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# Daily Current Affairs



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# Power projects on Brahmaputra pose serious threat to State



**R DUTTA CHOUDHURY**

**GUAHATI, June 2:** The Chinese hydropower projects on the river Brahmaputra as well as the proposed Yinkiong project on the Indian side of the river may pose a serious threat to Assam in the days to come if adequate precautionary measures are not taken by taking into account various factors like high rainfall, earthquakes, etc.

It is reported that China has already constructed three hydropower projects on the Brahmaputra, while India is also contemplating a major project just after the river enters India from China.

But the consequences can be dan-

gerous as the State already witnessed the devastation from the release of excess water by the hydropower projects following heavy rainfall. The release of excess water from the Kurichhu hydropower project in Bhutan resulted in heavy floods in the lower Assam districts.

When contacted to comment on the issue, Prof Parag Phukan of the Department of Geology of Gauhati University told *The Assam Tribune* that the safety of the hydropower projects would depend on several factors.

He pointed out that due to climate change, the Himalayan glaciers are melting faster than before and if the melting increases, there is every pos-

sibility that the volume of water in the rivers would increase. Now it is not known whether the hydropower projects are designed for such an eventuality.

Prof Phukan said that the second major point to be pondered is whether the projects are prepared to deal with high-intensity rain. This year, the region faced heavy rainfall even before the onset of the monsoon. If that is the case, the water level on the rivers will increase substantially and it is not known whether the projects are designed to deal with such an issue.

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The Chinese government's new five-year plan(2021-2025) is about to approve the construction of dams in the lower stretch of the Brahmaputra River (Yarlung Zangbo in China). It is a matter of serious concern for the lower riparian states namely India and Bangladesh. The move is expected to give China an edge in International diplomacy as it would gain substantial bargaining power post dam construction.

## Why is China developing dams on the Brahmaputra?

- 1 The construction would help the country develop clean energy and curb the rising pollution levels. This would improve citizens' health and augment water security.
- 2 The dam would also allow it to fulfill its international climate commitments under multilateral agreements like the Paris Agreement.
- 3 China's location of the upper riparian state would allow it to control water flow towards the lower riparian states (India and Brahmaputra). This will give greater bargaining power to China in international relations.

## Rules or statutes governing Brahmaputra water sharing

- 1 There is a lack of a cooperative framework for managing river systems in South Asia. There are no binding agreements between India and China on Brahmaputra water sharing.
- 2 India and China signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2002 for the sharing of hydrological data.
  - o Under this China agreed to share information about the discharge of water at three stations from June 1 to October 15 each year. This would improve planning and flood control in India during the monsoon region.
- 3 The two countries have even signed an MoU in 2013 regarding the sharing of water flow data.
- 4 A unilateral stoppage in data sharing was seen from the Chinese side during the 2017 Doklam Standoff but data sharing resumed in 2018.



# Major threat



On April 28, 2004, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1540 which affirmed that the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery constitute a threat to international peace and security. Such a resolution underlines an open secret; many nations in the world, including superpowers and authoritarian regimes, are clandestinely developing such weapons, thereby enhancing the danger that one day these might fall into wrong hands, and render the global community vulnerable to blackmail or even to the threat of extermination. In a timely intervention before the recently held open consultations of the UN Security Council 1540 Committee, Amarnath, the Counsellor at India's UN Mission, cautioned the international community about the "heightened" threat of misuse of biological agents and chemicals as weapons against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic and called on it to address the rapid evolution of proliferation risks. He asserted that new and emerging technologies could increase the danger of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) access by terrorist groups and other non-state actors, which added a serious dimension to threats posed by these weapons to international peace and security. Adding that the growing capabilities of terrorists and other non-state groups to access delivery systems like missiles and unmanned aerial systems have compounded the risks of terrorism using WMDs, he asked the UN 1540 Committee to deliberate on such a major threat.

No doubt, Amarnath at the consultations was obliquely referring to the mystery associated with the outbreak of the novel coronavirus pandemic, first reported in China's Wuhan city in December, 2019. It may be noted that Wuhan has a microbiology research centre where attempts to develop biological weapons are allegedly made, and conspiracy theorists have raised eyebrows at the coincidence that the Covid-19 pandemic originated from that city. Yet, such a reference, far from scoring a political point, instead underlines the danger that these types of research pose to humanity. Amarnath pertinently pointed out that UNSC Resolution 1540 identifies terrorists and terrorist groups as key non-state actors, who may acquire, develop, traffic in or use weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, and that, this threat is thus not in the theoretical realm. Therefore, preventing terrorist groups from acquiring and using weapons of mass destruction must be an urgent responsibility of the international community. He stated it was India's stand that member states must focus on this critical threat during the open consultations while reiterating our nation's commitment to the implementation of resolution 1540. He added that implementation of resolution 1540 being a long-term task, would require continuous and constant efforts from member states, especially for prohibiting access or activities by any non-state actors, in particular for terrorist purposes, related to nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their means of delivery.

In resolution 1540 of the year 2004, the Security Council decided that all States shall refrain from providing any form of support to non-State actors that attempt to develop, acquire, manufacture, possess, transport, transfer or use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their means of delivery, in particular for terrorist purposes

- **Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT):** It prohibits testing of nuclear weapons in the atmosphere, underwater, and in outer space. However, it permits nuclear test explosions underground.

- It was originally signed between the UK, USA and USSR in 1963 to control nuclear proliferation and nuclear arms race.

- Today nearly 120 states are party to it (including India).

- **Treaty for the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons:**

- Coming into force in 1970, it seeks to inhibit the spread of nuclear weapons.

- A total of 191 States have joined the Treaty, including the five nuclear-weapon States.

- The provisions of the Treaty envisage a review of the operation of the Treaty every five years.

- **The 3 important 'pillars' of NPT are**

- **First Pillar:** The States-Parties commit to general and complete disarmament.

- **Second Pillar:** NNWS forgo development or acquiring nuclear weapons.

- **Third Pillar:** States-Parties can access and develop nuclear technology for peaceful applications

- India, Israel, South Sudan and Pakistan never signed NPT and North Korea has declared withdrawal in the past.

- India refused to sign it on the grounds that the nuclear weapons states must agree to a clear plan for nuclear disarmament.

- **Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)**

- It curbs the development of new nuclear weapons and the improvement of existing nuclear weapon designs.

- Its negotiation started in the 1990s and it opened for signatures in 1996.

- It will enter into force after all 44 States listed in Annex 2 to the Treaty have ratified it.

- Once it enters into force, it will be legally-binding against nuclear-testing. CTBT does not explicitly define nuclear weapons and nuclear explosive devices

- India, China, USA, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Iran, Pakistan, Israel and Egypt have not ratified CTBT

- **Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)**

- **Origin:** The Treaty has its origins in the Humanitarian Initiative, a group of non-nuclear weapons states who advocate nuclear disarmament on humanitarian grounds

- **Adoption:** The Treaty was adopted in 2017 and will come into force on Jan 22, 2021, 90 days after the 50th state ratified it.

- It legally binds and prohibits member states from developing, testing, producing, manufacturing, acquiring, possessing, or stockpiling nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices

- **India is not a member of TPNW** as it was not part of its negotiations (like other nuclear weapons states) and believes that this Treaty does not constitute or contribute to the development of any customary international law

- **Nuclear Suppliers Group**

- It is a **48 member, consensus-driven group** of nuclear supplier countries that seek non-proliferation of nuclear weapons through the implementation of two sets of Guidelines (called as "Non-Proliferation Principles") for nuclear exports and nuclear-related exports

- It was formed in 1974 in response to India's nuclear test.

- The NSG holds consultations annually to control nuclear related dual-use commodities and technology.

- This dual-use control list includes materials, equipment, and technology that can be used both for nuclear weapons and fuel-cycle activities and for other, non-nuclear purposes

- India applied for membership to the NSG in 2016, which has been blocked by China (and few other nations) on the grounds that as per NSG guidelines, **India must first be a member of the NPT before its inclusion in NSG.**



## ***Astra Mk-1***

- Recently, the Ministry of Defence has signed a deal with Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) for the supply of **Astra Mk-1 missile** for the Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy.
- The Astra Mk-1 is a beyond visual range (BVR), air-to-air missile (AAM).
- It is designed and developed by the **Defence Research and Development Organisation**.
- BVM missiles are capable of engaging beyond the range of 20 nautical miles or 37 kilometers .
- AAMs are fired from an airborne asset to destroy an airborne target.
- It has the ability to travel at four times the **speed of sound**.
- It is fully integrated on **Sukhoi-30 MKI and Tejas** of the Indian Air Force and the **Mig-29K** of the Navy.

## Daily MCQ for APSC CCE

*Which of the following organs of human body affects by Hepatitis B*

- A. Kidney
- B. Liver
- C. Pancreas
- D. Both A and B

**Correct Answer is B. Liver:**

Hepatitis B is a viral infection that *attacks the liver* and can cause both acute and chronic disease. The virus is most commonly transmitted from mother to child during birth and delivery, as well as through contact with blood or other body fluids during sex with an infected partner, unsafe injections or exposures to sharp instruments.



## Daily MCQ for APSC CCE

*Which of the following state in India became the first state to develop 10GW solar power capacity*

- A. Assam
- B. Gujarat
- C. Rajasthan
- D. Karnataka

**Correct Answer is C. Rajasthan:**

Rajasthan is fast emerging as the solar hub after becoming the first State to develop 10 GW power capacity. Rajasthan occupies the top position with 10,506 MW share in the country's 49,346 MW solar energy capacity.

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