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New plan for water conservation

Special Correspondent

Project will cover all Assembly segments in State: Minister

Project aimed at tackling water shortage KWA to have three divisions from July 1

Thiruvananthapuram: Water Resources Minister N.K. Premachandran on Monday announced a water conservation project for all the 140 Assembly constituency in the State.

It is intended to tackle water shortage in the State. Replying to a debate on the demand for grants for his department in the Assembly on Monday, the Minister said the programme would lay emphasis on tackling pollution of water resources, maintaining the quality of water and preventing over-exploitation.

He proposed an awareness programme and a plan of action to achieve the objectives. A meeting of legislators and local body representatives will be held on July 3 to work out the modalities of the programme.

KWA revamp

Mr. Premachandran said the Kerala Water Authority (KWA) would be divided into projects, supply and maintenance divisions as part of a revamp.

The new divisions would come into being on July 1. The projects division would deal with the conception and execution of drinking water projects.

He said the Rs.850-crore Special Project Assisted by Nabard (SPAN), spread over 36 drinking water schemes, was the government's flagship project in the water resources sector.

Out of the 91 packages under SPAN, benefiting 27 lakh people, 48 had been approved and the rest would be re-tendered. Admitting to delays, the Minister said he was in consultation with the PWD and Finance Ministers to reform the manuals and codes concerned to expedite the tendering process.

The Minister presented an update of various projects, their revised commission dates and the present status. With regard to the JBIC scheme, rechristened JICA, local bodies had been entrusted with the task of restoring the roads that had been dug up.

Under the agreement, it was the responsibility of the contractor to complete the restoration work, but this had been amended owing to work-related complaints.

He was expecting a Rs.1,000-crore World Bank scheme for Jalanidhi.