

Course correction – At last, a scheme

Cauvery basin States must quickly agree on an authority to apply the water sharing award

Now that the Karnataka election is over, the Centre has finally **mustered** the courage to submit a draft scheme in the Supreme Court to implement the final decision on apportioning the **Cauvery** waters among the **riparian** States. The draft, which gives no name for the authority it proposes to create to monitor implementation of the Cauvery **Tribunal's** final award, as modified by the Supreme Court, has been largely drawn from the Tribunal's directions. It will be a two tier structure, with an **apex** body charged with the power to ensure **compliance** with the final award, and a regulation committee that will monitor the field situation and water flow. The powers and functions of the authority are fairly **comprehensive**. Its powers would extend to **apportionment**, regulation and control of Cauvery waters, supervision of operations of reservoirs and regulation of water releases. The draft makes the authority's decisions final and binding. However, there is an **ambiguous** clause: if the authority finds that any one of the States is not cooperative, it can seek the Centre's help, and the Centre's decision will be final and binding. This can be seen either as an **enabling** clause to resolve the situation when there is a stand-off, or as one that gives scope to the Centre to **intervene** on behalf of one State. To **allay** apprehensions of the Centre acting in a **partisan** manner, it would be better if it is not given the final say, but **mandated** to help in the implementation of the Tribunal's award at all times.

There are a few differences between the Cauvery Management Board **envisaged** by the Tribunal and authority proposed in the scheme. The Tribunal favoured the chairperson being an irrigation engineer with not less than 20 years of experience in water resources management, whereas the scheme says the chairperson could be a senior and eminent engineer with wide experience in water resources management or an officer in the rank of Secretary or Additional Secretary to the Union government. Similarly, the representatives from the four States would be administrators rather than engineers as proposed by the Tribunal. It is possible that Karnataka and Tamil Nadu may have differing views on the nature and powers of the authority, as well as its name and composition. But it is vital that all States accept the mechanism, and that the authority itself have adequate autonomy. The Cauvery dispute has **dragged** on for several decades, and it would be unfortunate if the implementation of a final decision arrived at through rigorous **adjudication** is not monitored by an independent authority. All States should agree to the broad **contours** of this scheme and **comply** with the authority's decisions. The most welcome feature of such a mechanism is that an issue concerning the livelihood of thousands of farmers will be taken out of the political domain and entrusted to experts.

WORD LIST

1. **Mustered** : (gather, come together)
Synonym : assemble, collect, congregate, congress, convenes, convoke, mobilize, organize, rally, summon
2. **Cauvery** : (Kaveri)
(A river in South India, flowing SE from Western Ghats in Karnataka State through Tamil Nadu state to the Bay of Bengal: Sacred to the Hindus) (765 k.m. long)
3. **Riparian** : (relating to or situated on the banks of a river)
Example : (all the riparian states must sign an agreement).
4. **Tribunal** : (Court)
Synonym : board, committee, judge, justice, council, judiciary, forum
5. **Apex** : (top, highpoint)
Synonym : apogee, culmination, pinnacle, climax, crest, crown, height, meridian, peak, roof, summit, zenith.
6. **Compliance** : (agreement)
Synonym : conformity, consent, amenability, assent, concession, docility
7. **Comprehensive** : (inclusive)
Synonym : all-inclusive, broad, complete, exhaustive, extensive, full, global, overall, thorough, absolute, whole
8. **Apportionment** : (allotment)
Synonym : allocation, appropriation, division, partition, portion
9. **Ambiguous** : (having more than one meaning)
Synonym : cryptic, dubious, enigmatic, equivocal, inconclusive, obscure, opaque, puzzling, questionable, uncertain, unclear, vague, doubtful, enigmatical, indefinite
10. **Enabling** : (allowing to happen)
Synonym : permissive, sanctioning, lenient, indulgent, allowing, approving
11. **Intervene** : (mediate, happen)
Synonym : arbitrate, intercede, interfere, involve, meddle, negotiate, interpose, intrude, obtrude, reconcile.
12. **Allay** : (reduce something, usually a pain or a problem)
Synonym: alleviate, assuage, calm, ease, lessen, mitigate, mollify, pacify, abate, compose.
13. **Partisan** : (interested, factional) (person devoted to another or cause)
Synonym : biased, one-sided, sectarian, sympathetic, unjust, fanatic, partial.
14. **Mandated** : (administered)
Synonym : assigned, authorized, charged, decreed, ordered, bid, commanded, dictated, proclaimed.
15. **Envisaged** : (Picture in one's mind, imagine)
Synonym : anticipate, behold, conceive, conceptualize, contemplate, externalize, foresee, image, predict, think up, vision.
16. **Dragged** : (haul something to a new place) (move very slowly)
Synonym : draw, lug, move, pull, tow, transport, yank, magnetize, trail, truck, tug

17. **Adjudication** : (judgement)
Synonym : conclusion, decision, determination, finding, pronouncement, ruling, settlement, verdict
18. **Contour** : (outline, profile)
Synonym: curve, figuration, form, shape, delineation.
19. **Comply** : (abide by, follow agreement or instructions)
Synonym: adhere to, give to, give up, obey, observe, quit, satisfy, submit

Course correction – Rupee rout

Slide of the currency and a widening trade deficit present the RBI with a huge dilemma

India's macroeconomic threats lie exposed as it **grapples** with the rupee's **slide**. The currency sunk to a closing low of 68.07 against the U.S. dollar on Tuesday, its lowest level in 16 months, before recovering slightly the next day. The rupee, already one of **the worst** performing Asian currencies, has now weakened 6.2% in 2018. The rise in **crude** oil prices through this year, amidst rising geopolitical tensions in West Asia and **dwindling** global supply, have obviously hurt the rupee and the trade balance. Meanwhile, despite a depreciating currency, India's **merchandise** exports are **stumbling** instead of gaining from the opportunity. April clocked a sharp decline in exports from employment-intensive sectors such as readymade garments and gems and jewellery, according to official data. The trade deficit has **consequently** widened to \$13.7 billion in April, compared to \$13.25 billion in the same month in 2017. The value of oil and petroleum product imports increased by 41.5% from last year to hit \$10.4 billion. U.S. sanctions following Washington's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal and a June 22 meeting of OPEC should drive oil price trends hereon. Oil prices apart, the tightening of U.S. monetary policy has almost always spelled trouble for emerging market economies hooked to Western capital inflows. This time it is no different; capital outflows are scuppering the currencies of many emerging market economies. As the U.S. Federal Reserve has come to adopt a more hawkish stance, investors in search of higher risk-adjusted **yields** have started to pull money out of emerging markets. Yields on emerging market bonds have risen as investors sold them off aggressively.

The yield on the 10-year bond issued by the Indian government has risen to more than 7.8%, from 7.1% in early April. Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) pulled out 15,500 crore from India's capital markets in April, which is the highest monthly outflow since December 2016. Not surprisingly, about two-thirds of the outflow was attributed to the bond market. The current headwinds from the reversal of capital flows were only to be expected. India is better placed than countries such as Argentina or Turkey. But that's no reason to be **complacent** as external account risks can get out of hand very quickly. A hike in the RBI's **benchmark** interest rates could stem the capital exodus, but with core inflation picking up and the government keen on a rate cut as a growth **catalyst**, the RBI has an unenviable **dilemma** on its hands. Policy-makers, blessed with relatively benign external economic conditions after the **taper tantrum** of 2013, will have to find means to **spur** exports — whether by facilitating swifter GST refunds or taking

on tariff and nontariff barriers from the developed world. Efforts to diversify India's energy basket also need greater stress.

WORD LIST

1. **Grapple** : (grab, wrestle)
Synonym: confront, contend, cope, deal with, attack, catch, clash, fasten
2. **Slide** : (move smoothly; move down)
Synonym: accelerate, drift, drive, drop, fall, flow, glide, more, tumble, veer, shove
3. **Dwindling** : (waste away; taper off)
Synonym: abate, decay, decrease, diminish, drop, ebb, fade, fall, lessen, shrink, sink, subside, wane, weaken, wither.
4. **Merchandise** : (goods for sell, sell goods)
Synonym: commodity, material, product, stock, stuff, effects, produce.
5. **Stumbling** : (slip, stagger)
Synonym: bumble, careen, fall, fall down, falter, flounder, hesitate, limp, lumber, lurch, shuffle, swing, waver
6. **Consequently** : (as a consequence)
Synonym: therefore, ergo, thereupon
7. **Scupper** : (sink deliberately)
Synonym: sink, scuttle, submerge
8. **Hawkish** : (hostile, battling)
Synonym: aggressive, attacking, belligerent, blood thirstily, combative, contending, contrary, inimical, material, militant, offensive
9. **Yield** : (Production of labour, produce)
Synonym: crop, earnings, harvest, income, output, profit, return, revenue, turn out.
10. **Complacent** : (contended)
Synonym: confident, happy, pleased, satisfied, self-righteous, smug
11. **Benchmark** : (reference point)
Synonym: criterion, gauge, standard, yardstick, measure, touchstone
12. **Catalyst** : (something which incites activity)
Synonym: impetus, incentive, motivation, stimulant, adjuvant, agitator, enzyme, goad, impulse.
13. **Dilemma** : (crisis)
Synonym: difficulty, embarrassment, impasse, mess, plight, predicament, problem, puzzle, quandary
14. **Taper** : (decrease)
Synonym: abate, dwindle, lessen, recede, subside, diminish, drain, fade, narrow, reduce, weaken
15. **Tantrum** : (fit)
Synonym: flare-up, outburst, temper, anger, animosity, storm, wax
16. **Spur** : (incitement, stimulus, prompt)
Synonym: Boost, encouragement, goad, impetus, incentive, incitation, instigation, momentum, motivation, provocation, impulse.

SOME IMPORTANT VOCABS

1. Ambivalent (Adjective)
Meaning: having mixed feelings or contradictory ideas about something or someone.
Usage: Some loved her, some hated her, and few were ambivalent about her.
2. Forsake (Verb)
Meaning: abandon or leave.
Usage: She forsook her child, giving him up for adoption.
3. Impudent (Adjective)
Meaning: not showing due respect for another person; impertinent.
Usage: He could have strangled this impudent upstart.
4. Inept (Adjective)
Meaning : having or showing no skill; clumsy.
Usage: My attempts at baking were inept but I fumbled on.
5. Novice (Verb)
Meaning: a person new to and inexperienced in a job or situation.
Usage: He was a complete novice in foreign affairs.
6. Salient (Adjective)
Meaning: most noticeable or important.
Usage: The salient points stuck out clearly in her mind.
7. Umbrage (Noun)
Meaning: offence or annoyance.
Usage: She took umbrage at his remarks.
8. Serendipity (Noun)
Meaning: the occurrence and development of events by chance in a happy or beneficial way.
Usage: Technical innovation may be the result of pure serendipity.
9. Quaint (Adjective)
Meaning: attractively unusual or old-fashioned.
Usage: Narrow streets lead to a quaint bridge over the river.

10. Truculent (Adjective)

Meaning: eager or quick to argue or fight; aggressively defiant.

Usage: The truculent attitude of farmers to cheaper imports.

11. Intractable (Adjective)

Meaning: hard to control or deal with.

Usage: Their problems have become more acute and intractable.

12. Delineate (Verb)

Meaning: describe or portray (something) precisely.

Usage: The law should delineate and prohibit behaviour which is socially abhorrent.

13. Ascetic (adjective)

Meaning: characterized by severe self-discipline and abstention from all forms of indulgence, typically for religious reasons.

Usage: An ascetic life of prayer, fasting, and manual labour.

14. Daunt (verb)

Meaning: make (someone) feel intimidated or apprehensive.

Usage: Some people are daunted by technology.

15. Idyllic (adjective)

Meaning: like an idyll; extremely happy, peaceful, or picturesque.

Usage: An attractive hotel in an idyllic setting.

16. Burgeon (verb)

Meaning: begin to grow or increase rapidly; flourish.

Usage: Tourism has burgeoned over the last ten years.

17. Anomalous (adjective)

Meaning: deviating from what is standard, normal, or expected.

Usage: Nuclear weapons testing may have been responsible for the anomalous weather conditions.

18. Friable (adjective)

Meaning: easily crumbled.

Usage: The soil was friable between her fingers.

19. Protean (adjective)

Meaning: tending or able to change frequently or easily.

Usage: The diverse and protean nature of mental disorders.

20. Recondite (adjective)

Meaning: (of a subject or knowledge) little known; abstruse.

Usage: The book is full of recondite information.

21. Boisterous (adjective)

Meaning: noisy, energetic, and cheerful

Usage: A group of boisterous lads.

22. Inveigle (verb)

Meaning: persuade (someone) to do something by means of deception or flattery

Usage: He was attempting to inveigle them into doing his will

23. Sodden (adjective)

Meaning: saturated with liquid, especially water; soaked through.

Usage: His clothes were sodden.

24. Perfidious (adjective)

Meaning: deceitful and untrustworthy

Usage: It is highly risk to hire a perfidious labour.

25. Conundrum (Noun)

Meaning: a confusing and difficult problem or question.

Usage: One of the most difficult conundrums for the experts.

26. Denouement (Noun)

Meaning: The final part of a play, film, or narrative in which the strands of the plot are drawn together and matters are explained or resolved

Usage: The film's denouement was unsatisfying and ambiguous.

27. Stolid (adjective)

Meaning: calm, dependable, and showing little emotion or animation

Usage: A stolid, slow-speaking man.

28. Dissemble (verb)

Meaning: conceal or disguise one's true feelings or beliefs

Usage: An honest, sincere person with no need to dissemble.

29. Dilatory (adjective)

Meaning: slow to act

Usage: They were dilatory in providing the researchers with information.

30. Garner (Verb)

Meaning: gather or collect (something, especially information or approval)

Usage: The police struggled to garner sufficient evidence.

*Good, better, best.
Never let it rest.
'Til your good is better
and your better is best.*