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Yettinahole Project

(The Hindu, 12-09-24)

What is the Yettinahole Integrated Drinking Water Project?

- Based on a report by Dr. G.S. Paramashivaiah on diverting excess water from west-flowing rivers to interior dry region of South Karnataka
- Aims to harness 24.01 tmcft of water from the Nethravathi River's catchment area in Coastal Karnataka.
- Intended to provide water to seven arid districts of southern Karnataka
- Estimated cost of ₹23,251 crore
- Intended to benefit 13 million people across 7 districts
- Involves constructing 8 dams and a 274 km pipeline network
- First stage recently inaugurated by the Congress government

What are the main controversies surrounding the project?

- Opposition from people in Malnad and coastal regions
 - Potential negative effects on agriculture and fishing in the source region
 - Disagreements between different regions and political parties over water allocation
- Concerns about impact on Western Ghats biodiversity and downstream communities
- Potential reduction in water flow to the Hemavathi reservoir and its impact on the Cauvery River basin
- Doubts about the actual water yield (9.55 tmcft vs. projected 24.01 tmcft)
- Allegations of implementing without proper environmental clearances
 - Activists moved the National Green Tribunal (NGT) opposing the project. NGT quashed petitions in 2019, upholding the government's argument about providing drinking water
- Doubts from beneficiary districts about assured water supply
- Land acquisition issues for gravity and feeder canals
- Landslips reported in area close to project work areas. Residents blame the project for the tragedy, while officials deny any connection
- Critics propose focusing on alternative solutions like rainwater harvesting and groundwater recharge instead.

What are the sustainable alternatives for addressing water scarcity in arid regions?

- Rainwater harvesting: Construct check dams and percolation tanks to capture surface runoff
 - Potential to increase water availability by 10-20% in semi-arid regions
- Create artificial recharge structures like injection wells and spreading basins
 - Can improve groundwater levels by 1-3 meters annually in suitable areas
- Water-efficient agriculture: Adopt drip irrigation and precision farming techniques
 - Can reduce agricultural water use by 30-70% compared to traditional methods
- Wastewater recycling and reuse: Develop advanced treatment facilities for greywater and blackwater
 - Potential to reclaim up to 70% of municipal wastewater
- Water conservation and demand management: Implement tiered pricing structures to discourage excessive use

- Education campaigns can reduce household water consumption by 15-20%
- Smart water management systems: Implement IoT-based leak detection and real-time monitoring

Can you answer the following question?

The Yettinahole Integrated Drinking Water Project highlights the complex challenges in balancing development needs with environmental concerns. Critically examine the issues surrounding large-scale water diversion projects in India, and suggest sustainable alternatives for addressing water scarcity in arid regions.

Instability and uncertainty stalk Bangladesh

(The Hindu, 11-09-24)

What led to the recent political upheaval in Bangladesh?

- Protests against a 'quota system' reserving government jobs for descendants of 'freedom fighters'
- Government's heavy-handed suppression of student demonstrations
- Growing anger against Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her government
- Hasina's resignation and fleeing to India

Who is currently in charge of Bangladesh?

- An interim government headed by Muhammad Yunus, an economist
- The interim government has the backing of the Army
- Students are functioning as 'storm-troopers'
- Several key officials, including the Chief Justice and central bank governor, were compelled to step down

What are the potential geopolitical implications of this change?

- Possibility of increased meddling by major powers like the U.S. and China
- Concerns about the growing presence of Islamist parties in Bangladesh
- Potential shift in Bangladesh's foreign policy, possibly strengthening ties with China
- Risk of regrouping and revival of militant activities in India's northeast

What challenges does India face due to these developments?

- Dealing with uncertainty along much of its periphery, especially to the west and northwest
- Potential shift of Bangladesh from a friendly neighbor to a problem state
- Delay in resolving the Rohingya Muslims issue
- Possible strengthening of the China-Pakistan axis
- Threat of Islamist radicalism in the region

Can you answer the following question?

Analyze the recent political developments in Bangladesh and their potential impact on India's strategic interests in South Asia.

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