



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 23-04-2024

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Lakshmana Tirtha

Syllabus: GS-1; Rivers of India

Context

- *Lakshmana Teertha river dries up due to shortage of rainfall*

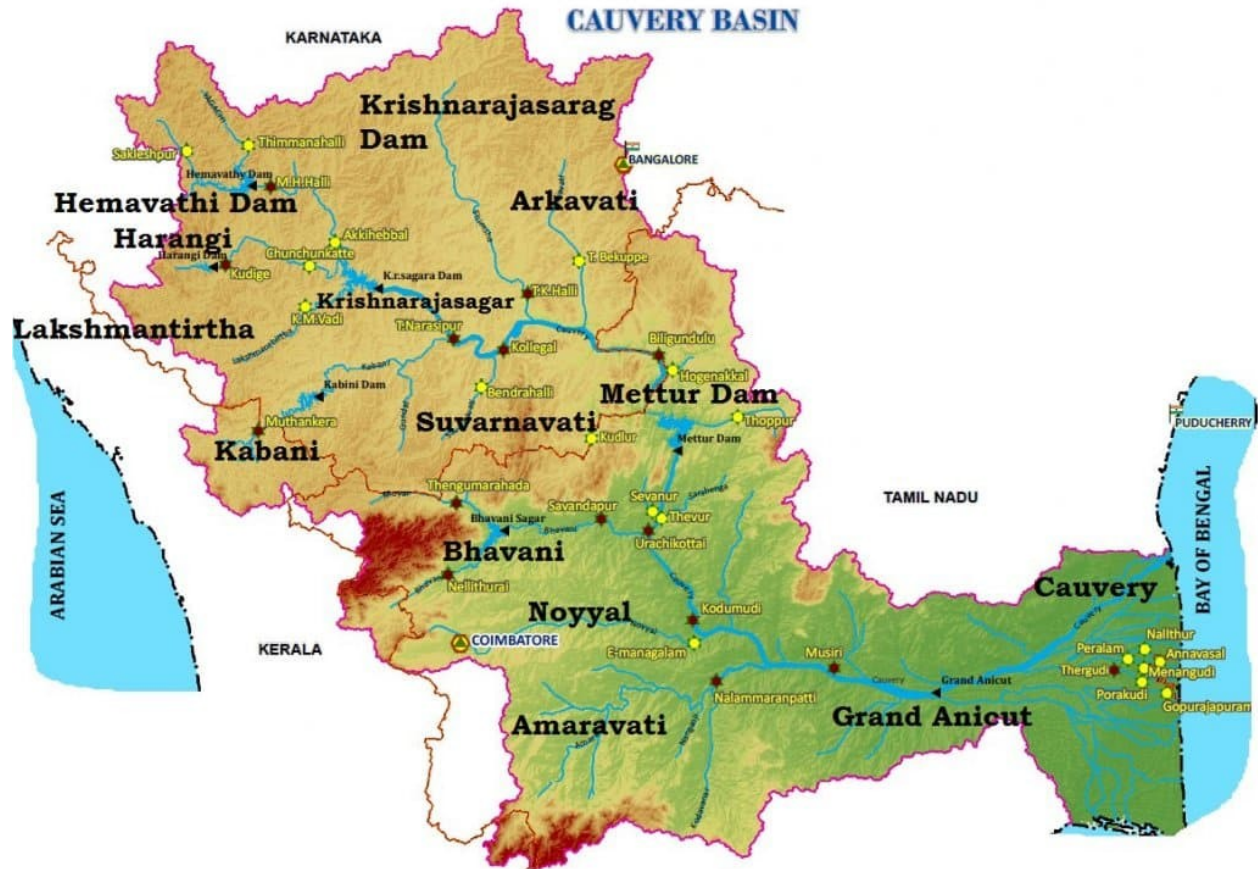
About

- *The Lakshmana Tirtha (Lakshmantirtha River) is a river of Karnataka, India.*
- *It rises in Kodagu district and flows eastward.*
- *It joins the Kaveri in the Krishna Raja Sagara lake.*
- *The river originates at a height of 1450 metres in the Brahmagiri range of Kodagu district.*
- *Unlike Kaveri, Lakshmana Tirtha flows in relatively flat-terrain region of south coorg.*
- *Increase in the water level during monsoon, results in flooding of adjacent paddy fields.*
- *The river meanders throughout its course and enters Mysore district through Nagarahole National Park.*
- *Hunsur is located on the banks of this river and is the source of drinking water for the people of Hunsur.*
- *The river finally meets Kaveri at Krishna Raja Sagara reservoir*

Threats

- *The river generally runs dry few months after monsoon, due to ground water depletion and its constant exposure to direct sunlight and lack of shade from coffee estate; privilege that Kaveri enjoys during its course in Kodagu.*
- *Pollution of its tributaries is a major concern.*
- *Waste is dumped into streams of Kuranthoad flowing near Ponnampet and Gonikoppal.*
- *Coffee wastewater from de-pulping coffee cherries is also a serious threat to the river.*
- *Untreated waste from Hunsur, is led directly into this river.*
- *Illegal sand mining has been a major headache for the district administration.*

Kaveri river and Its tributaries



Why are sugary processed foods harmful?

Syllabus: GS-2; Health, Government policies and Interventions

Context

- Recently, the spotlight has returned on high sugar content in flavoured malt-based milk powders and baby food.

Why is it problematic to label malt-based, sugary milk products as 'health' drinks?

- On analysing the product in question, (a drink like Bournvita, for example,) it is observed that it contains 86.7g of carbohydrates per 100g, of which 49.8g is sugar content.
- Of the total sugars, 37.4g is sucrose or added sugar.

- *For every recommended per serve of 20g chocolate powder, the consumer is downing nearly 10g of total sugar.*
- *Apart from added sugar, the process of malting, which involves germinating cereals, drying, roasting and powdering them, also produces sugar.*
- **Malting was a process originally used to produce single malt whiskey, and is also used in making malt-based milk beverages.**
- *Once you germinate a grain, the starch in the grain breaks down to sugar by the action of a group of enzymes called amylase.*
- *When you roast it, it develops a nice flavour as that sugar gets caramelised.*
- **Maltose is nothing but two units of glucose, a form of sugar, bonded together.**
- *Apart from added sugar, the chocolate powder contains **maltodextrin**, liquid glucose, maltose generated from malting process of cereals and so on.*

What is FSSAI's stand on sugar content?

- *In its **Food Safety and Standards (Advertising and Claims) Regulations 2018**, the FSSAI said that only if total sugar is less than 5g per 100g in a product, it can claim to be 'low on sugar.'*
- *Any product which is 'low on sugar,' can potentially be 'healthy.'*
- *But when products do not fulfil this requirement, and still advertise or market their products as 'health drinks,' it is problematic, the FSSAI scientific panel member added.*
- *This is because if a child, for instance, takes four servings of this so-called drink, he or she will end up consuming 40 grams of sugar, which is higher than the World Health Organization's advised threshold of consuming 25 grams or six teaspoons of sugar per day.*
- *In Indian households, one often adds extra teaspoons of sugar to a chocolate-powder drink too.*

Will an FSSAI probe be enough to curb the practice of misleading labels?

- *In September 2022, the FSSAI put out a draft notification which stated that **high fat, sugar, salt (HFSS)** food means a processed food product which has high levels of saturated fat or total sugar or sodium.*
- *The draft notification was released to explain what a HFSS food would consist of and how to warn consumers against it on front-of-the-pack labelling of the food packet or beverage bottle.*
- *It implied that if a product derives more than 10% of total energy (kcal) from sugar and/or saturated fat, then the product was high on fat and/or sugar.*
- *However, the FSSAI has kept the regulation open-ended on whether companies need to declare fat, sugar and salt content on the front of the pack or not. It has also batted for **'health rating stars,'** and not warning labels.*

What is the way forward?

Comprehensive regulation

- *The first step, would be to bring about a **comprehensive regulation** to clearly define what is 'healthy,' and 'unhealthy,' which encompasses all beverages and food products.*
- *There is a draft notification on front of pack labelling and high fat, sugar, salt foods which has received comments from all stake holders and after that has been put in cold storage.*

Marketing

- *The underlying problem is marketing and pushing it to unsuspecting consumers.*
- *Also, under the **Infant Milk Substitutes Act**, infant foods cannot be promoted via advertisements.*
- *However, rules are flouted, and social media influencers often promote baby food.*
- *Over the past week, the spotlight has returned on high sugar content in flavoured malt-based milk powders and baby food.*

Awareness

- *Government authorities are warning against branding such items as "healthy" and have called out the allegedly misleading promotion and marketing tactics while loading products with added sugar.*
- *In its **Food Safety and Standards (Advertising and Claims) Regulations 2018**, the FSSAI said that only if total sugar is less than 5g per 100g in a product, it can claim to be 'low on sugar.'*

Innovation Trap

Syllabus: GS-3; Economy

Context

- *Based on the article published in Live Mint regarding **how Organizations must think innovatively without falling in the innovative trap***

About

- *The innovation trap occurs when **organizations try to innovate but end up in patterns of thinking and behavior that prevent genuine progress and creativity.***

- *This trap can happen when organizations: Prioritize conformity, Rely too much on past successes, and Resist challenging the status quo.*

Example

- *Kodak's downfall can be attributed to its reluctance to embrace digital photography despite inventing the first digital camera in 1975.*

Some other common innovation traps

- *The "innovation is the holy grail" trap: When innovation is elevated to an unattainable level*
- *Grand declarations about innovation are followed by mediocre execution*

Some other types of innovation

- **Incremental innovation:** *Improves existing technology in an existing market*
- **Architectural innovation:** *A type of innovation*
- **Disruptive innovation:** *Theories regarding products, concepts, or services that disrupt existing value chains or establish new ones*
- **Business model innovation:** *Involves changing how a business functions and makes money, and changing what customers it targets, how it targets them, and what it uses to target them*

Know more

What is innovation capture?

- *Innovation capture is a process that tracks proposals from initial suggestions to commercialization.*
- *This process helps with **analysis, strategic decisions, IP commercialization, and innovation culture.***

Innovation capture involves

- **Defining a challenge or problem:** *Clearly expressing needs and providing a limited time to obtain ideas to solve the problem*
- **Prioritizing ideas:** *Not just extracting ideas, but also prioritizing them*
- **Collecting feedback:** *Continuously collecting feedback on implemented innovations*
- **Using feedback:** *Making necessary adjustments, improvements, or pivots to enhance the innovation's effectiveness*
- **Celebrating success:** *Acknowledging and celebrating successful innovations to motivate teams*
- **Learning from failures:** *Treating failures as learning opportunities*

Why have private investment dropped?

Syllabus: GS-3; Economy

Context

- *The failure of private investment, as measured by private **Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF)** as a percentage of **gross domestic product (GDP)** at current prices, to pick up pace has been one of the major issues plaguing the Indian economy.*

What is GFCF and why does it matter?

- *GFCF refers to the **growth in the size of fixed capital in an economy.***
- ***Fixed capital refers to things such as buildings and machinery, for instance, which require investment to be created.***
- *So private GFCF can serve as a rough indicator of how much the private sector in an economy is willing to invest.*
- *Overall GFCF also includes capital formation as a result of investment by the government.*
- *GFCF matters because fixed capital, by helping workers produce a greater amount of goods and services each year, helps to boost economic growth and improve living standards.*
- *In other words, fixed capital is what largely determines the overall output of an economy and hence what consumers can actually purchase in the market.*
- *Developed economies such as the U.S. possess more fixed capital per capita than developing economies such as India.*

Why has private investment fallen?

- *Many economists in India have blamed **low private consumption expenditure** as the primary reason behind the failure of private investment to pick up over the last decade, and particularly since the onset of the pandemic.*
- *Their reasoning is that strong consumption spending is required to give businesses the confidence that there will be sufficient demand for their output once they decide to invest in building fixed capital.*
- *Hence these economists have advised that the **government should put more money into the hands of the people to boost consumption expenditure, and thus help kick start private investment.***

- *Historically, however, an increase in private consumption has not led to a rise in private investment in India.*
- *In fact, a drop in consumption spending has boosted private investment rather than dampening it.*
- *Private final consumption expenditure dropped steadily from nearly 90% of GDP in 1950-51 to hit a low of 54.7% of GDP in 2010-11, which was a year prior to when private investment hit a peak and began its long decline.*
- *And since 2011-12, private consumption has risen while private investment has witnessed a worrying fall as a percentage of GDP.*
- *The inverse relationship between consumption and investment is likely because the money that is allocated towards **savings and investment**, either by the government or by private businesses, comes at the cost of lower consumption expenditure.*
- *Other economists believe that **structural problems** may likely be the core reason behind the significant fall in private investment as a percentage of GDP over the last decade or so.*
- *They have cited **unfavourable government policy and policy uncertainty** as major issues affecting private investment.*
- *The rise in private investment in the 1990s and the 2000s correlated with the economic reforms programme started in 1991.*
- *The drop in private investment, on the other hand, correlated with the slowdown in the pace of reforms in the last two decades under both the UPA (second term) and NDA governments.*
- *Further, policy uncertainty can discourage private investment as investors expect stability to carry out risky long-term projects.*

Vasuki indicus

Syllabus: GS-3; Environment- Biogeography

Context

- *In a huge discovery, paleontologists have discovered a massive fossil of the **world's 'largest snake' that ever existed***



About the study

- In a study published in the journal *Scientific Reports*, researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee said they'd discovered an "excellently preserved, partial vertebral column" of the snake.
- They uncovered 27 vertebrae and analysed each one to confirm that the specimen was indeed a *V. Indicus*, which is extinct.
- The team named it **Vasuki** after a myth about a serpent of the same name which **rapped itself around the neck of the Hindu deity Lord Shiva**.
- The snake was most likely an **ambush predator** that constricted its prey like a python, the researchers said after concluding that it was likely slow-moving and too big to be forager.
- The specimen they found was fully grown and had a broad, cylindrical body, according to the study, which said it could have weighed almost one metric ton (1000kg or 2,200 pounds).
- The only other comparable snake in terms of length is the extinct **Titanoboa**, widely considered the world's largest snake, which measured 45 to 50 feet long (around 15 metres) and three feet (0.9 metres) wide.
- The **madtsoiidae** family of snakes lived for around 100 million years in Africa, Europe and India.
- But Vasuki is specifically from the Indian subcontinent and existed roughly 56 to 34 million years ago.

Significance

- *The fossilised remains are between 10 to 15 meters in length and were found in Gujarat's Panandhro Lignite Mine in Kutch.*
- *The scientists are amazed as the age of these fossils is 47 million years; **It also tells a lot about a distant era of Earth's history.***