



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 22-08-2025

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Krishna River

Syllabus: GS-1; Geography-Rivers

Context

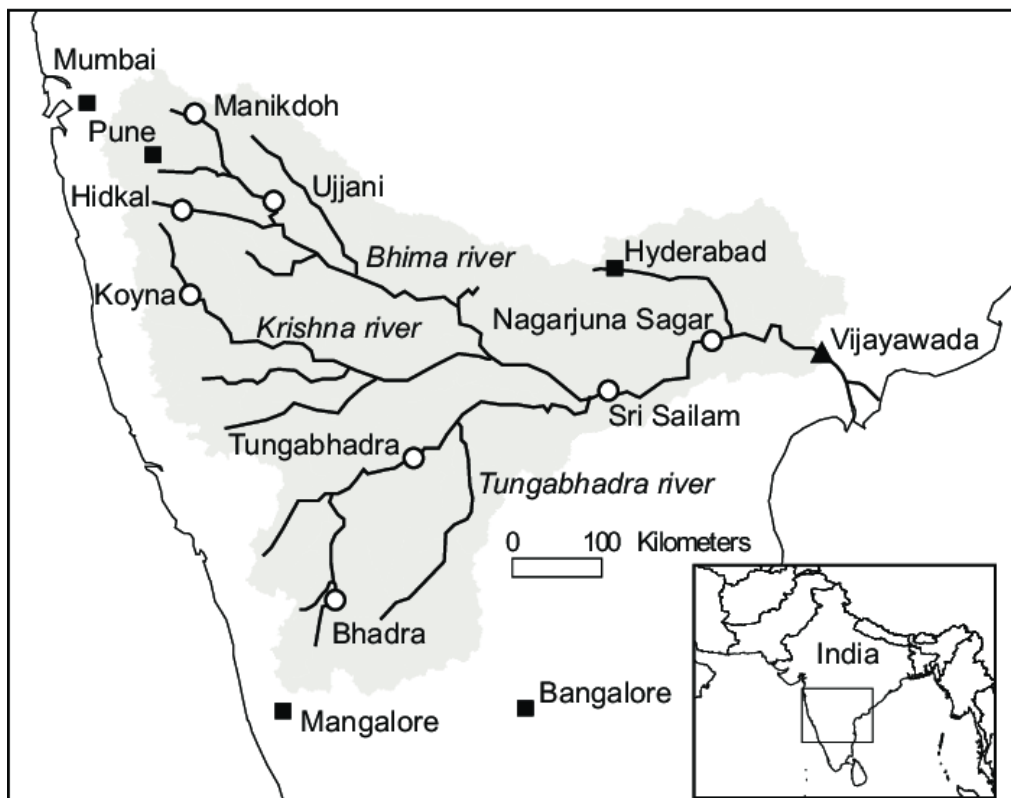
- The Krishna River basin is currently on high alert due to a significant flood-like situation triggered by persistent and heavy rainfall across its catchment areas, particularly in the upper riparian states of Maharashtra and Karnataka.

About Krishna River

- A major river of south-central India and one of the country's longest rivers, with a total course of **about 800 miles (1,290 km)**.

Course

- It rises in **western Maharashtra state in the Western Ghats range near Mahabaleshwar**.
- It flows through the states of **Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh**, before emptying into the **Bay of Bengal at Hamasaladeevi, Andhra Pradesh**.



Basin

- The Krishna River Basin covers an area of **258,948 sq. km (nearly 8% of India's total area)**, bounded by the Balaghat range, Eastern Ghats, and Western Ghats.

Major Tributaries

- The principal tributaries that contribute to its flow—and are currently contributing to the high water levels—are the **Ghataprabha, Malaprabha, Bhima, Tungabhadra, and Musi**.

Didayi tribe

Syllabus: GS-1; Tribes of India- Society

Context

- **Champa Raspeda**, a student from **Malkangiri district, Odisha**, has become the **first member of the Didayi tribe (a PVTG)** to clear **NEET 2025** – a historic milestone for this marginalized community.



About the Didayi Tribe

- **Other Names:** Didai people, Didiya tribe.

- **Location:** Predominantly in **Malkangiri district**, Odisha (Eastern Ghats region).
- **PVTG Status:** Among the **13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)** in Odisha.
- **Ethnic Stock:** **Proto-Australoid** racial group.
- **Language:** Belongs to the **Austroasiatic language family**.
- **Social Structure:**
 - **Patriarchal** society.
 - Villages governed by a **traditional council of elders** for dispute settlement.
- **Religion & Beliefs:** **Animistic**, with strong reverence for **nature and spirits**.
- **Habitat & Settlements:**
 - Small, remote forest villages in hilly terrains.
 - Houses: **Thatched huts with mud walls and bamboo**.
- **Occupation:** Traditionally based on:
 - **Shifting & settled agriculture**
 - **Hunting, gathering, and fishing**

Constitution Amendment

Syllabus: GS-2; Polity

Context

- Recently, Constitution 130th Amendment Bill 2025 is presented in Lok Sabha.

What is a Constitutional Amendment?

- A constitutional amendment is a formal change to the text of the nation's fundamental law (the Constitution). The Indian amendment process, as envisioned by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, is a deliberate blend of rigidity and flexibility:
 - **Flexible like Britain's:** Some provisions can be amended easily by a simple parliamentary majority.
 - **Rigid like the USA's:** Other provisions require a complex process involving super-majorities and state consent. This balance ensures the Constitution is stable yet capable of evolution.

Procedure for Amending the Indian Constitution (Article 368)

The standard procedure under Article 368 involves the following steps:

1. **Initiation:** An amendment bill can be introduced in **either house of Parliament (Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha)**. It can be sponsored by a minister or a private member. The **President's prior permission is not required** to introduce the bill.
2. **Passage in Parliament:** The bill must be passed in **each house by a special majority**.
 - a. **Special Majority:** This means a majority of:
 - i. **The total membership** of that house, *and*
 - ii. **Two-thirds of the members present and voting.**
3. **State Ratification (if required):** If the amendment concerns **federal provisions** (listed below), it must also be **ratified by the legislatures of at least half (50%) of the states** by a **simple majority**.
4. **Presidential Assent:** After being passed by both Houses of Parliament (and by state legislatures, if required), the bill is presented to the **President for assent**. The President **must give his assent**; he **cannot withhold** assent or return the bill for reconsideration.
5. **Becoming an Act:** Upon the President's assent, the bill becomes a **Constitutional Amendment Act**, and the Constitution stands amended.

Key Features of the Procedure:

- **No Joint Sitting:** If there is a deadlock between the two Houses, there is **no provision for a joint sitting** to resolve it.
- **State Initiative:** States **cannot initiate** amendment bills (except for one case—state legislatures can pass a resolution requesting Parliament to create/abolish a State Legislative Council).

Three Methods of Amendment

The Constitution can be amended in three distinct ways:

Method	Majority Required	Provisions Amended	Examples
1. Simple Majority of Parliament	Majority of members present and voting (same as ordinary legislation).	Numerous provisions outside the scope of Article 368.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Admission of new states (Art. 2, 4). - Abolition/creation of State Legislative Councils (Art. 169). - Citizenship (Art. 11). - Salaries & allowances of MPs. - Fifth & Sixth Schedules.
2. Special Majority of Parliament	Special Majority (as defined above).	Most constitutional provisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fundamental Rights (Part III). - Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV). - Most structural provisions.
3. Special Majority + State Consent	Special Majority in Parliament + Ratification by $\geq \frac{1}{2}$ States.	Provisions related to the federal structure of the Constitution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Election of the President (Art. 54, 55). - Extent of executive & legislative powers (Union, State, Concurrent Lists). - Representation of states in Parliament. - Article 368 itself.

Major Limitations: The Basic Structure Doctrine

The most significant limitation on Parliament's amending power is the **Basic Structure Doctrine**, established by the Supreme Court.

- **Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (1973):** This landmark case ruled that while Parliament has the power to amend **any** part of the Constitution, including Fundamental Rights, it **cannot alter the "Basic Structure"** of the Constitution.
- **What is the Basic Structure?** It is not explicitly defined but has been elucidated through various judgments. Key elements include:
 - Supremacy of the Constitution
 - Sovereign, Democratic, and Republican nature of the polity
 - Secularism
 - Federalism
 - Separation of Powers between Legislature, Executive, and Judiciary
 - Judicial Review
 - Rule of Law
 - Dignity of the Individual (linked to Fundamental Rights)
 - Unity and Integrity of the Nation

Other Important Judgments reinforcing this limitation:

- **Minerva Mills Ltd. v. Union of India (1980):** Struck down parts of the 42nd Amendment that made Directive Principles superior to Fundamental Rights and excluded judicial review of constitutional amendments. Affirmed that harmony between Fundamental Rights and DPSPs is part of the Basic Structure.
- **I.R. Coelho v. State of Tamil Nadu (2007):** Held that any law placed in the **Ninth Schedule** after 1973 (the Kesavananda date) is open to judicial review if it violates the Basic Structure.
- **National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) Case (2015):** Struck down the 99th Constitutional Amendment Act and the NJAC Act, 2014, upholding that the **independence of the judiciary** is a part of the Basic Structure.

Criticisms of the Amendment Process

- **Centralized Power:** The power to initiate amendments rests solely with the Union Parliament. States have a very limited role (only ratification in specific cases).
- **No Time Limit for States:** The Constitution does not specify a time limit for state legislatures to ratify an amendment, potentially leaving important amendments in limbo.
- **Vague Basic Structure:** The ambiguity of what constitutes the "Basic Structure" leads to judicial subjectivity and uncertainty.

- **Similar to Ordinary Law:** Except for the majority required, the process of passing an amendment bill is the same as for ordinary legislation, which critics argue diminishes the gravity of amending the supreme law.

Why India needs a national space law urgently

Syllabus: GS-2; Government Policies and Interventions, GS-3; Space Technology

Context

- This article argues that as India's space program rapidly advances with ambitious missions and growing private sector involvement, the lack of a comprehensive national space law creates significant risks and hurdles.
- A robust legal framework is essential to ensure safety, sustainability, and commercial growth in space activities.

1. What does the Outer Space Treaty of 1967 stipulate?

The Outer Space Treaty of 1967 establishes several foundational principles for global space activities:

- **Space as a Common Heritage:** It declares that space is "the province of all mankind."
- **Prohibition of National Appropriation:** It prohibits any country from claiming sovereignty over celestial bodies like the Moon or planets.
- **State Responsibility:** It places responsibility on national governments for all space activities conducted by their citizens, whether by government agencies or private companies.
 - This means a country is internationally liable for the actions of its private space companies.

2. Is it self-executing?

- **No, the Outer Space Treaty is not self-executing.**
 - This means its principles are not automatically enforceable as domestic law in a country that has ratified it.
 - Nations must enact their own **national space legislation** to translate the treaty's international obligations into concrete, enforceable rules, regulations, and procedures for their government and private entities.

3. Why is it important that countries enact their own national space legislations?

As highlighted by UNOOSA officials in the article, national space legislation is crucial because it:

- **Provides Predictability and Clarity:** It creates a stable, clear regulatory environment for both government and private companies to operate in.
- **Ensures Safety and Sustainability:** It allows countries to implement rules for safe operations, space debris management, and accident investigations.
- **Fulfills International Obligations:** It is the primary method for a country to enforce the principles of the Outer Space Treaty within its own jurisdiction, ensuring it meets its international responsibilities and liability requirements.
- **Promotes Commercial Growth:** Clear laws on licensing, liability, insurance, and intellectual property rights foster innovation, attract investment, and build trust in the commercial space sector.

4. What has been India's approach to space legislation?

- India's approach has been "**methodical**" and "**incremental**." Rather than rushing a comprehensive law, it has been developing regulations step-by-step.
- The article notes that the Department of Space is proceeding meticulously, particularly on the technical regulations needed to authorize and supervise commercial space operations, as required by the Outer Space Treaty.
- However, a key issue is that the current regulator, **IN-SPACE** (Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre), operates without formal statutory backing, making its decisions vulnerable to legal challenges.

5. Why is creating affordable insurance frameworks for space startups crucial?

This is crucial for two main reasons:

1. **International Liability:** Under the Outer Space Treaty, the Indian government is ultimately internationally liable for any damages caused by its private companies (e.g., if a satellite collides with another).
 - Requiring private companies to hold **third-party insurance** is a way to financially protect the state and ensure that victims can be compensated without the cost falling on taxpayers.

2. **Enabling Startups:** Space operations involve extremely high-value assets. Affordable insurance is necessary to de-risk these ventures, making it feasible for startups to operate and scale without facing prohibitive costs.

- Without it, innovation and commercial growth would be severely hampered.

Key Priorities for India's Space Law (as identified by Capt. T.H. Anand Rao)

The director of the Indian Space Association outlined essential components for effective Indian space legislation:

- **Statutory Authority for IN-SPACE:** Giving the regulator formal legal power.
- **Clear Licensing Rules:** Transparent processes for approvals to avoid delays.
- **Clear FDI Rules:** Allowing foreign investment to help startups scale.
- **Affordable Insurance Frameworks:** To manage liability and protect startups.
- **IP Protection:** Securing intellectual property rights without excessive government control to encourage innovation and prevent talent from moving abroad.
- **Accident Investigation & Debris Management:** Mandatory procedures for safety and sustainability.
- **An Independent Appellate Body:** To resolve disputes and prevent conflicts of interest.

Kalai-II Hydroelectric Project

Syllabus: GS-3; Energy security, North-East development, ecological sustainability, India-China border infrastructure.

Context

- The **Arunachal Pradesh State Pollution Control Board (APSPCB)** recently held a **public hearing** for environmental clearance of the project.
- The project is being developed by **THDC India Limited** (Tehri Hydro Development Corporation Ltd.).

About the Project

- **Capacity:** 1,200 MW
- **Location:** Anjaw District, Arunachal Pradesh
- **River:** Lohit River (tributary of Brahmaputra)
- **Type:** Run-of-river with pondage project

- **Dam type:** Concrete gravity dam

Technical Features

- **Reservoir capacity:** 318.8 million cubic meters
- **Gross head:** 125 m
- **Turbines:** 6 units × 190 MW each
- **Components:**
 - Upstream & downstream coffer dam
 - Diversion tunnel
 - Intake tunnel
 - Pressure shafts
 - Underground powerhouse
 - Surge chamber
 - Tail race tunnel

Strategic & Environmental Significance

- **Energy security:** Boosts hydropower generation in North-East India, strengthens India's renewable capacity.
- **Border location:** Anjaw is a sensitive border district with China (Tibet); hence, project has strategic value.
- **Ecological concerns:**
 - Impact on Lohit River ecology and aquatic biodiversity.
 - Displacement of tribal communities.
 - Forest clearance and potential landslide risks in fragile Himalayan ecosystem.

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