

Interest rates are still low.

Bank of America
Bank of Opportunity™

Act Now BANK OF AMERICA, N.A. EQUAL HOUSING LENDER

Windows Live™

Home

Hotmail

Spaces

OneCare

MSN

Spaces

Web

Dorothy
Sign out

Spaces home ▾

Stagecraft and Statecraft... Photos Profile Friends More ▾

Tools ▾

Blog

Listed by date ▾

Entries

Summary

November, 2008

October, 2008

September, 2008

August, 2008

July, 2008

June, 2008

May, 2008

April, 2008

March, 2008

February, 2008

January, 2008

December, 2007

November, 2007

October, 2007

September, 2007

August, 2007

July, 2007

June, 2007

May, 2007

April, 2007

March, 2007

February, 2007

January, 2007

December, 2006

November, 2006

October, 2006

September, 2006

August, 2006

July, 2006

June, 2006

May, 2006

April, 2006

March, 2006

The Strategic Importance of Water in Asia
Billions of people suffer from acute water crisis

The Nation, Bangkok
August 25, 2008

Hundreds of millions of people in Asia are suffering from the acute water crisis caused by the adverse impact of climate change and China's ambitious hydro-engineering projects that divert river water cascading from the Tibetan highlands, the source of almost all the major rivers of Asia.

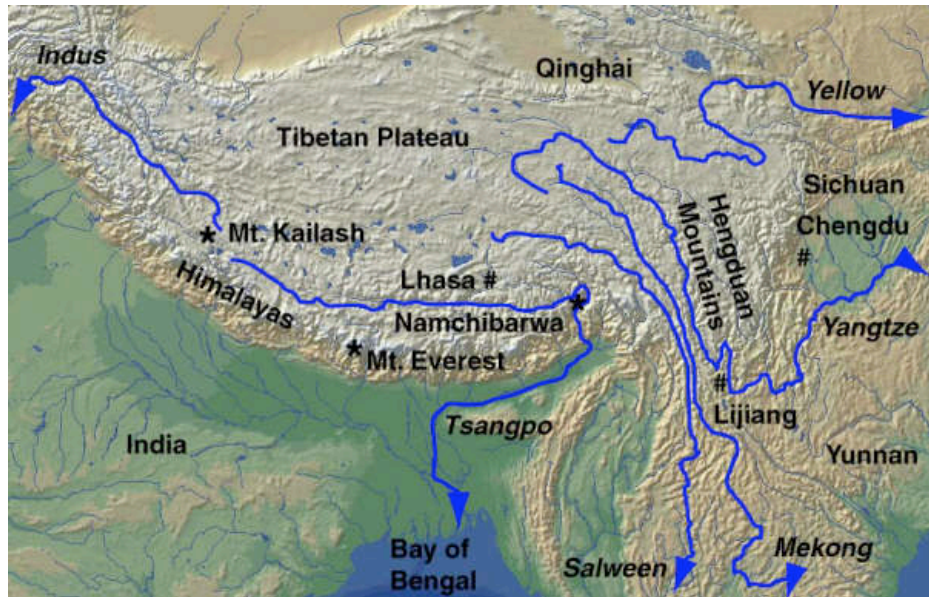
Brahma Chellaney, professor of strategic studies at the New Delhi-based Centre for Policy Research was speaking at the seminar, "The Strategic Importance of Water in Asia", held at Bali, Indonesia, by Singapore-based Media Programme Asia of Konrad Adenauer Stiftung.

Chellaney said that after reviewing the environmental situation in Asia, he found the water crisis in Asia is being aggravated both by climate change and by manmade environmental degradation in the form of shrinking forests and swamps that foster a cycle of chronic flooding and drought through the depletion of nature's water and absorption cover.

Citing the survey conducted by the Remote Sensing Department of the China Aero Geophysical Survey, he said the study had warned that the Himalayan glaciers could be reduced by nearly a third by 2050 and up to half by 2090 at the current rate. The glacial melt would further deplete Tibet's water resources, which are the lifeline for the people of southern and southeastern Asia and China.

He explained that the Tibetan plateau is a source of almost all the major rivers of Asia. Tibet's vast glaciers, huge underground springs and high altitude have endowed it with the world's greatest river systems.

Its river waters are a lifeline to the world's two most populous states, China and India, as well as to Bangladesh, Burma, Bhutan, Cambodia, Laos, Nepal, Pakistan, Thailand and Vietnam. These countries make up 47 per cent of world population. "The Himalayan snow melt that feeds Asia's great rivers could be damagingly accelerated by global warming," he warned.



He said the impact from climate change was not the only cause of the water crisis in Asia. The Chinese South-North Water Diversion (SNWD) Project is also a major reason for the water crisis, he warned. The project is aimed at supporting the growth and development of industry in China.

The US\$62billion (Bt2.1 trillion) canal project includes three water-diversion routes connecting the Yangtze River, the Huai River, the Yellow River and the Hai River to help bring water to parched regions such as the Shandong province and the municipalities of Tianjin and Beijing.

The SNWD plan is to create three new waterways to run along the east, centre and southwest of China. Just the first phase of project entails an investment of some \$15 billion.

February, 2006

January, 2006

December, 2005

November, 2005

October, 2005

September, 2005

August, 2005

July, 2005

June, 2005

May, 2005

April, 2005

The project's eastern route, transporting water to the north from the Yangtze through a tunnel burrowed beneath the Yellow River, will involve expansion of the 1,600-km imperial Grand Canal into the world's longest aquaduct. The 1,200-km-long central route, also intended to relieve pressure on the Yellow River, will pass beneath the Yellow River too in channelling water towards Beijing.

The most ambitious part of this project is to divert river waters cascading from the Tibetan highlands. This challenging phase includes a series of canals and tunnels along a 1,215-km route bisecting the eastern Tibetan Plateau to connect the upper reaches of the Yangtze with the upper reaches of the Yellow. The tunnels would have to be cut through the earthquake-prone Bayankala Mountains.

In the Tibetan plateau, China's South-North Project calls initially for building 300 km of tunnels and channels to draw waters from the Jinsha, Yalong and Dadu rivers, located on the eastern rim of the plateau. The possible diversion of the Brahmaputra waters northward is to come later.

The idea of diverting the Brahmaputra waters would adversely affect the dry-season availability of Brahmaputra waters downstream in India and Bangladesh while increasing wet-season flooding.

The river's ecological health is already being affected through the growing number of irrigation reservoirs and hydropower plants upstream. Overexploitation could reduce sediment transportation downstream, affecting agriculture in northeastern India and Bangladesh, besides eroding the river-centred biodiversity of fish and aquatic organisms in Tibet. Also, owing to the high ambient salt levels along the watershed, irrigation-induced salinity is already threatening the widespread farming introduced in the upstream basin.

Water is a key issue that would determine if there will be greater cooperation or greater competition in Asia," he said.

"The bad news is that water management is still not a major priority for most Asian governments, at the federal or state levels" he added.

However, in a bid to mitigate the adverse impact from the water crisis, which would cause conflict in many areas, Chellaney called on all Asian governments to focus on water management of shared interstate water resources as an important component to build regional and climate security.

August 26 10:19 AM | [Send a message](#) | [View trackbacks \(0\)](#)

Trackbacks

The trackback URL for this entry is:
<http://chellaney.spaces.live.com/blog/cns!4913C7C8A2EA4A30!695.trak>
Weblogs that reference this entry
None