

River Lukha

October 13, 2021

In news- Recently, the state government of Meghalaya has claimed that a detoxing pilot project has brought the Lukha river back from the dead.

A note on detoxing pilot project

- The Meghalaya Pollution Control Board had in its 2012 investigative report blamed the contamination on acid mine drainage and run-off from the coal mines.
- The **pilot project was undertaken under the District Mineral Fund** after reports of low pH levels affecting the aquatic life in the river.
- The pilot project to rejuvenate the Lukha by using algae to remove toxic contents from the water has become a success.
- The detoxification process is called phycoremediation.
- Phycoremediation has improved the pH level of a critical stretch of the river.

About the river

- The Lukha river is in the East Jaintia Hills district where most of Meghalaya's rat-hole coal mines are located.
- The Lukha, "reservoir of fish" in the local Pnar language was considered toxic beyond redemption a decade ago.
- The Lukha, draining the southern part of East Jaintia Hills, is fed by the Lunar river, its main tributary and numerous streams from the hills of the Narpuh Reserve Forest.
- The river flows into Bangladesh.

District Mineral Fund(DMF)

- District Mineral Foundations are statutory bodies in India established by the State Governments by notification (as a trust or non-profit body).
- They derive their legal status from section 9B of Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 as amended on 26 March 2015 as Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2015.
- In September 2015, the Central Government issued a notification directing states to set up DMF & rates of contribution payable by miners to the DMFs.
- Under the Act of 2015, a provision was made also to create a National Mineral Exploration Trust under the jurisdiction of the central government, with 2% of royalty as levy, for boosting detailed exploration of minerals.
- They are established in all the districts affected by mining works, to work for the interest and benefit of persons and areas affected by mining related operations.
- It is funded through the contributions from miners (which varies from 10% to 30%).
- The object of the DMF is to work for the interest and benefit of persons, and areas affected by mining related operations in such a manner as may be prescribed by the State Government.