‘No time frame for Cauvery Board’
DELHI, Feb. 27, 2018, The Hindu

"Union Minister for Water Resources Nitin Gadkari on Monday was non-committal on a possible time frame for the constitution of the Cauvery Management Board (CMB), as mandated by the Supreme Court.

Stating that the panel was "in the process now," the Minister said, "We are very sensitive and very cautious about water problem in Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and even in Karnataka."

Interacting with journalists at the office of The Hindu here, Mr. Gadkari refused to be drawn into specifics when asked if the Centre had a time frame for establishing the CMB.

“We respect the decision of the Supreme Court. Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, they are like two eyes for us. And water is a crucial problem,” the Minister said, adding, “I am a farmer and I know what the problem of the drinking water and irrigation in my area Vidarbha (where over 10,000 farmer suicides happened). So, I am very keenly interested. (I) Will find out some way out.”

Cautious approach

However, Mr. Gadkari indicated that the process may not be easy. "It is a very difficult task and it is not a very easy question. But, my track record is whatever I have taken in the hands, I have completed the project. But, it is a big task. I do not want to give any assurance for that,” he said.

Unlike his other portfolios of Transport and Shipping, work in the water was "not so easy", the Minister said and added that he needed help from the Finance Ministry for projects.

Pet projects

Mr. Gadkari said the Centre was keen on implementing two major projects — diverting water from the Godavari to the Cauvery and the Polavaram project, in its attempt to cater to the water needs of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

About 3,000 tmc ft of water in the Godavari was going to the sea and the aim was to save at least 700 tmc ft by diverting it to the Cauvery through two dams at a cost of about ₹1 lakh crore. The other plan was the ₹60,000 crore Polavaram project, which he said would be completed before March next year.

The Detailed Project Reports (DPR) for both the projects would be prepared by next month and the suggestions from the Chief Ministers concerned would be taken. The Centre was also looking at low-interest loans from lenders such as the Asian Development Bank......."