



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 08-06-2024

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Cold Lava

Syllabus: GS-1; Geography- Lava, Volcano

Context

- *'Cold lava' floods Philippines village after eruption*



Cold lava

- *Cold lava, also known as lahar in Indonesian and Tagalog, is a mixture of **volcanic material like ash, sand, and pebbles** that mixes with heavy rain or snow melt to flow down a volcano's slopes.*
- *The phrase 'cold lava' is a translation of the term "lahar" in Indonesian and Tagalog. It flows similarly to wet concrete and can travel quickly.*
- *The mixture can flow quickly, like wet concrete, and can reach speeds of hundreds of kilometers per hour.*
- *Cold lava can spread up to 60 kilometers away from the volcano and can crush or bury almost anything in its path, including people and homes.*
- *The United States Geological Survey considers cold lava to be **more destructive and deadlier than regular lava flows.***

What is the coldest type of lava?

- **Carbonatite**, *Because of its very unusual composition, carbonatite is literally the coolest lava on earth, erupting at 500-600 degrees Centigrade (930-1,100 degrees F), compared with 1,160 degrees C (2,120 degrees F) for lava from Kilauea's current eruption.*

What does cold lava turn into?

- *Lava cools to form **volcanic rock** as well as **volcanic glass**.*
- *Magma can also extrude into Earth's atmosphere as part of a violent volcanic explosion.*
- *This magma solidifies in the air to form volcanic rock called **tephra**.*

Know more

Mount Kanlaon

- *Kanlaon, also known as Mount Kanlaon and Kanlaon Volcano, is an active **andesitic stratovolcano** and the highest mountain on the island of Negros in the Philippines, as well as the **highest peak in the Visayas**, with an elevation of 2,465 m (8,087 ft) above sea level.*
- *Mount Kanlaon ranks as the 42nd-highest peak of an island in the world.*
- *The volcano straddles the provinces of Negros Occidental and Negros Oriental, approximately 30 km (19 mi) southeast of Bacolod, the capital and most populous city of Negros Occidental and whole island.*
- *It is one of the active volcanoes in the Philippines and part of the **Pacific Ring of Fire**.*
- *The volcano has three hot springs on its slopes: **Mambukal Hot Springs** on the northwest, **Bucalan Hot Spring** and **Bungol Hot Spring**.*
- *Its adjacent volcanic edifices are Mount Silay and Mount Mandalagan, north of Kanlaon.*

Special Marriage Act 1954

Syllabus: GS-2: Polity – Marriage laws.

Context:

- *The Madhya Pradesh High Court's order ruling declining to give protection to a couple on the ground that a marriage between a Muslim man and Hindu woman will not be valid, even if registered under the **Special Marriage Act (SMA), 1954**, reflects an incredible misunderstanding of the law.*

More about news:

- **Incorrect Judgment:** *Judge wrongly ruled a Muslim-Hindu marriage invalid under the Special Marriage Act (SMA) 1954.*
- **Judge's Misunderstanding:** *The judge used Muslim law, which says a Muslim can't marry an "idolatress," to assess the marriage.*
- **Purpose of SMA:** *SMA allows inter-faith couples to marry without religious rituals.*
- **Irrelevant Question:** *The judge asked if the marriage would be valid under Muslim law, which was irrelevant.*
- **Counsel's Argument:** *Counsel correctly argued that SMA overrides personal religious laws.*
- **Judge's Contradiction:** *Judge acknowledged SMA bypasses religious rituals but claimed invalid personal law marriages can't be legalized under SMA.*
- **Prohibited Relationships:** *Judge misunderstood a provision meant to prevent prohibited relationships.*
- **Secular Marriage Issue:** *The case wrongly applied Muslim law despite the woman not wanting to convert.*
- **Impact on SMA:** *This judgment undermines SMA and could force people into religious conversion to marry.*
- **Uniform Civil Code:** *The ruling could hinder efforts towards a uniform civil code and give undue importance to Muslim personal law over SMA.*

About Special Marriage Act (SMA), 1954

Background and Purpose

- **Enactment:** *The Special Marriage Act was enacted by the Parliament of India in 1954.*
- **Objective:** *To provide a special form of marriage for Indian citizens and Indian nationals living abroad, irrespective of the religion or faith followed by either party.*
- **Purpose:** *To facilitate inter-religious marriages and to provide a secular alternative to religious laws.*

Key Provisions

Scope of the Act:

- *Applicable to all Indian citizens irrespective of religion, caste, or community.*
- *Also applicable to Indian nationals residing abroad.*

Conditions for Marriage:

- *Both parties must consent to the marriage.*
- *Both parties must be of sound mind and capable of giving valid consent.*
- *The male must be at least 21 years old and the female must be at least 18 years old.*
- *Neither party should have a spouse living at the time of marriage.*
- *The parties should not fall within the degrees of prohibited relationship unless permitted by their custom.*

Procedure for Marriage:

- **Notice of Intended Marriage:** *Parties must give notice in writing to the Marriage Officer of the district where at least one party has resided for not less than 30 days prior to the notice.*
- **Publication of Notice:** *The Marriage Officer displays the notice in a conspicuous place in his office.*
- **Objections:** *Any person can object to the marriage within 30 days of the notice. The Marriage Officer must inquire into the objections.*
- **Declaration and Signing:** *If no objection is sustained, both parties must appear before the Marriage Officer, sign a declaration in the presence of three witnesses, and the declaration must be countersigned by the Marriage Officer.*
- **Certificate of Marriage:** *The Marriage Officer issues a Certificate of Marriage, which is conclusive evidence of the marriage.*

Registration of Marriage:

- *The marriage is registered in the Marriage Certificate Book maintained by the Marriage Officer.*
- *The certificate of marriage, once issued, is conclusive proof of the marriage.*

Consequences of Marriage under the Act:

- *The marriage provides legitimacy to children born from the union.*
- *Inheritance rights are governed by the Indian Succession Act, 1925.*
- *The Act overrides personal laws in matters related to marriage, divorce, and succession.*

Dissolution of Marriage:

- **Divorce by Mutual Consent:** *Both parties can jointly file for divorce on the grounds of mutual consent.*
- **Other Grounds for Divorce:** *Cruelty, desertion, adultery, etc., similar to the grounds in the Hindu Marriage Act.*
- **Judicial Separation:** *The Act also provides for judicial separation on similar grounds as for divorce.*
- **Provisions for Maintenance:** *The Act allows for the provision of maintenance to the spouse during and after the divorce proceedings.*

Significance

- **Secular Nature:** *The SMA is a secular law, meaning it is not bound by any religious rituals or customs.*
- **Inter-religious Marriages:** *It provides a legal framework for inter-religious and inter-caste marriages.*
- **Gender Equality:** *The Act ensures gender equality in marriage and divorce proceedings.*
- **Legal Certainty:** *The Certificate of Marriage under the Act is a legally recognized document providing certainty and protection under the law.*

Challenges and Criticisms

- **Social Stigma:** *Despite the legal provisions, social acceptance of inter-religious and inter-caste marriages remains low.*
- **Bureaucratic Hurdles:** *The procedure involving notice and objections can be cumbersome and subject to misuse.*
- **Lack of Awareness:** *Many people are unaware of the provisions of the SMA, leading to underutilization.*

Coalition Government

Syllabus: GS-2: Polity - Coalition government.

Context:

- *The NDA has returned to power for a historic third straight term at the Centre, but the BJP itself has fallen short of the majority mark of 272. That implies there will be a coalition government in the real sense of the word.*

Overview of coalition government:

- *A coalition government is formed when multiple political parties cooperate, usually because no single party can achieve a majority on its own. The coalition is often temporary and based on a common minimum program or agenda.*

Types of Coalition Governments

- **Pre-election Coalition:** *Parties form alliances before elections and agree to share power if they win.*
- **Post-election Coalition:** *Formed after elections when no party secures an absolute majority, leading to negotiations and alliances.*
- **Grand Coalition:** *Major political parties, often from different ideological spectrums, come together, typically during national crises.*
- **Minority Coalition:** *A government formed by a coalition of parties that do not hold a majority but can govern with the support of other parties or independents.*

Reasons for Coalition Governments

- **Electoral Fragmentation:** *Multiple parties with significant support but no dominant player.*
- **Diverse Political Landscape:** *Representation of various interests, regions, and communities.*
- **Strategic Alliances:** *Parties align to combine their vote share and increase electoral success.*
- **Checks and Balances:** *Coalitions can act as a counter to any single party's dominance, promoting democratic balance.*

Features of Coalition Governments

- **Shared Power:** *Multiple parties share ministerial and administrative responsibilities.*
- **Common Minimum Program (CMP):** *A negotiated policy agenda acceptable to all coalition partners.*
- **Negotiation and Compromise:** *Constant negotiation on policy issues to maintain the coalition.*
- **Instability and Fragility:** *Susceptible to disagreements and splits, leading to potential instability.*

Examples of Coalition Governments in India

- **First Coalition Government (1977-79):** *Janata Party coalition, post-Emergency period.*
- **National Front Government (1989-91):** *Led by V.P. Singh, supported by BJP and Left Front.*
- **United Front Government (1996-98):** *Supported by Congress from outside, prime ministers included H.D. Deve Gowda and I.K. Gujral.*

- **National Democratic Alliance (NDA):** Led by BJP, first formed in 1998 under Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
- **United Progressive Alliance (UPA):** Led by Congress, formed in 2004 under Manmohan Singh.

Merits of Coalition Governments

- **Inclusive Governance:** Represents a broader spectrum of public opinion and interests.
- **Consensus Building:** Encourages cooperation and consensus among different political groups.
- **Prevent Authoritarianism:** Reduces the risk of autocratic governance by distributing power.
- **Flexibility:** Adaptable to changing political dynamics and needs.

Demerits of Coalition Governments

- **Policy Paralysis:** Difficulty in decision-making due to conflicting interests among coalition partners. Example: UPA government 2004-2014.
- **Instability:** Prone to frequent changes and government collapses.
- **Compromised Governance:** Quality of governance can suffer due to constant negotiations and compromises.
- **Political Opportunism:** Parties may join or leave coalitions based on political convenience rather than ideological commitment.

Constitutional and Legal Provisions

- **Anti-Defection Law:** Tenth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, to prevent party-hopping and ensure stability.
- **Collective Responsibility:** Article 75(3) and Article 164(2) of the Constitution ensure that the Council of Ministers is collectively responsible to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assembly, respectively.
- **Role of the President/Governor:** In coalition scenarios, the President or Governor plays a crucial role in inviting parties to form the government.

Challenges in Coalition Governments

- **Coordination and Management:** Effective management of coalition partners is critical.
- **Policy Implementation:** Ensuring all coalition partners agree on and implement policies.
- **Leadership Issues:** Balancing leadership roles and positions among coalition partners.

- **Electoral Promises:** *Difficulty in fulfilling diverse and sometimes conflicting promises made by different parties.*

Comparative Perspective

- **Germany:** *Known for stable coalition governments, often between CDU/CSU and SPD.*
- **Italy:** *Frequent government changes and instability due to coalition politics.*
- **United Kingdom:** *Experienced coalition government during 2010-2015 (Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition).*

Practice Question

Q. Analyze the impact of coalition governments on policy-making and political stability in India, considering both the merits and demerits. Illustrate your answer with relevant examples from recent history. (15 marks, 250 words)

Greedflation

Syllabus: GS-3; Economy- Inflation

Context

- *This is in the context of how - To explain the increase, President Joe Biden and some policy experts offer the simplistic and misleading narrative of "greedflation" for the rise in the cost of Living of common people*

What is Greedflation?

- *Greedflation is a portmanteau of two words: "greed" and "inflation."*
- *It refers to a **situation where companies or businesses take advantage of market demand by increasing prices excessively, leading to higher inflation rates.***
- *Many believe this phenomenon is driven by greed, hence the name "greed"flation.*
- *Greedflation has been attributed to surging global prices and ballooning corporate profits.*

The impact of greedflation

- *Families are particularly affected by greedflation as it can significantly increase the **cost of essential goods and services**, making it more expensive to provide for their families.*

- *Rising cost of education*
- *Increased price of groceries*
- *Higher cost of family activities*
- *Less money for savings and investments*
- *It can also contribute to the perception that some companies are cashing in rather than using record profits to increase **wages and benefits**.*

The “shrinkflation” effect

- *If greedflation is the practice of artificially inflating prices, shrinkflation refers to **providing less of a product or service without reducing the price**.*
- *For example, “shrinking” the size of a box of cereal or laundry detergent but still charging the same price as before.*

Inflammatory bowel disease

Syllabus: GS-3: Science and Technology –diseases.

Context:

- *Researchers at the Francis Crick Institute, working with UCL and Imperial College London, have discovered a new biological pathway that is a principal driver of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) and related conditions, and which can be targeted using existing drugs.*

IBD Prevalence:

- *Affects about **5% of the global population**.*
- *Affects **1 in 10** people in the UK.*
- *Over 500,000 people in the UK living with IBD as of 2022.*
- ***Current Treatments:** Not effective for all patients, with challenges in developing new drugs due to incomplete understanding of IBD causes.*
- ***Research Focus:** A 'gene desert' area of DNA linked to IBD.*

Findings:

- ***Enhancer:** A DNA section acting like a volume dial for genes.*
- ***Macrophages:** Enhancer only active in these immune cells.*
- ***ETS2 Gene:** Enhanced by the enhancer, higher levels increase IBD risk.*

- **Genetic Editing:** *Showed ETS2 is crucial for inflammatory functions in macrophages.*

Impact:

- *Increased ETS2 turns macrophages into inflammatory cells resembling those in IBD patients.*
- *Many IBD-linked genes are part of the ETS2 pathway, confirming its role in causing IBD.*

ETS2 as a Target:

- *Specific drugs to block ETS2 don't exist.*
- *MEK inhibitors, used for other conditions, might reduce ETS2 activity.*

Testing MEK Inhibitors:

- *Reduced inflammation in macrophages and IBD patient gut samples.*
- *Side effects in other organs are a concern.*
- *Collaboration with LifeArc to target delivery directly to macrophages.*

Genetic Variant and Inflammation:

- *ETS2 enhancer variant is very common in people with IBD (95% carry one or two copies).*

Ancient Origins:

- *The variant is ancient, existing for at least 500,000 to one million years.*
- *Present in Neanderthals and other archaic humans.*

Evolutionary Benefit:

- *ETS2 activation was crucial for early bacterial infection responses.*
- *Provided protective effects before antibiotics were available.*
- *Remains common, especially in regions with high infectious disease rates.*