



RACE IAS

Daily current affairs

19 April 2022

Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956:

Context:

The Telangana Government has requested the Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS) one more time to refer its complaint made under Section 3 of the **Inter State River Water Disputes Act, 1956**, to the existing Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal-II or Brijesh Kumar Tribunal immediately to finalise the fair and equitable share of Telangana in Krishna waters.

About Krishna River Water Dispute:

Inter-state water dispute:

Art 262 provides for the adjudication of inter-state water disputes. It has two following provisions:

1. Parliament may by law provide for the adjudication of any dispute or complaint with respect to the use, distribution and control of waters of any inter-state river and river valley.
2. Parliament may also provide that neither the Supreme Court nor any other court is to exercise jurisdiction in respect of any such dispute or complaint.

Under the provisions of the act, the central government has enacted, River boards act (1956) and Inter-state water disputes act (1956).

1. The river board act provides for the establishment of river boards for the regulation and development of the Inter-state River and river valleys. Such a river board is established on the request of the state governments concerned.

2. The inter-state water dispute act empowers the central government to set up an ad hoc tribunal for the adjudication of a dispute between the two or more states in relation to the water of an inter-state river. The decision of the tribunal would be final and binding. Furthermore, the act bars the SC and any other court to have jurisdiction in this matter.

Issues surrounding the interstate Water Dispute Act, 1956:

The Inter State Water Dispute Act, 1956 which provides the legal framework to address such disputes suffers from many drawbacks as it does not fix any time limit for resolving river water disputes.

Delays are on account of no time limit for adjudication by a Tribunal, no upper age limit for the Chairman or the Members, work getting stalled due to occurrence of any vacancy and no time limit for publishing the report of the Tribunal.

The River Boards Act 1956, which is supposed to facilitate inter-state collaboration over water resource development, remained a 'dead letter' since its enactment.

Surface water is controlled by Central Water Commission (CWC) and ground water by Central Ground Water Board of India (CGWB). Both bodies work independently and there is no common forum for common discussion with state governments on water management.

Sources: the Hindu

India gets S-400 training equipment:

Context:

S-400 training equipment and simulators have arrived in India from Russia.

- However, there is a delay in the delivery of the second regiment of S-400 from Russia due to the ongoing war in Ukraine.

Concerns for India:

There is the threat of U.S. sanctions under CAATSA (Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act) on India for imports from Russia. However, nothing is clear as of now.

What is the S-400 air defence missile system? Why does India need it?

The S-400 Triumf is a mobile, surface-to-air missile system (SAM) designed by Russia.

- It is the most dangerous operationally deployed modern long-range SAM (MLR SAM) in the world, considered much ahead of the US-developed Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system (THAAD).



What is CAATSA, and how did the S-400 deal fall foul of this Act?

- Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)'s core objective is to counter Iran, Russia and North Korea through punitive measures.
- Enacted in 2017.
- Includes sanctions against countries that engage in significant transactions with Russia's defence and intelligence sectors.

What sanctions will be imposed?

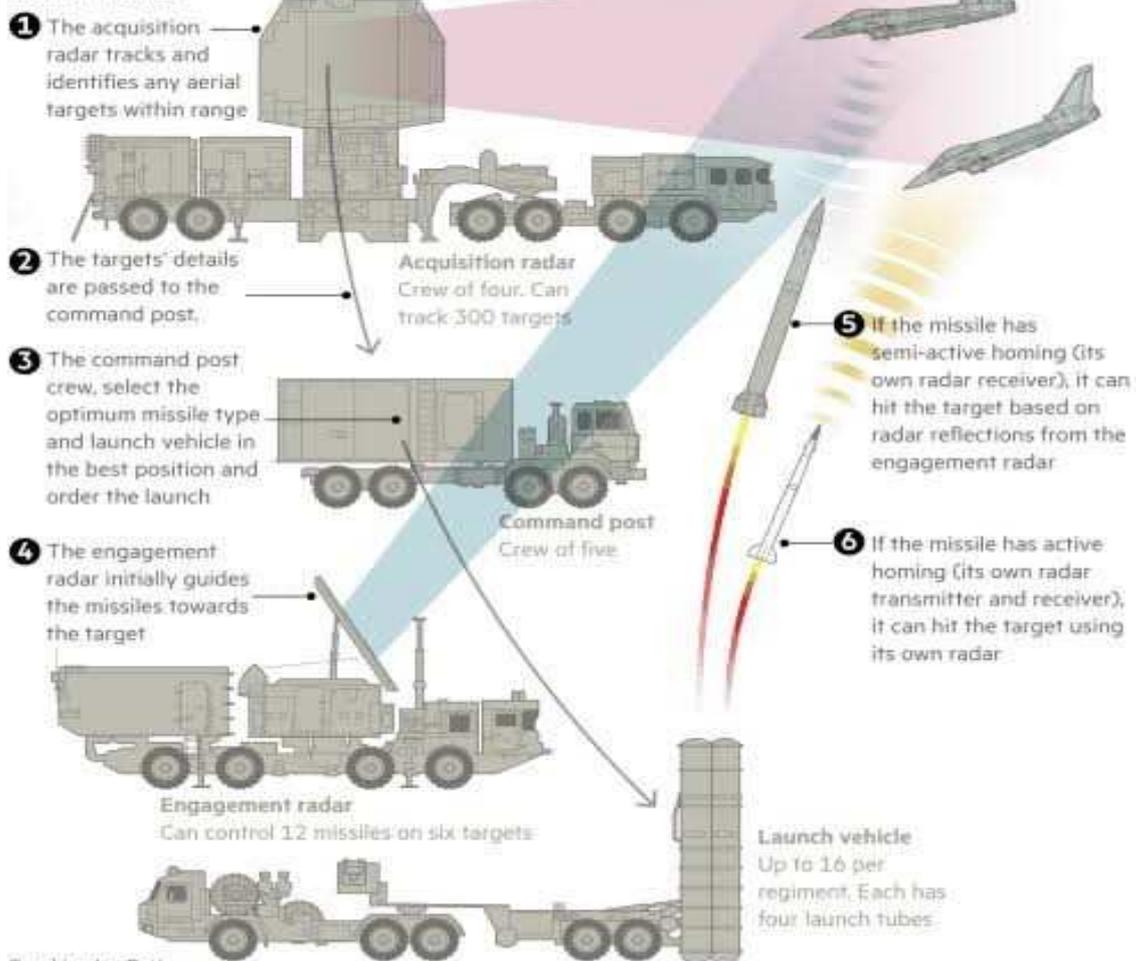
1. prohibition on loans to the sanctioned person.

2. prohibition of Export-Import bank assistance for exports to sanctioned persons.
3. prohibition on procurement by United States Government to procure goods or services from the sanctioned person.
4. denial of visas to persons closely associated with the sanctioned person.

The S-400 mobile surface-to-air missile system

Turkey has purchased two regiments (four battalions)

How it works



Graphics: Ian Boff
Sources: Air Power Australia; Army Recognition Group; FT research
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Significance of the deal:

The S-400 decision is a very strong example of how advanced our defence and strategic partnership is, and how strong Indian sovereignty is, to choose its international partners, especially when it comes to issues of national interest and national security.

Sources: the Hindu.

Parboiled rice:

Context:

The Centre has said it will stop the purchase of excess parboiled rice, of which Telangana is a major producer.

- The demand for parboiled rice has come down in recent years.

PARBOILED RICE STOCK WITH FCI (LAKH TONNES)

STATE	STOCKS
Andhra Pradesh	0.66
Telangana	16.52
Chhattisgarh	1.49
Odisha	2.07
Jharkhand	2.98
Kerala	3.00
Tamil Nadu	12.09
West Bengal	0.43
Karnataka	0.1
Bihar	1.09
Haryana	0.11
Punjab	0.04
TOTAL	40.58

As on April 1. Source: Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution

What is parboiled rice?

It is rice that has been partially boiled at the paddy stage, before milling. Parboiling of rice is not a new practice, and has been followed in India since ancient times.

How is it prepared today?

There are several processes for parboiling rice. For example:

1. CFTRI, Mysuru, uses a method in which the paddy is soaked in hot water for three hours. The water is then drained and the paddy steamed for 20 minutes. Also, the paddy is dried in the shade.

2. Chromate soaking process: It uses chromate, a family of salt in which the anion contains both chromium and oxygen, which removes the odour from the wet rice.

All processes generally involve three stages – soaking, steaming and drying. After passing through these stages, the paddy goes for milling.

What are the benefits?

- Parboiling makes rice tougher. This reduces the chances of the rice kernel breaking during milling.
- Parboiling also increases the nutrient value of the rice.
- Parboiled rice has a higher resistance to insects and fungi.

Disadvantages:

- The rice becomes darker and may smell unpleasant due to prolonged soaking.
- Besides, setting up a parboiling rice milling unit requires a higher investment than a raw rice milling unit.

Sources: Indian Express

Why is India looking to boost wheat exports?

Context:

Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the subsequent western sanctions on Russia have affected wheat exports from the Black Sea region and impacted food security in several countries, especially in Africa and West Asia.

- The disruption to global wheat supplies in turn has thrown open opportunities that India's grain exporters are eyeing, especially given the domestic surplus availability of the cereal.

India's wheat production and consumption:

India expects to produce 112 million tonnes of wheat in the current season. The government requires 24-26 million tonnes a year for its food security programmes.

Status of India's wheat exports:

- Wheat exports in the 2021-2022 financial year were estimated at 7.85 million tonnes, a quadrupling from 2.1 million tonnes in the previous year.
- Exports this fiscal are expected to be almost 10 million tonnes worth \$3 billion.

Why India?

More countries are turning to India because of the competitive price, acceptable quality, availability of surplus wheat and geopolitical reasons.

Which new markets are expected to buy from India?

Egypt, Jordan and countries in East Africa are also likely to source the foodgrain from India.

What is being done to facilitate exports?

- The Commerce Ministry has put in place an internal mechanism to facilitate it and get the paperwork ready for the related sanitary and phytosanitary applications to help facilitate shipments.
- The railways are providing rakes on priority to move the wheat.
- The railways, ports, and testing laboratories are all geared up to meet the requirements.

Sources: the Hindu.

Why is there a coal crisis in India?

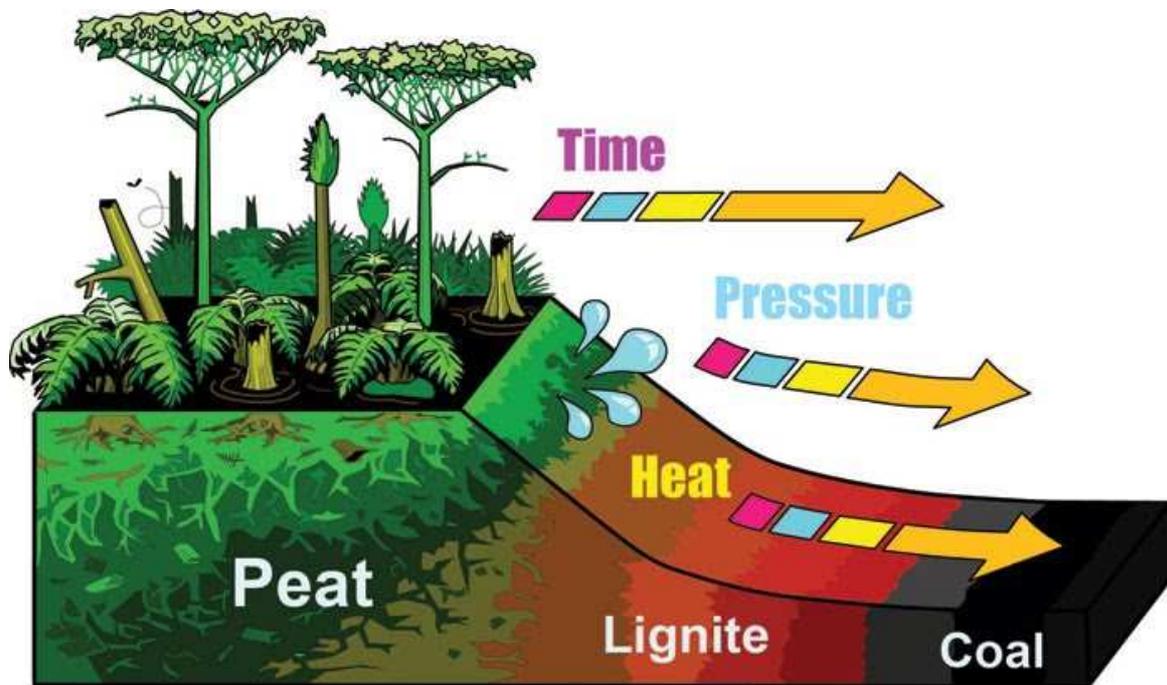
Context:

To battle the looming energy crisis in the country due to constraints on domestic coal supply, the central government has decided to take a number of steps to increase the use of imported coal for power generation, including for blending purposes.

These steps include:

- All the companies have been asked to operationalise their power plants at full capacity to reduce pressure on domestic coal demand.
- The Centre has decided to allow the cost of imported coal as a pass-through till December 2022.

- It has asked all the states to use imported coal for blending purposes to the extent of 10% instead of only 4% to ensure maintaining adequate coal stocks at the power plant as per the advised coal stock norms.



What's the issue?

India is the world's second largest coal producer, with the world's fourth largest reserves, but a steep surge in power demand that has outstripped pre-pandemic levels means state-run Coal India's supplies are no longer enough.

How bad is the situation?

The situation is "touch and go", and could be "uncomfortable" for up to six months.

- The coal stocks at its thermal power plants can supply just days of fuel.
- The coal stocks at the power plant end were only 36% of the normative requirement which would be sufficient for only about 11 days.
- This is worrisome because coal-fired plants make up nearly 70% of India's power source mix.
- It is expected that the peak demand may increase up to 210 GW in April'2022.
- Therefore, all the coal-based power plants need to have adequate coal stocks, enabling supply of coal-based power to the extent of about 160 GW during peak hours.

Reasons for the shortage:

- Sharp fall in imports due to high prices.
- Increased economic activity after the second wave of the pandemic has driven up demand for coal.

Impact of the shortage:

- If industries face electricity shortages it could delay India's economic reopening.
- Some businesses might downscale production.
- India's population and underdeveloped energy infrastructure will mean the Power Crisis could hit long and hard.

What next?

- Coal India and NTPC Limited are working to raise output from mines.
- The government is trying to bring more mines on stream to boost supply.
- India will need to amp its imports despite the financial cost.

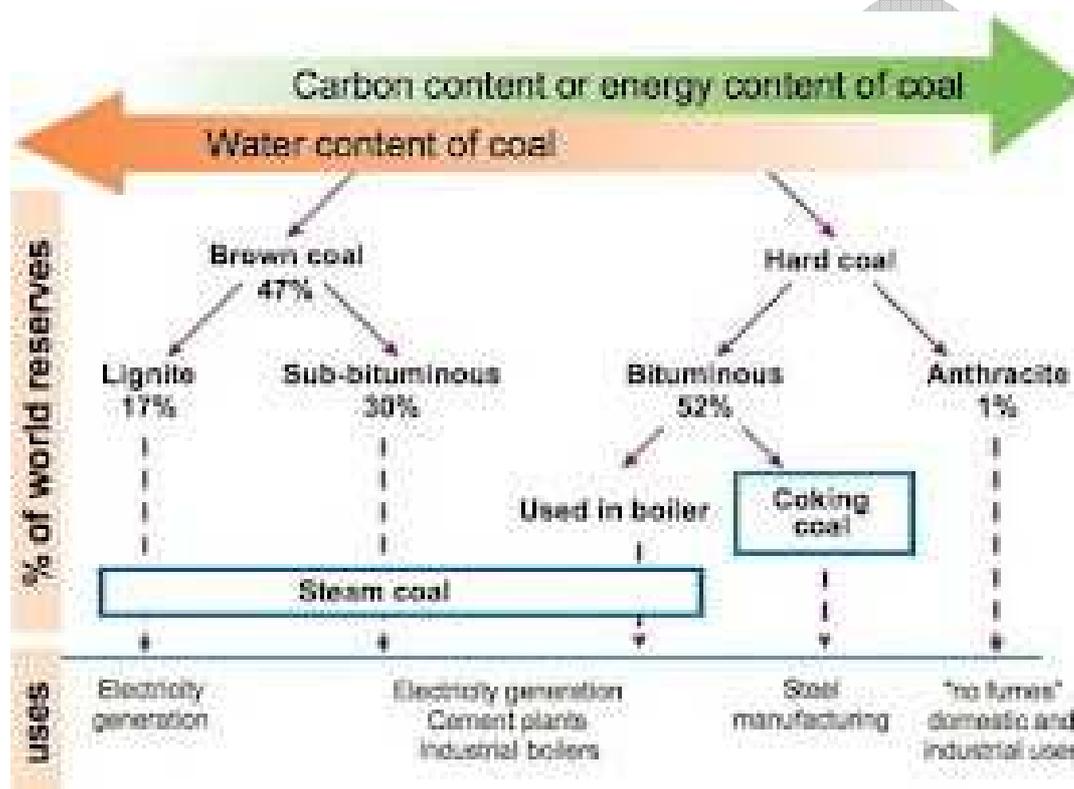
Recent Reforms In Coal Sector:

- Commercial mining of coal allowed, with 50 blocks to be offered to the private sector.
- Entry norms will be liberalised as it has done away with the regulation requiring power plants to use "washed" coal.
- Coal blocks to be offered to private companies on revenue sharing basis in place of fixed cost.
- Coal gasification/liquefaction to be incentivised through rebate in revenue share.
- Coal bed methane (CBM) extraction rights to be auctioned from Coal India's coal mines.

Challenges ahead:

1. Coal is the most important and abundant fossil fuel in India. It accounts for 55% of the country's energy needs. The country's industrial heritage was built upon indigenous coal.
2. Commercial primary energy consumption in India has grown by about 700% in the last four decades.

3. The current per capita commercial primary energy consumption in India is about 350 kgoe/year which is well below that of developed countries.
4. Driven by the rising population, expanding economy and a quest for improved quality of life, energy usage in India is expected to rise.
5. Considering the limited reserve potentiality of petroleum & natural gas, eco-conservation restriction on hydel project and geo-political perception of nuclear power, coal will continue to occupy centre-stage of India's energy scenario.



Sources: Indian Express.

Ammonia in Yamuna:

Context:

Water supply was disrupted in parts of Delhi once again when ammonia levels in the **Yamuna river** remained high on 16th April.

- The concentration of ammonia in the river was 7.4 ppm (parts per million), seven times the level of around 1 ppm that the Delhi Jal Board's water treatment plants (WTPs) can process.

What is the acceptable limit?

The acceptable maximum limit of ammonia in drinking water, as per the Bureau of Indian Standards, is 0.5 ppm.

What is ammonia and what are its effects?

Ammonia is a colourless gas and is used as an industrial chemical in the production of fertilisers, plastics, synthetic fibres, dyes and other products.

- It consists of hydrogen and nitrogen. In its aqueous form, it is called ammonium hydroxide.
- This inorganic compound has a pungent smell.
- Occurrence: Ammonia occurs naturally in the environment from the breakdown of organic waste matter.
- It is lighter than air.

Contamination:

It may find its way to ground and surface water sources through industrial effluents or through contamination by sewage.

- If the concentration of ammonia in water is above 1 ppm it is toxic to fishes.
- In humans, long term ingestion of water having ammonia levels of 1 ppm or above may cause damage to internal organs.

How does it enter the Yamuna?

The most likely source is believed to be effluents from dye units, distilleries and other factories in Panipat and Sonapat districts in Haryana, and also sewage from some unsewered colonies in this stretch of the river.

What needs to be done?

1. Stringent implementation of guidelines against dumping harmful waste into the river.
2. Making sure untreated sewage does not enter the water.
3. Maintain a sustainable minimum flow, called the ecological flow. This is the minimum amount of water that should flow throughout the river at all times to sustain underwater and estuarine ecosystems and human livelihoods, and for self regulation.

Challenges ahead:

1. Delhi depends on Haryana for up to 70 per cent of its water needs.
2. Haryana, with a large number of people involved in agriculture, has water paucity issues of its own.
3. Both states have argued over maintaining 10 cumecs (cubic meter per second) flow in the Yamuna at all times.
4. Both states have approached the courts several times over the past decade to get what they call an equitable share of water.
5. The lack of a minimum ecological flow also means accumulation of other pollutants. After water is extracted from the river for treatment in North East Delhi, what flows is mostly untreated sewage and refuse from homes, runoff from storm water drains and effluents from unregulated industry.

Sources: Indian Express.

What is a 'Poison Pill' defence?

Twitter has countered Elon Musk's offer to buy the company for more than \$43 billion with a corporate tool known as a poison pill, a defensive strategy familiar to boardrooms trying to fend off takeovers but less familiar to everyday investors.

- This defense mechanism was developed in the 1980s as company leaders, facing corporate raiders and hostile acquisitions, tried to defend their businesses from being acquired by another enterprise, person or group.
- A poison pill is a maneuver that typically makes a company less palatable to a potential acquirer by making it more expensive for the acquirer to buy shares of the target company above a certain threshold.

Sir Chhotu Ram:

- Born in 1881, he was a prominent politician in British India's Punjab Province.
- He championed the interest of oppressed communities of the Indian subcontinent. For this feat, he was knighted in 1937.
- He was a co-founder of the National Unionist Party.

The enactment of two agrarian laws was primarily due to his contribution- the Punjab Relief Indebtedness Act of 1934 and the Punjab Debtor's Protection Act of

1936, which emancipated the peasants from the clutches of the moneylenders and restored the right of land to the tiller.

National Crisis Management Committee:

For effective implementation of relief measures in the wake of natural calamities, the Government of India has set up a National Crisis Management Committee.

- The Cabinet Secretary is its
- Other members: Secretaries of all the concerned Ministries /Departments as well as organizations are the members of the Committee.
- The NCMC gives direction to the Crisis Management Group as deemed necessary.

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