

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3317

ANSWERED ON 12.03.2026

INTER-STATE RIVER WATER DISPUTES

3317. Dr. M P ABDUSSAMAD SAMADANI:

Will the Minister of **JAL SHAKTI** be pleased to state:

- (a) the existing statutory and institutional mechanisms for adjudication of inter-State river water disputes under the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956;
- (b) whether the Government has undertaken any reforms to ensure time-bound constitution and functioning of Water Disputes Tribunals including amendments to the said Act and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the number of inter-State water disputes presently pending before tribunals or other fora along with the average time taken for their resolution; and
- (d) whether the Government proposes to establish a permanent tribunal or strengthen alternative dispute resolution mechanisms to ensure expeditious, transparent and cooperative resolution of such disputes and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI

(SHRI RAJ BHUSHAN CHOUDHARY)

(a) The Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956 (as amended from time to time) provides the statutory mechanism for adjudication of disputes relating to the waters of inter-State rivers and river valleys. When a request under section 3 of the Act is received from any State Government in respect of a water dispute, as defined in Section 2(c) of the Act, and the Central Government is of opinion that the water dispute cannot be settled by negotiations, the Central Government under section 4 (1) of the Act constitutes a Water Disputes Tribunal for the adjudication of the water dispute.

The Tribunal investigates the matters referred to it and adjudicates the dispute and exercises powers similar to those of a civil court under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908. Further, Section 6A of the Act provides that the Central Government may frame a scheme for implementation of the decision of the Tribunal, which may include establishment of an authority for implementation of such decision.

(b) The Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956 has been amended from time to time to strengthen the mechanism for adjudication of inter-State River water disputes. Accordingly, necessary amendment

was undertaken in the year 2002, to provide timelines for adjudication of the dispute. These timelines have been prescribed in Section 5 of the Act.

(c) At present, four Inter-State River Water Disputes Tribunals, namely Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal (KWDT)-II, Mahadayi Water Disputes Tribunal, Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal and Ravi & Beas Waters Tribunal, are in existence for adjudication of disputes among the co-basin States. In addition, Hon'ble Supreme Court in the recent judgement has ordered for constitution of Tribunal in Pennaiyar basin. The time taken for resolution of such water disputes depend on the complexity of references /issues involved, submissions made by the party States before tribunal and many other relevant factors. Hence, no fixed time/average time can be indicated for resolution of such disputes.

(d) With regard to establishment of a permanent tribunal, no decision has been taken by the Central Government. However, the Inter-State River Water Disputes (Amendment) Bill, 2019, which was introduced in the 17th Lok Sabha, proposed certain institutional reforms for the expeditious resolution of inter-State river water disputes. These included the establishment of a permanent Tribunal, constitution of a Dispute Resolution Committee for amicable settlement of disputes, and provisions for time-bound adjudication, among others. With dissolution of 17th Lok Sabha, the Bill has lapsed.
