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1. LPG Production Targets

Following the disruption caused by the Iran war in the Middle East region, the Central government has, for the first time, fixed LPG (cooking gas) production targets for public and private refineries and oil and gas production companies.

i. In an order recently issued by the Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, the maximum quantity of LPG to be produced by 21 oil refineries and oil and gas production companies has been specified. Accordingly, these refineries and companies can collectively produce up to 63,810 tonnes of LPG per day.

ii. Highest target for Reliance:

- Under the current order, the Reliance Industries refinery in Jamnagar, Gujarat, which sells its products in the domestic market, has been directed to produce up to 18,000 tonnes of LPG per day.
- Nayara Energy, located at Vadinar in Gujarat, has been assigned a target of producing 4,480 tonnes of LPG per day. Companies such as ONGC and GAIL have been directed to produce 6,460 tonnes per day.
- The 18 refineries owned and operated by public-sector oil companies have been asked to collectively produce 31,470 tonnes of LPG per day.

iii. Target to be enforced during shortages:

- The production target will be implemented whenever there is a shortage or disruption in LPG supplies. The order states that the production schedule will be revised by the Central Government every year on January 1 and July 1.
- The current target is more than twice India's LPG production in the previous financial year and accounts for around 70% of the country's daily LPG consumption.

- India consumed 3.32 crore tonnes of LPG in the financial year 2025–26, with more than 64% of its LPG being imported. Following the Iran war in the Middle East, Iran closed the Strait of Hormuz, disrupting cargo shipping through the route. This affected LPG supplies to India.
- Taking this situation into consideration, the Central Government has, for the first time, fixed LPG production targets for public and private refineries and oil and gas production companies with the aim of strengthening the domestic supply system.

2. Bangladesh defeated Australia by 9 wickets in the first Test, thereby creating history by registering its first-ever victory on Australian soil.

i. This was Bangladesh's second Test victory against a SENA nation. Its first victory came against New Zealand in 2022. South Africa, England, New Zealand and Australia are collectively known as the SENA countries.

3. PM Gati Shakti Programme

According to Central Government data, 396 infrastructure projects worth ₹18.66 lakh crore have been recommended for approval under the PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan.

i. The Network Planning Group (NPG), established under the programme launched on October 13, 2021, has recommended infrastructure projects in various sectors, including roads and railways, to the concerned ministries.

ii. According to Central Government data:
- The NPG evaluated 396 infrastructure projects worth ₹18.66 lakh crore. Of these, 256 projects were assigned to the concerned ministries, while 198 projects are currently under implementation.
- The programme aims to reduce logistics costs, and investments exceeding ₹500 crore can be undertaken only through evaluation by the NPG.

4. Bangladesh has said that India should create a conducive environment for Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman to visit New Delhi.

i. There continues to be uncertainty over Tarique Rahman's proposed visit to attend the BRICS Summit, scheduled to be held in New Delhi on September 12 and 13, and Bangladesh has made this statement in this context.

5. Analysis of the Cauvery water dispute and why the proposed Mekadhatu project causes significant alarm among Tamil Nadu's farmers.

i. Context of the Mekadhatu Project

- Karnataka plans to build a dam at Mekadhatu, located very close to the Tamil Nadu border and above Hogenakkal.
- Karnataka State claims the project is essential to provide drinking water for Bengaluru.
- Tamil Nadu claims this as entirely false, viewing it as a strategy to gain further control over the river's flow.

ii. Geographical and Agricultural Disparity

- 34% of Tamil Nadu's land area lies within the Cauvery basin, whereas only 17% of Karnataka's land is in the basin.
- In Tamil Nadu, 60% of the river-irrigated land depends solely on the Cauvery, and it is the primary source for the state's food grain production.
- Irrigation Trends (Last 60 Years):
  - ➢ Karnataka: Expanded its canal irrigation area from 2.8 lakh hectares (1960–61) to 9.62 lakh hectares(2022–23),.
  - ➢ Tamil Nadu: Its canal irrigation area shrunk from 8.95 lakh hectares to 6.45 lakh hectares in the same period,.
- Net cultivation area in Tamil Nadu has dropped from 60 lakh hectares in the 1960s to 47 lakh hectares by 2010.

iii. Legal Framework and Water Allocation

- Supreme Court Ruling (2018): In a normal year, Karnataka must release 177.25 TMC of water to Tamil Nadu.
- The required release includes 10 TMC in June, 34 TMC in July, 50 TMC in August, and 40 TMC in September.
- The Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) is tasked with calculating shared distress during years of poor rainfall based on monthly inflows, typically confirmed by September/October.

iv. Historical Pattern of Non-Compliance

- Karnataka often claims its dams are empty or only have enough for drinking water, yet when heavy rains arrive, they suddenly release massive quantities (e.g., 25,000 cusecs) into the river.
- Over the last 30 years (1994–2024), Karnataka released less than 100 TMC during the critical June–September period in 11 separate years, despite being mandated to release 123.14 TMC.
- In 2023–24, Karnataka released only 78.8 TMC during these four vital months.
- Karnataka consistently disregards CWMA recommendations and Supreme Court orders whenever water levels are slightly low.

v. Impact on Tamil Nadu's Agriculture

- The four months from June to September are the primary factors deciding the success of the Kuruvai and Samba crops.
- Due to irregular water release, Kuruvai cultivation in some areas has plummeted from 25,000 hectares to less than 4,295 hectares.
- If Karnataka restricts flow based on its own storage models, approximately 12.5 lakh acres of irrigated land in Tamil Nadu could become fallow.

vi. Why Farmers Fear Mekadhatu

- Farmers fear that a dam at Mekadhatu will allow Karnataka to capture every remaining drop of seepage and surplus flow that currently reaches the Mettur dam, leading to the permanent desertification of the Cauvery delta.

- Karnataka's history of "stubborn behavior" and ignoring legal mandates makes any new storage project a direct threat to the survival of Tamil Nadu's agriculture.

vii. Suggested Solutions

- Centralized like the Postal and Railway departments, the maintenance and operation of dams on interstate rivers should be fully taken over by the Central Government.
- The State Government is urged to move beyond just legal battles and protests. It must prioritize building check dams and modernizing its own storage systems to capture floodwaters that are currently wasted by flowing into the sea.