

Amid Punjab-Haryana standoff, Centre clears 296 CISF personnel for Nangal Dam security

In a communication to BBMB, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs said that 296 posts of CISF personnel have been created for manning the "Bhakra Dam Project, Nangal (Punjab)".

The Centre Wednesday sanctioned a contingent of 296 armed CISF personnel for providing security cover to the Nangal Dam, the move coming on a day when the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Punjab organised a Fateh (victory) Rally for not letting extra water to flow to Haryana till May 20.

Meanwhile, water was released from the dam to Haryana as fresh distribution cycle kicked in Wednesday. The Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB), which regulates the water quota, in a meeting last week decided that Punjab will get 17,000 cusecs, Haryana 10,300 cusecs, and Rajasthan 12,400 cusecs of water in the new distribution cycle that will remain in effect till May 20, 2026.

In a communication to BBMB, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs said that 296 posts of CISF personnel have been created for manning the "Bhakra Dam Project, Nangal (Punjab)".

The has been asked to provide boarding, lodging and other logistics for the personnel.

The communication has quoted a security deposit of Rs 2,90,100 per head and has asked the BBMB to transfer Rs 8,58,69,600 (for 296 personnel) to CISF headquarters.

Punjab will also have to bear part of the cost of deployment, being a partner state of BBMB.

Meanwhile, the AAP workers who had been staging a sit-in at the Nangal dam, situated downstream of the Bhakra dam, for the past 20 days to prevent release of extra water to Haryana, lifted the 'dharna' after Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann reached there and addressed the Fateh rally.

Mann said the he will flag the issue of reconstitution of the BBMB in the meeting of Niti Aayog, to be chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and slated for Saturday. Mann, who has chosen not to attend Niti Aayog meetings in the past, he will attend the meeting this time and flag the issue.

He said as the level of water is changing frequently, every water agreement should be reviewed after every 25 years. Punjab is a landlocked border state which has already over explored its only available natural resources in terms of water and fertile soil to feed the country, he said.

Mann bemoaned that the manner in which BBMB "became a party to snatch" the legitimate share of waters of the state was unfortunate and highly condemnable.

He said Haryana exhausted its share of water in the March, but the BBMB acted as a "puppet of the Centre and Haryana government" to "snatch" Punjab's waters.

Mann said, in an unprecedented manner, BBMB chairman Manoj Tripathi himself came to Nangal to "steal" the state's share of water, a move which was "thwarted" by the people of the state.

Centre's move to deploy CISF comes days after Tripathi was locked up at BBMB rest house in Nangal. He was released after the intervention of Punjab Police.

Mann said that new cycle of water has now begun but water will be released to Haryana only after releasing 3,000 cusecs for Punjab farmers.

"I again want to ask Haryana officials to use water judiciously. Do not expect more water from Punjab," Mann said, adding Haryana was allocated 15.06 lakh cusecs of water in the previous water cycle but it utilized 16.48 lakh cusecs.

Mann claimed that the BBMB, which had taken Rs 32 crore from Punjab for its very existential projects, never returned the money.

Punjab is owed nearly Rs 150 crore from BBMB, he claimed, adding that the state government will soon stake a claim for recovery of this money.

The CM called BBMB a "white elephant" and termed it unacceptable in the present form.

He said 3,000 posts of Punjab's quota have deliberately not been filled by BBMB so as to "weaken" the state's claim over the waters.

Mann said even the townships like Nangal that were aesthetically designed, have been "ruined" due to the "neglect" of the BBMB.

He said Punjab has a glorious history of making sacrifices to protect the 553 kilometres long border with Pakistan.

He said this time Punjabis were at the forefront while giving a befitting reply to the Pakistani Army and on the other hand they saved the share of their water too.

He said that for years, Punjab's water has been diverted to other states through the BBMB adding that hands of Congress, Akalis and BJP were drenched with blood of Punjabis as these parties have backstabbed them by ignoring the water rights of the state for vested interests.

He said that a former Chief Minister got a plot in Gurgaon, where they have a hotel now, for planning the Sutej Yamuna Link (SYL) canal and issuing its survey order.

Mann also said that self proclaimed savior of Punjab waters and former chief minister had presented silver spade to the then Prime Minister for the ground breaking ceremony of SYL at Kapoori.

Mann said that despite being smaller in area, Haryana is getting more water than Punjab.

Today, nearly 60 per cent of the state's farmlands are irrigated through canals, which makes every drop of Punjab's water extremely valuable, he said.

On the occasion Cabinet Minister Harjot Singh Bains welcomed Mann and other dignitaries. Meanwhile, Cabinet Minister Barinder Goyal thanked all the dignitaries and people who had attended the rally.