

RAWALPINDI — The dream of water supply from Khanpur Dam to twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad has turned into a reality with Federal Capital already benefitting from the project while Rawalpindi city and Cantonment will start getting water from Khanpur Dam by August this year. However, it remains whether the Dam would cater to the need of residents of the twin cities round the year.

According to the water distribution accord made under Executive Committee for National Economic Council (ECNEC) the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad share of water per day is 51 million gallons per day (MGD) while Khanpur Dam is already providing some 42.09 MGD and 40.002 MGD water for irrigation purpose and some industrial use in NWFP and Punjab respectively.

Some water experts questioned the validity of the project and said that a small dam like Khanpur could not meet such a big demand

Will Khanpur Dam cater to need?

From Our Correspondent

of water both for municipal use of twin cities and irrigation requirements of parts of NWFP and Punjab.

These experts said that the lake of Khanpur Dam could not store water for long time because water seeps into the bed and the surrounding mountains.

They also doubt the storage capacity of the dam shown in the documents. They are of the view that since its commissioning in 1985 the dam has never been cleaned and now there is a huge bed of sand and mud in the dam which has reduced its water storage capacity.

The sources in CDA informed that out of the total share of 16.5 MGD of water they were presently getting 5 MGD while experts critical of the project argue that even out of total share of 51 MGD

at present the Khanpur Dam Water Supply Scheme could not provide the full share of CDA. "What would be the situation when WASA and RCB started getting their share by the end of this year," they question.

The Khanpur Dam is located across Haro river some 64 kilometre from Islamabad on Taxila-Haripur road. The project was conceived in 1963 by the then government to provide water to the residents of twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

Later the dam was commissioned in 1985 but no concrete measures were taken to bring water from Khanpur Dam to the area and the water needs of the area were met on ad hoc arrangements.

The project director of Khanpur Dam informed that the total storage capacity of Khanpur Dam is

22,792 million gallons and it is expected to be filled three times in a year depending on the rain pattern. He said that though due to low rainfalls over the past three years, the water level in the dam is low, even then it can easily meet the requirements of the twin cities besides catering to the irrigation needs of parts of NWFP and Punjab.

He informed that in all some 18,000 acre each of NWFP and the Punjab is being irrigated with the water of Khanpur Dam.

To a question, he admitted that they have seepage problem in the dam but they were working on it and had controlled it to a great extent. He further said that some people in the area using the dam for irrigation purpose were propagating against the project as after the supply of water to Rawalpindi city and Cantonment they would be de-

prived of the extra water which they had been utilising for years.

He said that after the completion of the project in 1985 the share of water for irrigation and civic use was fixed under the ECNEC accord and no one could get the share of other.

The officials of WASA and Rawalpindi Cantonment Board dealing with water supply schemes also brush aside the objections raised about the project and said that the feasibility of the project was made after detailed study and consultation with international firms.

Giving the details of water supply in Federal Capital, Rawalpindi City and Rawalpindi Cantonment Board, the officials of RCB informed that at present RCB was facing the acute water shortage whereas the water availability in

Rawalpindi city and Federal Capital was comparatively better.

He said that for the population of 8.5 lakh residents of federal capital 107 MGD was available with 125.88 gallons of water available per person per day. In Rawalpindi, for 8.33 lakh people about 27 MGD water is available giving the share of 32.5 gallons per person per day, whereas in Rawalpindi Cantonment Board for the total population of 9 lakh only 16.33 MGD was available with a share of 18.33 gallons per person per day.

According to the international standards minimum water per person per day is 200 gallons and according to these standards both the residents of twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad are water-deficient with Rawalpindi Cantonment Board the hard-hit area.

Now with the initiation of work on water supply project from Khanpur to Rawalpindi city and Cantonment it is hoped that the ordeal of residents of the area might end.