

Mekedatu water Project

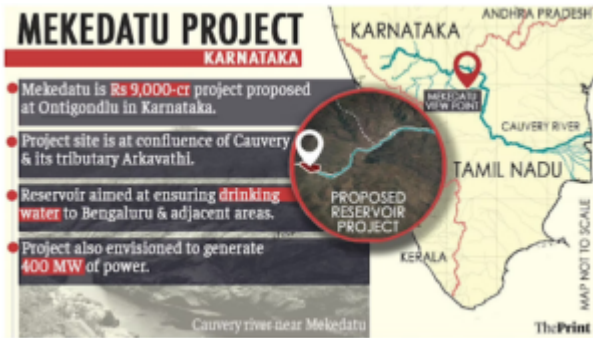
April 8, 2022

In news— The Tamil Nadu Assembly has recently passed an unanimous resolution condemning the Karnataka government for its “unilateral decision” to proceed with the Mekedatu project. It has stated that Karnataka taking up construction of a reservoir across Cauvery in Mekedatu is in “violation” of orders passed by the CWDT and the Supreme Court.

About the project-

- Mekedatu multi-purpose (drinking and power) project across river Cauvery **involves building a balancing reservoir to store 67 TMC of water near Kanakapura in Karnataka's Ramanagara district.**
- Mekedatu (which translates as Goat's crossing) was originally mooted in 1948.
- **Karnataka gave the project shape after the final award of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT) was notified** in February 2013 allocating the riparian states their shares. **Karnataka's share in the award has been decided at 284.75 tmc ft.**
- After a pre-feasibility study report was submitted in 2018, the State submitted a detailed project report to the Central Water Commission in 2019.
- **The ₹9,000 crore project** will involve **submergence of nearly 5,100 hectares of forest in Cauvery wildlife sanctuary** hosting rich flora and fauna.
- **It will help the state in utilizing the additional 4.75 tmc ft. of water allocated by Supreme Court** in 2018 for consumptive use for drinking purposes for Bengaluru and neighbouring areas.
- **Currently, more than 30% of Bengaluru is dependent on borewell water.**
- Ramanagara and Bengaluru rural districts will also benefit.

- Along with the 5th stage of the Cauvery Water Supply Scheme, which will be completed shortly, the water from **Mekedatu is projected to meet the water requirement of the State capital for the next 30 years.**
- Besides, there are also plans to generate 400 MW of power. The revenue earned from power generation is expected to compensate the Government for its investment on the project within a few years.
- Karnataka argues that the reservoir will also help to ensure monthly flow stipulated in the award for Tamil Nadu rather than harm the neighbouring State's interest in any way.
- **In July 2019**, the Expert Appraisal Committee on River Valley and Hydroelectric Projects constituted by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has said the proposal could be reconsidered only after Tamil Nadu and Karnataka reach an "amicable solution."
- **The project is now before the Cauvery Water Management Authority.**
- The Authority is exploring the possibility of having an exclusive discussion on the project, when the matter is sub judice.
- Apart from writing to the Centre to withdraw the permission given to prepare the detailed project report (DPR), **Tamil Nadu has also filed a petition before the Supreme Court, explaining its objections against the project.**
- The Centre and Karnataka have also filed counter affidavits.



Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary-

- It is a protected area located in the Mandya, Chamarajanagar and Ramanagara districts of Karnataka.
- The Cauvery River passes through its midst.
- An area of 510.52 km² was established as Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary on **14 January 1987 under Section 18 of the Wildlife Protection Act 1972** with the objective of providing protection, conservation and development of Wildlife and its environment.
- The sanctuary was expanded to its current area of 253,910 acres in 2013.
- On its east, it adjoins Dharmapuri forest division of Tamil Nadu state.