Mahanadi River Water Dispute

What is the issue?

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- Sharing of Mahanadi river water has been a bone of contention between the states of Odisha and Chhattisgarh.
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- Odisha is now increasingly showing its resentment to the centre for not intervening and resolving the water dispute.
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What are Odisha's concerns?

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- Odisha is arguing that **Chhattisgarh has been constructing dams and weirs (small dams)** upstream the Mahanadi river.
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- This is being allegedly carried on by the Chhattisgarh government without consulting Odisha.
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- Odisha says this would affect the flow of the river downstream and affect drinking water supply.
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- Also, it would impact the irrigation facilities in Odisha and adversely affect the interests of the farmers.
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- It is also alleged that Chhattisgarh would utilise water far in excess of the equitable share of the waters of Mahanadi.
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- Moreover, the weirs and other projects would impact the flow of water in the Hirakud reservoir, a multipurpose river valley project, which is a lifeline for many in the state.
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What is the way forward?

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- Under the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956 a tribunal can be formed to resolve water disputes.
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- A tribunal could be formed if a state government requests the Centre and the Centre is convinced of the need to form the tribunal.
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- Odisha has long been demanding the formation of a tribunal for resolving the Mahanadi river water dispute.
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- However, notably only three out of the eight existing tribunals have given awards accepted by the states concerned.
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- The Centre has recently put forward the idea of a **permanent tribunal to adjudicate all inter-state river water disputes** for speedy resolution.
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- Materialising this idea could be a solution to the Mahanadi River Water Dispute and many such water disputes among different states.
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Source: The Hindu, Indian Express

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