

Special Committee – On Interlinking of rivers

June 23, 2019

The Inter-Linking of Rivers programme aims to connect various surplus rivers with deficient rivers. The idea is to divert excess water from **surplus regions to deficient regions** to help improve irrigation, increase water for drinking and industrial use, and mitigate drought and floods to an extent.

The special committee was set up following a Supreme Court direction on a 2012 writ petition on 'Networking of Rivers'. The SC directed the Centre to set up a special committee that would then constitute sub-committees. It directed the committee to submit a bi-annual report to the Cabinet on status and progress, and directed the Cabinet to take appropriate decisions

The status reports are meant to be in accordance with the National Perspective Plan. This plan was formulated in 1980 by the Ministry of Irrigation (now Water Resources) to look into inter-basin transfers. The plan comprises two components: peninsular rivers development and Himalayan rivers development.

India also has a **National Water Development Agency (NWDA)**, which was set up in 1982, to conduct surveys and see how feasible proposals for interlinking river projects are.

The status report of three priority links was shared with the Cabinet. These were **Ken-Betwa, Damanganga-Pinjal and Par-Tapi-Narmada**.

The Water Resources Ministry had drawn up detailed project reports for all three projects in 2015. The committee report also goes into the status of other Himalayan and peninsular links identified under the National Perspective Plan.