Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu (Merger of Union Territories) Bill, 2019

Why in news?

The Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu (Merger of Union Territories) Bill, 2019 was recently introduced in the Lok Sabha.

What is the Bill on?

- The Bill aims at merging the two Union Territories of ‘Daman and Diu’ and ‘Dadra and Nagar Haveli’ into one.
- Both the UTs are located on India’s western coast near Gujarat.
- They were colonial possessions of Portugal before they became part of independent India.
- Dadra and Nagar Haveli has just one district while Daman and Diu has two.
- Daman and Diu are separated by the Gulf of Khambhat.
- The merger of the two UTs is said to be done for better administration and checking duplications of various work.
How did these territories come under Portuguese rule?

- **Daman and Diu** - Before the arrival of the Portuguese, both Daman and Diu were part of the Sultanate of Gujarat.
- Sultanate of Gujarat was an independent kingdom during the 15th and 16th centuries.
- It comprised the present-day Gujarat and neighbouring areas.
- Portuguese had arrived in India at the end of the 15th century, and were an energetic and ambitious maritime power at that time.
- Early in the 16th century, the Sultan of Gujarat, Bahadur Shah, came under immense pressure.
- His kingdom was invaded by the second Mughal Emperor Humayun.
- At that juncture, he decided to remain on conciliatory terms with the Portuguese.
- Thus, in 1534, the Shah signed the Treaty of Bassein with the Portuguese.
- By this, he ceded Diu to the latter, as well as other territories of his empire such as Vasai and the islands that today form Mumbai.
The Portuguese obtained Daman from the Shah in 1559. Diu became an important port for the Portuguese, who built a large fortress there, as well as other buildings. Within a few years of acquiring the island, Gujarati ships using the port of Diu were required to pay duties to the Portuguese. For over four centuries, both Daman and Diu remained part of the Portuguese dominions in India, and were ruled from Goa.

**Dadra and Nagar Haveli** - Nagar Haveli passed from its Rajput rulers to the Marathas in the mid-18th century. It was transferred to the Portuguese in 1783 as compensation for a ship that the Marathas had destroyed. The Portuguese then acquired Dadra in 1785.

### What happened after India’s independence?

- After India’s independence from Britain, Portugal refused to hand over its territories in India.
- It was claimed to be an integral part of Portugal.
- On a diplomatic level, India tried to persuade Portugal to transfer its territories peacefully.
- Locally, Indian nationalists organised resistance against Portuguese occupation.
- In 1954, they were able to seize Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and an economic blockade was imposed over the rest of the Portuguese-held territories.
- The loss of Dadra and Nagar Haveli sent alarm bells ringing for the Portuguese.
- So, security was tightened in their remaining Indian possessions.
- Additional troops were brought in from Portugal, Angola, and Mozambique (the latter two were Portuguese colonies until 1975).
- Around 8,000 European, African, and Indian troops were split between the districts of Goa, Daman and Diu.

### What was Operation Vijay?

- In December 1961, as attempts at conciliation failed, India launched Operation Vijay against Portuguese India.
- While most of the hostilities took place in Goa, the Daman and Diu territories also witnessed action.
- The IAF inflicted heavy damage, ultimately forcing the Portuguese to surrender.

### What happened after the Portuguese left?


• Immediately in December 1961, Goa, Daman and Diu were constituted into the Union Territory of Goa, Daman and Diu.
• In 1967, a referendum called the ‘Goa Opinion Poll’ was held.
• Voters were asked to decide whether the UT should be merged with Maharashtra or should remain separate.
• The mandate was against a merger, and the UT continued as before.
• In 1987, Goa achieved statehood, and Daman and Diu became a separate UT.
• Between 1954 to 1961, Dadra and Nagar Haveli was administered by a citizen’s council called the Varishta Panchayat of Free Dadra and Nagar Haveli.
• In 1961, it became a Union Territory.

Source: Indian Express