

Speed up water projects

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Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Tuesday urged Union Minister for Jal Shakti Gajendra Singh Shekhawat to speed up work on various water projects for Tamil Nadu.

The Chief Minister urged the Centre to reject Karnataka's proposal to construct a dam across the Cauvery at Mokedatu and also asked for the corrections sought by Tamil Nadu to be made in the Dam Safety Bill before it was introduced in the Lok Sabha.



During a video conference on Tuesday, Mr. Palaniswami requested the Centre to instruct the National Water Development Agency (NWDA) to complete the preparation of a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the Godavari-Cauvery Link Project and take up the work at the earliest.

The NWDA had prepared a DPR and sent it to the States concerned for their comments in March 2019. Tamil Nadu had sent its comments in September 2019, with a request to re-work the alignment to Mayanur Barrage instead of Grand Anicut.

He also requested the Centre to instruct the NWDA to forward the DPR of the Cauvery-Gundar Link project to the State government so that the work could be fast-tracked.

Mr. Palaniswami urged the Centre to sanction funds for Nadandhai Vaazhi Cauvery project as a special programme like the "Namami Gange" Project, and also to take it up as a national project. "I have announced rehabilitation and rejuvenation of river Cauvery and to abate pollution in the river, on the lines of 'Namami Gange' Project.

"The estimate has been prepared for an amount of ₹10,700 crore and WAPCOS is preparing the DPR. Cauvery is the lifeline of Tamil Nadu, not only for agriculture but also for drinking water," Mr. Palaniswami said.

"Tamil Nadu has requested certain corrections in certain clauses in the proposed Dam Safety Bill and conveyed to Government of India. The State which owns, operates and controls the dam should have full operational control with regard to dam safety. The Government of Tamil Nadu's request for corrections in the Dam Safety Bill may be included before the introduction of this Bill in Lok Sabha," the CM said.

Tamil Nadu also reiterated its opposition to Karnataka's proposal to construct a dam across the Cauvery at Mokedatu and urged the Centre to reject and return the proposal of the neighbouring State.

"You are well aware that the Cauvery is the lifeline of Tamil Nadu and any attempt to restrict its flow by an upper riparian State is a violation of the Supreme Court order. Therefore, I request you to instruct the CWC and CWMA authorities to reject and return the proposal of Karnataka."

As for Karnataka constructing an anicut across the Penniyar against the agreements in force, Tamil Nadu has filed a case before the Supreme Court and based on its order, the Negotiation Committee meetings have been held by the Central Water Commission (CWC).

“As there is no progress in these meetings, we have requested the Government of India to form a tribunal immediately,” he said.

Over 34 lakh households are proposed to be covered with tap connections under the Jal Jeevan Mission during this year and against an allocation of ₹2,375 crore, allocations have been made for ₹2,265 crore to effect 20 lakh household connections in 2020-21.

“The remaining 14 lakh households will be covered by converging funds of the various schemes. We have already covered about 4 lakh connections and propose to complete the rest by March 2021,” he said.

Pointing out that Tamil Nadu had not been included in the World Bank-supported Atal Bhujal Yojana implemented by the Centre in seven States, Mr. Palaniswami urged the inclusion of the state in during the current year.

Municipal Administration Minister S.P. Velumani, Chief Secretary K. Shanmugam, Chief Engineer of the Cauvery Technical Cell R. Subramanian and other senior officials were present during the video conference.
