

[17 August, 2004]

RAJYA SABHA

Plan for interlinking of rivers

1448. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether an ambitious plan to interlink the country's rivers was launched in 2002 and later endorsed by the Apex Court, if so, what is its present status;

(b) what steps Government have taken on the work so far done in this regard,

(c) whether the ambitious plan is facing any environmental problem;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) what are the details of the work carried out so far by the multi-disciplinary task force in regard to framing of an action plan, funding options, etc.?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAIPRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) The Union Government formulated a National Perspective Plan (NPP) for Water Resources Development in August, 1980 comprising of Peninsular River Development and Himalayan River Development. The Union Government set up National Water Development Agency (NWDA) in 1982. The NWDA is studying the feasibility of river linking proposals of the NPP. Feasibility Report of 11 link projects out of 30 identified link projects have been completed. Field surveys and investigations for preparation of feasibility reports in respect of 19 links have been undertaken and are planned for completion by December, 2005. The Government envisages a comprehensive assessment of the feasibility of linking of the rivers of the country in a fully consultative manner.

(c) and (d) The studies of interlinking the rivers are at feasibility stage. Environmental problems in the river linking project, if any, will be duly addressed when Detailed Project Reports (DPR) of the links are taken up.

(e) The Task Force on Interlinking of Rivers (TF-ILR) has on 30.4.2003 submitted Action Plan-I giving the outline of the time schedules for the completion of the feasibility studies, detailed project reports, estimated cost, implementation schedule, concrete benefits and

advantages of the project etc. Action Plan-II was submitted on 16.4.2004. The important issues such as appraisal of individual projects in respect of economic viability, socio-economic impacts, environmental impacts and preparation of resettlement plans, suitable mechanism for bringing about speedy consensus amongst the States, prioritization of the different project components for preparation of Detailed Project Reports and implementation; suitable organizational structure for implementing the project; various modalities for project funding; international dimensions that may be involved in some project components and cost recovery have been discussed in Action Plan-II.

Settlement of Baglihar Power Project

1449. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether any initiatives have been taken following Prime Minister's Peace initiatives with Pakistan in the beginning of this year for settlement of the Baglihar Power Project dispute with that country; and

(b) if so, the details of this project, the initiatives taken and moves made, and the response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAIPRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) The Baglihar Project is a 450 MW Run-of-River Hydroelectric Scheme on the Chenab Main in the State of Jammu & Kashmir. A tour of the Permanent Indus Commission comprising Commissioners for Indus Waters of both India and Pakistan was arranged in October, 2003. A meeting of the Permanent Indus Commission to discuss the project also took place at Islamabad/Lahore in January, 2004. Subsequently, Secretary level talks between India and Pakistan on the Baglihar Hydroelectric Project were held at New Delhi on June 22, 2004. The talks were held in a very cordial & friendly atmosphere and in the spirit of good will & cooperation. The two Secretaries discussed ways and means to resolve technical concerns relating to the Project and shared their assessments on this issue. They decided to report the matter back to their respective Governments.