

Raje govt. lobbying for river interlinking project

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The Bharatiya Janata Party government in Rajasthan is lobbying hard for the Centre's approval for the ambitious Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project (ERCP) with a proposed budget of Rs. 37,000 crore as a river interlinking project, which will transfer excess waters from the Chambal river basin to 13 districts in the State facing water scarcity.

Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje met Union Water Resources Minister Nitin Gadkari in New Delhi on Wednesday with the request for approval which would facilitate Central assistance for the project. Ms. Raje pointed out that the project, which would link Parvati, Kalisindh and Chambal rivers, would benefit 40% of the State's population with the supply of drinking and irrigation waters.

According to the official sources here, Mr. Gadkari has agreed to the proposal and stated that a Cabinet note on the subject would shortly be drafted and sent to the Union Cabinet. Ms. Raje had sought the national project status for ERCP at a meeting of the NITI Aayog's Governing Council last month.



'Fast approval'

The State government's lobbying has been perceived here as its "serious attempt" to get the project's approval announced during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rally here on July 7, when he will interact with the beneficiaries of flagship schemes.

The Central Water Commission has already given in-principle approval to the project's feasibility report. The ERCP's implementation would speed up after getting the national project status, said Ms. Raje, adding that the quality of water, along with its scarcity, was a big issue for the desert State.

The Eastern Rajasthan Canal, as an intra-basin water transfer scheme, will ensure availability of water in Jhalawar, Baran, Kota, Bundi, Sawai Madhopur, Ajmer, Tonk, Jaipur, Dausa, Karauli, Alwar, Bharatpur and Dholpur districts till 2051. Besides supplying water to the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor, it will also take care of the flood and drought situation in the area.

An additional command area of 2 lakh hectares is likely to be created for irrigation when the river interlinking is successfully completed. The project will also facilitate restoration of dependable yield of the existing 26 major and medium irrigation projects en route, reduced to 30%, to their original status.
