

Despite PM's appeal, Gujarat continues to boil. P8



People kept in the dark on project: MP

Discontent brews as Yettinahole work progresses

People fear water diversion from Kumaradhara, Netravathi rivers

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SAKLESHPUR (HASSAN DISTRICT): The North Karnataka region is in the grip of an intense agitation over the Kalasa-Banduri project. But another controversy seems to be brewing related to the Yettinahole project.

In this, water flows through huge pipes measuring 10 to 12 feet in diameter across River Hemavathi, the lifeline of Sakleshpur.

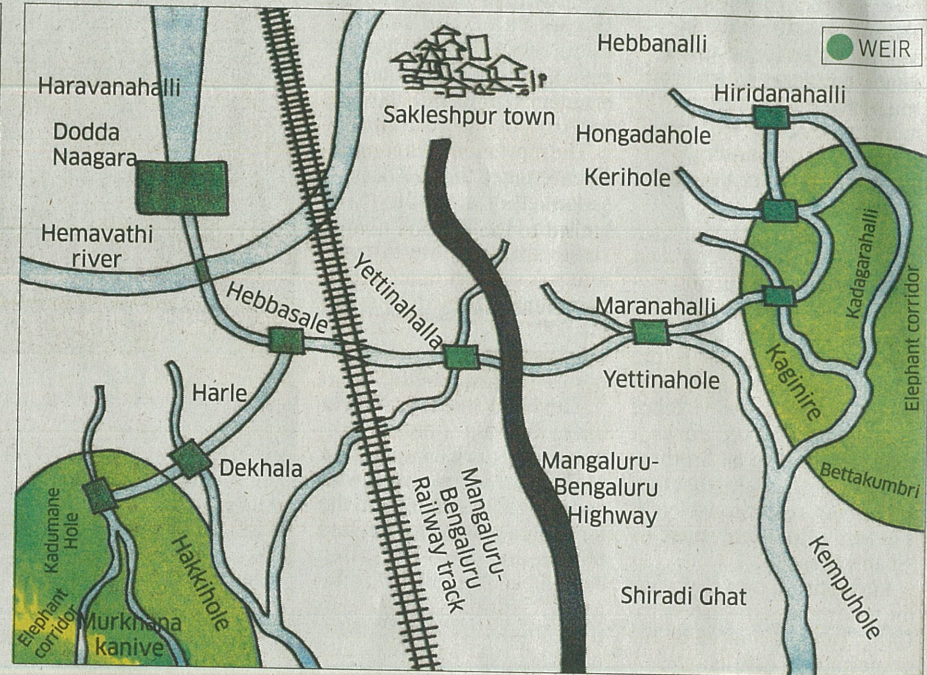
As per the existing plan, the Rs 13,000-crore project comprises construction of eight weirs between Hongadahole and Doddanaagara, the biggest weir, from where water will be pumped to a height. From there, it will flow using gravitational force to Tumakuru, Kolar, Chikkaballapur districts and parts of Bengaluru district.

While seven weirs are on one side of River Hemavathi, Doddanaagara is on the other side. Hence, to reach Doddanaagara (8th weir) from Hebbasale (7th weir), either the huge pipes measuring 10 to 12 feet in diameter should be laid beneath the river or above it.

Four huge pipes would be laid across River Hemavathi, each measuring 10x10 feet, while the water in rivers/rivulets is less than two feet in depth. There is no men-



A view of the trench dug up to lay pipes (seen by the side) at Sattigala near Sakleshpur, Hassan district. Rainwater has filled the trench. DH PHOTOS



tion about the same in the detailed project report too.

As per the plan, the water which was supposed to flow towards Kempuhole and from there, to River Kumaradhara and finally to River Netravathi before joining Arabian Sea would be blocked and diverted to Tumakuru, Kolar, Chikkaballapur districts and parts of Bengaluru district, after crossing River Hemavathi (which joins River Cauvery and then flows to Tamil Nadu).

If the water collected through weirs (which was supposed to flow through River Netravathi) joins River Hemavathi, will the affected people keep quiet?, asks Shivanna, a villager from Hebbasale, through whose land huge pipelines pass.

Only 9 tmc ft available

Though the authorities concerned continue to claim that 24 tmc ft of water is available, a recent study by a team of ex-

perts from the Centre for Ecological Sciences (CES) of the Indian Institute Science (IISc), Bengaluru, led by Prof T V Ramachandra has found out that only 9 tmc of water is available for the project.

If sources are to be believed, officials have surveyed River Kumaradhara too to make up for the water deficiency.

“What is the guarantee that water from River Hemavathi too is not diverted?,” asked an activist.

No work started: Minister

Recently, Minister for Forest, Environment and Ecology B Ramanath Rai, in an interactive session organised by the Kanara Chamber of Commerce and Industries, claimed that no work has commenced pertaining to Yettinahole project in the Western Ghats region.

But, when mediapersons visited the project site, a completely different picture emerged.

While a huge weir (measuring over 100 feet in height) is coming up at Yettinahalla (5th weir), huge pipes measuring 10x10 feet have already been laid at Hebbasale and Kadumane Estate.

The work on the project is being undertaken on a war-footing, but the public have been kept in the dark, said Dinsh Holla, the convener of Sahyadri Samrakshana Sanchaya.

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SHIVANNA, A VILLAGER FROM HEBBASALE: If the water collected through weirs (which was supposed to flow through River Netravathi) joins River Hemavathi, will the affected people keep quiet?

State to resume iron ore auction in October