Syllabus subtopic: India and its neighbourhood- relations.

News: The Union Cabinet has given its ex-post facto approval for a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Bangladesh on the withdrawal of 1.82 cusecs (cubic feet per second) of water from the Feni river by India for a drinking water supply scheme for Sabroom town in Tripura.

Prelims focus: Feni river, origin and tributaries.

Mains focus: Significance and the need for MoU.

About Feni river:

- The Feni river forms part of the India-Bangladesh border.
- It originates in the South Tripura district, passes through Sabroom town on the Indian side, and meets the Bay of Bengal after it flows into Bangladesh.

About the dispute:

There has been no water-sharing agreement between the countries on the Feni previously.

The dispute over the sharing of the river water has been long-standing. It was taken up between India and Pakistan (before the independence of Bangladesh) in 1958 during a Secretary-level meeting in New Delhi.

Recent developments and significance of the MoU:

In August 2019, India and Bangladesh held a water secretary-level meeting of the Joint Rivers Commission (JRC) in Dhaka, where it was agreed to collect data and prepare water-sharing agreements for seven rivers — Manu, Muhuri, Khowai, Gumti, Dharla, Dudhkumar, and Feni.

The MoU stands to benefit Sabroom town on the southern tip of Tripura. The present supply of drinking water to Sabroom town is inadequate. The groundwater in this region has high iron content. Implementation of this scheme would benefit over 7000 population of Sabroom town.