

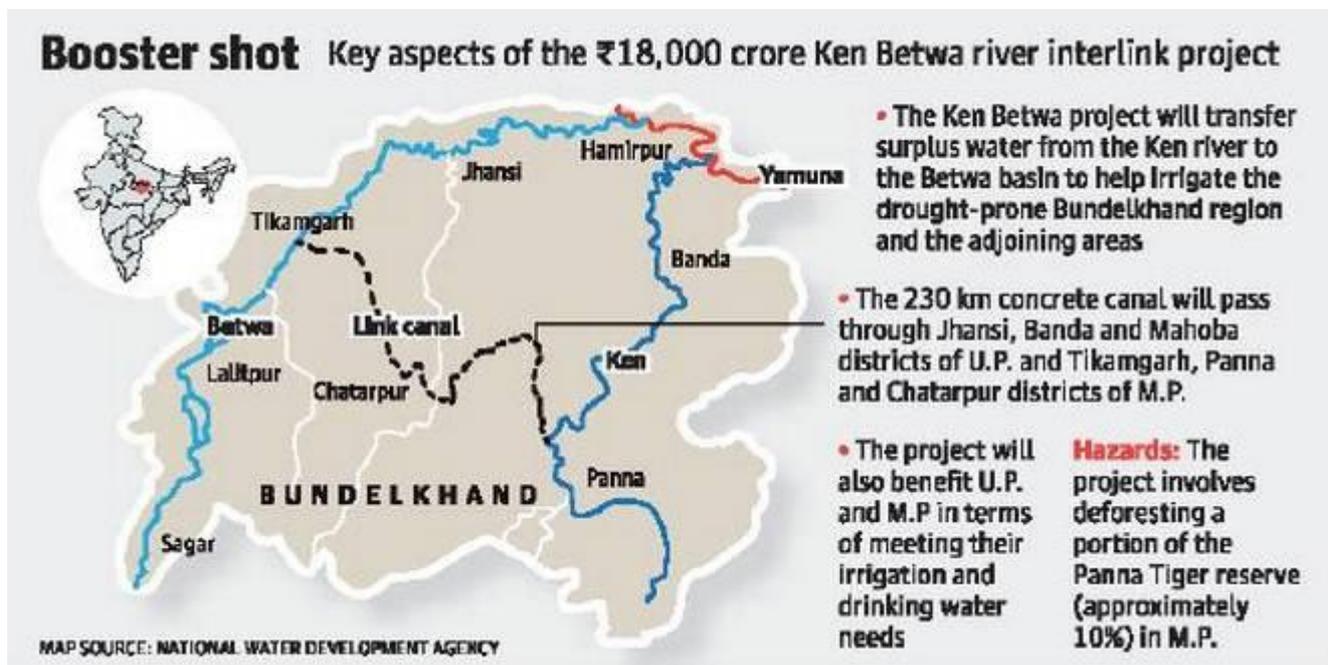


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General Studies-1

Ken Betwa River interlinking Project:

- The Ken-Betwa ILR project aims to transfer surplus water from the Ken River to the Betwa basin through concrete canal to irrigate India's worst drought-prone Bundelkhand region.
- It is India's first inter-State river interlinking project
- The main feature of the project is a 230-km long canal and a series of barrages and dams connecting the Ken and Betwa rivers. The key projects are Makodia and Dhaudhan dams.
- On completion, the multipurpose project will benefit Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh in terms of meeting irrigation, drinking water and electricity needs of people across 6 districts in the two states.



Significance of Project

- Ken-Betwa river interlinking project will irrigate India's worst drought-affected and drought-prone Bundelkhand region.



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- It will irrigate 3.5 lakh hectares in Madhya Pradesh and 14,000 hectares of Uttar Pradesh, in Bundelkhand.
- It will benefit 5 districts of Madhya Pradesh (Chhatarpur, Raisen, Panna, Tikamgarh, and Vidisha) and 3 districts of Uttar Pradesh (Mahoba, Jhansi and Banda) by assured irrigation supply, domestic and industrial water supply and power.
- On the other hand, about 20000 people in 38 villages will be affected due to the submergence by Daudhan reservoir and Makodia reservoir.

Issues:

Disagreements over water-sharing and difficulty in acquiring non-forest land impede the Rs. 18,000-crore Ken- Betwa river interlink project.

The project, which involves deforesting a portion of the Panna Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh, was accorded clearance by the National Wildlife Board on the condition that the land lost would be made good by acquiring contiguous, revenue land.

This is to ensure that wildlife corridors in the region aren't hit. "The M.P. government has said that they are facing major difficulties over this

Another hurdle is a dispute over how Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh — the two beneficiaries — will share water in the Rabi season.

While there's a 2005 agreement between Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh on how water would be shared, Madhya Pradesh said last year that these assumptions were no longer valid.

In theory, this could mean a completely fresh environmental appraisal.

World's tallest girder railway bridge:

Key facts:

- World's tallest girder railway bridge is being built in the North East as part of the upcoming 111-kilometres long Jiribam-Tupul-Imphal railway line.
- Bridge No.164 is being built across the valley of river Ijai near Noney and has been designed to take a maximum train speed of 120 kmph.



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- The Jiribam–Tupul–Imphal railway line cuts across the lower Himalayan ranges necessitating series of tunnels through the hills and tall bridges across the deep valleys. The line will connect Manipur’s state capital Imphal to Jiribam which is on the western-most boundary of the state. Jiribam is an area that adjoins the Cachar district of Assam. As of now Manipur’s capital Imphal has no railway connectivity.
- It is located in Seismic Zone-V, making it highly vulnerable to earthquakes.

International Yoga Day:

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will lead the 4th International Yoga Day Celebrations in Dehradun on June 21, 2018.

A series of Yoga related events are being organized across the world to mark the occasion.

This year, the theme is ‘Yoga for peace’.

Why was June 21 selected to be International Yoga Day?

June 21 is the longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere and has special significance in many parts of the world. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had proposed this date at the United Nations General Assembly 2014.

About Yoga:

Yoga is a group of physical, mental, and spiritual practices or disciplines which originated in ancient India.

There is a broad variety of yoga schools, practices, and goals in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism.

Among the most well-known types of yoga are Hatha yoga and Rāja yoga.

The origins of yoga have been speculated to date back to pre-Vedic Indian traditions; it is mentioned in the Rigveda, but most likely developed around the sixth and fifth centuries BCE, in ancient India's ascetic and śramaṇa movements.

The chronology of earliest texts describing yoga-practices is unclear, varyingly credited to Upanishads.



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The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali date from the first half of the 1st millennium CE, but only gained prominence in the West in the 20th century.

Hatha yoga texts emerged around the 11th century with origins in tantra.

Yoga gurus from India later introduced yoga to the West, following the success of Swami Vivekananda in the late 19th and early 20th century.

General Studies-2

India & Tajikistan agree to enhance mutual cooperation for sustainable water development

India and Tajikistan have reaffirmed their commitment to promote bilateral relations and agreed to enhance economic cooperation, particularly in sustainable water development.

Republic of Tajikistan and United Nations are also jointly organizing a high-level Conference on "International Decade for Action: Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028". The Conference will discuss key water related issues of sustainable development goals adopted by UN member countries.

International Decade for Action on Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028:

- In order to accelerate efforts towards meeting water-related challenges, the United Nations General Assembly declared 2018-2028 as the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development".
- The Water Action Decade commenced on World Water Day, 22 March 2018, and will end on World Water Day, 22 March 2028.

Objectives:

- The objectives of the Decade focus on the sustainable development and integrated management of water resources for the achievement of



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social, economic and environmental objectives and on the implementation and promotion of related programmes and projects.

- It will also focus on the furtherance of cooperation and partnership at all levels in order to help to achieve internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, including those contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- The Decade also highlights the importance of promoting efficient water usage at all levels, taking into account the water, food, energy, environment nexus; and stresses the importance of the participation and full involvement of all relevant stakeholders, including women, children, young people, older persons, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and local communities.

National Dam Safety Bill,

The Union Cabinet, in its meeting chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on 13.6.18, approved the proposal for introduction of **Dam Safety Bill, 2018** in the Parliament.

The objective of this Bill is to help develop uniform, countrywide procedures for ensuring the safety of dams.

Over the last fifty years, India has invested substantially in dams and related infrastructures, and ranks third after USA and China in the number of large dams. 5254 large dams are in operation in the country currently and another 447 are under construction .

A badly maintained, unsafe dam can be a hazard to human life, flora and fauna, public and private assets and the environment.

About the Bill:

The provisions of the Dam Safety Bill 2018 will empower the dam safety institutional set-ups in both the Centre and States and will also help in standardizing and improving dam safety practices across the country.

The Dam Safety Bill, 2018 addresses all issues concerning dam safety including regular inspection of dams, Emergency Action Plan, comprehensive dam safety



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review, adequate repair and maintenance funds for dam safety, Instrumentation and Safety Manuals.

It lays the onus of dam safety on the dam owner and provides for penal provisions for commission and omission of certain acts.

Institutional framework

The institutional framework for dam safety as provided under the dam safety bill 2018 includes the following:

National Committee on Dam Safety (NCDS)

The Bill provides for constitution of a **National Committee on Dam Safety** which shall evolve dam safety policies and recommend necessary regulations as may be required for the purpose.

National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA)

The Bill provides for establishment of **National Dam Safety Authority** as a regulatory body which shall discharge functions to implement the policy, guidelines and standards for dam safety in the country.

State Committee on Dam Safety (SCDS)

The Bill provides for constitution of a **State Committee on Dam Safety by State Government.**

State Dam Safety Organization (SDSO)

The Bill provides that every state having specified number of dams will establish a State Dam Safety Organization which will be manned by officials with sufficient experience in the field of dam safety.

OFFENCES AND PENALTIES

The Bill provides for punishment / penalty if the dam safety provisions are not followed

- If a person obstructs any officer/employee or refuses to comply with any direction of the Central/ State Govt or NCDS/ NDSA/ SCDS/ SDSO, the



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action would be punishable with imprisonment upto 1 year, or/ and fine (2 years for loss of lives)

- If offence by any department of the Govt, the head of the department deemed to be guilty if offence committed with his knowledge.
- If offence by a company/body corporate, every person in charge of/responsible for conduct of business of company, deemed to be guilty.
- No cognizance of offence except on a complaint by Central/ State Govt or NCDS/NDSA/SCDS/SDSO.

US quits UNHRC:

The United States on Tuesday announced its withdrawal from the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) terming it "hypocritical and self-serving."

Reason given by US:

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley blamed the UNHRC for bias against Israel and refusing to eject members who are violators of human rights.

Announcing the decision at the State Department, the officials named Russia, China, Cuba and Egypt for thwarting U.S. efforts to reform the Council.

UNHRC was founded in 2006. Then President George W. Bush was dismissive of the body. Under President Barack Obama, the U.S. joined it in 2009.

Concerns:

- Rights groups have criticized the Trump administration for not making human rights a priority in its foreign policy. Critics say this sends a message that the administration turns a blind eye to human rights abuses in some parts of the world.
- The US withdrawal from the body could bolster countries such as Cuba, Russia, Egypt and Pakistan, which resist what they see as UN interference in sovereign issues.



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About UNHRC:

- The UN body was established in 2006 with the aim of promoting and protecting human rights around the globe, as well as investigating alleged human rights violations.
- It is made up of 47 member states, which are selected by the UN General Assembly on a staggered basis each year for three-year-long terms.
- Members meet around three times a year to debate human rights issues and pass non-binding resolutions and recommendations by majority vote.
- The council also carries out the Universal Periodic Review of all UN member states, which allows civil society groups to bring accusations of human rights violations in member states to the attention of the UN.

General Studies-3

Invasive alien plants:

Why in News?

The Forest and Wildlife Department will launch a special drive with the support of the public to curb the wild growth of invasive alien plants which are posing a threat to the flora and fauna in the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary (WWS), a major habitat of Asiatic elephants in the country.

The spread of the exotic plants, including *Senna spectabilis*, *Maesopsis eminii*, *Mikania micrantha*, Lantana and Eupatorium, was posing a serious threat to the region.

Senna spectabilis is more dangerous than other exotic species owing to its fast growth.

Nearly 3,000 sq km of the region, including three forest divisions in Wayanad contiguous with the Nagarhole National Park and the Bandipur Tiger Reserve in Karnataka and the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve in Tamil Nadu, is infested with the invasive plants.

Sanctuary officials have launched an eco-restoration drive in the Kakkapadam forest area under the Muthanga forest range of the sanctuary, sources said.



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What is IAS?

Invasive alien species (IAS) are species whose introduction and/or spread outside their natural past or present distribution threatens biological diversity.

IAS occur in all taxonomic groups, including animals, plants, fungi and microorganisms, and can affect all types of ecosystems.

While a small percentage of organisms transported to new environments become invasive, the negative impacts can be extensive and over time, these additions become substantial.