

Hindustan Times -22 May- 2024

Dry dams portend looming distress

The monsoon has arrived in the Andaman Sea and is expected to hit the Kerala coast on May 31.

Meanwhile, an intense heat wave is sweeping northern India while water levels in the country's 150 reservoirs monitored by the Central Water Commission are alarmingly low at just 25% of their total capacity. The storage position in most of these reservoirs is lower than the corresponding period of last year and less than the normal storage. Particularly striking is the deficiency in the Godavari, Krishna and Cauvery basins, which can have a debilitating impact on meeting drinking water needs, irrigation and hydropower generation.

Major cities of southern India including Chennai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad have reported major water crises, with rationing mooted in parts of the Karnataka capital. The storage in Kerala's reservoirs is better than for the corresponding period last year, but an extended dry spell has forced the government to declare it the state's worst drought in 40 years. Exceptionally high temperatures have led to a spike in power demand, which governments are struggling to meet since power generation from hydro-power projects is under stress. The situation has been blamed on El Nino conditions that impacted both the monsoons last year. An above-normal Southwest monsoon is predicted this year with La Nina conditions, a weather phenomenon known for bringing excess rainfall, which, hopefully, will offset the fall in agriculture output.

However, states must prepare to ensure that the La Nina bounty is not wasted. Much of the water crisis in summer months has to do with the failure to augment storage during the monsoon. Reservoirs, ponds, and tanks need to be dredged ahead of the season so that excess rainfall is conserved. The climate crisis is changing the monsoon pattern and leading to short bursts of heavy rain rather than extended rainfall across the season. This can have disastrous implications such as urban flooding in the absence of infrastructure to channel the excess water.

Deccan Chronicle-22 May- 2024

CAUVERY PANEL DIRECTS RELEASE OF 2.5 TMCFT WATER

DC CORRESPONDENT
WITH AGENCY INPUTS
CHENNAI, MAY 21

The Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) on Tuesday ratified the decision of Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) to direct the Karnataka government to release 2.5 tmcft of the Cauvery water for the remaining period of May. The quantity of water, which will ensure environmental flows, was decided by the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT). The CWRC, which met four days ago, had decided to suggest the release of water at Biligundlu on the Tamil Nadu-Karnataka border.

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The Morning Standard-22 May- 2024

K'taka told to release Cauvery water after checking priority

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) on Tuesday endorsed the decision of the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC), given the low water level in reservoirs of the Cauvery basin.

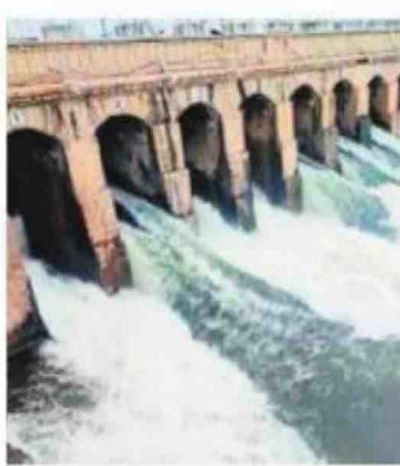
CWRC on May 16 rejected Tamil Nadu's demand to direct Karnataka to release backlog deficit water in environmental flow and ensure no further deficit in the environmental flow of Cauvery river to the state.

The authority meeting was chaired by Saumitra Kumar Haldar, Chairman of the Cauvery Water Management Authority.

"It was a routine meeting where we endorsed the 96th CWRC decision which rejected demand of Tamil Nadu to direct Karnataka to release water to Tamil Nadu," Haldar said.

"It is not an irrigation season so both states should focus on drinking water requirements" he said Haldar, and underlined that the forecast of good monsoon would soon address water stress in the region.

The ongoing heavy pre-monsoon



soon showers over the last week have helped ease water stress in both the states. The interstate point at Biligundlu, which was receiving barely 150 cusecs of water per day, is receiving over 1,100 cusecs per day over the past week.

"Both states have enough water in their respective reservoirs to meet their drinking water requirements," Vineet Gupta, Chairman, CWRC, part of the CWMA meeting, said.

Earlier, the committee refused to accede to Tamil Nadu's demand to direct the Karnataka government to ensure the release of backlog of Cauvery water and maintain the environmental flows as per the final

award of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT) later modified by the Supreme Court.

As per the water award, for a normal year, Karnataka must ensure TN realises around 1,000 cusecs of Cauvery water per day, which will be 2.5 tmcft per month, between February and May, at Biligundlu.

"Last week's pre-monsoon activities in the southern peninsula have improved Cauvery basin flow up to 1,100 cusecs per day at Biligundlu," Gupta said. The CWDT award cannot be followed in the distressed year, he said.

Earlier in its submission to CWRC, the Tamil Nadu government reiterated its demand for a scientific formula to share water in a distress year.

In a statement, Tamil Nadu government said, "The state has suffered in distress year in getting its due share and hence requested the CWRC to take immediate action without further delay to evolve a scientific formula to decide the distress percentage based on yield as mandated by the Union of India notification on June 1, 2018."