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LS passes bill to set up single tribunal on river water rows

NEW DELHI, DMNS: The Lok Sabha on Wednesday passed a bill to set up a single standing tribunal with multiple benches for adjudication of inter-state river water disputes in a "transparent manner" within a stipulated time frame.

The Inter-State River Water Disputes (Amendment) Bill, 2019, piloted by Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, was passed by the Lower House by voice vote after the members debated on the bill for more than five hours.

"The amendment bill has been brought to ensure adjudication of long-standing inter-state river water disputes in a transparent manner within a stipulated time frame," the minister told the Lok Sabha, underlining that there have been instances when a tribunal could not resolve a dispute between states for 33 years.

Responding to DMK member Dayanidhi Maran's



Gajendra Singh Shekhawat

concern over the fate of the Cauvery Management Authority, the minister clarified that all the bodies set up under the original Act will remain unaffected.

In his reply to the debate, the Jal Shakti minister highlighted the need for the creation of an "effective mechanism" for management of water in the country, urging the members to rise above their "regional concerns" and come forward to find a solution to growing scarcity of water, keeping the future in mind.

"We must look into the issue of water management. Neither the court nor the tribunal can create water," he said.

The Opposition members objected to some provisions, with Congress leader Manish Tewari saying the "entire basis" of bringing the bill was "completely and absolutely flawed".

Sumalatha counters Maran on Cauvery

Independent MP from Mandya, Sumalatha Ambareesh, countered the allegation by DMK's Dayanidhi Maran in the Lok Sabha that Karnataka had been persistently violating the orders of the Cauvery Water Dispute Tribunal and the Supreme Court on releasing water to Tamil Nadu.

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