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General Studies-1

Mahadayi verdict

The Mahadayi Water Disputes Tribunal which has been hearing the tussle over sharing of the Mahadayi or Mandovi river between Goa, Karnataka and Maharashtra, has delivered its final verdict.

About the Verdict:

- The tribunal has allowed Karnataka access to 13.4 tmc of water for its consumptive use (5.4 tmc) and power generation (8.02 tmc).
- The share of Goa was pegged at 24 tmc with the Tribunal allowing it for the state's municipal water needs, irrigation water requirements and industrial water demands.
- Maharashtra got the lowest share of 1.33 tmc for meeting its in-basin needs with respect to five projects.
- The tribunal also directed the Centre to set up the Mahadayi Water Management Authority to implement its report and final decision.

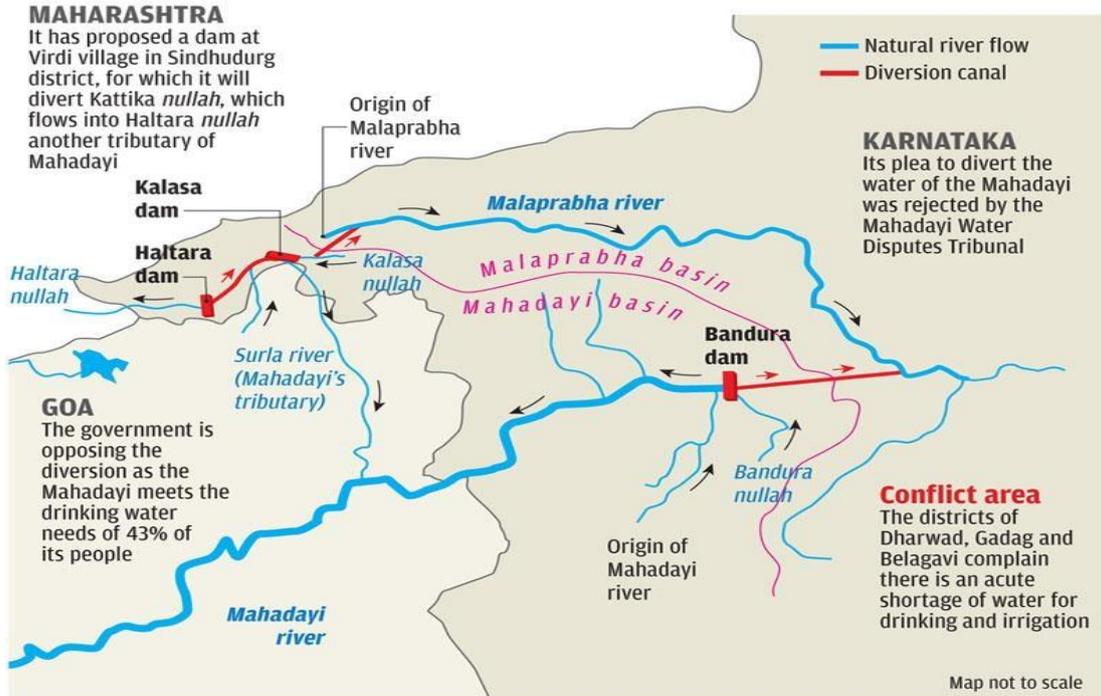
What is Dispute?



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Controversial water diversion plan

Under the Kalasa Bandura project, the Karnataka government has proposed dams and canals to divert the Mahadayi's water to address the water deficit in the Malaprabha basin



Total cost of project ₹ 93.98 cr	A total of 501 ha of forest will be affected by the project	The proposed dams are in forest areas for which no forest clearances have been taken	Kalasa and Bandura dams are close to Mhadei and Bhimgad wildlife sanctuaries, respectively
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General Studies- 2

Indecent Representation of the Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986



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**THE INDECENT REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN
(PROHIBITION) ACT 1986**

INTRO :

This Act is different than the Act of obscenity (S. 292).
Exploitation of body of women is resorted by advertisers,
magazine and other frequently but not coming under law of
obscenity. Therefore this provision has been made.

Provision :

- v) No person shall publish or arrange or take part in the publication or exhibition of any advertisement containing indecent representation of women in any form.
- ii) No person shall produce, sell, hire, distribute, circulate or send by post any book, pamphlet, slide, film, writing, drawing, painting, photograph which contain indecent representation of women.

Context:

After taking into account of the recent technological advancement in the field of communications such as social media platforms, etc, the Ministry of Women and Child Development has decided to move fresh Bill to broaden the scope of *the Indecent Representation of the Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986* to cover the audio-visual media and content in electronic form.

The reformulated Bill proposes following amendments in the parent Act:

- *Amendment in definition of term advertisement* to include digital form or electronic form or hoardings, or through SMS, MMS etc.
- *Amendment in definition of distribution* to include publication, license or uploading using computer resource, or communication device or in.
- *Insertion of a new definition to define the term publish.*
- *Amendment in section 4* to include that No person shall publish or distribute or cause to be published or cause to be distributed by any



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means any material which contains indecent representation of women in any form.

- *Penalty* similar to that provided under the Information Technology Act, 2000
- *Creation of a Centralised Authority* under the aegis of National Commission of Women (NCW). This Authority will be headed by Member Secretary, NCW, having representatives from Advertising Standards Council of India, Press Council of India, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and one member having experience of working on women issues.
- *Functions:* This Centralised Authority will be authorized to receive complaints or grievances regarding any programme or advertisement broadcasted or publication and investigate/ examine all matters relating to the indecent representation of women.

Need for revisiting the law:

The Government of India has enacted the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act (IRWA), 1986 to prohibit indecent representation of women through advertisements, publications, writings, paintings, figures or in any other manner.

- Since the enactment of the Act, *technological revolution has resulted in the development of new forms of communication*, such as internet, multi-media messaging, cable television, over-the-top (OTT) services and applications e.g. Skype, Viber, WhatsApp, Chat On, Snapchat, Instagram etc.
- Therefore, these technological advancements make it necessary to widen the scope of the law so as to cover such forms of media on one hand and to strengthen the existing safeguards to prevent indecent representation of women through any media form on the other.

Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill, 2017

Context:



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Lok Sabha has passed *Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill, 2017* to extend the facility of 'proxy voting' to overseas Indians, on the lines of service voters.

- The Bill seeks to amend Representation of People Act (RPA), 1950 and Representation of People Act (RPA), 1951 to allow for proxy voting and make certain provisions of these Acts gender-neutral.

Highlights of the Bill:

The Bill proposes *to allow non-resident Indians (NRIs) to emerge as a decisive force in the country's electoral politics on their own terms.*

The amendment paves the way to remove an "unreasonable restriction" posed by Section 20A of the Representation of the People Act, which requires overseas electors to be physically present in their electoral constituencies to cast their votes.

What necessitated this move?

- Section 20A of the Act provides for registration and inclusion of overseas electors in the electoral rolls.
- The Registration of Electors Rules, 1960 provide for overseas electors to register themselves in the electoral rolls of their respective constituencies on the basis of self-attested copies of their passport and valid visa, and exercise their franchise in person on production of the original passport at the time of voting at the specified polling booth.
- Thus, the rules demand for the physical presence of overseas electors in their respective polling stations in India on the day of polling.
- This causes hardship to the overseas electors. This amendment proposes facilitating an external mode of voting, that is, voting by proxy, whereby such electors can exercise their franchise from their places of residence abroad.

What is voting by proxy?

According to the provisions of 'Representation of the People Act (Amendment) Bill, 2017 overseas Indians, who are entitled to vote in India, can appoint a proxy voter to cast their votes on their behalf. Also, the overseas Indians would



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be allowed to use the option of proxy, which till now was only available to service personnel.

Arbitration & Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 2018

Context:

The Lok Sabha has passed the *Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 2018*. It will amend the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996. The Act contains provisions to deal with domestic and international arbitration, and defines the law for conducting conciliation proceedings.

Key features of the Bill are:

Arbitration Council of India: The Bill seeks to establish an independent body called the Arbitration Council of India (ACI) for the promotion of arbitration, mediation, conciliation and other alternative dispute redressal mechanisms.

Its functions include: (i) framing policies for grading arbitral institutions and accrediting arbitrators, (ii) making policies for the establishment, operation and maintenance of uniform professional standards for all alternate dispute redressal matters, and (iii) maintaining a depository of arbitral awards (judgments) made in India and abroad.

Composition of the ACI: The ACI will consist of a Chairperson who is either: (i) a Judge of the Supreme Court; or (ii) a Judge of a High Court; or (iii) Chief Justice of a High Court; or (iv) an eminent person with expert knowledge in conduct of arbitration. Other members will include an eminent arbitration practitioner, an academician with experience in arbitration, and government appointees.



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Appointment of arbitrators: Under the 1996 Act, parties were free to appoint arbitrators. In case of disagreement on an appointment, the parties could request the Supreme Court, or the concerned High Court, or any person or institution designated by such Court, to appoint an arbitrator.

Role of courts: Under the Bill, the Supreme Court and High Courts may now designate arbitral institutions, which parties can approach for the appointment of arbitrators.

For international commercial arbitration, appointments will be made by the institution designated by the Supreme Court.

For domestic arbitration, appointments will be made by the institution designated by the concerned High Court.

In case there are no arbitral institutions available, the Chief Justice of the concerned High Court may maintain a panel of arbitrators to perform the functions of the arbitral institutions. An application for appointment of an arbitrator is required to be disposed of within 30 days.

Relaxation of time limits:

Under the 1996 Act, arbitral tribunals are required to make their award within a period of 12 months for all arbitration proceedings. The Bill proposed to remove this time restriction for international commercial arbitrations.

Completion of written submissions:

Currently, there is no time limit to file written submissions before an arbitral tribunal. The Bill requires that the written claim and the defence to the claim in an arbitration proceeding, should be completed within six months of the appointment of the arbitrators.

Confidentiality of proceedings:

The Bill provides that all details of arbitration proceedings will be kept confidential except for the details of the arbitral award in certain circumstances. Disclosure of the arbitral award will only be made where it is necessary for implementing or enforcing the award.



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General Studies- 3

Iris Scan Authentication feature for Aadhaar-based transactions by Axis bank

Why in News?

Axis Bank has become the *first bank in the country to introduce Iris Scan Authentication feature* for Aadhaar-based transactions through its micro ATM tablets.

How it works?

- The bank has deployed highly secure iris powered micro ATM tablets which are STQC certified and UIDAI compliant registered devices with completely integrated iris sensors.
- Micro ATMs completely eliminate the requirement of debit cards, passwords, PINs, and user IDs, and empower consumers to avail banking services using only their Aadhaar numbers and biometrics (iris scan/fingerprint scan).

Significance:

This service, which requires a customer to scan their iris on a tablet, will boost the bank's financial inclusion efforts by making Aadhaar authentication process hassle-free and offering easier access to digital banking for consumers especially in the rural parts of the country.

Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope (GMRT)

Context:

Astronomers have used an Indian telescope to discover the most distant radio galaxy ever known, located at a distance of 12 billion light-years.



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The galaxy, from a time when the universe was only 7% of its current age was found using the Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope (GMRT) in Pune.

The distance to this galaxy was determined using the Gemini North telescope in Hawaii and the Large Binocular Telescope in Arizona.

What are radio galaxies?

- Radio galaxies are very rare objects in the universe. They are colossal galaxies with a supermassive black hole in their centre that actively accretes gas and dust from its surroundings.
- This activity initiates the launch of high-energy jet streams, which are capable of accelerating charged particles around the supermassive black hole to almost the speed of light.
- The discovery of such galaxies at extremely large distances is important for our understanding of the formation and evolution of galaxies.

About GMRT:

- The Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope (GMRT), located near Pune in India, is an array of thirty fully steerable parabolic radio telescopes of 45 metre diameter, observing at metre wavelengths.
- It is operated by the National Centre for Radio Astrophysics, a part of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai.
- At the time it was built, it was the world's largest interferometric array offering a baseline of up to 25 kilometres (16 mi).
- One of the aims for the telescope during its development was to search for the highly redshifted 21-cm line radiation from primordial neutral hydrogen clouds in order to determine the epoch of galaxy formation in the universe.

US Space Force

Why in News?

NASA Administrator recently expressed full support for President Donald Trump's proposed military "Space Force" but added that it will have a role separate from NASA.



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Background:

U.S. President Donald Trump is planning to create a "space force" or a sixth branch of the American armed forces. The space force plan requires congressional approval. Military leaders and experts have questioned the wisdom of launching an expensive, bureaucratic new service branch.

About Space Force?

- The United States Space Force, as proposed by the Trump administration, would be a new branch of the military by 2020, on par with the army, navy, air force, marines and coast guard.
- An independent branch can't be created until Congress approves it, but the administration can take several steps on its own to prepare for the launch of a new force, the first since the air force was formed shortly after the second world war.
- Officials plan to create a Space Operations Force – an "elite group of war fighters specializing in the domain of space" drawn from various branches of the military, in the style of existing special operations forces, Pence said.
- They'll also create a United States Space Command and a Space Development Agency, and appoint an assistant secretary of defense for space.

The need:

- The White House points to galactic threats from US adversaries, particularly Russia and China, which could develop weapons to jam, blind or destroy satellites that are crucial to communications systems.
- In 2007, China destroyed one of its own satellites, in a test of a weapon that could be used to target others. Russia has also tested a missile that could be used to track and destroy satellites.
- Not everyone is convinced, however, with critics saying threats on earth are much more real than the prospect of wars in space.

NASA's New Horizons mission

Why in News?



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Scientific data sent back by National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) New Horizons spacecraft suggests that there could be a hydrogen wall at the end of our solar system.

What does the presence of Hydrogen wall indicate?

- It is believed that this hydrogen wall is a "signature of the furthest reaches of sun's energy".
- Technically speaking, the charged particles which the sun sends outwards causes hydrogen to release characteristic ultraviolet light. But as one keeps going away from the sun its influence wanes, which might create a pileup of interstellar hydrogen.

About New Horizons Mission:

- **New Horizons** is an [interplanetary space probe](#) that was launched as a part of [NASA's New Frontiers program](#).
- The spacecraft was launched in 2006 with the primary mission to perform a [flyby](#) study of the [Pluto](#) system in 2015, and a secondary mission to fly by and study one or more other [Kuiper belt](#) objects (KBOs) in the decade to follow.
- It is the [fifth artificial object](#) to achieve the [escape velocity](#) needed to [leave the Solar System](#).
- New Horizon's core science mission is to map the surfaces of Pluto and Charon, to study Pluto's atmosphere and to take temperature readings.
- The spacecraft was launched in 2006, before the big debate started over Pluto's status as a planet. In August of that same year, the International Astronomical Union reclassified Pluto as a dwarf planet.



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THREE BILLION-MILE JOURNEY TO TAKE SNAPS OF PLUTO

- New Horizons travels at 36,373mph - 300 times faster than a jet plane. At this speed it could be wrecked if hit by an object as small as a pebble
- Sends radio signals that probe the planet's atmosphere
- The craft is the size of a baby grand piano
- On board are a 1991 US postage stamp and two quarter dollar coins
- Unlike previous probes, there are no messages to alien life on board

■ Measures the solar wind - charged particles emitted by the Sun - around Pluto

Dust Counter - records dust particles, casting light on how Solar System was born

■ Contains seven imagers that take pictures

Pluto
New Horizon
3bn miles
Path travelled since launch
Saturn
Earth
Jupiter
Mars
Uranus
Neptune

COMPARED BY DIAMETER	
EARTH 8000 miles	PLUTO 1400 miles