

# Kalabagh Dam—a necessity or luxury

Pakistan should assert its right over water of three rivers which it had surrendered to India, as the Indian planners have established a number of dams and reservoirs on the rivers like Jehlam and Chenab.

Pakistan had an exclusive right over the water of these rivers under the Indus Basin Treaty, which has been violated by the Indian government and now it was a high time to seek the share of water of Ravi, Satluj and Bias from India.

This was the crux of the issues being discussed in the book written by Malik Fateh Khan Cheengi, convenor *Kalabagh Dam Banao Tehreek* a Talla Gung, Chakwal based movement striving for the construction of this mega project. Mr Fateh Khan, in his book 'Kalabagh Dam' is of the firm belief that war on Kashmir with India can be averted but it would not be possible to avoid a war on water with India as India will not give Pakistani a due share of water from the existing resources.

He said Pakistan had to face a threatening-cum blackmailing situation in 60's from India on the water situation. However, following the lack of strategic depth and weak defence backed by ailing economy, it was not able to reply these threats in the same language. However, this time situation of negotiations on water will be different between both the sides as Pakistan was not on a weak wicket because it was a nuclear power.

Pakistan should plead before the

World Bank, the guarantor of Indus Basin Treaty for its rights over the water resources which it was promised in the agreement.

Fateh Khan believes that demolition of all the dams and barrages on the rivers flowing to Pakistan is prerequisite to maintain the peace between both the sides.

Discussing main topic of the book, Mr Fateh Khan Cheengi is of the firm belief that Pakistan is left with only option of construction of Kalabagh Dam along with other 1000 down the stream small and medium size dams which would store water.

He said none of the past ruler has ever asked people about different development projects initiated in the country. Majority of these projects were started because of the easy availability of funds from the creditors.

**'The govt should take initiative to build Kalabagh Dam, which guarantees the revival of economy'**

Therefore, army should take an initiative to start this project, which guarantees not only the revival of economy but also sick industry of the country.

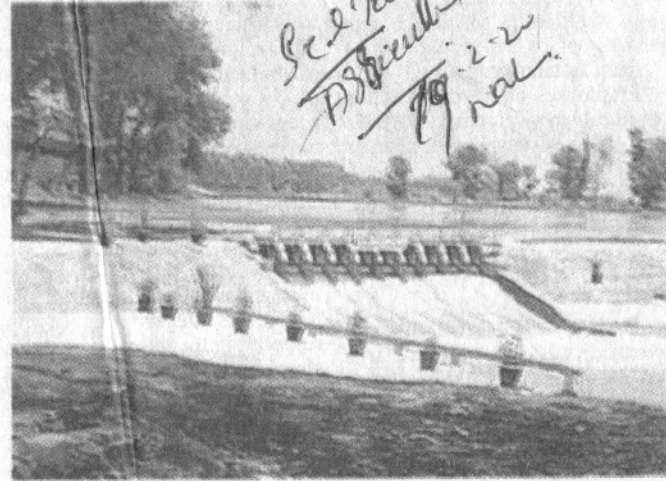
Pakistan has become a 'warehouse' of the foreign manufacturers and local industry which is lying sick and can not compete with the flood of the manufacturers of the developed countries. It was only because the high cost inputs, mainly the electricity. In case of availability of low priced electricity, more than 3000 sick units would resume their operation, which would make the country

as an export surplus in different sectors. The revival of these units will open new vistas of development and new opportunities for the unemployed youth of the country.

Counting the immediate benefits of the Kalabagh Dam, Fateh Khan Cheengi has written that more water availability would bring more areas in Balochistan and Sindh under cultivation. It would not only increase the GDP of the country considerably but would also check the mounting unemployment ratio. Export of surplus production would help control the fiscal deficit and thus reducing the debts which have made the economy a hostile. Kalabagh Dam is the only reply to mounting threats of drought.

Malik Fateh Khan Cheengi is happy that the any of the provincial assembly of Punjab had not reacted, when the assemblies of other provinces were passing resolution against the dam. This generous attitude of 'big brother' will help place the very first plaque of Kalabagh Dam. Although, Punjab will have to bear 55 per cent cost of the project in case of foreign funding and even 65 per cent damage in the shape of dislocation of population and salinity around the reservoir, yet the Punjab should continue to sacrifice for the good of the rest of the provinces. It would help remove all the apprehensions of all three brothers regarding this dam.

He said that an Ireland like peace movement should be started to construct such 1000 dams in the country. School children had organized a campaign to end the ongoing anarchy in that country. Similarly, the school children should be organized to launch a begging drive to retire the debt of the country as well as to start



the construction of Kalabagh Dam.

He has further written that every one should know that water situation was worsening with every passing day. The reservoirs were depleting rapidly while losing their storage capabilities, and within next 10 years, the Tarbella and Mangla dams would have lost their storage capabilities following the ongoing silting. In this scenario, it was a serious question to ponder, whether or not the small dams fulfil future requirements of water for irrigation as well as power generation purpose.

Malik Fateh Khan Cheengi has not written even a single word against the General Pervez Musharraf led army regime for shelving this important project. Rather, he has repeated the same view of 'squeezing money from the so called plunderers, a hype which was created by present regime at the time of take over and back fired miserably. The same hype has played a havoc with the economy of

the country and repelled a lot of investment and entrepreneurs from Pakistan.

He has also published a list of 32 big defaulters of the country, however, no source of this list has been printed. Names of the majority of the defaulters and their offices have not been spelled correctly. Malik Fateh Khan has also criticised the post 1985 political governments of the country for creating an economic mess. However, he did not write even a single word about the respective army regime, which never allowed democracy to flourish and let a true leadership emerge in the country. Although he has castigated Ayub Khan for introducing EBDO and delaying the construction of Kalabagh Dam, but at the same time he did not mention the negligence on the part of Ziaul Haq, which put a second last nail in the coffin of this project. The final nail has been placed by Musharraf government. —Rizwan Razi