



Bhadbhut Project

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Why in News

Recently, the Gujarat government has awarded the contract for the **Bhadbhut project** in **Bharuch**.

- The **Inland Waterway Authority of India** has given clearance for this project.
- The project has **faced protests from local fishermen** because it is **likely to impact fishing patterns**, mainly those of **hilsa** (*Tenualosa ilisha*).

Key Points

- **Features of the Project:**



- It is located across the river **Narmada**, 5 km from Bhadbhut village and 25 km from the mouth of the river, where it flows into the **Gulf of Khambhat**.
- The project is **part of the larger Kalpasar Project**, which entails the construction of a **30-km dam across the Gulf of Khambhat** between Bharuch and Bhavnagar districts.
 - Kalpasar Project aims to **store Gujarat's 25% average annual surface water** resources..
 - This reservoir will **store about 8,000 million cubic metres (MCM)** of surface water and will be one of the **world's largest freshwater reservoirs in the sea**.
- **Purpose:**
 - To **prevent salinity ingress**.
 - **Salinity ingress** refers to the process of saltwater invading areas which previously contained only freshwater.
 - Due to the reduced flow of freshwater, saline seawater gushes into the Narmada estuary during high tide, thus increasing salinity along the banks.
 - It will **stop most of the excess water flowing out of the Sardar Sarovar Dam** from reaching the sea and will **create a sweet water lake** of 600 MCM on the river, solving the freshwater problems in Bharuch.
 - This will tap the excess waters of the **Narmada, Mahisagar and Sabarmati rivers** in the reservoir.

- **Impact:**

- The barrage is **expected to interfere with the migration and breeding cycle of hilsa**, blocking their natural entry.
 - Hilsa is a **marine fish which migrates upstream and arrives in the brackish water of the Narmada estuary** near Bharuch for **spawning** usually during the monsoon months of July and August and continues doing so till November.
 - The **reduced outflow of water from the dam, industrial effluents flowing into the river and salinity ingress** are believed to be the major causes of the decline of hilsa.
- Part of **Aliya Bet**, an **island in the delta of the Narmada** and known for **shrimp farming**, is likely to get submerged.

A portion of the forest in Aliya Bet too will get affected by the project.

Source: IE