Centre’s Deceit in the Cauvery Issue

What is the issue?

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- The central government has once again (3rd time) failed to submit a draft scheme to enable the equitable sharing of Cauvery water.
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- Political considerations are suspected to have played a major role in the center’s action that seems to be undermining Supreme Court’s authority.
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How did the present situation evolve?

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- The final verdict on Cauvery was given by the Supreme Court (SC) in February 2018, which ended a dispute of over 2 decades.
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- The verdict had provided for the formulation of a scheme for equitable sharing of Cauvery waters within 6 weeks.
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- The central government failed to constitute the board within the deadline citing frivolous ambiguities.
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- Consequently, SC had re-iterated its earlier verdict and asked for the constitution of a scheme within 3 weeks time.
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- This 2nd deadline had recently passed and the centre had again failed to comply citing the busy electioneering schedule of the central ministers.
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- This argument is legally untenable and morally wrong, and the centre could be pulled over for contempt of court for failing to fulfil a statutory obligation.
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- Busy schedule of the union ministers also seems bogus as cabinet decisions on multiple other issues were cleared recently.
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What are the implications?

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- SC court had stated in its original verdict that there shall be no delay in constituting a ‘Scheme for Cauvery’.
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- But the Centre had been delaying it indefinitely and its approach to the case has been highly politicised.
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- Notably, the political calculus in mind seems to be the approaching Karnataka Assembly elections.
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- The Centre had mentioned that it had convened a meeting of representatives of the four States and had cited differences of opinion among the States.
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- While there is a ring of truth to this, the court noted that the central government clearly lacked the intention.
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- This set a very bad precedent and could prove disastrous for the political fabric of the nation in the long run.
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Source: The Hindu

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