

## ***Negotiators reach agreement to curb global warming***

MARRAKESH: Negotiators reached an agreement on Sunday on rules governing a treaty on climate change, the first international accord to curb global warming, delegates said.

The agreement, accepted in a closed-door meeting of chief delegates, was adopted shortly afterward by the plenary of the 165-nation climate conference by consensus without a vote after 5.30 a.m.

Cabinet ministers emerged smiling from a conference room after nearly 19 hours of negotiation over complex legal text. "I'm tired, but it was worth it", said Canadian environment minister David Anderson.

Negotiations snagged over a few points in a thick book of binding rules governing the implementation of the 1997 Kyoto protocol.

The protocol would require industrial countries to scale back emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases to less than 1990 levels by an average of five per cent by 2012.

"We have an accord, and only a few hours ago we thought we wouldn't", said French environment minister Yves Cochet.

The United States, the world's biggest polluter, watched from a distance, having decided last March to abandon the treaty and draw up its own action plan.

"The big question now is how we bring the U.S. into the biggest international effort against the greenhouse effect", said Olivier Deleuze, Belgium's state secretary for the environment and head of the European delegation.

Delegates said the agreement opened the way for ratification by enough countries to bring the treaty into force, probably before a global environment summit next September marking 10 years since the first voluntary measures were adopted against climate change at the earth summit in Rio de Janeiro.

The treaty needs ratification by 55 countries, including those that produced 55 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions in 1990. (AP)

# Deal on climate change treaty

Marrakesh (Morocco), Nov 10

WORLD ENVIRONMENT and energy ministers have reached agreement on the fine print of the landmark Kyoto pact to limit global warming, paving the way for its implementation next year, delegates have said.

The deal, reached after tough bargaining at the end of a two-week UN-sponsored conference on climate change in Morocco, provides a detailed rulebook governing the complex treaty aimed at limiting humanity's negative impact on the Earth's climate.

"We have an agreement," Environment Minister Michael Meacher told reporters in the early hours of Saturday, after marathon negotiations on the

*Handwritten: HGT-11* **US TO BOYCOTT CTBT MEET** *Handwritten: U/11*

THE US said late on Friday night that it would boycott a weekend UN meeting aimed at pushing the implementation of a major nuclear test ban treaty.

State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said Washington would not be represented on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty at the meeting, set to begin on Sunday on the sidelines of the annual UN General Assembly session. "The conference is for countries which have ratified the CTBT," he said. "Other countries, including the US, have been invited to attend as observers. But the US will not be attending," he said.

*AFP, Washington*

final day of the meeting.

"It's a remarkable day for the environment after four years of negotiations on Kyoto," he added.

The 1997 Kyoto Protocol commits developed countries to reduc-

ing emissions of the greenhouse gases that are blamed for global warming by trapping heat in the atmosphere, by an average of five percent from 1990 levels by 2012.

The worst offender is carbon dioxide (CO2) produced from the fuel burned by industry.

"We're quite confident now that the (Kyoto) protocol is saved," said Olivier Deleuze, the European Union's chief delegate at the talks.

The pact seemed in jeopardy last March when, after four years of tortuous negotiations on its content, the United States, the world's biggest emitter of greenhouse gases, pulled out of the agreement, saying it would hurt the US economy.

The 15-member EU has said it will ratify Kyoto by 2002, but the treaty must be ratified by at least 55 countries responsible for 55 percent of the world's 1990 CO2 emissions before it can come into force.

Reuters

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

11 NOV 2001

# Agreement on Kyoto protocol

REUTERS

MARRAKESH (Morocco), Nov. 10. --Environment and energy ministers of a number of countries today reached an agreement on the final draft of the Kyoto pact to limit global warming, paving the way for its implementation next year, delegates said.

The deal, reached after a tough bargain at the end of a two week-long UN-sponsored conference on climate change in Morocco, provides a detailed set of rules governing the complex treaty.

"We have an agreement," British environment minister Michael Meacher told reporters today, after marathon negotiations on the final day of the meeting.

"It's a remarkable day for the environment, after four years of negotiations on Kyoto," he added.

The 1997 Kyoto Protocol demands the developed countries' commitment to reducing emissions of the greenhouse

gases, that are blamed for global warming, by an average of five per cent from 1990 levels by 2012. The worst offender is carbon dioxide, produced from fuels burned by industries.

"We're quite confident now that the (Kyoto) protocol is saved," said Olivier Deleuze, the European Union's chief delegate at the talks.

The pact seemed in jeopardy last March when, after four years of tortuous negotiations the United States, the world's biggest emitter of greenhouse gases, pulled out of the agreement, saying it would hurt the US economy.

The 15-member EU has said it will ratify the Kyoto Protocol by 2002, but it must be ratified by at least 55 countries, responsible for 55 per cent of the world's 1990 carbon dioxide emissions, before it can come into force.

"I am sure, all countries will ratify, except for the United States," said Mr Deleuze, who is also Belgium's energy min-

ister.

"Those who don't ratify, that's for a political reason," he said.

The long-term aim of the treaty is to curb, what UN scientists say, the artificial warming of the earth's climate and its consequences, such as, rising sea levels, melting ice caps, changing rainfall patterns, increased flooding and more frequent droughts.

After Washington's abrupt withdrawal, all eyes turned to Russia and Japan. Without them, the whole pact could collapse.

Negotiators were deadlocked for hours on Friday after four countries -- Australia, Canada, Japan and Russia -- dubbed the 'gang of four' by environmentalists -- raised objections to five points.

These included binding mechanisms to meet the pact's pollution-cutting targets and complex rules on the extent to which countries can offset their emissions by counting



Policemen ride past the venue of the climate summit in Marrakesh. - AP/PTI

carbon stored in trees and the end of the negotiations reached at the last conference was Russia's demand to increase its recourse to these forests and farmland. Delegates said one 'carbon sinks' issue' which persisted right to Under an agreement year from these 'sinks'.

## Climate talks stalled

*Environ 10/11* *FD-16*  
MARRAKESH (MOROCCO), NOV. 9. Talks at the U.N. Climate Conference were stalled early today, less than 24 hours before a deadline for concluding a legal text defining action to curtail global warming.

Negotiations went past midnight, but ended in deadlock between a handful of industrial countries and the rest of the more than 160 nations attending the conference, delegates said.

Five issues remained to be resolved, according to delegates from both developing and developed countries.

Closed-door negotiations resumed early today, the last day of the scheduled two-week meeting, and the conference chairman warned the time limit will not be extended into tomorrow. Previous conferences had stretched well past midnight of the final day.

The conference objective is to write the rules for implementing the 1997 Kyoto protocol on global warming, which calls on nearly 40 industrial countries to limit or reduce the emission of greenhouse gases — primarily carbon dioxide from industry and cars — blamed for raising the earth's temperature.

The accord assigns each country a target, but sets an average 5.2 per cent emission reduction from 1990 levels, to be achieved by 2012. — AP

19.12.1990

## SHARING OF DISTRESS

Environment

THE BLAND 'DIRECTIVE' the Cauvery River Authority issued to Karnataka after its October 10 meeting — that it "ensure inflows at Mettur as stipulated by the Tribunal" in its interim order — has obviously not come up to the expectations of Tamil Nadu which has been pressing for a time-bound release of water, for what it says are its immediate requirements to save the paddy crop in the delta. A dissatisfied Tamil Nadu lost no time in approaching the Supreme Court for urgent relief. Incidentally, the 'directive' itself, which figured in an official release, appeared to be an afterthought, since by all accounts there was no indication to that effect in the course of the deliberations at the meeting. If anything, the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee's concluding remarks suggested a virtual rejection of Tamil Nadu's case for immediate relief, taking note of the recent rains in the delta region; he however assured the State that, should a situation of distress arise, the Authority would be called at short notice to consider providing of relief. Irrespective of whether there is anything more to it than meets the eye in this perceived divergence in response, the fact remains that such ambiguities and lack of transparency showed the CRA in poor light, apart from giving room for unnecessary controversies and wrangles between member States.

Admittedly, the precipitation during the south-west monsoon has been substantially below normal in the Cauvery basin catchment and the upper riparian has to cope with a looming threat of drought in many districts, a grim prospect that places it under tremendous pressure for water conservation. On the other side, Tamil Nadu has its own difficulties, given the depleted storage in Mettur, and is anxious to ensure adequate and timely supply of water for the main samba paddy crop. At the core of the problem is, as it has always been whenever the monsoon played truant, the sharing of 'distress' among the riparian States, especially between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. And this is an issue that needs to be

sorted out by negotiations, with both sides adopting an attitude of give-and-take. Even the Tribunal, while mandating (by its interim order of June 21, 1991) that Karnataka make available 205 tmcft of water in a year and according to a set timetable, has left this crucial question unsettled, although it has broadly commended sharing on a 'pro rata' basis. If Tamil Nadu has been anxious to get assured supplies of water within a timeframe to suit its cropping seasons — this indeed was the rationale behind the Tribunal-ordained schedule — Karnataka has been extremely wary of any suggestion that may ultimately require its adhering to what it considered to be an "impracticable" and "unrealistically rigid" timetable, which of course is understandable, given the State's basic objections to the Tribunal's order itself.

As it happens, the Authority, created at the behest of the apex court in 1998 to ensure the implementation of the Tribunal's fiat, has not so far been really tested on this vital question of 'distress sharing' and, perhaps for this reason, it has not chosen to apply its mind seriously to evolving a mutually acceptable formula. Tamil Nadu, now under an AIADMK regime, has articulated serious reservations about the effectiveness of the CRA, as at present constituted, and the party supremo, Ms. Jayalithaa, swears by a non-political empowered body of technical personnel for the monitoring assignment. In fact, the new Government's lack of faith in the CRA was manifest from the very beginning, as witnessed in its initial reluctance to approach the body for relief and its hurried filing of a suit in the Supreme Court. In the very nature of things, the CRA's present composition, with the Prime Minister at the head and the Chief Ministers of basin States as members, seems to be the best bet. But, much depends on the way the flexibility which the involvement of heads of governments provides — a definite advantage — is actually used by the players at a given time and, more specifically, on how non-parochial and accommodative they are in 'distress sharing'.

15 OCT 2002

# MP seeks Central aid for gas victims

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHOPAL, Oct. 13. — The Madhya Pradesh government has sought a Central assistance of Rs 22 crore annually to carry out rehabilitation and medical care programmes for the victims of the Bhopal gas tragedy even as the leading victims' group accused the former of being engaged in a "conspiracy" to fold up the gas relief department itself.

The state government recently made a statement that it has already submitted to the Centre a proposal of Rs Rs 317 crore for second action plan meant for relief and rehabilitation of the gas victims. The victims' largest organisation, Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Udyog Sangathan (BGP MUS) has, however, blasted the state government asking why it hasn't

completed the first action plan of 1990-1995 till date despite having spent Rs 290 crore, 75 per cent of which was borne by the Centre, for the purpose.

The fact remains that the Digvijay Singh government has failed in ensuring relief and rehabilitation of thousands of Bhopal gas victims over the last eight years of its rule, said Mr Abdul Jabbar, the BGP MUS convener.

Despite showing an expenditure of more than Rs 300 crore since the 1984 Bhopal gas tragedy, the state government has failed to undertake medical treatment, and economic and social rehabilitation of thousands of gas victims, Mr Jabbar said. The entire process has all along been beset with massive irregularities and rampant corruption involving a nexus among the politicians, bureaucrats, and contractors, he alleged.

The major hospitals meant to provide free health care to the gas victims such as Kamla Nehru Hospital, Indira Gandhi Children and Women Hospital, and

Pulmonary Medicine Centre have not become fully operational even 17 years after the tragedy, Mr Jabbar noted. "It is disgraceful that the state government hasn't been able to even work out a data base of the total number of gas victims and their ailments over the last 17 years."

He said the state government has also failed to ensure economic and social rehabilitation of the gas-affected survivors, a significant percentage of which include widows, physically disabled persons, and those families who lost their bread-earners in the disaster. The government hasn't been able to provide employment to them although crore are claimed to be spent for the purpose. All the employment schemes meant for the gas victims have become non-functional, according to Mr Jabbar, while the ambitious Special Industrial Area, established to generate employment for them, has now turned into barracks for the RAF personnel.

14 OCT 2002

KABUL TAKES THE BEATING EVEN AS U.S. PLANS TO USE 'BUNKER-BUSTER' BOMBS

# Special forces ready to enter Afghanistan

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, Oct. 10. War planes of the U.S. pounded targets in and around the capital city of Kabul in what is seen as an intensification of strikes against Afghanistan after two days. Specific targets are those of the Taliban in Kabul.

(AP) quoted senior defence officials as saying the U.S. plans to use 5,000-pound (2,250 kg) "bunker-buster" laser-guided bombs against the underground bunkers of Taliban leaders. The officials said they did not know whether the bunker strikes had been carried out as planned on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Unnamed officials in the Pentagon said up to 1000 U.S. special forces were ready to move into Afghanistan from Uzbekistan. This Central Asian nation is a critical component in the U.S. and British land and air operations even if victory little is mentioned for the record and for obvious reasons.

The U.S.-led bombardment on Wednesday night of Kabul is said to be the heaviest since the start of the air strikes on Sunday. Sev-

eral jets are participating in the night attack even as the Taliban gunners are opening fire from the

## Call to kill Blair

LONDON, Oct. 10. A London-based fundamentalist group, Al Muhajiroun, has given a call to British Muslims to "assassinate" the Prime Minister, Mr. Tony Blair, to avenge the bombing of Afghanistan.

Any Muslim, British or foreign, who "wants to get rid of him (Blair)", would not be punished under Islamic law, but praised, Mr. Abdul Rehman Saleem, a spokesman for the group was quoted by the Times daily today. — PTI

centre and the western parts of the Capital, according to reports reaching here. At least five or six large explosions have been heard.

For the second day, the U.S. carried out daylight raids with one of the focal points being Kandahar, where the airport once

again came under attack. Huge explosions were heard in the city after the night strikes.

There are reports that the U.S. was planning to use helicopters for specific attacks on the hideouts of the Al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden.

The Bush administration is moving another aircraft carrier to the area. The USS Kitty Hawk and its support vessels would be of tremendous help in the movement of largescale commando units and helicopters. The choppers, which can carry up to 14 commandos, are capable of flying low and fast under any weather condition.

It was said that the Northern Alliance (NA) had also made progress and that the Taliban was facing a lot of heat in its traditional strongholds.

It is believed that the air strikes would have substantially softened the ground for the NA. The U.S. forces are expected to start land operations only after it is determined that the Taliban is really vulnerable.

The Defence Department is convinced that the Taliban's mil-

## Storm of planes won't stop: Al-Qaeda

strikes against Afghanistan had "opened a door that will never be closed". "America must know that by coming to the land of Afghanistan they've opened up a new page of animosity between us and the forces of the unbelievers."

Reacting to the Al-Qaeda remarks, the White House in a statement from Washington said that they only bolstered the American view that the group must be eradicated.

"If anybody needed further proof that this group of terrorists has launched attacks on freedom and civilisation, all they had to do was watch that statement" said a White House official, who declined to be named.

Curbs on Osama eased  
The Taliban has authorised Osama bin Laden to issue statements but restrictions on him using the country as a base for "hostile activities" remain, a

spokesman for the militia said today. "We have allowed Osama bin Laden to issue statements but the restrictions on him using Afghan soil for hostile activities remain in effect," said Amir Khan Muttaqi, a newly-appointed spokesman for the Taliban chief, Mullah Mohammed Omar, according to the Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press news agency.

The Taliban had previously insisted that it had prevented Osama bin Laden from communicating with the outside world, a restriction it claimed made it impossible for him to have orchestrated the September 11 terrorist attacks on the U.S.

It became evident on Monday that the restrictions, if they were ever applied, were no longer in force when Osama bin Laden appeared on the Al Jazeera satellite television channel to denounce the U.S.-led airstrikes against Afghanistan. — AFP, AP

itary component has just about been wiped out, especially with regard to air defences. "Essentially we have air supremacy over Afghanistan now," the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Richard Myers, said.

The Pentagon is reviewing the damage caused through satellite images and other reconnaissance. While on the one hand, there is full satisfaction that tremendous damage had been brought on the Taliban and the Al-Qaeda network, there is also the feeling that some sites would have to be struck again.

Meanwhile, the U.S. President, Mr. George Bush, released the names of 22 individuals who were in the Federal Bureau of Investigation's 'most wanted list'. Heading the list is Osama bin Laden.

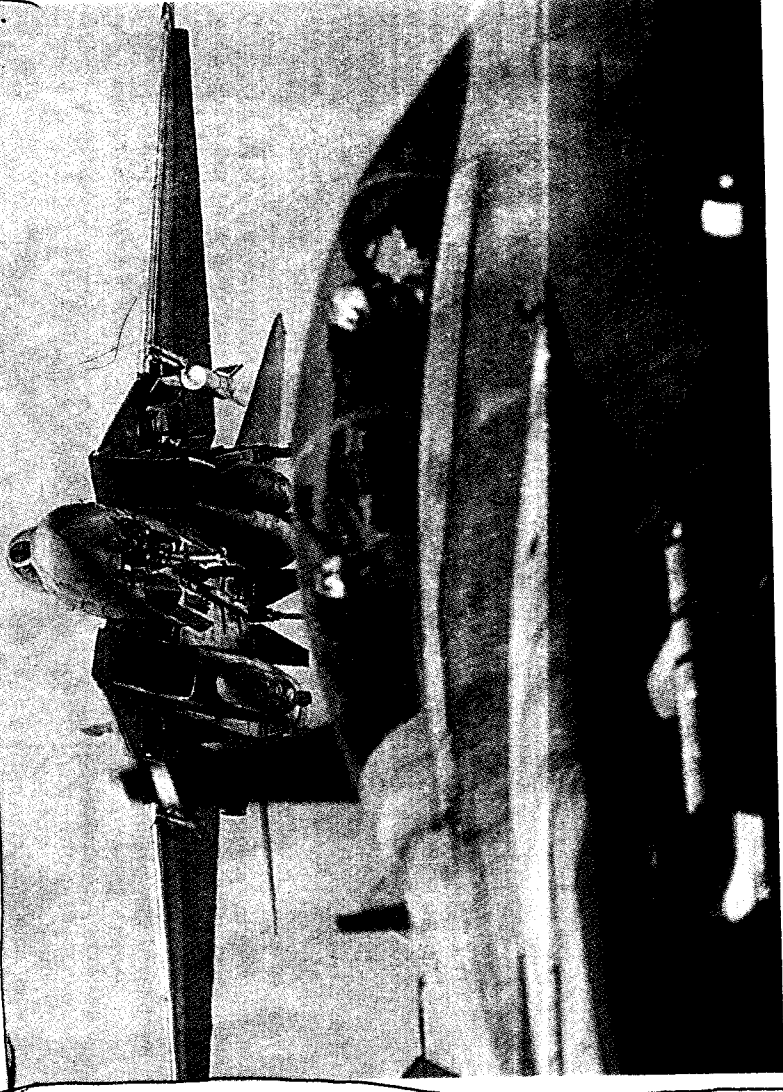
## Humanitarian aid

The U.S. coupled the air assaults with a humanitarian effort, dropping packets of food aid from planes. The Taliban announced that Afghans were destroying the packets rather than eating the food. Mr. Abdul Hanan Himat, a spokesman for the Taliban Information Ministry, said, "The Americans are killing us and attacking us, and we don't need this food."

Along rugged stretches of the Pakistani border, Pakistani troops have been fending off Taliban fighters apparently seeking to flee the bombing campaign. Meanwhile, the United Nations complained that its Afghan staffers still inside the country were being coming targets of Taliban loyalists. The U.N. withdrew its foreign staff at the outset of the crisis, but Afghan nationals remained behind.

## Journalists stoned?

AFP reports from Islamabad: The Taliban announced that it had charged a French journalist and two Pakistani colleagues with spying, a crime that carries the death penalty. "Today our department has officially accused



GETTING READY FOR RAINING HELL: A F-14 lands as another readies for takeoff from the flight deck of the USS Enterprise in the Arabian Sea on Wednesday. — AP

legedly entering the country illegally.

The three were displayed on the streets of a Taliban-held city and were stoned by angry residents, a Taliban source said.

## Ensure inflow, Karnataka told

By J. Venkatesan

NEW DELHI, Oct. 10. Within hours of the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Mr. O. Panneerselvam, expressing "disappointment" over the outcome of the talks, the Cauvery River Authority (CRA) headed by the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, today directed the Karnataka Government to "ensure inflows at the Mettur reservoir as stipulated by the Tribunal, especially in view of the situation being faced in the Cauvery basin".

Soon after the meeting, both Mr. Panneerselvam and the State Law Minister, Mr. C. Ponnaiyan, described the Authority as "toothless and powerless" and accused Mr. Vajpayee of not giving any direction to Karnataka to save the withering "kuruva" crops in Tamil Nadu. They said that even after the Water Resources Secretary pointed out that Karnataka could spare at least 10 tmcft (thousand million cubic feet) of water to Tamil Nadu, the Prime Minister did not respond positively as Karnataka strongly opposed Tamil Nadu's demand. The Karnataka Chief Minister, Mr. S.M. Krishna, told reporters that the Authority had not given any direction to the State, though he described the talks as "useful". Apparently, the Authority had taken the decision to give a direction to Karnataka taking into consideration Tamil Nadu's demands, which complained that Karnataka had been flouting the orders of the Tribunal continuously. In a press release, the Centre said "the Authority also decided that the storage position in Karnataka

and Tamil Nadu will now be reviewed by the Cauvery Monitoring Committee on a monthly basis, and if the situation warrants, will recommend for convening an emergency meeting".

The Authority observed that the current year was one of the most difficult years for the Cauvery basin as was evident from the fact that inflows into the Mettur reservoir were only 55 per cent of the normal inflows and the total storage in four Karnataka reservoirs was also only 77 per cent of the design storage.

Therefore, the Authority called for a strong and effective response to manage the available water efficiently and equitably, with the understanding, cooperation and spirit of sacrifice among the Riparian States. Earlier, Mr. Panneerselvam, who was upset over the failure of the talks, told reporters that the decision of the Authority was to leave the farmers of Tamil Nadu to the will of rain God. He said "the Prime Minister has let us down. Neither Karnataka has listened to Tamil Nadu's plea nor the Authority is helpful in solving the problem."

However, Mr. Krishna disputed Tamil Nadu's contention and said Karnataka had released 27 tmcft of water to Tamil Nadu between September 11 and October 7, which was almost equivalent to Tamil Nadu's demand of one tmcft of water per day. He said 42 of the 46 taluks in the Cauvery basin were in the grip of drought and the State had done whatever it could do in these circumstances.

## Threat to sue polluting countries

WASHINGTON, SEPT. 7. Environment groups are threatening to sue the governments of America, Britain and other countries accused of causing pollution, on behalf of millions of people affected by global warming.

A consortium of lawyers representing organisations such as Greenpeace and America's World Wildlife Fund have discussed ways of holding governments and corporations to account for damage done to the planet by carbon dioxide and other emissions.

The proposed lawsuits, representing millions of people whose homes are flooded by rising sea waters or whose lives are affected by polluted air, would mean that people living on the other side of the world could sue governments in Washington and elsewhere.

Supporters of the idea said they were inspired by the recent decision of the Bush administration to abandon the

Kyoto protocol on global warming.

They added that their actions would be based on the experience of class actions filed by survivors of the Holocaust and cigarette smokers against large corporations.

The groups joined together to investigate the possibility of, for instance, representing the 10,000 people of the tiny nation of Tuvalu.

Scientists believe that global warming will lead to rising seas that will submerge the group of islands and the population has already started exploring the possibility of moving en masse to Australia or New Zealand.

Other possible clients for the legal actions would be the populations of low-lying countries such as the Maldives or Holland, a former legal adviser to Friends of the Earth told the *New York Times*.

The groups could also choose to join action with elderly people whose breathing is

inhibited by air pollution.

According to one of the lawyers involved, they have been encouraged by a cross-border case fought in the 1940s when an international arbiter ruled that a Canadian smelting plant that was damaging crops and cattle in Washington state could be held accountable in law.

The idea was greeted with scepticism by at least one environment lawyer.

Ms. Anne Hayes of the Pacific Legal Foundation, said: "They will have a real hard time proving causation, that the United States Government has caused sea levels to rise.

But many of the lawyers involved believe that merely accusing a major polluting nation or its largest corporations will earn them a victory in "the court of public opinion" even if they cannot win huge damages for those made homeless by floodwaters.

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THE HINDU

- 8 SEP 2001



/net.news/

Space venture

JULY can't pass without remembering the moonlanding in 1969 by Neil Armstrong and Edwin Aldrin and Armstrong's famous quote: "That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind" ([www.nasa.gov/planetary/lunar/apollo11.html](http://www.nasa.gov/planetary/lunar/apollo11.html)) How times changed from 1967 when man sent a small sphere with four long spines, a little bigger than a basketball into orbit around the Earth. Sputnik 1 was the first active radio transmitter in space. Today, there are some 2,500 manmade satellites and uncountable bits of space debris hurtling around at thousands of miles per hour. [www.siam.com/explorations/100697spatnik/hall1.html](http://www.siam.com/explorations/100697spatnik/hall1.html) and [www.pathfinder.com/Life/space/ga/antleap/sec1/sec1.html](http://www.pathfinder.com/Life/space/ga/antleap/sec1/sec1.html) — SNS

Hedwig calling

HEDWIG is a name you should get to know soon since the hit Off-Broadway musical Hedwig and the Angry Inch has been turned into a movie that, before it even opened, was being touted as an object of cult worship. The resulting film, which incorporates glam rock, tons of makeup and even bits of animation, is now open in New York, LA and San Francisco. While you're waiting for Hedwig to hit your hometown, check out the site that accompanies the film. You can download MP3s of Hedwig's greatest hits. [www.dailyrating.com/cool-site-browse.phtml?id=D6C7C1F](http://www.dailyrating.com/cool-site-browse.phtml?id=D6C7C1F) — SNS

Project Gastro

HERE is a consortium of academics, clinicians, theorists, virus developers, substance abusers and skilled individuals under the direction of the Project Gastro Discretionary Oversight Committee, working to lead the world towards a more perfect tomorrow and to develop hardware and software applications for today's hungry clinical marketplace. Some of their recent developments include the Lightweight Parasite Removal Kit and the Portable Autopsy Kit. See [www.projectgastro.com/](http://www.projectgastro.com/) — SNS

If you have interesting insights into the Net, or have discovered a great new site, e-mail the details to [thestatesman@vsnl.com](mailto:thestatesman@vsnl.com)

The Statesman netpoll

Previous question  
For all the wait saying he would first speak to Parliament, unlike Musharraf who hogged the media, was Vajpayee's statement on Tuesday sufficient?  
Yes 36%  
No 64%  
Unsure 0%

Today's proposition

Should J&K be given more powers than other states in the Indian Union when we consider it an integral part of India and expend men and material to keep it that way?  
<http://www.thestatesman.net>

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W R R N E I Y Double Word Score RACK 1  
H L L M E U U All Letter Double RACK 2  
E B R I L O R Triple Word Score RACK 3  
N R M A E C O RACK 4  
G H O P V N A I 3rd Letter Triple RACK 5

PAR SCORE 120-130  
by JUDD

FIVE RACK TOTAL  
TIME LIMIT: 25 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2 to 7 letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blank" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in The Official Scrabble Players Dictionary (Merriam-Webster) and OSW Official Scrabble Words (Chambers). JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION BY JUDD  
M A R I G A H N S RACK 1 = 60  
N A R C O RACK 2 = 13  
P E T T L E RACK 3 = 59  
S U N S I T RACK 4 = 71  
PAR SCORE 125-135  
JUDD'S TOTAL 203

# Nature's warnings ignored

NEGLECT and devastation are etched all over Orissa's recent history. The crippling drought of the mid-90s, followed by the supercyclone of 1999 and now the recent tragedy wrought by the flash floods. The misery this time has been compounded by the fact that it may well have been "man-made" and that the suffering and destruction may have been alleviated had the government acted on the warning signals left behind by the supercyclone.

The floods, following incessant rains submerged several districts, many of them along the coast. Besides, nature's fury, lack of coordination between two state governments is partly to blame. The amount of water, ordered released by Chhattisgarh into the already swollen Mahanadi — 2.3 lakh cusec — was more than double the normal volume released and no prior warning was issued to the Orissa government.

Excess rain in Chhattisgarh meant that four dams in the state were overflowing. And the excess discharge into the Hirakud implied that it was Orissa's southern districts that would be the most affected — Jagatsinghpur and Kendrapara, districts that had suffered severe ecological damage during the supercyclone.

Chhattisgarh and the state it was once part of, Madhya Pradesh, have long had a water-sharing dispute with Orissa. Vote-bank politics have invariably prevented an amicable resolution of the dispute. But in the late 1990s, two dissimilar factors emerged. For one, in the 1990s, Congress-led governments ruled both Madhya Pradesh and Orissa, while since the mid-90s, the Biju Janata Dal has held sway in Orissa.

**Nature's fury apart, Orissa's flash floods may well have been man-made because of the lack of coordination between the governments of Chhattisgarh and Orissa. Chhattisgarh released 2.3 lakh cusec — more than double the normal volume — into the already swollen Mahanadi without prior warning to Orissa, writes ANURADHA KUMAR**



An aerial view of a flooded village in Orissa. — API/PTI

logically advanced nations like the USA. The US National Weather Service will help Vietnam's weather agency strengthen its ability to predict and manage flooding — through advanced computer weather models and technology training.

The pity is that in India, flood control measures are widely known but rarely implemented. After the supercyclone, the state and the Centre did little to construct embankments, drainage channels and towards afforestation. And even optical and microwave data from geo-stationary satellites have been rarely used to map and monitor flood events.

For the Centre, disaster relief is more often than not guided by political compulsions. So, the National Calamity Contingency Fund, set up in March, awarded the biggest slice of relief assistance, Rs 103 of Rs 434 crore, to West Bengal just before the Assembly election. Drought-hit Gujarat and Rajasthan received Rs 85 crore each; Chhattisgarh, also drought-affected, received Rs 40 crore while Orissa got Rs 35 crore.

Despite this, relief operations in Orissa began almost a week after floods affected the area. More ironically, in Puri, villagers starved though there was plenty of foodgrain stocked in the block headquarters.

The flash floods have added to the worries of climate experts who expressed concern over the extreme weather changes witnessed all through the 1990s in Orissa.

Recent studies show a climate change in Orissa. The state has experienced more cyclones than floods in recent years. While the Indian meteorological department says the extreme changes in weather are a temporary phenomenon, climate experts say these are early manifestations of global warming.

With surface temperatures in India having steadily increased over the past century, there have also been variations in the monsoon rainfall.

The yearly variations in monsoon rainfall over India are large enough to cause devastating floods or serious drought. In parts of eastern India and Bangladesh, experts have long predicted an increased frequency of extreme rainfall that could lead to flash floods. It is indeed time for the government to take note.

(The author is a freelance writer.)

The Congress government in Chhattisgarh is also a new one, set up last November. The rivalry between the two Congress chief ministers of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh is also known.

The other factor has more to do with weather changes in the region. For the first time, in over two decades, have the rains visited Chhattisgarh on such a massive scale and disaster management systems were never set up to cope with any such eventuality.

The UN General Assembly had proclaimed the 1990s as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. But while global forums like these exist to establish rich disaster-management related traditions and to spread public awareness, in India there seems to be little co-ordination between relevant institutions such as the Indian Meteorological Department, climate and disaster management experts and the governments.

While it is nearly impossible to prevent the occurrence of natural disasters and their damages, it is possible to reduce the impact of disasters by adopting suitable disaster mitigation strategies.

More crucially, the government authorities in Orissa ignored the warnings sounded by different environmental and expert groups. Portents of the flash floods were seen in the debris of the supercyclone. Dubbed a supercyclone for the damage it caused and for the over 10,000 people who perished, it also left behind an ecological crisis.

About 123,500 acres of forest land, including 50,000 acres of mangrove forests planted along the coast as a cyclone buffer, were damaged. The breach of several embankments along the seashore made coastal regions vulnerable to flash floods, while the destruction of the belt of trees, up to one-kilometre thick in some stretches, meant that a mild cyclone could cause much damage.

The missing green spread would imply an extensive loss of valuable and fertile topsoil that would, in turn, dangerously pave the way for heavy silting of the riverine system. As a result, it had been predicted soon after the supercyclone that flash floods would occur in low-lying delta areas such as Pattamundai, Kendrapara, Kujang, Ersama, Astarang and the Devi river system where the river bed was already high.

Countries like Vietnam, more prone to annual floods, are seeking the help of techno-



Flood affected women of Shankharihai village wait for a free meal on Tuesday. — API/PTI

ORISSA is battered by natural calamities at such regular intervals that "relief" turns out to be the main crop every year, while kharif and rabi production take a backseat.

The old saying in the state is that Orissa has three crops every year "kharif, rabi and relief". Failures of successive governments have transformed the divine blessings of a long coastline and a number of rivers to a curse as far as the suffering millions are concerned.

The bounties of nature — a coastline of over 480 km, rich forest cover and huge mineral wealth remain untapped while the wrath of natural forces shatter the economy of this poorest state in the country.

The heat wave of 1998 followed by the supercyclone-floods of 1999, drought in 2000-01 and the 10-day floods have crippled the agrarian backbone just when it was recovering from the supercyclone and the drought.

Heavy rain, both in the upper and lower catchment areas of the Mahanadi since the first week of July, resulted in the overflowing of rivers. At least 800,000 people across 15,000 villages of 22 districts were affected by the four successive floods within 15 days.

The trail of devastation — 6.50 lakh hectare agricultural land submerged and about 200,000 houses damaged, 742 embankments breached, 84 lives lost and

5,000 cases of diarrhoeal attacks had been officially acknowledged.

The acrimony over government failures and relief not reaching the marooned millions have begun.

Ruling party MPs whose constituencies have been flooded and a few MLAs have joined the Opposition to lambast the government. Their attack has focused on the inexperience and inept handling of the situation. Receding flood waters have started exposing horrific tales of suffering. And now the scarcity of safe drinking water and lack of medical intervention have triggered fears of an epidemic.

The government sounded a "red alert" on 16 July, ordered evacuation (over 500,000 were evacuated, claims the government) and instructed the district administration to stock foodstuff and relief material.

Versions of the marooned, however, belie government claims and declarations made daily at the state secretariat in Bhubaneswar.

"For five days, hundreds of us were perched on rooftops with not a soul from the administration extending any lifeline or relief," screamed agitated villagers of Garadpur in Kendrapara.

"Jawans who rescued us were shocked that nobody had reached us in five days. They wondered how we had survived and one of them said perhaps it was safer on rooftops than on the ground because diarrhoea cases are on the rise."

"On 20 July did some airdropping of food take place in our area. Four days after the floods, we reached the Bedari and Raghavpur with relief and found over 100 people still on rooftops," said Narendra Panda, a social activist of Kendrapara, who along with his team had mobilised relief material.

The preparedness in terms of boats, sandbags and foodstuff was so inadequate that it has gone unnoticed. The situation was such that for the first four days, few areas could be reached. High currents, swirling waters and lack of power boats were the major impediments to rescue and relief operations.

As the situation eased a bit, the Army and NGOs took the lead in reaching out to the marooned. Cooked food with pouches of drinking water were distributed in some areas by CARE, KIIT, social activists like Mr. Panda and his team and other NGOs.

There were heroic tales of how the villagers saved the embankments along the Devi river. Men and women stayed up all night to pile sandbags along the embankments as the waters swelled and threatened to spill over.

"When the flood situation

## Real issues submerged

Problems facing the Hirakud reservoir, embankment maintenance, construction of another dam on the Tel or Mahanadi rivers and afforestation, at least in the critical catchment areas, need to be addressed urgently, writes K RAVI

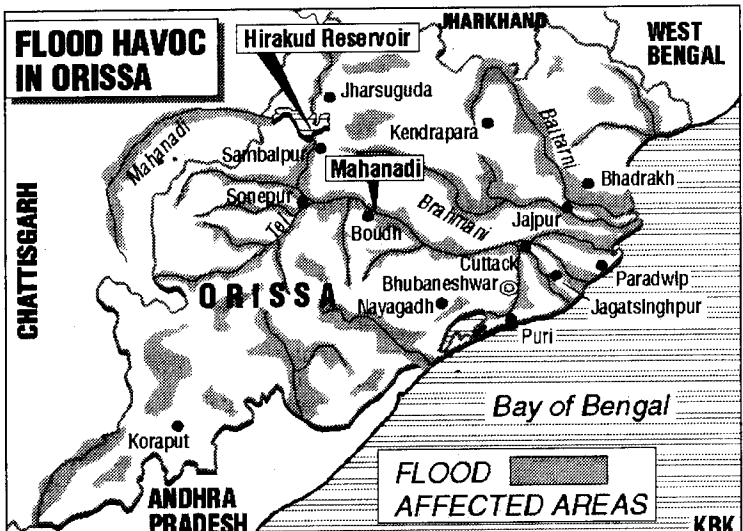


Flood victims take shelter on a roof in Patkura, Kendrapara. No relief has arrived. — Eastern Projections.

was acute, some people fled. I had to arrange ganja for a saving embankments at an end during the cyclone — which were yet to be repaired. Once again the jury is out and a clear picture or verdict on the government's handling of the situation would only emerge when waters recede and rehabilitation takes place.

The most disconcerting feature that begs attention is that the long-term measures are lost in the muddling that takes place and just as in the previous calamities, the hullabaloo will die down only to return when the next calamity strikes the state.

Strangely, major issues — such as the urgency of taking flood-control measures such as strengthening of embankments, construction of another dam downstream Mahanadi and preventing siltation along the catchment — have been criminally neglected by successive governments and are not discussed at all. As a senior bureaucrat said, "You will hear about all these aspects for the next fortnight or so but after that everybody will conveniently forget about it all."



What needs to be addressed is that the Hirakud dam is too small in comparison to the spread of its catchment area. Then there is no dam all along the downstream of the Mahanadi till it flows into the Bay of Bengal.

The catchment area is spread over 32,000 sq miles at the dam site. The dam's length is 4,800 metres. Experts say that heavy rainfall along the catchment does cause huge inflow with the dam safety norms prescribing that water can be retained only up to 628 or 629 feet.

The embankments on the other hand can withstand only 9 to 10 lakh cusec and with rivers like Tel contributing heavily downstream, floods are inevitable every time there is a heavy downpour.

Hirakud was designed primarily for flood control. Power generation and irrigation were considered secondary objectives of the dam. Yet, over the years power generation and irrigation have gained precedence.

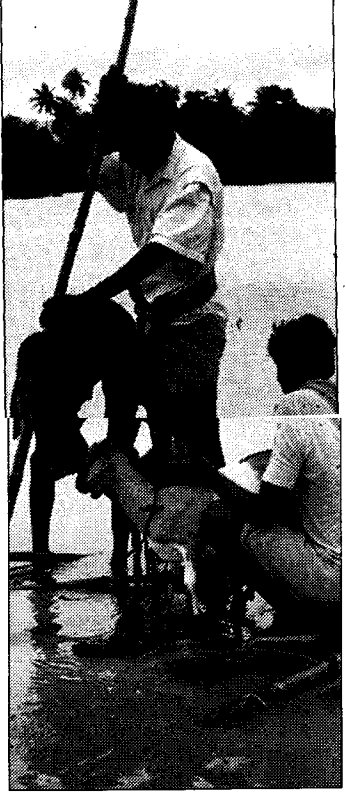
As a result, water levels are kept above 600 feet even prior to the monsoon. Last year, it was reduced in anticipation of a good monsoon and the dam level could only reach 617 feet during monsoon, causing difficulties in irrigation and power generation.

This year, the authorities had retained 607 feet of water on 7 July, closed all discharge gates when the Tel river flooded downstream. But incessant rain caused heavy inflow and water had to be released when the reservoir level reached 628 feet. "Had we not moderated it properly and discharged water earlier, the magnitude of the floods would have been much higher," say experts, while disputing the charge that they had mishandled the regulation and moderation of the discharge from the Hirakud.

Citing instances, they explained that the discharge at Mundali point was 11 lakh cusec on 18 July. So, the sluice gates were closed at Hirakud to avert addition of water to such a heavy discharge downstream, though the inflow was over 9 lakh cusec at Hirakud.

What needs to be addressed is the construction of another dam on the Mahanadi. The Mahanadi valley development project was envisaged during 1946-47 and three units were supposed to be constructed — the Hirakud dam, the Tikarpada dam and the Naraj dam — with each having its own canal system and hydel power installations.

The Tikarpada project was debated over the last several decades but never implemented. Issues of submergence and rehabilitation of ousted croppers up and stalled such moves. Political will was lacking.



After communication lines remained disrupted at Bari in Jajpur for 15 days, villagers shifted to safer areas in a raft. — Eastern Projections

The state has over 5,000 km of embankment which can sustain a maximum flood water level of 9 to 10 lakh cusec. Over the years, the water resources department has neglected flood control and embankment maintenance. Allocations for this sector has dipped from Rs 20 crore to Rs 1.86 crore this year. This is a pittance compared to the extent of embankment repair that is needed. The water resources department has always concentrated on irrigation projects and World Bank-assisted schemes.

The Rs 1.86 crore allotted for flood control measures this year shows how the government had not woken up even after the supercyclone extensively damaged the embankments.

The other area of concern is the fast depleting forest cover along the catchment areas of the Mahanadi delta system. Consequently, the river beds are choked with silt, reducing their water carrying capacity. The 1982 floods were caused by over 16 lakh cusec of water flowing at the Naraj point whereas in 1992, 12 lakh cusec flooded over Naraj to cause floods, though of a lesser intensity and spread. The government and the Opposition get busy with relief and rehabilitation measures while the major aspects remain submerged under the flood waters.

Unless issues relating to the Hirakud reservoir, embankment maintenance, construction of another dam on the Tel or Mahanadi rivers and afforestation, at least in the critical catchment areas, are addressed, floods and their accompanying miseries are inevitable.

(The author is The Statesman's Bhubaneswar-based Special Representative.)



A Shankharihai villager carries a sack of rice from a relief boat, 45 km from Bhubaneswar. — API/PTI

## Kyoto deal is accepted

Bonn, (Germany), July 26: The political deal to save the Kyoto Accord on global warming was finally accepted on Wednesday, after last-minute technical wrangling held up its final approval at a UN forum in Bonn for two days. It took delegates from the 180-odd countries present just three minutes of a much-delayed plenary meeting to see the text formally adopted as no nation raised objections and chairman Jan Pronk, the Dutch environment minister, brought down his gavel. Russia won a special concession to be allowed further negotiations on one technical passage.

But UN officials said the decision did no more than accept Moscow would try to bargain on this later and some delegates said it would be opposed.  
(Reuters)

THE ASIAN AGE