

Overcoming water shortage

Leading water and power experts Wednesday urged all the four provincial governments to build dams in their respective areas in order to conserve 36 MAF water presently being wasted to sea. The consensus was developed at Pakistan Water Front meeting jointly chaired by the LCCI Senior Vice President Ijaz A. Mumtaz and former Vice President Shahzad Ali Malik.

The water and power experts including Mushtaq Ahmad Gill, Dr. Muhammad Shafiq, Dr. Shahid Raza, Ayub Mayo and Dr Asif were of the opinion that there was no constitutional bar on the provincial government so they must not waste any more time and should initiate working on small dams in their respective areas. They said that it was not the Pakistan alone against which the Indian government was hatching water conspiracies but it was playing the same game with China, Bangladesh and Nepal. They made the point that Pakistan is on the brink of mass starvation as the process to turn it into a desert had begun because of a drastic cut in water availability from 5,000 cubic meters per capita in 1950s to 1000 cubic meter in 2010 despite the fact that water availability per capita ranks last amongst Asian countries and Pakistan experiencing severe water stress. Without water 20 million acres of otherwise fertile land would dry up in a week and tens of millions of people would starve. No army, with bombs and shellfire could devastate as thoroughly as Pakistan could be devastated by India by cutting off river flows.

They said that the United States should ensure implementation of Indus Water Treaty (IWT) in letter and spirit, sharing of complete information regarding water flows as per the article VI of IWT, Installation of telemetry system on rivers by international agencies. Compensation of 0.2 MAF water of Baghliar. Protection of water shed in the upper reaches (J&K) of western rivers. Time-bound resolution of differences and disputes. Technical & financial assistance for development of water resources particularly hydro electric projects. Under the Indus Water Treaty 1960 India cannot stop or interfere with western rivers, whereas in case of Baghiliar Dam India did not meet IWT provisions of sharing information. India withheld 0.2 MAF in case of Baghliar. India is building a huge storage capability (National river linking project) with a cost \$ 120 billion to be completed in 2016 with features to diversion of 178 cubic KM water from north to south, including 3,000 storage reservoirs, 14,000 KM of canals, resulting in conflicts with neighbouring countries including China, Bangladesh, Bhutan etc. India commitment to ensure 50,000+cusecs in Chenab at Marala in IWT-1960 blatantly violated. Water flows of western rivers as of Jan 2010. river Chenab at Marala 4,200 cusecs, river Jhelum at Mangla 6,300 cusecs and river Indus at Terbel 14,400 cusecs. The presentation further said that under-construction Kishanganga Dam is a severe threat to Neelum-Jhelum Hydel Project.