Krishna and Godavari River Management Boards

Why in news?

The Centre (Union Ministry of Jal Shakti) has notified the jurisdiction of Krishna and Godavari River Management Boards (KRMB and GRMB).

What is the long-drawn dispute between A.P. and Telangana?

- The dispute between the two States over project works and hydel generation at Srisailam, Nagarjunsagar and Pulichintals reservoirs was going on for long.
- Andhra Pradesh has been demanding notification of the boards' purview for long.
- But Telangana has been opposing it.
- It feels that handing over projects' operation without clarity on the States' share of water would be meaningless.
- Andhra Pradesh has been proposing a few projects, including a lift irrigation scheme for Rayalaseema.
- In turn, Telangana has been coming up with half-a-dozen projects of its own.
- It has been 7 years since the boards were constituted under the provisions of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014.
- The Centre has only notified now the jurisdiction of Krishna and Godavari River Management Boards (KRMB and GRMB).

What does this mean?

- The notification transfers to the Boards the operation of all projects in the two river basins in A.P. and Telangana effective from October 14, 2021.
- The operations include the generation of hydel power.
- The two river boards can now administer, regulate, operate and maintain 36 projects in the Krishna Basin and 71 in the Godavari.
- The Boards are empowered to operate the headworks of barrages, dams, reservoirs, regulating structures, part of canal network, transmission lines and the power houses at the projects.
- The notification authorises the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) to assist the KRMB in the day-to-day management.
- This applies to the specified projects and other works related to security assigned by the KRMB.

What are the challenges?

- The Centre's efforts are aimed at defusing the increasing tension between the two States over water sharing and power generation.
- But implementation is bound to face challenges as regulation of water is going to be a tough job.
- This is especially given the absence of clarity on water share of the two States as also the project-wise allocation.
- [Project-wise supply for irrigation and drinking needs as also hydel generation at projects]

What lies ahead?

- The arrangement is expected to leave the working of Water Resources or Irrigation Department in the States intact.
- The Centre must now see to it that the empowered Boards function in a fair manner.
- Notably, the Union government's decision will be final with regard to matters concerning jurisdiction of the two bodies.
- Both States have their own justification to pursue new water and power projects as several areas await economic development.
- At the same time, the two States should instead focus on water and energy conservation.
- They should pay attention to improving the efficiency of irrigation schemes and hydel reservoirs.

Source: The Hindu

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