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T.N. URGES KERALA TO INCREASE OUTFLOW FROM SIRUVANI DAM

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Indian River System Including Lakes, and HEPs

Siruvani dam

In the wake of Kerala restricting water from Siruvani dam, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Monday wrote to his Kerala counterpart requesting him to direct officials to maintain the storage of the Siruvani dam up to its full reservoir level (FRL) i.e. 878.50 m, so as to provide uninterrupted water supply to the Coimbatore Corporation and other beneficiaries of the project.

Increase water supply

In the letter, he also requested the Kerala Chief Minister to direct officials to increase the water supply from the Siruvani dam to enable supply of 101.40 MLD (megaliters per day).

“If storage of water to its full capacity is not maintained, the Coimbatore Corporation and adjoining areas, depending on Siruvani water, will be affected severely during the ensuing summer,” a copy of the letter shared with the media read.

Since January 3, the Kerala Irrigation Department has controlled the intake tower, and it was informed it cannot regulate the flow until further orders from the Kerala Government, Mr. Stalin said. Siruvani dam is a prime source of water supply to Coimbatore city. Of the current total water requirement of 265 MLD for Coimbatore Corporation, 101.4 MLD was to be supplied from Siruvani dam.

In spite of adequate rainfall in the Siruvani catchment area, Kerala was maintaining the storage level in Siruvani Dam at 877.0m only instead of the FRL of 878.50m for the past three years.

Regular meetings were being held by the officials of the Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board with the Kerala Irrigation Department officials to store water up to the FRL, and the Tamil Nadu Municipal Administration and Water Supply Department had taken up this issue with Kerala's Water Resources Department.

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WHAT IS THE BLUE BLOB?

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Various Landforms, Changes Therein and the Effects of Such Changes

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The Blue Blob is a cold patch located south of Iceland and Greenland and little is known about it. However, a recent study theorises that it may have helped temporarily stall the melting of Arctic sea ice. The cold patch was most prominent during the winter of 2014-2015 when the sea surface temperature was about 1.4 degrees Celsius colder than normal.

The Arctic region is reportedly warming four times faster than the global average. Iceland's glaciers steadily shrank from 1995 to 2010, losing an average of 11 billion tons of ice per year. Starting in 2011, however, the speed of Iceland's melting slowed, resulting in about half as much ice loss, or about five billion tons annually. This trend was not seen in nearby, larger glaciers across Greenland and Svalbard.

The researchers found that cooler waters near the Blue Blob were linked to observations of lower air temperatures over Iceland's glaciers and coincided with a slowing of glacial melting since 2011.

Other scientists have proposed that the Blue Blob is part of the normal sea surface temperature variability in the Arctic. Notably, especially cold winters in 2014 and 2015 led to record cooling, which caused upwelling of cold, deep water, even as ocean temperatures around the region warmed due to climate change.

Before the Blue Blob, a long-term cooling trend in the same region, called the Atlantic Warming Hole, reduced sea surface temperatures by about 0.4 to 0.8 degrees Celsius during the last century and may continue to cool the region in the future. A possible explanation for the Warming Hole is that climate change has slowed the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation, an ocean current that brings warm water up from the tropics to the Arctic, thus reducing the amount of heat delivered to the region.

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ETHIOPIA TO START GENERATING POWER FROM BLUE NILE DAM

Relevant for: Geography | Topic: Indian River System Including Lakes, and HEPs

Ethiopia will start generating power from its mega-dam on the Blue Nile on Sunday, government officials told *AFP*, a major milestone for the controversial project.

The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), set to be the largest hydroelectric scheme in Africa, has been at the centre of a regional dispute ever since Ethiopia broke ground there in 2011.

“Tomorrow will be the first energy generation of the dam,” an Ethiopian government official said on Saturday.

A second official confirmed the information. Both spoke on condition of anonymity because the development has not been officially announced.

Downstream concerns

Ethiopia’s downstream neighbours Egypt and Sudan view the dam as a threat because of their dependence on Nile waters, while Addis Ababa deems it essential for its electrification and development.

There was no immediate response from Cairo or Khartoum, which have been pressing Ethiopia to sign a binding agreement on the filling and operation of the dam ever since work first started.

The three governments have held multiple rounds of talks. but so far there has been no sign of any breakthrough.

The \$4.2-billion (3.7-billion-euro) project is ultimately expected to produce more than 5,000 megawatts of electricity, more than doubling Ethiopia’s electricity output.

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