Conflict Over Nile

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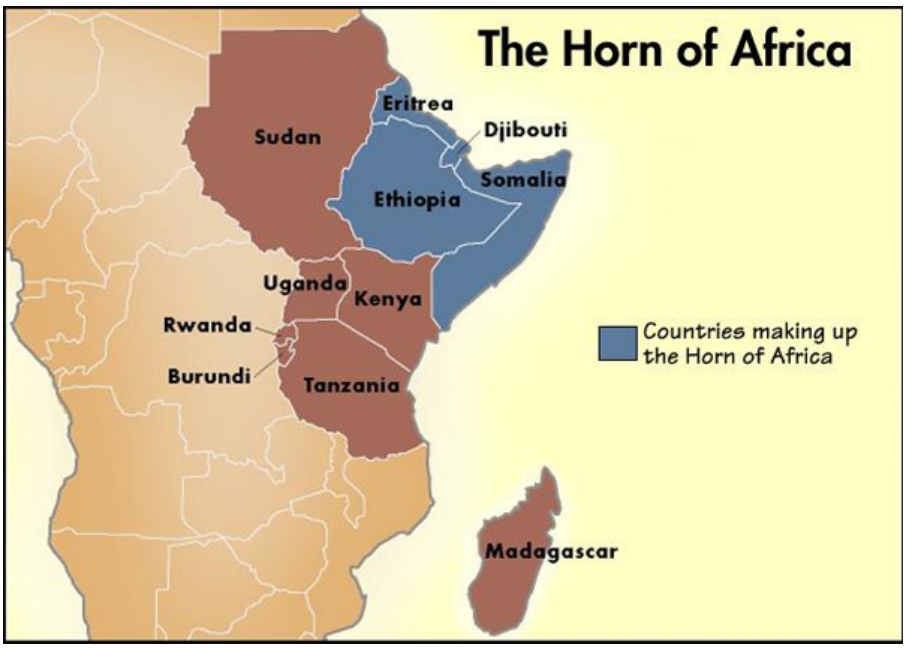
Why in News

Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt have recently agreed to resume negotiations to resolve their **decade-long complex dispute** over the **Grand Renaissance Dam** hydropower project in the Horn of Africa.

- Horn of Africa is the **easternmost extension of African land** and includes the region that is home to the countries of **Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia,** whose cultures have been linked throughout their long history.
- The Grand Renaissance Dam is being constructed by **Ethiopia on the river Nile.**



Key Points

- **Conflict:**
  - **The Nile, Africa's longest river,** has been at the center of a decade-long complex dispute involving several countries that are dependent on the river's waters.
  - **Grand Renaissance Dam:**
    - This 145-meter-tall (475-foot-tall) hydropower project, started by **Ethiopia** is the cause of conflict.
    - Given the **dam's location on the Blue Nile tributary,** it would **allow Ethiopia to gain control** of the flow of the river's waters.
      Blue Nile is a tributary of the Nile river and it carries about two-thirds of the river's water volume and most of the silt.
  - At the forefront of this **dispute are Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan.**
  - **Dam's Importance for Ethiopia:**
    - Ethiopia believes this dam will generate approximately **6,000 megawatts** of electricity which will **support its industrial growth.**
    - It can also **export surplus electricity** to neighbouring regions to generate revenue.
      Neighbouring countries like **Kenya, Sudan, Eritrea and South Sudan** also suffer from **electricity shortages** and they can also **benefit from the hydropower project** if Ethiopia decides to sell electricity to them.
  - **Egypt's Concern:**
    - Egypt lies **downstream** and is concerned that Ethiopia's control over the water could result in **lower water levels within its own borders.**
    - Egypt depends on the Nile for approximately 97% of its drinking water and irrigation supplies.
    - The dam would jeopardise **food and water security** and **livelihoods** of ordinary Egyptian citizens.
  - **Sudan's Stand:**
    - Sudan too is concerned that if Ethiopia were to gain control over the river, it would affect the **water levels Sudan receives.**
    - Sudan is likely to **benefit from the power generated** by the dam.
    - The **regulated flow of the river will save Sudan** from serious flooding in August and September. Thus it has proposed joint management of the dam.
- **Current Situation:**
  - The latest round of talks between **Ethiopia, Sudan and Egypt** occurred with **South Africa** observing the proceedings in its role as the current head of the **African Union's** rotating council, in addition to other international observers.
  - Despite previous talks, the point of contention hasn't changed.

Nile River

- The River Nile is in Africa. It originates in **Burundi, south of the equator,** and flows northward through northeastern Africa, eventually flowing through Egypt and finally draining into the **Mediterranean Sea.**
- **Source:**

  The source of the Nile is sometimes considered to be **Lake Victoria,** but the lake itself has feeder rivers of considerable size like the **Kagera River.**
- The Nile River is considered as one of the **longest rivers** in the world.
- The Nile has a length of about **6,695 kilometers** (4,160 miles).
- The Nile basin is huge and includes parts of **Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, Congo (Kinshasa), Kenya.**
- The **Nile River** forms an **arcuate delta** as it empties into the Mediterranean Sea. Deltas with **triangular or fan-shape** are called **arcuate (arc-like) deltas.**
- The Nile is formed by three principal streams: **the Blue Nile, the Atbara, and the White Nile.**

Way Forward

- To solve the **conflict peacefully, mediation and facilitation** by the neighbouring countries and the international bodies are necessary.
- In case, the attempt to resolve the conflict does not work out by facilitating negotiations between the conflict parties, then **a compensation method** can be adopted which would need the countries to compensate each others' losses.
- All countries involved in the issue **need to peacefully resolve the issue** so that they can **reap the advantages** of the dam and **their peace and security** is restored again.

Source:IE