Operation Swarna

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance*

Why in News?

Recently, the Tirupati Urban Development Authority (TUDA) has announced Operation SWARNA to rescue the River Swarnamukhi.

- **Name** – Operation SWARNA (Swarnamukhi Waterbody Action for River and Nala Awareness)
- **Initiative by** – Tirupati Urban Development Authority (TUDA)
- **Task Force –** To be headed by the TUDA Vice-Chairman, inspired by the HYDRAA model in Hyderabad.
- **Objective** – Rescue River Swarnamukhi from encroachments.
    - Revive its flow and rejuvenate the river.
    - Ensure sustainable ecosystem and waterbody protection.
- **Concerns raised** – Erstwhile ruling party leaders occupied streams, canals and fake adjoining survey numbers were used for registrations.
- Floods of 2021 exposed the fraud, leaving victims without homes or documents.

Swarnamukhi river Profile
• **Origin** – Pakala. • **Course** – Flows eastwards for 130 km. • **Touchpoints** – Passes south of Tirupati and touches Srikalahasti. • **Mouth** – Joins the Bay of Bengal.

- **Project initiation** – To kickstart the project formal Bhumi Puja will be performed soon at Mukkoti Agastheswara temple, the confluence of three rivers near Thondavada.
- **Coordination** – TUDA,
    - Irrigation department,
    - Survey department and Revenue departments.
- **Plan of action – Drone Survey** Planned from Thondavada to Srikalahasti (50–70 km stretch).
    - **Purpose of the survey** – Fix river boundaries.
    - Mark 50 metres on either side of the flow area.
    - Identify encroachments clearly.
- **Public outreach** – Whistle-blowers and victims invited to file complaints.
    - Complaints can be lodged against officials and representatives (from Sarpanch to MLA) involved in land misuse.

- **Tourism & beautification plans –**
  - **Riverfront beautification** – To develop a tourist hub at Tiruchanur, near Goddess Padmavathi Ammavari temple.
  - A tunnel construction to slow down water flow, allowing devotees to wash hands and feet before visiting the temple.
- **Projects importance** – Greatly enhances both cultural and tourism value.
- The project is the first such massive operation taken up in the State to free water bodies from encroachers.

Reference

The Hindu| Operation Swarna

