

UPSC Daily Current Affairs| Prelim Bits 23-01-2025

Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)

Why in News?

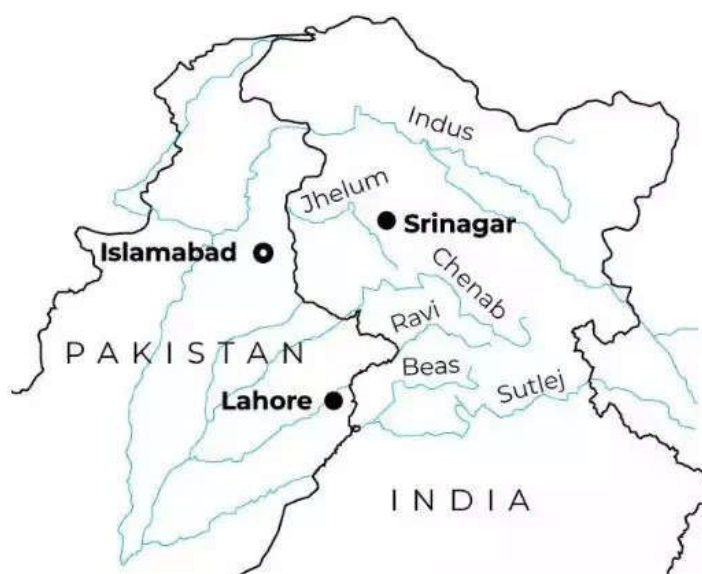
The Neutral Expert (NE) appointed under terms of the IWT decided that he was competent to decide on differences between India and Pakistan on the design of hydroelectric projects built on the Indus Treaty-rivers.

- The Indus Water Treaty was signed by **India and Pakistan** on September 19, 1960 to determine the distribution of the waters of the Indus and its tributaries.
- The negotiations were arranged by the **World Bank**.
- Under the IWT,
 - India enjoys “unrestricted use” of the **3 “Eastern Rivers”** - Beas, Ravi, Sutlej, whereas
 - Pakistan controls the **3 “Western Rivers”** - Indus, Chenab, and Jhelum.

Division of rivers as per Indus Waters Treaty

Eastern rivers to India: Sutlej, Beas, Ravi

Western rivers to Pakistan: Chenab, Jhelum and Indus



- India gets roughly 30% and Pakistan gets 70% of the water carried by the Indus River System.
- According to Article III (1) of the Treaty, “India is under obligation to let flow” waters of the Western Rivers to Pakistan.

- Both India and Pakistan have the *right to non-consumptive* use and rights of drainage issues and river conservation aspects.
- Article IX of the IWT provides for a graded 3-level dispute settlement mechanism, in which disputes are first decided at the level of the Indus Commissioners of India and Pakistan.
- Then it will be escalated to the World Bank-appointed Neutral Expert, and only then to the PCA in The Hague.

The recent ongoing dispute

- Two hydroelectric projects currently under construction in Jammu & Kashmir in India, namely
 1. The Kishenganga HEP on Kishenganga, a tributary of the Jhelum,
 2. The Ratle HEP on the Chenab.
- Although they are “run-of-the-river” projects, which generate electricity without obstructing the natural flow of the river, Pakistan has repeatedly alleged that these violate the IWT.
- Pakistan asked the World Bank to facilitate the establishment of a Court of Arbitration to consider its concerns about the designs of the two hydroelectric power projects.
- India asked for the appointment of a Neutral Expert to consider similar concerns over the two projects.
- According to Article IX of the IWT it is now escalated to World Bank-appointed Neutral Expert.

References

1. [The Indian Express | Indus Waters Treaty](#)
2. [Economic Times | Modification of Indus Waters Treaty](#)

Bluetongue Disease

Why in News?

The presence of multiple Culicoides species responsible for the larger number of bluetongue virus transmission in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

The Indian Culicoides fauna now includes 93 valid species, many of which are recognised as confirmed or potential vectors of important pathogens of animal health.

- Bluetongue is a **viral disease** that affects ruminants like sheep, cattle, and goats.
- **Symptoms** - Fever, Swelling of the face, lips, tongue, nose, jaw, and eyelids, Excessive salivation, Congestion and nasal discharge, Ulcers in the mouth and nose, Lameness, Respiratory problems, Hemorrhages in the skin and other tissues.

- **Transmission** - The disease is spread by the bite of a *Culicoides* midge.
- The midge takes blood from an infected animal and spreads the disease to other animals when it bites them again.
- It is ***not contagious*** between animals.
- **Affected animals** - Sheep are usually the most affected.
- Cattle and goats can carry the virus for a period of time and transmit it to other animals.
- Other ruminants like deer, camels, llamas, giraffes, bison, buffalo, wildebeest, and antelope can also be affected.
- **Geographic distribution** - Bluetongue is found in tropical and subtropical regions, between 53°N and 35°S.
- It has been found in Africa, the Americas, Australia, the Middle East, and some countries of southern Asia and Oceania.
- **Vaccination** - Vaccination is used as the most effective and practical measure to minimize losses related to the disease.
- European Medical Agency has recently recommended the approval of the vaccines *Bluevac-3* and *Syvazul BTV 3* to protect sheep against bluetongue disease.
- **Treatment** - There is no specific treatment for animals with bluetongue apart from rest, provision of soft food, and good husbandry.
- Bluetongue is listed by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) as a ***notifiable disease***.

References

1. [The Hindu | Blood-sucking flies in Andaman & Nicobar Islands](#)
2. [EMA | Vaccine Approval](#)

Diamond Imprest Authorization (DIA) Scheme

Why in News?

The Department of Commerce recently introduced the Diamond Imprest Authorization Scheme to support exporters.

- **Aim** - It aims to keep investments and jobs within the country, helping small and medium diamond exporters (MSMEs) compete globally.
- The initiative seeks to simplify and reduce the costs associated with importing and handling diamonds for exporters, further positioning India as a key player in the international diamond market.
- **Implementation** - It will come into effect on April 1, 2025.
- **Ministry** - Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
- **Eligibility** - It is open to exporters with Two Star Export House status (a recognition granted by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade) and above, with at least \$15 million in exports annually.
- **Features**
 - **Duty-free imports** - Exporters can import natural cut and polished diamonds of

- less than $\frac{1}{4}$ **carat** (25 cents) without paying customs duty.
- Including the products of semi-processed, broken, half-cut, etc.
- **Export obligation** - Exporters must add **at least 10%** value to these diamonds before exporting them.
- Diamonds are to be imported under Actual User Conditions.
- Exports will be against payment in Free Foreign Exchange.
- This move comes in response to policies in diamond-producing countries like Botswana, Angola and Namibia, where manufacturers must process diamonds locally.

India's gross exports of gems and jewellery in December 2024 stood at \$1,967.98 million, marking a decline of 10.29% compared to the same period last year.

References

1. [PIB | Diamond Imprest Authorization Scheme](#)
2. [Business Standard | Diamond Imprest Authorization scheme](#)

Spotted Hyena

Why in News?

A recent study discovered that the hyena (Crocota crocuta), one of Africa's most abundant carnivores, appeared in southern Egypt after it became extinct in Egypt 5,000 years ago.

- It is a Non-arboreal, Nocturnal, Highly social hyena species found abundant in **sub-Saharan Africa**.
- It is also known as the laughing hyena.
- **Scientific Name** - Crocutta crocutta.
- **Family** - Hyaenidae (largest extant member of the Hyaenidae).
- **Weight** - 40-86 kg - females often weigh more than males.
- **Habitat** - Semi-desert, savanna and open woodland, dense, dry woodland, and montane regions.
- **Range** - Sub-Saharan Africa, though historically across Africa and Eurasia.
- **Distinction** - It is physically distinguished from other species by its vaguely bear-like build, rounded ears, less prominent mane, spotted pelt, more dual-purposed dentition, fewer nipples, and pseudo-penis.
- It is the **only placental mammalian species** where females have a pseudo-penis and lack an external vaginal opening.



- **Diet** - Carnivorous.
- **Conservation status**
 - **IUCN Status** - Least Concern.
 - **CITES Appendix** - Not listed.
- **Population in Wild** - 27,000-47,000 individuals; most abundant within the ***Serengeti ecosystem and Kruger National Park.***
- **Threats** - Habitat loss and poaching.

References

1. [Down to Earth | Spotted Hyena](#)
2. [Inaturalist | Spotted Hyena](#)

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Geography

Demographic dividend of India

- **Below 35 years of age** - 65% of population
- **Below 25 years of age** - 50% of population

Social Issues

Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao movement

- **Launched in** - 2015, at Panipat in Haryana.
- **Objectives** - To *prevent gender biased sex selective elimination*
 - To ensure survival and protection of the girl child
 - To ensure education and participation of the girl child
 - To increase girl's participation in the fields of sports.
- **Tri-ministerial effort of**
 - Ministry of Women and Child Development
 - Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
 - Ministry of Human Resource Development

Polity & Governance

National Voters' Day (NVD) - 25th January

- **Commemoration of** - The *foundation day of the Election Commission of India (ECI)*.
- It is observed *since 2011*, it is 15th National Voters' Day in 2025.
- **Aim** - To underline the centrality of the voter.
- To raise electoral awareness among citizens and to promote the enrolment of new voters.
- **2025 theme** - Nothing Like Voting, I Vote for Sure.
- President will present the *Best Electoral Practices Awards* to state and district officials who demonstrated exemplary performance in ensuring the smooth conduct of elections.
- **ECI** - It was established on January 25, 1950, a day before India became a Republic.

Electoral rolls in India

- **Electoral Roll** - A list of people who've enrolled to vote.
- **Preparation by** - Election Commission.
- **Current electoral database** - It now *stands at 99.1 crore* and counting.
- **Trends** - A 6-point increase in Electoral Gender Ratio from 948 in 2024 to 954 in 2025.
- It bear a youthful and gender balanced look
 - 18-29 age group - 21.7 crores.

International Relations and Issues

World Economic Forum (WEF)

- **WEF** - A forum for various *stakeholders to meet and discuss* global and regional socio-economic issues.
- **Founded in** - 1971, by *Klaus Schwab*, a german professor.
- It was earlier known as *European Management Forum*.
- **Members** - Innovators, disruptors, niche market leaders and regional champions.
- It was the *1st non-governmental institution* to initiate a partnership with China's economic development commissions in 1979.

World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2025

- **Theme** - Collaboration for the Intelligent Age.
- **Held in** - Davos, Switzerland.
- **Period** - It hold its Annual Meeting at the end of January.
 - **Discussion about** - Inclusive growth, investment in social, physical & digital infrastructure and democratising technology.

Environment

India's Non-Fossil Fuel Capacity

India targeted to achieve 500 gigawatts of non-fossil fuel-based energy capacity by 2030.

- India is emerging as a *global leader in clean energy*.
- **Solar Energy** - 24.5 gigawatts, is the dominant contributor to the India's renewable energy growth.
- It accounts for 47% of the total installed renewable energy.
- **Wind energy** - 3.4 gigawatts.

Miscellaneous

Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar

- **Annual award** - To recognize and honour the invaluable contribution and selfless service rendered by individuals and organizations in India in the field of disaster management.
- It is announced every year on 23rd January, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose.
- **Award for institution** - A cash prize of Rs. 51 lakh and a certificate.
- **Award for individual** - A cash prize of Rs. 51 lakh and a certificate
- **2025 award for Institution** - Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS).

INCOIS

- **Established in** - 1999, at Hyderabad, Telangana.
- It is integral to India's disaster management strategy, specializing in early alerts for ocean-related hazards.
- **Activities** - It provides tsunami alerts, high-wave, cyclone, and storm surge forecasts, helping to safeguard coastal areas and maritime operations.
- It assisted during the 2013 Phailin and 2014 Hudhud cyclone
- **Recognized by** - UNESCO as a top Tsunami Service Provider.
- **Awards** - It received the Geospatial World Excellence in Maritime Services Award in 2024 and the Disaster Risk Reduction Excellence Award in 2021.

Developments of INCOIS

- **Indian Tsunami Early Warning Centre (ITEWC)** - It provides tsunami alerts within 10 minutes, serving India and 28 Indian Ocean countries.
- **Search and Rescue Aided Tool (SARAT)** - To assist the Indian Coast Guard, Navy and Coastal Security Police, in locating individuals or objects lost at sea.
- **SynOPS visualization platform** - It integrates real-time data to strengthen response coordination during extreme events.