Raje seeks national project status for eastern canal

Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje has requested the Centre to give special financial assistance to the State to help it tide over the acute water crisis and sought the national project status for the proposed Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project, which will supply drinking and irrigation water to 13 districts.

Quality of water

The Central Water Commission has already given in-principle approval to the project’s feasibility report. The ERCP’s implementation would speed up after getting the national project status, said Ms. Raje, adding that the quality of water, along with its scarcity, was a big issue for the desert State.

“Of all fluoride-affected habitations in the country, 53% are in Rajasthan. In view of Rajasthan’s financial constraints, the Centre should contribute 50% of the cost of surface drinking water projects in the fluoride-affected areas,” Ms. Raje said while addressing a meeting of the NITI Aayog’s Governing Council in New Delhi on Sunday.

Ms. Raje also sought an increase in the land holding limit from 2 hectares to 5 hectares for receiving agricultural input subsidy, while pointing out that the crop production was low in several districts despite big size of land. Besides, up to 10 districts in the State were perpetually facing drought conditions.

Agriculture reforms

She pointed out that the State government had launched several reforms in the agriculture sector despite the challenging geographical features of Rajasthan. Considering these initiatives, the NITI Aayog has recently ranked Rajasthan at third position in the agricultural reforms category.