

## Current Affairs of the Day

### PAPER 2:

#### ➤ Polity & Governance:

1. Centre opposes move to recognise same-sex unions
2. Karnataka to seek nod for Mekedatu project
3. About Mekedatu dam project
4. About CWC
5. Concern as water leaks from Kondapochamma reservoir
6. About Kaleswaram Lift Irrigation Project
7. About Godavari River & Pranahita River
8. About Mission Kakatiya
9. About Mission Bhagiratha

#### ➤ International Relations:

1. What's next for Palestine after UAE, Bahrain deals with Israel?

### PAPER 3:

#### ➤ Economy:

1. Three agri reform Bills introduced



## Centre opposes move to recognise same-sex unions

- The Centre on Monday opposed before the Delhi High Court a petition seeking recognition of same-sex marriages, saying, “our legal system, society and values do not recognise marriage between same sex couples”.
- Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, said the 2018 judgment of the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court “merely decriminalises homosexuality or lesbianism, nothing more, nothing less”.

### Struck down in 2018:

- On September 6, 2018, a five-judge Constitution Bench, led by then Chief Justice Dipak Misra, unanimously held that criminalisation of private consensual sexual conduct between adults of the same sex under **Section 377** of the Indian Penal Code is clearly unconstitutional.
- “This is my version on record. I will not even file an affidavit. I will only rely on statutory provisions. If a wife dies within seven years, there is a separate punishment. Now, who will be treated as a wife [in same sex marriage]?” Mr. Mehta asked.

### Contrary to provisions:

- The Solicitor General said the petition was not permissible as it was asking the court to legislate and also that any relief granted “would run contrary to various statutory provisions”.
- Responding to the submission, a bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Prateek Jalan said, “As far as maintainability part is concerned, today what we are thinking is whether a PIL [Public Interest Litigation] should or should not be entertained... At the moment, we are trying to understand whether we should get into the issue or whether we have to wait.”
- “Worldover, today things are changing. Those changes may be applicable in our country or they may not be,” the Bench said, adding that for “our country we have to see what our constitutional values say”.
- Later, the Bench asked if any of the petitioners or others have faced difficulties while trying to register same-sex marriages. “If these petitioners are well-educated and their marriage registration is denied, they can surely come to the court,” the Bench said.



## Karnataka to seek nod for Mekedatu project

- The Karnataka government is likely to take a delegation, headed by Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, to bring pressure on the Centre to approve the construction of the **Mekedatu balancing reservoir** that has been proposed to store water for drinking purposes.
- The ₹9,000 crore project, approved by the State government in 2017, has received approval from the Union Water Resources Ministry for the detailed project report and is awaiting approval from the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF) even as Tamil Nadu has approached the Supreme Court against the project.

### Value Added Information

#### About Mekedatu dam project:

- Being set up by the Karnataka government, the project is near Mekedatu, in Ramanagaram district, across the river Cauvery from Tamil Nadu. Its primary objective is to supply drinking water to Bengaluru and recharge the groundwater table in the region.

#### About CWC:

- Presently functioning as an attached office of the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Government of India.
- Entrusted with the general responsibilities of initiating, coordinating and furthering in consultation of the State Governments concerned, schemes for control, conservation and utilization of water resources throughout the country, for purpose of Flood Control, Irrigation, Navigation, Drinking Water Supply and Water Power Development.
- Headed by a Chairman, with the status of Ex-Officio Secretary to the Government of India.

#### Facts for Prelims- Cauvery River:

- River rises on Brahmagiri Hill of the Western Ghats in south-western Karnataka state.



- It flows in a south-easterly direction for 475 miles through the states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Before emptying into the Bay of Bengal south of Cuddalore, Tamil Nadu, the river breaks into a large number of distributaries.
- In the upper course, at the Krishnaraja Sagara, the Kaveri is joined by two tributaries, the Hemavati and Lakshmantirtha, where a dam was constructed for irrigation.
- Upon entering Tamil Nadu, the Kaveri continues through a series of twisted wild gorges until it reaches Hogenakal Falls. There the Mettur Dam was constructed for irrigation and hydel power.
- The Kaveri's main tributaries are the Kabani (Kabbani), Amaravati, Noyil, and Bhavani rivers.

## Concern as water leaks from Kondapochamma reservoir

Water has been leaking from the Kondapochammasagar reservoir located at the Markook mandal headquarters in Telangana.

The leakage has been taking place near the Beerappa temple in the village. It is part of the **Kaleswaram Lift Irrigation Project** in the Gajwel Assembly constituency represented by Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao.

### Value Added Information

#### About Kaleswaram Lift Irrigation Project:

- The Kaleswaram Lift Irrigation Scheme of Telangana is a multi-purpose irrigation project on the Godavari River in Kaleswaram, Bhupalpally, Telangana.
- The project starts at the confluence point of Pranahita River and Godavari River.
- Originally called Pranahita-Chevella project in erstwhile Andhra Pradesh, it was redesigned, extended and renamed as Kaleswaram project in Telangana in 2014.



## Benefits of the Project

- It would bring **drinking water and irrigation** to the backward areas of Telangana.
- It will also help to **restore the ground water level** to its original state by the way of shifting from usage of groundwater for irrigation to usage of surface water.
- The project will also support **Mission Kakatiya** and **Mission Bhagiratha** schemes designed to provide drinking water to many villages and improve the capacities of tanks.

## About Godavari River:

- The Godavari is **India's second longest river** after the Ganga.
- **Source:** Trimbakeshwar, Maharashtra.
- **Areas drained:** It flows east for 1,465 kilometres, draining the states of **Maharashtra, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and Karnataka**, ultimately emptying into the Bay of Bengal through its extensive network of tributaries.
- **Tributaries:** The major tributaries of the river are classified as the **left bank tributaries** which include the Purna, Pranhita, Indravati and Sabari river and the **right bank tributaries** are Pravara, Manjira, Manair.
- **Kumbh Mela** is held at **Nasik (on the Godavari)**, Prayagraj (at the confluence of Ganga, Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati), Haridwar (on the Ganges), Ujjain (on the Shipra) every four years by rotation.
- **Sadarmatt Anicut across river Godavari** is one among the **two irrigation projects** in the **International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID) Register of Heritage Irrigation Structures**.

## About Pranahita River:

- Pranahita river is the largest tributary of the Godavari river covering about 34% of its drainage basin.
- It is a confluence of various other smaller tributaries like Wardha, Penganga and Wainganga Rivers.



## About Mission Kakatiya:

- It is a flagship programme launched by the Government of Telangana which aims at **rejuvenation of water tanks and other water storage structures** to provide assistance and help to the **small and marginal farmers** of the state.

## About Mission Bhagiratha:

- It is a project for **safe drinking water for every village and city household** in Telangana State.
- It aims to provide **piped water** to 2.32 crore people in 20 lakh households in **urban and 60 lakhs in rural areas** of Telangana.
- The project will supply **clean drinking water** to all households in the state through water sourced from **River Godavari and River Krishna**.

## Three agri reform Bills introduced

- Three Bills on agriculture reforms were introduced in Parliament on Tuesday to replace the ordinances issued during the lockdown.
- The Centre introduced the Bills on food and agriculture reform in the Lok Sabha on Monday, amid vehement protest from the Opposition parties and the farmers groups. The proposed legislations will replace the ordinances promulgated during the lockdown and will bring about changes to the marketing and storage of farm produce and agri commodities outside registered markets, as well as the facilitation of contract farming.

## Significance:

- Introducing **The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, and The Farmers Empowerment and Protection Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill**, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said the new laws would benefit farmers by empowering them to decide the price of their produce, which was earlier determined by traders. It would also encourage private investments and technology introduction in the sector, he said.
- Minister of State for Consumer Affairs Raosaheb Danve introduced the amendment to the Essential Commodities Act, noting that the ordinance was



introduced after recommendation from a high-powered panel, including six Chief Ministers.

### Criticism:

- Opposition parties and farmers groups are opposing the move to enact amendments to the Essential Commodities Act, new laws to bypass the State APMC Acts and to facilitate contract farming.
- “It is beyond the legislative competence of this House to enact any law on agriculture, which is a domain of the State governments,” said Congress MP Shashi Tharoor. Trinamool Congress MP Saugata Roy called them “draconian” and “anti-farmer” legislations.

### What's next for Palestine after UAE, Bahrain deals with Israel?

- It took more than three decades for the first Arab country to recognise Israel. Egypt signed a peace treaty with its Jewish neighbour in 1979, a year after the Camp David summit between President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin.
- Jordan, the second Arab country that established peace with Israel, took 15 more years to do so. There was a gap of 26 years between Jordan's peace treaty and that of the UAE with Israel. And then, it took less than 30 days for the fourth agreement — between Bahrain and Israel that was announced on Friday by U.S. President Donald Trump.

### Arab Peace Initiative:

- The new-found readiness of Arab countries to have peace with Israel, under the mediation of the Trump administration, appears to be transforming one of the oldest conflicts in modern West Asia. There are speculations that more Arab countries, from Morocco to Sudan and Oman, might follow the footsteps of the UAE and Bahrain. These deals, which have formalised years of back-room contacts between the Gulf kingdoms and Israel, suggest that the pan-Arab-Israel conflict is turning the page. Where does it leave the Palestinians?
- Till the UAE-Israel deal was announced on August 13, the official Arab position on the question of Palestine was rooted in the Arab Peace Initiative, proposed by Saudi Arabia in 2002, and endorsed by the Arab League in the



same year. The proposal calls for normalising relations between the Arab world and Israel, in exchange for full Israeli withdrawal from the territories it captured in the 1967 war, including the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights, a “just settlement” of the Palestinian refugee issue and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

- “Since 2002, both the UAE and Bahrain have supported the Arab Peace Initiative. However, the recent agreements made by Bahrain and the UAE break with this consensus. The Abraham Accords [Israel-UAE deal] require Israel only to ‘temporarily halt’ its formal annexation of the West Bank [settlements]. The agreement between Bahrain and Israel dispenses with the pretence altogether, making no mention of Palestinian land,” said Elham Fakhro, senior Gulf analyst at the Brussels-based International Crisis Group (ICG).
- This has angered the Palestinians, who have “strongly rejected” the agreements. “The Palestinian leadership considers this step to blow up the Arab Peace Initiative and the decisions of the Arab and Islamic summits, and international legitimacy, as an aggression against the Palestinian people, and as neglecting Palestinian rights and sacred things, especially Jerusalem and the independent Palestinian state on the borders of June 4, 1967,” the Palestinian leadership said in a statement issued after the UAE deal was announced.
- The Palestinians have further called for “an immediate emergency session” of the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation “to reject this declaration”.
- The Palestinians Liberation Organization (PLO) has rejected the Bahrain-Israel deal as well. “If you really wish to ‘advance the cause of peace, dignity, & economic opportunity for the Palestinian people’ how about ending Israel’s ruthless occupation and its theft of our land and resources? Coercing and cajoling Arabs to normalise with Israel will not bring you peace or dignity,” tweeted Hanan Ashrawi, a member of the PLO Executive Committee, after the Bahrain agreement was announced.



## Bleak future:

- The Palestinians got nothing in return from these agreements, said A.K. Pasha, a professor of West Asian Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. “[Former Egyptian President Anwar] Sadat wanted an autonomous West Bank and Gaza and removal of the settlements [in 1978-79], but he could get only a freeze on the settlements for three months. The same scenario is now being repeated. The Israelis say they have postponed the annexation. After the U.S. election, whether Trump wins or not, [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Nentanyahu will go ahead with his annexation plan,” he told The Hindu, adding that the future of the Palestinians “looks quite bleak”.
- Agrees Ms. Fakhro of the ICG. “By normalising relations outside this framework of ‘land for peace’, the two states have broken with a decades-old Arab consensus on the Palestinian issue, and effectively endorsed Israel’s military occupation over the Palestinians. This leaves the Palestinians more isolated than ever, and further weakens the already-dim prospect of a two-state solution,” Ms. Fakhro told The Hindu. “For the Palestinians, solidarity will need to be recast in broader terms, knowing full well that many Arab states — but not their unrepresented populations — have all but abandoned the Palestinian cause.”