annually. The existing stock of 15 TMC would cater only to the city's requirement. Authorities may have plan well to manage the supply for the city and agriculture if dams fail to fill up.

Among the four dams, Temghar has registered the

highest rainfall of about 1,609 mm followed by Varasgaon 1,148 mm, Panshet 1,147 mm and Khadakwasla 382 mm.

Meanwhile, the irrigation department will release water through the Mutha canal to rural parts for the kharif crops till the next week. The department has planned the release of about 2.5 TMC water during the ongoing rotation which will fill up ponds and water sources that supply water to smaller towns like Indapur and Daund.

City-based Sajag Nagrik Manch (SNM) has said that the Pune Municipal Corporation should start releasing 6.5 TMC treated water for agriculture which will bring down the additional burden of sharing of the water in the dams and help the city draw additional water.

Vivek Velankar of the manch said technical hurdles have been cleared in treating and release of used water. The administration should work on priority failing which there would be a crisis in water management, he added.

Girish Bapat calls for meeting

Poor water stock in the dams has prompted guardian minister Girish Bapat to call for a meeting next week to review the water stock in the dams and decide about the supply for the city and agriculture.

Bapat said he has asked the irrigation department to reserve 15 TMC water in the dams for the city's requirement. Additional water flowing into the reservoirs is being released into the Mutha canal for kharif crops, he said.

Officials of the state irrigation department, Pune Municipal Corporation and MLAs will attend the meeting.

Bapat said they were monitoring dam levels and the government will ensure the city gets enough water. There are plans to save about two TMC additional water for the city by releasing treated water for agriculture through the baby canal, he added.

GROUND SITUATION

- > Rusted water supply lines that require repairs
- STATUS:** No steps taken, water wastage continues
- > A system to control water supply
- STATUS:** There is no system in place
- > No mechanism to calculate water usage
- STATUS:** The proposal is pending
- > The PMC has no maps of old water pipeline network
- STATUS:** No efforts taken

PROMISES

- > The much-awaited 24x7 water supply plan is likely to gain momentum
- > The sewage treatment capacity of the PMC may go up substantially once the infrastructure to recycle waste water is in place at Mundhwa
- > BhamaAskhed project will be completed as soon as possible

SUPPLY

Average daily water supply in the city	195 litres/person
Central areas receive water at an average of	300 litres/person
Fringe and suburban areas get	50 litres/person

THE CITY'S GROUNDWATER LEVEL IS HIGH, BUT UNFORTUNATELY ABOUT 75% OF THIS WATER RESERVE IS CONTAMINATED, SAYS A STUDY CONDUCTED BY A CITY-BASED TRUST



KHADAKWASLA LAKE LAST WEEK

PMC flounders as another crisis looms

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Pune: The Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) has no contingency plan to tackle a water crisis if the monsoon gets any worse and the reservoirs of dams providing water to city are not full to their capacity.

Since 2009, the civic body has taken no action on the plan to tackle water crises if the monsoon is delayed or fails. That year, when the rains almost dried up mid-July, guardian minister Ajit Pawar had announced 30% water cuts in Pune and 20% in Pimpri-Chinchwad to tide over the possible shortage.

Under special measures, the civic body planned to dig five bore wells in each of the 144 wards in the city. Every ward was to get 20 water tanks, each with a capacity of 1,000 litres. There were plans to utilize the existing 399 wells and 4,820 bore wells in the city if the water shortage escalated. Over the years, the plan surfaced

if there are signs of a bad monsoon and promptly put away once the reservoirs are full.

The civic body has also neglected private wells, another source of water. It has not taken any steps to identify the available wells so that it can start supplying water through tankers. Experts have said there was a need to carry out tests and certify the water for drinking purpose.

The city's groundwater level is high, but unfortunately about 75% of this water reserve is contaminated, says a study conducted by a city-based trust, which blamed the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) for not making enough efforts to judiciously use this valuable source of drinking water.

The Gomukh Environmental Trust's detailed study suggests that Pune has enough groundwater reserve to meet at least 10% of the city's annual

requirement. "Every time Pune faces a water shortage, a public discussion is held on surface water augmentation like demanding a larger share from the Khadakwasla dam system or importing water from Bhama-Askhed dam since surface water and its shortages are visible.

"Groundwater is ignored and even neglected because it is out of sight, and therefore, out of mind," said Vijay Paranjpye, chairman of Gomukh Environmental Trust.

Meanwhile, the demand for additional water quota is still on paper. Every year, the city's water quota is reserved till July 15. Considering the experience of the past few years, the PMC has repeatedly asked the state to reserve the yearly water quota till August 31, but the state irrigation department is unwilling to provide any additional quota to the city.

Municipal commissioner

Kunal Kumar recently told TOI that water was cause for concern.

"Water is one area where Pune needs to find solution very fast. We are not one of those cities which has a long-term projection for water supply. Although we are comfortable every year in getting the amount of water we need, we must find smart solution in the water sector. To think that we will get more and more sources of water by building big pipelines to get water into the city is actually going to be difficult and expensive," he had said.

Using technologies for auditing leakages and replacing old pipes with new pipes will help. "Management of non-revenue water which gets lost in the system is a must. With use of these technologies we will be able to increase our water availability for the next 7-12 years. One has to work on water sources, but managing water and its distribution is also a must," he added.

NO CONTINGENCY PLAN IN SIGHT

Scientists find green solution for PoP idols

Meenakshi.Rohatgi
@timesgroup.com

IMMERSTON OPTIONS



- > Last year, over three lakh idols were immersed in rivers and tanks
- > 'Jal Abhishek' can dissolve the idols and the residue can be used as a fertilizer
- > Liquid generated can be used to water the green spaces and the solid residue can be used to make chalk

Pune: Scientists at the city-based National Chemical Laboratory (NCL) have found a more environment-friendly solution for household and big Ganapati idols made from plaster of Paris that are taken for immersion on Anant Chaturdashi.

The liquid solution called 'Jal Abhishek', for sentiments' sake, can dissolve the idols and the residue can be used as a fertilizer. Pune Municipal Corporation can thus ensure that idols handed over at hundreds of immersion tanks are disposed of with dignity.

Five idols were immersed in the solution and they dissolved in an hour at a recent trial in Kasba Vishrambaug ward office. Mayor Dattareya Dhankawde, civic officials and nearly 100 representatives of Ganapati mandals were present.

According to NCL officials, a solution made of ammonium bicarbonate, a common rising agent used by bakeries, can dissolve idols made of plaster of Paris (PoP) which would produce sludge and calcium sulphate, a widely used fertilizer.

"About 20% ammonium bicarbonate, in the powder form, will be dissolved in water to make this solution. Plaster of Paris is made of gypsum and will react with this solution to form calcium sulphate which can be used as a fertilizer and sludge or calcium carbonate that can make chalk," said senior NCL scientist Shubhangi Umbarkar.

The focus was on using a chemical which would not harm the environment. "We experimented with baking soda which is sodium bicarbonate, but sodium sulphate, the by-product, was unusable," added Umbarkar.

The project is the effort of one and half years, involving the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC), Cummins India and the NCL to stop pollution of the city's water bodies on immersion day. After last year's Ganeshotsav, over three lakh idols were immersed in rivers and tanks, according to civic officials.

"We had been trying to

identify a bio-degradable material to make idols in order to save our environment and our water bodies. However, the limited availability of the identified raw material challenged us to look for a more sustainable solution. Through efforts from NCL scientists, we have a solution to dissolve PoP. The liquid generated from the process can directly be used to water the city's green spaces and the solid can be used to make chalk," said S Ravichandran, head of corporate responsibility, Cummins Group in India

The civic body will have a pilot project for this year; Suresh Jagtap, head of the solid waste management at PMC, said. "We will take it to the people so that there is increased acceptance among Ganesh mandals."

"Our efforts have borne fruit. It will be presented before the standing committee and the cost and other factors will be worked out. The civic body will transport idols from the tanks to the centralized place where the process will be followed," said Ketaki Ghadge, medical officer at PMC.

Mahesh Suryawanshi, treasurer, Dagdusheth Halwai Ganapati Mandal said, "We encourage the use of eco-friendly Ganapati idols, but will now spread awareness about this solution."

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Fresh conflict in FTII: Faculty not for assessments, seeks transfer to HRD

Rupali.Shukla@timesgroup.com

Pune: Fresh trouble is brewing in the Film and Television Institute of India with senior faculty here questioning the director's order to assess the diploma films of the 2008 batch. And it now turns out that the faculty has taken its support for the students to the ministry of information and broadcasting and stated in a detailed letter the many reasons why this is a "wrong time" to assess the film projects of the students. The letter even states that FTII should be transferred "lock, stock and barrel" to the Union HRD ministry as education is the "life blood of the ministry" and it understands the key elements of an educational institution better.

The faculty is largely united in its stand that assessments should not be carried out in the middle of the students' strike, but sources said the director Prashant Pathrabe has instructed them to still carry out the process. When contacted, Pathrabe refused to comment.

On Wednesday, the FTII administration had even sought police help to keep students at bay during the process. In an 11-page letter to the I&B ministry, a copy of which is with The Times of India, faculty members have stated that the students could not be blamed for the delay in the completion of their diploma projects. "One can hardly blame students for what must be regarded as an administrative failure".

The letter, which the faculty shot on Tuesday, points out the many roadblocks the 2008 batch faced in completing their project work, including a

Rahul takes student issues to Prez

Rupali.Shukla@timesgroup.com

Pune: The agitating students of the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) on Thursday said they hoped President Pranab Mukherjee will take an initiative to resolve their issues after Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi and other party members met him on Thursday.

A nine-member delegation led by Rahul Gandhi met Mukherjee at Rashtrapati Bhavan on Thursday morning, briefed him on the FTII issue and submitted a memorandum seeking his intervention and immediate action to "ensure that public institutions are not made captive to the viewpoints of a few organizations and individuals, and that their autonomy and credibility are restored immediately."

In a statement, the striking FTII students said: "We hope that the President will intervene in our issue and take an initiative to resolve it." They also appealed to other parliamentarians to help resolve the issue in a more democratic fashion. The students have been on strike for 64 days now.

"flawed syllabus". The reason the 2009 batch could finish its projects on time was because it was "given priority over the 2008 batch" in the use of facilities, the letter notes.

In another letter to the dean and the director, faculty members have said this is not the right time to go ahead with the assessment. "Conducting an important work like this in the presence of policemen will affect the assessment process," the letter states. It adds that a delegation of faculty members would now meet the I&B ministry to help resolve the issue.

In the letter to the ministry, faculty members have said poor infrastructure too de-

The memorandum has been signed by MPs Rahul Gandhi, Raj Babbar, Veerappa Moily, Kumari Selja, Mani Shankar Aiyar, Ranjeet Ranjan, Ashok Chavan, KC Venugopal and National Students' Union of India (NSUI) president Roji John.

A source in Rahul's office said the President has agreed to consider the concerns put up.

Rahul had visited FTII campus on July 31 and had assured the students that he will raise the issue in the Parliament. However, he did not bring up the issue in the Parliament.

The memorandum submitted to the President stated that Gajendra Chauhan was under-qualified in terms of both academic experience and body of work compared to his predecessors. It also stated that repeated attempts made by students to initiate dialogue with the government were denied and the students had no choice but to go on strike.

Earlier in the day, Rahul had told the media, "This is not about one individual. It's about the soft power of India—the creativity & merit of our youth. I want to send a message to the students of FTII that they are fighting a very important fight for the soul of this country."

Additional funds for the institute were granted 11 years after the request was made to the Planning Commission, then 2010 was declared a zero year due to protests against the Hewitt committee report (that had hinted at FTII's privatization).

Faculty members have also noted that they had informed the director in March 2008 that the scheduled three-year course may not be completed in the stipulated time over syllabus and curriculum concerns, but their observations were ignored and admissions were still carried out. The letter notes that an institution like FTII is "but a tiny blip on a large radar screen" for the I&B ministry, and is regarded more as a media unit rather than an academic institution. For this reason, it is a good idea to be transferred to HRD ministry, the letter notes. The ministry knows faculty members, researchers and teachers are the crucial groups in any educational institution, the letter states.

On directors, the letter states: "The directors who are appointed from the civil services have a primary allegiance to the ministry and only a secondary one to the institution that we call the FTII. The faculty and the staff find themselves constrained by the Civil Service Rules."