

## Water aplenty but Gulbarga thirsty

### Sewage gushes out of defunct pipes; residents protest in vain

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Gulbarga, Nov 27: This may be the Suvarna Karnataka year, but for Gulbarga city, grappling with a water crisis, there is no reason for celebration.

The diktat of district-in-charge Minister Sharana-basappa Darshanapur to civic authorities to supply drinking water at least twice a week to Gulbarga city speaks volumes for the near collapse of the supply system. The malfunction in both bulk and retail water supply systems has resulted in chaos in the city of five lakh people

Though the Bhima and Bennethora, the principal sources of water to the city are brimming, the corporation has not been supplying water even once a week. And once the supply starts, stinking sewerage water gushes out of domestic and public taps.

Not a single day passes in the city without people taking to streets against the defunct water supply system, with protesters threatening to disrupt public order. Administrator Pankaj Kumar Pandey

and commissioner Thippesh are virtually on the run and avoid facing people.

The Bhima water supply scheme, with an installed pumping capacity of 11 mgd (million gallons a day), was alone capable of meeting water demand up to the 2025. But never in its 12-year history has it been able to pump more than 5 mgd thanks to the substandard raising main. Every week, breaches in the 27-km long pipeline bring water supply to a

halt for several days. Now the Rs 25-cr scheme is being abandoned to make way for a parallel pipeline.

The Bennethora reservoir, which is brimming with water, can also quench the city's thirst for the whole year. And here too worn out pipes laid during Nizam's rule are wreaking havoc.

Though the government has spent Rs 58 cr on re-modelling the existing pipeline, its benefit is seen nowhere. On the contrary, the supply system has

gone from bad to worse. Both the water board and the corporation are to blame for the poor execution and maintenance of the system. Nearly 30 per cent of the city's outlying areas depend on underground water. At many places, borewells have gone dry due to over-exploitation. The quality of ground water is going down mainly due to defunct underground drainage system.

The man-made water crisis has caused severe hardship to people who are forced to wander with empty pots from pillar to post in search of water.