

1. What India's suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty means for Pakistan — and for itself

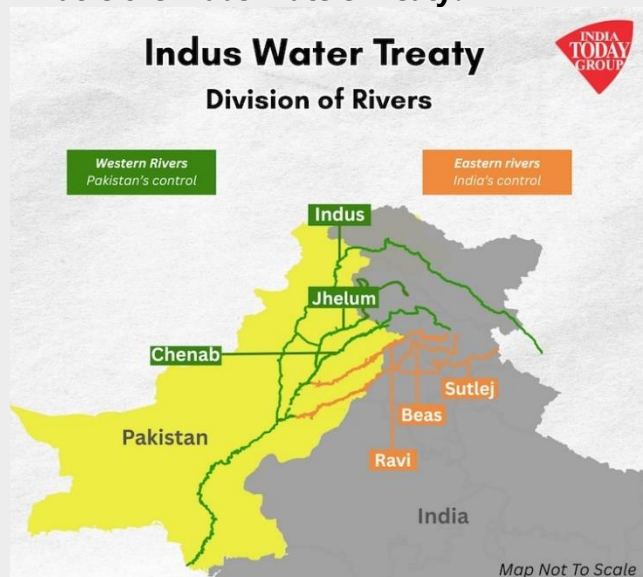
Why in News?

The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), which has survived four wars, decades of cross-border terrorism against India by Pakistan, and a long history of antagonism between the two countries, was suspended for the first time by New Delhi.

India made its decision a day after the attack on tourists in Pahalgam, in which Pakistani terrorists took the lives of 26 people.

Among the slew of diplomatic actions against Pakistan announced by India — including the closure of the Attari border post, cancellation of visas, and the expulsion of several Pakistani personnel from India — the suspension of the IWT may have the most far-reaching ramifications.

What is the Indus Waters Treaty?



The IWT was signed in Karachi on September 19, 1960, following nine years of negotiations between India and Pakistan. The Treaty has 12 Articles and 8 Annexures (from A to H).

According to the provisions of the Treaty, all the water of the "Eastern Rivers" of the Indus system — Sutlej, Beas and Ravi — shall be available for the "unrestricted use" of India. Pakistan shall receive water from the "Western Rivers" — Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab.

Why is decision by India significant?

The decision to suspend the IWT will straightaway give more options to New Delhi on how to use the waters of the Indus river system.

For instance, India can immediately stop sharing water flow data with Pakistan. There will be no design or operational restrictions on India for the use of the water of the Indus and its tributaries. Also, India can now create storage on the Western Rivers, Indus, Jhelum and Chenab.

However, the suspension will not have an immediate impact on the flow of water to Pakistan for a few years at least. India does not currently have the infrastructure to either stop the flow of water into Pakistan, or to divert it for its own use.

Can Pakistan trigger any arbitration clause under the IWT in response to India's decision to suspend the Treaty?

The Indus Waters Treaty lacks an exit clause, meaning neither India nor Pakistan can legally abrogate it unilaterally.

The Treaty has no end date, and any modification requires the consent of both parties.

But while the Treaty cannot be exited, it does contain a dispute resolution mechanism: Article IX, along with Annexures F and G, lays out procedures for raising grievances — first before the Permanent Indus Commission, then a neutral expert, and eventually, a forum of arbitrators.

Pakistan is yet to issue an official response to India's suspension of the IWT.

In case India 'revokes' the treaty, it literally means it has shunned it. The dispute resolution mechanism under Article IX and Annexes F and G of the IWT will be of no use and assistance to Pakistan. It is limited to a dispute under the treaty and not meant to provide for specific performance of the treaty itself.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Relations

Source: Indian Express

2. Why WTA's maternity and fertility initiative is historic

Why in News?



For years, top-level woman athletes have faced the conundrum of choosing between sustained sporting excellence and the joy of parenthood. In a move hailed as transformative, the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) announced in March a new maternity policy that includes grants for initiatives such as egg-freezing and IVF (in-vitro fertilisation). With the WTA leading the way, other sports are also beginning to rethink how they can support their woman athletes through every phase of their lives.

What is the policy?

The WTA has launched a maternity and fertility initiative in partnership with Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund. The programme provides up to 12 months of paid maternity leave and financial support for fertility treatments, including egg-freezing and IVF. Over 320 players are eligible for assistance.

Challenges

Egg-freezing is a physically demanding process. It involves hormone injections, frequent monitoring and surgery for egg-retrieval. For tennis players, this can clash with training and competition.

Is there ranking protection?

While the WTA currently provides protected rankings for players returning from maternity leave, it does not yet extend that to players undergoing fertility preservation.

Mothers on tour

Recent years have seen several players returning to elite competition after becoming mothers. Elina Svitolina, who won a WTA title in Rouen in 2024 after giving birth, spoke about the journey.

Her return, and those of Serena Williams, Kim Clijsters and several others, shows that motherhood and professional tennis need not be mutually exclusive.

What does this mean for the future of women's tennis?

The WTA policy not only helps preserve players' fertility but also normalises conversations around family planning. With top athletes now leading by example, this could inspire wider change across sport.

Cultural shift

Beyond the policies, what's changing is the culture. Players now speak openly about fertility, not just as a private matter but as part of career planning.

Maria Sharapova, now retired, has become an advocate and investor in fertility-focused start-ups.

"When women have the opportunity to navigate their careers on their own terms by freezing their eggs, they unlock more autonomy in all aspects of their lives," she has said.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains; Miscellaneous

Source: The Hindu

3. Persona non grata

Why Now?



Following the terrorist attacks in Pahalgam that left 26 people dead, India downgraded its diplomatic relations with Pakistan, announcing measures such as suspending the 1960 Indus Water Treaty.

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said, "The Defence/Military, Naval and Air Advisors in the Pakistani High Commission in New Delhi are declared Persona Non Grata. They have a week to leave India. India will be withdrawing its own Defence/Navy/Air Advisors from the Indian High Commission in Islamabad."

What does persona non grata mean?

Persona non grata is a Latin phrase which means "unwelcome person." It has a specific meaning in diplomacy, referring to a diplomat or foreign person whose entry or presence in a certain country has been prohibited by that country.

The designation received diplomatic meaning at the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, which lays the ground rules for how diplomats are to be treated, including in relation to their rights and privileges in host countries. Article 9 of the treaty mentions that a country can declare any member of a diplomatic staff persona non grata "at any time and without having to explain its decision."

Soon after the declaration, the person concerned usually returns to their home nation. In case they fail to do so within a reasonable period, the country "may refuse to recognise the person concerned as a member of the mission." The article also says that a person can be declared persona non grata even before arriving in a country.

When Can A Person Be Declared Persona Non Grata?

There aren't any fixed rules regarding when a country can declare a foreign person persona non grata, as there is no requirement of an explanation under the Vienna Convention.

Historically speaking, countries have used it to express their discontent with the actions of other nations. During the Cold War, it became a tit-for-tat sanction as both the US and the Soviet Union liberally declared each other's diplomats persona non grata.

India previously labelled a Pakistan High Commission staffer persona non-grata for espionage activities in 2016 after he was arrested by Delhi Police with documents relating to defence deployment.

Notably, the imposition of a persona non grata designation isn't limited to diplomats. One DW report noted that Hollywood actor Brad Pitt was declared persona non grata by China after starring in the 1997 film Seven Years in Tibet, though the ban was lifted in 2014. Donald Trump, much before becoming US President, was also labelled as persona non grata by Panama City's Municipal Council after he said that America was "stupid" to "give away the Panama Canal for nothing."

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Relations

Source: Indian Express

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