

CENTRE PLANS TO LAUNCH IRRIGATION SCHEME SOON

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The Central government is planning to launch the 'Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana' later this month to ensure water supply to farmers round the year, Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh said here today.

A concept paper on the issue will soon be discussed with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It was finalised by the Agriculture Ministry after taking views from concerned ministries, including Water Resources and Rural Development. The interlinking of rivers has been also conceptualised for transfer of water from surplus basins to deficit basins.

"Just as Atal Bihari Vajpayee had launched the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) connecting villages, we will launch 'Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana' most likely this month itself," Mr Singh said addressing a function to mark "water week".

The basic contours of the agri-irrigation programme would be on the lines of the PMGSY, he said. Each irrigation project would be selected for releasing funds by the state government after seeking the nod of the concerned Zilla Parishad.

The Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Ms Uma Bharti, said dissemination of data in public domain constitutes the most important aspect of water resources man-



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agement.

Inaugurating the India Water Week - 2015 here today, she said, "Our country has wide variation in water availability across various river basins. While Ganga and Brahmaputra river basins are well endowed with water, the basins in peninsular India are relatively water scarce and most of them have already reached the stage of full development".

She said it is in this context that the inter-basin water transfer pro-

gramme known as the interlinking of rivers has been conceived for transfer of water from surplus basins to deficit basins.

"The programme is based on creating relatively large storage to build resilience in the system and also provide an aggregate storage capacity needed for the country in an area where the topography and geology provide favourable condition. We will adopt a win-win strategy for implementation of the programme," Ms Bharti said.

Notwithstanding concerns raised by environmentalists, the government asserted that it will take up interlinking of rivers on a priority basis "come what may" and that any "obstacles" which may come in the way would be addressed or removed.

Urban Development Minister M Venkaiah Naidu today suggested a five-pronged strategy to tackle the problem. Notwithstanding concerns raised by environmentalists, Naidu said the government will take up inter-linking of rivers on a priority basis. "Some of our environmental friends are raising voices. There will be voices in democracy, let there be. But, they have answers also... We have to take up river linking on a priority basis come what may," Naidu said.

Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar said water management for sustainable development should be considered in the backdrop of climate change threat.