

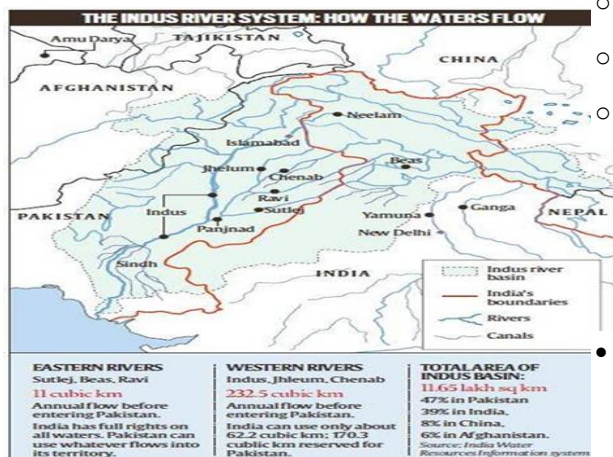
### LET DIPLOMACY FLOW: ON THE INDUS WATER TREATY

#### Context:

- While Islamabad expressed the desire for a diplomatic handshake from across the border two weeks ago, it recently restated its request for third-party mediation in the Indus Water Treaty (IWT).
- This shows that the **climate is not at all appropriate for the thawing of relations** between the two nations, and it is still difficult to bridge the gap between words and deeds.

#### What is the Indus Water Treaty (IWT)?

- It is a **water-distribution agreement** between India and Pakistan that was mediated by the **World Bank (WB)** and signed in Karachi in **1960** by Jawaharlal Nehru, then the Indian PM, and Ayub Khan, then the president of Pakistan.
- The Treaty gives control over the waters of the three eastern rivers - the Beas, Ravi and Sutlej - to India (about 20% of the total water), while control over the waters of the three western rivers - the Indus, Chenab and Jhelum - to Pakistan (80%).
- India is granted **unlimited non-consumptive usage** of the western river waters for purposes like power generation and **limited irrigation use**.
- The dispute redressal mechanism provided under the IWT is a graded 3-level mechanism:



- Indus Commissioners
- Neutral Expert
- Court of Arbitration

#### Background in which Talks of Modifying IWT Started:

- **In order to change** the more than 60-year-old IWT that controls how the two nations share the waters of six rivers in the Indus system, **India**

has sent Pakistan a notice via the Indus Commissioners.

- Article XII (3) of the IWT states that it may occasionally be altered by a treaty that has been properly approved.

## Why Does India Want to Modify the IWT?

- Under Article 60 of the **Vienna Convention** on the Laws of the Treaties, a party can criticise an agreement and give notice of its intention to terminate it if the other party violates its fundamental provisions.
- **India has adopted the moderate approach** of not terminating but modifying the IWT.
- New Delhi claims that Islamabad **has violated the dispute settlement mechanisms**, as mandated by Articles 8 and 9 of the Treaty.
  - **Article 8** specifies the roles and responsibilities of the Permanent Indus Commission - a regular channel of communication for matters relating to the implementation of the Treaty.
  - **Article 9** offers a graded pathway (Neutral Expert, Court of Arbitration) to address any issue related to the implementation or interpretation of the IWT.
- As per India, **Pakistan's unilateral decision to approach the Permanent Court of Arbitration**, bypassed the graded pathway.

## What are the Concerns?

- Pakistan has shown a preference for **third-party mediation**, suggesting that this may be the most effective way to resolve the impasse in the two countries' relations.
- In India, Pakistan's opposition to the hydroelectric projects is viewed as **a strategy to postpone them**.
- These stances resemble **diplomatic hedging** - meaning that by pursuing two diametrically opposed strategies toward another state, **balancing** (preparing for the worst) and **engagement**, a state distributes its risk.
- They serve as a reminder that **technically-negotiated agreements are just half of the solution** and can cause transboundary rivers and their ecosystems to experience gradual strain over time.

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## WHAT IS THE FINANCE COMMISSION?

The Central government will soon start off the process to set up the Sixteenth Finance Commission, with the Finance Ministry likely to notify the terms of references for the Finance Commission.



## About Finance Commission:

- **What is it?** It is constitutional body for giving recommendations on distribution of tax revenues between the Union and the States and amongst the States themselves.
- **Who constitutes?** The Finance Commission is constituted by the President under article 280 of the Constitution.
- It is constituted at the end of every fifth year or earlier, as the deemed necessary by the President.
- **Parliament may by law determine** the requisite qualifications for appointment as members of the Commission and the procedure of their selection. On account of this, The Finance Commission (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1951 was passed.
- **Mandate:** It is the duty of the Commission to make recommendations to the President as to:
  - the distribution between the Union and the States of the net proceeds of taxes which are to be, or may be, divided between them and the allocation between the States of the respective shares of such proceeds;
  - the principles which should govern the grants-in-aid of the revenues of the States out of the Consolidated Fund of India;
  - the measures needed to augment the Consolidated Fund of a State to supplement the resources of the Panchayats and Municipalities in the State on the basis of the recommendations made by the Finance Commission of the State;
  - any other matter referred to the Commission by the President in the interests of sound finance.
- **Composition:** It consists of a Chairman and four other members appointed by the President.
- **Qualifications of members:** The Chairman of the Commission is selected from among persons who have had experience in public affairs and the four other members are selected from among persons who

- are, or have been, or are **qualified to be appointed as Judges of a High Court**; or
  - **have special knowledge of the finances** and accounts of Government; or
  - have had **wide experience in financial matters** and in administration; or
  - have **special knowledge of economics**
  - **Tenure of members:** Every member will be in office for the time period as specified in the **order** of the President and is **eligible for reappointment**.
  - **Recommendations of the Finance Commission are not binding on the government.**
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## JUSTICE ROHINI COMMISSION

The Justice G. Rohini-led commission for the sub-categorisation of other backward classes (OBCs) was recently given another extension in its tenure by the President.



### About Rohini Commission:

- The commission was set up by the President under Article 340 of the Indian Constitution on October 2,

2017.

- It is **headed** by former Delhi High Court judge, **Justice G. Rohini (retd)**.
- **Mandate:** To **examine the issues** related to the **sub-categorisation of Other Backward Classes**.
- **Terms of References:**
  - to **examine the extent of inequitable distribution of benefits of reservation** among the castes or communities included in the broad category of Other Backward Classes, with reference to such classes included in the Central List;
  - to **work out the mechanism, criteria, norms** and parameters in a scientific approach for **sub-categorisation within such Other Backward Classes**;
  - to take up the exercise of **identifying the respective castes or communities** or sub-castes or synonyms in the **Central List** of Other Backward Classes and **classifying them into their respective sub-categories**.

What does Article 340 say?

- The Article reads, "The President may, by order, appoint a Commission consisting of such persons as he thinks fit to investigate the conditions of socially and educationally backward classes within the territory of India and the difficulties under which they labour and to make recommendations as to the steps that should be taken by the Union or any State to remove such difficulties and to improve their condition..."

## SARISKA TIGER RESERVE (STR)



After successful reintroduction of tigers at the Sariska Tiger Reserve (STR), the forest department is planning to relocate a pair of sloth bears at the reserve.

### About Sariska Tiger Reserve (STR):

- **Location:** It is located in the Aravalli hills in the Alwar district of Rajasthan
- This area was a **hunting preserve** of the erstwhile Alwar state.
- It was declared as a wildlife reserve in 1955 and then a **Tiger Reserve in 1978** under Project Tiger.
- It is the **first reserve** in the world which **successfully relocated tigers**.
- Sariska is also **famous for old temples, palaces and lakes** such as Pandu Pol, Bhangarh Fort, Ajaibgarh, Pratapgarh, Siliserh Lake and Jai Samand Lake.
- **Topography:** Grasslands, dry deciduous forests, cliffs, and rocky landscapes.
- **Flora:** salar, kadaya, dhak, gol, ber, Banyan, gugal, bamboo, kair, adusta etc
- **Fauna:** Bengal tigers, leopard, jungle cat, Indian jackal, chital, chinkara, four-horned antelope, Indian peafowl, grey partridge, Indian peafowl, Indian eagle-owl etc.

### Sloth Bear:

- Sloth bears are **one of the eight bear species** found across the world.
- **Scientific name:** Melursus ursinus
- **Distribution:** They mainly inhabit the region of **India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bhutan**.
- **Features:**

- They have long, shaggy dark brown or black fur and curved claws, which are the longest out of any of the bear species.
- It feeds on fruits, ants and termites.
- **Conservation Status:**
- IUCN: “Vulnerable”
- Indian Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Schedule 1

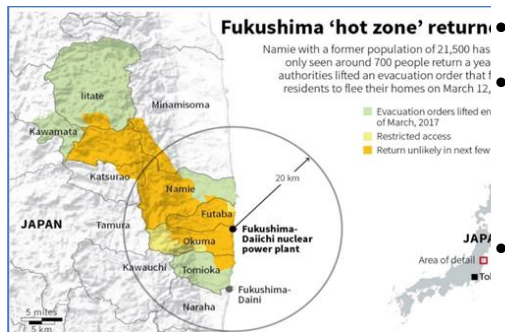
## JAPAN PLANNING TO FLUSH FUKUSHIMA WASTEWATER INTO THE OCEAN

### Why in news?

- As part of a decommissioning project, Japan is expected to start flushing 1.25 million tonnes of wastewater from its Fukushima nuclear power plant into the Pacific Ocean this year.
- Experts are sceptical about this idea due to its suspected impact on the water, marine life, fishers’ livelihoods and other countries in the area.

### News Summary

#### What was Fukushima nuclear disaster?



In March 2011, after a magnitude 9 earthquake, a tsunami flooded the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in Okuma and damaged its diesel generators.

The loss of power suspended coolant supply to reactors at the facility; the tsunami also disabled backup

systems. This led to Fukushima disaster.

- Soon, radioactive materials leaked from reactor pressure vessels, exploded in the facility’s upper levels, and exposed themselves to the ambient air, water, soil, and local population.
- Winds also carried radioactive material thrown up in the air into the Pacific.
- Since then, the power plant and its surrounding land have been uninhabitable.

#### What does Japanese government want?

- The water that the Japanese government wants to flush from the plant was used to cool the reactors, plus rainwater and groundwater.
- It contains radioactive isotopes from the damaged reactors and is thus itself radioactive.
- Japan has said that it will release this water into the Pacific Ocean over the next 30 years.
- Nuclear plants around the world regularly release water containing trace amounts of radionuclides into large waterbodies.
- For this, water is being treated to remove most radioactive isotopes. This water will be far above safety standards.

## **Why this move of Japanese govt is being opposed?**

- **No known threshold**
  - Japanese officials claim that the water will be treated before its release. However, experts claim that there is no known threshold below which radiation can be considered safe.
  - Any discharge of radioactive materials will increase the risk of cancer and other health impacts to those who are exposed.
- **Difficult to remove tritium from the water**
  - Removing tritium from the water is a very difficult task.
  - Tritium, (T, or  $3H$ ), the isotope of hydrogen with atomic weight of approximately 3.
  - But removal of tritium is necessary as it is easily absorbed by the bodies of living beings and rapidly distributed via blood.
- **Impact on marine lives and livelihoods of the fisherfolk in the region**
  - Experts expect the affected water to poison the fish.
  - South Korea banned seafood imported from around Fukushima, to Japan's displeasure, from 2013.
- **Impact on Pacific Ocean**
  - China, South Korea, Taiwan and Pacific Islands Forum have expressed concerns over this.
  - Researchers across the world have also called for more studies to understand the precise composition of each tank before it is flushed.

## **What are Japan's other options?**

- **Store the water for longer and then discharge it.**

- This is because tritium's half-life – the time it takes for its quantity to be halved through radioactive decay – is 12-13 years.
- The quantity of any other radioactive isotopes present in the water will also decrease in this time.
- So, at the time of discharge, the water could be less radioactive.

## CENTRE ISSUES PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCAST GUIDELINES

### Why in news?

- The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB) has issued fresh advisories with respect to the Guidelines for Uplinking and Downlinking of Television Channels in India, 2022.
- Through the advisory, the Ministry has clarified certain points of the guidelines.

### **The guidelines for Uplinking and Downlinking of Satellite Television Channels in India, 2022**

- In November 2022, the Union Cabinet had approved the new 'Guidelines for Uplinking and Downlinking of Satellite Television Channels in India, 2022'.
  - These were amended after a gap of 11 years.
  - As per the guidelines, all TV channels in India, including private channels, are required to broadcast at least 30 minutes of content daily on themes of national importance and of social relevance.
  - **The guidelines also covered the issue of uplinking and downlinking.**
    - Uplinking and downlinking shall be subject to clearance and approval by the **Ministry of Home Affairs.**
    - The policy mandates that channels uplinking in frequency bands other than C-band must encrypt their signals.
    - Broadcast companies will be allowed to uplink foreign channels from Indian teleports.
      - This would create employment opportunities and make India a teleport hub for other countries.
      - Currently, only 30 channels are uplinked from India out of the total 897 registered with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB).
      - At present, **Singapore is considered the hub for teleport uplinking.**



- However, after the new guidelines come into effect, foreign channels are expected to show greater interest in using Indian teleports.
- **The guidelines tried to streamline the process so as to improve ease of doing business.**
  - The new guidelines allow a news agency to get permission for five years instead of the current one year.
  - The penalty clauses have been rationalised, and separate sets of penalties have been proposed for different types of contraventions.
- At present, a uniform penalty is applicable for all types of contraventions.
  - Requirement for seeking permission for the live telecast of events has been done away with.
  - Only prior registration of events to be telecast live would be necessary.

### **What was the Rationale behind the new guidelines?**

- The government has argued that since airwaves/ frequencies are public property they need to be used in the best interest of the society.
- Also, the govt. wanted to improve the ease of doing and make India hub for teleport uplinking, which in turn would generate employment.
- However, analysts criticize this move by saying the, while airwaves may be public property, broadcasters had paid hefty fees for their use.
- Any binding guidelines that adversely impact their commercial interests may not be fair.

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### **WHAT IS D4 DRONE SYSTEM?**

The D4 anti-drone system which was used for security during the Republic Day parade is one of the products to be showcased at Aero India 2023.



#### **Key facts about D4 Drone system:**

- **What is it?** The Drone Detect, Deter and Destroy system (D4S) is the **first indigenously developed anti-drone system** to be inducted into the Indian Armed Forces.
- It is **developed** by Defence Research and Development Organisation (**DRDO**) and **manufactured** by Bharat Electronics Limited (**BEL**).

- **Purpose:** To detect rogue drones that are likely to attack most vulnerable places.
- **Features:**
  - D4 system can **instantly detect and jam** micro drones (**Soft kill**) and use a **laser-based kill mechanism** to terminate targets (**Hard kill**).
  - It uses **DRDO's RF/Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS)** to detect the **frequency** which is being used by the controller and the signals are then jammed.
  - It can **detect and jam** micro-drones at a distance of **up to 3 km**.
  - It can **lase a target 1-1.25 km far** depending on the wattage of the laser weapon.

#### **About Aero India:**

- It is a biennial air show and aviation exhibition held in Bengaluru, India at the Yelahanka Air Force Station.
  - It is organised by the Defence Exhibition Organisation, Ministry of Defence.
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