

KOSI-MECHI RIVER INTERLINKING PROJECT**Prelims:** Geography, Rivers, Places in News**Mains:**

GS-I- Geographical features and their location

GS-III- Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways, etc.

Why in News?

- ▶▶ The Centre has approved the Rs 4,900 crore project for interlinking of Kosi and Mechi rivers of Bihar.
- ▶▶ This is the second major river interlinking project in the country to be approved after the Ken-Betwa project in Madhya Pradesh.

Kosi-Mechi River Interlinking Project:

- ▶▶ Bihar has got the final remaining mandatory techno- administrative approval for the project from the MoEFCC.
- ▶▶ The central government has approved construction of 76.20 km canals on eastern bank of Kosi for irrigation purpose, the minister said.
- ▶▶ Being a green project, it will not displace people nor require acquisition of forest land.
- ▶▶ The total land requirement is about 1,396.81 hectares.

Benefits of the project:

- ▶▶ The project will not only prevent recurring floods in north Bihar, but also irrigate over 2.14 lakh hectares of cultivable land in Araria, Purnea, Kishanganj and Katihar districts, collectively called Seemanchal region.
- ▶▶ The project is aimed at alleviating hardships of the people resulting from the floods and has the potential to usher in a green revolution in Seemanchal region.
- ▶▶ This project will provide a diversion to the surplus water of Kosi River through existing Hanuman Nagar barrage to Mechi River of Mahananda basin.
- ▶▶ Mechi River will get water from another source and it will become a vast natural resource of irrigation.
- ▶▶ There are no national parks, wildlife sanctuaries or eco-sensitive zones within 10 km radius of the project.

Move for a National Project:

- ▶▶ Bihar is pitching the river interlinking project for the national project & status and in that case the majority funding of the project will be borne by the Centre.
- ▶▶ The fact that the entire command area is contiguous to Indo-Nepal international boundary is a critical aspect that the Government of India would likely take special note.

