

Ken Betwa river link project

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In news : Recently, a memorandum of agreement has been signed between the Union Minister of Jal Shakti and the chief ministers of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh to implement the Ken-Betwa Link Project

A brief note on the Ken-Betwa Link Project(KBLP)

- It is the first project under the National Perspective Plan for interlinking of rivers. Under this project, **water from the Ken river will be transferred to the Betwa river through a canal**. Both these rivers are tributaries of river Yamuna.
- **Cost:** As per the Comprehensive Detailed Project Report, the cost of Ken-Betwa Link Project is estimated at Rs 35,111.24 crore at 2017-18 prices.

Region covered & its benefits:

- It would benefit the Bundelkhand region , a drought-prone region, which spreads across 13 districts of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.
- The project will benefit to the water-starved region of Bundelkhand, especially in the districts of Panna, Tikamgarh, Chhatarpur, Sagar, Damoh, Datia, Vidisha, Shivpuri and Raisen of Madhya Pradesh and Banda, Mahoba, Jhansi and Lalitpur of Uttar Pradesh.
- The project is expected to provide annual irrigation of 10.62 lakh hectares, drinking water supply to about 62 lakh people and also generate 103 MW of hydropower.

Phases of the project:

This project consists of two phases:

- **Phase-I:** Under this, one of the components Daudhan dam complex and its appurtenances like Low Level Tunnel,

High Level Tunnel, Ken-Betwa link canal and Power houses will be completed

- **Phase-II:** Under this, three components Lower Orr dam, Bina complex project and Kotha barrage will be constructed.

Major concerns

As per the written reply given by Minister of State for Jal Shakti Rattan Lal Kataria, out of the 6,017 ha of forest area coming under submergence of Daudhan dam of Ken Betwa Link Project, 4,206 ha of area lies within the core tiger habitat of Panna Tiger Reserve.

Various clearances required for a river-linking project

Following are the various clearances required for the interlinking of river projects:

- Techno-economic (given by the Central Water Commission)
- Forest Clearance and Environmental clearance (Ministry of Environment & Forests)
- Resettlement and Rehabilitation (R&R)
- Plan of Tribal Population (Ministry of Tribal Affairs) and
- Wildlife clearance (Central Empowered Committee).

Similar river linking projects in India

- **Periyar Project:** Under the Periyar Project, transfer of water from Periyar basin to Vaigai basin was envisaged. It was commissioned in 1895
- Similarly, other projects such as Parambikulam Aliyar, Kurnool Cuddapah Canal, Telugu Ganga Project, and Ravi-Beas-Sutlej were undertaken.

History of river linking projects in India

The idea of transferring surplus water from a river to water-deficit area was mooted by the then Union Irrigation Minister

(earlier the Jal Shakti Ministry was known as Ministry of Irrigation) Dr K L Rao in 1970s The former Minister suggested construction of a National Water Grid for transferring water from water-rich areas to water-deficit areas. Similarly, Captain Dinshaw J Dastur proposed the Garland Canal to redistribute water from one area to another. However, the government did not pursue these two ideas further. It was in August, 1980 that the Ministry of Irrigation prepared a National Perspective Plan (NPP) for water resources development envisaging inter basin water transfer in the country.

National Perspective Plan (NPP)

It comprised of two components:

1. Himalayan Rivers Development; and
2. Peninsular Rivers Development.

Based on the NPP, the National Water Development Agency (NWDA) identified 30 river links 16 under Peninsular component and 14 under Himalayan Component. Later, the river linking idea was revived under the then Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government. Ken Betwa Link Project is one of the 16 river linking projects under the Peninsular component.