



Concerns Over River Interlinking Project

Why in News?

According to a report, a major dam project in Madhya Pradesh, part of the ambitious **river interlinking project**, has been found to be in violation of environmental clearances by a central government's expert committee.

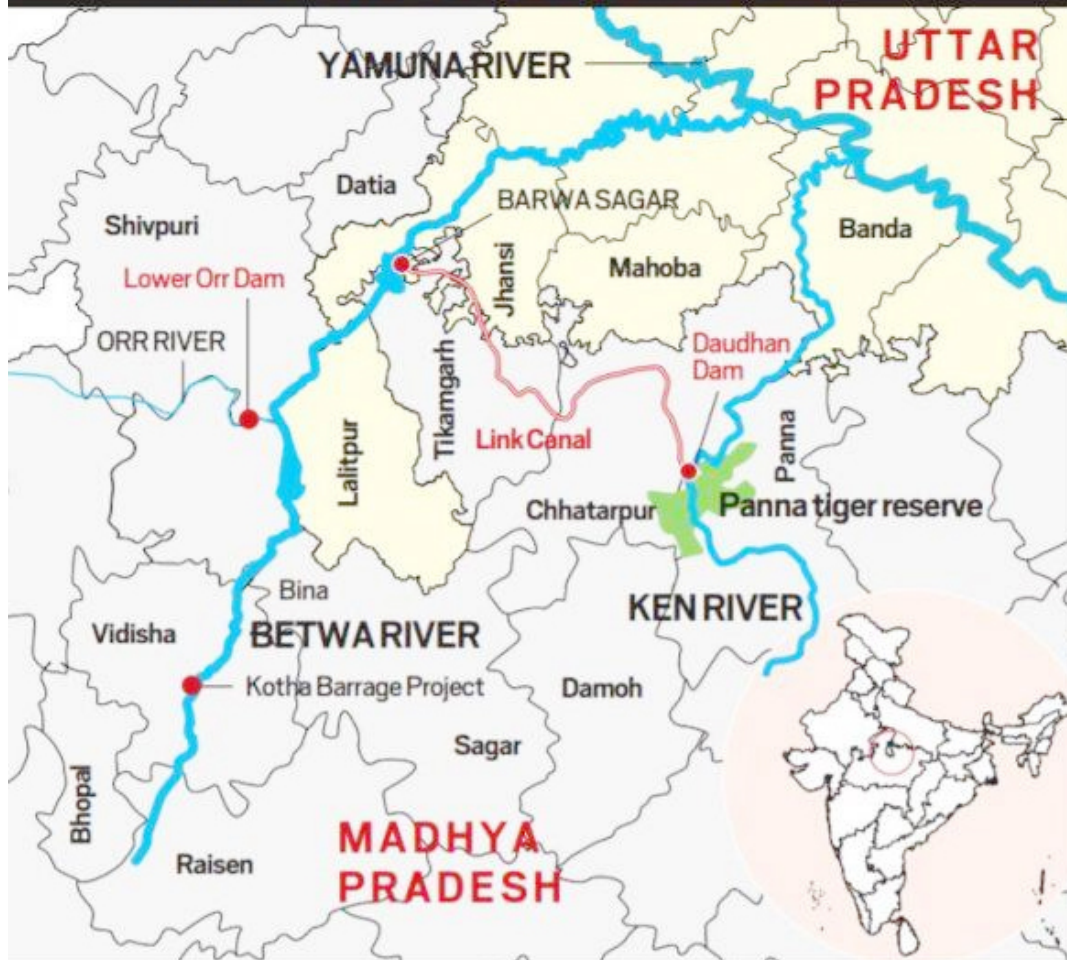
Key Points

- The dam project under the scanner is the **Lower Orr dam** which began in 2019. It is part of the [Ken-Betwa river interlinking project](#).
- The [national interlinking of rivers \(ILR\)](#) is the idea that rivers should be inter-connected, so that water from the surplus rivers and regions could be transferred to deficient regions and rivers to address the issue of [water scarcity](#).
 - This led to the setup of the **National Water Development Agency (NWDA)** in 1982.
- There are four major projects for which detailed project reports (DPRs) have been prepared are: **Ken-Betwa link, Damanganga-Pinjal link, Par-Tapi-Narmada link, and Mahanadi-Godavari link**.
 - The criticism of interlinking of rivers ranges from ecological consequences, displacement of natives, to the flawed premise of the exercise.
- The Lower Orr project under the scanner involves the construction of a dam and a canal network.
- As of 2022, when the alleged irregularities came to the light, around 82% of the dam and 33.5% of the canal network had been completed without a clearance from the Union **Ministry of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**, as per the findings of the [Expert Appraisal Committee \(EAC\)](#).

Ken-Betwa River Link Project (KBLP)

- It is the **first project under the National Perspective Plan for the interlinking of rivers**, which aims to transfer surplus water from one river basin to another to address water scarcity and enhance irrigation.
- The KBLP **involves transferring water from the Ken River in Madhya Pradesh to the Betwa River in Uttar Pradesh**, both of which are tributaries of the Yamuna River.
- The project has two phases, with mainly four components:
 - **Phase I will involve one of the components-** the Daudhan Dam complex and its subsidiary units such as the Low-Level Tunnel, High-Level Tunnel, Ken-Betwa Link Canal and powerhouses.
 - **Phase II will involve three components:** The Lower Orr Dam across the Orr River, a tributary of the Betwa, the Bina Complex Project, and the Kotha Barrage.

TWO STATES, TWO RIVERS AND A LINK



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