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TN acting as if surplus Cauvery belongs to them: Govt

Will oppose river-linking project tooth and nail: Bommai

BENGALURU, DHNS

Karnataka has decided to "strongly oppose" Tamil Nadu's Cauvery-Vellaru-Vaigai-Gundar river-linking project, with the state government announcing its readiness to wage a legal battle against its neighbour.

"Tamil Nadu's project is against the interests of Karnataka," Law Minister Basavaraj Bommai said after a high-level meeting with Water Resources Minister Ramesh Jarkiholi and senior officials.

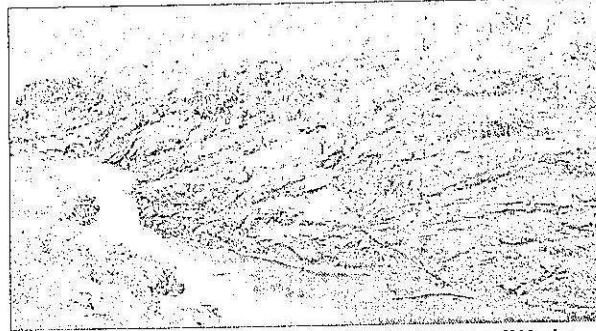
Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami laid the foundation stone for the first phase of the Cauvery-Vellaru-Vaigai-Gundar project,

which will be built at a cost of Rs 6,900 crore.

"Tamil Nadu wants to use the surplus Cauvery river water of about 45 tmcft. Surplus water should also be shared between states. But officially or legally, there is no decision on sharing the surplus water. That being the case, it's not right to come up with a project that seeks to use surplus water," Bommai said.

"That surplus water should be shared between the states is a fundamental principle. But going against this, Tamil Nadu is acting as if even the surplus water is theirs. We have decided to strongly oppose this and wage a legal fight," he said.

Out of the 740 tmcft estimat-



A file picture of River Cauvery at Mekedatu. Tamil Nadu moved the Supreme Court when Karnataka proposed to build a balancing reservoir at Mekedatu to utilise surplus water.

DH PHOTO

ed by the Supreme Court in the entire Cauvery basin, 483 tmcft is generated up to the Karnataka-Tamil Nadu border at Biligundlu.

"As per the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, even surplus water needs adjudication. The matter is still pending before the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal. So, Tamil Nadu's project goes against the Act also," Bommai stressed.

When Karnataka proposed to build a balancing reservoir at Mekedatu to utilise surplus water to provide drinking water to Ramanagara and Kanakapura towns, Tamil Nadu filed a petition in the Supreme Court opposing the project.

Tamil Nadu, according to Bommai, has "consistently" opposed Karnataka's projects. "When we wanted to modernize anicuts that are 300-400

BASAVARAJ BOMMAI
Home Minister

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years old, they opposed. They opposed when we sought an allocation for drinking water to Bengaluru," he said. "In the Krishnagiri and Dharmapuri region, Tamil Nadu took up the Hogenakal project to provide drinking water to four districts. We filed our objections and then we got 9 tmcft allocation for Bengaluru," he added.

"Like this, they've been consistently creating conflicts. They have started a new project just like how they started the Hogenakal project without any permission," he said.