

## Foundation laid for India's biggest lift irrigation project

The foundation stone for India's biggest lift irrigation project, which is coming up in Andhra Pradesh's at an estimated cost of Rs.385 billion, was laid by Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy Wednesday.

The Pranahita-Chevella Sujala Sravanti lift irrigation scheme, aimed at irrigating land in seven districts in the Telangana region and supplying drinking water to the state capital, is being developed at Chevella in neighbouring Ranga Reddy district.

Addressing a public meeting on the occasion at Chevella, Reddy promised that the project would be completed in four years.

The massive project will lift Pranahita river water to a height of 493 metres. It is aimed at diverting 160 tmc feet of water for irrigating 1.64 million acres of land in seven drought-prone districts.

The project will have 16 lifts with electricity requirements of 3,375 MW. The electricity required for lifting the water is expected to incur an expenditure of Rs.22.94 billion annually.

It is one of the major projects taken up under the ambitious 'Jalayagnam' programme of the Congress government to irrigate eight million acres of land at a whopping cost of Rs.650 billion.

The foundation stone for the project was laid at a time when parties are gearing up for assembly elections due next year.

The chief minister, during his speech, hit back at the opposition parties for alleging that the irrigation projects were being built by the government to earn kickbacks in contracts.

The project has been kickstarted when the movement for separate statehood to the Telangana region is picking up following support extended by all major opposition parties.

The ruling party, which is yet to take a clear stand on a separate Telangana state, wants to go ahead with the mega project to show that it was committed to develop the backward region.

( © IANS / India eNews)