

# Panel to investigate charges of illegal construction in Mekedatu

NGT appoints joint committee, directs it to submit a report on or before July 5

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The National Green Tribunal (NGT), Southern Zone, has appointed a joint committee to look into allegations of unauthorised construction activity taking place in Mekedatu, where the Karnataka government had proposed to construct a dam across the Cauvery River.

Acting *suo motu* based on a media report, the NGT has directed the panel to submit a report on or before July 5.

“If the project is to be implemented without conducting any environmental impact assessment study and without obtaining necessary clearance, if any required, then it will be an unauthorised act affecting the environment,” the NGT said, adding that it would get the



**Matter of concern:** The NGT directed the panel to assess the damage caused to the environment. ■ SUDHAKARA JAIN

jurisdiction of intervening on the issue.

Considering the allegations made in the news report, it said, “We are satisfied that there arises a

substantial question of environment, which requires the interference of this Tribunal.”

The NGT also directed the joint committee to assess the

damage caused to the environment in case of any construction made and determine the compensation payable by the respective authorities who are responsible.

The Principal Chief Conservator of Forest, Department of Forests, State of Karnataka, would be the nodal agency for coordination and for providing necessary logistics for this purpose, it added.

The NGT has issued a notice communicating its decision to the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change, Department of Water Resources, Central Water Commission, Cauvery Water Management Authority, Chief Secretaries of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, among others.