Prelim Bits 04-08-2021 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Reverse Merger

- Stocks of certain small finance banks (SFBs) and their holding companies skyrocketed after the RBI permitted these SFBs to apply for a reverse merger with their holding companies.
- **Merger** is a corporate action where two companies decide to bring together their assets and liabilities to create a single entity that are bigger and better than either of them. It is usually proposed between equals.
- **Reverse merger** is a combination where a smaller company merges into a larger one, or a loss-making company merges into a profitable one.
- In the case of SFBs, the holding company is merged into the subsidiary bank. This type of merger is also referred to as downstream merger.
- **Importance** - Reverse merger proposal has made SFBs a better bet for investors. It could help investors unlock value by
    1. Eliminating dual listing of the SFBs and their holding companies.
    2. Warding off equity dilution on account of the mandated reduction in promoter holding.
- Downstream mergers could help dilute promoter stakes in these SFBs.

Gilgit-Baltistan

- Pakistan has finalised its 26th Constitutional Amendment Bill to incorporate Gilgit-Baltistan as its province, the region known before 2009 as Northern Areas.
- Due to Gilgit-Baltistan's status as part of the unresolved Kashmir issue, it will be given 'Provisional Provincial Status' by amending Article 1 of the Constitution.
- It provides for representation of the region in National Assembly and Senate.
- India has asserted that Gilgit-Baltistan is a part of India by virtue of the legal and irrevocable accession of J&K to the Indian Union in 1947.
- To know more about the Gilgit-Baltistan Dispute, click here.

Prevention of River Pollution

- Under **National Water Quality Monitoring Programme**, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) along with the PCBs/Committees in different States/UTs is monitoring water quality of water bodies.
- As per the latest CPCB report of September 2018, 351 polluted stretches were identified on 323 rivers.
- **Problems** - Rivers in the country are polluted mainly due to,
    1. Discharge of untreated sewage from cities/towns and industrial effluents in their respective catchments,
    2. Problems in operation and maintenance of sewage treatment plants, lack of dilution and other non-point sources of pollution,
    3. Rapid urbanization and industrialization.
- **Cleaning of rivers** is an ongoing process. It is the duty of States/UTs and local bodies to ensure treatment of sewage and industrial effluents to the prescribed norms before discharging into water bodies or land.

- National River Conservation Plan (explained below) provides financial and technical assistance for abatement of pollution in identified stretches of rivers, excluding River Ganga and its tributaries.
- The Central Government has notified General Discharge Standards and also industry specific effluent discharge standards under **Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986**.
- These standards should be complied by the industrial units, STPs and/or the CETPs for prevention and control of pollution in water bodies.

National River Conservation Plan

- It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** of the Jal Shakti Ministry. The plan aims to prevent pollution of rivers and improving water quality.
- The activities under National River Conservation Plan include,
    1. Sewage treatment plants for treating the diverted sewage,
    2. Low cost sanitation works to prevent the open defecation on riverbanks,
    3. Public awareness and public participation,
    4. Electric crematoria to ensure proper cremation of the bodies brought to burning Ghats.
- It is implemented by National River Conservation Directorate (NRCD).
- NRCD only provides financial assistance to the States/ local bodies to set up infrastructure for pollution abatement of rivers in identified polluted river stretches based on proposals received from the States/ local bodies.

Border Fencing

- It is being erected on Indo-Pakistan border, Indo-Bangladesh border and Indo-Myanmar border by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- So far, 5187 km length of International border has been fenced. Fencing lengths along Indo-Pakistan and Indo-Bangladesh Border are 2041 km and 3141 km respectively.
- Unfenced area includes non-feasible stretches, where fencing could not be constructed due to riverine and marshy land, are being covered through technological solution.

National Child Labour Project

- In 2020-21, over 58,000 children were rescued across India from work, rehabilitated and mainstreamed under the Central Sector Scheme National Child Labour Project (NCLP).
- The District Project Societies (DPS) are set up at the district level under the Chairmanship of the Collector/District Magistrate for overseeing the implementation of this NCLP scheme.
- Under this Scheme, children in the age group of 5-8 years are directly linked to formal education system through a close coordination with the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.
- Children in the age group of 9-14 years are withdrawn from work and put into NCLP Special Training Centres.
- In these Centres, the children are provided with bridge education, vocational training, mid-day meal, stipend, health care etc. before being mainstreamed into formal education system.
- Under this Scheme, funds are provided directly to the DPS who in turn engage and allocate the funds to NGOs/Civil Societies Organisation etc. for running of Special Training Centres.

PENCiL Portal

- PENCiL (Platform for Effective Enforcement for No Child Labour) portal is an electronic platform developed for the implementation of Child Labour Act and NCLP Scheme by ensuring the timely disposal of work.
- It aims at involving Centre, State, District, Governments, civil society and the general public in

achieving the target of child labour free society.

- It has five components- Child Tracking System, Complaint Corner, State Government, National Child Labour Project and Convergence.
- This portal is administered by the Ministry of Labour & Employment.

Source: PIB, The Hindu, The Indian Express, Business Line

