

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:370

ANSWERED ON:10.11.2010

INTER LINKING OF RIVERS

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Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is reviewing the long standing demand of interlinking of various rivers in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Supreme Court of India has given any direction on inter-linking of rivers;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (e) whether any neighbouring country has raised objection to the inter-linking project; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI VINCENT H. PALA)

(a) & (b): The Ministry of Water Resources (MOWR) (erstwhile Ministry of Irrigation) formulated a National Perspective Plan (NPP) for Water Resources Development in 1980 envisaging inter-basin transfer of water from surplus basins to deficit basins/areas which comprises of two components, namely, Himalayan Rivers Development Component and Peninsular Rivers Development Component. National Water Development Agency (NWDA) was set up under the Ministry of Water Resources in 1982 for carrying out various technical studies to establish the feasibility of the inter-linking of the rivers proposals envisaged under NPP and to give concrete shape to them.

Based on various studies conducted, NWDA has identified 30 links (16 under Peninsular Component & 14 under Himalayan Component) for preparation of Feasibility Reports (FRs). Out of these, FRs of 14 links under Peninsular Component and FRs of 2 links (Indian Portion) under Himalayan Component have been completed.

Five links under Peninsular Component namely (i) Ken-Betwa, (ii)Parbati-Kalisindh- Chambal, (iii) Damanganga-Pinjal, (iv) Par-Tapi-Narmada &(v) Godavari (Polavaram)-Krishna(Vijayawada) were identified as priority links for building consensus among the concerned States for taking up their Detailed Project Reports (DPRs). DPR of one priority link namely, Ken – Betwa was completed and sent to the Governments of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh for comments. The Government of Madhya Pradesh has suggested an alternative proposal. Now the DPR of the project is to be prepared for two phases. The DPR of the phase-I has been completed and sent to the Government of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh in May 2010 for comments. Further, NWDA has taken up the DPRs of two more priority links after concurrence of the concerned states, namely Par – Tapi – Narmada and Damanganga – Pinjal which are planned to be completed by December, 2011. Another priority link namely, Godavari (Polavaram)- Krishna(Vijawada) link is part of the Polavaram project of the Andhra Pradesh. Planning Commission has given investment clearance to the Polavaram Project and the Government of Andhra Pradesh has taken up the above project including link component as per their proposals. The names of the links under NPP and their present status is given at Annexure.

The issues related with the inter-basin water transfer proposals under NPP are regularly discussed with the officials of State Governments in the Governing body (GB) and Society of NWDA. So far 55 meetings of GB and 29 meetings of Society have been held. The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Water Resources also examined the subject of Inter Linking of Rivers in its sitting held on 12-04-2008.

The Government has also constituted a Consensus Group headed by Chairman, Central Water Commission (CWC) and consisting of Secretaries of Irrigation/Water Resources Departments of the concerned States for arriving at consensus regarding sharing of surplus waters and to discuss issues of preparation of Detailed Project Reports by NWDA. So far ten meetings of the consensus group have been held. The consensus building for eight more links under Mahanadi- Godavari-Krishna-Pennar-Cauvery-Vaigai-Gundar linkage system for taking up their DPRs with concerned states has been initiated.

The activities of NWDA are reviewed on Plan to Plan basis. Government has reviewed the activities of NWDA while finalizing its outlay for XI Plan.

(c) & (d): A Writ Petition No. 512 of 2002 regarding Networking of Rivers has been filed in the Supreme Court. Hon'ble Supreme Court regularly monitors the Status of Progress of Inter-Linking of Rivers (ILR) programme. The Affidavits indicating progress of ILR are submitted by Govt. of India from time to time. During the hearing on 05-04-2010 the Court ordered learned Solicitor General appearing for Union of India to serve photo copy of the Status Report filed by Union of India to all the parties.

(e) & (f): During 36th meeting of Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) held in Dhaka in September, 2005, the Bangladesh side had shown concern about India's proposed River Interlinking project and expressed that India should not take any unilateral decision on its proposed river interlinking project that might affect Bangladesh. It was clarified by the Indian side that none of the 14 links of the Himalayan Component of NPP would be attempted until concerns of neighboring countries were examined and addressed in an open and transparent manner. It was pointed out that other 16 links under Peninsular Component of NPP did not relate to any rivers originating from Himalaya and therefore, Bangladesh need not have any anxiety on this score.

The Bangladesh side again conveyed its concern regarding India's proposed River Interlinking project during the 37th meeting of JRC held in Delhi on 18-19 March, 2010. The Indian side re-iterated their earlier stand that India would not take any unilateral decisions on the Himalayan component of the proposed River Interlinking project which may affect Bangladesh.