



Betwa River | Photo: Wikipedia

The Centre on Wednesday approved the use of forest land for the ambitious Ken-Betwa Link project. Madhya Pradesh (MP) Chief Minister (CM) Shivraj Singh Chouhan said work on the project will speed up after the approval from the

Union forest and environment ministry.

The project will irrigate 1.062 million hectares of the Bundelkhand region of MP, which will see Assembly elections by the year-end. The CM said that the project will provide "great relief" to the water-scarce Bundelkhand.

"This will provide drinking water to about 6.2 million people and two electricity projects – 103 Megawatt (Mw) hydropower and 27 Mw solar plants – will be set up under this river-linking initiative. Two other projects of 72 Mw capacity will also be put up."

Chouhan said after the completion of the project, water for irrigation, drinking water, as well as, industrial use will be ensured in Bundelkhand.

However, farmers from 22 affected villages of Chhatarpur and Panna districts, led by social activist and Aam Aadmi Party State Secretary Amit Bhatnagar, are opposing the project. Bhatnagar said: "It is not appropriate to proceed with the project without making arrangements for rehabilitation." He said the constitutional rights of about 22,000 people of the area were being violated because of this project.

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