**SC asks Upper Yamuna River Board to resolve water crisis in Delhi**

The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the Upper Yamuna River Board (UYRB) to consider and resolve the drinking water crisis in Delhi, saying it does not have the expertise to decide the “complex and sensitive issue” which involves sharing of Yamuna water among States which are signatories to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) dating 20 years back.

A Vacation Bench headed by Justice P.K. Mishra said it did not want to either violate or tinker with the MoU settled among the States by even passing an interim order.

“The issue should be left to be considered by the Upper Yamuna River Board, a body constituted with the agreement of parties in the MoU of May 12, 1994,” the Bench observed.

The court said the UYRB had already, in a meeting held on June 5, advised Delhi to apply to the Haryana government, by 5 p.m. on June 14, to supply 150 cusecs of water on “humanitarian grounds”.

The Bench also directed the UYRB to hold a meeting on June 14 and take a decision on the issue of giving Delhi water “at the earliest”.

Haryana’s stand

However, Haryana, represented by senior advocate Shyam Divan, said it did not have excess or surplus water. The State itself was going through heat wave conditions similar to Delhi.

The court also pulled up the Himachal Pradesh government for making an erroneous statement in a June 6 hearing that it had up to 137 cusecs surplus water and could release it from upstream through the Hathni Kund Barrage to enter Delhi via Wazirabad Barrage.

“When Haryana requested Himachal Pradesh to inform them about the release of additional 137 cusecs of water, the Jal Shakti Vibhag of Himachal Pradesh wrote back that the 137 cusecs is already flowing uninterruptedly from the territory of Himachal Pradesh to Tajewala [Hathni Kund Barrage],” the order noted. Justice Mishra said the court would have ideally considered contempt action against Himachal Pradesh for making the “incorrect statement”.