



## KEN-BETWA RIVER LINKING NATIONAL PROJECT (KBLP) - GEOGRAPHY

**NEWS:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of KBLP on 25th December 2025, commemorating the 100th birth anniversary of former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

### WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

#### Foundation and Background:

- The project envisages transferring water from the Ken River (located in Madhya Pradesh) to the Betwa River (flowing through Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh), both of which are tributaries of the Yamuna.
- The Ken-Betwa Link Canal will span 221 km in length, including a 2-km tunnel for water transfer.

#### Key Features of the Project

##### 1. Irrigation, Drinking Water, and Power Generation:

- The project will irrigate **10.62 lakh hectares** annually (8.11 lakh ha in MP and 2.51 lakh ha in UP).
- It will provide **drinking water** to approximately **62 lakh people** in the region.
- Power generation capacity includes **103 MW of hydropower** and **27 MW of solar power**, contributing to renewable energy targets.

##### 2. First Under the National Perspective Plan:

- KBLP is the **first project** under the National Perspective Plan (NPP) for interlinking rivers, which was introduced in 1980.
- The NPP is divided into two components:
  - **Peninsular Component:** Encompasses 16 proposed projects, including KBLP.
  - **Himalayan Component:** Proposes 14 river-linking projects.

##### 3. Project Structure and Phases:

- **Phase I:**
  - Involves the construction of the **Daudhan Dam Complex** and its associated infrastructure, including:
    - Low-Level Tunnel
    - High-Level Tunnel



- Ken-Betwa Link Canal
- Powerhouses
- **Phase II:**
  - Includes the development of three additional components:
    - **Lower Orr Dam**
    - **Bina Complex Project**
    - **Kotha Barrage**

#### 4. Timeline of Development:

- **August 2005:** A tripartite MoU was signed among the Centre, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh for the preparation of a detailed project report (DPR).
- **2008:** The project was declared a **National Project** by the Government of India.
- **March 22, 2021:** A Memorandum of Agreement was signed between the Ministry of Jal Shakti and the governments of MP and UP to implement KBLP.
- Included as part of the **Prime Minister's package for the development of the drought-prone Bundelkhand region.**

#### 5. Geographical Focus and Regional Benefits:

- The project will significantly benefit the **water-scarce Bundelkhand region**, which spans **13 districts** in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.
- Districts to benefit:
  - **Madhya Pradesh:** Panna, Tikamgarh, Chhatarpur, Sagar, Damoh, Datia, Vidisha, Shivpuri, Raisen.
  - **Uttar Pradesh:** Banda, Mahoba, Jhansi, Lalitpur.

### Environmental and Social Impact

#### 1. Deforestation and Wildlife Concerns:

- Large-scale deforestation inside **Panna National Park and Tiger Reserve**, a core tiger habitat.
- **Submergence of 98 sq km** of Panna National Park due to the construction of the Daudhan Dam.
- Tigers, which went locally extinct in 2009 but were later reintroduced, are likely to face habitat loss.



## 2. Hydrological Issues:

- Critics argue that hydrological data showing the **surplus water availability** in Ken has not been made public for scrutiny.
- A study by IIT-Bombay (2022) indicated that large-scale water transfers through river-linking projects could lead to a **mean rainfall deficit of up to 12% in September**, affecting regional climate.

## 3. Displacement and Protests:

- Displacement of **5,228 families in Chhatarpur district** and **1,400 families in Panna district** due to submergence.
- Locals have protested against what they term **inadequate compensation** and **low benefits**, especially in Panna district.

## Related Projects

### Modified Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal-ERCP (PKC-ERCP)

#### 1. Overview:

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in **January 2024** between Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- Integrates the long-pending **Parbati-Kalisindh-Chambal Link Project** with the **Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project (ERCP)**.

#### 2. Objectives:

- Aims to transfer surplus monsoon water within the **Chambal basin** to water-scarce sub-basins such as Banas, Gambhiri, and Banganga.
- Promotes **intra-basin water management**.

#### 3. Benefits:

- Supplies **drinking and industrial water** to **13 districts** in Rajasthan and parts of Madhya Pradesh (Malwa and Chambal regions).
- Ensures irrigation for **2.8 lakh ha in each state** (total 5.6 lakh ha).

## National Perspective Plan (NPP)

#### 1. Objective:

- Introduced in **1980**, the NPP aims to address **water imbalance** across India by transferring water from **surplus basins** to **deficit basins**.

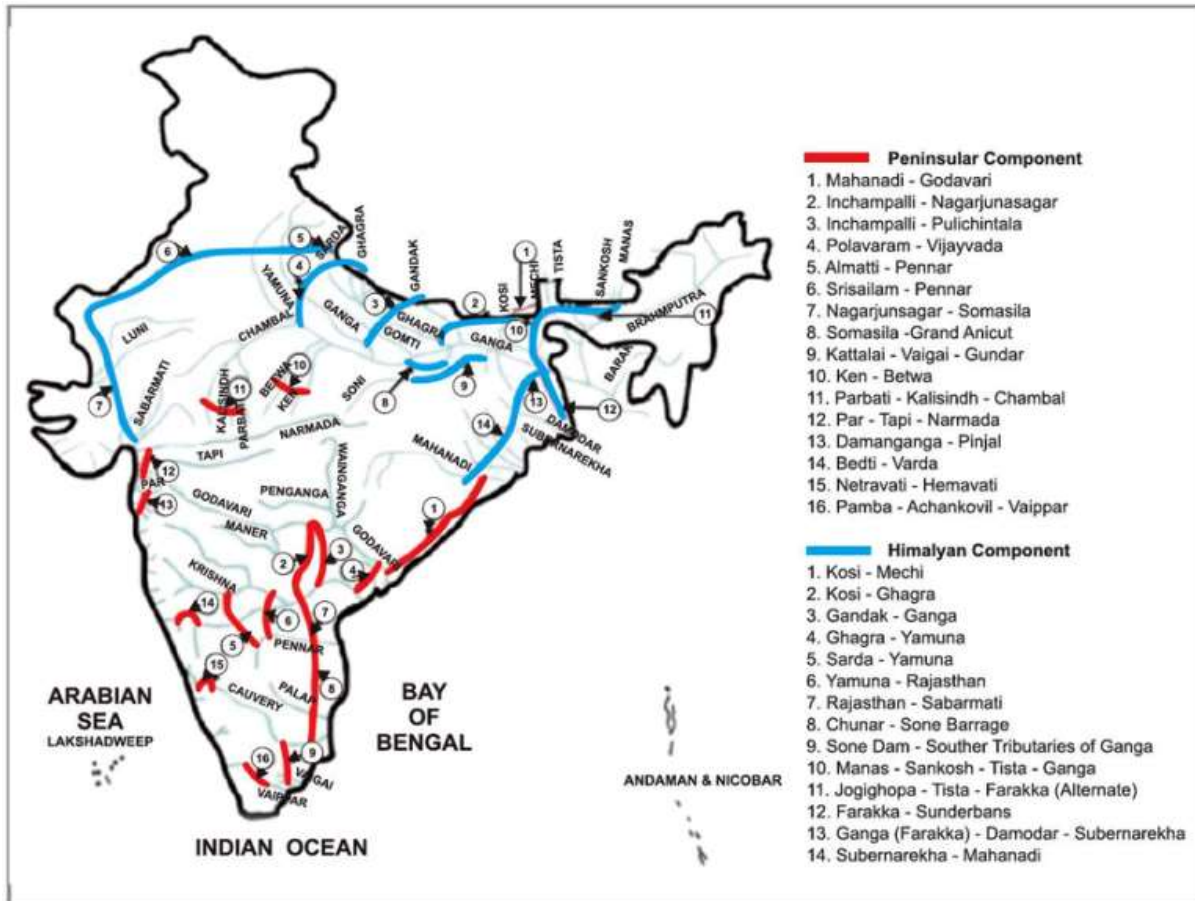
#### 2. Components:



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- **Peninsular Component:** Envisions 16 river-linking projects, including the Ken-Betwa Link Project.
- **Himalayan Component:** Proposes 14 river links, focused on Himalayan rivers.



Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/upsc-current-affairs/upsc-essentials/knowledge-nugget-of-the-day-ken-betwa-river-linking-project-9766941/>