

Press review 6 – 19 March 2013

Dams to provide better prospects

March 04, 2013. [0](#)

A news report said that Asian Development Bank has declined to fund Bhasha dam, saying that how can Pakistan arrange \$12 billion for its construction. It would take 12 years to build, while 7 years have already passed since its first ground breaking in 2006. Kalabagh dam would take only 6 years at an estimated cost of about \$ 6 billion the choice would be clear to an unbiased viewer.

The trouble with our planners and politicians is that they are myopic about seeing the writing on the wall. What is needed is to try to start work on both Bhasha and Kalabagh dam in tandem so that if Kalabagh dam is built in 6 years with no objection from World Bank and ADB we could hopefully manage to arrange for funds for Bhasha in the time at our disposal. The crunch however, lies in the fact that we could not build either dam with our ‘gunghoo’ policies of our decision makers. The authorities to be must come clear on the water and power issue that has been held hostage by the personal vanities and baseless prejudices of parties with vested interests for a long time.

DR MUHAMMAD YAQOOB BHATTI,

Lahore, February 28.

Public funding is not wasted on building dams

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Could there be anything more incongruous than a former Labor politician quoting Liberal free marketer Bert Kelly? Perhaps one whose own aggressive and bizarre behaviour is no impediment to calling the respected Andrew Robb a “troubled” character. Mark Latham (“[The damnation of dams](#)”, *AFR*, February 28) says that governments stopped funding new dams in 1983 because they were an inefficient use of public money.

Nonsense. As compared to spending \$40 billion per year on welfare, much of which is middle-class welfare, or \$16 billion on school halls? The Labor Party has no choice in opposing dams as that is the price that the Greens demand for sharing the spoils of government – that and the understanding that Australian farmers invariably vote conservative.

Government-funded dams for urban areas to entice and service consumption is OK by the likes of Latham, rather than dams for export production which has, in Latham's and the Greens' view, the unfortunate by-product of supporting farmers.

Furthermore, Bert Kelly did not witness any repeated failures of state-led farming ventures in the north in the 1960s, the small failures were private ventures led and financed by courageous Canadian/American billionaire and philanthropist Art Linkletter.

The Ord River dam cost just \$20 million to construct, about \$300 million in today's money, much less than the new Cotter Dam in Canberra. The success of the Ord River Scheme is precisely why the Coalition believes that the successful Ord experiment is now able to be replicated elsewhere.

Chris SmithBraddon, ACT

Letters

Lack of dams holding back Lebanon's water, energy sectors

03-02-13

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/2013/Mar-02/208501-lack-of-dams-holding-back-lebanons-water-energy-sectors.ashx#axzz2MZJK4oB3>

March 02, 2013 01:24 AM By [Stephen Dockery](#)

(The Daily Star :: Lebanon News :: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb>)

Below a giant reservoir of mineral-tinted blue water in the snow-capped mountains of Shabrouh, water gushes across a spillway that runs down through a 63-meter-high jagged stone wall.

This small-scale dam on a minor waterway could well be the model to alleviate the country's water and energy shortages.

The Energy and Water Ministry has extensive plans for dozens of dams such as the one in Shabrouh, stretching from Aita Shaab in the south to Kawshara in the north.

But documents from the ministry and meetings with officials confirm that nearly every one of these dam projects is several years behind schedule. While five of the projects may begin construction soon, the ministry lacks the funds or the organizational capacities to arrange the infrastructure the country desperately needs.

"The ministry does not have much money to do this," said Ziad Zakhour, a dam expert at the ministry.

The dams would be used to harness the 1 billion cubic meters of water that rush through Lebanese waterways every year for hydroelectric power as well as pump the resource into the country's water system, providing urgently needed help for both the water and electricity sectors.

Currently there is a 300 million cubic meter water shortage in the country every year, with the largest shortage in the arid Bekaa Valley region, where an extra 150 million cubic meters of water is needed.

By 2035, the overall water shortage is expected to reach around 700 million cubic meters, according to ministry estimates.

"If we take into account all of the water production systems we are still in deficit," Zakhour said.

Lebanon's yearly rains and snowmelt fill the country's waterways with millions of cubic meters of water as well, plenty for the country to drink.

With airport meteorologists estimating 818 millimeters of precipitation this year compared to last year's 618 millimeters, this year's particularly rainy winter would have added lots of water to dam reservoirs – if they were functioning.

The national strategy to reduce the water shortfall involves installing meters, charging based on usage, network repairs and waste treatment. Most importantly, the plan allocates nearly \$2 billion over the next eight years to build dams, the biggest contribution in avoiding the shortage.

"This country cannot do without dams, this is clear," said Younes Hassib, a water expert from GIZ, a German development organization.

Currently the largest dam in the country is in Qaraoun in the Western Bekaa, which adds over 220 million cubic meters of water into the network every year. Shabrouh generates 8 million cubic meters, while Ballout Lake in Metn adds a half million cubic meters.

Many more dams are needed to make a sizable impact on the nation's water shortage, but the country is unlikely to complete them any time soon.

Four dams projects are two years behind schedule, eight have been delayed and will not start construction this year, and two have been stopped altogether due to resistance from local communities.

There are five dams that could begin construction this year, in Buqaata in Kesrouan, Mseilha and Balaa in Batroun, Ratiba in Jbeil, and a rehabilitation project at Kawshara Lake in Akkar. They will add around 15 million cubic meters a year of water capacity, a small amount on a national scale.

Dams with larger capacity aren't likely to begin construction for several years, Zakhour said.

The problem, ministry and water experts say, is two-fold. First the process of planning a dam is

intense and inclined to experience delays.

Geologists and engineers must be brought in for site location and dam design. Environmental experts must be consulted to determine the ecological impact of stopping the flow of millions of cubic meters of water, and residents often need to be relocated from the dam area.

It's a lengthy process that can take several years.

Another problem is money and planning. The ministry's budget has been exceptionally tight recently due to tough economic conditions and much of the money spent on water sector reform has been allocated into urban wastewater treatment projects that have dragged on for years with limited returns.

A national water sector strategy published by the Energy and Water Ministry last year offers a clearer way forward for water projects but also reveals a ministry that is mired in bureaucratic problems and is calling for help in fixing deep-rooted organizational problems.

Many provisions of a recently enacted ministry reform law have not been implemented. Sixty-four staff members are working in departments that should have been eliminated while overall the ministry is 33 percent understaffed, according to the report.

This understaffed body struggling with its organization is tasked with fixing an ailing water supply system that leaks hundreds of thousands of cubic meters of water a year.

The ministry is working through antiquated laws that include a 1913 Ottoman irrigation act.

"It's a multi-level approach, if you like, and all these things need to be tackled in parallel," Hassib said.

Beyond the difficulty in planning and building dams and their benefits in terms of water storage and low cost energy, dams are also a controversial issue among environment activists.

The Beirut-based environmental policy group IndyAct said the dams could prove to be disastrous. Storing millions of cubic meters of water stops it from nurturing ecosystems downstream. Open reservoirs are also at risk of water pollution problems, and the actual dam itself can destroy animal habitats.

"IndyAct is completely against a water strategy that is based on dams. It will completely alter the ecosystem of the few natural areas that we have," the group said in a policy statement provided to The Daily Star.

IndyAct suggests that conservation and recycling projects of water are much more environmentally friendly methods of reducing the country's water shortage.

“In terms of water supply, we need to rely on more progressive methods,” the statement said.

Vattenfall Says French Plan for EDF, GDF Hydropower Dams May Contradict Law

By: [Hydropower News - RenewableEnergyWorld.com](#)

Posted on March 05, 2013 at 08:00 AM EST

A French proposal to allow GDF Suez SA and Electricite de France SA to extend their concessions to run hydropower plants by 25 years may contradict national laws on allotting contracts for public services, Vattenfall AB said.

PM allays fears on China dams

<http://www.assamtribune.com/scripts/detailsnew.asp?id=mar0713/at05>

SpI CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, March 6 – Allaying apprehension over diversion of Brahmaputra River, Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh said that China has assured that all hydropower projects there are run-of-river ventures and would not impact the flow of river downstream.

The Prime Minister was replying to the discussion on President’s address in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday. He said that India has taken up the issue of trans-border rivers with China and has been assured at the highest level that all new projects are RoR and will not impact the flow of water.

India is vigilant about all developments on the country’s periphery having a bearing on its unity and integrity, he added.

The Prime Minister’s [reply](#) came even as the Centre has confirmed that the neighbouring [country](#) has proposed to construct three more hydropower projects on the river in [Tibet](#) Autonomous Region.

The recently released ‘Outline of the 12th Five Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People’s Republic of China’ indicates that three more hydropower projects on the main stream of the Brahmaputra River in Tibet Autonomous Region [have been approved for implementation](#) by the Chinese authorities, Minister for [Water Resources](#) Harish Rawat said in a written reply to a question by Biswajit Daimary.

The Government of India is aware of [construction](#) activity on Brahmaputra River at Zangmu on the Chinese side, which is a run of the river (RoR) hydroelectric project, which does not store water, the Minister clarified.

Phi Phi may run out of water

THE NATION March 15, 2013 1:00 am

<http://www.nationmultimedia.com/national/Phi-Phi-may-run-out-of-water-30201994.html>

Drought is threatening to spread to many parts of the country, with water in the renowned tourist getaway of Phi Phi Island set to run out as early as this month.

"Here, rain has not fallen for more than a month," Weerapat Jantaro, chairman of the Phi Phi Island Tourism Operator Club, said.

The operators are getting ready to buy water from Phuket for Bt250-Bt300 per cubic metre to prevent disruption to their business.

Some 2,500-3,000 visitors arrive on Phi Phi every day, with many staying the night.

Phankham Kittitornkun, chairman of the Ao Nang Tambon Administration Organisation, said that though the privately owned reservoir on the island still had some water, it would likely dry up by the end of the month.

"So when April arrives, tourism operators on the island will have to order water from Phuket. Besides paying for the water, they will have to pay for transportation, which is even more costly," he said.

Bottled water on Phi Phi would be a few times more expensive than on the mainland.

The Irrigation Department has warned farmers around the Chao Phraya River basin not to plant a second crop this season.

Large dams across the country are down to 41.28 billion cubic metres of water - 6.24 billion cubic metres lower than last year - and just 17.76 billion cubic metres can be used.

More than 10 million rai of farmland in the Chao Phraya basin are being worked on this arid season despite the plan limiting planted areas to 9.6 million rai.

As of March 12, only 1.91 million cubic metres, or 21 per cent, remained of the water stored for irrigation in the Chao Phraya Basin even though the dry season is expected to drag on for at least another month.
