

Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB)

March 2, 2022

In news— Recently, the Union government has decided to adopt a new criterion for selecting members of the BBMB that has evoked sharp criticism from political circles in Punjab and Haryana.

Newly proposed criterion/rules-

- According to the Bhakra Beas Management Board Rules, 1974, the member (power) in BBMB was from Punjab and the member (irrigation) was from Haryana.
- But in the amended rules of 2022, this requirement has been done away with and as per the new rules, **the appointments of Member Power and Member Irrigation can be from any state.**
- However, the **Central government has clarified that the recently notified rules only specify the technical qualifications** required for the functional members (power and irrigation), and that the structure of the BBMB remains unchanged.
- It has also been argued that the changes have been made **in pursuance to a judgement of the Punjab and Haryana High Court** in the **case of Jagmohan Singh Vs Union of India.**
- It has said that **no previously existing member has been dropped** and no new member has been added and representation of all the four member States Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan is secured equally.
- The **benefit accruing to States in the form of power and irrigation** at predetermined percentages also **remains unchanged.**
- Earlier, neither the Punjab Reorganization Act, 1966 nor

the BBMB Rules, 1974 specified the eligibility criteria, qualifications, experience, etc., for appointment as whole-time members of the body.

About Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB)-

- BBMB is **engaged in the regulation of the supply of water and electricity from Bhakra Nangal and Beas Projects** to the states of *Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and Chandigarh*.
- The genesis of BBMB lies in the **Indus Water Treaty** signed between India and Pakistan in 1960.
- The administration, maintenance and operation of Bhakra Nangal project was handed over to Bhakra Management on October 1, 1967.
- On May 15, 1976, when the Beas Projects Works were completed and handed over, the Bhakra Management Board was renamed as Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB).
- The BBMB is a **statutory body constituted under Section 79 and Section 80 of the Punjab Reorganization Act, 1966**.
- The BBMB management includes a chairperson and two whole time members who are from the partner states of Punjab and Haryana.
- They are designated as Member (Power) and Member (Irrigation) from Punjab and Haryana, respectively.
- It also consists of a **representative each from the governments of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh** as nominated by the respective state governments.
- Following the reorganization of Punjab in 1966, Punjab and Haryana were allocated a share of 58:42 in power projects related to BBMB.
- Later, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh were also given a share.

About Indus Waters Treaty-

- It was signed between India and Pakistan and brokered by the World Bank.
- The treaty fixed and delimited the rights and obligations of both countries concerning the use of the waters of the Indus River system.
- As per the provisions of the Indus Waters Treaty, all the waters of the Eastern Rivers (Sutlej, Beas, and Ravi), amounting to around 33 million acre feet (MAF) annually, is allocated to India for unrestricted use and the waters of the Western rivers (Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab) amounting to around 135 MAF to Pakistan.
- Under the treaty, India has been given the right to generate hydroelectricity through run-of-the-river projects on the western rivers, subject to specific criteria for design and operation.
- It also gives the right to Pakistan to raise concerns on the design of Indian hydroelectric projects on western rivers.
- The Treaty also provides an arbitration mechanism to solve disputes amicably.
- A Permanent Indus Commission was set up as a bilateral commission to implement and manage the Treaty.
- The Commission solves disputes arising over water sharing.
- It also makes it mandatory for both countries to appoint water commissioners.

About Bhakra dam-

- It is a concrete **gravity dam on the Sutlej River** in Bhakra Village near Bilaspur in Bilaspur district, Himachal Pradesh in northern India.
- The dam forms the **Gobind Sagar reservoir**.
- In terms of quantity of water, it is the **third largest reservoir in India**, the first being Indira Sagar dam (River Narmada) in Madhya Pradesh and second Nagarjunasagar Dam (River Krishna).

- It was described as “New Temple of Resurgent India” by Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of India.

Beas river-

- The Beas river, called as Vipas in Rig veda and Hyphasis by Greek, rises in the Himalayas in central Himachal Pradesh and flows for some 470 kilometers to the Sutlej River in the Indian state of Punjab.
- The Beas joins the river Sutlej at the south-western boundary of Kapurthala district of Punjab.
- Its main tributaries are Bain, Banganga, Luni and Uhal.