Rajasthan seeks higher Central assistance for water scheme

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State has only 1% of country’s surface water: Minister

The Congress government in Rajasthan has sought changes in the norms for Central assistance for the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), which envisages supply of 55 litres of water per person per day to every rural household by 2024, in order to reduce the financial burden on the States. The flagship Central scheme at present stipulates the share in 50:50 ratio.

New action plans

Rajasthan, where only 12% households are currently getting piped water supply, has formulated new action plans for implementing JJM by rejuvenating the sources of water to provide connections to about 98 lakh households. The JJM is being implemented under the State Water and Sanitation Mission, which is already functional, and different sources, including rainwater harvesting, have been tapped.

The Union Ministry of Jal Shakti is holding discussions with all the States in five phases for their action plans under the JJM. Officers from Rajasthan’s Public Health Engineering Department held deliberations at a workshop in Odisha’s Puri.

Public Health Engineering Minister B.D. Kalla said here that the State, which had only 1.01% of the country’s surface water, had been trying hard to supply drinking water to geographically difficult areas and expected more assistance from the Centre to achieve the targets of JJM. Unless the steps were taken to increase surface water, the dark zones would expand across the State, he said.

Mr. Kalla said in the State Assembly on Tuesday that the Opposition should also urge the Centre to consider increasing its share in the JJM by changing the norms. He affirmed that the linking of Brahmani river with the Bisalpur dam, built on Banas river in Tonk district, would ensure inflow of more water, facilitating the water supply to Tonk, Sawai Madhopur, Ajmer, Jaipur and Nagaur districts.