Renaming of Allahabad

Why in news?

\n\n

The Uttar Pradesh cabinet recently approved a proposal to rename Allahabad as ‘Prayagraj’.

\n\n

What is the procedure?

\n\n

\n
- The task of renaming a city is given to the State Legislators.
\n
- The procedure differs from state to state but the regulations remains the same.
\n
- The first step involves raising of a request in form of a resolution by any MLA, which proposes the renaming of any particular city or street.
\n
- On the basis of the request of the MLA, the issue would be deliberated upon and the consequences of the same shall be discussed upon.
\n
- The final step involves voting of the validity of the resolution.
\n
- If a simple majority is attained in favour of the resolution, the said resolution shall be declared passed.
\n
- The State Legislation on the basis of the majority view shall make the necessary changes in the name of the state or city public.
\n
- The proposal will go to the Centre for approval before the city is officially renamed.
\n

\n\n

What is the history behind Allahabad?

\n\n

\n
- The age-old name of the city was Prayag which in literal translation means "a place of sacrifice".
\n
- Prayag finds its mention in the Rig Veda and is recognised as the place where Brahma (the creator of the universe in Hindu mythology) attended a ritual sacrifice.
\n

\n\n

\n
- Allahabad is more famously known as Triveni Sangam or Sangam Nagari as it is in this city that the confluence of three most pious rivers, the Ganges, Yamuna and Saraswati occurs.
\n
- The name was changed after 16th-century Mughal emperor Akbar built a fort near ‘Sangam’.
\n
- Akbar is said to have chosen the name Ilahabad for the city to press his syncretic religious idea espoused in the Din-i-Ilahi.
\n
- Ilahabad is the city of gods, its pluralistic heritage includes not just Hindu and Islamic traditions but also a Christian lineage derived from its colonial inheritance.
\n
- Later, Shah Jahan renamed the entire city as ‘Allahabad’.
\n
- However, the area near the ‘Sangam’, the site of the Kumbh Mela, continues to be known as ‘Prayag’.
\n

\n\n

What are the concerns?

\n\n

\n
- **Marginalisation -** The decision is made out of arbitrariness and political motives.
\n
- The residents have not been known to pitch for a change of name as a priority.
\n
- The city, once a teeming cosmopolitan centre of learning, cultural

production, politics and industry, has been in decline over the past few decades, mirroring the marginalisation of this region in national affairs.
\n
- **Heritage -** The name change is hardly likely to address any of the city's problems or the many unfulfilled aspirations of its residents.
\n
- Also, Muslims constitute nearly 20% of the state's population, at over 38 million,and denying such a large population its due share in public life and collective memory, is to practise exclusionary politics.
\n
- There have been no studies done to date to measure the impact of city name changes.
\n
- **Cost -** Geographical indicators attached to the place, in the international market, often end up losing their significance due to such a change.
\n
- Outsiders have to be introduced with the new name of the place and the traffic signs and milestones have to be reinstalled.
\n
- Railway signage, systems and paperwork across the country have to be updated.
\n
- Government and business stationery have to be destroyed and remade at a cost to the environment.
\n
- The biggest cost may be in re-educating outsiders about the name change, an intangible line item whose true costs will never be known.
\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Indian Express

\n

