

Centre okays dam on Ravi, will cut water flow to Pak

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New Delhi: The Centre on Thursday approved implementation of the Shahpurkandi Dam project on the Ravi in Punjab. The move will allow India to use the water which at present goes “waste” flowing through the Madhopur Headworks downstream to Pakistan. Once completed in June 2022, it will improve irrigation potential of farmers in Jammu & Kashmir and Punjab.

Though the project was planned 17 years ago at an estimated cost of over Rs 2,285 crore, it could not be implemented due to paucity of funds with the state. The Centre will provide financial assistance of over Rs 485 crore (for the irrigation component) to the state for implementing the project over five years from 2018-19 to 2022-23.

The decision in this regard was taken by the Union Cabinet, keeping in view the provisions of the Indus Water Treaty. Under this 1960 treaty, India has full rights for utilisation of waters of the three eastern rivers Ravi, Beas and

Satluj. The project will create an additional irrigation potential of 5,000 hectares in Punjab and 32,173 hectares in J&K. In addition, Punjab will also be able to generate 206 MW of hydro-power.

The project was initially approved by the Planning Commission in November 2001 and was included under the accelerated irrigation benefits scheme of the water re-

sources ministry for funding its irrigation component.

Revised cost of the project was approved by the advisory committee of the ministry in August 2009. Work on the project could not progress much due to non-availability of funds on the part of the Punjab government for the power component and later due to inter-state issues with J&K.