

Mahadayi River Dispute

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In News

The dispute over Mahadayi river began in the 80s and grew stronger in the subsequent decades. The trigger was **Karnataka's move to design a number of dams, canals and barrages to route the Mahadayi river water to the Malaprabha basin.**

History of the Dispute

- Karnataka claimed that channeling the river water into the basin of Malaprabha, a tributary of the Krishna, would **meet the requirements of water-scarce districts of Bagalkot, Gadag, Dharwad and Belgaum.**
- Goa, seeking redressal to the dispute in 2002, sought the constitution of a water disputes tribunal. The state also moved the apex court in 2006 with its demand.
- The **Mahadayi Water Disputes Tribunal was set up on November 16, 2010.**

Details of the Dispute

- Goa contends that its population is **dependent on the river's natural path and any move to divert it would affect its fragile ecosystem.**
- It claimed that the **ingress of saltwater in the river,** which is dependent on monsoons, will ultimately end up **killing the state's mangroves and green belt,** disturb the relationship between the people and the land, as well as the ecological balance.
- The dispute is also around the **amount of water that Goa receives.** Karnataka claims that the **surplus from Mahadayi drains into the sea and that it should be diverted into the deficit basin in Malaprabha** to meet the state's drinking, irrigation, agriculture and power

generation needs.

- Goa has, meanwhile, denied Karnataka's claims saying it is a **water deficient state and limiting the water supply would adversely impact its agriculture production.**
- The **Supreme Court** has, for now, **stayed the construction of dams and canals** by Karnataka on the Mahadayi.

Geography of the River

- Mahadayi river **rises in the Western Ghats, from the Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary** in Khanapur taluk of Karnataka's Belagavi district.
- Flowing westward, it **enters Goa from Sattari taluka** of North Goa districts. A number of streams join the flow of the river to form the Mandovi which is one of two major rivers that flow through Goa. It **joins the Arabian Sea at Panaji.**
- The Mahadayi river stretches 111-km. Over two-thirds of the river's stretch lies in Goa (76km).
- The Mandovi is important for Goa also because it is **one of the few sweet-water sources** at the state's disposal. Most of Goa's 11 rivers contain salt water and Mandovi ensures water security as well as being an important place to source fish for the state.

