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## Cauvery dispute: 'No inter-basin transfer without consensus'

State says Tamil Nadu should abide by the rules

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In the latest round of dispute involving the Cauvery riparian States, Karnataka has opposed Tamil Nadu's unilateral decision to lay foundation for a link scheme proposing to utilise and transfer surplus water in the Cauvery basin to the southern parts of that State. While the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal has allocated water share to each of the States, the surplus water is yet to be allocated.

Karnataka's stand is on the premise that unless the surplus water is allocated, the States should not be allowed to have projects utilising it. Water resources experts estimate that about 40 tmcft is expected to be used once the Cauvery-Vellaru-Vaigai-Gundar link scheme is completed. However, officials said that the Detailed Project Report was yet to be given and the quantum of water transfer could be

measured only based on that. "We are asking the riparian State to comply with the rules," an official said.

Sources in the Water Resources Department said that Tamil Nadu has linked the new scheme to an earlier peninsular link scheme that involves the linking of Godavari-Krishna-Palar-Pennar-Cauvery-Vaigai, for which national project status is being sought. "Tamil Nadu wants the new scheme to be part of the peninsular link scheme... The State is funding the project. Even the peninsular link scheme has not been approved yet," a source said.

However, sources pointed out that since 2010, Karnataka has taken a stand that any inter-basin transfer should have consensus between the riparian States or be decided through adjudication.

Sources pointed out that when the undivided Andhra Pradesh wanted to transfer 80 tmcft of water from the Krishna basin, Maharashtra was allocated 25 tmcft and Karnataka received 14 tmcft.

Officials said that the Krish-

na tribunal award was very clear about inter-basin transfers. "Under the order, no State is barred from claiming its right if a river basin is augmented by another river basin," said an official. Sources further pointed out that even the Centre could not unilaterally take up such a project or help any State in executing it.

The Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal, in its final order in 2007, had allocated 419 tmcft of water to Tamil Nadu, 270 tmcft to Karnataka, and 30 tmcft to Kerala, and 7 tmcft to Puducherry. However, a Supreme Court order in 2018 reduced Tamil Nadu's share to 404 tmcft and increased Karnataka's share to 284 tmcft. Karnataka has been directed to release 177 tmcft at the Bilingundi point on the State borders. However, no orders have been made on the utilisation of surplus water.

### Referred to CWMA

Tamil Nadu's new scheme has been referred to the Central Water Management Authority, which in turn has sought the opinion of Karnataka.