

Cauvery dispute

On September 21, the Supreme Court asked Karnataka to continue releasing 5,000 cubic feet per second (cusecs) of water from the Cauvery river to Tamil Nadu for 15 days.

Karnataka told the Supreme Court that the daily flow of 5,000 cusecs of water to Tamil Nadu was “against [its] interest.”

The State, especially in urban areas like Bengaluru, was on “the brink of a drinking water crisis”.

Tamil Nadu is in need of water for at least three lakh acres over which a short term crop (kuruvasi) has been raised. Already, there are reports of the crop being at risk of withering in many places.

How is the Cauvery water being shared?

The Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT)’s final award of

2007 and the Supreme Court’s judgement of February 2018 spell out the system for sharing the river water.

Pointing out that 740 thousand million cubic feet (tmc ft) of water would be available in the Cauvery basin in a normal year, the Court, which broadly adhered to the CWDT’s award, made the allocation for constituents of the basin as follows:

Karnataka (284.75 tmc ft); Tamil Nadu (404.25 tmc ft); Kerala (30 tmc ft) and Puducherry (7 tmc ft). Ten tmc ft and four tmc ft have been set apart for environmental protection and inevitable escapages into the sea.

Why are Karnataka’s farmers upset?

This year’s southwest monsoon has played truant, especially in south interior Karnataka, the region where the Cauvery river originates.

Between June 1 and September 23, the region suffered a deficit rainfall of 27%, according to the India Meteorological Department.

Kodagu of Karnataka and Wayanad of Kerala, which form part of the catchment of the Cauvery and its tributary, Kabini, registered a deficit rainfall of 43% and 56% respectively.

Karnataka, in its application before Court, had stated that "...at the reservoir level, which covers a part of the catchment, the shortfall is 53.42%," given the fact that the State has four reservoirs in the Cauvery basin.

How serious is the situation in T.N.?

Being the lower riparian State in the Cauvery basin, Tamil Nadu is mainly dependent on releases by Karnataka, particularly during the southwest monsoon, as it falls under the rain shadow region in the season.

The Hindu

NEP

The Parliament Standing Committee on Education, headed by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP Vivek Thakur, tabled a report during the special session of Parliament on the "Implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 in Higher Education."

What did the report say?

The report looked at the salient features of the NEP's implementation in the higher education sector and the progress made so far.

The report noted that of the 1,043 universities functioning in the country, 70% are under the State Act and that 94% of students are in State or private institutions with just 6% of students in Central higher educational institutions, stressing the importance of States in providing higher education.

What were the recommendations?

The panel asked the Union Government and the State Governments to take actions such as earmarking suitable funds for the education of Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs),

Setting clear targets for higher Gross Enrolment Ratio for SEDGs, enhancing gender balance in admissions to HEIs, providing more financial assistance and scholarships to SEDGs in both public and private HEIs, making admission processes and curriculum more inclusive,

Increasing employability potential of higher education programmes and for developing more degree courses taught in regional languages and bilingually.

The panel also recommended specific infrastructural steps to help physically challenged students and a strict enforcement of all

non-discrimination and anti-harassment rules.

The Hindu

Kalambo river

Along the banks of the Kalambo River in Zambia near Africa's second highest waterfall, archaeologists have excavated two logs of the large fruited bush willow tree that were notched, shaped and joined nearly half a million years ago.

These artefacts, researchers said on Wednesday, represent the oldest known example of humans in this case a species that preceded our own building wooden structures, a milestone in technological achievement that indicates that our forerunners displayed more ingenuity than previously thought.

The logs, modified using stone tools,



appear to have been part of a framework for a structure, a conclusion that contradicts the notion humans at that time simply roamed the landscape hunting and gathering resources.

The Kalambo River forms part of the border between Zambia and Songwe Region, Tanzania. It is a comparatively small stream which rises on the Ufipa Plateau

The Ufipa Plateau is a highland in southwestern Tanzania.

The Hindu

The Union Cabinet approved the National Research Foundation (NRF) Bill, 2023.

The legislation aims to establish the NRF as an apex body to provide “high level strategic direction” to scientific research in the country under the National Education Policy (NEP) at an estimated cost of ₹50,000 crore between 2023 and 2028, a press statement from the Department of Science and Technology (DST) said.



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