

Desert districts getting new identity as power hubs: Gehlot

[Vimal Bhatia](#), TNN | Sep 3, 2013, 02.20 AM IST

JAISALMER: Chief minister Ashok Gehlot on Monday said providing [drinking water](#) to the residents even in remote parts of the state was among the top priorities of the state government and there was no deficit of funds for the purpose. Gehlot was addressing a public assembly on the occasion of inaugurating the first phase of Pokhran-Falsoond Balotara-Siwana lift project at Pokhran.

The chief minister said that Rajasthan was state of diverse geographical conditions. It has 10% of the country's area and around 5.5% of India's population, but only 1% drinking water. "Life of the people in desert has been tough, but now the situation is changing as the area is leading in oil, gas and energy generation," said Gehlot.

According top priority to drinking water schemes, the government has provided canal water under six new big projects by making a separate provision of Rs 23,000 crore. He said the government hard to get canal water in Barmer, Jaisalmer and Pokhran. "Barmer and Jaisalmer is emerging as solar and wind energy hub too. Jodhpur is developing in form of educational hub and top educational institutions are being set up there," Gehlot said.

Union culture minister [Chandresh Kumari](#) said Pokhran was developing as a power hub and after the wind energy, the area was going to create a record in tapping the solar energy. She congratulated people of Pokhran on getting drinking water.

Energy minister Jitendra Singh said the Barmer-Jaisalmer parliamentary constituency was as big as Kerala and providing facilities in this area was a big challenge.

Congress state president Chandrabhan said Pokhran got national identity with the country's nuclear tests, but today the place was creating another identity for itself in the form of energy generating hub.