

Centre committed to inter-linking of rivers: Gadkari

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Saturday said the Centre is committed to interlinking rivers to fulfil the water needs of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

Addressing delegates at the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morch (BJYM) national convention, the minister for Road Transport and Highways said that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, the government planned to interlink six rivers, which would cost about Rs two lakh crore.

"In Andhra Pradesh we took up the Polavaram irrigation project. We have spent Rs 7,000 crore so far. It is being constructed with central Government funds," he said.

Gadkari alleged that some people were trying to mislead the public by saying that the government was not focusing on the project.

"We will complete the dam. The surplus waters of the Godavari river, which flows as waste to the sea, will be diverted to the Krishna river," he said.

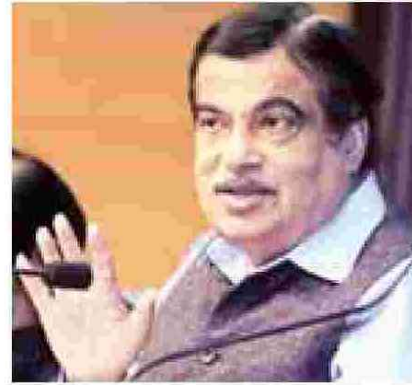
"We will take water by diverting Krishna river water to Penna river and from Penna to the Cauvery. Thus we will fulfil the water needs of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana," he said.

The minister also said the centre was assisting the Telangana government's Rs 80,000 crore Kaleshwaram Project.

Stressing the need to bring BJP into power once again in the 2019 elections, Gadkari said India is marching towards progress with implementation of several schemes for the poor.

Among some of the projects taken up by the government were setting up a water grid, power grid, National Highway Grid and an Optical fibre grid, he added.

Gadkari said development of sectors like agriculture, industry and services was



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essential for any nation to progress.

Referring to the agriculture sector, he said 1.88 crore acres of land was being brought under irrigation.

"The sector contributes 10 to 12 per cent to our GDP. We want to increase the growth rate of the agriculture sector," he said.

Gadkari said the Centre has accorded priority to rural development and undertaken road connectivity of 6.5 lakh villages.

He said that under Modi's leadership, India's relations with other countries have improved.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, in his address, said it was because of the BJP that Kashmir was still an integral part of India.

"Had the Congress rule continued, the state would have been lost," he said.

Fadnavis said it was essential for the country that BJP come to power in the 2019 polls.

He appealed to BJYM cadres to explain the government schemes to every nook and cranny.

According to him, India has emerged as the fastest growing economy in the world, surpassing China.

Fadnavis claimed that 49 per cent of the total Foreign Direct Investments that India receives comes to Maharashtra.