

### **SC curtails T.N.'s share of Cauvery water**

The Supreme Court awarded Karnataka 14.75 tmc ft (thousand million cubic feet) of Cauvery water from Tamil Nadu's share, reasoning that Karnataka has historically suffered "limited access to and use" of the river water.

- Out of the 14.75 tmc ft, Bengaluru will get 4.75 tmc ft for drinking water purposes.

Out of a total of 740 tmc ft available in the 802-km-long river, the Supreme Court determined that Karnataka would now get 284.75 (270+14.75) tmc ft, Tamil Nadu's share has been reduced from 419 tmc ft to 404.25 tmc ft, while Kerala and Puducherry would continue to be allocated 30 tmc ft and seven tmc ft, respectively.

The court gave the Centre six weeks' time to frame a Cauvery water-sharing scheme under Section 6A of the Inter-State Water Disputes Act of 1956. The scheme has to be in consonance with the CWDT's award and the changes introduced by the Supreme Court through this judgment.

- With this, the apex court dismissed the Centre's claims that it has complete discretion to decide whether or not to frame a scheme.
- The court held that subject to the formulation of a scheme, the water allocation arrangement should stand unchanged for the next 15 years. The court warned the States to not deviate from the judgment or use the allotted water for other than the designated purposes. It supported the tribunal's decision to exactly apportion lands for irrigation in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu and determine the water allocation to these lands.

### **How did system allow PNB fraud, asks CVC**

The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), India's apex body for checking corruption in the government, has summoned senior officials of the Reserve Bank of India and the Finance Ministry, along with the Chief Vigilance Officer of Punjab National Bank (PNB), to assess how the Rs 11,500 crore fraud reported by the government-owned PNB, slipped past all the in-built checks and balances in the banking system.

- the CVC would like to ascertain if there is a systemic issue that needs to be corrected, as it isn't convinced by the bank's claims that junior employees colluded with the fugitive diamond merchant Nirav Modi and other banks were to blame for not carrying out due diligence on the letters of undertaking (LoUs).
- Banks are audited at three levels — apart from an internal audit, there is an external auditor and a statutory audit undertaken by the RBI. The CVC is keen to understand

how none of these audits picked up a red flag on the LoUs that seem to have been issued bypassing the system.

Meanwhile, the RBI broke its silence on the fraud and blamed internal control failures for PNB's woes in a statement, terming the incident as a 'case of operational risk' due to 'delinquent behaviour' by one or more employees.

### **'Show source of income to contest polls'**

In a landmark move in poll reforms, the Supreme Court ruled that politicians, their spouses and associates must declare their sources of income, along with their assets, in order to qualify for contesting elections. It directed the government to set up a permanent mechanism to monitor the accrual of wealth of sitting MPs and MLAs, their spouses and associates.

- The judgment, said "manifold and undue accretion of assets" by legislators or their associates by itself becomes a good ground for disqualification.

The court made it mandatory for candidates contesting elections and their associates to declare their assets and source of income at the time of nomination.

- The obligation of a candidate to disclose both his assets and the source of income is a part of the fundamental right of a citizen to know, under Article 19 (1) (a) of the Constitution.
- The court said enforcement of a citizen's fundamental right needs no statutory sanction from the government or Parliament.

It held that "undue accretion of assets" is an independent ground for disqualifying an MP or an MLA.

- Amassing wealth is a "culpable offence" by itself and a lawmaker can be prosecuted even without charging him for offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act.
- The court said the amassment of unaccounted wealth by lawmakers is the mark of a failing democracy. If left unattended, it would inevitably lead to the destruction of democracy and pave the way for the rule of mafia.

The court said India as a "socialist republic" believes in the distribution of material resources and not in the concentration of wealth.

- If the assets of a legislator increase without bearing any relationship to their known sources of income, the only logical inference that can be drawn is that there is some abuse. The court pointed out how legislators use their position to secure loans from nationalised banks which turn into NPAs.

### **Iran, India will shine bright'**

President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Hassan Rouhani said that his country is ready to share its rich natural resources with India. He also gave a call for Muslim unity and universal brotherhood while delivering a speech at the packed Mecca Masjid where he offered Friday prayers.

- "Iran announces from here that it will fully cooperate with India to share oil, gas and energy for the development and progress of India and its people," Mr. Rouhani said.
- Iran will permit India to use the Chabahar Port as a transit point so that its goods can enter other countries in Central Asia, besides Afghanistan.
- India and Iran can work together in agriculture, industry and new technology sectors to enhance cooperation in areas of mutual interest. He also said that Iran wants peace in the region.

Mr. Rouhani said "enemies of Islam" want to divide Muslims. The Mecca Masjid, he said, bears testimony that Indian and Iranian Muslims are brothers. "All schools of thought are like rivers. They all flow into a sea," he said urging the Muslim community to rise above sectarian differences.

Earlier, Mr. Rouhani visited the Qutb Shahi tombs complex on the foothills of Golconda Fort.

- The first Qutb Shahi king, Sultan Quli Qutb-ul-Mulk who ruled from Golconda, hailed from Hamadan in present day Iran. The dynasty which ruled till 1687 had continued contacts with the Persian empire.
- Mr. Rouhani offered prayers at the mausoleum of Sultan Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah. He reportedly seemed curious about the tile patterns still existing on Ibrahim Qutb Shah and Muhammad Qutb Shah's tombs.

### **Chandrayaan-II to be launched in April**

India's second moon mission, Chandrayaan-II, which would land a rover on the lunar surface is expected to be launched in April.

- Chandrayaan-II would cost about Rs 800 crore. It presented many technological challenges as it had three components: an orbiter, a lander and a moon rover.
- The orbiter had a life of one year while the lander and the rover were designed to last a lunar day, which was 14 days, as they worked on solar power.
- A location had been identified at the Moon's South Pole to drop the lander and rover.

### **Cauvery a national asset, no exclusive ownership'**

An inter-State river like Cauvery is a 'national asset', and being in a state of flow, no State can claim exclusive ownership of its waters or assert a prescriptive right so as to deprive other States of their equitable share, the Supreme Court held.

- While it is common and equal to all through whose land it (river) runs and no one can obstruct or divert it, yet as one of the beneficial gifts of Nature, each beneficiary has a right to just and reasonable use of it, the court observed.

This principle of equitable apportionment, as is now intrinsically embedded generally in a pursuit for apportionment of water of an international drainage basin straddling over two or more States, predicates that every riparian State is entitled to a fair share of the water according to its need, and is imbued with the philosophy that a river has been provided by nature for the common benefit of the community as a whole through whose territory it flows even though those territories may be divided by frontiers as postulated in law.

- However, the court said the "principle of equality" among the riparian States does not imply equal division of water. The apex court said, equality here means "equal consideration and equal economic opportunity of the co-basin States."
- To conceive that equality rests on equal sharing of water within an arithmetical formula, would be fundamentally violative of the established conception of equitable apportionment, the Supreme Court observed.

The court compared the sharing of inter-State river waters in India to the practices of sharing of international rivers among nations.

- The Supreme Court referred to the Helsinki Rules of 1966, which recognise equitable use of water by each basin State taking into consideration the geography and hydrology of the basin, the climate, past utilisation of waters, economic and social needs, dependent population and availability of resources.
- The judgment also refers to the Campione Rules in the context of the Cauvery dispute. These Rules hold that basin States would in their respective territories

manage the waters of an international drainage basin in an equitable and reasonable manner.

The court referred to the National Water Policy, which had reiterated time and again that water is a “scarce and precious national asset.”

### **Plea to ban law practice of MPs, MLAs**

The Supreme Court decided to examine a plea to ban Members of Parliament and State Legislative Assemblies from practising law.

- A Bench led by Chief Justice Dipak Misra asked Attorney-General K.K. Venugopal for assistance.

Petitioner, advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay, said: “Under Section 21 of the IPC, MLAs and MPs are public servants. Hence, allowing them to practice as an advocate and restricting other public servants is arbitrary and irrational and violation of Articles 14-15 of the Constitution.”

### **Solar alliance biggest win since Paris accord, says PM**

The biggest development on tackling climate change since the Paris Accord of 2015 has been the International Solar Alliance, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the inaugural session of the World Sustainable Development Summit.

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- India and France initiated the International Solar Alliance on November 30, 2015 in Paris, on the sidelines of COP-21, the UN climate conference.. It has 121 members(countries).
- The International Solar Alliance (ISA) that aims at increasing solar energy deployment in member countries, came into legal, independent existence in December and is the first treaty-based international intergovernmental organisation to be based out of India.
- The ISA aims to mobilise more than \$1,000 billion in investments by 2030 for “massive deployment” of solar energy, pave the way for future technologies adapted to the needs of moving to a fossil-free future and keep global temperatures from rising above 2°C by the end of the century.
- As part of the agreement, India will contribute \$27 million to the ISA for creating corpus, building infrastructure and recurring expenditure over five years from 2016-17 to 2020-21.

India has committed itself to having 175,000 MW of renewed energy in the grid by 2022.

### **TRAI to fine 'predatory' tariff**

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) said a "financial disincentive" of up to Rs 50 lakh for each service area can be imposed on a telco in case a tariff offered by the operator is found to be predatory.

In its new tariff order, aimed at ensuring transparency, non-discrimination and non-predation, TRAI said in the case of non-compliance with norms to report any new tariff to the regulator, the telco may be "liable to pay five thousand rupees, by way of financial disincentive for every day of delay subject to a maximum of Rs 2 lakh as the Authority may by order direct."

TRAI added there was no need to impose restrictions on the number of promotional offers that an operator can provide to its subscribers.

STATE – AP

### **CM to inaugurate tourism complex**

Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu will inaugurate a tourism complex on the foothills of Kotappakonda, lay the foundation stone for a ropeway project to Sri Koteswara Swamy temple.

### **JNTU campus at Kakani**

The Chief Minister will also lay the foundation stone for the JNTU-Kakinada campus at Kakani village