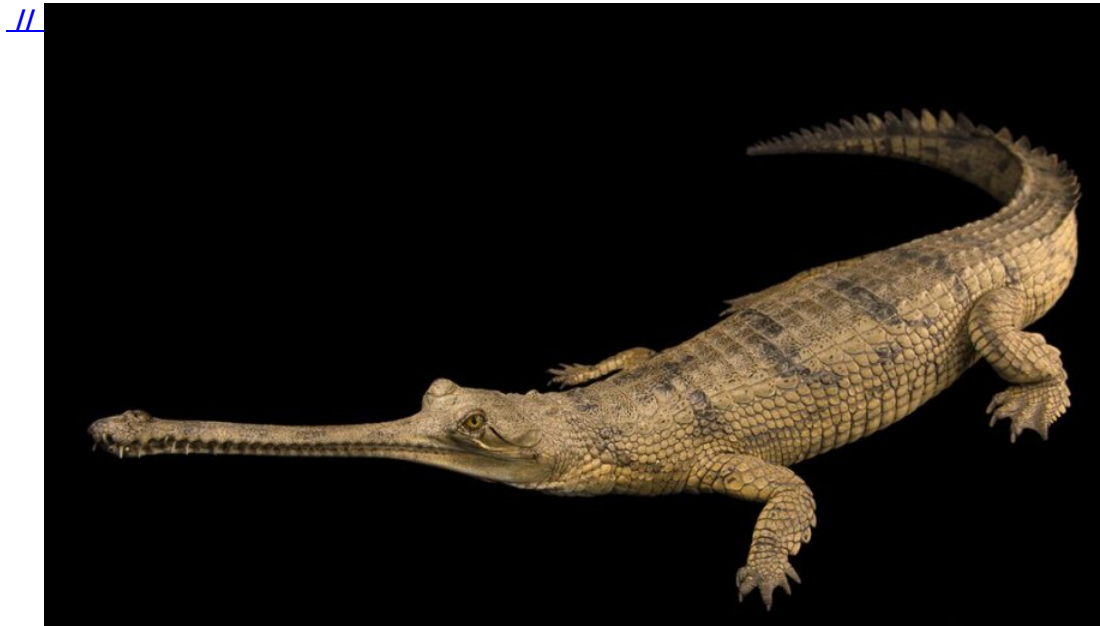




Rescuing Gharials: Mahanadi River

Why in News

Recently, **Odisha announced a cash award of Rs. 1,000 to conserve gharials in Mahanadi River Basin.**



Key Points

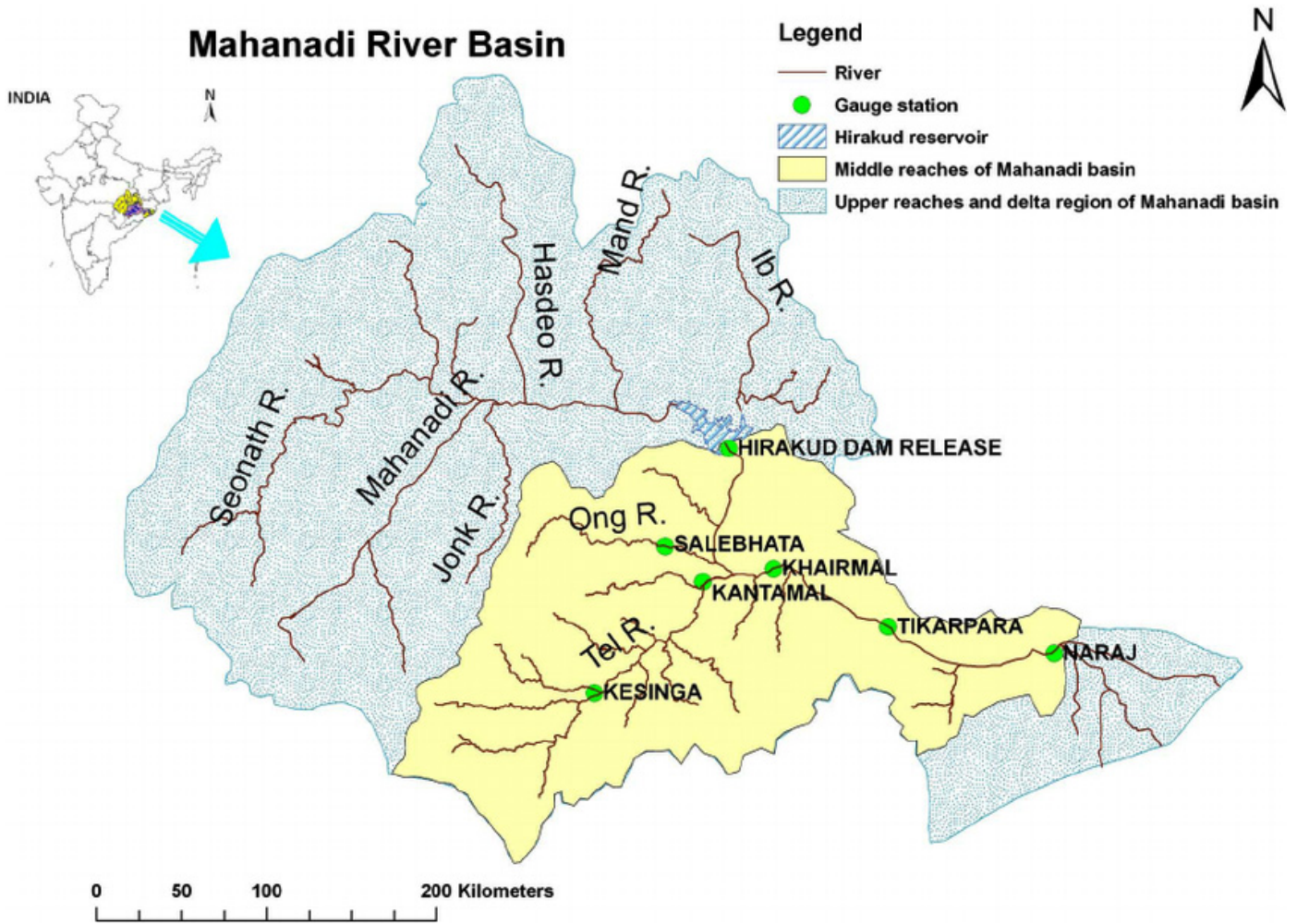
▪ About Gharials:

- Gharials, sometimes **called gavials**, are a **type of Asian crocodylian distinguished by their long, thin snouts**. **Crocodylians are a group of reptiles** that includes crocodiles, alligators, caimans, and more.
- **India has three species of Crocodylians namely:**
 - **Gharial** (*Gavialis gangeticus*): **IUCN Red List- Critically Endangered**
 - **Mugger crocodile** (*Crocodylus palustris*): **IUCN- Vulnerable.**
 - **Saltwater crocodile** (*Crocodylus porosus*): **IUCN- Least Concern.**
- All the three are listed on **Appendix I of CITES** and **Schedule I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.**
- **Exception: Saltwater Crocodile populations of Australia, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea are included in Appendix II of CITES.**
- **Habitat of Gharials:**
 - **Natural Habitat:** Fresh waters of the northern part of India.

- **Primary Habitat:** [Chambal river](#) (a tributary of Yamuna).
- **Secondary Habitat:** [Ghagra](#), Gandak river, Girwa river (Uttar Pradesh), the Ramganga river (Uttarakhand) and the Sone river (Bihar).
- **Significance:** Population of Gharials are **a good indicator of clean river water.**
- **Conservation Efforts:**
 - Breeding Centres of **Kukrail Gharial Rehabilitation Centre in Lucknow**, Uttar Pradesh, **National Chambal Sanctuary (Gharial Eco Park, Madhya Pradesh).**
- **Threats:**
 - Increased river pollution, dam construction, massive-scale fishing operations and floods.
 - Illegal sand mining and poaching.

▪ **Mahanadi River:**

- **About:**
 - The Mahanadi River system is the **third largest of peninsular India after Godavari and Krishna**, and the **largest river of Odisha state.**
 - The **catchment area** of the river extends to **Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Jharkhand and Maharashtra.**
 - Its **basin is bounded by** the Central India hills on the north, by the Eastern Ghats on the south and east and by the Maikala range on the west.
- **Source:**
 - It **rises from a place near Sihawa in Bastar hills in the state of Chhattisgarh** to the south of Amarkantak.
- **Major Tributaries:** Seonath River, Hasdeo river, Mand river, Ib river, Jonking river, Tel river
- **Mahanadi River Dispute:** The Central Government constituted [Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal](#) in 2018.
- **Major Dams/Projects on Mahanadi:**
 - [Hirakud Dam](#): This is the longest dam of India.
 - Ravishankar Sagar, Dudhawa Reservoir, Sondur Reservoir, Hasdeo Bango and Tandula are other major projects.



Source: DTE

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