



ORSAM WATER BULLETIN

Weekly Bulletin by ORSAM Water Research Programme

Events-News-Politics-Projects-Environment-ClimateChange-Neighbourhoods-Cooperation-Disputes-Scarcity and more



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19 September 2017 - 25 September 2017

Russia blames SDF for increased Euphrates water flow, slowing regime advance in eastern Syria

A Russian defense ministry spokesperson on Tuesday, September 19, called on the US-led Coalition not to hamper Syrian government actions against Islamic State in eastern Syria, blaming Coalition-backed forces for increasing water flow in the Euphrates river in a bid to prevent them crossing.

Major General Igor Konashenkov said that Syrian government troops crossed to the east bank of the Euphrates near Deir Ez-Zor, not far from where Syrian Democratic Forces were hit by an airstrike on Saturday. The Coalition blamed Russia for the airstrike, a claim denied by a Russian spokesperson.

Oil-rich Deir Ez-Zor is the only Syrian province where ISIS still holds significant territory. Syrian government and allied forces including Russia are mounting an anti-ISIS offensive west of the Euphrates river while the SDF is conducting a Coalition-backed campaign against ISIS on the east side, where the majority of Syria's oil wells are located.

“In the past 24 hours, assault troops of the Syrian government army backed by the Russia aerospace force crossed the Euphrates and continues to expand the stronghold east of Deir ez-Zor,” Konashenkov said.

Konashenkov said the water level in the Euphrates had risen significantly since the regime forces first crossed, blaming the SDF for increasing water flow in the river from upstream dams near Tabqa and Raqqa. He said the flow of water in the river “nearly doubled to two meters per second.”

“Since there have been no rains, the only source of such changes in the water situation is man-induced water discharge at dams upstream the Euphrates,” he said.

The ISIS Hunters, a paramilitary special forces unit in the Syrian Arab Army, claimed on social media that some of its troops had crossed.

The Syrian ministry of defense has not confirmed that its forces have crossed to the east bank of the river, only that it captured a nearby island from ISIS.

19/09/2017 online at: <https://www.grasswire.com/2017/09/russia-euphrates-water-regime-advance-deir-ezzor/>

Intl. companies willing to participate in Iran's water and wastewater sector

International companies are really willing to provide services in Iran's water and wastewater sector in post-sanction era, said the Secretary of International water conference and editor of the GWI (Global Water Intelligence) English journal.

Speaking to a reporter on Tuesday, Tom Scotney said having communicated with Iran's Ministry of Energy and Water and Wastewater Engineering Company, the officials of GWI

journal are trying to create a communication network between Iran's public and private sectors in the water and wastewater sector and international private sectors in other countries.

Iran's high capacity, proper technical capabilities and the commitment of the government to use the capabilities of the private sector encouraged the international companies to continue working in this country, he noted.

International water conference was held in Tehran on Tuesday with the presence of Iran's Minister of Energy Hamid Chitchian.

The one-day conference aimed at knowing Iran's market to provide services in water and wastewater sector.

27/09/2017 online at: <http://theiranproject.com/blog/2016/09/27/intl-companies-willing-to-participate-in-irans-water-and-wastewater-sector/>

US Joins effort to 'transform' wastewater reuse in Palestinian territories

The US government will join Israel and the Palestinian Authority in an effort to "transform" how wastewater is treated and reused in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, a senior Trump administration official said.

Speaking at a UN committee hearing on Monday, Jason Greenblatt, the president's special representative for international negotiations, spoke of the "devastating" effects that dirty water has on both peoples.

"Contaminated water is the single largest cause of illness and disease among infants in Gaza – think about that for a moment," he said. "Parents in Gaza cannot even give their children a drink of water without exposing them to significant risks."

As a result, Greenblatt said the administration was committing itself to resolving the issue, which has had the rare effect of unifying Israel and the PA.

"I am pleased to announce that the United States will join them in this endeavor by working to advance a plan that transforms the wastewater treatment and reuse sector in the West Bank and Gaza," Greenblatt told the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee. "As part of this effort, we will work with the parties and the donor community – and again, we welcome active engagement from our partners – to develop a comprehensive strategy for wastewater treatment and reuse in the West Bank and Gaza."

The Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, established in 1993, is a 15-member committee that serves as the principal policy-level coordination mechanism for development assistance to the Palestinian people.

Greenblatt brought to the UN a message of pragmatism, tempering expectations that any major breakthroughs were on the horizon in his greater effort to forge a comprehensive Israeli- Palestinian peace agreement.

But he said the time for slow talk on the humanitarian situation in Gaza had come to an end.

“For too long, Hamas has exploited the people of Gaza as hostages and shields, bullying them into submission.

Hamas rules by the fist, instead of by improving the lives of the people it purports to govern,” he told the gathering. “Hamas continues to divert money belonging to the Palestinians of Gaza – including funds provided by international donors – and uses these funds to build terror tunnels, missiles and for other nefarious uses. This has a huge impact on Gaza’s development, as major electricity and water projects which could radically transform the humanitarian situation in Gaza, are on hold because Hamas refuses to pay the Palestinian Authority for the services it already provides.”

19/09/2017 online at: <http://www.jpost.com/Arab-Israeli-Conflict/US-joins-effort-to-transform-wastewater-reuse-in-Palestinian-territories-505495>

Hoover Dam may be saved by Israeli company

The Hoover Dam, one of the most iconic dams in the world, now under threat from an invasive species of mussels that interfere with its hydropower operations, may find its salvation with an Israeli water treatment company.

Technology developed by the Israeli company Atlantium Technologies is supposed to prevent the entry of said mussels into the cooling installations of the turbines placed in the dam, which supplies electricity and drinking water to millions of people.

The mussels apparently came from ships that sailed from Asia and made their way to the Colorado River and from there to Lake Mead—the largest water reservoir by volume in the United States, formed by the Hoover Dam.

The mussels have started clogging the turbines that are inside the dam which are powered by the pressure of the waterfall passing through them.

The mussels' invasion into the dam's pipeline may completely shut the turbines down and stop electricity supply to two countries.

This is where Atlantium enters the picture. Controlled by Benjamin Kahn, owner of the underwater observatory in Eilat and other places in the world, Atlantium has developed a method to purify water using UV rays, and has recently been informed that it has won a contract to install its technology inside the cooling systems of all turbines in the dam.

The system is supposed to serve as a sieve that will neutralize mussels and other living organisms that come into the pipeline and allow the important power turbines to continue operating.

23/09/2017 online at: <https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-5019771,00.html>

USAID grants \$1 million for water projects

A USAID funded project launched a \$1 million water conservation project Wednesday to help improve access to water, protect water resources and spread awareness about water conservation. "USAID is proud to have granted over \$1 million to provide citizens with the opportunity to support the development of quality services that enhance both public health and promote inclusive economic growth," Economic Growth Office Director at USAID William Butterfield said. A statement released by the association said the LWP is a 5-year project aiming to increase access to "clean, reliable and sustainable sources of drinking water for Lebanese citizens." LWP focuses on improving Lebanon's capacity in the management of water resources, enhancing the efficiency and sustainability of the public water utilities, and addressing water challenges arising from the impact of the Syrian refugee influx to Lebanon.

21/09/2017 online at: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2017/Sep-21/420075-usaid-grants-1-million-for-water-projects.ashx>

Lebanon: Malbatt responsible for water distribution to west sector

The Malaysian Battalion (Malbatt) is responsible for supplying 180,000 gallons of water to the western sector and secluded campsites of other nations which have difficulty obtaining water.

The western sector includes the Irishfinbatt (Irish-Finnish Battalion), as well as the battalions of Fiji and the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF).

Assistant Chief of Staff Defence Logistics, Major-General Datuk Mohd Razif Idris said the provision of water supply was being carried out at the Malbatt Harris camp which was one of the main locations for water supply.

He said the task of delivering water supply to the battalions of other nations under the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (Unifil) was a civic and noble responsibility.

"It shows the strong trust that Unifil has in Malbatt which has been entrusted with the task of guarding this resource since 2010," he told reporters after visiting Malbatt members at the Tibnine camp in Lebanon here on Friday.

Mohd Razif said the task was a big responsibility as water resources were a daily essential commodity and Malbatt should make sure it was properly supplied to Malbatt and the battalions of three other nations.

He said seven-kilometre deep wells were dug at the hills near the camp to contain water, adding that Malbatt had assigned a staff from each of the Malbatt sections to guard the water resources.

"The Malbatt staff will take turns guarding the water resources round-the-clock to protect them from any external threat.

"The water resources here (Tibnine) are very valuable and if it is compromised by enemy attacks, it would be very disastrous for Malbatt members," he said.

The Malaysian Government approved the involvement of the Malaysian Armed Forces in the Unifil mission in Lebanon since 2007, to assist peace-keeping forces from other member countries of the United Nations to enforce Resolution 1701 of the Security Council.

24/09/2017 online at: <http://www.thesundaily.my/news/2017/09/24/lebanon-malbatt-responsible-water-distribution-west-sector>

Sultanate water conservation efforts win global acclaim

The Global High-Level Panel of the Water and Peace, in which the Sultanate is a member, has submitted World Water and Peace Report in Geneva, Switzerland.

The report called for intensifying international efforts for preventing water-related conflicts and leveraging water as an instrument of peace.

“Since water supply is likely to become a major source of tension in the coming years, there is huge potential today to make water a key medium for cooperation and a driver of peace,” the head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter, told the members of the Global Panel on Water and Peace.

The panel, which was established in November 2015 and was chaired by former Slovenian President Danilo Türk, presented the results of their work in the form of a set of recommendations to prevent and resolve water-related conflicts in Geneva.

Ciaran O’Cuinn, Director of the Middle East Centre for Desalination Research, said: “This meeting of the Blue Peace highlights the Sultanate’s long tradition in peace initiatives. The water policies of the Sultanate are as important as its human right policies. The Sultanate sets aside major investments in upgrading its water infrastructure and it also has a good desalination system and drainage system.”

The Global High Level Panel consists of 15 co-convening countries –Cambodia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Estonia, France, Ghana, Hungary, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Oman, Senegal, Slovenia, Spain, and Switzerland, with support from the Strategic Foresight Group and the Geneva Water hub, acting as Secretariat of the Panel.

The report highlighted the United Nations Millennium Development Goals for 2000 and 2015, seeking international cooperation to prevent and resolve water-related conflicts.

In its recommendations, the report called for the relevant international organizations and UN bodies, including the Security Council’s Counterterrorism Committee, studying the trends in the development of technologies for protecting water infrastructure and stimulate international cooperation for their effective use in situations of armed conflicts.

States should be encouraged to develop appropriate legislative frameworks for the protection of transboundary water infrastructures against terrorist acts.

The report also highlighted the importance of developing a global framework for sanitation and water management, and creation of intergovernmental committee on water and sanitation under the United Nations.

The report recommended to the UN General Assembly to convene a Global Conference on International Water Cooperation with the aim of formulating a framework for global water cooperation. It has been observed that countries which jointly manage their shared water resources do not go to war with each other, and hence Switzerland is very active in what it calls 'blue diplomacy'.

This kind of diplomacy encourages discussions between the countries which make up the Nile Basin, and between countries in Central Asia and the Middle East. Syria and Yemen are two countries where water scarcity has exacerbated in conflicts.

Switzerland will present the recommendations at the UN General Assembly in New York.

24/09/2017 online at: <http://omantribune.com/details/50901/>

FCC wins big with Abu Rawash wastewater expansion in Egypt

Spanish infrastructure group FCC has secured a \$320 million contract to expand the Abu Rawash wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) in Egypt.

To serve six million people, the project capacity will be expanding from 1.2 million m³/day to 1.6 million m³//day, with the addition of biological treatment.

Under a design, build & operate (DBO) arrangement, the contract all includes a three-year operation and maintenance period.

The consortium also includes the Construction Authority for Potable Water and Wastewater (CAPW) and Orascom Construction.

Although the initial agreement with the Egyptian government included a concession for 20 years (including financing), the economic situation in Egypt made it advisable for the investment in the project to be assumed entirely by the Egyptian state, abandoning the original idea of a concession type contract.

The Abu Rawash contract is part of the ambitious programme for water and sewerage actions by the Government of Egypt and has the backing of the African Development Bank.

This is the third major project undertaken by FCC Aqualia in Egypt after it was chosen in 2010 to design, build, and finance and operate for 20 years the New Cairo wastewater treatment plant.

In 2016, the Egyptian Ministry of Defense awarded FCC Aqualia the project for the El Alamein desalination plant. Located on the Mediterranean coast in an area of growing tourist development, the plant will treat 150,000 m³/day.

19/09/2017 online at: <http://www.waterworld.com/articles/wwi/2017/09/fcc-wins-big-with-abu-rawash-wastewater-expansion-in-egypt.html>

Egypt disappointed with committee on renaissance dam

Egypt is now raising concerns over a sluggish progress in regards to technical studies on Ethiopia's Grand Renaissance Dam.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry met with his Ethiopian counterpart Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu in New York on the sideline of the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) where issues regarding the Grand Renaissance Dam were discussed.

A statement from Egyptian foreign ministry hinted that Mr Shoukry expressed concerns over slow working pace of a tripartite technical committee assigned to study the effects of the renaissance dam on downstream countries.

Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan formed a tripartite technical committee comprising of experts from the three countries to study the future impact of the dam. The move was informed by complaints from Egypt that the project would have devastating downstream effects.

Egypt's main concern is water security, as the country faces a future of increasing scarcity. Nearly all of Egypt's water comes from the Nile, and its population of 83 million is growing at nearly two percent annually.

A recent report from the Geological Society of America said that the 'Nile's fresh water flow to Egypt may be cut by as much as 25%, with a loss of a third of the electricity generated by the Aswan High Dam', which would be bad news for Egyptians.

Once complete, the the Grand Renaissance Dam will be the largest hydropower facility in Africa (about 6 000 MW) – nearly triple the country's current electricity generation capacity – and represent a potential economic windfall for the government.

23/09/2017 online at: <http://cceonlinenews.com/2017/09/23/egypt-disappointed-with-committee-on-renaissance-dam/>

Afghan FM: Kabul ready for talks on shared water resources, refugees

Afghan Foreign Minister Salahuddin Rabbani voiced his country's readiness to cooperate with Iran in order to resolve disputes over the use of shared water resources and the issue of Afghan refugees in Iran.

He made the remarks in a meeting with his Iranian counterpart, Mohammad Javad Zarif, on the sidelines of the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

In violation of a 1973 treaty with Iran, Afghanistan has refused to supply its neighbor with a share of water from the Hirmand River, which rises in Afghanistan and flows through the eastern parts of Iran.

According to the treaty, Afghanistan is committed to share the waters of the river with Iran and supply it with 26 cubic meters of water per second, or 850 million cubic meters per annum.

Speaking at an international conference on sandstorms and environmental issues in Tehran in July, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani criticized the Afghan government's dam projects.

"We cannot remain indifferent to the issue [water dams] which is apparently damaging our environment," Rouhani said. "Construction of several dams in Afghanistan, such as Kajaki, Kamal Khan, Salma and others in the north and south of Afghanistan, affect our Khorasan and Sistan-Baluchestan provinces."

Kabul's failure to abide by the agreement has accelerated an environmental disaster in southwestern Afghanistan and eastern Iran.

In 1950, Iran and Afghanistan created the Hirmand River Delta Commission, tasked with measuring and dividing the river flow between the two countries, and hammered out the treaty in 1973.

However, political events such as a coup in Afghanistan in 1973, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, and subsequent civil war and Taliban rule had a damaging impact on the fate of the Hamoon wetlands.

23/09/2017 online at: <http://iran-daily.com/News/201095.html?catid=3&title=Afghan-FM--Kabul-ready-for-talks-on-shared-water-resources--refugees>

UCs' chairmen concerned over water shortage in Rawalpindi

Rawalpindi: The chairmen of several union councils in the monthly meeting of Municipal Corporation expressed concern over problem of water shortage occurring in Rawalpindi city and stressed upon the government for taking measures to improve the situation. They warned if the problem was not addressed in the next four to five years the issue would become severe.

The members through a resolution stressed upon the government for linking water pipeline of Barotha dam with Rawalpindi to avert any crisis like situation in the next five years. For this purpose the government should approve a grant they said.

The meeting was chaired by Mayor Rawalpindi, Sardar Naseem held at Jinnah Hall, Municipal Corporation office here Tuesday. The meeting was also attended by deputy mayor, Rawalpindi and members elected on special seats.

The chairman of UC 20, Haji Arshad Mahmood draw the attention of the mayor towards supply of drinking water from Rawal Dam which he termed unhygienic. Couple of months back a large number of fish died due to contaminated water. He said that CDA has admitted that the water supplied from Rawal Dam is unhygienic and dangerous for the health of citizens. The waste of poultry farms and Bani Gala falls into the Rawal Dam making it contaminated. A large number of people are being infected by hepatitis because of drinking

contaminated water supplied from the source of Rawalpindi. It reflects the inefficiency and indifference of the civic bodies. He proposed the Mayor for forming a committee comprising members of CDA and Wasa to resolve this issue in the best interest of the people.

The members also called upon the Mayor for taking measures for improving the system of fire brigade in Rawalpindi. They alleged at present the condition of fire brigade is very poor. There is shortage of fire fighting vehicles and staff. The water pipes of fire extinguish vehicles are leaking. If any incident of fire occurs, the fire brigade is unable to extinguish it because of poor condition of vehicles and shortage of staff.

The mayor assured the UCs chairmen to work on their issues seriously and adopt effective measures to rectify the situation. However, he directed the officials of Wasa for improving the drainage and sewerage system from Banni as water accumulates in Murree Road during rains. He directed them to build manholes and outlets on roads to assure smooth flow of water during rains.

When one of the chairmen drew attention of mayor towards dearth of space in the grave yards, Sardar Naseem told that 200 kanal land has been acquired in Rakh Dhamiyal, Rawalpindi, for new graveyard. Work is being carried out to start construction work which would be completed in next 6 months.

Earlier at the start of the meeting, the chairmen presented a resolution which denounced the brutal killings of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar by Burmese armed forces. They demanded off the United Nations and other human rights.

20/09/2017 online at: <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/231209-UCs-chairmen-concerned-over-water-shortage-in-Rawalpindi>

India-Pakistan water dispute

The two-day secretary-level talks between India and Pakistan, under the auspices of the World Bank, on the issues of Kishenganga and Ratle hydro-electric power plants within the framework of Indus Water Treaty, ended without producing any result.

However, the World Bank, which is a signatory to the water sharing treaty between the two countries, has assured its continued assistance in resolving the issue peacefully.

Pakistan and India had been involved in intractable discussions to resolve the dispute regarding construction of two hydro electric power plants namely Kishenganga and Ralte being built by the latter in violation of the provisions of the Indus Water Treaty.

This issue arose last year too, when Pakistan requested the World Bank to establish a court of Arbitration to resolve the differences between the two countries.

India simultaneously requested the World Bank for the appointment of a neutral expert.

The World Bank initially agreed to set up both the Arbitration Court and the appointment of the neutral expert.

However in response to the Indian objection on two parallel processes not being legally tenable, the World Bank decided to announce a 'pause' and asked both the parties to resolve the issue through bilateral avenues.

Giving reasons for this action, the President of the Bank, in a letter written to finance ministers of both the countries, said "We are announcing this pause to protect the Indus Water Treaty and to help India and Pakistan to consider alternative approaches to resolving conflicting interests under the treaty and its application to two hydro electric power plants.

This is an opportunity for the two countries to begin to resolve the issue in an amicable manner and in line with the spirit of the treaty rather than pursuing concurrent processes that could make the treaty unworkable over time.

I would hope that the two countries will come to an agreement by the end of January."

The position taken by the World Bank regrettably was akin to what India had argued.

The Indian government welcomed the 'pause' announced by the World Bank.

A spokesman of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs said "By temporarily halting both processes, World Bank has confirmed that pursuing two concurrent processes can render the treaty unworkable over time.

India remains fully conscious of her international obligations and is ready to engage in further consulting on the matter of resolving current differences regarding the two projects"

This action of World Bank was tantamount to shirking the responsibility as a guarantor of the accord charged with the responsibility to ensure that both parties stuck to the provisions of the accord and, in case of failure of the two sides to sort out their differences, appoint a court of Arbitration.

The arbitration was even more necessary in view of the threats by Modi government to control the flow of water of the western rivers into Pakistan.

Therefore, reacting to the World Bank decision, the Finance Minister in his letter to the President of the World Bank rightly maintained that under the Treaty no party could 'pause' performance of the obligations under the Treaty and the position taken by the Bank would only prevent Pakistan from approaching a competent forum and having its grievances addressed.

As these exchanges were in progress, the Indian government tasked the inter-ministerial to enhance storage of western rivers waters, which was a very alarming development.

Under the circumstances, the avoidance by the World Bank to take a position in line with its obligations under the Treaty amounted to almost giving up on its own brokered agreement.

The hope expressed by the World Bank, that both sides would be able to resolve their differences, represented lack of understanding of the prevailing situation.

India was actually trying to build pressure on Pakistan to back off from the position taken by her on the Kashmir issue, particularly in regards to current uprising in the valley.

It was not a technical issue.

India had been threatening to review the Indus Water Treaty in the backdrop of Uri attack which it blamed on Pakistan.

In an atmosphere loaded with tensions between the two countries, expecting them to show goodwill in resolving the issue was hoping against hope.

The World Bank had a role to play as per the Treaty and it failed that role this time.

Under the Indus Water Treaty, the waters of the Eastern rivers Sutlej, Beas, and Ravi had been allocated to India and the Western rivers Indus, Jhelum and Chenab to Pakistan except for certain uses allowed to India including power generation.

According to reliable sources, India was contemplating to launch more hydropower projects with a cumulative power generating capacity of 32,000 MW on the rivers allocated to Pakistan and consequently attain the capability of regulating the water flows to Pakistan, especially reducing water flow in the river Chenab which irrigates most of the land in Punjab.

Such a situation could lead to serious consequences and may even threaten peace and security in the region in the event of armed conflict over the issue between the two countries.

It is pertinent to point out that the case of Kishanganga has already been considered by the Permanent Court of Arbitration at Hague, which while recognizing the Indian right to build the Dam, did address Pakistan's concerns about India keeping the level of reservoirs below the Dead Storage Level.

The Court also recognized the concept of environmental flows in rivers to ensure that the power generating projects were operated in an environmentally sustainable manner.

The Award announced on 20 December 2013 specified that 9m³/s of natural flow of water must be maintained in Kishanganga river at all times to maintain environment downstream.

However, India was not even abiding by the award of the Permanent Arbitration Commission.

Pakistan was not asking for something beyond the treaty obligations of the World Bank.

The World Bank needs to revisit its decision and set up a court of arbitration as requested by Pakistan, because there is no hope of resolving of this issue through bilateral arrangement as suggested by previous Indian behavior and it ultimately has to be referred for arbitration.

Pakistan is seeking redress of its grievances over non-adherence to the already announced decision of the Arbitration Court on the issue and stands justified in asking the World Bank to again constitute a Court of Arbitration to look into the matter.

22/09/2017 online at: <http://nation.com.pk/columns/22-Sep-2017/india-pakistan-water-dispute>

Clean drinking water project of Rs 15b for South Punjab: Shahbaz Sharif

Punjab Chief Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif has said that the government of the PML-N has provided funds worth billions of rupees for progress in the South Punjab and every district of South Punjab has been included on priority in development progress in the province.

He stated through funds of billions of rupees right of the people of South Punjab has been returned to them. He said he gives special attention to the interest of the people of South Punjab and every possible effort are being made for the progress in South Punjab.

The Punjab government is launching a mega project of the clean drinking water from the South Punjab and all tehsils of South Punjab have been included in this project of Rs15 billion, he added.

He said top standard educational institutes like Daanish Schools have also been established in South Punjab in which children from poor families are getting top standard education free of cost and the safe city project has also been launched in Bahawalpur and Bahawalpur Division has been given all-out resources for development and progress.

The Chief Minister expressed these views while talking to lawmakers from Bahawalpur. Federal ministers belonging to Bahawalpur Riaz Hussain Pirzada, Balighur Rehman, minister of state Arshad Khan Legari, besides other MNAs Provincial Ministers Tanveer Aslam Malik, Dr. Ayesha Ghaus Pasha and secretaries of concerning departments were also present.

Talking to the lawmakers, the chief minister said after 400-MW solar power plant in Quaid-e-Azam Solar Park, now a Turkish firm will install 300-MW solar power project at the price of six cents per unit that will be lowest power tariff in the history of Pakistan.

The PML-N government has installed several power projects to eliminate load-shedding and by the end of this year, load-shedding will be eliminated from Pakistan. He said billions of rupees of the people have been saved through transparency, quality and speedy completion of projects, he further added.

He said survey for the clean drinking water is being completed and contracts for the projects will be announced in November. He said a network of carpeted roads has been established in villages that is the biggest rural road network project in Pakistan.

Muhammad Nawaz Sharif had introduced the form to the market road project in 1985 and now the Punjab government is spending Rs90 billion on rural roads projects due to which rural economy is progressing. He said infrastructure has been improved in Punjab with the

investment of billions of rupees and mega projects worth billions of rupees have been completed.

He told that Khanewal-Lodhran Road will cost Rs23 billion and the Punjab government is providing funding for this project, adding two-way DG Khan-Muzafargarh Road will be completed at the cost of Rs13 billion from the funding of the Punjab government. The Punjab government is establishing state-of-the-art hepatitis filter clinic in every district across the province to provide free medical treatment, work on billion rupees projects in education, health and other social sectors are continuing.

The lawmakers belonging to South Punjab said the chief minister has always given resources for development in South Punjab which has never seen such development in the history. They said, for this reason, the people of South Punjab love CM Shahbaz Sharif. DCs and DPOs of Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan and Bahawalnagar participated in the meeting via video link.

23/09/2017 online at: <http://nation.com.pk/lahore/23-Sep-2017/clean-drinking-water-project-of-rs-15b-for-south-punjab-shahbaz-sharif>

We need deeper commitment to water cooperation

On 19 September, within the framework of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, Director-General Irina Bokova addressed the high-level event “Towards Implementation of the International Decade for Action ‘Water for Sustainable Development’ 2018-2028”.

Organized by the Permanent Missions of Canada, Ecuador, Japan, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Spain and Tajikistan, as well as UNDESA, UNDP, UNESCO-WAPP and UN-Water, the event took place in the presence of the President of Tajikistan H.E. Mr Emomali Rahmon, champion of the International Decade, aiming to build support and momentum for the implementation of water related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

President Rahmon called for "continued cooperation and mobilization of all resources for holistic measures" to drive forward the SDGs, including transborder cooperation and women's Empowerment. "This is the importance of this International Decade."

The President of the General Assembly. H.E. Mr Lajcak said "water is essential for a sustainable life on a sustainable planet and for decent lives."

“Water is the common denominator of many global challenges, in health, food, energy,” said the Director-General. “It can be the common solution also, but this requires deeper commitment. This is why water stands at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Climate Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.”

"Water is vital for sustainable development but also for peace," said Minister Safadi of Jordan. "Water could be the cause of war, but could also be the cause of peace... the peace that we all deserve."

The Honorable Enele Sosene Sopoaga, Prime Minister of Tuvalu spoke of water "as a security issue for many people's around the world. We have to adapt as challenges of climate change and sea levels continue to rise".

The Director-General highlighted that water cooperation is about fighting poverty, saving children from disease, allowing girls to go to school instead of walking for kilometers to fetch water. She underscored UNESCO's work through its 'water family', which includes a global network of 36 water-related centers and 46 water-related Chairs, including the IHE-Institute for Water Education.

Minister Hussen of Canada spoke of his government's new feminist aid policy, to craft new solutions, because "water is undervalued and under threat."

“Fundamentally, water is about peace, between States and across regions. There is enough freshwater in the world – our goals are to share it sustainably, to link science more tightly with policy, and this is our message throughout the International Decade,” concluded Irina Bokova.

19/09/2017 online at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/we-need-deeper-commitment-water-cooperation>