Cauvery authority directs Karnataka to release water

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The Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA), at its first meeting here on Monday, directed Karnataka to release water to Tamil Nadu and other States but did not discuss Karnataka's decision to challenge the constitution of the CWMA in the Supreme Court.

"There is no need and no point in discussing Karnataka's challenge...The Authority has nothing to do with it," Masood Hussain, Interim-Chairman, CWMA, told The Hindu.

Appeal in SC

The Karnataka government on Saturday decided to file an appeal in the Supreme Court against the setting up of the CWMA and the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) on the grounds that the move should have been discussed in Parliament.

Mr. Hussain said the CWMA had directed Karnataka to release 34 tmcft (thousand million cubic feet) of water from the Biligundulu site. This would be over and above the water released in June, he clarified.

The CWMA, which is yet to appoint full-time members, is scheduled to meet every 10 days during the monsoon months. Based on the storage of water in various reservoirs — Hemavathy, Harangi, Krishnarajasagar, Kabini, Mettur, Bhavanisagar, Amaravathy and Banasurasagar — it will recommend how much water ought to be released in keeping with the Supreme Court's recent verdict in these blocks of 10 days.

The court's February verdict had said Karnataka will get 284.75 tmcft, Tamil Nadu 404.25 tmcft and Kerala and Puducherry 30 and 7 tmcft respectively.

The CWMA includes Tinku Biswal, S.K. Prabhakar, A. Anbarasu and Rakesh Singh, secretaries of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karnataka looking after the departments of water resources, besides representatives of the Central Water Commission and Union Ministries of Agriculture and Water Resources. The CWMA will be headed by the Chairman, a senior and eminent engineer or a Secretary/Additional Secretary-level executive with experience in handling inter-State water disputes. The Authority will have two whole-time members and six part-time members, including one each nominated from the riparian States. There will be a Secretary from the Central Water Engineering Services cadre, but without voting rights.