

GEOGRAPHY**Mahadevi River**

Union environment Minister was heckled by protesters for giving a go-ahead to Karnataka for the Kalasa Banduri project, which aims to provide drinking water to three north Karnataka districts by diverting water from the Mahadayi.

About:

- The Mhadei (or Mahadayi/Mahadeyi) River is described as the lifeline of the Indian state of Goa.
- It originates from a cluster of 30 springs at Bhimgad in the Western Ghats in the Belgaum district of Karnataka. Then it enters Goa and finally drains in Arabian sea.
- The Mandovi and the Zuari are the two primary rivers in the state of Goa.
- Mandovi joins with the Zuari at a common point at Cabo Aguada, forming the Mormugao harbour.
- The two rivers are linked by Cumbarjue Canal.
- Panaji, the state capital and Old Goa, the former capital of Goa, are both situated on the left bank of the Mandovi.
- The river Mapusais a tributary of the Mandovi.
- Three large freshwater isles — Divar, Chorao and Vashee are present in the Mandovi near the town of Old Goa. The island of Chorao is home to the Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary, named after the renowned ornithologist Salim Ali.

Dispute:

- Tensions over sharing the Mhadei's water started in the 1980s as Karnataka designed several dams and canals to channel water to the Malaprabha basin to address endemic water shortages in its northern districts of Belagavi, Dharwad, Gadag, and Bagalkot.
- The central government set up the Mhadei Water Disputes Tribunal in 2010.
- In August 2018, the Tribunal awarded 13.42 thousand million cubic (TMC) feet from the Mhadei basin — including 3.9 TMC feet for diversion into the depleted Malaprabha basin through the Kalasa-Banduri project — to Karnataka.
- Goa and Karnataka have both challenged the award, and the matter is pending in the Supreme Court.

CONSTITUTION AND POLITY**Quid Pro Quo**

As the proceedings to impeach President Donald Trump unfold in the United States Congress, the expression “quid pro quo” has been heard over and over — something that the President and his supporters have insisted cannot be established in his dealings with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky, thus absolving him of blame.

About:

- Quid pro quo is a Latin expression which means “something given or received for something else”.
- In the 1500s in England, it was often used in the sense of apothecaries substituting one medicine for the other, by accident or design. It has also been part of trade lexicon as a term for the barter system.
- In legal terminology, Quid pro quo is now used to imply a mutually beneficial deal between two parties. In political contexts, like the one involving Trump currently, it is often seen as an essential requirement to suggest or establish corruption, wrongdoing, or impropriety.
- The expression is frequently used in India as well. Most recently, Rahul Gandhi alleged ahead of the Lok Sabha elections that rules were bent to get the offset contract of the Rafale jet deal for Anil Ambani — the BJP's defence then was that the government had no say in the choice of offset partner, and no quid pro quo could thus be made out.

Citizenship by Registration

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has cancelled the citizenship of Chennamaneni Ramesh who is a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) from Vemulawada in Telangana. The MHA held that

Ramesh obtained citizenship under section 5(1)(f) of the Citizenship Act, 1955 in the year 2009 by means of fraud, false representation and concealment of facts and thus, his action attracts provisions of section 10(2) of the Act. It is to be noted that a person who is not an Indian citizen is not eligible to contest or vote in any election.

Section 5(1)(f)

- Section 5 of the Citizenship Act 1955 deals with acquisition of citizenship by registration.
- Section 5(1)(f) states one of the categories eligible for the case of registration. That is, a person of full age and capacity
- Who, or either of his parents, was earlier citizen of independent India, and
- Has been residing in India for one year immediately before making an application for registration.

Section 10(2)

- Section 10 deals with deprivation of citizenship.
- Section 10(2) provides that the Central Government may, by order, deprive a citizen (who is such by registration) of Indian citizenship, if it is satisfied that:
- The registration was obtained by means of fraud, false representation or concealment of any material fact; or
- That citizen has shown himself by act or speech to be disloyal or disaffected towards the Constitution of India; or
- That citizen has, during any war in which India may be engaged, unlawfully traded or communicated with an enemy or been engaged in, or associated with, any business that was to his knowledge carried on in such manner as to assist an enemy in that war; or
- That citizen has, within five years after registration or naturalisation, been sentenced in any country to imprisonment for a term of not less than two years; or
- That citizen has been ordinarily resident out of India for a continuous period of seven years.
- The law, however, also provides for checks to ensure that citizenship is not cancelled arbitrarily.
- Section 10(3) of the Act says that the Central Government shall not deprive a person of citizenship under this section unless it is satisfied that it is not conducive to the public good that person should continue to be a citizen of India.

GOVERNANCE- WELFARE SCHEMES, E-GOVERNANCE, SERVICES ETC.

Himayat Mission

The Jammu and Kashmir administration is working on effective implementation of Himayat Mission. Under this, 42 projects have been sanctioned for training and placement target of 68,134 youths.

About:

- Himayat is a placement linked skill training programme for unemployed youth of Jammu and Kashmir.
- This initiative of Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India is being implemented by the Himayat Mission Management Unit, J&K State Rural Livelihoods Mission (JKSRLM), Govt of J&K within the state.
- Himayat is under implementation in the State since 2011. The Programme was recommended by Dr. C. Rangarajan Committee report which was submitted to the Prime Minister in 2011.
- Under it, Youth are provided free skill training for a duration of 3 to 12 months, in a range of skills for which there is good market demand. At the end of the training, the youth are assured of a job and there is one year post-placement tracking to see how they are faring.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS

Hong Kong Convention For Recycling Of Ships

The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for enactment of Recycling of Ships Bill, 2019 and accession to the Hong Kong International Convention for Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships, 2009.

Recycling of Ships Bill, 2019:

- The Government of India has decided to enact Recycling of Ships Bill, 2019, to provide for the regulation of recycling of ships by setting certain international standards and laying down the statutory mechanism for enforcement of such standards.
- The proposed Bill restricts and prohibits the use or installation of hazardous material, which applies irrespective of whether a ship is meant for recycling or not. Ships shall be recycled only in authorized ship recycling facilities.
- It has also been decided to accede to the Hong Kong International Convention for Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships, 2009.
- When the Hong Kong Convention comes into force, its provisions will be implemented under the provisions of the Recycling of Ships Bill, 2019 and rules and regulations framed there under.

Hong Kong Convention for Recycling of Ships:

- Full name: The Hong Kong International Convention for the safe and environmentally sound recycling of ships.
- Objective: To make the ship recycling industry safe for its workers and the environment.
- Agencies involved: The convention was adopted in 2009 by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), which is a specialist agency of the United Nations (U.N).
- Timeline: It was adopted in 2009. It will enter into force two years after "15 states, representing 40% of the world merchant shipping by gross tonnage, and on average 3% of recycling tonnage for the previous 10 years, have signed and ratified it."

INDIAN ECONOMY**Chit Funds (Amendment) Bill, 2019**

Lok Sabha passed the Chit Funds (Amendment) Bill, 2019.

About:

- The Bill seeks to amend the Chit Funds Act, 1982. The 1982 Act regulates chit funds, and prohibits a fund from being created without the prior sanction of the state government.
- Names for a chit fund: The Act specifies various names which may be used to refer to a chit fund. These include chit, chit fund, and kuri. The Bill additionally inserts 'fraternity fund' and 'rotating savings and credit institution' to this list.
- Substitution of terms: The amendment bill defines –
 - 'gross chit amount' as the sum of subscriptions payable by all the subscribers of a chit;
 - 'share of discount' as the share of the subscriber in the amount kept apart for running the chit; and
 - 'net chit amount' as the difference between chit amount and the amount kept apart for running the chit.
- Presence of subscribers through video-conferencing: The Act specifies that a chit will be drawn in the presence of at least two subscribers. The Bill seeks to allow these subscribers to join via video-conferencing.
- Foreman's commission: Under the Act, the 'foreman' is responsible for managing the chit fund.
- He is entitled to a maximum commission of 5% of the chit amount. The Bill seeks to increase the commission to 7%.
- The Bill allows the foreman a right to lien against the credit balance from subscribers.
- Aggregate amount of chits: The Bill increases the maximum amount of chit funds which may be collected to (i) 3 lakh rupees for chits conducted by individuals, and for every individual in a firm with less than four partners, and (ii) 18 lakh rupees for firms with four or more partners.
- Application of the Act: Currently, the Act does not apply to any chit where the amount is less than Rs 100. The Bill removes the limit of Rs 100, and allows the state governments to specify the base amount over which the provisions of the Act will apply.

Related Info: Under a chit fund, people agree to pay a certain amount from time to time into a fund. Periodically, one of the subscribers is chosen by drawing a chit to receive the prize amount from the fund.

Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) In 2018

Ministry of Tourism provided data on Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India in 2018 to Parliament.

Key highlights:

- Bangladesh, the United States, and the United Kingdom were the top three countries from where foreign tourists arrived in India in 2018
- Among individual states, Tamil Nadu saw the most visits by foreign tourists in 2018 — over 60 lakh in that year. Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh followed, with over 50 lakh and 37 lakh visits respectively.
- There is a consistent increase in overall foreign tourist arrivals as well as foreign exchange earnings over the years 2016, 2017, and 2018.

Disinvestment

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has accorded 'In-principle' approval for strategic disinvestment in five public sector units (PSUs) as per the details below.

About:

- Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (BPCL): Government will sell its entire 53.29% stake in BPCL. However, BPCL's 61.65% share in Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL) will be retained and will be transferred to a public sector company operating in the oil and gas space.
- Shipping Corporation of India Ltd. (SCI): The government will sell its entire 63.75% stake in the SCI and will cede management control.
- Container Corporation of India Ltd. (CONCOR): Government will sell its 30.8% stake in the CONCOR and hand over management control.
- Tehri Hydro Development Corporation India Limited (THDCIL): The government will sell its entire 74.23% stake in THDCIL to NTPC Ltd. and also cede control.
- North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Limited (NEEPCO): The government will sell its entire 100% stake in the NEEPCO to NTPC Ltd. and also cede control.

Related Info:

- The government proposes to raise Rs 1.05 lakh crore from disinvestment in the current financial year. In the current fiscal year, by the end of September, the government had only raised Rs 12,359 crore through disinvestment.
- It had exceeded asset-sale targets of Rs 1 lakh crore in FY18 and Rs 80,000 crore in FY19.
- At current market value, the government can raise about Rs 63,000 crore from selling its entire 53.3% stake in BPCL. Big international oil companies including Saudi Aramco are said to be keen on investing in BPCL, given the refiner's strong presence in fuel retailing among other things.

ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES

Green Steel

The term 'Green Steel' refers to a steelmaking process that lowers greenhouse gas emissions, cuts costs and improves the quality of steel. This can be done through usage of gas in place of coal, recycling steel etc.

- To move towards 'Green Steel', the Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry has launched Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga project in the Eastern India, which can provide gas to all the Steel plants, located in the area.
- The gas will help in replacing coal in steel making process as usage of coal leads to large amount of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) emissions.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns: What do you understand by disinvestment? Critically examine the policy of disinvestment in India ?

Ans:

Disinvestment means to the act of selling or liquidating of assets. The process of dilution of a government's stake in a PSU (Public Sector Undertaking) is disinvestment. It allows the transferring of the government's enormous public debt of PSU to the private sector. Disinvestments, in most cases, are primarily motivated by the optimisation of resources to deliver maximum returns.

Disinvestment Policy:

- The government of India has decided to privatise the Public sector enterprises in a gradual and phased manner through disinvestment.
- It will be done by bringing down government's equity shares in all non-strategic Public sector enterprises to 26% or lower.
- The Government has decided to permit up to 49% disinvestment of equity so that the government would continue to hold 51%.

Benefits of disinvestment policy:

Benefit of government:

- It will reduce government's debt.
- It will save resources by spending less on PSUs which can be used by government for welfare purposes.
- It will help in reducing fiscal deficit.
- It enable government to raise funds that can be used to strengthen physical and social infrastructure.

Benefit of society:

- It will increase government's focus on society welfare.
- It will ensure resources in the hands of public.
- Consumers will get better services.
- Companies will expand that will lead to more jobs.

Benefit of market:

- It would bring more competition into various sectors thus improving the quality of services.
- It will increase market profitability and hence companies' profits.
- Benefit of PSUs:
 - It will ensure modernisation of PSUs with changing times.
 - It distribute loss and failure risks of PSUs to the private sector.

Issues in disinvestment policy:

- There are controversies about the prices at which some of the initial shares were sold, even though all the disinvestment has been done through an auction process.
- It has been just a resource raising exercise by the government than reforming PSU.
- The valuation of shares is affected by the decision not to reduce government holdings to less than 51 per cent.
- With the continuing majority ownership of the government the disinvested public enterprises would continue to operate within the constraints of the public sector.
- Loss making units don't attract investment so easily.
- It may lead to emergence of private monopolies.
- Mere change of ownership from public to private does not ensure higher efficiency and productivity.
- It may lead to loss of jobs of many workers. Private sector governed by profit motive has a tendency to use capital intensive techniques which will worsen unemployment problem in India.

Divestment should not be seen as a short-term fiscal measure; instead, it should be part of a long term plan to improve the production of goods and services in India. The government should strengthened the regulatory framework that ensures efficient market conditions.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQs

1. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has recently accorded 'In-principle' approval for strategic disinvestment of which of the following public sector units (PSUs)?
 1. Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (BPCL)
 2. Shipping Corporation of India Ltd. (SCI)
 3. Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

(a) 1 only **(b) 1 and 2 only** (c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3
2. The river Mapusa is a tributary of which of the following river?

(a) Mandovi (b) Krishna (c) Netravati (d) Narmada
3. With reference to the Hong Kong Convention for Recycling of Ships, consider the following statements:
 1. The convention was adopted in 2009 by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), which is a specialist agency of the United Nations (U.N).
 2. It was adopted and entered into force in 2009.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
4. Himayat Mission is an initiative of which one of the following Union Ministries?
 - (a) Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
 - (b) Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
 - (c) Ministry of Human Resource Development
 - (d) Ministry of Rural Development**
5. With reference to the data provided in Parliament on Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) in India in 2018, consider the following statements:
 1. Bangladesh, the United States, and the United Kingdom were the top three countries from where foreign tourists arrived in India in 2018.
 2. Among individual states, Gujarat saw the most visits by foreign tourists in 2018.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
6. What is the meaning of a Latin expression 'Quid pro quo', recently seen in news?
 - (a) Something given or received for something else**
 - (b) A sincere intention to be fair
 - (c) Seize the day
 - (d) Work undertaken voluntarily and without payment
7. With reference to the Chit Funds (Amendment) Bill, 2019, consider the following statements:
 1. The Bill seeks to amend the Chit Funds Act, 1982.
 2. The Bill forbids the subscribers to join via video-conferencing.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
8. Consider the following statements:
 1. A person who is not an Indian citizen is eligible to contest elections.
 2. The Citizenship Act, 1955 contains provisions with respect to the acquisition and termination of Indian citizenship.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2