

PRESS RELEASE

Text of the speech delivered by Thiru O. Panneerselvam, Minister for Finance and Public Works, Government of Tamil Nadu at the Fifth Meeting of the Special Committee for Inter Linking of Rivers chaired by the Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation on 13.7.2015 at New Delhi.

At the outset, I would like to bring to your kind notice that our Hon'ble Chief Minister Puratchi Thalaivi Amma has been repeatedly urging for the optimum utilisation of the available water resources in the country, so that water stressed States like Tamil Nadu are benefited.

As early as on 16.4.2003, our Hon'ble Chief Minister Puratchi Thalaivi Amma had urged the then Chairman, Task Force for Interlinking of Rivers to expedite the programme of interlinking of rivers through necessary legislation in order to facilitate the implementation of the Peninsular Grid which involves linking Inter State Rivers of Mahanadhi – Godavari – Krishna – Pennar – Palar – Cauvery - Vaigai - Gundar. This link should be given the highest priority and implemented speedily so that the Order of the Supreme Court is implemented in letter and spirit.

It is the firm view of our Hon'ble Chief Minister Puratchi Thalaivi Amma that in the interlinking projects, the rights of use of water flowing from the existing Inter State Agreements should not be disturbed and that the aim should be to increase the availability of water to the deficit States, like Tamil Nadu.

Our Hon'ble Chief Minister Puratchi Thalaivi Amma has been urging that Tamil Nadu's long standing demand for diversion of about 22 TMC ft. of water of the west flowing rivers of Pamba and Achankovil to Vaippar Basin in Tamil Nadu, to benefit the southern Districts, should be implemented expeditiously, since the feasibility has already been established. It may kindly be recalled that in the 1st meeting of this Special Committee, you had suggested that a discussion may be held with the Government of Kerala in respect of issues relating to Pamba – Achankovil – Vaippar link. I wish to point out that the Ministry is yet to convene a meeting on this issue. It is our view, that the link has to be established expeditiously without further delay, since surplus water of these two rivers is flowing into the Arabian Sea, which could have been optimally utilised in the water stressed southern Districts of Tamil Nadu. It is our request that the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the Pamba-Achankovil-Vaippar link should be prepared on a priority basis, so as to implement the link speedily.

The Government of Tamil Nadu has programmed to implement the linking of Rivers within the State like Pennaiyar (Sathanur Dam) – Palar link, Pennaiyar (Nedungal Anicut) – Palar link, Cauvery (Mettur Dam) – Sarabanga link, Athikadavu – Avinashi Flood Canal Scheme and Thamirabarani – Karumeniyar – Nambiyar link. The Government of Tamil Nadu had already posed the following projects seeking financial assistance from the Government of India which were not favourably considered by the previous Government:-

- (i) Pennaiyar (Sathanur Dam) – Palar link;
- (ii) Pennaiyar (Nedungal Anicut) – Palar link;
- (iii) Cauvery – Gundar link;
- (iv) Cauvery-Sarabanga link
- (v) Athikadavu – Avinashi Flood Canal Scheme
- (vi) Tamirabarani-Karumeniar-Nambiyar link

Such schemes proposed by the State Government may be considered by the Government of India and financial assistance including cost for land acquisition extended to this Government.

With regard to the Agenda items for this meeting, the Government of Tamil Nadu agrees to extend the tenure of the 2 Sub Committees namely (i) Sub Committee for Comprehensive Evaluation of Various Studies/Reports available on the issue of Interlinking of Rivers (ii) Sub Committee for System Studies for identification of most appropriate alternative plan, for a further period of 6 months subject to the condition that the 2 Sub Committees should be instructed to expedite their findings for the overall interlinking of the Peninsular Grid and also for the quick implementation of the Pamba-Achankovil-Vaippar link.

Further, I would like to bring to your kind notice that following the Order of the Supreme Court dated 27.2.2012 and the request made by our Hon'ble Chief Minister Puratchi Thalaivi Amma to activate the functioning of the Special Committee, 4 meetings of the Special Committee were held so far. It is our earnest request that work at the ground level be started immediately to interlink the Peninsular rivers. Our Hon'ble Chief Minister Puratchi Thalaivai Amma therefore urges that action may be taken to forthwith commence the ground work for the speedy implementation of the Interlinking of Rivers Project, particularly, the Peninsular component of the Mahanadhi-Godavari – Krishna – Pennar – Palar – Cauvery – Vaigai - Gundar link system and the Pamba-Achankovil-Vaippar link so that the people of Tamil Nadu are benefited.

Thank you, Vanakkam.

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