# Mekedatu Row Flares Again: Tamil Nadu Hits Back at Karnataka CM

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15 November 2026: Karnataka Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, in the Prime Minister's presence at Mysuru, appealed to the Centre to help Karnataka obtain approvals for the proposed Mekedatu balancing reservoir across the Cauvery, and said "no one can stop the construction of a dam at Mekedatu". Tamil Nadu Congress president Manickam Tagore called the remarks 'unacceptable'; the dispute has now become an open Congress-versus-Congress confrontation.

## The Mekedatu project: key facts

Location: a deep gorge on the Cauvery in Karnataka, near the Ramanagara-Chamarajanagar border - 'Mekedatu' means 'goat's leap' in Kannada.

The project: a proposed balancing reservoir intended for drinking-water supply to Bengaluru and nearby regions, plus about 400 MW of hydropower.

Tamil Nadu's objection: as the lower-riparian state, it fears the dam will hit downstream irrigation in the delta districts; it says any approval without its consent would be illegal.

## The legal background

From tribunal to court: the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal gave its final award in 2007; in 2018 the Supreme Court modified the allocation (Karnataka's share rose, Tamil Nadu's fell).

Regulatory framework: the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) and the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee were constituted in 2018; new projects must pass through this framework - the core of Tamil Nadu's 'violation of the tribunal award' argument.

Tagore's charge: the Karnataka CM's stance "violates the Supreme Court ruling and the tribunal's final award" and "goes against the principle of federalism"; he demanded the Centre grant no permission without the full consent of lower-riparian states. The TVK government's Law Minister C.T.R. Nirmal Kumar also accused the Karnataka CM of making controversial statements ahead of every election.

## For the exam

Questions can be asked on Mekedatu's location (Cauvery, Ramanagara region), the project's purposes (drinking water + hydropower), the 2007 tribunal award, the 2018 Supreme Court verdict, the CWMA and riparian principles; the constitutional provision for inter-state river disputes (Article 262) is also linked.

## Quiz: Test your knowledge

**Q1: Consider the following about the Mekedatu project: 1. It is proposed on the Cauvery river. 2. It is a dispute between Tamil Nadu and Kerala. 3. Its purposes include drinking-water supply and hydropower. How many are correct?**

(a) Only one(b) Only two(c) All three(d) None

Answer and explanation: (b) Statements 1 and 3 are correct. Statement 2 is wrong - the dispute is between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu; Tamil Nadu is the lower-riparian state.

**Q2: In which year was the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) constituted?**

(a) 2007(b) 2014(c) 2018(d) 2023

Answer and explanation: (c) The CWMA and the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee were set up after the Supreme Court's 2018 verdict; the tribunal's final award was in 2007.

## Mains Practice Question

The Mekedatu dispute shows that political tension persists despite inter-state water agreements. Evaluate the arrangements for resolving inter-state river disputes within the federal framework. (Answer in 250 words - 15 marks)

Answer outline:

Introduction: The context - the fresh Karnataka-Tamil Nadu clash over Mekedatu.

Main body: The statutory arrangement - Article 262, the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act 1956, the tribunal (2007), the Supreme Court (2018), the CWMA; weaknesses - delays in implementation, data disagreement, electoral politics; suggestions - basin-level cooperative management, real-time water data, a benefit-sharing model.

Conclusion: Court decisions are necessary but not sufficient; cooperative federalism and shared data institutions are the durable solution.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

In short: Mekedatu is Karnataka's proposed balancing reservoir on the Cauvery, opposed by Tamil Nadu; the latest row flared over the Karnataka CM's 'no one can stop it' remark.

## Question: Where is Mekedatu?

A deep gorge on the Cauvery in Karnataka, near the Ramanagara-Chamarajanagar border; the name means 'goat's leap'.

## Question: Why does Tamil Nadu oppose it?

As the lower-riparian state, it fears reduced flows for delta irrigation and holds that the project violates the 2007 tribunal award and the Supreme Court's 2018 verdict.

## Question: What is the legal sequence of the Cauvery dispute?

The tribunal's final award in 2007, the Supreme Court's modified allocation in 2018, and the constitution of the CWMA and the Regulation Committee the same year.

## Sources:


- Indian Express: TN Congress chief hits out at DK Shivakumar over Mekedatu remarks, 14 November 2026
- India Today: Mekedatu dam - TN opposes Karnataka CM's remarks, 14 November 2026


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