

1. Crisis at Kaleshwaram— why Telangana's massive irrigation project is distressed**The mega project**

The Kaleshwaram project on the Godavari will be the world's largest multi-stage lift irrigation project. It is on Godavari river in Telangana's Jayashankar Bhupalpally district.

Work on the project began in 2019. In lift irrigation projects, water does not rely on gravity to flow in canals from higher ground to lower; rather, water is lifted by means of pumps or surge pools to a main delivery chamber at the highest point in the project, from where it is distributed to beneficiary fields.

The project sprawls over approximately 500 km in 13 districts, with a canal network of 1,800 km. Most of the water under the project is to be sourced from the Medigadda Barrage. Two other barrages in the project are Annaram and Sundilla.

Crisis at Medigadda

On October 21, 2023, one of the pillars — No. 20 of block 7 — of the Medigadda Barrage sank, which led to flooding. The state government asked the National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA), a statutory body set up under the National Dam Safety Act, 2021, for a thorough inspection.

Findings of the NDSA

The NDSA's report, made public in April 2024, revealed serious structural issues, including:

- Design flaws and construction defects
- Failure of modelling studies
- Lack of quality control
- Ignored dam safety standards

Medigadda Barrage showed cracks and tilting of piers in Block-7. Annaram and Sundilla barrages also had seepage and structural stress.

Recommended Structural Repairs

The NDSA has advised:

- Rehabilitation of designs
- Stabilisation measures to prevent further damage
- Comprehensive geo-technical and geophysical studies
- Hydraulic and structural redesigns using advanced modelling tools

Political Fallout

The project, initiated by former CM K Chandrashekar Rao (KCR), was considered the flagship achievement of the State government.

However, current Irrigation Minister Uttam Kumar Reddy has called KLIP the “biggest man-made disaster since Independence.”

He claims:

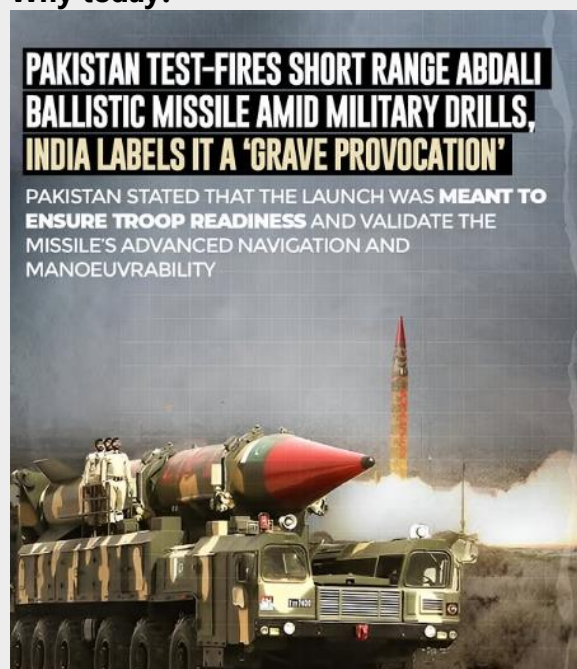
- Telangana is paying ₹16,000 crore annually in debt servicing
- Barrages were overloaded, designed for 2 TMC but stored over 10 TMC, causing foundation failures.

Relevance: GS Prelims; Geography

Source: Indian Express

2. Abdali Weapon System

Why today?



Pakistan recently test-fired a ballistic missile called the Abdali Weapon System, a surface-to-surface missile with a range of 450 kilometers, as part of Ex INDUS. The launch was aimed at ensuring the operational readiness of troops and validating key technical parameters.

What is the Abdali missile?

The Abdali is a ballistic missile — a missile that uses projectile motion to travel towards its target, and is powered by a rocket for only the initial, short duration of its journey.

Naming of Missiles

The Abdali missile was first tested in 2001-02. It is named after Ahmed Shah Abdali, the Afghan ruler who invaded India multiple times in the 18th century. Pakistan has a tradition of naming

its missiles after Muslim rulers who invaded India. Thus, apart from Abdali, it has Ghaznavi missiles (named after Mahmud of Ghazni), the Ghauri missile (named after Muhammad Ghori), and the Babur missile, named after the first Mughal ruler Zahir ud-Din Babur.

Exercise Indus

The military drill during which this missile was tested was called Exercise Indus.

Background

India has recently suspended the Indus Water Treaty with Pakistan, following the Pahalgam attack on tourists. It has also taken a range of other steps — curbing water flow through the

Baglihar dam over the Chenab; stopping the import of Pakistani products; banning docking of Pakistan-owned ships and suspending the exchange of all mail and parcels.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Bilateral Relations

Source: Indian Express

3. No entry for Pakistan-flagged ships in India: How ships choose their flags and what they signify

Why in News?



As part of India's response to Pakistan following the Pahalgam terror attacks last month, the Directorate General of Shipping (DGS) banned the entry of ships bearing Pakistan flags to India.

In an order, the maritime authority said, "In exercise of power conferred by section 411 of the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958... keeping in view the present situation, the

following directions are hereby issued: A ship bearing the flag of Pakistan shall not be allowed to visit any Indian port. An Indian flag ship shall not visit any port of Pakistan." Later, Pakistan also imposed a ban on Indian-flagged ships from entering its ports.

The 1958 Act deals with ships with Indian flags anywhere in the world and ships with foreign flags while in Indian waters "to ensure safety of life at sea and safety of ships". But what exactly is the function of flags in shipping?

What do the flags of countries mean in shipping?

Flags on ships foremost show which country the vessel has been registered with, rather than the owner or the crew's nationality.

As the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) says, "By linking a ship to a State, the system of ship registration indicates that that State has the right to protect that ship in international law." This identification becomes necessary also because ships move through international waters, which are not under the jurisdiction of any state.

Under the framework of international law, all countries need to fix the conditions for granting their nationality to ships and the right to fly their flag. However, there is currently no common, binding framework for the registration process.

According to the DGS website, the registration affords evidence of title of the ship to those who deal with the property in question. It further gives protection to the members of the crew in case of casualties involving injuries and/or loss of life to claim compensation under the provisions of the Indian Acts in Indian courts.

Countries must also exercise their jurisdiction and control in administrative, technical and social matters over ships flying their flag. The responsibility for monitoring ships' compliance with international standards on safety, pollution prevention and on-board living and working conditions lies primarily with the flag state.

Can any ship fly any country's flag?

The 1982 United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is the global treaty on maritime activity. It states that a "genuine link" must exist between the state and the ship registered with it, but again, there is no definition of such a link.

The idea behind a genuine link is to secure more effective implementation of the duties of the flag state. At times, the problem of fraudulent registration of ships has been raised. For instance, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) said in 2017 that approximately 73 vessels had been fraudulently using its flag and illegally fishing in its waters.

How do ships choose, then?

Some countries only register vessels with ties to the country through ownership or crewing ("closed registries"). Other countries allow foreign-owned or controlled vessels to use their flag through an "open registry". Still others choose not to allow the use of their flag for international trade at all. Open registries are now widely used around the world, the IMO says. A 2023 article in The Diplomat said that flagging a ship can mean a vessel has access to state-specific tax breaks, certification, and security measures. This is known as the "flag of convenience," where ships choose states that offer the most benefits. "To that end, most merchant ships are registered in only a handful of countries, with the top eight flag states for 2023 listed as Panama, Liberia, the Marshall Islands, Hong Kong, Singapore, China, Malta, and the Bahamas," it said.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Bilateral Relations

Source: The Hindu

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