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Contents

April- 2018
Issue-1

Seven Important Issues

1-25

- Perpetual President of China and its Implications for India
- Protecting Innocent Citizens
- E-waste: Needs Better Handling
- The International Solar Alliance: New Sun in the World
- Water Conservation: Need of the Hour
- Corporate Social Responsibility in India
- Understanding: Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill

Seven Subjective Questions with Model Answers

26-31

Seven Important National & International News

32-37

Seven Brain Boosters & Seven MCQ's Based on Them

38-46

Seven Important Facts For Prelims

47

Seven Perfect Quotes (Important for Essay and Answer Writing)

48

Seven Practice Questions for Main Exam

49

SEVEN IMPORTANT ISSUES

I. PERPETUAL PRESIDENT OF CHINA AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIA

Why in News?

Recently China's Parliament amended the constitution to remove the limit on presidential terms. The amendment will allow President Xi Jinping, who is seen as the most powerful Chinese leader in the post-Mao Zedong era, to keep power indefinitely. The move reverses the era of "collective" leadership and orderly succession that was promoted by late paramount leader Deng Xiaoping to ensure stability following the turbulent one-man rule of Communist China's founder Mao Zedong.

Introduction

Politics, political rulers and their political trajectory decide what China is today and tomorrow. The constitutional amendment removing the presidential and vice-presidential two-term limit of China will allow Xi Jinping, supposedly the most powerful leader in Chinese political history after Mao Zedong, to hold office for at least another term after his second term ends in 2023. With this, he may emerge as the longest serving leader in the post-Mao period. In March 2013, Xi Jinping had assumed the position of President of China. In the Chinese political system, the powers and authority of the President primarily derives from the concurrent posts of General Secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and Chairman of the party's Central Military Commission (CMC), which Xi was already holding

before becoming President in March 2013. China under Xi has also been aggressively challenging India's role as the pre-eminent power in the Indian Ocean region. It's growing ties with Pakistan — Mandarin has now been made an official language in Pakistan — is also a cause for concern. But the question really is what does it mean for India? While there is considerable worry and doubt in New Delhi over the implications, it's important not to start painting the devil on the wall, just yet.

The Domestic Upshot

The constitutional amendment to do away with the presidential and vice-presidential term limits is a major development in Chinese political history. This was only the fifth occasion since 1982 that the constitution has been amended. Calling the move an "important" development for China's political course, the Chinese state media clarified that it did not mean a change in the retirement system for party leaders and officials. The amendment, importantly, incorporated Xi Jinping's thought on "Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era", which is to be gradually achieved by establishing a "moderately prosperous society" by 2020, a great modern socialist country by 2035 and, eventually, a strong China by the middle of the 21st century.

Theoretically, Xi's continuation into a third term as President would mean a strong and institutionalised authoritarian regime. It indicates a

unified leadership in times to come. It further implies that civil-military relations will be stable and Xi Jinping will continue to enjoy undisputed leadership in the civilian and military domains. In constitutional terms, the removal of the two-term limit for the President effectively establishes parity between the office of the President of China and that of the Chairman of the CMC and General Secretary of the party. The last two positions do not have any term limit in the constitution. As a result, the removal of the two-term limit for the position of President will allow all three significant offices to symbolically hold equal weight in China's complex civil-military structure.

There is widespread speculation that Xi might continue to hold power as the Chairman of the CMC and perhaps as the General Secretary of the CPC beyond 2022-23. Both are important positions that influence the Party's supervisory process in China's political structure. Politically, this will give Xi Jinping a free hand to assert his leadership and the CPC's supremacy without running the risk of allowing any other potential leader to challenge his leadership in the near future

Foreign Policy Matrix

The foreign policy bearing of Xi's extended presidency is enormous. Basically, it guarantees the continuation and evolution of major initiatives including the BRI over the next decade or so. Here, it is important to note that

as part of Xi's "new era" strategy, since his ascent to power in 2013, Beijing has been pursuing a multi-layered and multi-pronged foreign policy. "Bringing-in" and "going-out" are two important components of this policy. "Bringing-in" involves inviting foreign delegates and hosting grand summits and events, while "going-out" means overseas visits of the top leadership through an intensive outreach programme involving the signing of deals, undertaking cooperative programmes and promoting investment abroad.

These suggest that China pursued an active foreign policy during Xi's first term as President. This active foreign policy, combining "bringing-in" and "going-out" initiatives, is being pursued within the architecture of four foreign policy propositions: "a new type of major power relationships"; "major country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics"; "a community of common destiny"; and a "new type of international relations". Each of these propositions engages with smaller and bigger countries across the region and the world differently. But the main Chinese strategic ambitions behind these propositions are twofold: (a) enhancing China's position globally as a leader equal to the status of the US; and (b) taking a leadership role in international affairs, with a particular focus on the Asia-Pacific.

Geopolitical Scenario

The Chinese proposition of the "new type of major power relations" goes back to 2012 when Xi delivered a speech in Washington to characterise Sino-US relations in times to come. While aiming to enhance its status vis-a-vis the US, China's immediate focus will be on the Asia-Pacific region where Donald Trump has created a vacuum through his withdrawal from the Asia-Pacific multilateral trade grouping. China sees this as a strategic opportunity for its rise as a world power.

Under Xi's "new era" strategy, China's Asia-Pacific ambitions are growing continuously. The prime Chinese ambitions in the Asia-Pacific are not only to enhance Beijing's influence but also to check American influence by gradually changing the status quo of the region. Enhancing maritime interests, promoting stronger bilateral and multilateral security contacts, pursuing better economic cooperation through free trade agreements (FTAs) and focusing on regional economic integration and connectivity are major features of China's Asia-Pacific strategy. The Chinese White Paper released in January 2017, entitled China's Policies on Asia-Pacific Security, highlights all of these. The objective is to create a favourable condition for China's rise by influencing the geopolitics of the region. A revisionist tendency is already reflected in China's Asia-Pacific strategy. For instance, Xi Jinping's grand propositions and innovative initiatives over the last few years such as the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), introduction of the new Silk Road Fund (SRF) under the BRI and taking the lead to establish the New Development Bank (NDB) under BRICS are all integral to China's Asia-Pacific strategy.

These initiatives are changing the status quo in the region; the US National Security Strategy (NSS), released in December 2017, also points towards this trend. The Trump administration's NSS accuses Beijing of being a revisionist power that seeks to transform the geopolitics of the region through infrastructure investment and trade strategies.

With Xi at the helm for another decade, one is likely to witness a continuation in China's Asia-Pacific strategy. The return of the Quadrilateral initiative involving Australia, India, Japan and the US will only reinforce China's focus on the Asia-Pacific region. Major countries in

the region, including India, might find China's growing strategic ambitions challenging. It might even encourage some countries in the Asia-Pacific to revisit their policies towards China. Donald Trump's unclear Asia policy does not hold out any assurance, which might eventually encourage many Asian countries not only to rebuild their relationship with China but also to see China as an opportunity. For instance, Japan, an alliance partner of the US, has recently shown an inclination to improve relations with China. The recently re-elected Shinzo Abe has even expressed "conditional support" to China on the BRI and a willingness to engage with China under the initiative to improve bilateral relations. A similar trend is visible on Taiwan's part too. The ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) under Tsai Ing-Wen is not pursuing the same nationalist and 'pro-independence' policy as it did during its previous stint in power from 2000 to 2008. In South Asia, too, a similar trend can be noticed with many smaller countries engaging with China.

Criticism

This constitutional amendment, with its centralisation of power, is being seen in some quarters as a serious setback to China's legal and political system, which is in need of massive reform. According to a well-known journalist in China, commented that this development would "subject us to the ridicule of the civilised nations of the world" and will pull China "backward into history." On the other hand, this amendment was seemingly carried out keeping in view domestic imperatives. The economy has been under stress for some time and the rate of growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) has slowed down considerably, which the Chinese leadership has turned to calling the "new normal". In 2016, the economy grew at the rate of 6.7 per cent, which was the lowest growth rate since 1990.

At the same time, Xi Jinping's flagship Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) needs long-term nurturing since its main intent is to revitalise the economy and revive a higher growth rate through international economic engagement. Besides, there are other domestic issues including the anti-corruption drive that need a long-term action plan.

The constitutional amendment further implies that political reforms are becoming secondary in China. Civic participation and freedom of the people are becoming subordinate to the CPC's political culture of managing the country not by the "rule of law" but through arbitrary rules set by the rulers. With this, there seems to be a return to an authoritarian culture in decision-making. China had moved away from an authoritarian culture in the post-Mao period, adapting slowly to the collective and institutional decision-making process. In contrast, until his death, Mao had made all the crucial foreign policy decisions, including his decision to wage war on India in 1962.

Implications for India

If the last two years turned to be rather contentious between India and China, Delhi is now trying to reset relations with Beijing. The optics of the reset, however, has generated both disappointment and welcome endorsement. Those who hailed India's new political will to look China in the eye in 2017 are taken aback by what they see as a return to the perennial temptation to "appease China". For long years, India has bet that whatever the problems on the bilateral front, there is room for significant international cooperation with China. That proposition, however, was significantly dented in the last two years. Do note Beijing's active blocking of India's effort to secure membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group. China

also remains the only major power that does not support India's claim for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.

India needs to comprehend the course in which China's foreign policy is likely to evolve over the next decade. In fact, a road map of Chinese policy planning over the next three decades has already been outlined. Emphasising on a "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation", Xi outlined China's ambition to emerge as a superpower by 2049.

It is important to note here that since the BRI's initial announcement in 2013, China under Xi's leadership has pursued an intensive national and international campaign promoting its merits. If Xi's first tenure from 2013 to 2018 were to be seen as the phase of "promotion" of the BRI, the second term, 2018-2023, would mark the phase of "execution", with Beijing signing a range of projects and deals with various countries in Asia and the world. That means, Chinese foreign policy will become more BRI-centric in the years to come where infrastructure investment abroad, promoting connectivity and corridors and forging stronger trade and economic contacts with the outside world will be the main aspects of its "going-out" strategy. This will pose an even more severe test for India in the neighbourhood and in Asia at large, than what New Delhi is facing at present.

However, India should not treat this development negatively in its entirety, particularly in the context of boundary negotiations. Engaging with a strong leadership to find a solution to the boundary dispute is a better proposition than struggling to find a solution under a weak leadership. However, territorial integrity and national sovereignty are two subject matters that any country finds difficult to compromise on, including an authoritarian China. It is important to mention here that officials under

Xi Jinping had initially indicated a preference for "oriental wisdom" to resolve the boundary dispute. It remains unclear what this "oriental wisdom" really means, but the Chinese proposition is basically about finding a 'political' solution within the ambit of the "Panchsheel" – the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence – where the leadership in India and China will play a significant role in resolving the boundary dispute. Essentially, it implies that the boundary dispute between the two countries must be resolved through a 'political' understanding. Keeping this in perspective, Xi Jinping's extended presidency should encourage India to see the boundary negotiation process in a fresh context. In Xi's first term as President, neither did the boundary negotiation witness any positive development nor was it pursued continuously at the Special Representatives (SRs) level.

On Economic Front

Since 2014, President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi have met on several occasions. They had decided that the two countries would build a closer partnership in development and deepen cooperation in all areas. With the care and personal support of the Chinese and Indian leaders, the trade and economic ties between the two countries had kept a fast-growing momentum. In 2017, the bilateral trade reached \$84.4 billion, registering a growth of 20.3% from the year before and a record high. In particular, China's import from India soared by 40%, helping ease the bilateral trade imbalance. China remained India's largest trading partner. India had become one of the most important overseas investment destinations of Chinese companies.

Way Forward

Overall, India should carefully understand the evolving foreign policy strategy of China under Xi

Jinping and notably, his worldview and try to position bilateral relations accordingly. The foreign policy strategies and worldviews of each of the previous Chinese presidents have been an integral part of China's relationship with India. Unlike Mao's authoritarianism, Deng Xiaoping's approach largely pursued modest engagement through an "open-door" foreign policy where the focus was on expanding China's foreign relations across the world. As a result, during Deng's tenure, India-China relations normalised, even though the credit for normalisation should primarily go to India's diplomatic and political outreach to China. Under Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, China's foreign relations strategy turned towards "greater conservatism", mainly emphasising on domestic economic growth and linking

it with amicable relations among countries around China's periphery and elsewhere. China's overall approach towards India was to build confidence during the tenure of Jiang Zemin, when a range of confidence-building measures (CBMs) primarily in 1993 and 1996 was signed in order to offer a new momentum to bilateral relations after the normalisation process. The bilateral relationship became even more institutionalised during Hu Jintao's presidency, when a plethora of agreements, memorandums of understanding (MoUs) and continuous political exchanges at the highest level became the highlights of India-China relations.

In brief, Xi Jinping's extended presidency should be seen as a strategic opportunity for India-China relations. New Delhi must act

proactively to improve the envisioned "developmental partnership" between India and China. Reciprocation from China regarding the same will obviously be required. The essence of this developmental partnership is to forge closer economic contacts. Both sides should therefore focus on how to develop this developmental partnership while improving overall bilateral relations. On India's part, this should be carried out proactively without overlooking the changes and challenges that Xi's extended presidency brings to the region and the world in general.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: India and its neighborhood-relations.



2. PROTECTING INNOCENT CITIZENS

Why in News?

The Supreme Court recently asserted that the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 has become an instrument of "blackmail" and is being used by some to exact "vengeance" and satisfy vested interests. Though the intention of the court was clearly to protect officers from "arbitrary arrest" and to protect "innocent citizens" from being falsely implicated in cases, data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) and the Ministry of Home Affairs shows that if conviction rates under the Act are low, it may have as much to do with the misuse of the provision as with the manner in which investigations are conducted and cases prosecuted in the courts.

Introduction

Despite various measures to improve the socio-economic conditions of the SCs and STs, they remain vulnerable. They have, in several brutal incidents,

been deprived of their life and property. Because of the awareness created through spread of education, etc., when they assert their rights and resist practices of untouchability against them or demand statutory minimum wages or refuse to do any bonded and forced labour, the vested interests try to cow them down and terrorise them. When the SCs and STs try to preserve their self-respect or honour of their women, they become irritants for the dominant and the mighty. Under the circumstances, the existing laws like the Protection of Civil Rights Act 1955 and the normal provisions of the Indian Penal Code have been found to be inadequate to check and deter crimes against them committed by non-SCs and non-STs. It is considered necessary that not only the term 'atrocities' should be defined, but also stringent measures should be introduced to provide for higher punishment for committing such

atrocities. It is also proposed to enjoin on the States and Union Territories to take specific preventive and punitive measures to protect SCs and STs from being victimized and, where atrocities are committed, to provide adequate relief and assistance to rehabilitate them.

It isn't a coincidence that the laws enacted to protect the rights of people in vulnerable situations—women, Dalits, Adivasis—against the powerful, are the ones most often accused of misuse. Our Supreme Court's campaign against the 'misuse' of special laws continues. A few days ago, a two-judge bench of Justices AK Goel and UU Lalit issued new directions to prevent what they say is the "rampant misuse" of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. On the face of it, much of the judgment aims to uphold the fair trial rights of criminal suspects. The Court rightly observes that wrongful arrests and

detention violate the constitutional right to personal liberty. It defends the principles of due process and presumption of innocence, which are too often casually ignored in the Indian criminal justice system.

But then the judgment makes some odd leaps of logic. Quoting some High Court judgment and statistics from the National Crime Records Bureau, the Court concludes that the Atrocities Act may have become "a charter for exploitation or oppression", "an instrument to blackmail or to wreak personal vengeance" and a law which is "perpetuating casteism". It goes on to issue several directions, including one potentially destructive one: that the police mandatorily conduct a 'preliminary inquiry' into any complaint of caste-based discrimination or violence before registering a First Information Report. This isn't the first time that the two judges of the Supreme Court has raised questions about the abuse of protective laws. Last July, the same bench issued directions to prevent the 'misuse' of Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code (the 'anti-dowry' law). They wanted states to set up 'family welfare' committees to vet complaints of dowry harassment before suspects could be arrested.

- **No arrest without permission:** The apex court held that a preliminary inquiry should also be conducted before the FIR is registered to check whether the case falls within the parameters of the Atrocities Act or whether it was frivolous or motivated. The court also held that anticipatory bail should be allowed if the accused is able to prove that the complaint was mala fide.
- **Comments on casteism:** The court had also used the opportunity to emphasise how it felt the Act may even "perpetuate casteism" and how there was a need to curb "false implication of innocent citizens on caste lines".

- **Chargesheet and conviction rate:** The disposal of cases by police and courts revealed that under the Act, 1989, 11,060 cases were taken up for investigation in 2016 and the charge-sheeting rate was 77%. The data further revealed that it further stated that in 2016, there were 45,233 cases out of which only in 4,546 cases, the trial was completed. While there were convictions in 701 cases, in 3,845 the accused were acquitted or discharged. So the conviction rate was 15.4 % while the pendency percentage took at 90.5%. Final reports submitted by the police during the year revealed that the police had found 2,150 cases to be "true but (with) insufficient evidence", 5,347 cases to be "false", and 869 cases to be "mistake of fact".

NCRB Data of Crimes against SC/ST (PoA) Act

- The NCRB data of crimes against SC/ST (PoA) Act, as revealed in its 2017 annual report, reveals that while in 2014 the number of cases were 40,401, they had dropped marginally by 4.3% to 38,670 in 2015, but had risen by 5.5% to reach 40,801 in 2016. It had covered the sections pertaining to abuse and criminal intimidations, which were mostly invoked in complaints against officials and staff members, under the "other IPC crimes".
- In 2016, Uttar Pradesh (10,426 cases) reported the highest number of cases of atrocities against Scheduled Castes (SCs) accounting for 25.6% of the total followed by Bihar with 14.0% (5,701 cases) and Rajasthan with 12.6% (5,134 cases) during 2016.
- Incidentally, the crime head-wise data revealed that the largest proportion of these cases was of

assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty at 7.7% (3,172 cases) followed by rape at 6.2% (2,541 cases).

- In the case of Scheduled Tribes, the number of cases stood at 6,827 in 2014, fell by 8.1% to reach 6,276 in 2015 and then rose by 4.7% to 6,568 in 2016. In the case of STs, Madhya Pradesh (1,823 cases) reported the highest number of cases of atrocities at 27.8% followed by Rajasthan with 18.2% (1,195 cases) and Odisha with 10.4% (681 cases).
- In the case of STs, there were 974 rape cases which constituted 14.8% of all crime against them, followed by assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty with 12.7% (835 cases) and kidnapping and abduction with 2.5% (163 cases).

SC/ ST Prevention of Atrocities Act

The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Act, 2015 has been notified. The amendment Act received President's assent on December 31, 2015. It amends the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, which prohibits the commission of offences against members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and establishes special courts for trial of such offences.

1. The first category contains provisions of criminal law. It establishes criminal liability for a number of specifically defined atrocities and extends the scope of certain categories of penalizations given in the Indian Penal Code (IPC).
2. The second category contains provisions for relief and compensation for victims of atrocities.

3. The third category contains provisions that establish special authorities for the implementation and monitoring of the Act.

Apart from the offences already listed under the Act, the amendment Act adds that:

- Intentionally touching an SC or ST woman in a sexual manner without her consent, or
- Using words, acts or gestures of a sexual nature, or
- Dedicating an SC or ST women as a devadasi to a temple, or any similar practice will also be considered an offence.

Besides these, the Act adds new offences of atrocities such as

- Garlanding with footwear,
- Compelling to dispose or carry human or animal carcasses, or do manual scavenging,
- Abusing SCs or STs by caste name in public,
- Attempting to promote feelings of ill-will against SCs or STs or disrespecting any deceased person held in high esteem and
- Imposing or threatening a social or economic boycott.

New offences of atrocities like tonsuring of head, moustache, or similar acts which are derogatory to the dignity of members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, garlanding with chappals, denying access to irrigation facilities or forest rights, dispose or carry human or animal carcasses, or to dig graves, using or permitting manual scavenging, dedicating a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe women as devadasi, abusing in caste name, perpetrating witchcraft atrocities, imposing social or economic boycott, preventing Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes candidates from filing of nomination to contest elections, hurting a Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes woman by removing

her garments, forcing a member of Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe to leave house, village or residence, defiling objects sacred to members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe, touching or using words, acts or gestures of a sexual nature against members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe.

Criticism

The point is not that Section 498A or the Atrocities Act are incapable of being misused. Every law can be and is, abused. But to selectively look at the operation of certain laws—in a manner that ignores the realities of caste and gender injustice in India—and conclude that they are being particularly misused, is plain wrong. P.S. Krishnan, a member of the National Monitoring Committee for Education of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Persons with Disabilities has expressed his distress over the Supreme Court's judgment on March 20 diluting the SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) (POA) Act, 1989 and the POA Amendment Act, 2015. Krishnan, therefore, persuades the government to present the notorious cases as follows, to the Supreme Court:

- **Kizhavenmani, Tamil Nadu (1958):** 44 SCs were burnt to death in a confined building, because SC agricultural labourers sought a little raise in their very low wages. The high court acquitted all the accused.
- **Karamchedu, Andhra Pradesh, 1984:** Five SCs were massacred. The trial court convicted many of the accused. The High Court acquitted all. The Supreme Court upheld the trial court judgment – a clear example that acquittals do not mean false cases.
- **Six cases of Bihar including the Bathani Tola (1996) and Laxmanpur Bathe (1997):** In most of these, the trial court convicted the accused. In all of these, the High Court acquitted the accused.

Appeals are pending in the Supreme Court.

- **Kambalapalli, Karnataka:** The prime witness in this case, who is the sole survivor and head of the family whose other members were massacred, turned “hostile” resulting in the acquittal of all the accused. When asked why he turned hostile, he said: “Let me be given full protection, then I shall speak the truth”.

This is an example of how factually indisputable cases of crime fail in the courts showing that acquittal does not mean the case is false. This case shows how witnesses are vulnerable to intimidation and threats, which include social and economic boycott. Krishnan adds that this was noticed by a committee which toured British India in the 1920s and this situation continues even today.

- Delay in investigation and trial result in intimidation of victims, their survivors and witnesses by various means including social and economic boycott, which are crippling.
- Because the caste system is rampant and is inherited over the centuries, caste-based mindset and biases are widely prevalent among all sections, in all the limbs of the state and institutions and keeping this in view, the Act has been strengthened, but this is not enough. Among the important amendments in 2015 to the Act, is a new chapter of the rights of the victims and witnesses.
- Casteism can be abolished only if its underpinnings are eliminated, such as the landlessness of SCs, the misappropriation of the lands of STs, lack of irrigation for SC and ST lands, unavailability of quality education from pre-school to the highest level, high neonatal, infant, under-five and child mortality rates, stunting, anaemia etc. in all of which the SCs/STs fare the worst

among all social groups. These have to be tackled. Mere slogans and verbal attacks on the caste system will not eliminate it.

- Hidden Apartheid: Caste discrimination against India's 'Untouchables' had noted that Dalits are frequently the victims of discriminatory treatment in the administration of justice.
- Prosecutors and judges fail to vigorously and faithfully pursue complaints brought by Dalits, which is evidenced by the high rate of acquittals in such cases".
- Noting how the police generally failed to "register or properly register crimes against Dalits", it had noted that "Dalits' right to equal treatment before organs administering justice is compromised at the outset".
- In fact, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), in its annual report

in 2017, had noted how "despite the deterrent provisions made in the PoA Act, increasing atrocities against the members of SCs and STs had been a cause of concern to the government". The MHA had stated that "it was, therefore, considered appropriate to strengthen the Act and make the relevant provisions of the Act more effective."

Conclusion

Indian law already has safeguards against the risk of false cases. Anyone who falsely charges a person with an offence with the intention of causing injury can face imprisonment for up to seven years. Giving false evidence and fabricating evidence are also criminal offences. These provisions, if properly enforced by the police and the judiciary, could effectively deter false complaints. What we don't need are more judgments which blunt protective laws and obstruct the rights that Parliament has recognised.

Ideally, in a liberal democracy individual rights should be foremost. However, in India it's often the case that group sentiments take precedence over individual rights, opening the door to draconian legal provisions and making the individual the most persecuted minority. This in turn hardens group identities, creates a vicious cycle of prejudice and defeats the project of an equitable society. Hence, it's time to give primacy to individual rights and make it the default liberal position. Laws must be reinterpreted accordingly.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

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3. E-WASTE: NEEDS BETTER HANDLING

Why in News?

Union Ministry for Environment, Forest and Climate Change has amended the E-waste (Management) Rules in a move to facilitate and effectively implement the environmentally sound management of e-waste in India. The collection targets have been revised and relax the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) plan by reducing e-waste collection targets for industries. The industries are liable to collect only 10 per cent of e-waste during 2017-18, 20 per cent during 2018-19, 30 per cent during 2019-20 and 40 per cent during 2020-21 and so on.

Introduction: Rise in Electronic Waste

India ranks fifth in the world in generating e-waste, according to the UN's Global E-Waste Monitor, 2014.

In 2017, over 200 manufacturers of electronic goods, including some e-giants, were served notices by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) for not complying with e-waste procurement norms.

"The country's economic growth, rise in per capita income and technological innovations coupled with high obsolescence rate of electronic and electrical equipment to increase in the rate of generation of e-waste. Toxic constituents such as Lead, Mercury, Cadmium, Hexavalent Chromium, Polybrominated biphenyls and Polybrominated diphenyl ethers are used in the manufacturing of electronic devices. Disposal of e-waste from such electronic devices, without processing it in an environmentally sound manner, may affect the human

health and environment including soil and ground water. No comprehensive inventorization of e-waste generation in the country has been done.

The Central Pollution Control Board will this year begin random checks on mobile phones, laptops and other electronic goods to check whether their constituent metals exceed safety norms. Under a directive called Reduction of Hazardous Substances (RoHS), officials will buy phones, disassemble them and, through chemical tests, check whether the levels of lead, cadmium, hexavalent chromium, mercury and polybrominated diphenyl ethers exceed prescribed norms. The tests will be conducted at the Hyderabad-based Centre for Materials for Electronic Technology.

E-waste (Management & Handling) Rules

The government has comprehensively revised E-waste (Management & Handling) Rules, 2011 and notified E-Waste (Management) Rules in March, 2016. The provisions of these rules include expanded producers' responsibility, setting up of producer responsibility organizations and e-waste exchange to facilitate collection and recycling, assigning specific responsibility to bulk consumers of electronic products for safe disposal, providing for economic incentives for collection of electronic waste and other measures which include responsibility of producers of electronic and electrical products for collection and channelizing of electronic waste. The rules provide for simplified permission process for setting up of dismantling and recycling facilities through single authorization based on Standard Operating Procedures (SoP) prescribed by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). State governments have been entrusted with the responsibility for earmarking industrial space for e-waste dismantling and recycling facilities and to undertake industrial skill development and establish measures for safety and health of workers engaged in dismantling and recycling facilities of e-waste. Some of the salient features of the E-waste (Management) Amendment Rules, 2016 are as follows:

- (i) The e-waste collection targets under EPR have been revised and will be applicable from 1 October 2017. The phase-wise collection targets for e-waste in weight shall be.
 - a. 10% of the quantity of waste generation as indicated in the EPR Plan during 2017-18, with a 10% increase every year until 2023.
 - b. After 2023 onwards, the target has been made 70% of the

quantity of waste generation as indicated in the EPR Plan.

- (ii) The quantity of e-waste collected by producers from the 1 October 2016 to 30 September 2017 shall be accounted for in the revised EPR targets until March 2018.
- (iii) Separate e-waste collection targets have been drafted for new producers, i.e. those producers whose number of years of sales operation is less than the average lives of their products. The average lives of the products will be as per the guidelines issued by CPCB from time to time.
- (iv) Producer Responsibility Organizations (PROs) shall apply to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) for registration to undertake activities prescribed in the rules.

- (v) Under the Reduction of Hazardous Substances (RoHS) provisions, cost for sampling and testing shall be borne by the government for conducting the RoHS test. If the product does not comply with RoHS provisions, then the cost of the test will be borne by the producers.

Effects on Environment and Human Health

Disposal of e-wastes is a particular problem faced in many regions across the globe. Computer wastes that are landfilled produce contaminated leachates which eventually pollute the groundwater. Acids and sludge obtained from melting computer chips, if disposed on the ground causes acidification of soil. For example, Guiyu, Hong Kong a thriving area of illegal

Effects of E-Waste constituent on Health		
Source of e-wastes	Constituent	Health effects
Solder in printed circuit boards, glass panels and gaskets in computer monitors	Lead (Pb)	Damage to central and peripheral nervous systems, blood systems and kidney damage. Affects brain development of children.
Chip resistors and semiconductors	Cadmium (Cd)	Toxic irreversible effects on human health. Accumulates in kidney and liver. Causes neural damage.
Relays and switches, printed circuit boards	Mercury (Hg)	Chronic damage to the brain. Respiratory and skin disorders due to bioaccumulation in fishes.
Corrosion protection of untreated and galvanized steel plates, decorator or hardener for steel housings	Hexavalent chromium (Cr VI)	Asthmatic bronchitis and DNA damage.
Cabling and computer housing	Plastics including PVC	Burning produces dioxin. It causes reproductive and developmental problems; immune system damage; interfere with regulatory hormones.
Plastic housing of electronic equipments and circuit boards	Brominated flame retardants (BFR)	Disrupts endocrine system functions.
Front panel of CRTs	Barium (Ba)	Short term exposure causes: muscle weakness; damage to heart, liver and spleen.
Motherboard	Beryllium (Be)	Carcinogenic (lung cancer) inhalation of fumes and dust. Causes chronic beryllium disease or berylliosis. Skin diseases such as warts.

e-waste recycling is facing acute water shortages due to the contamination of water resources.

In the late 1980s, a tightening of environmental regulations in industrialized countries led to a dramatic rise in the cost of hazardous waste disposal. Searching for cheaper ways to get rid of the wastes, "toxic traders" began shipping hazardous waste to developing countries. International outrage following these irresponsible activities led to the drafting and adoption of strategic plans and regulations at the Basel Convention.

Basel Convention

The fundamental aims of the Basel Convention are the control and reduction of transboundary movements of hazardous and other wastes including the prevention and minimization of their generation, the environmentally sound management of such wastes and the active promotion of the transfer and use of technologies. The Convention secretariat, in Geneva, Switzerland, facilitates and implements the Convention and related agreements. It also provides assistance and guidelines on legal and technical issues, gathers statistical data and conducts training on the proper management of hazardous waste.

The Basel Convention brought about a respite to the transboundary movement of hazardous waste. India and other countries have ratified the convention. However United States is not a party to the ban and is responsible for disposing hazardous waste, such as, e-waste to Asian countries even today. Developed countries such as US should enforce stricter legislations in their own country for the prevention of this horrifying act.

In the European Union where the annual quantity of electronic waste is likely to double in the next 12 years, the European Parliament recently passed legislation that will require manufacturers to take back their

electronic products when consumers discard them. This is called Extended Producer Responsibility. It also mandates a timetable for phasing out most toxic substances in electronic products.

Management of E-Wastes

It is estimated that 75% of electronic items are stored due to uncertainty of how to manage it. These electronic junks lie unattended in houses, offices, warehouses etc. and normally mixed with household wastes, which are finally disposed off at landfills. This necessitates implementable management measures. In industries management of e-waste should begin at the point of generation. This can be done by waste minimization techniques and by sustainable product design. Waste minimization in industries involves adopting:

1. Inventory management,
2. Production-process modification,
3. Volume reduction and
4. Recovery and reuse.

1. Inventory Management

Proper control over the materials used in the manufacturing process is an important way to reduce waste generation. By reducing both the quantity of hazardous materials used in the process and the amount of excess raw materials in stock, the quantity of waste generated can be reduced. This can be done in two ways i.e. establishing material-purchase review and control procedures and inventory tracking system.

Developing review procedures for all material purchased is the first step in establishing an inventory management program. Procedures should require that all materials be approved prior to purchase. In the approval process all production materials are evaluated to examine if they contain hazardous constituents and whether alternative non-hazardous materials are available.

Another inventory management procedure for waste reduction is to ensure that only the needed quantity of a material is ordered. This will require the establishment of a strict inventory tracking system. Purchase procedures must be implemented which ensure that materials are ordered only on an as-needed basis and that only the amount needed for a specific period of time is ordered.

2. Production-process Modification

Changes can be made in the production process, which will reduce waste generation. This reduction can be accomplished by changing the materials used to make the product or by the more efficient use of input materials in the production process or both. Potential waste minimization techniques can be broken down into three categories:

- i) Improved operating and maintenance procedures,
- ii) Material change and
- iii) Process-equipment modification

Improvements in the operation and maintenance of process equipment can result in significant waste reduction. This can be accomplished by reviewing current operational procedures or lack of procedures and examination of the production process for ways to improve its efficiency. A strict maintenance program, which stresses corrective maintenance, can reduce waste generation caused by equipment failure. An employee-training program is a key element of any waste reduction program. Training should include correct operating and handling procedures, proper equipment use, recommended maintenance and inspection schedules, correct process control specifications and proper management of waste materials.

Hazardous materials used in either a product formulation or a production process may be replaced with a less hazardous or non-hazardous material. This is a very widely used technique and is applicable to most manufacturing processes. Implementation of this

waste reduction technique may require only some minor process adjustments or it may require extensive new process equipment.

Modifying existing process equipment can be a very cost-effective method of reducing waste generation. In many cases the modification can just be relatively simple changes in the way the materials are handled within the process to ensure that they are not wasted. For example, in many electronic manufacturing operations, which involve coating a product, such as electroplating or painting, chemicals are used to strip off coating from rejected products so that they can be recoated. These chemicals, which can include acids, caustics, cyanides etc are often a hazardous waste and must be properly managed. By reducing the number of parts that have to be reworked, the quantity of waste can be significantly reduced.

3. Volume Reduction

Volume reduction includes those techniques that remove the hazardous portion of a waste from a non-hazardous portion. These techniques are usually to reduce the volume and thus the cost of disposing of a waste material. The techniques that can be used to reduce waste-stream volume can be divided into two general categories: source segregation and waste concentration. Segregation of wastes is in many cases a simple and economical technique for waste reduction. Wastes containing different types of metals can be treated separately so that the metal value in the sludge can be recovered. Concentration of a waste stream may increase the likelihood that the material can be recycled or reused. Methods include gravity and vacuum filtration, ultra filtration, reverse osmosis, freeze vaporization etc. For example, an electronic component manufacturer can use compaction equipments to reduce volume of waste cathode ray-tube.

4. Recovery and Reuse

This technique could eliminate waste disposal costs, reduce raw material costs and provide income from a salable waste. Waste can be recovered on-site, or at an off-site recovery facility, or through inter industry exchange. A number of physical and chemical techniques are available to reclaim a waste material such as reverse osmosis, electrolysis, condensation, electrolytic recovery, filtration, centrifugation etc. For example, a printed-circuit board manufacturer can use electrolytic recovery to reclaim metals from copper and tin-lead plating bath. However recycling of hazardous products has little environmental benefit if it simply moves the hazards into secondary products that eventually have to be disposed of. Unless the goal is to redesign the product to use nonhazardous materials, such recycling is a false solution.

Sustainable Product Design

Minimization of hazardous wastes should be at product design stage itself keeping in mind the following factors:

- **Rethink the product design:** Efforts should be made to design a product with fewer amounts of hazardous materials. For example, the efforts to reduce material use are reflected in some new computer designs that are flatter, lighter and more integrated. Other companies propose centralized networks similar to the telephone system.
- **Use of renewable materials and energy:** Bio-based plastics are plastics made with plant-based chemicals or plant-produced polymers rather than from petrochemicals. Bio-based toners, glues and inks are used more frequently. Solar computers also exist but they are currently very expensive.

- **Use of non-renewable materials that are safer:** Because many of the materials used are non-renewable, designers could ensure the product is built for re-use, repair and/or upgradeability. Some computer manufacturers such as Dell and Gateway lease out their products thereby ensuring they get them back to further upgrade and lease out again.

Management Options

Considering the severity of the problem, it is imperative that certain management options be adopted to handle the bulk e-wastes. Following are some of the management options suggested for the government, industries and the public.

Responsibilities of the Government

- Governments should set up regulatory agencies in each district, which are vested with the responsibility of co-ordinating and consolidating the regulatory functions of the various government authorities regarding hazardous substances.
- Governments should be responsible for providing an adequate system of laws, controls and administrative procedures for hazardous waste management. Existing laws concerning e-waste disposal be reviewed and revamped. A comprehensive law that provides e-waste regulation and management and proper disposal of hazardous wastes is required.
- Governments must encourage research into the development and standard of hazardous waste management, environmental monitoring and the regulation of hazardous waste-disposal.
- Polluter pays principle and extended producer responsibility should be adopted.

- Governments should encourage and support NGOs and other organizations to involve actively in solving the nation's e-waste problems.
- Uncontrolled dumping is an unsatisfactory method for disposal of hazardous waste and should be phased out.
- Governments should explore opportunities to partner with manufacturers and retailers to provide recycling services.
- Manufacturers, distributors and retailers should undertake the responsibility of recycling/disposal of their own products.
- Manufacturers of computer monitors, television sets and other electronic devices containing hazardous materials must be responsible for educating consumers and the general public regarding the potential threat to public health and the environment posed by their products.

Responsibility and Role of Industries

- Generators of wastes should take responsibility to determine the output characteristics of wastes and if hazardous, should provide management options.
- All personnel involved in handling e-waste in industries including those at the policy, management, control and operational levels, should be properly qualified and trained. Companies can adopt their own policies while handling e-wastes.
- Companies can and should adopt waste minimization techniques, which will make a significant reduction in the quantity of e-waste generated and thereby lessening the impact on the environment.

Responsibilities of the Citizen

Waste prevention is perhaps more preferred to any other waste management option including recycling. Donating electronics for reuse extends the lives of valuable products and keeps them out of the waste management system for a longer time. But care should be taken while donating such items i.e. the items should be in working condition. Reuse, in addition to being an environmentally preferable alternative, also benefits society. By donating used electronics, schools, non-profit organizations and lower-income families can afford to use equipment that they otherwise could not afford. E-wastes should never be disposed with garbage and other household wastes. This should be segregated at the site and sold or donated to various organizations.

Conclusion

While the world is marveling at the technological revolution, countries like India are facing an imminent danger. E-waste of developed countries, such as the US, disposes their wastes to India and other Asian countries. A recent investigation revealed that much of the electronics turned over for recycling in the United States ends up in Asia, where they are either disposed of or recycled with little or no regard for environmental or worker health and safety. Major reasons for exports are cheap labour and lack of environmental and occupational standards in Asia and in this way the toxic effluent of the developed nations 'would flood towards the world's poorest nations. The magnitude of these problems is yet to be documented. However, groups like Toxic Links India are already working on collating data that could be a step towards controlling this hazardous trade. It is imperative that developing countries and India in particular wake up to the monopoly of the developed countries and set up appropriate management measures to prevent the hazards and mishaps due to mismanagement of e-wastes.

General Studies Paper- III

Topic: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

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4. THE INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ALLIANCE: NEW SUN IN THE WORLD

Why in News?

On 11 March 2018, India, along with France, hosted the members of the International Solar Alliance (ISA), marking an important milestone in its efforts to take the alliance. The Delhi Summit was attended by 23 heads of states and governments from other ISA signatory countries. African Development Bank (AFDB), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Asian

Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the New Development Bank and the International Energy Agency (IEA) signed a joint partnership declaration with the ISA. The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) also signed a partnership declaration with ISA, working for deployment of over 1000 GW of solar energy and mobilising more than US\$ 1000

billion into solar energy by the year 2030.

Background

ISA is being described as India's gift to the world to combat climate change, is youngest international organisation that came into force on 6th December, 2017. The International Solar Alliance (ISA) was launched jointly by the Indian Prime Minister and the French President during

COP21. The Paris Declaration was issued on 30th November, 2015 at the time of launching of International Solar Alliance. It aims to contribute to the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement through rapid and massive deployment of solar energy. ISA also contributes to the 12 commitments of the One Planet Summit. ISA aims to bring together the 121 sun-rich States located between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn to provide a collective response to the main common obstacles to the massive deployment of solar energy in terms of technology, finance and capacity. The aim is to raise the trillion dollars needed to develop 1 terawatt of solar energy capacity by 2030. IRENA estimates that solar must account for at least 35 per cent of global power capacity by 2050 to meet the objectives the Paris Agreement on climate.

The key idea of the ISA is to "harmonize and aggregate demand for solar finance, solar technologies, innovation, research and development, and capacity building". Most of the countries that are part of the ISA are from Asia, Africa, South America and the Pacific, are hydrocarbon-deficit with high energy demand and are grappling with issues ranging from lack of infrastructure, lack of manufacturing capacity and high energy tariffs. Therefore, it is increasingly important for these countries to get access to renewable energy (RE) at affordable prices.

The countries located between the two tropics are, for the great majority, developing ones. 20-50% of their populations do not have access to electricity. They also represent: 73% of the global population; 36% of world GDP; 55% of total energy consumption

worldwide; and only 23% of installed solar capacity. Around 60 countries that have joined the International Solar Alliance represent a combined potential to develop 138 GW of solar capacity in the next five years, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA). Solar energy has an important role to play in ensuring a sustainable energy future and displays an enormous potential. In 90 minutes, the solar energy striking the Earth would be sufficient to provide the entire planet's energy needs for one year. The costs of solar photovoltaic modules have fallen by around 80% since the end of 2009, making it one of the cheapest sources for electricity generation, especially in countries between the tropics. Thanks to cost decrease and technology improvement, solar photovoltaic is currently the fastest-growing source of electricity globally. Worldwide solar capacity rose for the first time faster than any other source of electricity in 2016. 74 GW of new capacities were built reaching almost 300 GW in total capacity.

About International Solar Alliance

International Solar Alliance (ISA) is a coalition of solar resource rich countries

lying fully or partially between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn to specifically address energy needs by harnessing solar energy. The ISA is treaty-based intergovernmental international organization. The 121 prospective member countries (those falling between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn) of the ISA and are also the United Nations member, can join the Alliance by signing and ratifying the Framework Agreement or by acceptance or approval. The ISA Framework Agreement has a total of 14 articles. There are no targets or legal obligations imposed on member-countries. Secretariat of the ISA is located in National Institute of Solar Energy campus, Gurugram, Haryana. The ISA will have a two-tier structure – the Assembly and the Secretariat.

The key objectives of the ISA can be summed up as the following:

- Mobilizing more than \$1 trillion of investments by 2030 for massive deployment of solar energy;
- Global deployment of over 1,000GW of solar generation capacity;
- Making solar energy available at affordable rates, create solar

PM Modi's 10-point action plan to promote solar power

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday listed out 10 action points at the founding conference of the International Solar Alliance, to bring about a solar revolution worldwide. They include:



- ▶ Ensuring that cheap and improved solar technology is easily available
- ▶ Increasing the percentage of solar energy in countries' national energy mix
- ▶ Encouraging innovation for development of solutions to problems/challenges
- ▶ Ensuring concessional and risk-free funding for solar projects

- ▶ Developing regulatory aspects and norms to speed up adoption of solar technologies, solutions
- ▶ Consultancy support for bankable solar projects in developing nations
- ▶ Ensuring efforts to propagate solar revolution stress on partnerships and assimilation
- ▶ Ensuring creation of a network of centres of excellence that takes into account local circumstances and factors
- ▶ Ensuring solar energy policies are seen in the context of development that will help in achieving Sustainable Development Goals.
- ▶ Making the ISA secretariat a strong and professional body

grids and establish solar credit mechanism;

- Reducing the cost of finance and cost of technology;
- Enhancing energy security and sustainable development;
- Addressing common as well as specific obstacles that lie in the way of rapid and massive scaling up of solar energy in these countries;
- Act as a broader platform for deep diplomatic engagement on crucial developmental issues.

Although the ISA came into being on 6 December 2017, the Delhi summit marked the momentous occasion on which the alliance was given flesh and shape. Since 2016, the ISA has launched five programmes of action — rural and decentralized application; access to affordable finance; mini grids; solar e-mobility; and rooftop installations.

Opportunities for India

The summit has significant geopolitical implications and will shape the structure and course of the ISA. First is the time that an inter-governmental treaty-based alliance will have its headquarters in India. This will allow India the opportunity to position itself in a key global leadership role in the arena of climate change, RE and sustainable development. During the summit, India kicked off 27 projects in 15 countries enabling it to increase the scale and reach of its global engagements.

The Indian leadership also sees its active role within the ISA as a reiteration of India's commitment to fulfilling its global commitment on addressing climate change in a time-bound manner and help boost global confidence in India's capacities. Driven by remarkable cost declines, innovative policies and new business models, solar energy has emerged as the fastest growing renewable energy worldwide.

There is an immense opportunity at hand to bring its benefits to more and more countries around the world.

India's Commitment to Clean Energy

The ISA is not only expected to spur innovation in the RE space but also help make India a technological hub with independent manufacturing capabilities of RE equipment like solar panels, rather than being dependent on imports, through initiatives like 'Make in India'. India's Ministry of External Affairs is expected to play a role in "marrying Indian tech and finance capabilities with specific projects around the world". India announced a goal of obtaining 40 per cent of its electricity from non-fossil fuels by 2030 at the Paris climate change summit. It is close to achieving 20 GW grid connected solar power generation capacity this fiscal year (2018), in pursuit its aim of adding 175 gigawatts (GW) of green energy including 100GW of solar power.

- This year, India successfully achieved the target of producing 20 GW of solar energy four years ahead of its target.
- The country needs some \$83 billion between FY2018 and FY2022 to meet its 175 GW target, according to industry estimates.
- The emphasis of solar energy for remote areas, where electricity supply via conventional means is a challenge 'Atal Jyoti Yojana', and Solar Study Lamp Scheme has benefitted seven million school going children.
- 13 solar projects by India across the world worth \$143 million have been completed or are in the process of being executed.
- India, would give \$1.4 billion in aid to 15 other developing nations for 27 more solar projects.

- At present, the country's renewable energy installed capacity is 63 GW. Solar and wind power tariffs have dropped to an all-time low of Rs 2.44 per unit and Rs 3.46 per unit, among the lowest in the world.
- To supplement solar energy generation, India has distributed 28 crores LED bulbs in the last three years which have helped save \$ 2 billion and 4 GW of electricity.
- China is targeting over 360 GW of renewable capacity generation by 2022.

Technology Cooperation and Capacity Building

At the summit inauguration, Prime Minister set out a ten-point action plan for the ISA. This action plan includes framing of regulation and standards, consultancy support for bankable solar projects, concessional and less risky finances, all aimed at increasing the share of electricity produced from solar energy in the overall energy mix. Prime Minister also announced the creation of a solar technology mission for R&D and 500 training slots for member countries. India also extended Line of Credit of up to \$1.4 billion for 27 projects in 15 countries at the summit, while France has committed to investing \$ 860 million by 2022 in solar energy in addition to the over \$ 369 million that it committed in 2015. A day after the conference, President Macron and PM Modi flew to Mirzapur district in Uttar Pradesh to inaugurate a 75 MW solar power plant.

A Working Paper of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy notes that some of the key drawbacks in the use of solar technology include lack of systematic information about the on-ground requirements, scarce opportunities for capacity building and a shortage of suitable financing arrangements to make new technologies affordable.

Financing

ISA aims to raise investments of up to \$ 1 trillion by 2030. To facilitate the ISA secretariat and the ISA corpus fund, India has already contributed \$ 62 million. The African Development Bank's new deal on energy for Africa aims to achieve universal access to energy in Africa by 2025. AfDB's transformative 'Desert to Power' initiative in the Sahel and Sahara regions of Africa envisages 10 GW of solar power generation and providing clean energy to 90 million people. Together with the ISA, they would like to work on mobilization of concessional financing through existing, notably the bank's sustainable energy fund for Africa and the facility for energy inclusion. The Asian Development Bank promotes a vision of an Asia and Pacific region free of poverty. ADB's energy policy aims to help its developing member countries (DMCs) in Asia to provide reliable, adequate and affordable energy for an inclusive growth in a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable way and provide USD 3 billion per year by 2020 for clean energy, including solar energy projects in its DMCs.

ISA and ADB have joined hands for promotion of solar energy in Asia and the Pacific, including solar power generation, solar based mini-grids and transmission systems dedicated for integrating solar energy into the grids and any other future programs launched by ISA. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank finalized an Energy Sector Strategy that emphasizes proactive support to client countries to develop intermittent renewable energy, including solar. AIIB and ISA both have joined hands for promotion of solar energy in prospective ISA member countries where AIIB operates.

The Green Climate Fund's Strategic Vision includes financing innovative

projects and programmes, inter alia supporting the application and dissemination of cutting-edge climate technologies. Both ISA and GCF promote the development of affordable, reliable and sustainable solar energy as an important way towards a sustainable and inclusive economic growth. The New Development Bank's purpose is to mobilize resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in the Federative Republic of Brazil, the Russian Federation, the Republic of India, the People's Republic of China and the Republic of South Africa (BRICS) and other emerging market economies and developing countries.

The International Energy Agency is an autonomous agency within the framework of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which works to ensure reliable, affordable and clean energy for its 30 member countries and beyond. The IEA has four main areas of focus: energy security, economic development, environmental awareness and engagement worldwide. The IEA is at the heart of global dialogue on energy, providing authoritative statistics and analysis. The International Renewable Energy Agency is a universal international intergovernmental organisation that plays a leading role in the global energy transformation by supporting countries in achieving the increased adoption and sustainable use of all forms of renewable energy.

The ISA has also invited several financial institutions to form a \$ 300 billion global risk mitigation fund. A Common Risk Mitigation Mechanism (CRMM) study, carried out with the Tera Watt Initiative (TWI) of France and the ISA, states that a risk mitigation mechanism will reduce credit risk and increase investments more than ten-fold. Ten such funds of \$ 30 billion each have been planned by the ISA.

Trade, a Dark Spot in the Solar World

One of the foremost objectives of the ISA has been to undertake joint efforts to reduce the cost of finance and technology, besides mobilising more than \$ 1 trillion worth of investments needed by 2030 for the deployment of solar energy. While the cost of solar installations has been decreasing worldwide, it still remains high in many of the ISA countries. Most African countries also have a high most favoured nation (MFN) tariffs for photo voltaic (PV) cells, modules and semiconductor devices. This is exacerbated by their lack of manufacturing capacities and high tariffs. The Pacific Island countries have the highest MFN applied rates for solar products, with some going as high as 30-40 per cent. Hence, to further the spread of technology related to solar energy, reducing high tariff barriers is essential as such duties are detrimental to cost-effective solar deployment.

Although galvanising investments remains high on ISA's radar, freeing up trade of solar energy-related equipment and services should be explored. ISA members can voluntarily reduce import tariffs and non-tariff barriers on solar-related products and related services, would result in a plurilateral voluntary trade deal on solar energy goods and services among ISA members, bringing real benefits to trade and the environment. A plurilateral agreement is one where a group of economies come together to move forward with liberalisation in select areas. In this case the committed economies will be able to take advantage of global solar supply chains and economies of scale, while allowing massive deployment of affordable solar energy among ISA countries. An average of \$150 billion of these solar related goods has been imported by the world in the last five years. With ISA being recognised as

a treaty based inter-governmental international organisation in December 2017, it can galvanise support to voluntarily reduce tariffs within the ISA economies. However, in accordance with WTO MFN obligations (according to GATT), such benefits would need to be accorded to other WTO members as well. Nevertheless, in this case since most of the big buyers and suppliers of solar products are part of ISA already, providing similar concessional tariff benefits to all WTO economies will not be an issue.

Cooperation in Energy Storage Technology

Energy storage technologies have the potential to change the face of RE. Non-fuel minerals like cobalt are essential to energy storage technologies. Sixty per cent of global cobalt reserves are located in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which is a signatory to the ISA. Chile, another signatory, is part of the 'lithium triangle' of countries that contain approximately 54 per cent of the world's lithium reserves. Although Chile and Congo have yet to ratify the ISA agreement, cooperation with these

mineral rich countries within the ISA can unlock large gains for solar energy.

Conclusion

There is great optimism that the solar alliance would help in pushing 'power for all' into a more realistic realm. Furthermore, the ISA could be greatly beneficial in boosting technology transfer and emphasising the need for greater storage technologies. ISA member countries could also cooperate in developing an integrated electronic mobility ecosystem that is fueled by solar energy. India too would benefit immensely from the Alliance. Not only would it facilitate it in its endeavor to meet its commitments under the Paris Agreement, but would also allow it to take a leadership role in the developing world.

To promote use of solar energy, availability and development of technology, economic resources, reduction in prices, development of storage technology, mass manufacturing and innovation, a full ecosystem is required. In spite of these unresolved difficulties, the International Solar Alliance can be a

tremendous step forward for India on the world energy and environment stage. If India, with the cooperation of the other nations that constitute the ISA steering committee, can give practical, value-added substance to the ISA's mission, its position as a world leader will be significantly enhanced. Standing at the junction of technology, finance and consumer application, India, through its domestic solar bet and the International Solar Alliance, can have a transformative effect on the application of solar power and earn its place in the sun.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

Topic: Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

General Studies Paper- III

Topic: Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.



5. WATER CONSERVATION: NEED OF THE HOUR

Why in News?

The grave water situation in Cape Town in South Africa is a wake-up call to everybody across the globe from policymakers to the common man — that it cannot be business as usual when it comes to water usage. A similar crisis is looming large in other cities in the world as people continue to be reckless in their use of water. The United Nations General Assembly identified sustainable development as a priority. Therefore, on World Water Day, 22 March 2018, UN launched the International Decade for Action: Water for Sustainable Development

2018-2028 aiming to further improve cooperation, partnership and capacity development in response to the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Introduction

Water is, quite literally, a matter of life and death. Universal access to safe water and sanitation is a cornerstone of socio-economic development. Water is also a vital ingredient in (among other things) food, energy, health, industrial development, livable cities and the biodiversity and ecosystems around us. Pressure on water is rising and action is urgent. Our planet is so profoundly

dependent on water that when scientists search for the possibility of life on other planets, they search first for evidence of water.

The situation is so worrisome that 12 world leaders — 11 heads of state and a special adviser of a high-level panel on water - wrote an open letter to global leaders warning that the world is facing a water crisis and issued a New Agenda for Water Action. Observing that we need to make "every drop count", they called for a new approach: rethinking how we understand, value and manage water as a precious resource and catalysing

change and building partnerships to achieve the water-related goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Nature-Based Solutions

The 2018 edition of the World Water Development Report (WWDR-2018) seeks to inform policy and decision-makers, inside and outside the water community, about the potential of nature-based solutions (NBS) to address contemporary water management challenges across all sectors and particularly regarding water for agriculture, sustainable cities, disaster risk reduction and water quality. NBS use or mimic natural processes to enhance water availability (e.g., soil moisture retention, groundwater recharge), improve water quality (e.g., natural and constructed wetlands, riparian buffer strips) and reduce risks associated with water-related disasters and climate change (e.g., floodplain restoration, green roofs). The WWDR-2018, titled 'Nature-based Solutions for Water', demonstrates how nature-based solutions (NBS) offer a vital means of moving beyond business-as-usual to address many of the world's water challenges while simultaneously delivering additional benefits vital to all aspects of sustainable development.

The Indian Context

The oceans make up for about 97% of the Earth's water. Less than 3% of Earth's water is freshwater and most of it is not accessible. According to the U.S. Geological Survey, over 68% of the freshwater on Earth is found in icecaps and glaciers, while just over 30% is found in groundwater. India's current water requirement is estimated to be around 1,100 billion cubic metres per year, which is projected to touch 1,447 billion cubic metres by 2050.

Water conservation cannot brook delay any longer in India. According to a forecast by the Asian Development

Bank, India will have a water deficit of 50% by 2030. India's water needs are basically met by rivers and groundwater. Water scarcity can lead to disastrous consequences impacting food production as most of the farming is rain-fed. With ground water catering to about 60% of the country's irrigation, 85% of rural water drinking requirements and 50% of urban water needs, replenishing the aquifers has to be accorded top priority. Millions across India still do not have access to safe drinking water and this problem has to be tackled on a war footing.

The World Bank's Water Scarce Cities Initiative seeks to promote an integrated approach to managing water resources and service delivery in water-scarce cities as the basis for building resilience against climate change. The demand for water in urban areas is projected to increase by 50-70% in the next three decades. According to the United Nations, 2.1 billion people lack access to safely managed drinking water services; water scarcity already affects four out of every 10 people; 90% of all natural disasters are water related; 3.4 lakh children under five die every year from diarrhoeal diseases; agriculture accounts for 70% of global water withdrawal; and 80% of wastewater flows back into the ecosystem without being treated or reused. In 2010, the UN General Assembly recognised the right of every human being to have access to sufficient water for personal and domestic uses (between 50 and 100 litres of water per person per day). It has to be safe, acceptable and affordable (water costs should not exceed 3% of household income) and also physically accessible (within 1,000 metres of home).

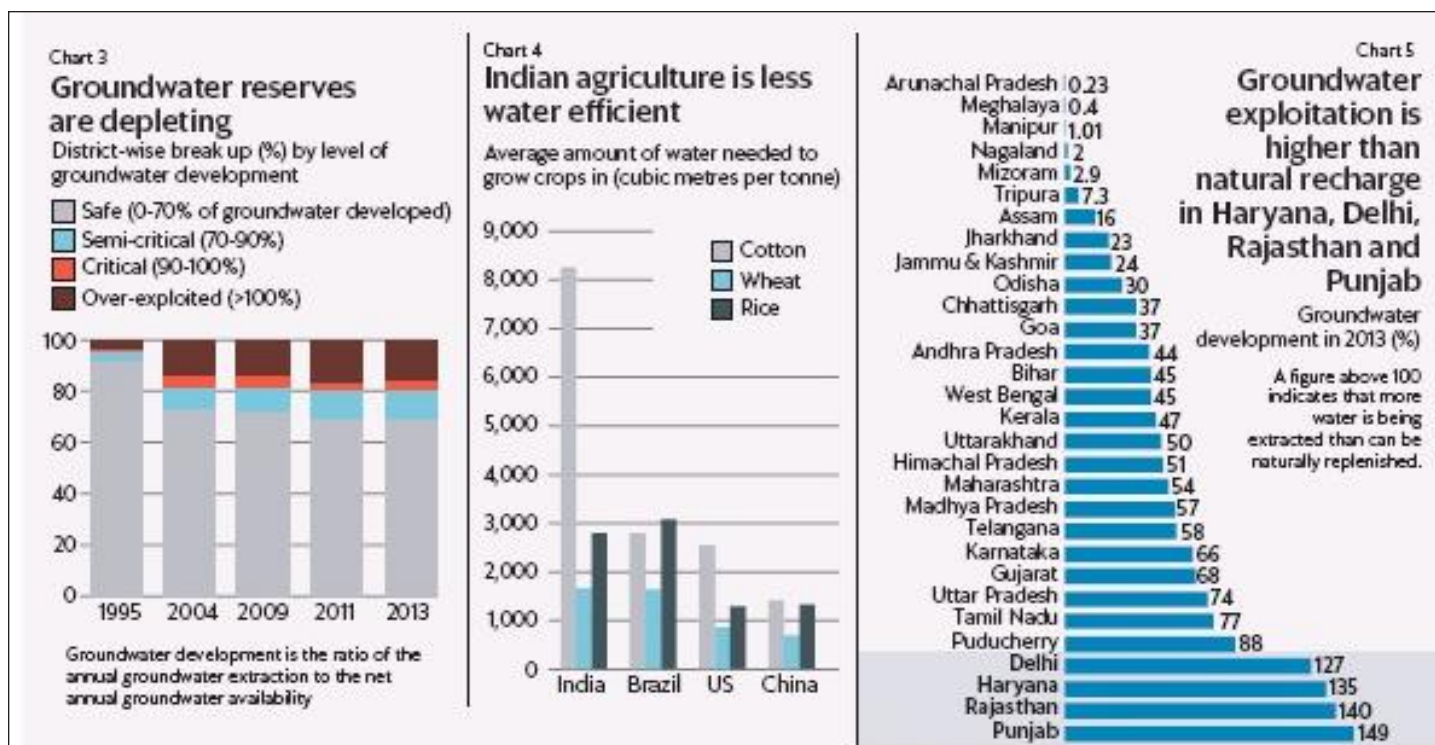
In India, we can't be complacent any more. A growing population, lack of adequate planning, crumbling infrastructure, indiscriminate drilling of borewells, large-scale consumption of

water, and a false sense of entitlement in using water carelessly are causing water shortages. Unless drastic measures are taken to minimise water usage, the day may not be far off when authorities will be forced to ration water supply in cities like Bengaluru, which has been ranked second in the list of 11 global cities which might face the imminent threat of running out of drinking water. Already, water is being supplied on alternate days in certain cities, and for a limited duration in some places.

India: Per Capita Water Availability

India should be worried as it is one of the most water-stressed countries in the world. Water availability, measured as renewable freshwater resources, stood at about 1,100 cubic metres per person in India according to the Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO's) AQUASTAT database. This is only slightly better than the annual per capita renewable freshwater availability of 800 cubic metres in South Africa and way below the 2,000 cubic metres in China. Renewable internal freshwater resources refer to internal river flows and groundwater from rainfall in the country, and exclude inflows from upstream countries (groundwater and surface water).

Data from the World Resources Institute shows that India is among the highly water-stressed countries in the world. More than half of India's total water supply comes from groundwater resources, which have been severely depleted because of excessive use, especially in the agrarian regions of Punjab and Haryana. It is not surprising that these states, along with Delhi are among the most water-stressed parts of the country. The share of districts with overexploited groundwater reserves (where 100% of available groundwater was extracted) rose from 3% in 1995 to 16% in 2013. Groundwater exploitation



Source: Central Ground Water Board, PRS, National Water Footprint Account, UNESCO-Institute for Water Education, May 2011

has increased after the Green Revolution because of the promotion of water-intensive crop varieties and the lack of a rational water policy that would regulate use.

A previous plain facts column had pointed out how government policies often encourage the production of water-guzzling crops in areas where they might not be the most efficient to grow.

- For instance, Punjab has the highest share of rice procurement in the country despite not being the most efficient state in producing rice in terms of water usage. Thus, India tends to use more water than other major agricultural countries for growing crops.
- In the most water-stressed states of Delhi, Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan, annual groundwater consumption is more than annual groundwater recharge.
- While India is blessed with major rivers, there is a sharp regional skew in the availability of surface water.
- The bulk of available surface water in India is concentrated in

the northern and eastern regions, in the Ganga-Brahmaputra river basins.

- Not surprisingly, inter-state water wars have been a prominent feature of India's south and farmer suicides have been growing in drought-affected southern states.
- The sharing of river water has become a political battleground in the south, as seen in the battle over Cauvery waters between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Not just water scarcity, but water quality is also a problem in the country. About 60% of India's districts face the problem of groundwater contamination or scarcity or both. Despite progress, India still lags its peers in reducing deaths from water-borne diseases like diarrhoea.
- Between 2005 and 2015, India recorded the lowest decline in mortality rate of diarrhoeal diseases among the BRICS economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.
- India's water crisis poses a threat to its economic development as well as its political stability.

- Unless steps are taken to reverse the depletion and contamination of India's water resources, India's cities and villages may face a fate worse than Cape Town in the coming years.

The Challenge

By 2050 the global urban population is projected to double to reach 7.3 billion people. The water needs in cities will grow from 15-20% of the global consumption to 30%, while the supply of freshwater resources remain unchanged. The unprecedented concentration of demand is already putting pressure on water resources and infrastructure particularly if the ambitious goal of universal access to safe drinking water and decent sanitation for all is to be met. Cities are significant sources of contamination of freshwater resources. Globally, 80% of wastewater – mostly originated from human settlements - is still discharged without proper treatment.

Water connects public health, food security, livable cities, energy for all, environmental wellbeing and climate action. Water and sanitation are necessary for human dignity

and economic growth. Yet, as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) make clear, the world needs to transform the way it manages its water resources, as well as improve water and sanitation related services for billions of people. Exploring this intricate linkages in its new report, Water Stress and Human Migration, the UN agency also found that full information on these dynamics is lacking for India, central Asia, the Middle East and central Sahel – areas expected to be hit with above-average surface temperature increases and worsening water scarcity in the next 30 years.

Pressure on water is rising and action is urgent. Growing populations, more water-intensive patterns of growth, increasing rainfall variability and pollution are combining in many places to make water one of the greatest risks to poverty eradication and sustainable development. Floods and droughts already impose huge social and economic costs around the world and climate variability will make water extremes worse. If the world continues on its current path, projections suggest that the world may face a 40% shortfall in water availability by 2030. The consequences of such stress are local, transboundary and global in today's interconnected world.

Domestic Water Governance

Governance does not only involve the government, in its different levels; rather, it entails a wide diversity of stakeholders, multiple scales, different sectorial concerns, the whole set of water policy challenges. Enhanced governance requires aligning individual interests and agreed goals. This affects the identification of needs and aspirations, the formulation and prioritisation of policy objectives, addressing policy gaps, reconciling administrative and hydrological boundaries, combining supply and demand - side approaches, bridging financing gaps, etc.

The Water Governance Initiative (WGI) based on 12 principles of water governance, which were approved on June 2015, these are clustered in 3 groups:

- **Effectiveness** – Building capacity, improving policy coherence, adopting adequate scales within basin systems, defining clear roles and responsibilities.
- **Efficiency** – Improving data and information, securing financing, streamlining regulatory frameworks, adopting innovative governance approaches.
- **Trust and Engagement** – Ensuring monitoring and evaluation, acknowledging trade-offs, fostering stakeholder engagement, enhancing integrity and transparency.

Government Policy

The government has come up with a Rs. 6,000-crore World Bank-aided Atal Bhujal Yojana with community participation to ensure sustained groundwater management in overexploited and ground water-stressed areas in seven States. It has been found that 1,034 blocks out of the 6,584 assessed blocks in the country are overexploited.

According to the annual report of the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, about 77% of rural habitations in India have achieved a fully covered status (40 litres per capita per day) under the National Rural Drinking Water Programme and 55% of the rural population have access to tap water. A sub-mission programme is being implemented to eliminate the problems of water quality in about 28,000 habitations affected by arsenic and fluoride by 2020.

Another important issue that needs to be addressed, particularly in urban areas, is the leakage of pipes providing water. We cannot allow this to continue any longer. Putting in place

an efficient piped supply system has to be top on the agenda of policymakers and planners. Although India receives an average rainfall of 1,170 mm per year, it is estimated that only 6% of rainwater is stored.

An Integrated Approach

Ensure Universal Access to Safe Water & Sanitation

Address gaps in service delivery models, technology and behavior change which limit access to sustainable drinking water and sanitation for all – including the needs of women, girls, people with disabilities and communities in vulnerable situations, recognizing access to safe drinking water and sanitation services as a fundamental human right.

Build Resilient Societies and Economies, Reducing Disaster Risk

- Shift the focus of disaster management from response to preparedness and resilience.
- Create incentives for water users, including irrigators, to use water efficiently, to not pollute water and to promote its reuse.
- Take action where water-related risks may exacerbate fragility, conflict, or forced displacement and affect peace and security.

Increase Water Infrastructure Investment

Improve the enabling environment for investment in sustainable water-related infrastructure and services, in order to at least double current levels of investment.

Nurture Environmental Water

Value environmental contributions to water management, prevent degradation and pollution of watersheds, rivers, lakes and aquifers and where necessary, restore and maintain acceptable environmental conditions and water quality.

Develop Sustainable Cities

Implement an integrated approach to urban water management in line with the Habitat III New Urban Agenda, aiming at more adaptable and resilient infrastructure.

Conclusion

Water is precious, fragile and dangerous. Water, in combination with land, air and energy, is the foundation of life, societies and economies. Water is more than a substance. It carries multiple values and meanings. These are expressed in spiritual, cultural and emotional terms and found in the heritage of water language, norms

and artefacts. These reflect the deep perceptions, need for connections and participation of all of society. Making water available for its many uses and users requires tools and institutions to transform it from a natural resource to one providing services and the to recover and return it safely back to ecosystems. Water and its sources must be respected because if neglected or misused, they have the power to harm, divide or even destroy societies.

The goal is to ensure sustainable water supply. So, before employing any project we need to assess its impact on the ecosystem. Water efficiency, harvesting rain, recycling and reusing

wastewater are the best options followed in different parts of the world for a sustainable supply. Urban areas will continue to expand. Global climatic changes will accelerate and worsen, especially if we delay the transition to clean energy. The sooner we accept these facts, the sooner every city can move to manage water in a more sustainable manner.

General Studies Paper- III

Topic: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.



6. CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN INDIA

Why in News?

Companies in India are turning socially responsible with the cumulative corporate social responsibility (CSR) spending by the 100 firms under review increasing to Rs 7,215.9 crore in the current financial year, up 41 per cent in the past three years. Over 22 companies have committed a higher CSR budget outlay in financial year 2017-18, compared with 10 in 2014-15. The number of companies that have spent less than the prescribed 2-per cent CSR budget has also substantially come down by 29 per cent. However, 58 companies spent 2 per cent or more, against only 32 companies during 2014-15.

Introduction

While there may be no single universally accepted definition of CSR, each definition that currently exists underpins the impact that businesses have on society at large and the societal expectations of them. Although the roots of CSR lie in philanthropic activities (such as donations, charity, relief work, etc.) of corporations. Globally, the concept of

CSR has evolved and now encompasses all related concepts such as triple bottom line, corporate citizenship, philanthropy, strategic philanthropy, shared value, corporate sustainability and business responsibility.

According to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), "Corporate social responsibility is a management concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders. CSR is generally understood as being the way through which a company achieves a balance of economic, environmental and social imperatives (Triple-Bottom-Line Approach), while at the same time addressing the expectations of shareholders and stakeholders. In this sense it is important to draw a distinction between CSR, which can be a strategic business management concept and charity, sponsorships or philanthropy. Even though the latter can also make a valuable contribution to poverty reduction, will directly enhance the reputation of a company and strengthen its brand, the concept

of CSR clearly goes beyond that. From the above definitions, it is clear that:

- The CSR approach is holistic and integrated with the core business strategy for addressing social and environmental impacts of businesses.
- CSR needs to address the well-being of all stakeholders and not just the company's shareholders.
- Philanthropic activities are only a part of CSR, which otherwise constitutes a much larger set of activities entailing strategic business benefits.

CSR in India

CSR in India has traditionally been seen as a philanthropic activity. And in keeping with the Indian tradition, it was an activity that was performed but not deliberated. As a result, there is limited documentation on specific activities related to this concept. However, what was clearly evident that much of this had a national character encapsulated within it, whether it was endowing institutions to actively participating in India's freedom movement and embedded in the idea of trusteeship.

As some observers have pointed out, the practice of CSR in India still remains within the philanthropic space, but has moved from institutional building (educational, research and cultural) to community development through various projects. Also, with global influences and with communities becoming more active and demanding, there appears to be a discernible trend, that while CSR remains largely restricted to community development, it is getting more strategic in nature (that is, getting linked with business) than philanthropic and a large number of companies are reporting the activities they are undertaking in this space in their official websites, annual reports, sustainability reports and even publishing CSR reports. The Companies Act, 2013 has introduced the idea of CSR to the forefront and through its disclose-or-explain mandate, is promoting greater transparency and disclosure. Schedule VII of the Act, which lists out the CSR activities, suggests communities to be the focal point. On the other hand, by discussing a company's relationship to its stakeholders and integrating CSR into its core operations, the draft rules suggest that CSR needs to go beyond communities and beyond the concept of philanthropy. It will be interesting to observe the ways in which this will translate into action at the ground level and how the understanding of CSR is set to undergo a change.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is now an integral part of most Indian businesses. Ever since the Corporate Social Responsibility Act came into effect in April 2014, companies with a net worth of Rs 500 crore or more are mandated to give two percent of their net profits to charity, or CSR programmes as they are called. India's top 100 companies have CSR policies in place and make full disclosures of their CSR initiatives in annual reports. Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and

Odisha are the top five states when it comes to the number of CSR projects being implemented. These account for 32 percent (or 629 projects) of all CSR projects and initiatives underway in India. Maharashtra, meanwhile, has topped the list for three years in succession.

What is Corporate Social Responsibility and what is not?

Companies engage in corporate social responsibility (CSR) when they confer benefits on the communities located in or near where they work which are neither required by law nor an integral part of their primary, profit-oriented operations. Consider the mining company which offers to build a road between its landing strip and a neighbouring community in order to boost local tourism businesses. This is not CSR if there is a land claim or statute which requires the company to ensure benefits to the local community, because in such circumstances the company is merely doing what is required of it. We expect companies to obey the law. It doesn't mean they always do, but a company is not demonstrating ethical behaviour of any special significance if it is merely doing what the law demands. But if there is no such legal compulsion, building the road is a form of CSR.

Corporate Social Responsibility Rule

India's new Companies Act, 2013 (Companies Act) has introduced several new provisions which change the face of Indian corporate business. One of such new provisions is Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The concept of CSR rests on the ideology of give and take. Companies take resources in the form of raw materials, human resources etc from the society. By performing the task of CSR activities, the companies are giving something back to the society.

Ministry of Corporate Affairs has recently notified Section 135 and Schedule VII of the Companies Act as well as the provisions of the Companies (Corporate Social Responsibility Policy) Rules, 2014 (CRS Rules) which has come into effect from 1 April 2014.

Applicability: Section 135 of the Companies Act provides the threshold limit for applicability of the CSR to a Company i.e. (a) net worth of the company to be Rs 500 crore or more; (b) turnover of the company to be Rs 1000 crore or more; (c) net profit of the company to be Rs 5 crore or more. Further as per the CSR Rules, the provisions of CSR are not only applicable to Indian companies, but also applicable to branch and project offices of a foreign company in India.

CSR Committee and Policy: Every qualifying company requires spending of at least 2% of its average net profit for the immediately preceding 3 financial years on CSR activities. Further, the qualifying company will be required to constitute a committee (CSR Committee) of the Board of Directors (Board) consisting of 3 or more directors. The CSR committee shall formulate and recommend to the Board, a policy which shall indicate the activities to be undertaken (CSR Policy); recommend the amount of expenditure to be incurred on the activities referred and monitor the CSR Policy of the company. The Board shall take into account the recommendations made by the CSR committee and approve the CSR policy of the company.

Definition of the term CSR: The term CSR has been defined under the CSR Rules which includes but is not limited to:

- Projects or programs relating to activities specified in the Schedule; or
- Projects or programs relating to activities undertaken by the Board in pursuance of recommendations

of the CSR committee as per the declared CSR policy subject to the condition that such policy covers subjects enumerated in the Schedule.

This definition of CSR assumes significance as it allows companies to engage in projects or programs relating to activities enlisted under the Schedule. Flexibility is also permitted to the companies by allowing them to choose their preferred CSR engagements that are in conformity with the CSR policy.

Activities under CSR: The activities that can be done by the company to achieve its CSR obligations include eradicating extreme hunger and poverty, promotion of education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality and improving maternal health, combating human immunodeficiency virus, acquired, immune deficiency syndrome, malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability, employment enhancing vocational skills, social business projects, contribution to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund or any other fund set up by the central government or the state governments for socio-economic development and relief and funds for the welfare of the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, other backward classes, minorities and women and such other matters as may be prescribed.

Local Area: Under the Companies Act, preference should be given to local areas and the areas where the company operates. Company may also choose to associate with 2 or more companies for fulfilling the CSR activities provided that they are able to report individually. The CSR committee shall also prepare the CSR policy in which it includes the projects and programmes which is to be undertaken, prepare a list of projects and programmes which a company plans to undertake during the implementation year and also focus

on integrating business models with social and environmental priorities and process in order to create share value.

The company can also make the annual report of CSR activities in which they mention the average net profit for the 3 financial years and also prescribed CSR expenditure but if the company is unable to spend the minimum required expenditure, the company has to give the reasons in the board report for non compliance so that there are no penal provisions are attracted by it.

CSR and Sustainability

Sustainability (corporate sustainability) is derived from the concept of sustainable development which is defined by the Brundtland Commission as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Corporate sustainability essentially refers to the role that companies can play in meeting the agenda of sustainable development and entails a balanced approach to economic progress, social progress and environmental stewardship.

CSR in India tends to focus on what is done with profits after they are made. On the other hand, sustainability is about factoring the social and environmental impacts of conducting business, that is, how profits are made. Hence, much of the Indian practice of CSR is an important component of sustainability or responsible business, which is a larger idea, a fact that is evident from various sustainability frameworks. An interesting case in point is the NVGs for social, environmental and economic responsibilities of business issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs in June 2011. Principle eight relating to inclusive development encompasses most of the aspects covered by the CSR clause of the Companies Act, 2013. However, the remaining eight principles relate to other aspects

of the business. The UN Global Compact, a widely used sustainability framework has 10 principles covering social, environmental, human rights and governance issues and what is described as CSR is implicit rather than explicit in these principles.

Globally, the notion of CSR and sustainability seems to be converging, as is evident from the various definitions of CSR put forth by global organisations. The genesis of this convergence can be observed from the preamble to the recently released draft rules relating to the CSR clause within the Companies Act, 2013 which talks about stakeholders and integrating it with the social, environmental and economic objectives, all of which constitute the idea of a triple bottom line approach. It is also acknowledged in the Guidelines on Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability for Central Public Sector Enterprises issued by the Department of Public Enterprise (DPE). The new guidelines, which have replaced two existing separate guidelines on CSR and sustainable development, mentions the following:

"Since corporate social responsibility and sustainability are so closely entwined, it can be said that corporate social responsibility and sustainability is a company's commitment to its stakeholders to conduct business in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner that is transparent and ethical."

Why is the CSR clause of the new Companies Act, 2013 so critical for SMEs?

By requiring companies, with a minimum net profit of 5 crore INR, to spend on CSR activities, the Companies Act, 2013 is likely to bring in many SMEs into the CSR fold. This will usher in a fresh set of challenges to a sector that is increasingly being asked by its B2B customers to comply with environmental and social standards, while remaining competitive in terms of price and quality. Thus, SMEs will have to quickly learn to be compliant with these diverse set of requirements.

Benefits of a Robust CSR Programme

As the business environment gets increasingly complex and stakeholders become vocal about their expectations, good CSR practices can only bring in greater benefits, some of which are as follows:

- **Communities provide the licence to operate:** Apart from internal drivers such as values and ethos, some of the key stakeholders that influence corporate behaviour include governments (through laws and regulations), investors and customers. In India, a fourth and increasingly important stakeholder is the community and many companies have started realising that the 'licence to operate' is no longer given by governments alone, but communities that are impacted by a company's business operations. Thus, a robust CSR programme that meets the aspirations of these communities not only provides them with the licence to operate, but also to maintain the licence, thereby precluding the 'trust deficit'.
- **Attracting and retaining employees:** Several human resource studies have linked a company's ability to attract, retain and motivate employees with their CSR commitments. Interventions that encourage and enable employees to participate are shown to increase employee morale and a sense of belonging to the company.
- **Communities as suppliers:** There are certain innovative CSR initiatives emerging, wherein companies have invested in enhancing community livelihood by incorporating them into their supply chain. This has benefitted communities and increased their income levels, while providing these companies with an additional and secure supply chain.

- **Enhancing corporate reputation:** The traditional benefit of generating goodwill, creating a positive image and branding benefits continue to exist for companies that operate effective CSR programmes. This allows companies to position themselves as responsible corporate citizens.

Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility

There is a great deal of talk about 'business ethics', as if to say that what we could call 'autonomous' ethical concepts, generated by the logics and needs of the manufacturing context itself, can take shape and develop inside manufacturing organisations, but without parallels or correlations in the ethical concepts of society.

This initial awareness introduces the concept of the relativity of ethical behaviour, in time and space. The aspirations and ethical levels of companies operating in certain countries differ substantially from those of companies operating in other areas, where the defence of the environment, social welfare, human rights, cooperation, assistance, etc. are expected and offered to a lesser degree, or are not requested or protected at all.

Imagining universal ethics that might inspire a company's behaviour in the same way and to the same extent, regardless of where it operates, could be a dream, an inspiration for a still distant future, but unfortunately it has never been and still cannot be a reality.

This new globalised, networked economy, based on the coordinated management of knowledge, sets evolutionary trends in motion that raise the level of ethicality, but simultaneously generates a braking effect on the ethical contents of corporate behaviour. Evolutionary trends and braking effects are generated regardless of existing codes

of practice, because they are linked to purely economic and social needs.

Conclusion

Companies are not solely providing a financial contribution but are increasingly unlocking their intellectual assets and the power of their people to achieve a positive impact. The idea of corporate social responsibility has come to be accepted as one of the major components of business growth and sustainability. The success in the new economy comes with various challenges. Those challenges require business and their managers to think beyond traditional way of looking for short-term goals. It requires business and the people inside these behemoths to embrace a much broader perspective that is also inclusive of stakeholders. The nature of society we are living in has changed. The nature of governance has equally changed since people are now enjoying more freedom within each societal democratic tenet. This freedom has found its way in the business and into the factories. The performance of the new economy is therefore pegged on the three pillars namely; economic, environment and social. Additionally, issues concerning human rights at the work place, child labor are also considered.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

General Studies Paper- III

Topic: Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.



7. UNDERSTANDING: FUGITIVE ECONOMIC OFFENDERS BILL

Why in News?

The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal of the Ministry of Finance to introduce the Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill, 2018 in Parliament. The Bill would help in laying down measures to deter economic offenders from evading the process of Indian law by remaining outside the jurisdiction of Indian courts. The cases where the total value involved in such offences is Rs.100 crore or more, will come under the purview of this Bill.

Introduction

The Central Government in India had introduced the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA), to prevent the circulation of laundered money. The Act defines money laundering as any process or activity connected to proceeds of crime, including its concealment, possession, acquisition or use and projecting or claiming it as legitimate property. While the PMLA Act allowed for confiscation and seizure of properties obtained from the laundered money, such actions were still subject to the processes of criminal prosecution. This led to many of the persons accused of money laundering, to flee the jurisdiction of Indian courts to avoid criminal prosecution under PMLA and the consequent confiscation of the properties.

There have been several instances of economic offenders fleeing the jurisdiction of Indian courts, anticipating the commencement, or during the pendency, of criminal proceedings. The absence of such offenders from Indian courts has several deleterious consequences –

- First, it hampers investigation in criminal cases;

THE EXISTING LAWS FOR SEIZING ASSETS

Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (SARFAESI)

Lender can take possession of the assets kept as security over non-repayment of loans

Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA)

Proceeds of the crime are attached by the Enforcement Directorate

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC)

Insolvent firms are either revived by creditors and interim resolution professional or the assets are liquidated

Recovery of Debts due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 (RDDBFI)

A debt recovery tribunal can pass orders for the attachment of assets that were given as security on non payment of dues/loans

- Second, it wastes precious time of courts of law,
- Third, it undermines the rule of law in India.

Further, most such cases of economic offences involve non-repayment of bank loans thereby worsening the financial health of the banking sector in India. The existing civil and criminal provisions in law are not entirely adequate to deal with the severity of the problem. It is, therefore, felt necessary to provide an effective, expeditious and constitutionally permissible deterrent to ensure that such actions are curbed. It may be mentioned that the non-conviction-based asset confiscation for corruption-related cases is enabled under provisions of United Nations Convention against Corruption (ratified by India in 2011). The Bill adopts this principle. In view of the above context, a budget announcement was made by the government in the Budget 2017-18 that the government was considering to introduce legislative changes or even a new law to confiscate the assets of such absconders till they submit to the jurisdiction of the appropriate legal forum.

Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill, 2018

On March 12, 2018, the Indian government introduced the Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill, 2018 ("Bill/Proposed Act"), in the Lok Sabha, after receiving approval from the Cabinet, to address the issue of such economic offenders avoiding criminal prosecution. The Bill defines a 'fugitive economic offender' as any individual against whom a warrant for arrest in relation to economic offences, under various statutes, listed in a schedule to the Bill ("Scheduled Offence") has been issued, on or after the enactment of this Bill, by any Indian court and who:

- Has left India to avoid criminal prosecution, or
- Being abroad refuses to return to India to face criminal prosecution.

The draft law says that officials, referred to as directors or deputy directors under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, can file an application to a Special Court for a declaration that they are a fugitive economic offender. This application should:

- Give the court the reasons for why it should declare the person a fugitive offender

- Provide information about the current whereabouts of the person.
- Provide a list of properties believed to be the proceeds of the crime.
- Provide a list of properties which the government believes should be confiscated.
- Provide a list of other persons who may have some interest in those properties.

As soon as such an application is filed, the government can attach – meaning present the trading or selling of any properties mentioned it for 180 days.

Salient Features of the Bill

1. Application before the Special Court for a declaration that an individual is a fugitive economic offender;
2. Attachment of the property of a fugitive economic offender;
3. Issue of a notice by the Special Court to the individual alleged to be a fugitive economic offender;
4. Confiscation of the property of an individual declared as a fugitive economic offender resulting from the proceeds of crime;
5. Confiscation of other property belonging to such offender in India and abroad, including benami property;
6. Disentitlement of the fugitive economic offender from defending any civil claim; and
7. An Administrator will be appointed to manage and dispose of the confiscated property under the Act.

If at any point of time in the course of the proceeding prior to the declaration, however, the alleged fugitive economic offender returns to India and submits to the appropriate jurisdictional Court, proceedings under the proposed Act would cease

by law. All necessary constitutional safeguards in terms of providing hearing to the person through counsel, allowing him time to file a reply, serving notice of summons to him, whether in India or abroad and appeal to the High Court have been provided for. Further, provision has been made for appointment of an administrator to manage and dispose of the property in compliance with the provisions of law.

Implementation Strategy and Targets

In order to address the lacunae in the present laws and lay down measures to deter economic offenders from evading the process of Indian law by remaining outside the jurisdiction of Indian courts, the Bill is being proposed. The Bill makes provisions for a Court ('Special Court' under the Prevention of Money-laundering Act, 2002) to declare a person as a fugitive economic offender. A fugitive economic offender is a person against whom an arrest warrant has been issued in respect of a scheduled offence and who has left India so as to avoid criminal prosecution, or being abroad, refuses to return to India to face criminal prosecution. A scheduled offence refers to a list of economic offences contained in the Schedule to this Bill. Further, in order to ensure that Courts are not over-burdened with such cases, only those cases where the total value involved in such offences is 100 crore rupees or more, is within the purview of this Bill.

Since the definition of a fugitive economic offender covers anyone against whom a warrant for arrest for certain offences has been issued, it seems likely that it should be applicable to people like Nirav Modi and Mallya. Finance Minister in his briefing, also suggested as much, saying the law would apply to all cases, "old and new."

Criticism of the Bill

Pre-Trial Confiscation of Property:

"Anyone can be prosecuted or property can be acquired without the person being found guilty. These provisions are against fundamental rights". the flagship provision of the Bill, which allows the Central Government to confiscate all properties belonging to a person declared as a "fugitive economic offender.

Disallowing Civil Claims: Citing a Supreme Court judgment from 2016, Mahtab also pointed out that "no one can be denied access to justice which is a facet of right to life under the Constitution." Under section 14 of the Bill, courts and tribunals across the country will be given the power to disentitle anyone declared as a fugitive economic offender from filing or defending any civil case – even if that case has nothing to do with their alleged economic offence. This means that they can't file cases, say, for breaches of contract against them. To make it worse, they can't even defend themselves if someone else files a civil case against them, for instance for defamation or nuisance, which would mean they would automatically lose those cases.

India has a long history of draconian provisions for suspected economic offences. These include preventive detention under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) and the Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act (COFEPOSA), as well as the confiscation of suspected illegal properties under the Smugglers and Foreign Exchange Manipulators (Forfeiture of Property) Act (SAFEPA). The Supreme Court has also refrained from holding such provisions to be unconstitutional. In 2015, the apex court upheld the validity of Orissa's Special Courts Act, which allowed for confiscation of suspected disproportionate assets from individuals being investigated for corruption charges.

Areas of Concern

The Proposed Act seeks to disentitle an individual who has been declared as a fugitive economic offender, from putting forward or defending any civil claim. Further, in its current form, the Bill also stipulates that any civil court or tribunal may disallow a company or limited liability partnership from putting forward or defending any civil claim if:

- the person filing claims on behalf of the company is declared a fugitive economic offender; or
- the company's promoter, key managerial person, or a majority shareholder of the company; or a person with controlling interest in a limited liability partnership is declared a fugitive economic offender
- This provision does not provide any protection to other persons associated with or invested in such companies/limited liability partnerships, which may not have benefitted/knowingly benefitted from proceeds of a crime.

Further, the interested parties in properties that are considered 'proceeds of crime' now bear the burden of proving proof that such properties were acquired bona fide and that they did not have knowledge that such properties were 'proceeds of crime'. Discharging such burden of proof is likely to be cumbersome for third parties who are not Indian

residents or who have perfunctory connections to the alleged criminal activity.

Way Ahead

If any provisions are found to be unconstitutional, this doesn't mean the whole law would be struck down. Without them, however, the Bill adds nothing really to the law. These are all show-off legislations, which will eventually just get misused by the bureaucrats. Unless you get the banking system in order, no amount of threat is going to help anybody. Once there is connivance, no threat is going to worry the person doing these things.

The government has justified not linking the forfeiture clause to criminal conviction by citing the principle enshrined in the UN Convention Against Corruption, which India ratified in 2011. The convention envisages domestic laws for confiscation of property without a criminal conviction in cases in which the offenders cannot be prosecuted for reasons of death, flight or absence. The Bill is reasonable in that a fugitive offender will cease to be one if he or she appears before court. There is a 180-day window during which the property will remain attached, with a provision for appeal against an order of confiscation. While the utility and effectiveness of laws are best assessed in the implementation, it is important to ensure they are fair and reasonable. The shortcomings in previous laws must be avoided and the new legal regime impartially enforced.

Conclusion

The Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill has been termed as a strong deterrent to people fleeing the country after committing a crime but experts say that flaws in the proposed legislation could be used to challenge the law in Courts. The blanket ban on offenders contesting the confiscation of their properties through civil suits, sale of property without trial and deterioration in value of seized assets and finding suitable buyers are some of the concerns around the new law.

The Bill is expected to re-establish the rule of law with respect to the fugitive economic offenders as they would be forced to return to India to face trial for scheduled offences. This would also help the banks and other financial institutions to achieve higher recovery from financial defaults committed by such fugitive economic offenders, improving the financial health of such institutions. It is expected that the special forum to be created for expeditious confiscation of the proceeds of crime, in India or abroad, would coerce the fugitive to return to India to submit to the jurisdiction of Courts in India to face the law in respect of scheduled offences.

General Studies Paper- III

Topic: Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment.



SEVEN SUBJECTIVE QUESTIONS WITH MODEL ANSWERS

Perpetual President of China and its Implications for India

Q1. Recently China's Parliament amended the constitution to remove the limit on presidential terms. What does it mean for India? Critically discuss its implications on Indo-Sino relations.

Hints:

- Recently China's Parliament amended the constitution to remove the limit on presidential terms. The amendment will allow President Xi Jinping, who is seen as the most powerful Chinese leader in the post-Mao Zedong era, to keep power indefinitely. The move reverses the era of "collective" leadership and orderly succession that was promoted by late paramount leader Deng Xiaoping to ensure stability following the turbulent one-man rule of Communist China's founder Mao Zedong.
- China under Xi has also been aggressively challenging India's role as the pre-eminent power in the Indian Ocean region. It's growing ties with Pakistan — Mandarin has now been made an official language in Pakistan — is also a cause for concern.
- China pursued an active foreign policy during Xi's first term as president. This active foreign policy, combining "bringing-in" and "going-out" initiatives, is being pursued within the architecture of four foreign policy propositions: "a new type of major power relationships"; "major country diplomacy with Chinese characteristics"; "a community of common destiny"; and a "new type of international relations
- But the main Chinese strategic ambitions behind these propositions are twofold: (a) enhancing China's position globally as a leader equal to the status of the US; and (b) taking a leadership role in international affairs, with a particular focus on the Asia-Pacific.
- Under Xi's "new era" strategy, China's Asia-Pacific ambitions are growing continuously. Enhancing maritime interests, promoting stronger bilateral and multilateral security contacts, pursuing better economic cooperation through free trade agreements (FTAs) and focusing on regional economic integration and connectivity are major features of China's Asia-Pacific strategy.
- Major countries in the region, including India, might find China's growing strategic ambitions challenging. It might even encourage some countries in the Asia-Pacific to revisit their policies towards China. Donald Trump's unclear Asia policy does not hold out any assurance, which might eventually encourage many Asian countries not only to rebuild their relationship with China but also to see China as an opportunity.
- For long years, India has bet that whatever the problems on the bilateral front, there is room for significant international cooperation with China. That proposition, however, was significantly dented in the last two years. Do note Beijing's active blocking of India's effort to secure membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group. China also remains the only major power that does not support India's claim for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council.
- India needs to comprehend the course in which China's foreign policy is likely to evolve over the next decade. In fact, a road map of Chinese policy planning over the next three decades has already been outlined. Emphasising on a "great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation", Xi outlined China's ambition to emerge as a superpower by 2049.
- However, India should not treat this development negatively in its entirety, particularly in the context of boundary negotiations. Engaging with a strong leadership to find a solution to the boundary dispute is a better proposition than struggling to find a solution under a weak leadership.
- Overall, India should carefully understand the evolving foreign policy strategy of China under Xi Jinping and notably, his worldview and try to position bilateral relations accordingly. Xi Jinping's extended presidency should be seen as a strategic opportunity for India-China relations. New Delhi must act proactively to improve the envisioned "developmental partnership" between India and China. Both sides should therefore focus on how to

develop this developmental partnership while improving overall bilateral relations. On India's part, this should be carried out proactively without overlooking the changes and challenges that Xi's extended presidency brings to the region and the world in general.

Protecting Innocent Citizens

Q2. The Supreme Court recently asserted that the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 has become an instrument of "blackmail" and is being used by some to exact "vengeance" and satisfy vested interests. Discuss critically.

Hints:

- Supreme Court's campaign against the 'misuse' of special laws continues. A few days ago, a two-judge bench of Justices AK Goel and UU Lalit issued new directions to prevent what they say is the "rampant misuse" of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. On the face of it, much of the judgment aims to uphold the fair trial rights of criminal suspects. The Court rightly observes that wrongful arrests and detention violate the constitutional right to personal liberty. It defends the principles of due process and presumption of innocence, which are too often casually ignored in the Indian criminal justice system.
- The intention of the court was clearly to protect officers from "arbitrary arrest" and to protect "innocent citizens" from being falsely implicated in cases, data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) and the Ministry of Home Affairs shows that if conviction rates under the Act are low, it may have as much to do with the misuse of the provision as with the manner in which investigations are conducted and cases prosecuted in the courts.
- The apex court held that a preliminary inquiry should also be conducted before the FIR is registered to check whether the case falls within the parameters of the Atrocities Act or whether it was frivolous or motivated. The court also held that anticipatory bail should be allowed if the accused is able to prove that the complaint was malafide.
- But then the judgment makes some odd leaps of logic. Quoting some High Court judgment and statistics from the National Crime Records Bureau, the Court concludes that the Atrocities Act may have become "a charter for exploitation or oppression", "an instrument to blackmail or to wreak personal vengeance" and a law which is "perpetuating casteism". It goes on to issue several directions, including one potentially destructive one: that the police mandatorily conduct a 'preliminary inquiry' into any complaint of caste-based discrimination or violence before registering a First Information Report.

- The point is not that Section 498A or the Atrocities Act is incapable of being misused. Every law can be and is, abused. But to selectively look at the operation of certain laws—in a manner that ignores the realities of caste and gender injustice in India—and conclude that they are being particularly misused, is plain wrong.
- Indian law already has safeguards against the risk of false cases. Anyone who falsely charges a person with an offence with the intention of causing injury can face imprisonment for up to seven years. Giving false evidence and fabricating evidence are also criminal offences. These provisions, if properly enforced by the police and the judiciary, could effectively deter false complaints. What we don't need are more judgments which blunt protective laws and obstruct the rights that Parliament has recognised.
- Ideally, in a liberal democracy individual rights should be foremost. However, in India it's often the case that group sentiments take precedence over individual rights, opening the door to draconian legal provisions and making the individual the most persecuted minority. This in turn hardens group identities, creates a vicious cycle of prejudice and defeats the project of an equitable society. Hence, it's time to give primacy to individual rights and make it the default liberal position. Laws must be reinterpreted accordingly.

E-waste: Needs Better Handling

Q3. Critically comment on India's e-waste management crisis.

Hints:

- Disposal of e-waste is a particular problem faced in many regions across the globe. Computer wastes that are landfilled produces contaminated leachates which eventually pollute the groundwater. Acids and sludge obtained from melting computer chips, if disposed on the ground causes acidification of soil.
- Toxic constituents such as Lead, Mercury, Cadmium, Hexavalent Chromium, Polybrominated biphenyls and Polybrominated diphenyl ethers are used in the manufacturing of electronic devices. Disposal of e-waste from such electronic devices, without processing it in an environmentally sound manner, may affect the human health and environment including soil and ground water. No comprehensive inventorization of e-waste generation in the country has been done.
- India ranks fifth in the world in generating e-waste, according to the UN's Global E-Waste Monitor. In 2017, over 200 manufacturers of electronic goods, including some e-giants, were served notices by the Central

Pollution Control Board (CPCB) for not complying with e-waste procurement norms.

- The government has comprehensively revised E-waste (Management & Handling) Rules, 2011 and notified E-Waste (Management) Rules in March, 2016. The provisions of these Rules include expanded producers' responsibility, setting up of producer responsibility organizations and e-waste exchange to facilitate collection and recycling, assigning specific responsibility to bulk consumers of electronic products for safe disposal, providing for economic incentives for collection of electronic waste and other measures which include responsibility of producers of electronic and electrical products for collection and channelizing of electronic waste.
- It is estimated that 75% of electronic items are stored due to uncertainty of how to manage it. These electronic junks lie unattended in houses, offices, warehouses etc. and normally mixed with household wastes, which are finally disposed of at landfills. This necessitates implementable management measures.
- While the world is marveling at the technological revolution, countries like India are facing an imminent danger. E-waste of developed countries, such as the US, disposes their wastes to India and other Asian countries. A recent investigation revealed that much of the electronics turned over for recycling in the United States ends up in Asia, where they are either disposed of or recycled with little or no regard for environmental or worker health and safety. The magnitude of these problems is yet to be documented.
- However, groups like Toxic Links India are already working on collating data that could be a step towards controlling this hazardous trade. It is imperative that developing countries and India in particular wake up to the monopoly of the developed countries and set up appropriate management measures to prevent the hazards and mishaps due to mismanagement of e-wastes.

The International Solar Alliance: New Sun in the World

- Q4. 'International Solar Alliance is being described as India's gift to the world to combat climate change.' In the light of this statement discuss the progress made by the International Solar Alliance.**

Hints:

- International Solar Alliance (ISA) is being described as India's gift to the world to combat climate change, is

youngest international organisation that came into force on 6th December, 2017. The International Solar Alliance (ISA) was launched jointly by the Indian Prime Minister and the French President during COP21.

- It aims to contribute to the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement through rapid and massive deployment of solar energy. ISA also contributes to the 12 commitments of the One Planet Summit. ISA aims to bring together the 121 sun-rich States located between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn to provide a collective response to the main common obstacles to the massive deployment of solar energy in terms of technology, finance and capacity.
- On 11 March 2018, India, along with France, hosted the members of the International Solar Alliance (ISA), marking an important milestone in its efforts to take the alliance. The Delhi Summit was attended by 23 heads of states and governments from other ISA signatory countries. The African Development Bank (AfDb), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the Green climate fund (GCF), the New Development Bank (NDB) and the International Energy Agency (IEA) signed joint financial partnership declarations with the ISA.
- The summit has significant geopolitical implications and will shape the structure and course of the ISA. It is the first time that an inter-governmental treaty-based alliance will have its headquarters in India. This will allow India the opportunity to position itself in a key global leadership role in the arena of climate change, RE and sustainable development. During the summit, India kicked off 27 projects in 15 countries enabling it to increase the scale and reach of its global engagements.
- The Indian leadership also sees its active role within the ISA as a reiteration of India's commitment to fulfilling its global commitment on addressing climate change in a time-bound manner and help boost global confidence in India's capacities. Driven by remarkable cost declines, innovative policies and new business models, solar energy has emerged as the fastest growing renewable energy worldwide. There is an immense opportunity at hand to bring its benefits to more and more countries around the world.
- There is great optimism that the solar alliance would help in pushing 'power for all' into a more realistic realm. Furthermore, the ISA could be greatly beneficial in boosting technology transfer and emphasising the need for greater storage technologies. ISA member countries could also cooperate in developing an integrated electronic mobility ecosystem that is fueled by solar

energy. India too would benefit immensely from the Alliance. Not only would it facilitate it in its endeavor to meet its commitments under the Paris Agreement, but would also allow it to take a leadership role in the developing world.

- To promote use of solar energy, availability and development of technology, economic resources, reduction in prices, development of storage technology, mass manufacturing and innovation, a full ecosystem is required. In spite of these unresolved difficulties, the International Solar Alliance can be a tremendous step forward for India on the world energy and environment stage. If India, with the cooperation of the other nations that constitute the ISA steering committee, can give practical, value-added substance to the ISA's mission, its position as a world leader will be significantly enhanced.

Water Conservation: Need of the Hour

Q5. The social, cultural, economic and environmental values of water to society need to be reassessed. Discuss it in the light of water scarcity, a problem faced by almost all urban centres of the world.

Hints:

- The grave water situation in Cape Town in South Africa is a wake-up call to everybody across the globe from policymakers to the common man — that it cannot be business as usual when it comes to water usage. A similar crisis is looming large in other cities in the world as people continue to be reckless in their use of water.
- The 2018 edition of the World Water Development Report seeks to inform policy and decision-makers, inside and outside the water community, about the potential of nature-based solutions (NBS) to address contemporary water management challenges across all sectors and particularly regarding water for agriculture, sustainable cities, disaster risk reduction and water quality.
- The oceans make up for about 97% of the Earth's water. Less than 3% of Earth's water is fresh and most of it is not accessible. Water scarcity can lead to disastrous consequences impacting food production as most of the farming is rain-fed.
- The demand for water in urban areas is projected to increase by 50-70% in the next three decades. According to the United Nations, 2.1 billion people lack access to safely managed drinking water services; water scarcity already affects four out of every 10 people; 90% of all

natural disasters are water related; 3.4 lakh children under five die every year from diarrhoeal diseases; agriculture accounts for 70% of global water withdrawal; and 80% of wastewater flows back into the ecosystem without being treated or reused.

- A growing population, lack of adequate planning, crumbling infrastructure, indiscriminate drilling of borewells, large-scale consumption of water and a false sense of entitlement in using water carelessly are causing water shortages. Unless drastic measures are taken to minimise water usage, the day may not be far off when authorities will be forced to ration water supply in cities like Bengaluru, which has been ranked second in the list of 11 global cities which might face the imminent threat of running out of drinking water.
- By 2050 the global urban population is projected to double to reach 7.3 billion people. The water needs in cities will grow from 15-20% of the global consumption to 30%, while the supply of freshwater resources remain unchanged. The unprecedented concentration of demand is already putting pressure on water resources and infrastructure particularly if the ambitious goal of universal access to safe drinking water and decent sanitation for all is to be met.
- Pressure on water is rising and action is urgent. Growing populations, more water-intensive patterns of growth, increasing rainfall variability and pollution are combining in many places to make water one of the greatest risks to poverty eradication and sustainable development. Floods and droughts already impose huge social and economic costs around the world and climate variability will make water extremes worse. If the world continues on its current path, projections suggest that the world may face a 40% shortfall in water availability by 2030. The consequences of such stress are local, transboundary and global in today's interconnected world.
- Water is precious, fragile and dangerous. Water, in combination with land, air and energy, is the foundation of life, societies and economies. Water is more than a substance: it carries multiple values and meanings. These are expressed in spiritual, cultural and emotional terms and found in the heritage of water language, norms and artefacts. These reflect the deep perceptions, need for connections and participation of all of society.
- Making water available for its many uses and users requires tools and institutions to transform it from a natural resource to one providing services and to recover and return it safely back to ecosystems. Water and its sources must be respected because if neglected or misused, they have the power to harm, divide or even destroy societies.

Corporate Social Responsibility in India

Q6. Corporate social responsibility is a management concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders. Discuss.

Hints:

- The Corporate social responsibility (CSR) approach is holistic and integrated with the core business strategy for addressing social and environmental impacts of businesses. CSR needs to address the well-being of all stakeholders and not just the company's shareholders. Philanthropic activities are only a part of CSR, which otherwise constitutes a much larger set of activities entailing strategic business benefits. The Companies Act, 2013 has introduced the idea of CSR to the forefront and through its disclose-or-explain mandate, is promoting greater transparency and disclosure.
- CSR is generally understood as being the way through which a company achieves a balance of economic, environmental and social imperatives (Triple-Bottom-Line Approach), while at the same time addressing the expectations of shareholders and stakeholders. In this sense it is important to draw a distinction between CSR, which can be a strategic business management concept and charity, sponsorships or philanthropy.
- CSR in India still remains within the philanthropic space, but has moved from institutional building (educational, research and cultural) to community development through various projects. Also, with global influences and with communities becoming more active and demanding, there appears to be a discernible trend, that while CSR remains largely restricted to community development, it is getting more strategic in nature (that is, getting linked with business) than philanthropic and a large number of companies are reporting the activities they are undertaking in this space in their official websites, annual reports, sustainability reports and even publishing CSR reports.
- CSR obligations include eradicating extreme hunger and poverty, promotion of education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality and improving maternal health, combating human immunodeficiency virus, acquired, immune deficiency syndrome, malaria and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability, employment enhancing vocational skills, social business projects, contribution to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund or any other fund set up by the central government or the state governments for socio-economic development and relief and funds for the welfare of the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, other backward classes, minorities and women and such other matters as may be prescribed.
- Sustainability (corporate sustainability) is derived from the concept of sustainable development which is defined by the Brundtland Commission as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Since corporate social responsibility and sustainability are so closely entwined, it can be said that corporate social responsibility and sustainability is a company's commitment to its stakeholders to conduct business in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner that is transparent and ethical.
- Corporate social responsibility in business companies covers different areas. These are: market environment, public environment, the area of employment, relations with investors and environmental protection. As one of the most serious effects of external economic activity is detrimental impact on the environment, the environmental issues are of great importance in the company. Corporate social responsibility means here ecological management. This includes activities in accordance with the adopted law, supports environmental awareness in the given surrounding and also creates its own solutions to minimize the harmfulness of core business. All these elements do not function in isolation – they interlace to create a model of economic management which is responsible for the natural resources.
- Corporate social responsibility is increasingly becoming a canon in the management of the organization value. Firstly, pressure of society requires from the company much more than just maximizing profits. Moreover, at such a rapid circulation of information and the many relationships between different groups of stakeholders, it is crucial to maintain good reputation. One of the most important factors that affects the dissemination of the idea is globalization. Companies do not operate in isolation, while facilitating the flow of goods, services, capital and technology makes them compete with the best companies.

Understanding: Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill

Q7. The proposed Fugitive Economic Offenders (FEO) Bill, 2018, seeks to empower the government to confiscate the property of proclaimed economic offenders. Discuss its features and legal challenges in its implementation.

Hints:

- The Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill, 2018 was drafted by the Union Government of India to prevent the economic offenders from evading the process of law by remaining outside the jurisdiction of Indian courts. The Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill is aimed squarely at the likes of Nirav Modi and Vijay Mallya. The Bill after becoming an Act will be applicable to the whole of India.
- “Fugitive Economic Offender” means any individual against whom a warrant for arrest in relation to a scheduled offence has been issued by any court in India, who: leaves or has left India so as to avoid criminal prosecution; or refuses to return to India to face criminal. The draft Bill is attached to a list of offences, which include cheating, forgery, fraud, corruption, insider trading, customs evasion, non-repayment of deposits and more. It must be noted that the Act becomes applicable only in the cases where the offence is for amounts above Rs.100 Crore.
- The director or any other officer authorised by the director may file an application to the Special Court for a declaration that an individual is a fugitive economic offender. After the application is filed, the Court will issue a notice to the person named a ‘fugitive economic offender’. Within six weeks from the date of the notice, the person will have to present himself at “a specified place at a specified time”. If the offender fails to do so, then he will be declared a ‘fugitive economic offender’ and his properties as listed in the director’s application will be confiscated.
- Once an individual is declared as a fugitive economic offender, the government can take steps to confiscate the proceeds of the crime and any other property they own. In simple words, the properties left behind by the fugitives will be controlled by the state if they fail to return back to India within the stipulated time.
- The Bill also says that, once a person has been declared a fugitive economic offender, any court in India can deprive any individual of filing or defending a civil claim regarding that property. This means that even before a person is found guilty by the court, he is deprived of filing or defending a civil claim regarding the property. This provision of the bill is likely to create a controversy according to law experts since it is in violation of the settled principle under the constitution of India that one is considered innocent unless proven guilty.
- This disentanglement even applies to companies, with the law saying even they will not be permitted to file or defend civil claims if “any promoter or key managerial personnel or majority shareholder of the company has been declared a fugitive economic offender.”
- After the confiscation of property, an administrator will be appointed by the court to manage and dispose of the confiscated property. Even though the process seems simple, the assets confiscated by enforcement agencies and courts are termed as distressed properties and rarely find buyers. The prime example is that of Sahara’s Amby Valley and the corporate office of the defunct Kingfisher Airlines which failed to garner bids or buyers despite multiple auctions.
- Moreover, it must be noted that the law cannot force or compel the fugitives to return as it mainly depends on extradition process. However, the toughness of the law either convinces the fugitives to return back or by confiscating their property allows the creditors to enforce their assets and realize their debt without them being simply frozen.
- Another thing that caught the analysts and law experts is the fact that whether the law can be applied retrospectively. The draft bill is silent on this issue and says that “the Act applies to any individual who is, or becomes, a fugitive economic offender on or after the date of coming into force of this Act”. Since the definition of the fugitive economic offender covers anyone against whom a warrant for arrest for certain offences has been issued. Even the Finance Minister in his briefing suggested that the law will be applicable to all cases “old and new”.
- If all the loopholes especially the disentanglement of pursuing or defending any civil claim regarding the property or selling the confiscated property without trial as provided in the draft bill which is against the principles of natural justice are plugged and sorted, then this law is likely to prove menace for fugitive economic offenders and will provide a much sigh of relief and comfort for the creditors and the government in tackling financial crimes committed by the fugitives.



SEVEN IMPORTANT NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWS

NATIONAL

1. The Payment of Gratuity (Amendment) Bill, 2017

Parliament has passed the Payment of Gratuity (Amendment) Bill, 2017. Besides enabling the central government to fix the ceiling of tax free gratuity, the bill will also empower it to fix the period of maternity leave through executive order.

The 2017 bill seeks to amend the Act on two issues, first, it empowers the government to notify the period of maternity leave eligible for qualifying as continuous service and determine the amount of gratuity

available to employees. Secondly, the Act had introduced a ceiling of Rs. 10 lakh on the maximum amount of gratuity payable to an employee through an amendment in 2010. The Bill empowers the government to notify the ceiling proposed instead of amending the Act.

The Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972

Introduced in 1972, the Act was enacted to provide for a scheme for the payment of gratuity to employees engaged in factories, mines, oilfields,

plantations, ports, railway companies, shops and other establishments. Employees who have rendered a minimum five years of continuous service with the establishment employing ten or more persons fall under the Act. The main purpose for enacting this Act is to provide social security to workmen after retirement, whether retirement is a result of the rules of superannuation, or physical disablement or impairment of vital part of the body. ■

2. Strategy on Resource Efficiency

The first meeting of the inter-departmental group of stakeholders on implementation of strategy on resource efficiency (RE) was held at NITI Aayog. After detailed discussion, a road map for implementation of the RE in the country was evolved.

Following measures related to implementation of strategy on resource efficiency was announced by the NITI Aayog:

- Resource Efficiency is cross-cutting, has implications for all sectors. Synergies need to be established for a robust implementation agenda.
- NITI Aayog will facilitate the RE strategy implementation. Implementation however will

be the responsibility of the line ministries/departments.

- A baseline survey on RE could be considered for better targeting.
- A status paper on RE and four sectoral strategy papers on RE are to be prepared.
- Swach Bharat also means a clean production/mining environment; therefore resource efficiency and circular economy are also a part of this initiative.
- One pilot study on ease of doing RE business in collaboration with DIPP could be considered.
- Finally RE is a potential instrument for generating wealth from waste. Measures for promoting effective recycling of scrap generated in the country could be explored.

Background

In November 2017, the NITI Aayog along with EU delegation to India released the strategy paper on Resource Efficiency (RE). The objective of the RE Strategy is to make recommendations for enhancing the resource-use efficiency in the Indian economy and industry, develop indicators for monitoring progress and create an ecosystem for improving the resource security and minimising environmental impacts. The implementation agenda of the RE Strategy consists of Core Action Agenda (2017-2018) and Medium-term Action Plan (2018-2020) in the thematic areas of institutional development, promotion and regulation. ■

3. Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs gave its approval for continuation of centrally-sponsored Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) from April 1 this year to March 31, 2020. The scheme aims to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio of the country to 30 per cent by 2020. In its second phase, it also aims at creation of 70 new model degree colleges and eight new professional colleges, enhancing quality and excellence in 10 select state universities and

70 autonomous colleges. Among its aims is providing infrastructural support to 50 universities and 750 colleges, improving access, equity and accessibility of higher education in states through academic, governance and affiliation and other reforms.

About RUSA

It was launched in 2013 as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) aims at providing strategic funding to eligible state higher educational institutions.

The central funding (in the ratio of 60:40 for general category States, 90:10 for special category states and 100% for union territories) would be norm based and outcome dependent. The funding to states would be made on the basis of critical appraisal of State Higher Education Plans, which would describe each state's strategy to address issues of equity, access and excellence in higher education. ■

4. Minority Religion Status Lingayat Community

The Karnataka government has granted the minority religion status to the Lingayat community in the state under the Karnataka Minorities Act 1994 on March 22, 2018.. The state government will, now, recommend to the Centre that the community be granted religious minority status under the Central Minority Commission Act 1992.

The community has been demanding status of a separate religion for a long time. One part of the community demands the minority status for both Veerashaiva and

Lingayats considering them the same, while another wants it only for the Lingayats as it considers Veershaivas to be Hindus. Karnataka State Minorities Commission had formed a seven-member committee, headed by retired High Court Judge HN Nagamohan Das on the issue. The Nagamohan committee has recommended minority status for only the Lingayats and has kept Veershaivas out.

Who are the Lingayats?

The tradition of Lingayatism is known to have been founded by social

reformer and philosopher Basavanna in 12th century Karnataka. The Lingayats emerged as a reactionary force against Hinduism in the twelfth century. While it rejected most of the broad Hindu traditions, it also assimilated aspects of it, making the demand for a separate religious status a rather complicated affair.

The Veerashaivas are a sub-sect of Lingayats and ardent followers of Lord Shiva. Basavanna, a 12th century social reformer, founded Lingayatism. The Veerashaivas preceded Basavanna. ■

5. SATH-E

NITI Aayog has released comprehensive roadmaps and detailed timelines for its initiative 'Sustainable Action for Transforming Human Capital in Education (SATH-E)'. It will promote data-driven analysis to strengthen academic monitoring across schools in the country.

- These roadmaps, which operate between 2018 to 2020, lay out detailed interventions which will take by the three participating States- Jharkand, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha - aiming to become

'Role Model States' in school education.

- These roadmaps present the first-of-its-kind, customized, action-oriented programmes, outlining interventions at the individual, district and state level.
- The roadmaps were jointly prepared by NITI Aayog, the three states and the knowledge partners of the SATH-E Initiatives, the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and Piramal Foundation For Education Leadership (PFEL).

SATH-E aims to create role model states for education and mainstream 'islands of excellence' across the country to facilitate qualitative and quantitative transformation of learning outcomes. Marrying technology with need-based, data-driven assessment and a 'giving it what it takes' approach - be it innovation, incubation, external third party funding and Public- Private-Philanthropic Partnership (PPPP) experimentation - SATH-E puts the states in the driver's seat to transform education at scale. ■

6. 'Tribal Diaries' Mobile App

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has developed an android based mobile application called Tribal Diaries for internal monitoring as also connecting with officers/officials concerned with implementation of schemes / programmes for tribal development. The application is for accredited users.

This application provides an opportunity for visual feedback in terms of photographs, videos, uploading reports of official tours / inspections and sharing of best practices etc. The application is being extensively used to get an overview of the Ekalavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs) funded by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. The principals of the EMRS are being encouraged to use the application and create projects highlighting the physical infrastructure of the schools, special achievement of the students and share success stories.



About EMRS

Ekalavya Model Residential School Scheme was started in 1998 and first school was started in the year 2000 in Maharashtra. EMRSs have been functioning as institutions of excellence for tribal students. As per existing

EMRS Guidelines of 2010, at least one EMRS is to be set up in each Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA) / Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP) having 50% ST population in the area.

7. Training Programmes for Agriculture and Allied Sectors

The ministries of agriculture and skill development signed an agreement to conduct training programmes for agriculture and allied sectors at 690 Krishi Vigyan Kendras across

the country. About 40 per cent of the country's workforce is linked to agricultural knowledge activities. The government aims to double farmers' income. However, without skill

upgradation, this is not possible. There are rapid technological strides in the agriculture sector; therefore, upskilling is needed.

Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) are agricultural extension centres created by ICAR (Indian Council for Agricultural Research) and its affiliated institutions at district level to provide various types of farm support to the agricultural sector. To achieve the set objectives KVKs undertake several types of activities in the adopted villages: farm advisory service, training programme for different categories of people, training programme for the extension functionaries, front line demonstration and on farm testing.



INTERNATIONAL

1. African Continental Free Trade Area

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) has been signed by 44 African countries at a summit of the African Union in Kigali, Rwanda. But 10 countries, including Nigeria, have refused to sign the deal and it will need to be ratified by all the signatories' national parliaments before the bloc becomes a reality. If successful, it will be the biggest trade agreement since the formation of the World Trade Organization in 1995. The summit was a step forward for the AU's 2063 project for closer African integration,

with 27 member states also signing a commitment for the free movement of persons.

About AfCTA

African heads of government agreed to establish a continental free trade area in 2012 and started negotiations in 2015. The agreement is set to be signed by all 55 member states of the African Union, bringing together 1.2 billion people with a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of more than \$2 trillion. The draft agreement

commits countries to removing tariffs on 90 percent of goods, with 10 percent of "sensitive items" to be phased in later.

The agreement will also liberalise services and aims to tackle so-called "non-tariff barriers" which hamper trade between African countries, such as long delays at the border. Eventually, free movement of people and even a single currency could become part of the free trade area.

2. Earth Hour-2018

The entire world on 24th March celebrated Earth Hour. Earth Hour is a "part and parcel" of the "Green Good Deeds" movement, in which every individual ought to take small, voluntary green actions to protect and conserve the environment and the earth. The objective of the programme is to create awareness about the

impacts of climate change and also contribute towards the betterment of the planet.

The concept of the Earth Hour began in Australia in 2007 and it is now being observed by 187 countries which turn off the lights at 8:30 pm as per their respective local time.



3. Copernicus Programme

India has joined Europe's mega global arrangement of sharing data from Earth observation satellites, called Copernicus. Data from a band of Indian remote sensing satellites will be available to the European Copernicus programme while designated Indian institutional users will in return get to access free data from Europe's six Sentinel satellites and those of other space agencies that are part of the programme, at their cost. The space-based information will be used

for forecasting disasters, providing emergency response and rescue of people during disasters; to glean land, ocean data; and for issues of security, agriculture, climate change and atmosphere.

The Copernicus emergency response mapping system was activated on at least two Indian occasions — during the 2014 floods in Andhra Pradesh and after the 2013 storm in Odisha.

About Copernicus

Copernicus is the European Union's Earth Observation Programme, looking at our planet and its environment for the ultimate benefit of all European citizens. It offers information services based on satellite Earth Observation and in situ (non-space) data. The Programme is coordinated and managed by the European Commission.

4. Brazzaville Declaration

To protect the Cuvette Centrale region in the Congo Basin, the world's largest tropical peatlands, from unregulated land use and prevent its drainage and degradation, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Republic of Congo and Indonesia jointly signed the Brazzaville declaration that promotes better management and conservation of this globally important carbon store. The declaration was signed on the sidelines of the Third Partners Meeting of the Global Peatlands Initiative in Brazzaville. The agreement noted the importance of good land use and infrastructure planning that takes the nature of peatlands into account.

There is a lot at stake in the protection of these peatlands: the equivalent of three years of global greenhouse gas emissions are stored in the Congo Basin, emissions that



could be released if the peatlands are degraded or the natural wetlands drained.

About Peatlands

Peatlands are wetlands that contain a mixture of decomposed organic material, partially submerged in a layer of water, lacking oxygen. The

complex biodiversity of the peatlands means they are home to a variety of species, but their high carbon content makes them uniquely vulnerable to incineration if they are drained. The declaration recognizes the importance of the scientific breakthrough of mapping the world's largest tropical peatland area. ■

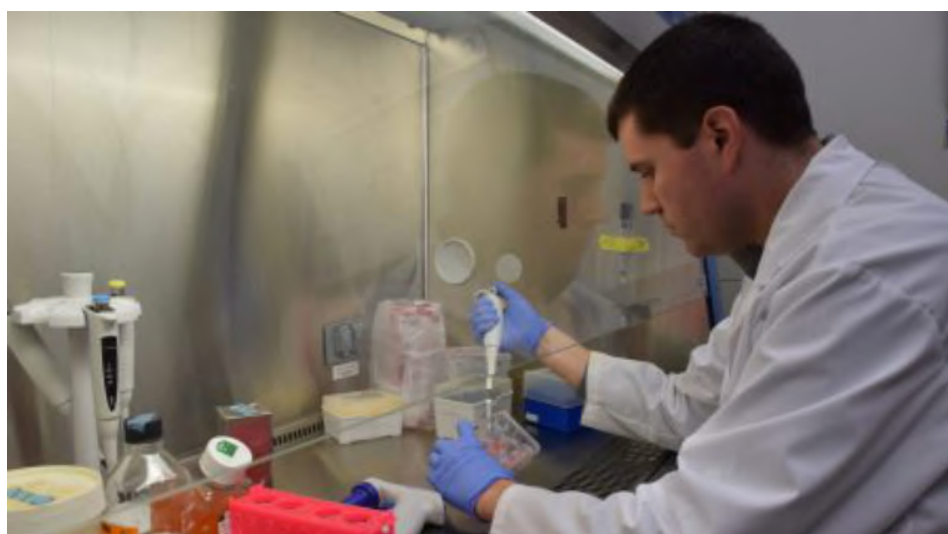
5. Protein that Prevents Spread of Cancer Discovered

Researchers have discovered a new protein that prevents the uncontrolled proliferation of cancer cells in the liver.

The protein, called LHPP, can serve as a biomarker for the diagnosis and prognosis of liver cancer. The loss of

LHPP promotes tumour growth and reduces the chance of survival of cancer patients. LHPP is present in healthy tissue and completely absent in tumour tissue. LHPP could potentially be used as a prognostic biomarker and allows clinicians to provide better treatment options.

The incidence of liver cancer, also known as hepatocellular carcinoma, is steadily increasing, researchers said. Hepatocellular carcinoma is usually diagnosed at a very late stage when the liver is already severely damaged and hence overall prognosis is poor. ■



6. Great Pacific Garbage Patch Growing

The Great Pacific Garbage Patch (GPGP), located in the North Pacific Ocean, is the largest accumulation zone for ocean plastics on Earth. According to the study the mass of plastic contained there is 4 to 16 times larger than previously supposed and it is continuing to accumulate because of ocean currents and careless humans both onshore and offshore.

- Researchers conducted the surveys of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch in 2015 and 2016 and estimated that 78200 tonnes of plastic waste are packed into an area.
- It is estimated that 20 per cent of the debris is from the 2011 Japanese tsunami.
- Accumulated in this area are 1.8 trillion pieces of plastic, weighing 80,000 metric tons, the equivalent of 500 Jumbo Jets.
- Plastics made up 99.9% of all debris in this part of the ocean.



- At least 46% of plastic consisted of fishing nets and over three quarters of the plastic was debris larger than 5cm, including hard plastics, plastic sheets and film.

About Patch

The patch was discovered in 1997 by Charles Moore, a yachtsman who had

sailed through a mishmash of floating plastic bottles and other debris on his way home to Los Angeles. The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is an accumulation of the marine debris or litter in the North Pacific Ocean. The Patch is also known as the Pacific trash vortex and spans from the West Coast of North America to Japan. ■

7. Re-denomination of the Bolivar Currency

Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro ordered a re-denomination of the ailing bolivar currency, by knocking three zeroes off amid hyperinflation and a crippling economic crisis. The measure to divide the so-called bolivar fuerte -

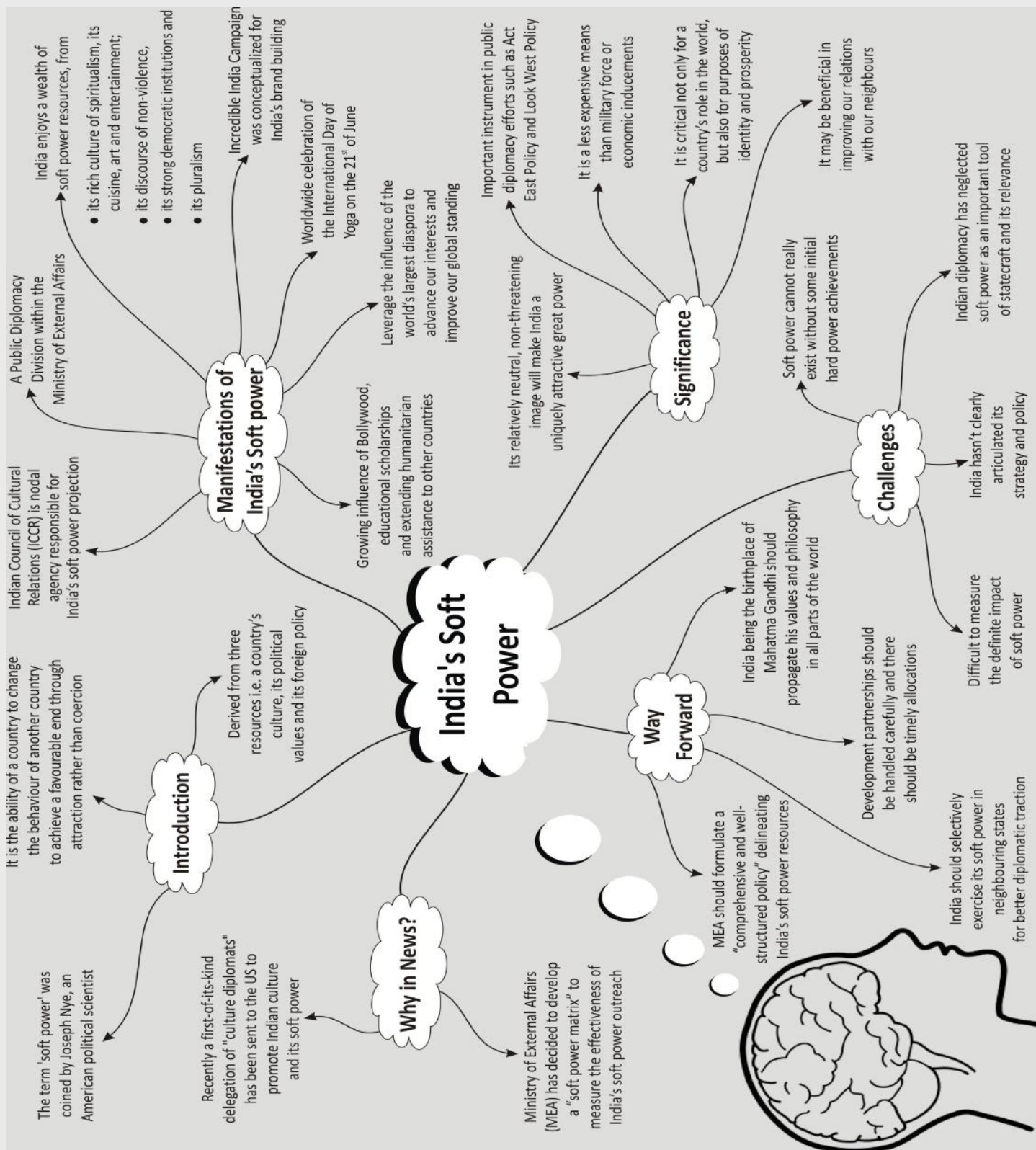
or "strong bolivar" - currency by 1,000 would take effect from June 4. The largest bill in circulation, the 100,000 bolivar note - barely enough to buy a coffee in the street - will become a 100 bolivar bill. Venezuela's government

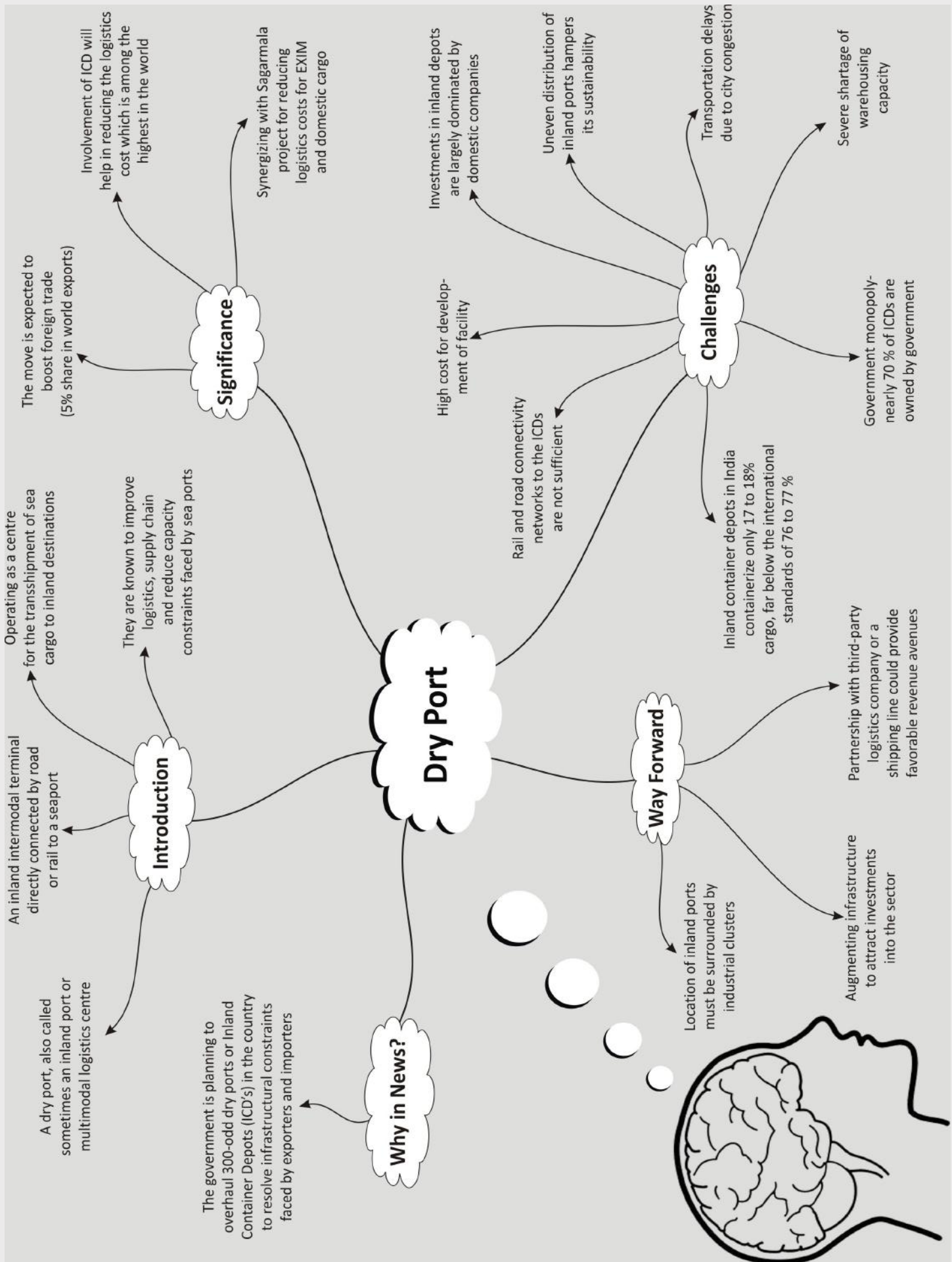
similarly re-denominated its currency by knocking off three zeroes a decade ago. The move illustrates the collapse of the bolivar, which has fallen 99.99 per cent against the US dollar on the black market since Maduro came to power in April 2013. A \$100 purchase of bolivars then would now be worth just a single US cent. Venezuela's new set of monetary denomination will consist of two coins, one of 0.50 cents of a bolivar (\$0.00001) and the other of one bolivar (\$0.00002).

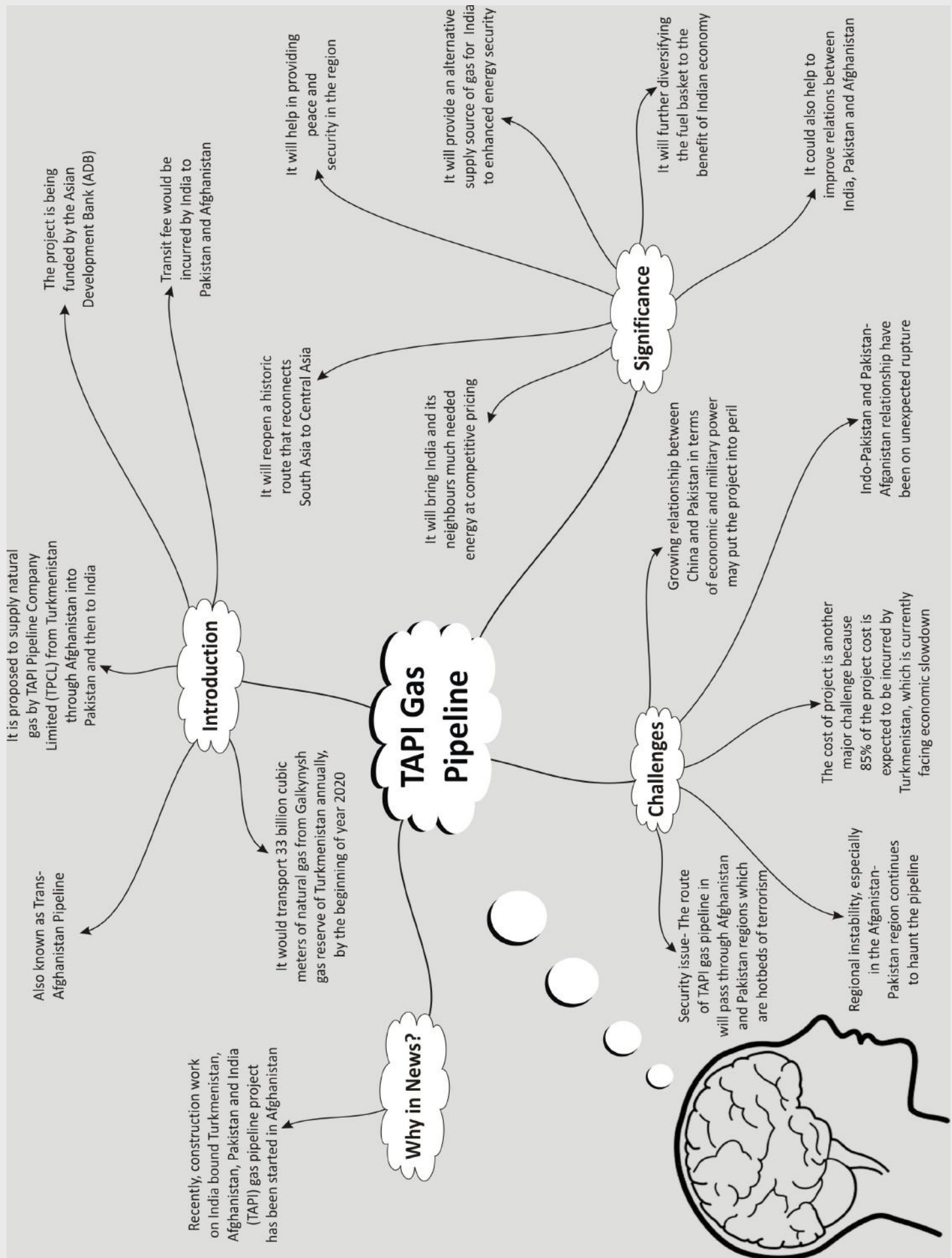
Oil-rich Venezuela's crushing economic and political crisis has caused widespread shortages of basic goods, in addition to hyperinflation which the International Monetary Fund expects to run to 13,000 per cent this year. ■

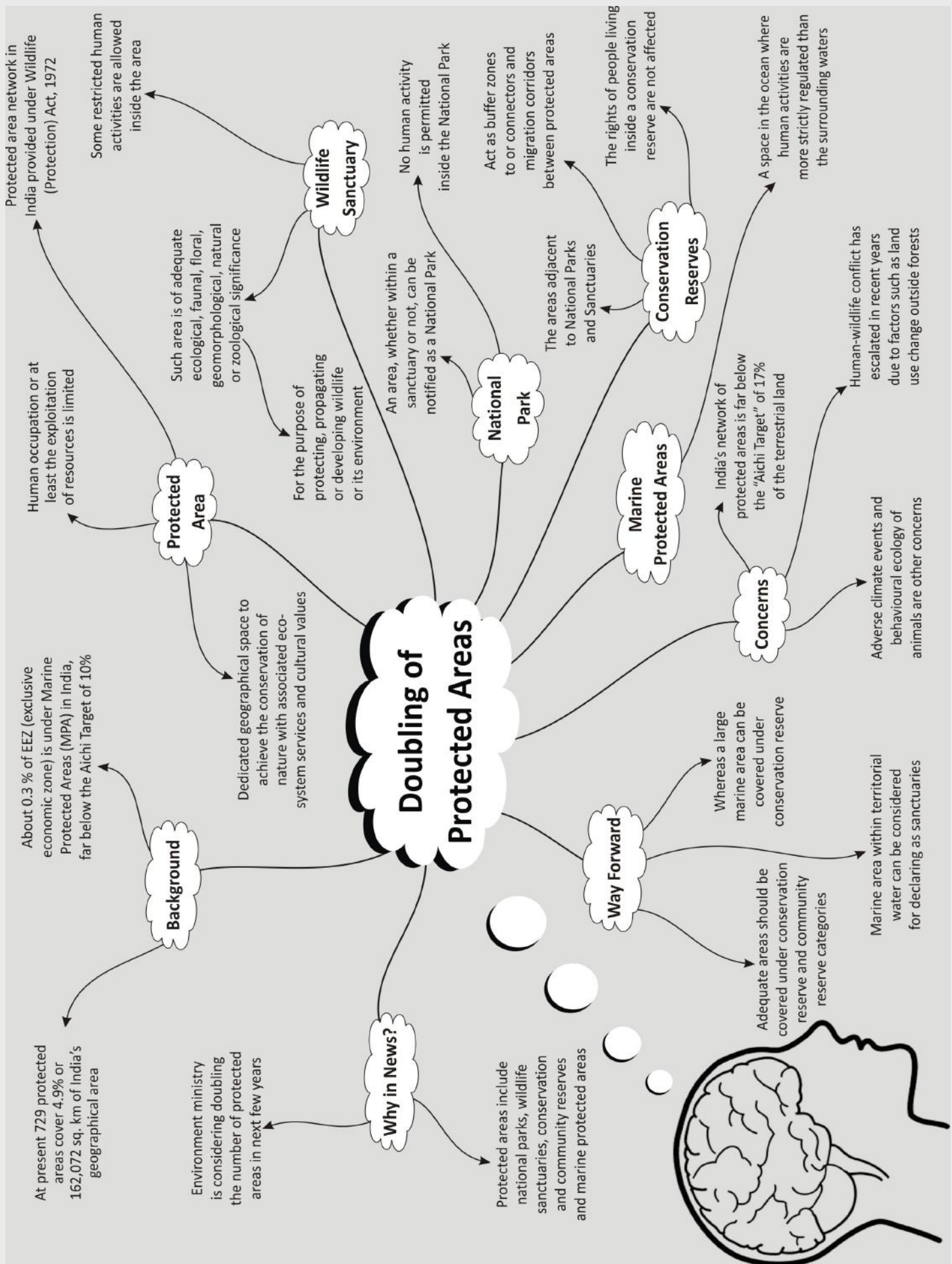


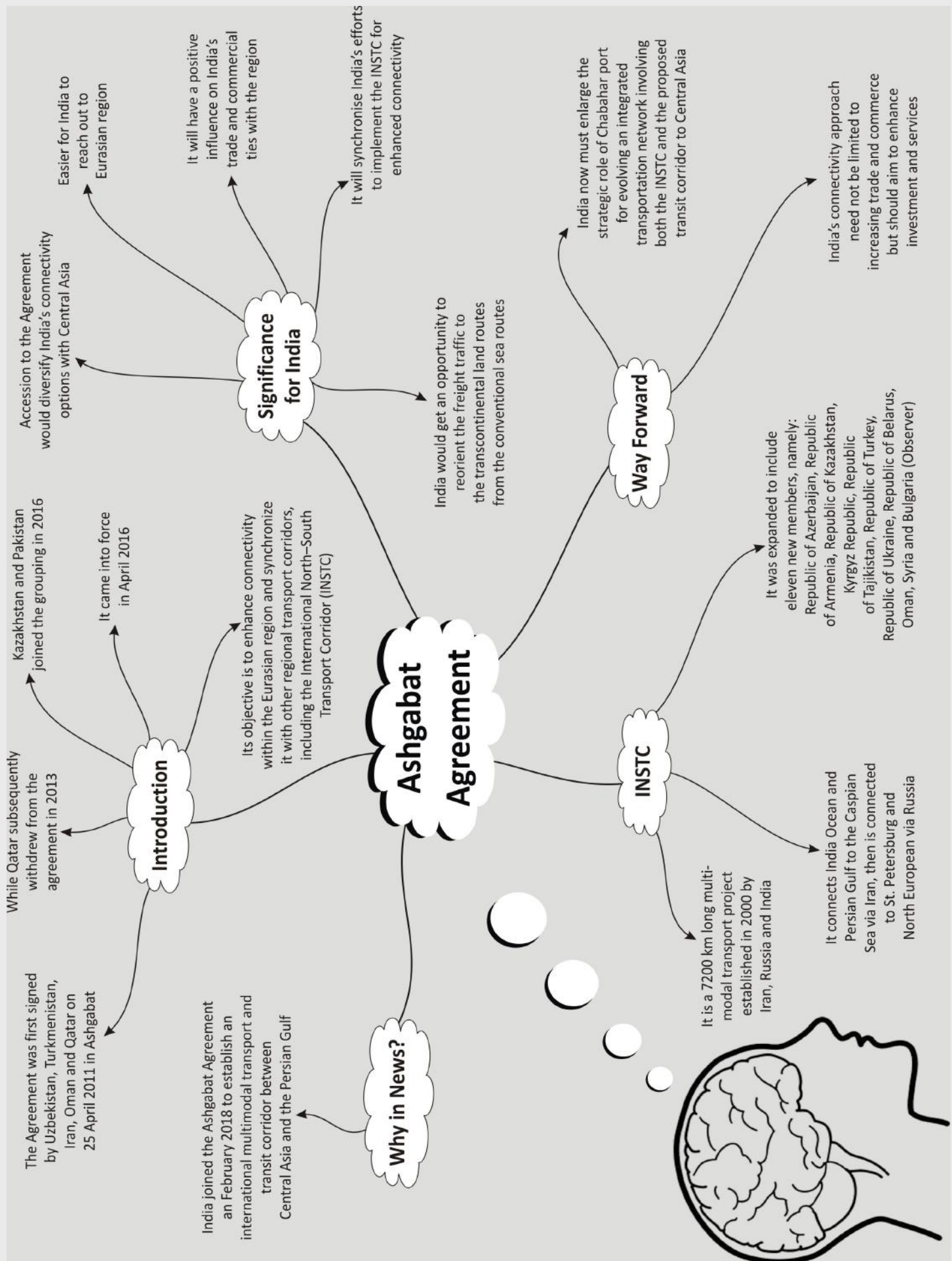
SEVEN BRAIN BOOSTERS

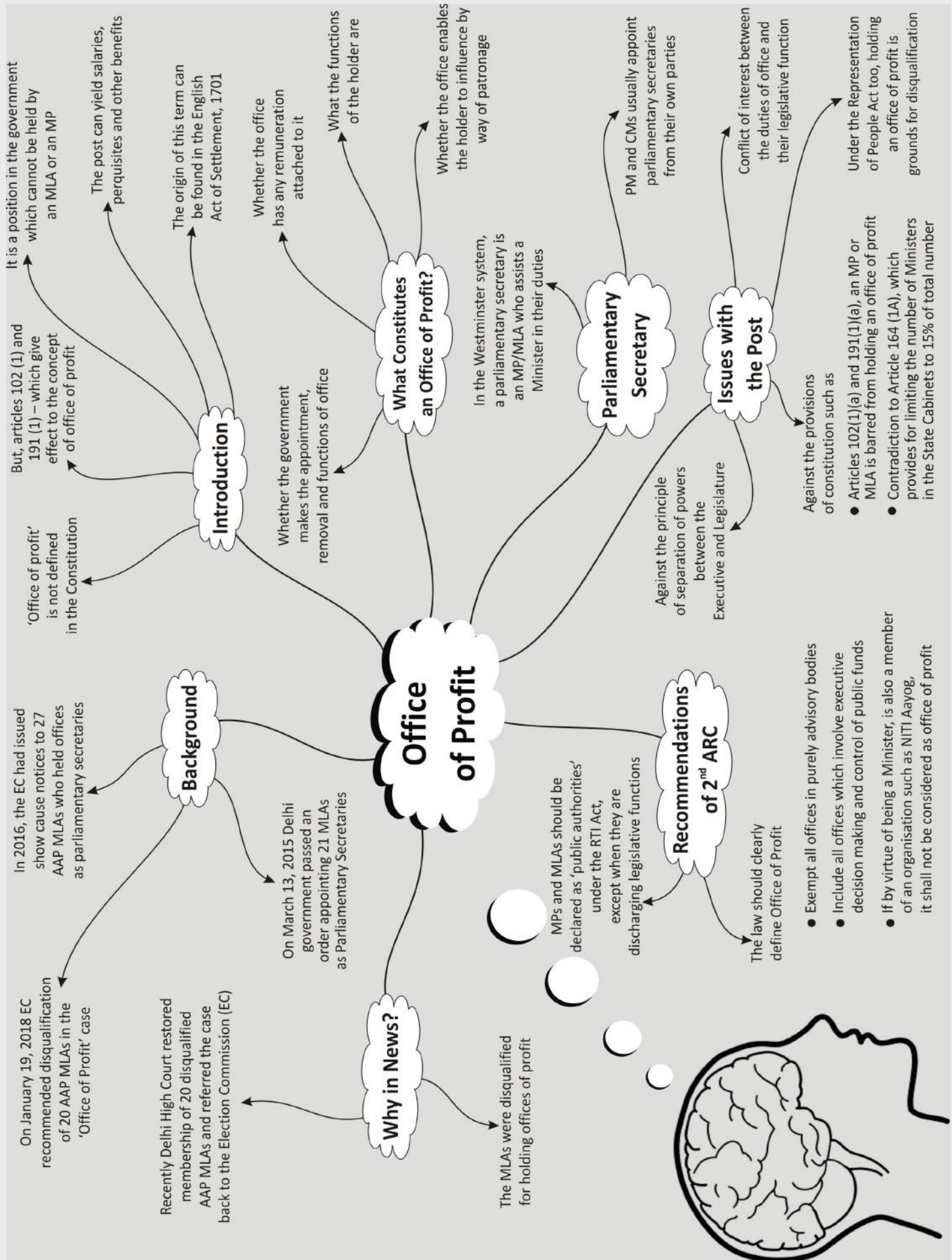


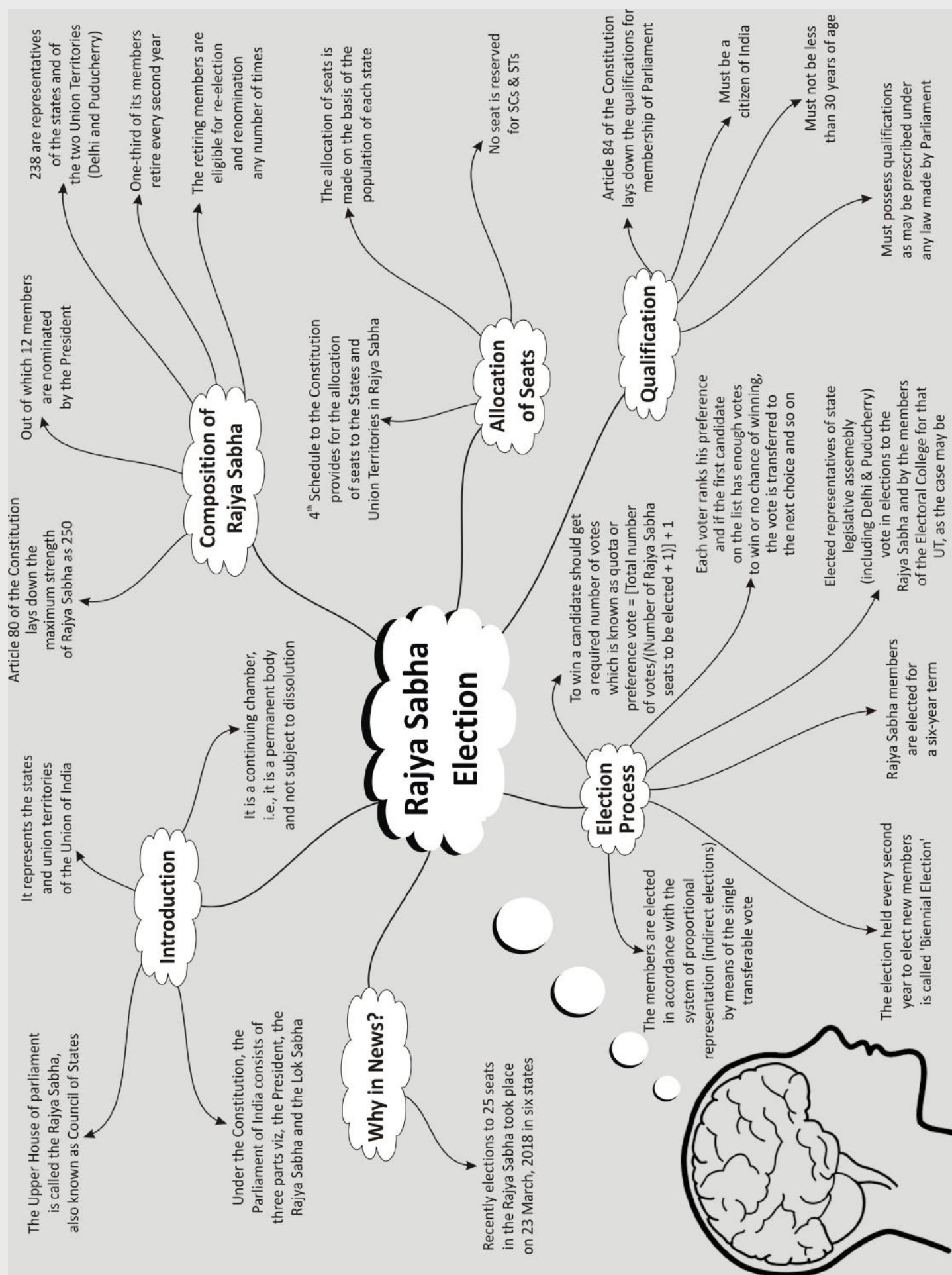












SEVEN MCQ's WITH EXPLANATORY ANSWERS

(Based on Brain Boosters)

India's Soft Power

Q1. The term 'soft power' is sometimes seen in news. Consider the following statements in this regard:

1. It is the ability of a country to change the behaviour of another country through attraction rather than coercion.
2. Celebration of the International Day of Yoga on the 21st of June globally is the example of India's soft power outreach.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2 d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (c)

Explanation:

Both statements are correct. Soft power is defined as the ability of a country to change the behaviour of another country to achieve a favourable end through attraction rather than coercion. It can be derived from three resources i.e. a country's culture, its political values and its foreign policy. Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) is nodal agency responsible for India's soft power projection. Along with several missions, celebration of the International Day of Yoga on the 21st of June globally is a very effective manifestation of India's soft power outreach.

Dry Port

Q2. Consider the following statements in respect of dry ports:

1. Dry port is an inland terminal that provides services for handling, temporary storage and customs clearance for international freight.
2. Dry ports are known to improve logistics, supply chain and reduce capacity constraints faced by sea ports.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2 d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (c)

Explanation:

Both statements are correct. Dry port is an inland terminal that provides services for handling, temporary storage, inspection and customs clearance for international freight. These are known to improve logistics, supply chain and reduce capacity constraints faced by sea ports. It is usually located where networks of different transportation modes converge and is directly connected by rail or road to a sea port.

TAPI Gas Pipeline

Q3. With reference to the TAPI gas pipeline project, consider the following statements:

1. TAPI project is being funded by World Bank.
2. Project will provide an alternative supply source of gas for India to enhanced energy security.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2 d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

Statement 1 is not correct because the project is being funded by the Asian Development Bank. The pipeline originates from Turkmenistan's Galkynysh field having gas reserves of 16 trillion cubic feet.

Statement 2 is correct. TAPI project will provide an alternative supply source of gas and energy for India to enhanced energy security along with diversification of the fuel basket to the benefit of Indian economy.

Doubling of Protected Areas

Q4. Consider the following statements:

1. IUCN classified protected areas according to their management objectives.
2. National parks of India are in the IUCN 1 category.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only b) 2 only
 c) Both 1 and 2 d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (a)

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct. IUCN protected area management categories classify protected areas according to their management objectives. The categories are recognised by international bodies such as the United Nations and by many national governments as the global standard for defining and recording protected areas.

Statement 2 is not correct. The National parks of India are in the IUCN 2 category. Category 2 protected areas are large natural or near natural areas set aside to protect large-scale ecological processes, along with the complement of species and ecosystems characteristic of the area, which also provide a foundation for environmentally and culturally compatible, spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities.

Ashgabat Agreement

Q5. With reference to the 'Ashgabat Agreement', consider the following statements:

1. It is an agreement among all Central Asian countries.
2. It is a strategic alliance for the purpose of oil and energy security only.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only b) 2 only
 c) Both 1 and 2 d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (d)

Explanation:

Both statements are not correct because this agreement was first signed by Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran, Oman and Qatar on 25 April 2011. While Qatar subsequently withdrew from the agreement in 2013, Kazakhstan and Pakistan joined the grouping in 2016. India formally joined Ashgabat agreement on 2nd February 2018. Ashgabat Agreement envisages facilitation of transit corridor and multimodal transportation of goods between Central Asia and the Persian Gulf.

Office of Profit

Q6. Consider the following statements in respect of 'Office of Profit':

1. The expression "office of profit" has been defined in the Article of 102 of the Constitution.

2. The final interpretation and decision whether a person is disqualified or not rests with the courts and not with Parliament.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only b) 2 only
 c) Both 1 and 2 d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

Statement 1 is not correct. The expression "office of profit" has not been defined in the Constitution or in the Representation of the People Act, 1951. But Clause (a) of Article 102 of the Constitution of India says a person shall be disqualified for being chosen as and for being, a member of either house of Parliament, if he holds any "office of profit" under the government of India or the government of any state other than an office declared by Parliament by law not to disqualify its holder.

Statement 2 is correct. It is for the courts to explain the significance and meaning of this concept. Over the years, courts have decided this issue in the context of specific factual situations. Thus the final interpretation and decision whether a person is disqualified or not rests with the courts and not with Parliament.

Rajya Sabha Election

Q7. With reference to the Rajya Sabha elections, consider the following statements:

1. 5th Schedule to the Constitution provides for allocation of seats to the States and Union Territories in Rajya Sabha.
2. All elected and nominated members of Legislative Assembly of state and UTs (as the case may be) vote in elections to the Rajya Sabha.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only b) 2 only
 c) Both 1 and 2 d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: (d)

Explanation:

Both statements are not correct. 4th Schedule to the Constitution provides for the allocation of seats to the States and Union Territories in Rajya Sabha, not the 5th Schedule. Elected representatives of state legislative assembly (including Delhi & Puducherry) vote in elections to the Rajya Sabha and by the members of the Electoral College for that Union Territory, as the case may be in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote.

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SEVEN IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIMS

1. Which North Indian city became the first city to install automatic speed gun cameras for traffic management?

– *Chandigarh*

2. According to International Energy Agency (IEA) report, carbon emissions of which country rose by 1.7 per cent to 9.1 gigatons in 2017?

– *China*

3. What was the theme of the 2018 International Day of Happiness?

– *Share Happiness*

4. Which social media platform has been accused of data breach in relation to the Cambridge Analytica controversy?

– *Facebook*

5. Which city hosted the first India-Japan Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction?

– *New Delhi*

6. Which city became the first-ever one in South America to host the G20 ministerial meeting 2018?

– *Buenos Aires*

7. World Water Day was observed globally on which date?

– *22nd March*

○○○

SEVEN PERFECT QUOTES

(IMPORTANT FOR ESSAY AND ANSWER WRITING)

"There is only one way to avoid criticism: do nothing, say nothing and be nothing."

- Aristotle

"Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go."

- T. S. Eliot

"Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life."

- Steve Jobs

"Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow. The important thing is not to stop questioning."

- Albert Einstein

"It does not matter how slowly you go, so long as you do not stop."

- Confucius

"It often requires more courage to dare to do right than to fear to do wrong."

- Abraham Lincoln

"The best revenge is massive success."

- Frank Sinatra

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SEVEN PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAIN EXAM

Answer each of the following questions in 200 words:

- Q1. Khap Panchayats have been in the news for functioning as extra-constitutional authorities, often delivering pronouncements amounting to human rights violations. Critically analyse the actions taken by the legislative, executive and the judiciary to set the things right in this regard.
- Q2. Critically analyse the shortcomings of Act East policy. How different is India's new 'Act East' policy compared to 'Look East' policy?
- Q3. Increasing interest of India in Middle East has its pros and cons. Critically examine.
- Q4. What are 'Smart Villages'? Critically examine their relevance for rural development in India.
- Q5. Comment on the challenges for inclusive growth which include careless and useless manpower in the Indian context. Suggest measures to be taken for facing these challenges.
- Q6. Farmers continue to be vulnerable to frequent episodes of losses that neither the state nor the markets have been able to mitigate. Critically evaluate.
- Q7. What do you understand by Special courts, fast-track courts and tribunals? Discuss the relevance and efficiency of these courts in India.

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	English	✓	✓ (some sites)
● Model answer (daily)	Hindi	✓	×
	English	✓	×
Current affairs/issues ● Analysis and question (daily and weekly)	Hindi	✓	✓ (some sites)
	English	✓	✓
Essay-writing & Ethics case study ● practice and evaluation	Hindi	✓	×
	English	✓	×

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