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# TODAY'S ANALYSIS

## (21 March 2025)

### TOPICS TO BE COVERED

- RIVER BETWA
- EXERCISE VARUNA
- ECONOMIC SURVEY: (CHAPTER 6) INDIA'S INFRASTRUCTURE  
DEVELOPMENT & CAPITAL EXPENDITURE
- MCQs

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## RIVER BETWA

### Context :

- The Betwa River, once known as *Vetravati*, has been an important part of Madhya Pradesh's culture, history, and spirituality.
- It **originated from Jhiri village in Raisen**, and its waters have nourished the region for centuries.
- Once **celebrated in ancient scriptures like the Vedas and the Mahabharata**, today Betwa is **facing a slow death**.
- Due to **human neglect, illegal activities, and lack of proper care**, the river is slowly vanishing.
- If this continues, Betwa will not only disappear as a river but also take away centuries of heritage and life.

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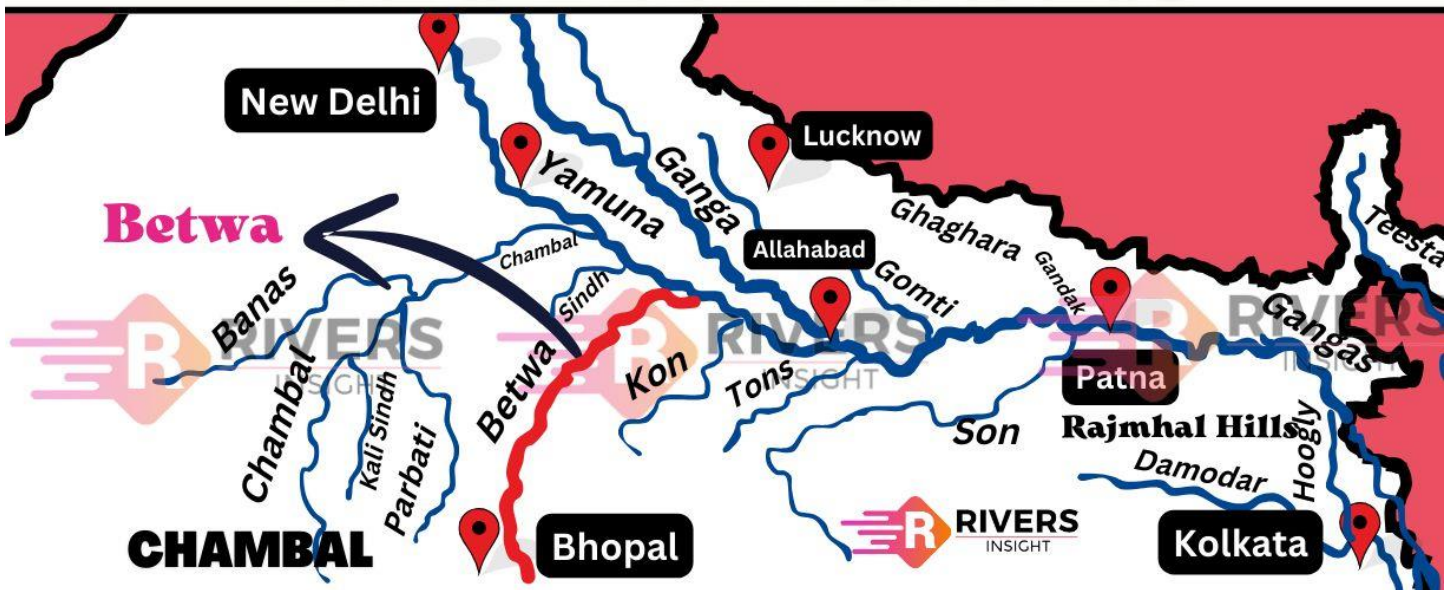


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# BETWA RIVER



## Historical Importance of Betwa River

- **Ancient Reverence:** Betwa has been **praised in ancient hymns and stories**, especially in the **Vedas and Mahabharata**. It was not just a river but a part of the culture and spiritual life of the people.
- **Cultural and Historical Role:** Over the years, the river has supported kingdoms, witnessed great leaders and saints, and been a vital part of the region's identity.

## Current Condition of Betwa River

- **Drying of Sources:** The river's source in Jhiri village, which once provided water all year long, is now dry. This symbolizes the slow death of Betwa.

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- **Loss of Flow:** The river that once flowed freely through sacred areas and ancient bridges now leaves behind cracked, dry land.
- **Silence Replaces Flowing Water:** The peaceful sounds of the river have been replaced by silence, disturbed only by machines digging into the riverbed.

## CAUSES OF THE DECLINE

- **Human Neglect:**
  - **Illegal Sand Mining:** Sand mining along Betwa's banks has caused significant damage to its environment.
  - **Deforestation:** Illegal cutting of trees has destroyed the forests that once protected the river's water supply.
  - **Concrete Construction:** Development projects have blocked the natural flow of the river, making it difficult for the river to replenish itself.
- **Water Extraction:** Illegal water extraction through bore wells from Raisen to Vidisha is taking away Betwa's water, reducing its supply.

## THE IMPACT

- **Environmental Concerns:** Activists like Rakesh Meena call out the destruction of Betwa as a "**conspiracy to kill the river**" and criticize human actions as the main cause of the river's suffering.

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- **Farmers' Struggles:** Farmers like Laxman Meena are facing the harsh effects of Betwa's drying. Their fields now suffer from a **lack of water**, which was once provided by the river.

## Loss of Cultural Heritage

- **Cultural Loss:** Betwa's decline is not just an environmental issue; it also threatens to erase centuries of cultural and historical connections. The river was part of the spiritual and cultural identity of the people.
  - **Guardians' Lament:** Figures like Gopal Das Maharaj, who have long been protectors of Betwa, express deep sorrow over the river's drying. They see it as the loss of an important cultural heritage.

## GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

- **Government Promises:** The local government, represented by Collector Arun Kumar Vishwakarma, acknowledges the river's importance and promises action. However, no significant changes have been seen so far.
- **Public Frustration:** Despite protests, including one 40 years ago to stop polluted water from Bhopal being dumped into the river, the government has not made meaningful efforts to restore Betwa.

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## Urgency for Action

- **Struggle for Survival:** Social worker Brijendra Pandey highlights the urgency, stating that Betwa is fighting for its life. Immediate intervention is necessary to prevent the river from vanishing.
- **Call for Action:** Restoration efforts must be swift and large-scale. If the river is not saved now, the region will lose not only Betwa but also its cultural and natural heritage.

## THE PATH FORWARD

- **Cultural and Environmental Importance:** Betwa is more than just a river. It is a lifeline for both the people and the environment of Madhya Pradesh. The loss of Betwa would mean the loss of the region's identity and history.
- **Need for Conservation:** Immediate and effective conservation measures are essential to save Betwa. Both the government and the local communities must work together to restore the river.

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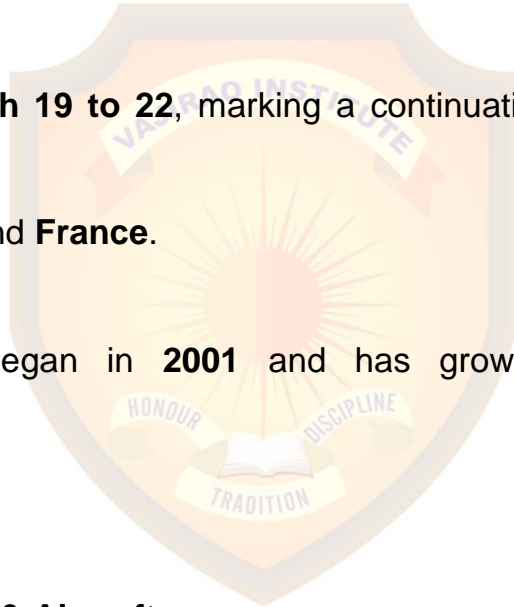


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# EXERCISE VARUNA

- **Event Overview:**

- The **23rd edition** of the bilateral naval exercise **VARUNA 2025** is set to take place from **March 19 to 22**, marking a continuation of the strong defence ties between **India** and **France**.
- The exercise began in **2001** and has grown into a significant annual collaboration.



- **Participating Vessels & Aircraft:**

- **Indian Navy:** Aircraft carrier **INS Vikrant**, **Scorpene-class submarine**, and other naval assets.
- **French Navy:** Aircraft carrier **Charles de Gaulle**, along with fighter aircraft, destroyers, and frigates.

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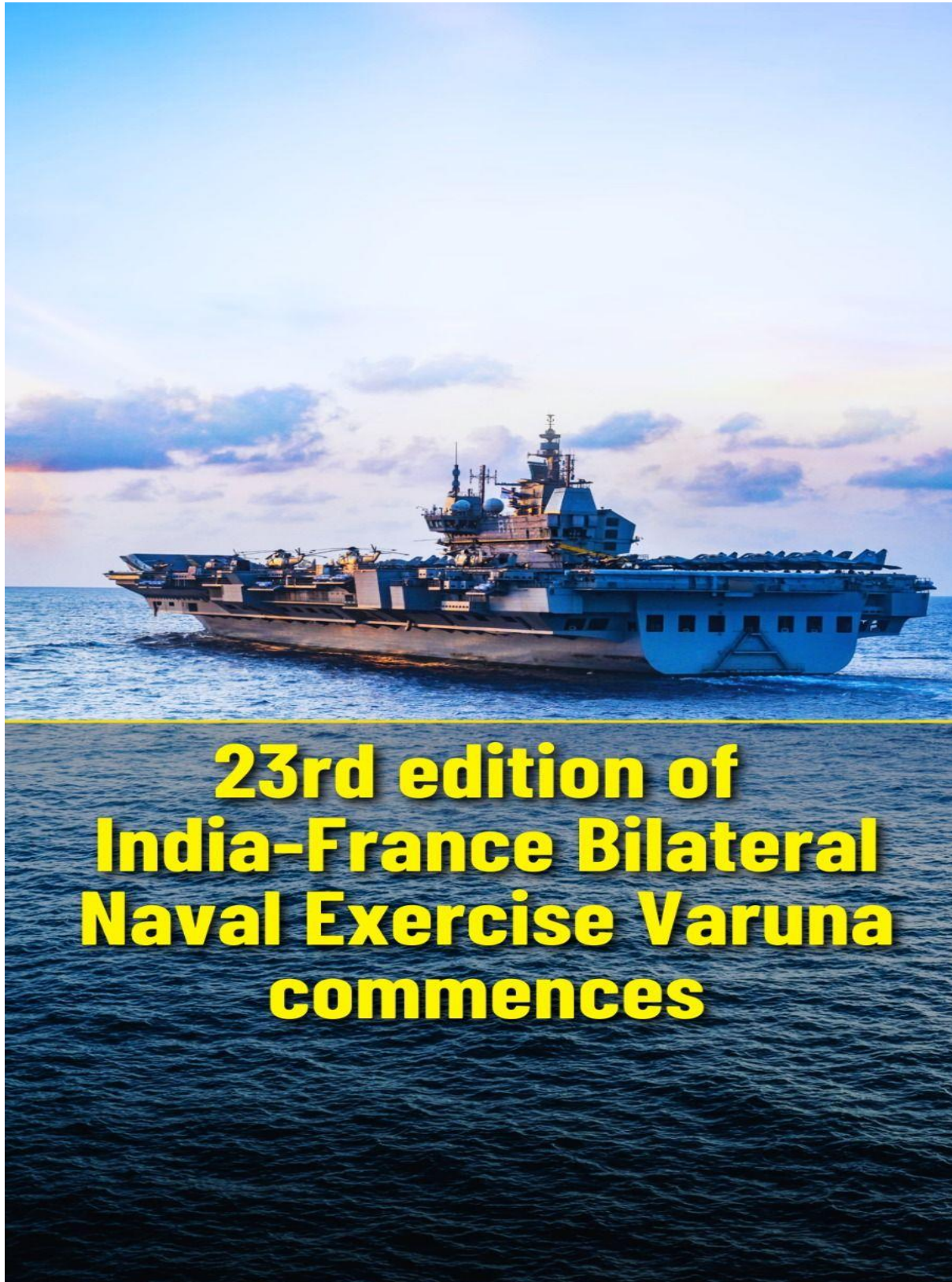


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## KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF VARUNA 2025

- **Advanced Naval Drills:** High-intensity exercises will cover multiple domains:
  - **Sub-surface:** Anti-submarine warfare drills focusing on enhancing **underwater domain awareness**.
  - **Surface:** Operations testing the coordination for synchronized surface engagements and maneuvers.
  - **Aerial:** Advanced air defence drills and **mock air-to-air combat** between **French Rafale-M** and **Indian MiG-29K** fighter jets.
- **Strategic Focus:**
  - Strengthening **tactical coordination** and improving **combat readiness**.
  - **Maritime patrol aircraft** to ensure **real-time intelligence sharing** and **situational awareness**.
  - **Replenishment-at-sea** operations to bolster **logistical cooperation**, reinforcing the navies' ability to conduct **sustained operations**.

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## BROADER SIGNIFICANCE

- VARUNA 2025 serves as a **symbol of military capability** and **commitment** to a **free, open, and secure maritime environment**.
- It highlights the growing strategic partnership between India and France, contributing to **regional security** and **stability in the Indo-Pacific**.
- **Future Implications:**
  - VARUNA continues to play a key role in enhancing the **maritime collaboration** between the two countries, ensuring enhanced **defence readiness** and further integration in the face of evolving global maritime challenges.

By participating in this exercise, India and France reaffirm their resolve to **strengthen bilateral defence ties** and work towards a **secure and cooperative maritime future**.

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# CHAPTER 6: INDIA'S INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT & CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

## Key Facts and Developments in India's Ports and Shipping Sector:

- **Port Capacity and Operational Efficiency:**
  - **Improvement:** Significant improvement in FY25.
  - **Container Turnaround Time: Reduced** from 48.1 hours in FY24 to 30.4 hours in FY25 (April-Nov).
- **Sagarmala Programme:**
  - **Aim:** Fully harness India's coastline and waterways, improving logistics efficiency.
  - **Progress:** High completion rates in port modernisation, port-led industrialisation, port connectivity, coastal community development, coastal shipping, and inland water transport (IWT) by November 2024.

## MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Infrastructure Development:**
  - **Vadhavan Mega Port:** Under development with an investment of over **₹76,000 crore**, featuring nine container terminals and multiple berths.

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- **Tuticorin International Container Terminal:** Inaugurated in September 2024, designed to handle 6 lakh TEUs annually and accommodate container vessels up to 10,000 TEUs.
- **Outer Harbour at Tuticorin:** Aims to boost port capacity by 4 million TEUs with two 1,000-meter terminals.
- **Port-Led Industrialisation:**
  - **Approved:** 12 new industrial smart cities with an investment of ₹28,602 crore across 10 states, along with 8 additional projects.
  - **Utilisation of Salt Lands:** About 25,000 acres of salt lands identified to enhance port sector infrastructure.
- **International Linkages:**
  - **Chabahar Port & INSTC:** The **Shahid Beheshti Port at Chabahar** connects Mumbai to Eurasia via the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), reducing transport costs and time. In FY24, vessel traffic increased by 43%, and container traffic rose by 34%.

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- **Sittwe Port, Myanmar:** Part of the **Kaladan Project**, provides an alternative route for the North-Eastern states, reducing transport costs between Kolkata and Mizoram.
- **Maritime Infrastructure and Urban Waterways:**
  - **National Maritime Heritage Complex:**
    - **Approved:** In October 2024, featuring a museum with 14 galleries, the tallest lighthouse museum, and India's largest Navy gallery, along with themed amusement parks.
  - **Urban Waterways Projects:**
    - **Investment:** Projects worth ₹1,303 crore underway, with 16 out of 30 projects already completed.
    - **Benefits:** Served over 35 lakh passengers and facilitated the transport of 5 lakh vehicles and 1 lakh cargo trucks.
- **Inland Waterways:**
  - **Improvement:** Improving **inland waterway connectivity**, especially for the North-East.

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- **Investment:** Developing waterways in Bangladesh with an investment of ₹305 crore (80% funded by India).
- **Rivers:** Improving the Brahmaputra and Barak rivers and Indo-Bangladesh Protocol route with an investment of ₹1,010 crore.

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIA'S POWER SECTOR

- **Power Sector Growth:**

- **Installed Capacity:** Increased by 7.2% year-on-year, reaching **456.7 GW** as of **November 2024**.
- **Transmission and Transformation Capacity:** Addition gained momentum, though affected by heavy monsoon conditions.

- **Renewable Energy Growth:**

- **Renewable Energy Capacity:**
  - **Total:** 209.4 GW as of December 2024.
  - **Year-on-Year Increase:** 15.8% from 180.8 GW in December 2023.
  - **Share:** Makes up about 47% of India's total installed capacity.

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## GOVT. INITIATIVES

- **Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY) and Pradhan Mantri Sahaj**

### **Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (SAUBHAGYA):**

- **Investment:** ₹1.85 lakh crore in distribution infrastructure.
- **Electrification:** 18,374 villages electrified under **DDUGJY**, and 2.9 crore households gained access to electricity under **SAUBHAGYA**.

- **Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme:**

- **Outlay:** ₹3.0 lakh crore.
- **Approved Projects:** Worth ₹2.8 lakh crore to enhance distribution infrastructure and implement smart metering solutions between FY22 to FY26.

- **Improvement in Power Supply:**

- **Daily Average Power Supply:**
  - **Urban Areas:** Improved from 22.1 hours in FY14 to 23.4 hours in FY24.
  - **Rural Areas:** Improved from 12.5 hours in FY14 to 21.9 hours in FY24.
- **Energy Demand and Supply Gap:** Reduced from 4.2% in FY14 to just 0.1% by December 2024.

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- **Consumer-Focused Measures** (Implemented in February 2024):
  - **Rooftop Solar PV Simplification:** Simplified installation process for systems up to 10 kW, with reduced commissioning timelines.
  - **EV Charging Connections:** Separate electricity connections for charging electric vehicles (EVs), supporting India's Net Zero goal by 2070.
  - **Faster New Electricity Connections:**
    - **Metropolitan Areas:** 3 days.
    - **Municipal Areas:** 7 days.
    - **Rural Areas:** 15 days.
  - **Metering Transparency:** Second meter installation within five days to verify consumption over the past three months, ensuring accurate billing.

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## MCQs

1. Consider the following statements wrt Betwa river and mark the correct one:

1. It originates in the Vindhya Range.
2. It is a tributary of Yamuna.

- (A) Only 1  
(B) Only 2  
(C) Both 1 & 2  
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

**Ans. (C)**

2. Which of these factors are negatively impacting the Betwa River?

1. Sand Mining
2. Concretisation
3. Over Extraction of water
4. Deforestation

- (A) Only 1 & 3  
(B) Only 1, 3 & 4  
(C) Only 2 & 3  
(D) All of the above

**Ans. (D)**

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3. Consider the following statements wrt Exercise Varuna and mark the correct one:

1. It is a bilateral naval exercise between India & France.
2. Its first edition was conducted in 2004.

- (A) Only 1
- (B) Only 2
- (C) Both 1 & 2
- (D) Neither 1 nor 2



**Ans. (A)**

4. Which of these port terminals is not developed by India?

- (A) Shahid Beheshti
- (B) Sittwe Port
- (C) Shahid Kalantari
- (D) All of them are developed by India

**Ans. (C)**

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5. Consider the following statements wrt Power Generation in India and mark the correct one:

1. More than 50% power is generated from the non fossil based sources.
2. The demand is projected to be 800 GW by 2030.

- (A) Only 1
- (B) Only 2
- (C) Both 1 & 2
- (D) Neither 1 nor 2



**Ans. (B)**

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