Driving the Balkanisation of India

Why in news?

Two projects that appear to have the blessing of the present political dispensation at the Centre have the potential to actually destroy it.

What are the issues of concern?

- **The Gyanvapi issue-** The court has been petitioned to allow Hindus to worship at what has for centuries been a mosque.
- Impartial observers state that there is incontrovertible evidence that the Gyanvapi mosque was once a temple that was demolished at the orders of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.
- But, we have the Places of Worship Act of 1991 that disallows a change of status of a religious structure.
- It rises questions like "Can Indian Muslims of today be asked to vacate a mosque based on an act in the distant past that they are not responsible for?
- **Language-** The destruction of the religious icons of conquered peoples in India is not confined to Islamic rule in north India.
    - For instance, there have been instances of deliberate destruction of remnants of the phallic symbol carved in stone in Harappan civilization.
- Aligned to the project of isolating the religious minorities of India is the project of establishing Hindi as the dominant language in the country.
- The issue has remained dormant in the country after settlement in the 1960s, whereby it was agreed that English would be used in the communications of the Government of India so long as the southern States want it.
- Even the ordinary southerner sees Hindi as the language of the most backward part of the country, one where Muslims are bullied, women are subjugated and politicians are treated as minor feudals.
- They simply reject the majoritarian grounds on which it is deemed to be the national language.
- Since 2014, we have seen a renewed thrust being given to Hindi by the Central government.
- Too much time and resources of Central government institutions are wasted on promoting Hindi when all its functionaries understand English well.

What about the diversity of India?

- Constitutionally, India is a union of States.
- India is also a coalition of peoples that are diverse in terms of their histories and culture.
- We see today the dominance of a political ideology with little understanding of the idea of India as a coalition of the willing.
- Incapable of winning hearts and minds, it has spawned a divisive politics which has the potential of wrecking a union put together with great care.

Reference

1. https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/driving-the-balkanisation-of-india/article65460703.ece

