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Ken-Betwa River Linking Project as a Part of National Perspective Plan

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Why in News?

Ken-Betwa River Linking Project Panel holds third meet.

When was the Panel constituted?

The Central Government has constituted a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) i.e. Ken-Betwa Link Project Authority (KBLPA) for the implementation of the Ken-Betwa Interlinking of rivers project. It also formed a 20 member National Steering Committee which will monitor the implementation. The SPV will be headed by a CEO of additional secretary rank. On the other hand, the committee will be chaired by the Secretary, Ministry of Jal Shakti.

The formation of the committee is on the lines of Memorandum of Agreement signed by the Ministry of Jal Shakti and State Governments of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh on the occasion of World Water Day (22 March 2021)

What is Ken-Betwa interlinking Project?

The Ken-Betwa ILR project aims to transfer surplus water from the Ken River to the Betwa basin through concrete canal to irrigate India's worst drought-prone Bundelkhand region. It is India's first inter-State river interlinking project. The main feature of the project is a 230-km long canal and a series of barrages and dams connecting the Ken and Betwa rivers. The key projects are Makodia and Dhaudhan dams. On completion, the multipurpose project will benefit Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh in terms of meeting irrigation, drinking water and electricity needs of people across 6 districts in the two states.

It is the first project under the National Perspective Plan for Inter-linking of Rivers. For this, the Central Government will provide a support of Rs. 39,317 Crore. Ken-Betwa link project passes through Panna National Park which is situated in Panna and Chhatarpur districts of Madhya Pradesh. It is also a Tiger Reserve. It is proposed to be implemented in 8 years with state of the art technology and will generate 103 MW hydropower and 27 MW solar power. It involves transfer of surplus water from the Ken river to the Betwa river through the construction of Daudhan dam and a canal linking the two rivers, the Lower Orr project, Kotha Barrage and Bina Complex Multipurpose Project.

What is the Significance of Ken – Betwa Linking Project?

Ken-Betwa river interlinking project will irrigate India's worst drought-affected and drought-prone Bundelkhand region. It will irrigate 3.5 lakh hectares in Madhya Pradesh and 14,000 hectares of Uttar Pradesh, in Bundelkhand. Drinking water supply to about 62 lakh people, 103 MW of hydropower. It will benefit 5 districts of Madhya Pradesh (Chhatarpur, Raisen, Panna, Tikamgarh, and Vidisha) and 3 districts of Uttar Pradesh (Mahoba, Jhansi and Banda) by assured irrigation supply, domestic and industrial water supply and power. On the other hand, about 20000 people in 38 villages will be affected due to the submergence by Daudhan reservoir and Makodia reservoir.

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What are all the issues/ concern about the Ken-Betwa Linking Project?

- About 20000 people in 38 villages will be affected due to the submergence by Daudhan reservoir and Makodia reservoir.
- Ken-Betwa river interlinking project will be the first river project that will be located within a tiger reserve.
- It will submerge about 10% of the Panna Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh which has been feted as a model tiger-conservation reserve
- Economic Viability: There is a significant financial expense associated with project implementation and maintenance. It is increasing as a result of project delays.
- Technical Viability: In the past few years, the river did not always flow in a steady stream.
- Another challenge would be that the Ken River flows 60-70 feet lower than the Betwa River. It requires at least 30% of the 103 MW produced power to pump the water up.

What is National Perspective Plan?

- It is for the water resources development envisaging inter-basin water transfer in the country.
- The NPP comprised two components: Himalayan Rivers Development and 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. Ken Betwa Link Project is one of the 16 river linking projects under the peninsular component.