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SEVEN IMPORTANT ISSUES

I. THE NATION OF THE MOST UNEMPLOYED

Why in News?

According to the Labour Bureau statistics, India has, today, become the nation of the most unemployed in the world; in the inclusive growth index. As per RBI-backed research by KLEMS India shows that the employment in 27 sectors fell by 0.2% and 0.1%, respectively in the years 2014 and 2015. However, IMF exuded confidence that the reforms being carried out in India in the last few years would end up creating new jobs in the country.

Background

India's liberalization in 1991 was premised on the idea that it would make local industries more competitive, helping them capture world markets, which in turn would enable millions of Indian workers to move away from low-productivity farm jobs to high-productivity factory jobs. Data from the KLEMS India database on employment and productivity published recently by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) shows that a part of the promise has indeed been met. Millions of workers have indeed left farm jobs for non-farm jobs, and the pace of this transition seems to have picked up since the mid-2000s when the economy's growth engine also picked up pace.

For a long time, there is a contention that India's impressive growth story has been devoid of a similar expansion in jobs, with the proponents, on the other hand, calling the theory a hoax. In absence of comprehensive

jobs data, India's actual employment story remained uncorroborated and dependent on just eight core sectors. Now, a more comprehensive database tracking employment stats in 27 sectors shows that employment rate indeed fell in 2014 and 2015 — the two high growth years. Besides these two years, employment also fell in 2012-13, and at a sharper rate, followed by a strong upswing.

KLEMS India shows that the employment in 27 sectors fell by 0.2% and 0.1%, in 2014 and 2015 respectively. India's GDP growth was 7.4% in 2014-15 and 8.2% in 2015-16. KLEMS India database is to analyse productivity performance in the Indian economy at the disaggregated industry level.

The sharpest fall in employment in last 10 years did not come only between 2014 and 2016, but two years prior to that in 2012-13. It was followed by a sharp rebound in the following year 2013-14 — the year that ended just before Lok Sabha elections. But again, the employment level fell in India in the years prior to two structural changes demonetisation in 2016 and the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in 2017.

Unemployment In India

On the economic development front, inequality and increasing unemployment is the biggest challenge for the fast emerging India. Self-employment opportunities are



declining in the country and jobs are continuously decreasing. But at the same time, another picture is that India is one of the fastest growing peak economies in the world. At some point in time, we have managed to climb up 30 places in the 'Business Accessibility Index. The Employment and Unemployment Surveys of Labour Bureau is for 2015-16 states that the unemployment rate for persons aged 15 years and above stood at 3.7%, with the highest in Andaman and Nicobar Islands (12.0%), Kerala (10.6%) and Himachal Pradesh (10.2%), and the lowest in Daman and Diu (0.3%), Gujarat (0.6%) and Chhattisgarh (1.2%). At a national level, In 2015-16 (3.7%) number is marginally higher than the one in 2013-14 (3.4%) and marginally lower than in 2012-13 (4.0%).

The grim unemployment situation in India is not new, but it has been reaching embarrassing lows of late. The cause of unemployment in the Indian society is multi-faceted. The prompt population growth is one of them, which can be termed as the biggest

cause of unemployment in rural India. Although the Government of India is providing many low job opportunities for people in the rural areas, they are turning out to be insufficient due to the continuous increase in the population size. Secondly, the land usage has not been kept at par with the outburst of employment need of the country. In rural India, a large chunk of the population still depends directly on the land for their livelihood. This is causing unemployment as the population is increasing but the land is constant.

Widening Inequality

In India, economic reforms were implemented in the nineties. Since then, there has been an unprecedented creation of wealth in the country. According to the Credit Suisse Global, since 2000, there has been an increase in the value of 9.9 percent annually in India, while its global average has been only 6 percent. But its benefits have not been found in the large population of the country. Despite India's share in global assets (sixth), the average assets of Indians are much lower than the global average.

In the meanwhile, the inequality has expanded in the distribution of public resources in the country and nearly one-third of the population is still forced to live below the poverty line. The condition is that India has slipped to the hundredth place in the Global Hunger Index of 2017, and in this case, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and many African countries have a better performance than India, while we were at 97th in 2016.

According to Oxfam, only one percent of the people on the global level have only 50 percent wealth. But this figure stands at 58 percent in India and 57 billionaires have assets equal to 70 percent of the country's population. 'The Widening Gaps: India Inequality Report 2018', economic inequality in India is increasing rapidly.

In the country's GDP, 15 percent of the wealth has been made, while the share was 10 percent five years ago. India is the second largest country in the world in terms of population. About 65 percent of the population in the country has an average age of less than 35 years. Such a large young population could be our strength, but due to lack of adequate employment in the country, a large number of youth is unemployed. According to data from the Economic Cooperation and Development Organisation, the number of young unemployed in the country is very high. This is causing the feeling of dissatisfaction in the society.

Similarly, in spite of all efforts, the participation of women in the total labor force of the country is only 27 percent (In the labor force, household work and care, such as unpaid work is not included). The latest estimates from the World Bank show that in the period from 2004-05 to 2011-12, 19.6 percent of the women moved out of labor force, which is a major drop.

The importance of women's involvement in the labour force can be understood in such a way that the International Monetary Fund estimates that if the presence of women in India's

labor force becomes as much as that of men, then it will help in increasing our GDP by 27 percent.

Last but certainly not the least, the education and the skills of the people can be collectively blamed for the high unemployment levels. The standard of education in the country has not moved over classrooms and can be considered a gateway to acquire certificates rather than skills. In the heaps of countless engineers and marketing graduates, a skilled workforce is still a distant dream.

Which Sectors are Generating Employment?

The public sector in India seems to be the biggest employer when it comes to the formal sector. According to the Statistical Year Book India 2017, the Railways in 2000-2001 had 15,49,385 employees, while in 2014-15, it had 13,03,860. The top employers of public sector are Indian Railways (14 lakh), Indian Army (13 lakh), India Post (4.66 lakh) and State Bank of India (2.2 lakh). According to Business Today, the top job creators of the private sector are Tata Consultancy Services (3 lakh), Infosys (1.6 lakh), IBM India (1.5 lakh) and Wipro (1.3 Lakh).

Top 10 job-generators Sectors				
Sectors	1980-81 and 1990-91 (in%)	1990-1991 and 2015-16 (in%)	Share in total workforce in 2015-16 (in%)	Productivity per worker (Rs.1000/worker, in 2015-16)
Construction	20.13	35.74	14.40	126.56
Trade	24.84	14.56	10.04	235.78
S Miscellaneous services (includes real estate brokerage)	7.38	8.43	5.02	415.53
Transport and storage	9.78	7.44	4.29	255.39
Education	3.13	6.26	3.22	222.13
Business services	1.47	5.99	2.18	811.68
Hotels and restaurants	2.49	3.75	1.89	123.53
Gems, jewellery and v misc. manufacturing	3.02	2.46	1.43	87.19
Food products, beverages and tobacco	4.92	2.28	2.42	158.72
Financial services	2.42	2.26	1.11	1259.52
Health and social work	0.81	2.07	1.08	290.04

- The pace of non-farm job creation in the post liberalization era (at 3.39% per annum) is similar to the pace of job creation in the decade immediately preceding liberalization (at 3.59% per annum), the growth of jobs in the post-liberalization era has been very narrowly concentrated in a few sectors.
- Nearly a third of new jobs added in the Indian economy in the post-liberalization era have been in the construction sector alone. The construction sector was a major job-creator even in the 1980s but its share in new jobs was much smaller then.
- In other Asian economies, which witnessed a transition from low-productivity jobs to high-productivity jobs, the manufacturing sector played a big role in that transition. In India, the role of the manufacturing sector has been very limited.
- Even as the construction and services sectors expanded their share in the total employment pie, the share of manufacturing has remained nearly the same as it was three decades ago.
- Manufacturing accounted for a tenth of total employment in the 1980s, and continues to account for about a tenth of total employment today. Within manufacturing, the share of labour-intensive industries such as textiles and leather has actually shrunk over the past few decades.

Indeed, unemployment is the lesser of India's problems. The more serious problem, instead, is severe underemployment," the Aayog said in the Three-Year Action Agenda for 2017-18 to 2019-20. The 'Make in India' campaign needs to succeed by manufacturing for global markets." 'Three Year Action Agenda' also

recommended for the creation of a handful of Coastal Employment Zones (CEZ), which may attract multinational firms in labour-intensive sectors from China to India.

Skill India: Is It The Correct Path?

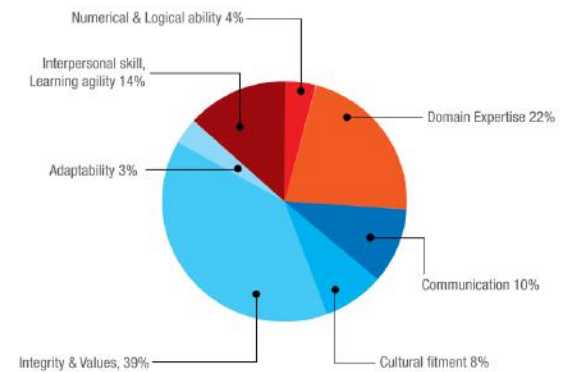
Skill India, the brainchild of Prime Minister campaign launched in 2015. The campaign's main aim is to train over 400 million people in India in different skills by 2022. The Skill India campaign includes multiple initiatives from the government which can carry forward the vision. These initiatives include "National Skill Development Mission", "Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna" and "Skill Loan Scheme".

One of the major schemes launched by the government to boost job creation is the Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana (PMRPY). The Scheme has been designed to give incentives to employers for generation of employment, by paying 8.33% EPS contribution of the employer for the new employment.

In the 2017-2018 budget, GOI decided to set aside Rs 17,000 crore, the biggest allocation to the sector which will directly boost the Skill India Mission.

In India, around 40% of the workforce is illiterate, while another 40% consists of school dropouts, a study by the Boston Consulting Group revealed. Only 10% of the workforce is vocationally trained and graduates. Initiatives such as Skill India can help create a skilled workforce in the short run, but as the population increases and the need for skilled workers skyrockets, these campaigns can fall well-short. In a country where 80% workforce has not completed a significant level of education, the solution is visible, but far. To overcome

SKILLS DESIRED BY EMPLOYERS



the unskilled workforce concern, educational reforms are required. Impacting the minds of students at the foundation level is the biggest reform that can be brought in this domain, and probably the country.

The India KLEMS

The India KLEMS research project was launched at ICRIER, New Delhi in 2009 to generate data sets which allow estimation of productivity growth at the industry level as well as the aggregate economy and its broad sectors.

- The Project is being implemented by the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) with financial support from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- The project is getting data/research/ intellectual support from:
 - ♦ Central Statistical Organization (CSO), Government of India;
 - ♦ Groningen Growth and Development Center, University of Groningen, Netherlands
 - ♦ A team comprising members from the RBI and experts from the CSO is working closely with the ICRIER research team.

At the completion of the project at ICRIER, a data series for the period 1980-2008 was constructed and a report was prepared, which were

subsequently released by the RBI. The input measures will incorporate various categories of capital (K), labour (L), energy (E), materials (M) and services (S) inputs. The present document describes the India KLEMS database version 2017. The dataset includes measures of Gross Value Added (GVA), Gross Value of Output (GVO), Labour (L), Capital (K), Energy (E), Material (M), Services (S), Labour Quality (LQ), Labour Productivity (LP) and Total Factor Productivity (TFP) at the industry and economy level from 1980-81 onwards.

Way Ahead

On the economic development front, inequality and increasing unemployment is the biggest challenge for the fast emerging India. Self-employment opportunities are declining in the country and jobs are continuously decreasing. Indeed, the pace of increasing inequality in India

has reached historically high levels. The gap between the rich and the poor has increased alarmingly. In the last few decades, most of the countries in the world have developed their economies, but due to privatisation, public capital, and resources have been reduced to the hands of selected few.

In the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a special emphasis in Goal 8 has been given to 'continuous inclusive and sustained economic development for all, to promote full and productive employment and better work' by 2030. Also mentioned in the same goal - 'By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training'.

India is also working towards fulfilling this goal and generating employment for all. Various schemes like Skill India, Make in India, Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMGEP), Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana, and Pradhan

Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana play an important role in this.

In the concept of inclusive development, the development of people of all sections of society, castes, and communities have been included. In this scale, aspects like living, health, education, and environmental status are judged. In the coming days, if we continue to follow this model of development while ignoring the inclusive growth, the inequities will get deeper. Therefore, it is necessary to increase the public expenditure on basic services such as education and health, and pay special attention to employment generation.

General Studies Paper- III

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

Topic: Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.



2. INDIA-US: '2-BY-2' DIALOGUE

Why in News?

The inaugural '2-by-2' dialogue was scheduled to be held in Washington this month, but was postponed as the US Secretary of State-designate, Mike Pompeo, is still awaiting his confirmation by the US Senate. US President Donald Trump nominated Pompeo as his Secretary of State after he fired Rex Tillerson from the post last month.

India-US Relation

If the end of the Cold War represented an inflexion point for the world order, it was also a traumatic event for India. The disintegration of the USSR saw India losing not only a political ally and sole purveyor of arms, but also the rationale for "non-alignment".

The US, with an excellent sense of timing, reached out with proposals

for military-to-military cooperation in 1991. A bipartisan consensus in Washington about enlisting India as a strategic partner led to then-President George Bush in 2005 making an offer which New Delhi could not refuse.

The unprecedented US-India Civil Nuclear Agreement, which followed in 2008, accorded India the "de facto" status of a nuclear weapon state without signing the Non Proliferation Treaty.

The 2004 Agreement on Next Steps in Strategic Partnership was followed by a Defence Framework Agreement in 2005 and the 2012 Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI), envisaging the transfer of advanced technologies to India.

In 2016, India was accorded the status of Major Defence Partner by

the US Congress. In 2016, India and the US had signed the foundational agreement: Logistical Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), which has since been operationalised.

The DTTI has, however, made little actual progress because of divergent objectives. While India seeks technology, the US remains focused on trade. Thus, despite all the hoopla, India's defence capability has benefited only from \$15 billion worth of hardware — comprising patrol-aircraft for the navy, transports and helicopters for the IAF, and howitzer guns for the army — purchased under the US Foreign Military Sales (FMS) scheme.

A major impediment in the Indo-US defence relationship has been India's reluctance to sign the

“foundational agreements” required by the US to enhance defence ties. After protracted discussions assuaged India’s justifiable apprehensions about a compromise of strategic autonomy as well as the security of military information, the Logistical Exchange Memorandum of Agreement was signed in 2016. Two others — the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement, and the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement — still hang fire due to bureaucratic reservations. A delay in signing these will deprive India of high-tech equipment that should accompany US hardware, and prevent the sharing of useful geospatial information between the two militaries.

Background

Three proposed defense foundational agreements between the United States and India—the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), and the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) for Geospatial Intelligence—have been in negotiations for years. The LEMOA was finally signed in August 2016, while the other two agreements remain sticking points in the relationship. From India’s point of view, the agreements have been controversial; for the United States, the failure to conclude the agreements has impeded further growth in its defense ties with India.

In order to elevate the Indo-US relationship to a strategic level and resolve many outstanding bilateral issues, India-US had agreed to establish a “2+2” dialogue between India’s foreign and defence ministers and US secretaries of state and defence. Scheduled for mid-April, the parleys have had to be postponed; awaiting the confirmation of a new US Secretary of State. The two-day dialogue, announced last summer when Prime

Minister Narendra Modi had a successful meeting with President Trump at the White House, was tentatively scheduled for April 18-19.

India’s first ‘2-by-2’ dialogue at the ministerial level aim to enhance peace and stability across the Indo-Pacific region by establishing a new 2-by-2 ministerial dialogue that will elevate their strategic consultations. The rapid global power shift from the West to Asia, rise of an assertive China and its territorial claims, and the emerging non-traditional security challenges have created geopolitical and geostrategic flux in Asia where the US increasingly expects India to play the larger role of a “net security provider”. The US believes that these foundational agreements will facilitate a strong defence and strategic partnership between the two countries and also help India build its defence capabilities to play such a role.

During the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government, the US had expressed its disappointment over India’s unwillingness to sign these agreements and not clearly indicating any specific reasons for its objections to it. Many Indian security analysts had pointed out that these agreements could lead to a formal India-US military alliance in due course and that it might upset India’s other important defence partners such as Russia. The defence ministry as well as the navy and air force chiefs too were of the view that there was little to be gained by such agreements.

2-by-2’ Dialogue

Two plus two meeting is a kind of dialogue mechanism where two

COMCASA

What
Legal framework to allow US to transfer high-end communication security equipment to India.

Why

- Enable Indian and US forces to operate more closely, share information on secure networks
- Improve performance of US-sourced platforms with compatible, secure communication systems
- Establishes platform to share real-time operational information with US & its allies

The Controversy

- UPA refused because it feared getting dragged into a US military alliance
- The agreement may specify US personnel to be given access to US-sourced communication equipment for periodic inspection
- The coding and keying systems will be same, allowing US access to Indian tactical information
- Integration with existing Russian weapon system may be a challenge

important portfolios of the countries taking part in the meeting discuss and agree upon a bilateral framework. The delegates from both the countries related to the concerned portfolios exchange views on the bilateral relations. The India-US 2-by-2 dialogue will be on the lines of India-Japan 2+2 dialogue. The 2-by-2 ministerial dialogue are considered more significant as strategic and defense interests reinforce each other. However, balancing commercial and strategic issues might get difficult. US already has this format of consultation with Australia, Japan and the Philippines, while India only has it with Japan.

The Indian delegation, which comprised Foreign Secretary and Defence Secretary, was in the US immediately after Tillerson was fired. Meanwhile, during the preparatory talks in Washington last month, the US side pressed the Indian side to sign the two foundational agreements for defence cooperation: Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), earlier known as the

Communications and Information Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA); and Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA).

Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement: COMCASA, is needed if any classified military information is required to be exchanged between US and Indian armed forces, and would allow India to fully utilise the communication security equipment on military platforms it imports from the US.

CISMOA, meanwhile, would allow the United States to supply India with its proprietary encrypted communications equipment and systems, allowing secure peacetime and wartime communication between high-level military leaders on both sides. CISMOA would extend this capability to Indian and U.S. military assets, including aircraft and ships.

Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement: BECA provides for sharing and data gathering of geospatial information between the two militaries. BECA would set a framework through which the United States could share sensitive data to aid targeting and navigation with India.

The idea of having the same communication systems, enabling an ‘interoperable’ environment for militaries on both sides to conduct joint operations was a red flag that former defence minister AK Antony had raised. As a result, the UPA did not firm up any of the defence foundation agreements with the US, which included the Logistics Security Agreement (LSA) and the COMCASA. While LSA gave both militaries access to each other’s bases, COMCASA would allow them to be the same communication network.

Strategic Concerns

- These agreements pave the way for a military alliance and force India to compromise its strategic autonomy.
- The agreements, particularly the LEMOA, primarily benefit the United States since Indian ships are less likely to refuel and resupply at U.S. ports.
- The agreements are intended to boost U.S. arms sales to India to the benefit of the U.S. economy and American workers.

- There is no clear need for these agreements, given the recent ascendancy of bilateral defense cooperation and the use of workaround agreements, such as the recently renewed Fuel Exchange Agreement.

The foundational agreements—now referred to as “facilitating agreements” by Washington and New Delhi as they relate to the India-specific agreements. Attention to the facilitating agreements is perhaps also heightened because the growing U.S.-India defense relationship—including increased defense trade, military exercises, and calls for India to sign agreements—is relatively new and, from the perspective of India, occurring at a comparatively rapid pace.

United States's Perspective

From the perspective of the United States, apart from the modest technical benefits of closer cooperation with New Delhi, these agreements are largely about building a foundation of trust. In this way, they are similar to the 2002 General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA), which, according to then-U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld paved the way for greater technology cooperation” between the two sides. Like GSOMIA, which ultimately enabled the Obama administration-era DTTI, LSA, CISMOA, and BECA would open new doors for the United States and India down the line.

Defense cooperation between India and the United States has long been bounded by New Delhi’s apprehension about Washington’s intentions and LSA, CISMOA, and BECA would signal the start of a new era, coinciding with the recently updated U.S.-India defense framework. These agreements might not be concluded during Carter’s visit to India next week, but they’ll

	CISMOA	BECA
Basic Purpose	Provide the legal mechanism to exchange command, control, communications, computer intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR) data to a foreign country, establish secure communications channels, and exchange communications supplies and services.	Enable the sharing of a range of geospatial products, including access to mapping and hydrographic data, flight information products, and the U.S. National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency’s geospatial information bank.

India’s Concern

Despite signing LEMOA, New Delhi has not been convinced about signing COMCASA as a blanket agreement encompassing all communication across military platforms. India is willing to consider signing a COMCASA kind of agreement separately for every equipment that it imports from the US.

Operational Concerns

- Implementation of the COMCASA could reveal locations of Indian military assets to Pakistan or other countries.
- Implementation of the COMCASA would be too burdensome for the Indian military, given U.S. procedures.

remain at the top of his agenda and of the U.S.-India defense agenda until they're signed—or set aside in an acknowledgment of the enduring limits to this bilateral.

Criticism

India has already agreed to the these three agreements “in principle,” but the alphabet soup of LSA, CISMOA, and BECA has spurred anxieties persist signing these agreements could erode India’s military independence; erode its historically close security relationship with Russia, jeopardizing ongoing projects; antagonize China, leaving India in a disadvantageous position vis-a-vis its border disputes with Beijing; and, in the case of CISMOA, allow the United States undue insight into Indian operational practices.

Conclusion

As and when the “2 by 2” dialogue does take place, the Indian side would do well to remind their US interlocutors that in the past three decades the USSR and Russia have, amongst other

items, leased two nuclear submarines, sold an aircraft-carrier, and transferred technology for a supersonic cruise missile to India. Even as India shifts, ponderously, into damage-control mode in its neighbourhood to atone for past diplomatic maladroitness, the larger security environment is assuming complex dimensions with a US-China trade-war looming, US-Russia relations taking a nose-dive and China’s Belt and Road masterplan unfolding in the Indo-Pacific. For India, however, it is the emerging Moscow-Beijing axis and Russia’s courtship of Pakistan that should ring alarm bells. Given that nations have neither permanent friends nor permanent enemies, only permanent interests, it is perhaps time for South Block to consider an agonising policy reappraisal.

It is important to note that the India-US strategic relationship has significantly improved over the last one-and-a half decade without these agreements. Defence cooperation has been the most visible aspect of this evolving relationship. The US has in

fact emerged as the top arms supplier to India and currently India conducts more military exercises with the US than with any other country. Therefore, with or without these foundational agreements, the India-US defence and strategic relationship is going to expand further including in the areas of joint research, development and production of high end defence technology. However, having these agreements will yield greater benefits for both the nations. Both sides need to make vigorous efforts to build consensus and arrive at a more acceptable version of the agreements, consistent with their respective national interests and policies.

General Studies Paper- II

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

Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.



3. EIGHTH REGIONAL 3R FORUM IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGION

Why in News?

The historic Indore 3R Declaration was adopted by the mayors and city authorities of India and countries of Asia Pacific region and signed and brought into effect. The 3 day forum was attended by over 700 delegates from more than 45 countries including high-level government representatives from Asia-Pacific countries, City Mayors, international experts, research institutes, representatives of the private and business sector, CSO and NGOs.

Introduction

The Eighth Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific held in Indore

with an overall theme of “Achieving Clean Water, Clean Land and Clean Air through 3R i.e. Reduce, Reuse & Recycle— A 21st Century Vision for Asia-Pacific Communities”. The mantra of 3R – Reduce, Reuse and Recycle—is at the heart of any vision towards the sustainable development of mankind. All stakeholders –producers, consumers and the State alike must adhere to this golden principle which can contribute significantly in solving the twin challenges of waste management as well as the sustainable development.

The adoption and signing of the Indore 3R Declaration is relevant to vision of sustainable development and

achieving SDGs. The commitments expressed in the declaration are crucial to promote the principles of 3R. The Indore 3R Declaration is an important outcome to address how 3R and resource efficiency measures can provide complementary benefits in making cities and countries clean, smart, liveable and resilient. The Forum also aims to generate policy-level, institutional level and technological insights towards effective implementation of 3R and resource efficiency to foster circular economic development, sustainable change in current use of natural resources and ultimately achieve a zero waste society.

Indore 3R Declaration

Cognisant of the above socio-economic context in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the SDGs and the NUA, the Mayors, city and local government authorities and representatives at the Asian Mayors' Policy Dialogue on Achieving Clean Water, Clean Land and Clean Air through 3R and Resource Efficiency, as part of the 8th Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific held at Indore, Madhya Pradesh (India). Indore 3R Declaration commitment to:

- Accelerate movement of holistic waste management in our cities;
- Implement local-level actions to make cities clean, safe, smart, resilient, resource efficient, inclusive and sustainable moving towards a zero waste society;
- Foster sustainable urban development planning and practices for maintaining bio-diversity;
- Inspire citizens to take proactive ownership for managing their own waste;
- Partner and collaborate with civil society organizations;
- Leverage national and international collaborations to promote
 - ◆ 3R as an economic industry, 3R-related science, technology and infrastructure, inter-municipal, inter-industry and city-to-city cooperation,
 - ◆ public-private-partnerships (PPPs) for integrated waste management, and expand investment opportunities in the 3R space;
- Strive towards complete ban of illegal disposal of plastics in eco-sensitive or eco-fragile areas;
- Undertake to work towards sound and sustainable wastewater management and treatment and

achieve water security and water quality for sustaining livelihood;

- Focus on sound and effective management of new emerging waste streams;
- Promote and facilitate the use and development of viable existing and emerging technology; and
- Engage in dissemination and acceptance of national and international best practices in 3R among all stakeholders for wide-scale adoption and replication.

3R Focus Areas	
>	Industrial Waste Management;
>	Municipal Solid waste (MSW) Management;
>	E-waste Recyclers;
>	Plastic Waste management;
>	Resource Optimization and Recovery

3R FORUM: Aims and Objectives

The Forum aims to address how 3R and resource efficiency measures can provide complementary benefits and ultimately achieve a zero waste society.

In addition, the Forum seeks to engage the public and private sector to explore various partnership opportunities in areas of 3R and waste management for moving towards a zero waste society. The Forum further provides an opportunity to establish insightful linkages between the principles of 3R and resource efficiency and the objectives of Swachh Bharat Mission (Clean India Mission). Through this Forum, India aims to strengthen this focus through its 'Mission Zero Waste' approach thereby encouraging cities, industries and other diverse stakeholders to see look at waste as a resource.

The Eighth Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific is hosted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India, and co-organized by the Ministry of the Environment, Government of Japan,

and the United Nations Centre for Regional Development of the Division for Sustainable Development /United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The Indore Municipal Corporation, Government of Madhya Pradesh, and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) have been designated as the City Partner, Organizing State Partner and Industry Partner respectively.

What is 3R initiative?

At the G8 Summit held in Sea Island, Georgia, U.S.A. in June 2004, Japan's Prime Minister Koizumi proposed the "3R Initiatives" aimed at building a sound material-cycle society through the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle), winning the consensus of heads of other nations. Based on this agreement, a ministerial meeting for launching the 3R Initiatives was held in Tokyo between April 28 and 30, 2005.

Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific

In 2009, the Regional 3R Forum in Asia was established at Japan's proposal as a platform for broad cooperation on promotion of the 3Rs – reduce, reuse and recycle – in Asia.

- Members include central governments, international agencies, aid agencies, private sector entities, research bodies, NGOs and other relevant parties.
- Forum members have held high-level discussions on policies, provided support for the implementation of 3R projects in member countries, shared useful



information, and are building networks for the further promotion of 3R initiatives.

- Japan hosted the inaugural Regional 3R Forum in Tokyo in 2009, and has cosponsored subsequent Forums together with the governments of host countries and the United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD). After the fourth forum, the name was changed to Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific.

has been organizing International Regional Forum on 3Rs since 2009 with the support of Government of Japan to promote the concept of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle in industry, service and agriculture sector. The overall objective is to establish sound material cycle society by adopting resource conservation, techniques and technologies.

United Nations Centre for Regional Development

The United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD) was established

UNCRD's interventions in developing countries are clustered under three main thematic interrelated and complementary areas of work - (a) Integrated Regional Development Planning; (b) Sustainable Urban Management; and (c) Knowledge Management.

- **Integrated Regional Development Planning:** UNCRD will undertake activities in areas, such as integrated decision making in addressing social, economic and environmental issues in a holistic way, strengthening and building institutional and technical capabilities, decentralized governance, human security, among others.
- **Sustainable Urban Management:** UNCRD will further strengthen its activities in the areas of urban planning, design and building, integrating disaster management planning, and with sectoral focus on environmentally sustainable transport (EST), 3Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle) and zero waste policies and programmes, and international partnerships (for example, International Partnership for Expanding Waste Management Services of Local Authorities - IPLA) towards building sustainable and resilient communities and cities.
- **Knowledge Management:** UNCRD aims to serve as a knowledge platform for policy makers and practitioners in relation to the above two areas in close collaboration with partners. This will involve capacity building, such as research, training, technical support, South-South cooperation and exchange of experiences, and dissemination of information on best practices, tools, technologies, and policies.

S.No.	Year	Venue	Subject
1	2016	Australia	Advancing 3R and Resource Efficiency for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
2	2015	Maldives	3R as an Economic Industry- Next Generation 3R Solutions for a Resource Efficient Society and Sustainable Tourism Development in Asia and the Pacific.
3	2014	Indonesia	Multilayer Partnerships and Coalition as the Basis for 3Rs Promotion in Asia and the Pacific
4	2013	Vietnam	3Rs in the Context of Rio+20 Outcome - The Future We Want
5	2012	Singapore	Technology Transfer for promoting the 3Rs
6	2010	Malaysia	"3Rs for Green Economy and Sound Material-Cycle Society"
7	2009	Japan	Inaugural Regional 3R Forum in Asia

Ha Noi Declaration

The Fourth Regional 3R Forum – held in Ha Noi, Viet Nam, in March 2013 – adopted the Ha Noi 3R Declaration - Sustainable 3R Goals for Asia and the Pacific for 2013-2023. It is a legally non-binding and voluntary document which aims to provide a basic framework for Asia-Pacific countries to develop measures and programs to promote 3Rs including a set of 3R indicators for monitoring specific progress. Japan continue its efforts to expand cooperation with the governments of other countries, international agencies, and other bodies with the aim of building a sound material-cycle society worldwide.

The United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD)

in 1971 based on the agreement between the United Nations (UN) and the Government of Japan dated 18 June 1971. UNCRD's vision is to achieve sustainable living environment for all - safe, secure, equitable and inclusive development in harmony with nature. The Centre's mission is to assist developing countries in their transition to sustainable development path in line with the new Development Agenda - Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Regional development planning and management is an effective set of tools that UNCRD is prioritizing to realize this mission through guiding subnational, national and international actions towards bridging the social, economic and environmental disparities within a region or among different regions.

Conclusion

The concept of 3R - 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' has been an integral part of India's DNA and culture for centuries. Unfortunately, rapid urbanization and attendant challenges have gradually pushed this concept to the background of urban consciousness. The launch of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) by Government of India in 2014, with its objective of 100% scientific management of Municipal Solid Waste synergises well with 'Mission Zero Waste.'

Achieving access to clean land, clean water and clean air are

fundamental rights of citizens. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda (NUA) have, inter-alia, a common objective to make cities and human settlements safe, resilient, inclusive and sustainable. In order to achieve this objectives sound management of, 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle), circular economic development, sustainable waste management and resource efficiency assume paramount importance. Pursuing 3R as an economic industry could further enable cities to move towards on the

path of sound material cycle societies and circular economic development to achieve necessary socio-economic and industrial transformation through the sustainable use of natural resources, enhanced water and energy security, reduced carbon foot-print, and improved land, water and air quality.

General Studies Paper- III

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



4. PROBITY IN JUDICIARY UNDER THREAT

Why in News?

The Supreme Court today is a bundle of contradictions, emitting confusing signals that only underline the depth of the divide within the higher judiciary. So much so that the otherwise passionately articulated line on the independence of judiciary is replaced by loud calls for immediate judicial reform.

Background

Justice V D Tulzapurkar, an eminent retired judge of the Supreme Court, had observed that "sycophantic Chief Justices" were a threat to the independence of the judiciary because they could easily pack the court or withdraw cases from one bench to another. "The Chief Justice is a man with all the failings, all the sentiments and all the prejudices which, we as common people have," B R Ambedkar had said in the Constituent Assembly, opposing giving the Chief Justice veto power in appointing judges.

In the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) judgment, four judges of the

Supreme Court struck down the government's legislative initiative on grounds of compromising the "primacy of Chief Justice's opinion" in the appointment of judges of the Supreme Court and high courts. The lone dissent was authored by Justice J Chelameswar. It is indeed the worst crisis of our judicial history and the entire legal fraternity is in shock with such divisions within the collegium. Decisions on appointment and transfer of judges may now come to a standstill.

Background: Earlier Crises

The SC has faced similar moments of crisis in the past, but those were confrontations between the government and the court. In the 1967 Golaknath case, the SC in a 6:5 ruling asserted itself and denied Parliament power to amend the Constitution and fundamental rights. In the 1972 Keshvanand Bharti case, the SC by a 7:6 majority subjected Parliament's power to amend the constitution only to the doctrine of "basic structure". Thus Parliament cannot anymore change the basic structure of the Constitution.

Soon after this order, the Indira Gandhi government appointed Justice A N Ray, a committed judge (as said), as the new CJI superseding three judges, who immediately resigned in protest. As CJI, Justice Ray did try to overturn Keshavanand Bharti. After two days of tense hearing, the review bench was abruptly dissolved after it realised that no one had approached the court with a review petition.

Then came the 1976 ADM Jabalpur case where four judges held that during Emergency a citizen has no remedy against illegal arrest due to suspension of right to life and personal liberty under Article 21. Justice H R Khanna was the lone dissenter, and was soon superseded by another committed judge, Justice Hamidullah Beg. Justice Khanna resigned. This judgment was recently overruled in the privacy case.

Judges versus CJI

The January 12 press conference by Supreme Court (SC) judges exposed deep faultlines in the judiciary. The trigger for the unprecedented step seems to have been the arbitrary

allocation of benches by the Chief Justice of India (CJI). This raises fundamental questions on the credibility of the institution and its ability to dispense justice. The allegations by the judges also raise serious doubts about the independence of the judiciary, given that an estimated 45 to 70 per cent of litigation involves the government. But the current crisis is of different magnitude as the four judges have raised some very pertinent issues about the administrative functions of the CJI. So it is now judges versus CJI. It is a fight within. The integrity of the apex court is now at its lowest ebb and it will take years to regain people's confidence.

They also said that they are convinced that unless the SC's independence and integrity is preserved, democracy would not survive as an independent judiciary is the hallmark of a successful democracy. They also justified their strange action of reaching out to people due to the fear that future generations of so called "wise men" may blame them for not rising up to the occasion. They also asserted that they have not sold their souls.

Particular case

Judge B H Loya's mysterious death which has been assigned to a relatively junior judge ignoring several senior judges. It seems they were probably referring to this high-profile case. It seems at least two judges, in response to a pointed question about Judge Loya's case being the "particular case", nodded their head in agreement.

Bench Constitution

The power of the CJI as master of the court's roster to ensure disciplined and efficient transaction of the business of the court but pointed out that there were established conventions which

have not been adhered to lately in some sensitive matters. They explicitly asserted that master of roster does not in any way mean "recognition of any superior authority, legal or factual of the Chief Justice over his colleagues". "Chief Justice is only the first amongst the equals — nothing more or nothing less."

National Judicial Appointment Committee

Opacity in the process of judicial appointments has also been a matter of much public debate. The SC's 2015 judgment in the National Judicial Appointment Committee (NJAC) underlined the need to enhance transparency in the functioning of the collegium system. Justice Chelameswar's refusal to attend meetings of the collegium on the grounds that its functioning lacks transparency, to the extent that even some members of the collegium are unaware of the basis on which judicial appointments are made, pointed to the deep malaise that afflicts the judicial appointments process.

Though some measures have been taken recently to place resolutions of the collegium in the public domain, the Memorandum of Procedure (MoP) related to the appointment of judges, which has been referred to in the letter by the four judges, continues to be kept under cover. Neither has the draft MoP prepared by the collegium been put in the public domain, nor have the comments of the government, if any, been communicated to the public.

Delay in Appointment

The government has been sitting on the Supreme Court collegium's recommendation to elevate Uttarakhand High Court

chief justice K.M. Joseph and senior lawyer Indu Malhotra to the apex court bench. A bench headed by Justice K.M. Joseph had, in 2016, delivered a hard-hitting judgment setting aside the President's Rule imposed in Uttarakhand imposed by the government. The Centre had briefly toyed with the idea of notifying Malhotra's appointment while taking no action in the case of Joseph. However, the ill-advised move fizzled out after it was pointed out to the law ministry that it went against precedent. It isn't just these two names that have been put on hold by the Centre without offering a cogent reason, or returning them to the SC collegium. The list is long and includes recommendations for the appointment of chief justices of several high courts.

Accountability of the Judiciary

The courts have held that the right to information is a fundamental right flowing from Article 19 and Article 21 of the Constitution, and that transparency in the working of public functionaries is critical in a democracy. Unfortunately, however, after the passage of the RTI Act in 2005, the courts have not been very forthcoming in providing information about their own functioning. In the last few years, five such matters seeking vital information related to the accountability of the judiciary reached the apex court. Three were referred to a constitution bench in August 2016 and await adjudication. One case relates to information about the appointment of judges. The applicant sought a copy of the correspondence between the CJI and other concerned constitutional authorities relating to the appointment of three SC judges, superseding the seniority of three others. In the second case, the RTI applicant sought

information related to the declaration of assets held by the judges of the SC and high courts in their own name, or in the name of their spouse or any person dependent on them. In the third case, an RTI application was filed with the SC seeking copies of the correspondence between the then CJI and a judge of the Madras High Court regarding the attempt of a Union minister to influence judicial decisions of the said high court.

The two other matters, wherein petitions against denial of information were dismissed by the SC, also raised matters of great public interest. One sought information about cases pending with the apex court in which the arguments had already been heard but judgments had been reserved. In the other matter, the applicant sought information on the total amount of public money spent on the medical expenses of individual judges reimbursed by the SC. By resisting transparency in all these matters, the judiciary has evaded accountability to the people of India.

Independence of Judiciary

The independence of judiciary was held to be the basic feature of the Constitution by the Supreme Court in Keshavanand Bharti case. Also, Dr. L.M. Singhvi, an eminent jurist, who was entrusted to the task of preparing a report, inter alia, on the independence and impartiality of the judiciary by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (1980), in his capacity as the Special Rapporteur, submitted his Final Report to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (1985) wherein he observed:- It needs to be said that impartiality and independence of the judiciary is more a human right of the consumer of

justice than a privilege of the judiciary for its own sake. Hence, it being inseparable part of the Constitution and considered as human rights, cannot be compromised with.

The Basic Principles on the independence of the Judiciary adopted by the Seventh United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders held at Milan coupled with the Bangalore Principles of Judicial Conduct 2002 lays down certain bare minimum values as- Independence, Impartiality, Integrity, Propriety, Equality, Competence and Diligence. Pertinent herein is the reinforcement of public confidence to ensure 'independence of judiciary' and that an institution, epicentre of constant attack and allegation of opacity, nepotism, patriarchy and reluctant of bringing transparency in the process of appointment cannot be said to be commanding the confidence of people. With the passage of time, along with the growing consciousness of people, the institute shall start suffering the trust and confidence deficit. And Judiciary, devoid of public confidence, shall lead to a compromise with the independence of judiciary.

Way forward

Collective decision-making was the bedrock that ushered in the collegium system in 1993. It laid the foundation of consultative procedures for appointment of judges. When appointments are a collective function, the allocation of important cases must be done collectively or at least in consultation with senior judges of the Supreme Court. There is still scope to revisit this roster through the prism

of objectivity and fairness. This must be done, for greater transparency and accountability will only yield more authority to our Supreme Court as the supreme custodian of people's rights.

In a rule-of-law-based legal system, no one including the CJI is above law. The CJI does have the power to form benches but this power is to be exercised judiciously, not arbitrarily. Arbitrariness is antithesis to rule of law and constitutionalism. The SC itself has come down heavily on litigants on of "bench hunting".

Most probably there is no truth in the allegations against CJI but with press conference, people's confidence in the judicial system has now reached rock bottom and the SC is suffering from a serious crises of legitimacy. The government has refused to intervene and termed it an internal matter of the judiciary. One hopes that judges will sit together and amicably resolve this crisis. Let the CJI demonstrate his leadership qualities which he has in abundance to take brother judges along. The CJI should use this opportunity to bring in judicial discipline.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary; Ministries and Departments of the Government: pressure groups and formal/informal associations and their roll in the Polity.

Topic: Appointment to various Constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of various Constitutional Bodies.



5. NATIONAL FOREST POLICY, 2018

Why in News?

On March 14, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) uploaded a draft of the National Forest Policy (NFP) 2018, after three decades years. The draft appears to be an attempt to shift the approach towards forestry in India – specifically, from a local community- and ecology-centric approach emphasised in the 1988 policy to focusing on timber and forest-based industries.

Background

Forests are a dynamic ecosystem consisting of plants, animals & microorganisms safeguarding the ecological security of the nation. Forests provide the carbon neutral timber, non-timber products like medicines, grasses & other ecosystem services essential for the very survival of the human beings.

The previous NFPs were focused on production and revenue generation of forests (NFP, 1894 and NFP, 1952) and environmental stability and maintenance of ecological balance (NFP, 1988). NFP, 2018 talks about climate change mitigation through sustainable forest management.

This is not the first time that the 1988 policy has been revisited to open the doors for forest-based industries. In 2016, a draft policy was published on the MoEFCC website only to be taken down after it was panned for excluding the Forest Rights Act and encouraging the entry of private industries in forest management. Even though the MoEFCC distanced itself from the draft, major chunks in the current draft have been copied from the 2016 document.

While there is merit in new concepts being introduced – economic valuation of ecosystem services, forest certification, national forest ecosystem management information system, etc. – these do not necessitate a complete shift in policy focus.

Draft National Forest Policy, 2018

The Central government has come up with a new draft National Forest Policy (NFP), 2018, which takes into account a reality that has become the defining feature of the world today—climate change. This latest development suggests that a new forest policy is on the anvil after 30 years.

SALIENT FEATURES: DRAFT NFP, 2018

1. Public private participation for afforestation in degraded forest areas
2. Promoting urban greens
3. Measures to safeguard ecosystems from forest fire (map the vulnerable areas; develop and strengthen early warning systems)
4. National Community Forest Management Mission for participatory forest management
5. Afforestation in catchment areas for river rejuvenation and water recycling
6. Economic valuation of forests
7. Forest certification to provide premium on forest produce
8. Integration of climate change concerns in forest management
9. Promote agro-forestry and farm forestry
10. Management of north-eastern forests

The objective and goal of the present policy is to safeguard the ecological and livelihood security of people. To achieve the national goal

for eco-security, the country should have a minimum of one-third of the total land area under forest and tree cover. In the hills and mountainous regions, the aim will be to maintain two-third of the area under forest & tree cover in order to prevent soil erosion and land degradation and also to ensure the stability of the fragile eco-systems.

Forestry in India is classified into four categories—Protection Forests, National Forests, Village Forests and Tree Lands. Whereas, the Forest Survey of India defines forest types—natural forest into 16 different types, plus an additional category known as “Plantation/ Trees Outside Forest (TOF)”.

Sustainable Management of Forests

Reducing Threats to Forests:

The various threats to Forests due to encroachments, illegal tree fellings, forests fires, invasive weeds, grazing, etc. will be addressed within the framework of the approved Working Plan/ Management Plan and also by ensuring community participation in forest management.

Forest Fire Prevention:

Adequate measures would be taken to safeguard ecosystems from forest fires, map the vulnerable areas and develop and strengthen early warning systems and methods to control fire, based on remote sensing technology and community participation. Also, awareness will be created about causes and impacts of fire on forests and local livelihoods.

National Forest Policy 1988

The aim of the policy was to ensure environment stability and maintenance of ecological balance for the sustenance of all life forms, humans, animal and plant. This national forest policy is enunciated due to the following need:

- > To meet the increasing energy demands of the populations
- > To obey the new directive principles and duties given in the Indian Constitution
- > Constitutional amendments of 1976 and its stress on environment made growth of forest based industries in this era
- > Need for the guidelines on conservation of wildlife

Basic Objectives

- > To maintain the environment stability and ecological restoration through preservation
- > To check soil erosion and denudation in the catchment areas and mitigation of floods
- > To check the sand dune extension in desert and coastal lands

Enhance Quality and Productivity of Natural Forests: Protection and enrichment of dense forests will be a top priority. Degraded forests will be rehabilitated by promoting natural regeneration, by taking strict protection measures and also by planting locally suitable indigenous species for assisting the existing regeneration.

Increase the Productivity of Forest Plantations: Public private participation models will be developed for undertaking afforestation and reforestation activities in degraded forest areas and forest areas available with Forest Development Corporations and outside forests.

Biodiversity Conservation: For conservation of flora, fauna and total biodiversity, the network of national parks, sanctuaries, conservation reserves, community reserves, biosphere reserves and important wildlife corridors and biodiversity heritage sites will be strengthened and extended adequately. Wildlife rich areas and corridors outside protected areas would be identified and maintained for ensuring ecological

and genetic continuity. To tackle rising human-wildlife conflict, the draft outlined short-term and long-term actions.

Strengthen Participatory Forest Management: All efforts to ensure synergy between Gram Sabha & JFMC will be taken for ensuring successful community participation in forest management.

Management of Non-Timber Forest Produce: Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) provide sustenance to forest dependent communities by supplementing their food and livelihood security will be managed sustainably ensuring increased employment and income opportunities for the local communities.

Management of Trees Outside Forests

Promote Agro-forestry and Farm Forestry: Agro-forestry and farm forestry have taken deep roots in the country and Trees Outside Forests (TOF) are contributing to the increase in tree cover and enhancing ecosystem services.

Promoting Urban Greens: Urban greens include woodlands, wetlands, parks, wood in institutional areas, gardens, avenue plantations, block plantations etc in such areas. These green patches bring many aesthetic, recreational, environmental and economic benefits to cities and their dwellers.

New Thrust Areas in forest & Tree Cover Management

Production Forestry: The demand for timber and other forest produce is showing an increasing, to ensure self sufficiency in timber, the States would be encouraged their plantation programmes.

Economic Valuation of the Forests: Forests provide a wide range of tangible benefits like timber, fuel wood, fodder and a wide range of NTFPs and intangible benefits like ecological services, hydrological benefits, soil conservation, flood control, carbon sequestration, biodiversity conservation, amelioration of the overall environment, etc. will

be evolved for appropriate valuation of forests and their services through institutions of repute.

Forest Management for Water Recycling: Healthy forest ecosystems helps recharge of aquifers by increasing percolation and reducing surface runoff, thereby nourishing springs, streams, rivers and other aquatic systems. Scientific catchment area treatment plans will be prepared and executed as part of the forest working/management plans.

Forest Certification: A Credible certification process can provide premium on the products, which can enhance value of forest product harvested sustainably. Adoption of appropriate certification regimes will be encouraged.

Integrate Climate Change & REDD+ Strategies: Forests acts as a natural sink of carbon dioxide thereby assisting in climate change mitigation. Strategic actions especially sustainable forest management as envisaged in REDD+ reference document for the country will be taken to strengthen forest-based climate change mitigation and adaptation.

REDD Programme

The UN-REDD Programme assists countries to develop the capacities needed to meet the UNFCCC's REDD+ requirements, so that they can qualify to receive results-based payments under the Convention. The UN-REDD Programme supports nationally-led REDD+ processes and promotes the informed and meaningful involvement of all stakeholders, including indigenous peoples and other forest-dependent communities.

REDD+

Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation, plus the sustainable management of forests, and the conservation and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD+), is an essential part of the global efforts to mitigate climate change. REDD+ is a climate change mitigation solution being developed by Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). REDD+ incentivizes developing countries to keep their forests standing by offering results-based payments for actions to reduce or remove forest carbon emissions.

Management of North-Eastern Forests: The forests of North-East are endowed with rich biodiversity. These forests in North-East have vital impact on climate, agriculture production, and mitigation of floods in the plain areas of North-East. Most of the forests (about 85%-90%) are community owned. These forests will be treated as mosaic of community forest management landscapes and will be delineated and mapped having well defined digitized boundaries. The community ownership and participation for forest protection, conservation and increase in cover will be ensured.

Financial Support: The budget of the forestry sector of the states will be enhanced proportionately to the allocation of central resources devolved, based on the finance commission weightage on forest resources of the States. Allocations for community development programmes especially those of agricultural and rural development in the states will also be utilised in forest areas in proportion of the population linked to the forests for life support.

Criticism

It is worth noting that most of the objectives mentioned in 1988 policy have not been met so far. The draft policy orients itself more on the conservation and preservation of forest wealth rather than regenerating them through people's participation.

The document also recommends "commercially important species like poplar and eucalyptus", both known to be water-demanding species with deep root systems that deplete groundwater. In 2016, the Karnataka government had blamed eucalyptus trees for depleting groundwater in the Arkavathi basin, which led to a fall in water supply to Bengaluru. Both poplar

and eucalyptus also have negative allelopathic properties – i.e. they don't encourage vegetative growth under their cover.

The rights of local, forest-dependent communities is being substituted by the demand for raw material from forest-based industries. The 1988 policy had sections called 'Rights and Concessions' and 'Tribal People and Forests', both of which have been replaced by 'Production Forestry', 'Increase (sic) the productivity of forest plantations' and 'Facilitate forest industry interface', all of which focus on increasing the timber yield.

The 1988 policy acknowledged this "symbiotic relationship between the tribal people and forests" and was inclusive in its approach to forestry. These ideals provided legal space to introduce concepts like joint forest management (JFM), which encouraged community involvement in the management and protection of forests and also ensured to some extent that the benefits accrued were shared equitably.

The lands available with the forest corporations which are degraded and underutilised will be managed to produce quality timber with scientific interventions. Public Private Participation (PPP) models will be developed for undertaking afforestation and reforestation activities in degraded forest areas and forest areas available with Forest Development Corporations and outside forests. Instead of handing over forests to the industry, the government could work on promoting agroforestry. That has the potential of significantly increasing the income of 20 million farmers.

Conclusion

The various threats to forests due to encroachments, illegal tree felling, forests fires, invasive weeds, grazing, etc. will be addressed within the framework of the approved Working Plan/Management Plan and also by ensuring community participation in forest management. A major concern is that existing forests should not be used for industrial use, as diversion is one of the biggest threats to forests. A golden chance of setting up a system of efficient natural area monitoring will be lost if PBRs and Biodiversity Management Committees are not integrated into the heart of the draft Forest Policy.

Forest fragmentation has devastating impacts and one of the most serious threats to long-term conservation, but the new draft policy proclaims: "There has been an increase in forest and tree cover and reduction in the diversion of forest land despite increasing population, industrialization and rapid economic growth. A move towards decentralisation of forest wealth, which is beyond commerce and embraces cultural values and often-forgotten knowledge - will provide transparency as well as an actual and felt recognition of our heritage.

The draft NFP 2018 mentions major forestry issues ailing the forest sector, but it doesn't provide answers to them as to how these objectives will be achieved considering the competitive demands for forestlands.

General Studies Paper- III

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



6. BATTING OF BETTING AND GAMBLING IN INDIA

Why in News?

Though online betting is not allowed in India, DreamXI claims it is not betting directly on cricket matches but a fantasy game that involves skill to score points and win. Gambling in India is illegal in most states, Goa and Sikkim being the two exceptions where it is legal. Social media and online gaming applications have become popular among gamblers during this season's Indian Premier League (IPL).

Introduction

Games, whether in the form of gambling, or popular social or casual games, are enjoyed by people of all age groups across the globe for their entertainment value. In fact, gambling, irrespective of its many vices, has been a part of the Indian culture since time immemorial. Even before the six side dice was invented, Indians used the nuts of the Bibhitaki tree as dice. References to gambling can be traced to the Mahabharata, one of India's oldest mythological epics, in which the opponents were tested based on their skills at board and dice games rather than through wars.

Gaming as a whole is gaining increasing significance as a major source of income and a profitable business venture worldwide.

Estimates about the size of the gambling market in India vary, with a 2010 KPMG report suggesting that it could be \$60 billion, while other, more recent, studies peg the value at a higher number.

About Gambling

A person is gambling whenever he or she takes the chance of losing or gaining money or belongings, and when winning or losing is decided mostly by chance.

Gambling' as per most Gambling Legislations is understood to mean "the act of wagering or betting" for money or money's worth.

Gambling under the Gambling Legislations however does typically not include (i) wagering or betting upon a horse-race/dog-race, when such wagering or betting takes place in certain circumstances, (ii) games of "mere skill" and (iii) lotteries (which is covered under Lottery Laws).

While gambling was once illegal, or viewed as a disreputable activity, social norms have shifted. Gambling is now a multi-billion dollar industry in Canada, and its growth is likely to continue. Surveys indicate that the general population favours funding charities, health care and other important initiatives through the funds raised from gambling. While some may consider gambling only to be associated with casinos and racetracks, there are countless activities that are considered gambling.

Types of Gambling

There are a many ways to gamble and all involve various levels of chance with the odds of winning less than the likelihood of losing. Essentially there are two types of gambling:

1. Games of Pure Chance: These games are mathematically constructed to make it inevitable that the operator will make more money than gamblers will win. You might be lucky at times, but over time continual gambling will result in net losses for the player. The odds of winning cannot be affected by anything the player does or thinks they know. Includes: pokies, various forms of lotto including Keno and casino games such as roulette.

2. Games Combining skill and chance: While skill is a component in these games, chance still plays a large role in determining the result and the odds are always in the operators' favour. Some knowledge and judgement may increase your chances of guessing a winning outcome. Includes: card games such as poker and blackjack and various types of betting offered by bookmakers, such as betting on horses, football teams or events.

State subject: Gambling and betting is a State subject, the primary law on which States have framed their gambling legislation is an archaic, British era law called the Public Gambling Act, 1867.

India follows a British era prohibitionist statute, the U.K. legalised and regulated various forms of gambling and betting many decades ago.

The Law Commission of India's endeavour to study the issue of whether or not gambling and betting should be legalised in the country is therefore a timely initiative to start the process of a much needed reform.

Why Legalise Gambling?

The reasons to look at legalising and regulating gambling are manifold.

- Gambling is already happening in a massive way. Law enforcement authorities are not able to stop it.

Recommendations of Lodha Committee

- Lodha panel wants BCCI to come under RTI Act
- Lodha panel recommends legalisation of betting
- No BCCI office-bearer can have more than two consecutive terms
- No BCCI office-bearer can be Minister or government servant, recommends Lodha panel
- In no case President will hold post for more than 2 years
- Panel recommends separate governing bodies for the IPL and BCCI

- Gambling and betting is mostly done surreptitiously, and is said to be controlled by underworld syndicates who use the unaccounted money earned from gambling activities for nefarious activities like terror financing.
- Legalising the activity will not only help curtail an important source of black money that is used by criminal syndicates, but also bring massive revenue to the state exchequer, which can be used for various constructive social schemes.
- Even a conservative estimate suggests that the government could earn tens of thousands of crores as tax revenue by legalising sports betting.
- In addition to revenue generation, a legal and regulated gambling sector will also help in creating large-scale employment opportunities.

Globally, wherever gambling is regulated, it has created a massive avenue for employment generation. For instance, the regulated gambling industry in the U.S. employs over 2.5 lakh people, while over 1 lakh individuals are employed in this sector in the U.K.

Why not to Legalise Gambling?

In 2016, while examining the Lodha Committee recommendations on legalising betting in sport, the Supreme Court in its order dated 18th July, 2016 had asked the government and Law Commission of India to look into the possibility of legalising betting and whether a new law needs to be enacted for the same.

The arguments that are given against legalizing of gambling are as follows:

- Gambling in sports may jeopardize the sportsmanship and the sports person can be easily lured by the

bookies. IPL's match fixing scandal is the perfect example.

- Substantial portion of Indian population is uneducated about the technicalities of gambling, which affects their rationality of making choices and putting their savings vulnerable to loss.
- India cannot be compared to western countries owing to differences in development, education, internet penetration and effectiveness of law enforcing agencies. So we cannot expect the same outcome of legalized gambling in Indian case.
- Loss incurred because of gambling addiction to people (especially youth) can force them to path of unlawful activities degrading moral values of society.

The Public Gambling Act of 1867

The primary legislative document that makes gambling in India a 'grey' legality is the Public gambling act. This is an old law created during British rule. While Pakistan has since abolished this rule, our own government has affirmed their commitment to keeping it on the books on many occasions. This 145 year old law makes operating a gambling house, assisting in the operation of a gambling house, visiting a gambling house (whether gambling or not), financing gambling and being in possession of gambling devices a crime. The penalty is a fine not exceeding 200 rupees or up to three months in prison.

Indian Scenario

There is overwhelming support for the idea on the ground that having failed to control illegal betting, which happens on a large scale and also deprives the state of a huge revenue-earning opportunity, the only recourse left is to legalise, regulate and tax the resultant income. It is also argued that this would help control large illegal syndicates, which often operate from outside the country.

It is well known that as of now, most betting is restricted to individuals who

sit on piles of black money and want to make a quick buck. The percentage of individuals who bet with hard-earned money is minuscule. Our abject failure in bringing people who have amassed huge illegal wealth by dubious means in the tax net should not be reason enough to legalise betting.

Moreover, what is the guarantee that legalising betting will generate revenue as projected, as radical steps like demonetisation and giving more power to tax authorities have not been able to make any significant change in revenue inflows or in curbing black money.

Way Forward

In India, since the Mahabharata, the practice of gambling has been criticised. There is also no evidence to suggest that the tendency to gamble is inherent in human nature. Therefore, a large section of the population, particularly women, oppose gambling not only from an ethical point of view but also because it invariably leads to moral and monetary bankruptcy.

- **Regulation versus Ban:** Regulating gambling in a legal manner as opposed to a complete ban has its takers. There is a school of thought that a complete ban may in fact increase underground illegal betting and gambling activities, which may prove to be counterproductive. The first attempt to control gambling was made in 1867 with the Public Gambling Act which provided for punishment for public gambling and keeping of common gaming houses.
- **Hurdles in Legalizing:** There are a number of hurdles in legalising gambling. The Supreme Court has mandated the Law Commission to look into the matter. The existing law was passed before the Constitution came into existence and it was a Central legislation. If

Parliament wishes to legislate on the subject, it will be difficult to do so, as the subject of gambling figures in the State List. As a result, the Constitution will have to be amended first so that gambling can figure in the Concurrent List. Necessary infrastructure — police machinery, prosecutors, etc. — will have to be put in place.

The problem of online gaming cannot be curbed by merely amending the Information Technology Act where it finds a mention. There has been a steep rise in online gambling of late and governments are trying to find ways of curbing the menace. Relevant provisos will have to be made in the new Act if gambling is to be regulated. In this context, the Supreme Court, in Board of Control for Cricket v. Cricket Association of Bihar & Ors (2016), mandated the Law Commission to study the possibility of legalising betting in India. Justice B.S. Chauhan, a former judge of the Supreme Court and Chairman of the Law Commission, invited views and suggestions in his letter dated May 30, 2017, from all

those concerned, so as to arrive at a judicious opinion and make suitable suggestions and recommendations to the government.

The gambling is not morally correct in the Indian context. They suggest that it is responsible for addiction, loss of livelihoods and bankruptcy. These concerns are unfounded. Gambling has been prevalent in society since ancient times and has been accepted as a form of recreation on various social occasions. As regards the concerns about betting and gambling leading to addiction and bankruptcy, it must be noted that even though gambling is largely illegal, it is still rampant and unchecked. There are numerous instances of people losing their livelihoods and committing suicide due to unchecked gambling even today, with authorities turning a blind eye to the problem.

Conclusion

At the current time most gambling in India is illegal. However, legal gambling does exist for horse racing, lottery, and rummy (paplu). There is also a high number of betting sites legal in the UK

which service Indians with only minor hassle. The law at this time seems more concerned with scaring Indians not to gamble, than it does much to prevent it.

A robust regulatory framework governing the gaming sector will ensure that people do not fall prey to the excesses of gambling. Awareness campaigns should educate people about the perils of excessive gambling; minors, habitual gamblers and vulnerable sections should be excluded from having access to gaming facilities; and limits must be imposed on the amounts that can be wagered, based on a person's financial capabilities.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.



7. MAKE IN NORTH-EAST

Why in News?

Recently the first meeting of newly constituted NITI Forum for North East was held in Agartala, to discuss ways to boost development projects in the states. The NITI Forum for North East outlined five development missions for promoting sectors like horticulture, tourism and food processing in the region. Other missions will cover bamboo-based handicrafts and medium scale industries with focus on 'Make in North-East'.

Introduction

When we visualize the North East what comes to mind are the rhinos

of Kaziranga, the rain clouds of Meghalaya, the bamboo handicrafts and lovely handloom dress material, the orchids and last but not the least, the tea gardens. But, the North East is not just about pleasant tourist spots, fabulous handlooms and handicrafts or its friendly people. It is an area with an entity of its own. Isolated from the geographical mainstream of the nation due to its peculiar location. The 'seven sisters' of the North East plus Sikkim have evolved a culture and identity which is different from the rest of India. These eight states, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Sikkim are

always discussed as a complete entity in all planning fora. Budget allocations, infrastructure facilities allocated development projects are all planned for the region as a whole. This has given the region an impression of being different and unique from the rest of the nation.

The northeastern region is a mega-biodiversity area and a hotspot for genetic erosion. The rural population is around 82 per cent and they depend largely on agriculture and allied sectors for work and income security. The forests have 8,000 of the 15,000 species of flowering plants occurring in India. Of about 1,300 species of

orchids reported from India, the region has the highest concentration: about 700 species. The species richness is the highest in Arunachal Pradesh, where over 5,000 flowering plants occur, and the lowest in Tripura with 1,600 species. Bamboo is the lifeline of the region, and 63 out of 136 species found in India occur here. Unfortunately, 25 of these are in the rare and endangered category. The region is home to Eri and Muga silkworms. Yak and mithun are unique animals that are threatened by the spread of non-edible invasive plant species. The region is culturally diverse: 225 of India's 450 tribes live here.

In spite of the richness of culture and bioresources, there is much poverty and unemployment. The allocation of funds for northeastern India is high and scientific departments are required to spend at least 10 per cent of their budget here. The outlay is, however, not getting converted into socially meaningful outcome.

NITI Forum for North East

It was constituted in February 2018 with an aim to ensure sustainable economic growth of North Eastern Region (NER) and periodically review the development status in the region. It has its Secretariat in the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region. It is tasked to identify various constraints on the way of accelerated, inclusive and sustainable economic growth in the North East Region of the country and to recommend suitable interventions for addressing identified constraints. It may examine and address any other issues which are of importance but not specifically spelt out in its terms of Reference. It may devise its own procedure to conduct its business/meetings/fields visits or constitution of Sub-Groups etc.

Recently the first meeting held to discuss ways to boost development projects in the states. The NITI

Forum for North East outlined five development missions for promoting sectors and focus of development projects in the region will be based on the concept of "HIRA". The acronym HIRA stands for Highways, Internet ways, Railways and Airways.

NE: An Economic Perspective

Currently, if we look at the bright side of the picture, as per India spend research, the impressive growth rate of 9.7 per cent of Meghalaya is higher than that of the fastest-growing big state, Madhya Pradesh at 9.5 per cent. Arunachal Pradesh grew faster than Gujarat. Fewer people, (12.8 million) fall in the BPL category in the entire NER than in just one large state, Karnataka (12.9 million). On the other hand in contrast, Tripura reported India's highest unemployment rate, 25.2 per cent in urban areas, followed closely by Nagaland with 23.8 per cent in 2011-12. The share of industrial sector for all the 8 states has increased while the share of agriculture and allied activities has declined. Unemployment in urban areas across all the NE states is higher than rural areas and is in line with the national pattern. The poverty here is also unevenly spread: Manipur is poorest: Sikkim the richest. The reasons behind the tardy progress of NER are attributable to the following factors:

Geographical Factors: The hills account for about 70 per cent area of NER and accommodate about 30 per cent of the population and the plains constituting the remaining 30 per cent of area hold about 70 per cent of its population. The region's accessibility has always remained weak due to geographical reasons and underdeveloped transport links with the rest of India. Also, as the region witnesses floods and landslides in the Brahmaputra and Barak Valleys of Assam, considerable strain is exerted on the economy of not only Assam but other NER states too.

Infrastructural Factors: One of the reasons for the economic backwardness of the North-Eastern states is the poor state of basic infrastructural facilities like roadways, waterways, energy and so on as well as social infrastructure like educational institutions, health facilities etc. NER has about 6 per cent of the national roads and about 3 per cent of the national highways. However, their quality is not good due to poor maintenance. The prominent indicators of shortfalls in infrastructure in this region are: increasingly congested roads, power failures, shortage of drinking water etc.

Agriculture: Despite agriculture being the major subsistence occupation of the tribal population. The pattern of agricultural growth has been uneven across states and between crops. The NER produces only 1.5 per cent of the country's total food grains and provides livelihood support to 70 per cent of the population. The pace of agricultural growth in the eastern and North-Eastern regions has been slower than the rest of the country. The Green Revolution was largely limited to the North-Western parts of the country and has not benefited the North-Eastern region. By and large, the production conditions in agriculture in the North-East are traditional. The agricultural productivity is the lowest irrigation facilities are almost non-existent in some areas and consumption of fertilisers is extremely low. One of the most common agricultural practices in the North-East is shifting or "ilium" cultivation. Approximately 1.7 million hectares of land is under it which leads to a large scale deforestation resulting in soil erosion and loss of soil fertility.

Natural Resource Base: In spite of having a reservoir of natural resources- soil, water, vegetation and hydrocarbons, the NER is underdeveloped because the resources are being indiscriminately exploited and mismanaged, thereby

leading to depletion of the very assets that are usually highlighted as triggered the greatest potential for growth and development of the NER. Also the biodiversity of the region is under severe threat. The bulk of natural resource degradation is being caused by coal mining, fertiliser, paper, cement industry etc. and militant activities.

Constraints on Industrial Growth:

At the time of Independence, there was a small but significant industrial sector in Assam which was mostly dominated by the colonial capitalists. This sector consisted of plantation and manufacturing of tea, mining of coal and oil, oil refinery, manufacturing of plywood and other forest resource-based products. Post-Independence, due to the partition of India, the industrial sector in Assam received a serious set-back as its trade routes were cut-off from the rest of India. This, in turn, hindered economic integration with other parts and also reduced the attractiveness of the region as a destination of investment. The main strength of the region for industrial development comes from its huge natural resource base.

Transport and Communication:

The road development in the region has been very slow due to various geographical and socio-economic reasons. During the Five Year Plans, the allocated funds for development of the transport sector in the Northeast were not adequate in comparison to its needs. Inadequate transport facility has been a serious drawback that crippled the development of the region for a long time. As a result of the partition, the region suffered not only economically in the form of relatively high prices of consumer goods but also by a sense of isolation from the rest of the country. Moreover, the railway network is only 4 per cent of India's rail network.

Social Dis-organization: A society that has insufficient productive forces,

makes its members capability-poor and a capability-poor society is also poor in cultural capital and if the standard of living of such a society is much higher than what it's productive forces can afford, then such a society's economic condition creates moral degeneration and consequently loss of character. Education system, having miserably failed here, the well-to-do families send their children to some mainland cities for further education which gives a big economic blow to the local society. This brain-drain, attributable to the Policy Paralysis of the region needs to be addressed.

Governance Challenges in the North East

The North-East Region (NER) is one of the backward regions of India characterized by low per-capita income, lack of private investment, low capital formation, inadequate infrastructure facilities, geographical isolation, and inadequate exploitation of natural resources like minerals, hydro power potential, and forests. Its own tax collection and internal resources are quite meager rendering the region totally dependent on central devolution. The local moneyed people prefer to invest in landed property and shy from setting up enterprises which are perceived as risky ventures. The peripheral locations of the states, the terrain and inadequate infrastructure have impeded the growth of industry.

Though government of India has to pay more attention to the north-east, one cannot escape from the harsh reality that the states too have to gear up their administration. Inclusive development must aim at economic growth with elimination of poverty, improvement in social indicators, and reduction in inequality as equally important goals, while ensuring at the same time that there is no damage to the environment. Unfortunately governance in the NER at the state and

district levels is quite weak, manifesting itself in non-utilisation of funds, lack of supervision, and poor outcomes.

Fund Utilization: As is well known, all non-exempt Union Ministries are required to mandatorily earmark 10 per cent of their Gross Budgetary Allocation (GBA) annually for the North Eastern Region. The unspent balances are transferred as Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR). While some projects are implemented on time, the other projects get delayed because funds are not transferred to them on time, the utilization capacity of these states is poor, and the works are hampered due to the short working season. Many external projects funded by ADB and the World Bank in NER are languishing for want of completion of various formalities, with the result that overall expenditure has not picked up in those projects. According to a CAG report (I of 2015) on sanitation programme in Manipur the process of planning was devoid of comprehensive assessment of the needs/requirement of rural beneficiaries. There was no community participation in the preparation of PIPs (Project Implementation Plan). Financial management was inefficient which resulted in delays in release of funds, short release of State's matching contribution, retention of huge balances and leakage of funds through inadmissible payments and avoidable expenditure. There were neither norms for assessment/ identification of beneficiaries nor for upkeep of the toilets by them.

Improve Monitoring AND Evaluation Systems: At present, officials at all levels spend a great deal of time in collecting and submitting information, but these are not used for taking corrective and remedial action or for analysis, but only for forwarding to a higher level, or for answering Assembly Questions. The data collected are not normally

subjected to any regular checks. There is a failure of the departments in verification of their correctness and almost total absence of accountability procedures. For instance, according to the state governments the percentage of severely malnourished children in the north-eastern states is much less than 1 per cent, whereas independent verification by UNICEF in 2014 has reported a much higher figure varying from 3.5 per cent in Manipur to almost 16 per cent in Meghalaya and Tripura. There is urgent need to reconcile the two sets of figures. Process reforms are needed so that field data is authentic, reliable and tallies with the evaluated data. It appears that state governments actively encourage reporting of inflated figures from the districts, which renders monitoring ineffective and accountability meaningless.

Promote e-Governance: Governance' is the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to transform government by making it more accessible, effective and accountable. e-Governance utilizes technology to accomplish reform by fostering transparency, eliminating distance and other divides, and empowering people to participate in the political processes that affect their lives. While e-Governance has great potential to bring benefits to all citizens, knowledge about e-Governance is mostly restricted to educated and professional groups. Most citizens are still unaware of the potential benefits.

A World Bank report on Assam observed in 2014 that there was absence of a comprehensive ICT Plan, and there was no common framework for service delivery, including a strong and supporting ICT infrastructure. Each Department should be required to make an ICT Plan covering the services, back-end requirements, requirements of horizontal connectivity, capacities and could be encouraged to adopt from a central bouquet of applications that

would help in improved efficiencies and better accountability.

Redundant Bureaucracy: Whereas some of the governance deficits discussed above are common to many states, there is a specific constraints in the NER. "Bandhs" in Assam have a rippling effect all over the Northeast as most basic commodities like rice, pulses, medicines, vegetables, poultry, etc., reach the other states via Assam either by road or by rail. The time has therefore come for citizens of Assam, Manipur and Nagaland to stand up against the negative culture of 'bandhs' issued by armed groups who invariably represent only themselves, and hold their state governments accountable for poor governance, in order to enable their future generations to have a progressive and peaceful life.

Governance Reform

- Government of India gives an undivided attention to the development of the region, in 1971, the Government of India set up the North Eastern Council. All the 8 states are its members. With head quarters in Shillong, it functions under the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER). The council, initially set up as an advisory body, now has been sanctioned as a regional planning body since 2002. They now discuss any matter in which the North Eastern States have a common interest and decide the action to be taken on any such matter.
- The North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd. (NEDFCL) is a Public Limited Company providing assistance to micro, small, medium and large enterprises within the NER.
- Other organisations under MDoNER include North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation

Limited (NERAMAC), Sikkim Mining Corporation Limited (SMC) and North Eastern Handlooms and Handicrafts Development Corporation (NEHHDC).

Way Forward

To significantly reduce, let alone eliminate within the next decade or so, the growing gap between growth rates in the country as a whole and much of the North Eastern Region calls for a massive improvement in delivery and governance, and not only increase in the flow of financial resources to the Region. It is no longer the availability of financial resources but the capacity of institutions and individuals in the North East to make effective use of available resources that is proving the Critical constraint to growth. To combat this, every effort needs to be made to induct technical support from all over the country, as well as from within the North Eastern Region, into all levels of governance. Institution-building calls for strengthening State departments and agencies, as well as promoting fruitful partnerships between civil society and State Governments. Strengthening of institutions of local self-government is particularly important. It is in these areas that government of India may like to concentrate in future. A six-fold strategy for the comprehensive development of the region has been proposed-

- Empowering people by maximizing self-governance and participatory development through grass-root planning to promote inclusive development.
- Creation of development opportunities for the rural area through enhancing productivity in agriculture and allied activities such as animal husbandry horticulture, floriculture, fisheries and generation of livelihood options through rural non-farm employment.

- To develop sectors in the region having a comparative advantage such as agro-processing, hydro-power generation.
 - Enhancing the skills and competencies of the people and building the capacities for institutions within the Government and outside.
 - Creating a hospitable investment climate to encourage investment by the private sector particularly for infrastructure.
 - Harnessing the resources of the Government and the private sector to realize the objectives of the vision.
- With tightly set targets, clear outcomes, strategies, and coordinated planning for the region

as a whole, the North East can be revitalized to become increasingly self-sufficient and a net positive contributor to the national exchequer and the country's economy. Initiating the process is the imperative requirement. Good governance calls for probity, transparency and accountability. This is a matter of both ethics and governance systems. Effective devolution, reinforced by social audit, will considerably strengthen monitoring and vigilance at the grassroots level and, hopefully, gradually impact higher echelons of governance. Equally, the importance of capacity building and institution-building cannot be over-emphasized. Innovation, initiatives, ideas and implementation-all the four need

to go together. What is needed is inclusive growth through inclusive development with focus on improved governance, doing away with the draconian laws and ensuring that the local communities are empowered to implement basic needs and services. For this, all the stakeholders need to formulate an all-comprehensive realistic plan for the overall development of NE states.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.



SEVEN SUBJECTIVE QUESTIONS WITH MODEL ANSWERS

The Nation of the Most Unemployed

Q1. According to KLEMS India database and ILOs World Employment and Social Outlook Report shows that employment in the Indian economy shrank, despite economic growth. It also claimed that working poverty in countries like India remains at a high. Discuss.

Hints: Employment in the total Indian economy shrank by 0.1% in financial year 2015-16 and by 0.2% in 2014-15. Far from more jobs being created, employment has actually contracted. According to latest KLEMS India database, a research project supported by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to analyse the productivity of the Indian economy.

The strange thing is that these were years of high growth, with real gross domestic product (GDP) growing by 7.4% in 2014-15 and 8.2% in 2015-16. But that hasn't led to growth in employment.

Agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining, manufacture of food products, textiles, leather products, paper, transport equipment and trade are some sectors in which employment contracted in both 2014-15 and 2015-16. The fall in employment in agriculture is par for the course, as people move out of unviable marginal farming into other occupations. The number of people in the construction sector has been steadily increasing.

According to the ILO's World Employment and Social Outlook report "A large part of the jobs created in the region remain of poor quality: vulnerable employment affects almost half of all workers in Asia-Pacific, or more than 900 million men and women. By 2019, India will have 18.9 million unemployed people or 9.76% of such population worldwide an increase from 18.3 million in 2017.

In India the vulnerable employment level is higher than those of the world or the South Asia region. The bigger concern in India is while the overall unemployment rate hovers between 3.4% to 3.5% between 2017-19, the unemployment rate in the 15-24 age group is much higher—increasing further from 10% in 2014 to 10.7% in 2019. In 2017, the unemployment rate in the 15-24 age group was 10.5%

The World Bank's latest "Global Economic Prospects" report shows that the second wave of change in the global labour market will play out over the next two decades, with developing economies contributing to all of the addition in the global skilled labour force, as the number of skilled workers in advanced economies is expected to decline. The rising level of skill and education in developing economies will also lift potential global growth and continue to reduce global inequality.

The integration of developing economies such as China and India into the global economy in the last few decades has helped lift millions out of poverty. The introduction of their labour forces into the global economy increased growth and income in these economies which also resulted in a decline in global inequality.

While India benefited by integrating with the global economy, the next wave of gains will depend on how well it adjusts to the changing economic and technological environment. India will need to make adjustments to be able to take advantage of a potential change in the composition of the global labour force. Policymakers will need to work on different levels to be able to create a competitive labour force and make India benefit from the emerging global situation.

First, India urgently needs to focus on education and skill development. The "Annual State of Education Report" periodically shows the depressing state of education in Indian schools. World Development Report also highlighted the problem, Despite several initiatives by the government, outcomes in the area of skill development have also not been as desired. India needs rapid improvement from primary to tertiary education to be able to compete in the global market.

Second, the World Bank in its analysis assumes that additional workers will get employed. This will be a big challenge for India. It has not been able to create enough employment opportunities for people moving out of agriculture. The basic reason for this is India has not capitalized on labour-intensive manufacturing.

Third, even though inequality at the global level declined in recent decades, it has gone up in advanced economies as the national income share of wages came down. This has resulted in a political backlash. India will need to protect its

interest in such an environment and look for opportunities to increase trade at both bilateral and multilateral forums.

Even though India is likely to regain its position as the fastest growing large economy in the world this year, the rate of growth will still be much lower than what China attained in its high growth years. A skilled labour force along with a focus on manufacturing and exports will help India grow at a faster rate in the medium to long run. An increasing number of skilled workers not only raises the potential growth but also reduces inequality within the country by reducing the skill premium.

India-US: '2-by-2' Dialogue

Q2. What is the foundational agreement? What are India's concerns over the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), and the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geospatial Intelligence (BECA). Explain.

Hints: The foundational agreements for are meant to build basic ground work and promote interoperability between militaries by creating common standards and systems. They also guide sale and transfer of high-end technologies. To understand the nature of these agreements and their drivers, it is essential to understand the legal authority under which these agreements are concluded, what the agreements accomplish in practice, and the impact on the Indian military if the remaining agreements do not move forward.

The three agreements — Logistics Support Agreement (LSA), Communications Interoperability and Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA) and Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-spatial Cooperation (BECA) are referred to as the foundational agreements which the U.S. signs with countries with which it has close military ties.

After a long period of negotiations, spanning over a decade, India and the United States have signed the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), a tweaked India-specific version of the Logistics Support Agreement (LSA), which the U.S. has with several countries it has close military to military cooperation. The agreement will primarily cover four areas — port calls, joint exercises, training and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief. Any other requirement has to be agreed upon by both sides on a case-by-case basis.

CISMOA: Provide the legal mechanism to exchange command, control, communications, computer intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR) data to a foreign

country, establish secure communications channels, and exchange communications supplies and services.

BECA: Enable the sharing of a range of geospatial products, including access to mapping and hydrographic data, flight information products, and the U.S. National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency's geospatial information bank.

India's Concern: Despite signing LEMOA, New Delhi has not been convinced about signing COMCASA as a blanket agreement encompassing all communication across military platforms. India is willing to consider signing a COMCASA kind of agreement separately for every equipment that it imports from the US.

Strategic Concerns

- These agreements pave the way for a military alliance and force India to compromise its strategic autonomy.
- The agreements, particularly the LEMOA, primarily benefit the United States since Indian ships are less likely to refuel and resupply at U.S. ports.
- The agreements are intended to boost U.S. arms sales to India to the benefit of the U.S. economy and American workers.

Operational Concerns

- Implementation of the COMCASA could reveal locations of Indian military assets to Pakistan or other countries.
- Implementation of the COMCASA would be too burdensome for the Indian military, given U.S. procedures.
- There is no clear need for these agreements, given the recent ascendancy of bilateral defense cooperation and the use of workaround agreements, such as the recently renewed Fuel Exchange Agreement.

It is important to note that the India-US strategic relationship has significantly improved over the last one-and-a half decade without these agreements. Defence cooperation has been the most visible aspect of this evolving relationship. Attention to the facilitating agreements is perhaps also heightened because the growing U.S.-India defense relationship—including increased defense trade, military exercises, and calls for India to sign agreements—is relatively new and, from the perspective of India, occurring at a comparatively rapid pace. However, having these agreements will yield greater benefits for both the nations. Both sides need to make vigorous efforts to build consensus and arrive at a more acceptable version of the agreements, consistent with their respective national interests and policies.

Eighth Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific Region

Q3. What is Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific? How, 3R forum help entire Asia Pacific region to explore and address the ways to utilize waste as a resource?

Hints: UNCRD and the Ministry of the Environment, Japan jointly launched the Regional 3R Forum in Asia in November 2009 in Tokyo, Japan with an objective to provide strategic policy advices to national and local government authorities in mainstreaming 3Rs in the overall policy, planning and development. The “Regional 3R Forum in Asia the Pacific” is a high-level policy Forum convened annually. Recently, 3R Forum held in Indore aim to “Achieving Clean Water, Clean Land and Clean Air through 3R and Resource Efficiency – A 21st Century Vision for Asia-Pacific Communities”.

The mantra of 3R – Reduce, Reuse and Recycle- is at the heart of any vision towards the sustainable development of mankind. All stakeholders –producers, consumers and the State alike must adhere to this golden principle which can contribute significantly in solving the twin challenges of waste management as well as the sustainable development”.

The Forum aims to address how 3R and resource efficiency measures can provide complementary benefits in making cities and countries clean, smart, liveable and resilient. The Forum also aims to generate policy-level, institutional level and technological insights towards effective implementation of 3R and resource efficiency to foster circular economic development, sustainable change in current use of natural resources and ultimately achieve a zero waste society.

In addition, the Forum seeks to engage the public and private sector to explore various partnership opportunities in areas of 3R and waste management for moving towards a zero waste society. The Forum further provides an opportunity to establish insightful linkages between the principles of 3R and resource efficiency and the objectives of Swachh Bharat Mission (Clean India Mission). Through this Forum, India aims to strengthen this focus through its ‘Mission Zero Waste’ approach thereby encouraging cities, industries and other diverse stakeholders to see look at waste as a resource.

Ministry housing & urban affairs committed to move towards 100% scientific solid waste management. To ensure compliance with Swachh Bharat Mission Rules 2016, Ministry is promoting scientific processing of waste, using the principles of 3R, and actively engaging in behaviour change initiatives, including messaging

through both traditional mass media, and interpersonal communications.

MoHUA is actively promoting the concept of source segregation, both at household level and by bulk waste generators, to not only reduce the total amount of waste going into landfills, but also to ensure improved quality of input waste going into waste processing plants. MOHUA is also actively promoting a variety of decentralised composting options among waste generators, including enforcing mandatory compliance by bulk waste generators for on-site processing of their wet waste generated. Parallely, MoHUA is encouraging the recycle and reuse of dry waste for higher value and earning potential.

India’s rapid urbanization and burgeoning population have greatly increased the challenges of solid waste management in the country. Urban India produces an estimated 54.75 million tonnes of municipal solid waste annually. The Forum comes at an opportune time with the Indian government’s focus on scientific management of 100% municipal solid waste through its ambitious Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban). Through this Forum, India aims to strengthen this focus through its ‘Mission Zero Waste’ approach thereby encouraging cities, industries and other diverse stakeholders to look at waste as a resource.

Achieving access to Clean land, clean water and clean air are fundamental rights of citizens. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda (NUA) have, inter-alia, a common objective to make cities and human settlements safe, resilient, inclusive and sustainable. In order to achieve this objectives sound management of, 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle), circular economic development, sustainable waste management and resource efficiency assume paramount importance.

Probity in Judiciary under Threat

Q4. There can be no difference of opinion in the House that our judiciary must be both independent and competent. How these two objects can be secured? Discuss.

Hints: It is a well-known fact that the independence of the judiciary is the basic requisite for ensuring a free and fair society under the rule of law. Rule of law that is responsible for good governance of the country can be secured through unbiased judiciary.

The doctrine of Separation of Powers which was brought into existence to draw upon the boundaries for the functioning of all the three organs of the state: Legislature,

Executive and the Judiciary, provides for a responsibility to the judiciary to act as a watchdog and to check whether the executive and the legislature are functioning within their limits under the constitution and not interfering in each others functioning. This task given to the judiciary to supervise the doctrine of separation of powers cannot be carried on in true spirit if the judiciary is not independent in itself. An independent judiciary supports the base of doctrine of separation of powers to a large extent.

The independence of the judiciary has also to be guarded against the changing economic, political and social scenario. Whenever there is a talk regarding the independence of the judiciary, there is also a talk of the restrictions that must be imposed on the judiciary as an institution and on the individual judges that forms a part of the judiciary. In order to ensure smooth functioning of the system there must be a right blend of the two.

The meaning of the independence of the judiciary is still not clear after years of its existence. The primary talk on the independence of the judiciary is based on the doctrine of separation of powers which holds its existence from several years. The doctrine of separation of powers talks of the independence of the judiciary as an institution from the executive and the legislature. So the independence of the judiciary can be understood as the independence of the institution of the judiciary and also the independence of the judges which forms a part of the judiciary.

The basic need for the independence of the judiciary rests upon the following points: To check the functioning of the organs, Interpreting the provisions of the constitution and Disputes referred to the judiciary. The components of the independence of the judiciary as talked of here refers to some of the requisite terms and conditions which are so necessary that if they are absent, the independence of the judiciary also cannot exist.

It is very difficult to lay down certain set conditions as law is dynamic in itself and of the changing economic, political and social scenario.

It is clear from the historical overview that judicial independence has faced many obstacles in the past specially in relation to the appointment and the transfer of judges. Courts have always tried to uphold the independence of judiciary and have always said that the independence of the judiciary is a basic feature of the Constitution. Courts have said so because the independence of judiciary is the pre-requisite for the smooth functioning of the Constitution and for a realization of a democratic society based on the rule of law. The interpretation in the Judges Case giving primacy to the executive, as we have discussed has led to the appointment of at least some Judges against the opinion of

the Chief Justice of India. The decision of the Judges Case was could never have been intended by the framers of the Constitution as they always set the task of keeping judiciary free from executive and making it self-competent. The decision of the Second Judges Case and the Third Judges Case is a praiseworthy step by the Court in this regard.

Whenever there is a mention of the independence of the judiciary, there is always a concern about the latent dangers of the judicial independence and there arises the importance of "Judicial Accountability". The recent development in this regard is the recommendation of the Law Commission for the inclusion of a whistleblower provision, aimed at protecting those making complaints against judges, in a draft bill dealing with the removal of judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts. Introduction of such a bill by the Law Commission is a major step in the direction of making changes to the rigid procedure in our constitution for the removing of the judges of the Supreme Court and the High Courts.

The importance of the independence of the judiciary was long ago realized by the framers of the constitution which has been accepted by the courts by marking it as the basic feature of the constitution. It is well known law has to change so as to meet to the needs of the changing society. Similarly judicial independence has to be seen with the changing dimension of the society. Judicial Accountability and Judicial Independence have to work hand in hand to ensure the real purpose of setting up of the institution of judiciary.

National Forest Policy, 2018

- Q5. The draft National Forest Policy 2018 has raised hackles of those advocating the rights of tribal communities, with the criticism that the proposed policy for forest management is highly flawed, detrimental to forest dwellers and is aimed to give corporate entities an opportunity to exploit forests for commercial gains. Critically comment.**

Hints: In March, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) had published a new 'Draft National Forest Policy, 2018' to revise the existing National Forest Policy, 1988. The draft has received stringent opposition from numerous experts and civil society organisations, as they have pointed out several loopholes in the policy.

Experts argue that the policy will allow the central government to frame new sets of rules and laws which will result in the dilution of Forests Rights Act, 2006. The policy proposes the development of "public-private partnership

models” in the name of “increasing productivity of forests”.

Back in 2016, the MoEFCC had proposed a ‘draft national forest policy, 2016’, which stated provisions for associating private players for developing forest-based industries. However, the ministry withdrew the draft, calling it an “inadvertent” error. This suggests that while the previous governments vehemently opposed to the formation of forest industries, the current government has been pushing for it.

The new draft policy also seeks to introduce a “community forest management (CFM) mission” which also attracted severe criticism on the lines that it is in contraction to the FRA, 2006. The draft policy seeks to introduce a community forest management (CFM) mission as an offshoot of earlier failed experiences of participatory forest management such as joint forest management (JFM), Van Suraksha Samitis.

The Draft National Forest Policy 2018 is in essence a blueprint to commercialize forests to serve the interests of industry and to bring in the private sector for the actual management of forests through the so-called public-private partnership model. The draft policy eliminates the rights of tribal communities and traditional forest dwellers. “It snatches away the rights of gram sabhas for management of forests and instead hands it over to proposed centrally controlled corporations.”

While the motive of the central government, to privatise the forests in the name of “increasing productivity” has become evident, it appears that the livelihood and rights of tribes and forest dwellers, who have been historically and traditionally depended upon the forests, has been grossly neglected.

The policy is in essence a blueprint to commercialise forests to serve the interests of industry, and to bring in the private sector for the actual management of forests through the so-called public private partnership model. If allowed, this will also pave the way for changing the character of natural forests to production or plantation forests. The policy, by afforestation, means planting commercially useful timber.

The reference to Forest Policy 1988 is a tokenism since there is no reason why the core perspectives, principles and strategies of the current policy are being watered down, with the proposed policy moving in a different direction, which is mainly about industry and forest department take-over, without any recognition that people’s protection efforts contributed to forest cover improving, the civil society has said.

Natural forests serve as a gene pool resource and help to maintain ecological balance. Such forests should not, therefore, be made available to industries for undertaking

plantation and for any other activities. The total forest cover in 2017, even in a contested definition of “forest cover” is just 21.54% as against a target of 33% which makes it an absolute imperative that no diversion can take place.

The draft Policy needs to recognize and lay adequate emphasis on the immense contribution of forests as food and nutrition producing habitats. Such a policy thrust will contribute to improve forest biodiversity, forest protection and also the indigenous forest-based economy and food cultures. These foods are available round the year, equitably accessible to all and encompass the forest people’s life as a safety net, a source of vital nutrients, rare delicacies, cultural relatedness, and social rootedness. The prevalent market price of foods fails to fully capture its value as it saves lives during periods of food scarcity, prevents endemic malnutrition and provides important therapeutic solutions.

Agriculture in and around forests should be sustainable, devoid of any chemicals or transgenics, and based on regenerative agro-ecological principles. This has to be an integral part of any forest policy in the country, to sustain the forest as well as the farming eco-systems and the communities, the civil society groups have said.

India, through the existing Forest Policy of 1988 and FRA 2006, has the required correct perspectives towards forest management by providing ownership and management to adivasis and other traditional forest dwellers, and in that sense, prioritized its forest policy thrust in a win-win approach for forests/wildlife and adivasis/traditional forest dwellers. State-managed forestry and revenue maximization by industry have already been relegated to a backseat and rightly so. In such a context, it is unclear why we need a new revised policy at all and why the forest department cannot work through the local institutions that FRA operates through, the CSOs have said in their response adding that they could speculate that this new policy draft is an exercise to provide a basis for CAF 2016, with the funding for implementation of the proposed policy coming from Compensatory Afforestation Funds.

Batting of betting and Gambling in india

Q6. Should betting and gambling be allowed in India? Give reason in favours and against.

Hints: Games, whether in the form of gambling, or popular social or casual games, are enjoyed by people of all age groups across the globe for their entertainment value. In fact, gambling, irrespective of its many vices, has been a part of the Indian culture since time immemorial.

Under the Constitution of India, the state legislatures have been entrusted with the power to frame state specific laws on 'betting and gambling'. The Public Gambling Act, 1867, is the central enactment on the subject, which has been adopted by certain states of India. The other states in India have enacted their own legislation to regulate gaming / gambling activities within its territory ("Gambling Legislations"). Most of these Gambling Legislations were enacted prior to the advent of virtual / online gambling and therefore primarily refer to gambling activities taking place in physical premises, defined as "gaming or common gaming houses".

Why legalise Gambling?

The reasons to look at legalising and regulating gambling are manifold. Gambling is already happening in a massive way. Law enforcement authorities are not able to stop it. Gambling and betting is mostly done surreptitiously, and is said to be controlled by underworld syndicates who use the unaccounted money earned from gambling activities for nefarious activities like terror financing. Legalising the activity will not only help curtail an important source of black money that is used by criminal syndicates, but also bring massive revenue to the state exchequer, which can be used for various constructive social schemes. Even a conservative estimate suggests that the government could earn tens of thousands of crores as tax revenue by legalising sports betting.

Why not to legalise gambling?

In 2016, while examining the Lodha Committee recommendations on legalising betting in sport. The 20th Law Commission headed by Justice (retired) AP Shah had in 2014 noted that the Public Gambling Act, 1867 is one of the archaic pre-independence laws that needs to be studied and if required, repealed or amended. Gambling in sports may jeopardize the sportsmanship and the sports person can be easily lured by the bookies. IPL's match fixing scandal is the perfect example. Substantial portion of Indian population is uneducated about the technicalities of gambling, which affects their rationality of making choices and putting their savings vulnerable to loss. India cannot be compared to western countries owing to differences in development, education, internet penetration and effectiveness of law enforcing agencies. So we cannot expect the same outcome of legalized gambling in Indian case. Loss incurred because of gambling addiction to people (especially youth) can force them to path of unlawful activities degrading moral values of society.

The U.K. enacted an updated gambling law in 2005 that provided for the creation of a Gambling Commission, which was tasked with crime prevention, the promotion of an open

and transparent gaming and gambling industry, and the protection of vulnerable people from the ills and dangers of gambling. The country further updated this legislation in 2014. Spain has set a 25% tax rate on gambling revenue, among the highest in Europe, and requires customers to provide their unique national identification numbers, names, and addresses before they can be registered to gamble. Other countries like Singapore, Malta, and the Isle of Man, have robust gaming legislations that can provide good examples of how India can regulate gaming and gambling while increasing government tax revenue, and curtailing misuse.

A robust regulatory framework governing the gaming sector will ensure that people do not fall prey to the excesses of gambling. Awareness campaigns should educate people about the perils of excessive gambling; minors, habitual gamblers and vulnerable sections should be excluded from having access to gaming facilities; and limits must be imposed on the amounts that can be wagered, based on a person's financial capabilities.

Make in North-East

Q7. There is a challenge to bring North East region into mainstream. The regional forums aiming to bring synergy among states and helping them to solve their problems which cannot be solved by one state alone. Discuss.

Hints: The North-East Region (NER) is one of the backward regions of India characterized by low per-capita income, lack of private investment, low capital formation, inadequate infrastructure facilities, geographical isolation, and inadequate exploitation of natural resources like minerals, hydro power potential, and forests.

The first meeting of the newly constituted NER forum here was organised by NITI Aayog and Ministry of Development of North East Region (DoNER) and the North Eastern Council (NEC). The government has focused on the development of a region which is more or less remained out of the mainstream for the last seven decades. A six-fold strategy for the comprehensive development of the region has been proposed-

- Empowering people by maximizing self-governance and participatory development through grass-root planning to promote inclusive development.
- Creation of development opportunities for the rural area through enhancing productivity in agriculture and allied activities such as animal husbandry horticulture,

floriculture, fisheries and generation of livelihood options through rural non-farm employment.

- To develop sectors in the region having a comparative advantage such as agro-processing, hydro- power generation.
- Enhancing the skills and competencies of the people and building the capacities for institutions within the Government and outside.
- Creating a hospitable investment climate to encourage investment by the private sector particularly for infrastructure.
- Harnessing the resources of the Government and the private sector to realize the objectives of the Vision.
- The NITI Forum for North East outlined five development missions for promoting sectors like horticulture, tourism and food processing in the region. Other missions will cover bamboo-based handicrafts and medium scale industries with focus on 'Make in North-East.
- To make North East more familiar in the rest of India, one emporium should be set up in all the districts of the country so that people can know about the products of the region. The focus of development projects in the region will be based on the concept of "HIRA." The acronym HIRA stands for Highways, Internet ways, Railways and Airways, the emphasis should also be on education, health and skill development in the region.

Unfortunately governance in the NER at the state and district levels is quite weak, manifesting itself in non-

utilisation of funds, lack of supervision, and poor outcomes. Good governance calls for probity, transparency and accountability. This is a matter of both ethics and governance systems. Effective devolution, reinforced by social audit, will considerably strengthen monitoring and vigilance at the grassroots level and, hopefully, gradually impact higher echelons of governance.

Though government of India has to pay more attention to the north-east, one cannot escape from the harsh reality that the states too have to gear up their administration. Inclusive development must aim at economic growth with elimination of poverty, improvement in social indicators, and reduction in inequality as equally important goals, while ensuring at the same time that there is no damage to the environment.

To conclude, innovation, initiatives, ideas and implementation-all the four need to go together. What is needed is inclusive growth through inclusive development with focus on improved governance, doing away with the draconian laws and ensuring that the local communities are empowered to implement basic needs and services. For this, all the stakeholders need to formulate an all-comprehensive realistic plan for the overall development of NE states.

With set of targets, clear outcomes, strategies, and coordinated planning for the region as a whole, the North East can be revitalized to become increasingly self-sufficient and a net positive contributor to the national exchequer and the country's economy. Initiating the process is the imperative requirement.



SEVEN IMPORTANT NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWS

NATIONAL

1. Childline and POCSO e-Box Information

National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has published the information regarding Childline (1098) – 24x7 Helpline for children and POCSO E-box on the back side of the front cover of all the course books from class 6th to class 12th. To equip the children with the information regarding the possible modes of protection / complaints, the Ministry of Women and Child Development had requested Ministry of Human Resource Development and NCERT to publish this information.

POCSO e-Box

It is an online complaint management system for easy and direct reporting of sexual offences against children and timely action against the offenders under POCSO Act 2012. POCSO e-Box was launched by the Ministry for Women and Child Development in 2016.

POCSO Act

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO Act), 2012 was formed to protect children



from offenses of sexual abuse, sexual harassment and pornography and to provide a child-friendly system for the trial of these offences. According to the act, "child" means any person below the age of eighteen years. ■

2. Gram Swaraj Abhiyan

Hon'ble Prime Minister has announced that on the occasion of Ambedkar Jayanti, a "Gram Swaraj Abhiyan" could be organised starting from 14th April to 05th May, 2018. The campaign, undertaken under the name of "Sabka Sath, Sabka Gaon, Sabka Vikas", is to promote social harmony, spread awareness about pro-poor initiatives of government, reach out to poor households to enroll them as also to obtain their feedback on various welfare programmes.

The objective of the 'Abhiyan' is to promote social harmony, reach out to poor rural households, obtain feedback on ongoing programmes, enrol in new initiatives, focus on doubling farmers' income, enhance livelihood opportunities and re-emphasise national priorities such as cleanliness and strengthen Panchayati Raj institutions.

As a special initiative during the Gram Swaraj Abhiyan, universal coverage under seven welfare

programmes including Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, Saubhagya, Ujala scheme, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana and Mission Indradhanush in 21058 identified villages with large number of underprivileged households across the country has been contemplated. Highest importance is given to saturate these villages with the benefits of seven welfare programmes. ■

3. PMNCH Delegation

A Delegation of The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH) called on the Prime Minister and present the logo for the 2018 Partners' Forum. India will host Partners' Forum Meeting in December 2018.

About Forum

PMNCH is a global partnership of 92 countries and over 1000 organisations. The Partnership provides a platform for organizations to align objectives, strategies and resources, and agree on interventions to improve maternal, newborn, child and adolescent



health. The Partnership is governed by a Board, and administered by a Secretariat hosted at the World Health

Organization in Geneva, Switzerland. ■

4. 5G Radio Laboratory

To establish India as a key global player in standardisation, R&D and manufacturing of 5G equipment, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Delhi is opening a Massive Multiple-Input, Multiple-Output (MIMO) lab on the campus. It will be the first of its kind in the country.

This 5G base station prototype will be used to test and verify algorithms and also to develop a complete 5G base station, which can possibly lead to manufacturing of 5G base stations in India with support from industry.

It will also be instrumental in generating skilled manpower in this technology.

In Massive MIMO, several antennas are

deployed at the

base station, as

compared to only a few antennas in 3G/4G. This improves system power efficiency, as the mobile terminals will now be required to radiate ten times



lesser power than in 3G/4G systems. This, in turn, reduces interference to other radio systems and also reduces possible effects of exposure to radiation on our health. ■

5. Rare Dance Panel of Nayak Period Found

A rare dance panel of Nayak period and an inscribed pillar of Chola period have been found on an abandoned brick mound at Pathalapettai near Kiliyur in Tiruchi.

- The dance panel is depicted on a stone slab that measures

1.21 metres in length and 33 centimetres in height.

- Four pairs of well-dressed male and female dancers, holding some object in one of their hands, are seen engaged in a ritualistic dance in the panel.

- Three pairs are shown hugging each other while the last pair is dancing keeping a distance between. All of them are decked with ornaments and different head gears.

- The female deity with a flower in the right hand seen between

the first two pairs and the pot depicted between the last two pairs denote the ritualistic nature of the dance.

Silappathikaram has references to such ritualistic performances by

rural folks. It is one of the Five Great Epics of Tamil Literature according to later Tamil literary tradition. A poet-prince from Kodungallur near Kochi, referred to by the pseudonym IlangoAdigal, is credited with this work.



6. FSSAI Launched "Project Dhoop"

In order to address rising incidence of Vitamin 'D' Deficiencies (VDD), particularly amongst the young people, FSSAI has launched a unique initiative, 'Project Dhoop' in association with NCERT, NDMC and North MCD Schools. The initiative urges schools to shift their morning assembly to noon time mainly between 11 am and 1 pm to ensure maximum absorption of Vitamin D in students through natural sunlight.

Micronutrients including vitamins are needed by people in only very small amounts, but these are the magic wands that enable the body to produce enzymes, hormones and other substances essential for proper growth and development. As tiny as

the amounts are, the consequences of their absence are severe. Vitamin A, D, B12, Iron, Folic Acid and Iodine, are the most important; their lack represents a major threat to the health and development of populations the world over, particularly children and pregnant women in countries like India.

Most parts of India receive abundant sunshine all the year through. Yet shockingly, studies have



found that more than 90% of boys and girls across various Indian cities are deficient in Vitamin D. In Delhi alone, 90-97% of school children (aged 6-17 years) have VDD and around 10-11% of these children exhibit signs of VDD. ■

7. Yogik' Farming

The agriculture ministry plans to offer cash incentives to farmers who take up 'yogik' farming, 'goumatakheti' and 'rishi krishi'—obscure methods of cultivation that have little scientific evidence to prove they are beneficial. According to revised guidelines of the centre's flagship scheme to promote organic farming, Paramparagat Krishi

Vikas Yojana (PKVY), farmers will be eligible for an assistance of Rs 48,700 per hectare for a three-year period for adopting these traditional methods of cultivation.

According to the revised guidelines, farmers practising traditional methods of organic farming like yogik farming, goumatakheti, Vedic farming, Vaishnavkheti, Ahinsa farming, Adhvoot Shivanand farming, and rishi krishi will be eligible for financial assistance, in addition to those adopting standard organic farming

practices like zero-budget natural farming and permaculture.

- Yogik farming refers to a system where it is believed that farmers can channelize cosmic energy to their fields by performing yoga.
- Rishi krishi is based on pre-Vedic, Vedic and medieval texts like Vishvavallava, Kashyapiyakrishisukti and Surapala's Vrikshayurveda.
- Gou matakheti is a system of farming which uses cow dung and urine from indigenous breeds of lactating cows.



INTERNATIONAL

1. WHO Directives Call for Breastfeeding

The World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) issued a new 10-step guidance to increase support for breast feeding in health facilities that provide maternity and newborn services, which provide the immediate health system platform to help mothers initiate breast feeding within the first hour and breastfeed exclusively for six months.

The guidelines describe how hospitals should have a written breast feeding policy in place, required staff competencies and antenatal and post-birth care, including breast feeding support for mothers. It also recommends limited use of breast milk

substitutes, rooming-in, responsive feeding and educating parents on the use of bottles and pacifiers, and support when mothers and babies are discharged from hospital.

Breast feeding is critical for achieving global goals on nutrition, health and survival, economic growth and environmental sustainability. Breastfeeding within an hour of birth could prevent 20% of the newborn deaths. Infants who are not breastfed are 15 times more likely to die from pneumonia and 11 times more likely to die from diarrhoea than children who are exclusively breastfed, which are two leading causes of death in children under-five years of age.

MAA Programme

It is a nationwide programme launched in an attempt to bring undiluted focus on promotion of breast feeding and provision of counselling services for supporting breast feeding through health systems. The programme has been named 'MAA' to signify the support a lactating mother requires from family members and at health facilities to breastfeed successfully. The chief components of the MAA Programme are Community awareness generation, Strengthening inter personal communication through ASHA, Skilled support for breastfeeding at Delivery points in Public health facilities and Monitoring and Award/recognition. ■

2. India-Myanmar-Thailand (IMT) Trilateral Highway

NHAI has signed an agreement for upgradation of Yagyi - Kalewa section in Myanmar to Two-Lane with Earthen Shoulder. The agreement was signed by NHAI with Punj Lloyd Ltd - Varaha Infra Ltd (JV). This one is country's second prime international road project, the first being Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) project.

The highway will connect India with Thailand through Myanmar, the only ASEAN country that shares land border with India. 1,000 km India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway will run from Moreh in Manipur to Mae Sot in Thailand via Myanmar. The highway will facilitate easy movement

of goods and people among the three countries. Once completed, greater flows of trade and investment will take place along the route, stimulating the movement of goods and people, creating jobs, promoting tourism as well as raising the livelihoods of the peoples in the region. ■

3. China is Extending CPEC to Afghanistan

According to the Asian Competitiveness Annual Report-2018 the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor – the flagship project of China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) – is being extended to Afghanistan. The BRI has injected "fresh vitality" to Asia's economic cooperation and helped the

continent to reshape its international relations.

China in December had unveiled its plans to extend the USD 50 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Afghanistan which has sparked concerns in India. CPEC is a flagship project under the Belt and

Road Initiative, has not only improved local infrastructure but also is extending toward Afghanistan, reducing poverty, the hotbed of terrorism, and bringing better prospects for local people's lives, as per report. ■

4. World Added Far More Solar Power Generating Capacity

The world installed a record 98 gigawatts of new solar capacity, far

more than the net additions of any other technology renewable, fossil fuel

or nuclear. Solar power also attracted far more investment, at \$160.8

billion, up 18 per cent, than any other technology. It made up 57 per cent of last year's total for all renewables (excluding large hydro) of \$279.8 billion, and it towered above new investment in coal and gas generation capacity, at an estimated \$103 billion. A driving

power behind last year's surge in solar was China, where an unprecedented boom saw some 53 gigawatts added – more than half the global total – and \$86.5 billion invested, up 58 per cent.

The Global Trends in Renewable Energy Investment 2018 report,

released by UN Environment, Frankfurt School - UNEP Collaborating Centre, and Bloomberg New Energy Finance, reports that falling costs for solar electricity, and to some extent wind power, are continuing to drive deployment. ■

5. Myanmar Military put on UN Blacklist

A new UN report puts Myanmar's armed forces on a UN blacklist of government and rebel groups "credibly suspected" of carrying out rapes and other acts of sexual violence in conflict for the first time. The UN said the assaults were allegedly perpetrated by the Myanmar Armed Forces, known as the Tatmadaw, "at times acting in

concert with local militias, in the course of military 'clearance' operations in October 2016 and August 2017."

UN Security Council meeting on preventing sexual violence in conflict, puts 51 government, rebel and extremist groups on the list. They include 17 from Congo including the armed forces and national police,

seven from Syria including the armed forces and intelligence services, six each from Central African Republic and South Sudan, five from Mali, four from Somalia, three from Sudan, one each from Iraq and Myanmar, and Boko Haram which operates in several countries. ■

6. Black Holes at the Centre of Our Galaxy

Researchers said data from the NASA's orbiting Chandra X-ray Observatory allowed them to detect a dozen black holes surrounding Sagittarius A*, the mammoth black hole at the centre of our spiral-shaped galaxy. Black holes, which come in a variety of sizes, are extraordinarily dense entities with gravity so powerful that not even light can escape. Based on these findings, the scientists estimated that up to 10,000 black holes dwell within about 3 light years of Sagittarius A*.

Supermassive black holes arise relatively soon after their galaxies are formed; devouring enormous amounts of gas dust and star to achieve colossal size. As one black hole grows to such huge size, even if it was not originally in the exact centre, it will sink into the centre of the galaxy.

The newly detected black holes, all produced by the collapse of massive dying stars, are rare ones that captured and bound themselves to a passing star, forming what is called a stellar binary.

About Sagittarius A*

It is a bright and very compact astronomical radio source at the center of the Milky Way, near the border of the constellations Sagittarius and Scorpius. It is part of a larger astronomical feature known as Sagittarius A. Sagittarius A*, boasting 4 million times the mass of our sun, is located 26,000 light years from Earth. ■

7. First AI-based Device to Detect Diabetic Eye Disease

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has permitted marketing of the first artificial intelligence (AI)-based medical device to detect certain diabetes-related eye problems. The device can detect more than mild level of the eye disease diabetic retinopathy in adults who have diabetes. Called IDx-DR, the device is a software programme that uses an artificial intelligence algorithm to

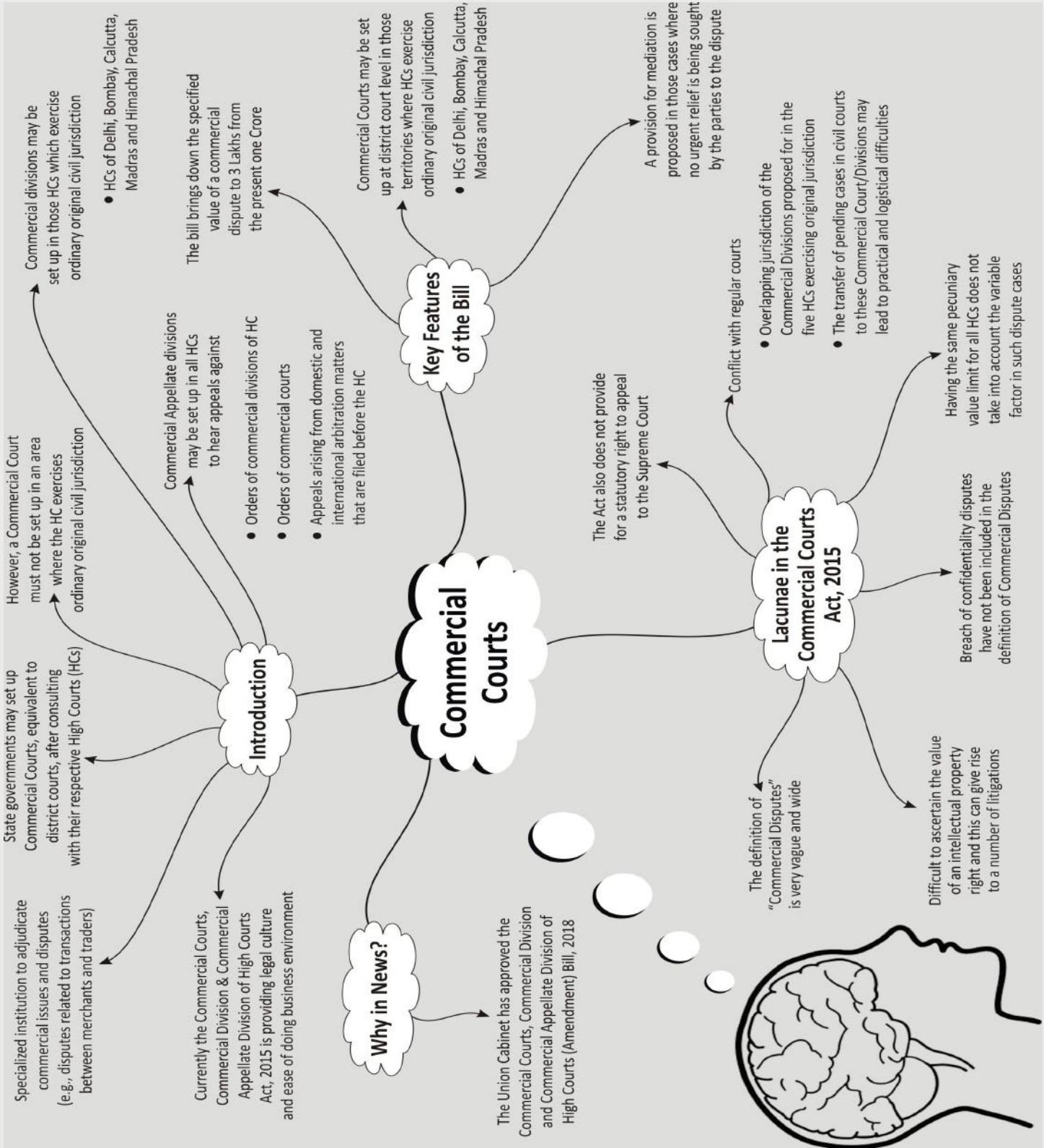
analyse images of the eye taken with a retinal camera.

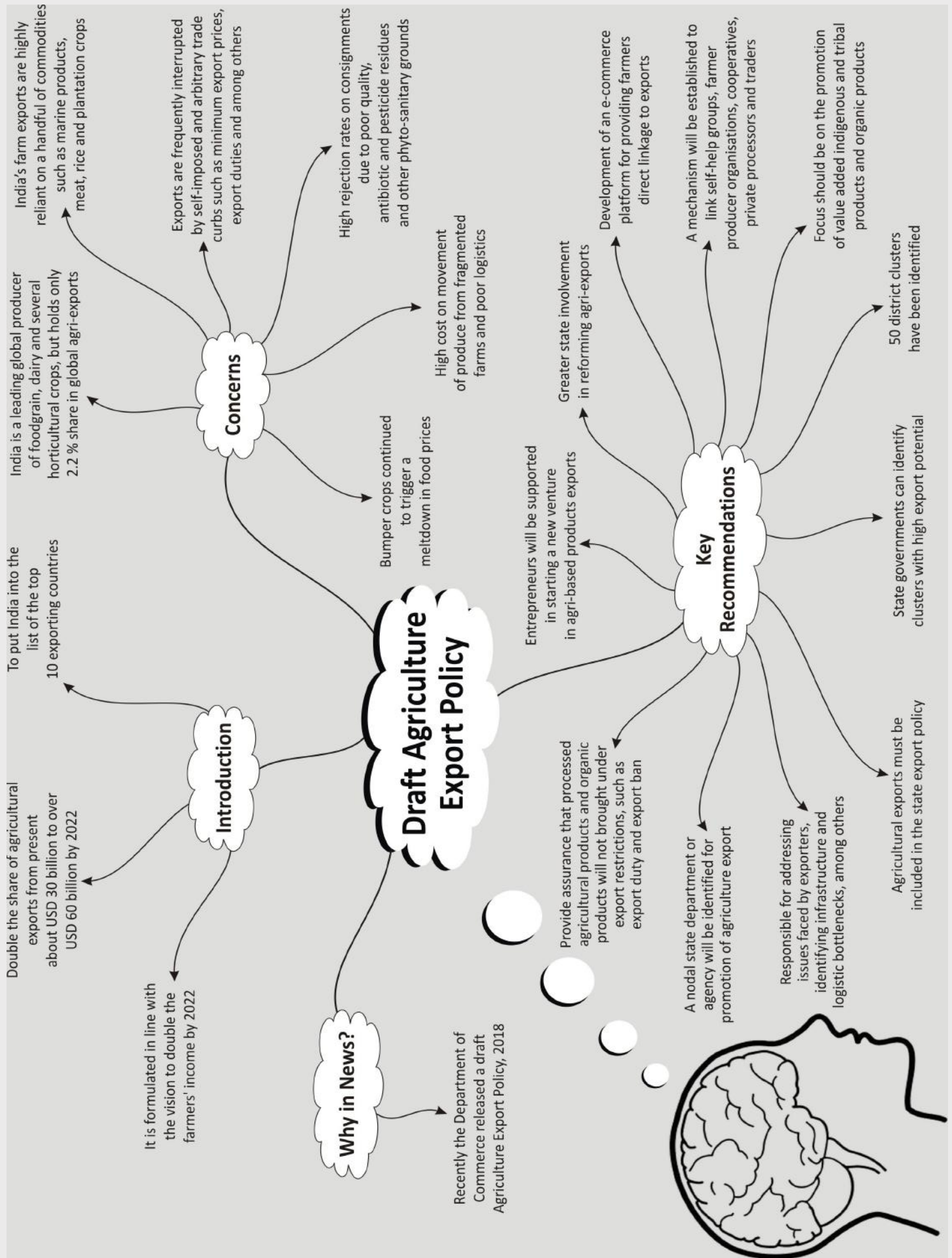
Diabetic retinopathy occurs when high levels of blood sugar lead to damage in the blood vessels of the retina, the light-sensitive tissue in the back of the eye. Early detection of retinopathy is an important part of managing care for the millions of people with diabetes, yet many patients with diabetes are not adequately screened

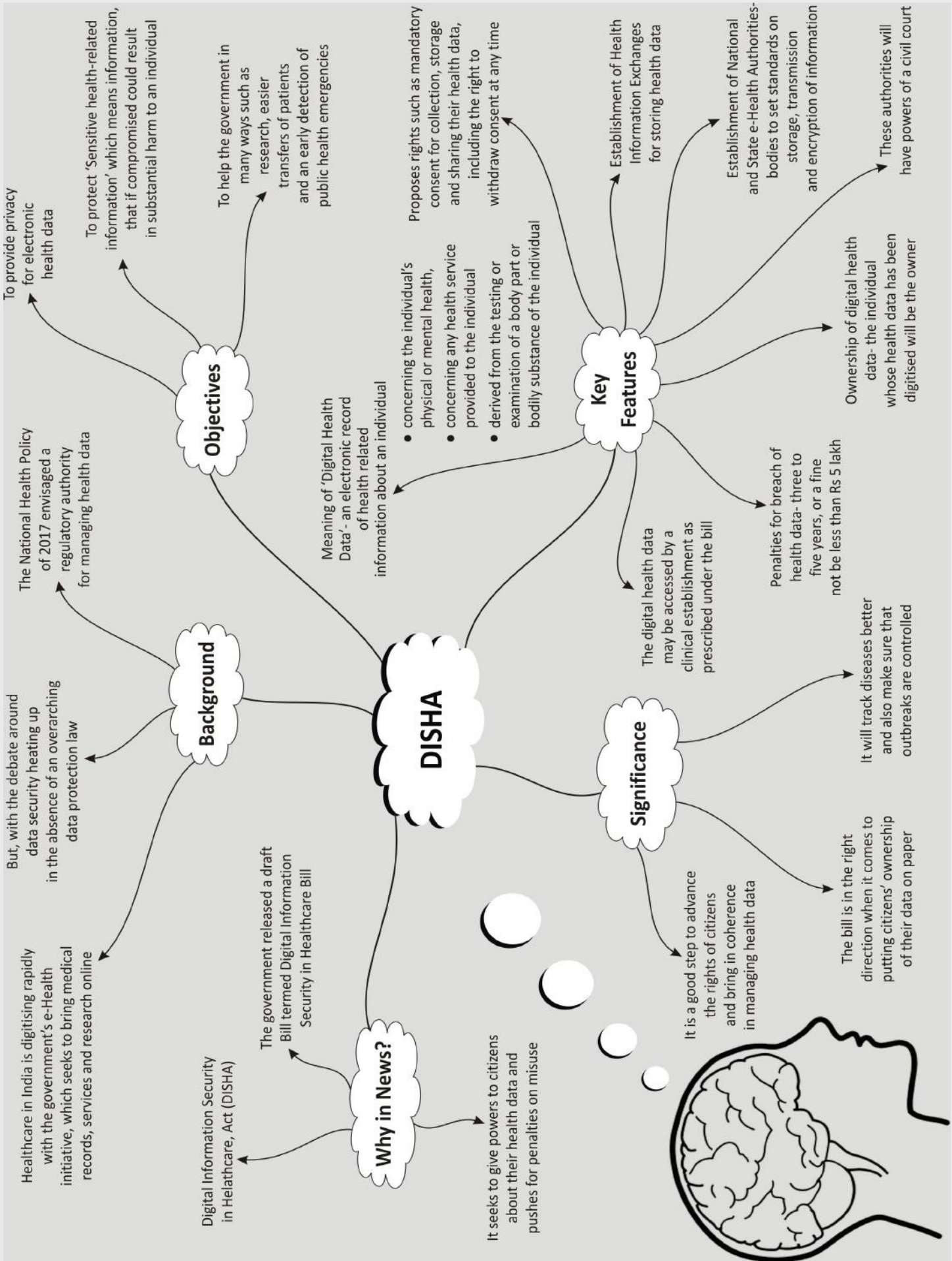
for diabetic retinopathy since about 50 per cent of them do not see their eye doctor on a yearly basis.

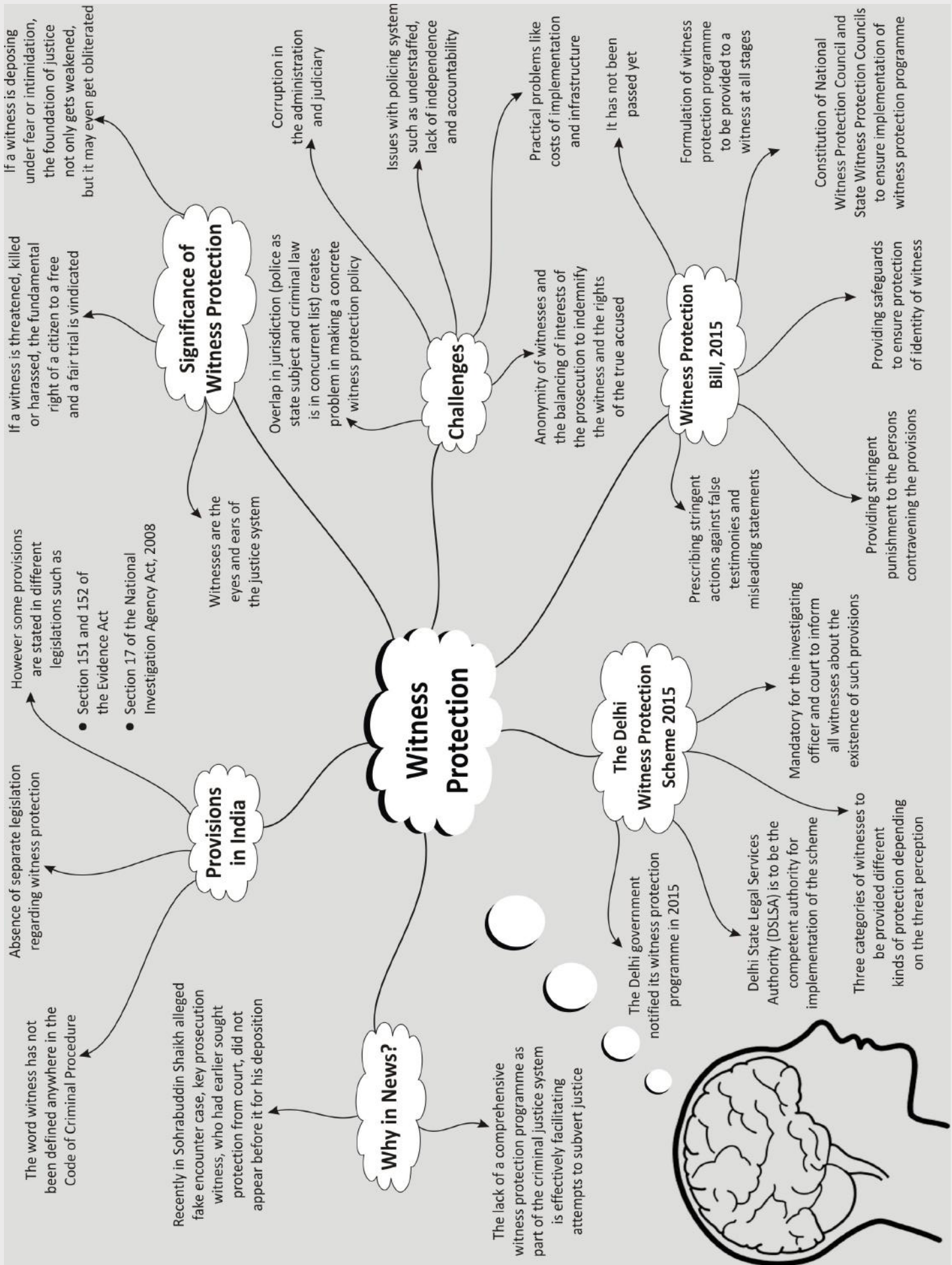
The use of device is not recommended for pregnant women as diabetic retinopathy progresses very rapidly and the device is not intended to assess rapidly progressive diabetic retinopathy. ■

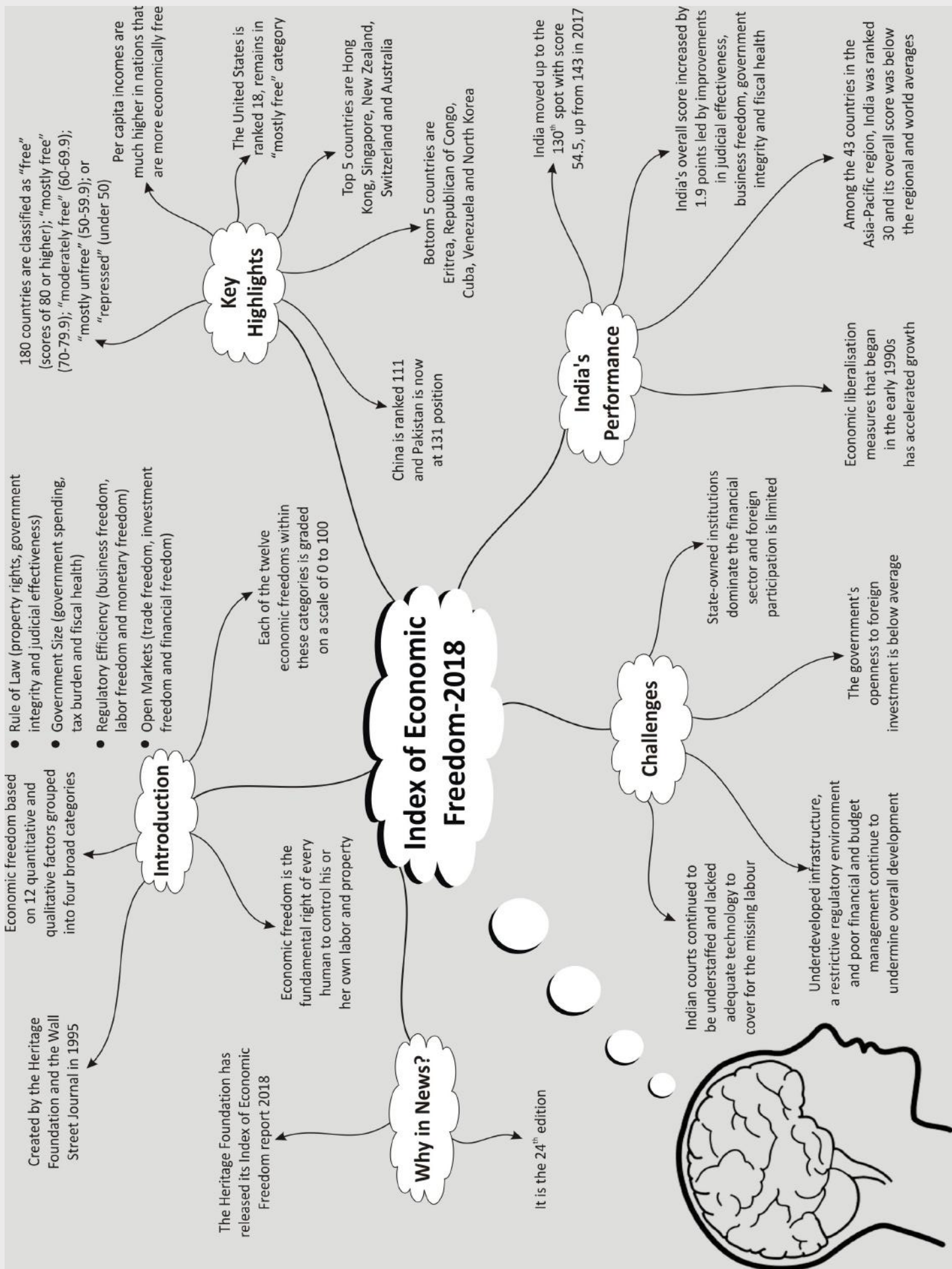
SEVEN BRAIN BOOSTERS

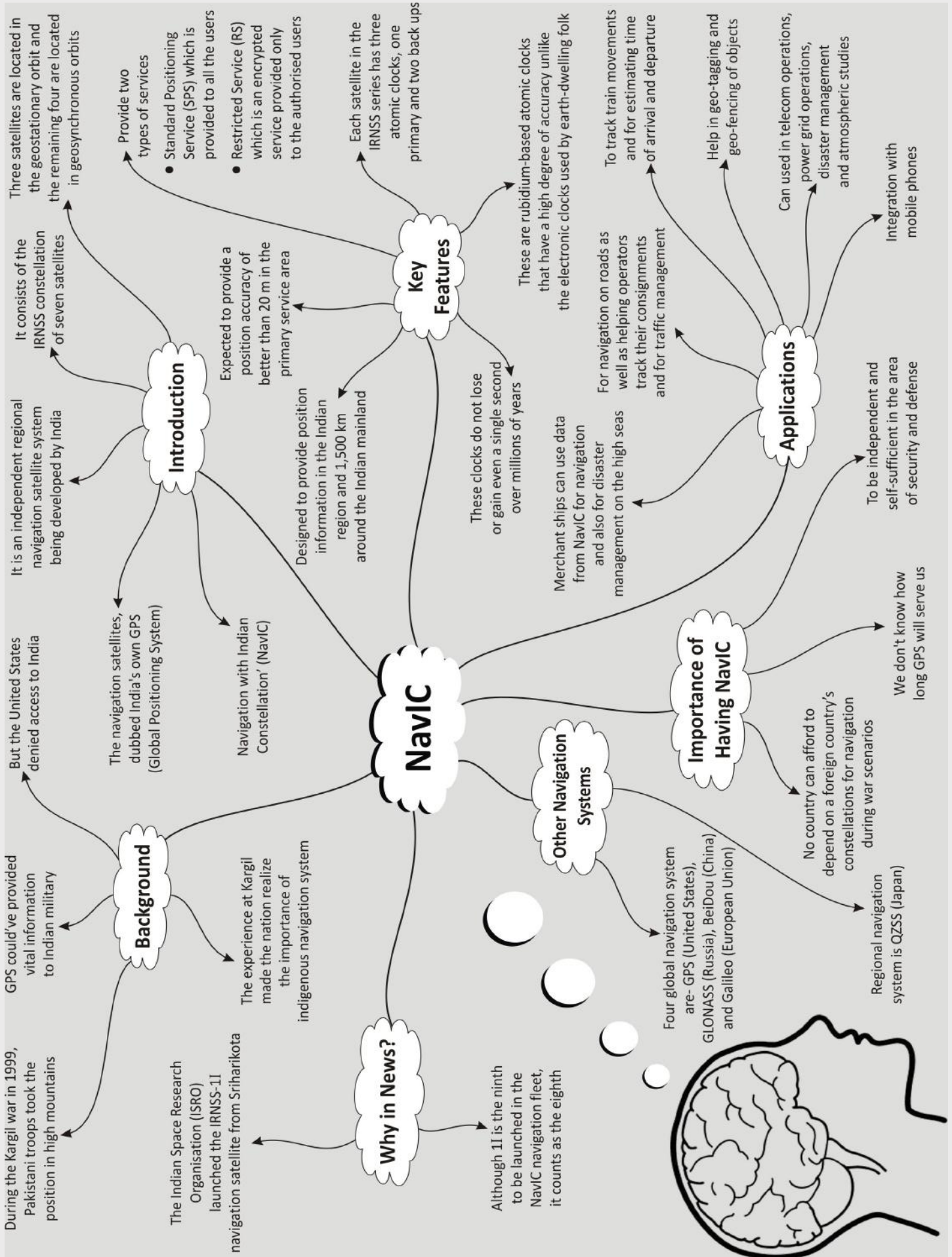


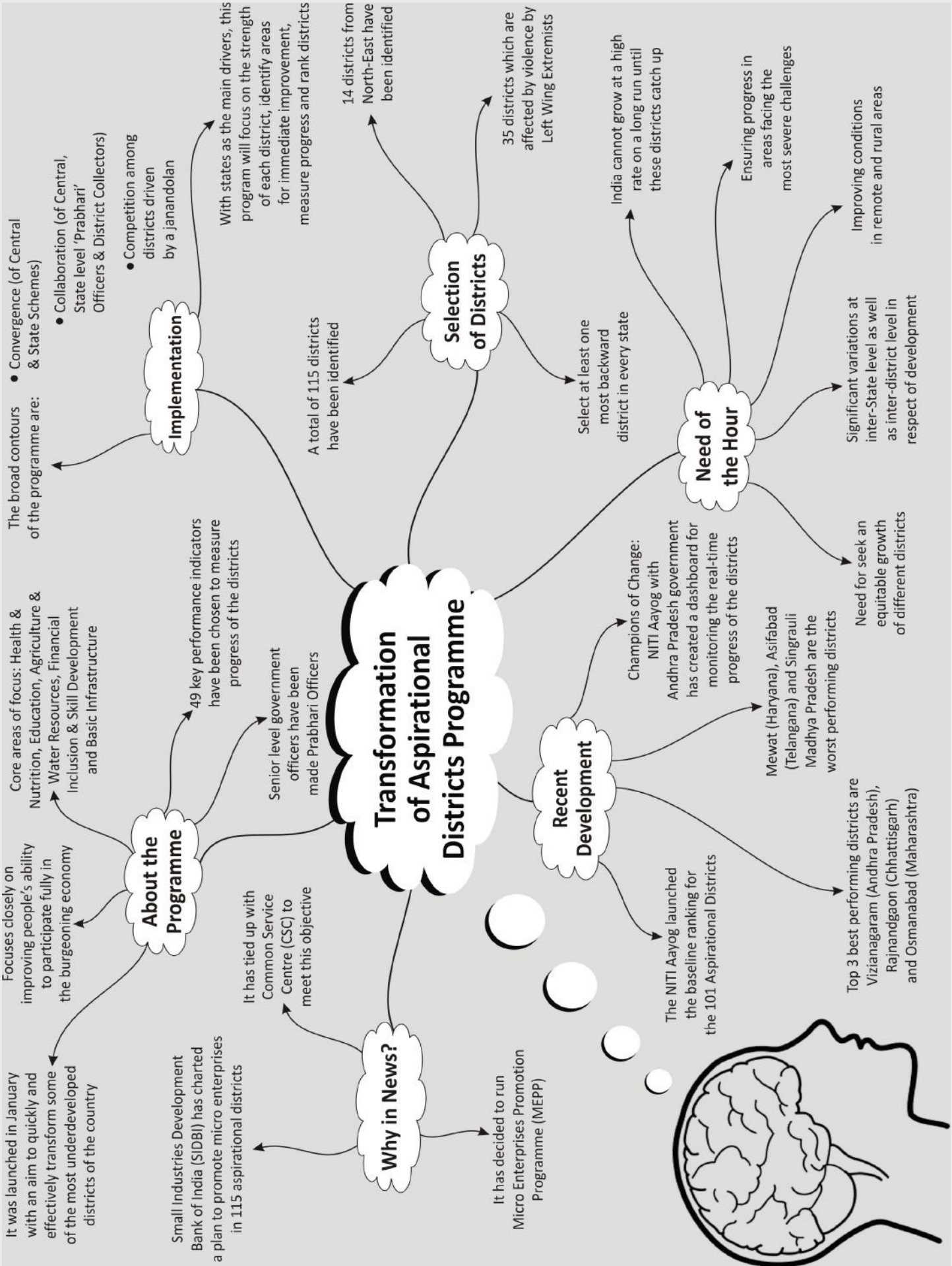












SEVEN MCQ'S WITH EXPLANATORY ANSWERS

(Based on Brain Boosters)

Commercial Courts

Q1. With reference to the commercial courts in India, consider the following statements:

1. State governments may set up commercial courts, equivalent to district courts, after consulting with their respective District Courts and High Courts.
2. The amendment bill provides for establishment of Commercial Courts at district Judge level for the territories over which respective High Courts have ordinary original civil jurisdiction.

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)

Statement 1 is not correct. State governments may set up commercial courts, equivalent to district courts, after consulting with their respective High Courts, not District Courts.

Statement 2 is correct. Earlier a commercial court must not be set up in an area where the high court exercises ordinary original civil jurisdiction. The Commercial Courts, Commercial Division and Commercial Appellate Division of High Courts (Amendment) Bill, 2018 provides for establishment of Commercial Courts at district Judge level for the territories over which respective High Courts have ordinary original civil jurisdiction, that is, the High Courts of Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Himachal Pradesh.

Draft Agriculture Export Policy

Q2. Consider the following statements in respect of draft Agriculture Export Policy, 2018:

1. It suggested measures to double the country's farm exports to over \$60 billion by 2022.
2. It also suggested restrictions in the form of a minimum export price (MEP), export duty or bans on processed agri products or organic products.

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. The draft national agriculture trade policy has sought a stable trade policy regime with limited government interference for key farm items including the politically-sensitive onion and pulses as it suggested measures to double the country's farm exports to over \$60 billion by 2022.

Statement 2 is not correct. The policy has a significant move suggested no restrictions in the form of a minimum export price (MEP), export duty or bans on processed agri-products or organic products. However, the door has been kept open for restrictions on commodities considered essential for food security.

DISHA

Q3. With reference to the draft 'Digital Information Security in Healthcare Bill', consider the following statements:

1. Under the Act any person or entity charged with data breach will be able to challenge the punishment in court.
2. The draft also proposed to constitute a National electronic Health Authority (NeHA) as an independent regulator.

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. Any person or entity charged with data breach will not be able to challenge the punishment in court. The central and state adjudicating authorities formed under the Act will have powers of a civil court. No court shall take cognizance of any offence punishable under the Act except on a complaint made by the central government, state government, the National Electronic Health Authority of India, State Electronic Health Authority, or a person affected.

Statement 2 is correct. The draft legislation has also proposed to constitute a national electronic health authority

(NeHA) which would function as an independent regulator. The NeHA will formulate rules, standards and processes for developing and managing electric health records (EHR).

Witness Protection

Q4. Consider the following statements in respect of witness protection in India:

1. In India there is a separate legislation regarding witness protection.
2. Witness Protection Bill, 2015 proposed to constitute National Witness Protection Council and State Witness Protection Councils.

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. In India there is no separate legislation regarding witness protection. These provisions are stated in different legislations. Some of the are- Section 151 and 152 of the Evidence Act and Section 17 of the National Investigation Agency Act.

Statement 2 is correct. The proposed Bill seeks to ensure the protection of witness by constitution of National Witness Protection Council and State Witness Protection Councils to ensure implementation of witness protection programme in its letter and spirit. However it has not been passed yet.

Index of Economic Freedom-2018

Q5. With reference to the 'Index of Economic Freedom-2018', consider the following statements:

1. India ranked 135th out of 180 countries in Index of Economic Freedom 2018.
2. Among the 43 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, India was ranked 35th.

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. India's economic freedom score was 54.5, making its economy the 130th freest in the 2018 Index. The firm noted that India's overall score

increased by 1.9 points, led by improvements in judicial effectiveness, business freedom, government integrity, and fiscal health. Among the 43 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, India was ranked 30, and its overall score was below the regional and world averages.

NavIC

Q6. Consider the following statements in respect of India's own GPS system- NavIC:

1. It is designed to provide position information in the Indian region and 1,500 km around the Indian mainland.
2. All of its seven satellites are placed in the Geostationary Equatorial orbit.

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)

Statement 1 is correct. It is designed to provide accurate position information service to users in India as well as the region extending up to 1500 km from its boundary, which is its primary service area.

Statement 2 is not correct. It consists of the IRNSS constellation of seven satellites. Three satellites are located in the geostationary orbit and the remaining four are located in geosynchronous orbits.

Transformation of Aspirational Districts Programme

Q7. With reference to the 'Transformation of Aspirational Districts Programme', consider the following statements:

1. This programme is under the aegis of NITI Aayog.
2. Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh is ranked best performing district in baseline rankings of NITI Aayog.

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)

Both statements are correct. This programme is a policy priority of government of India. NITI Aayog anchors the programme with support from central ministries and the state governments. According to the baseline ranking, Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh is ranked best performing district in the country.



SEVEN IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIMS

1. Who became the youngest Indian to win a gold medal in the Commonwealth Games?

–Anish Bhanwala

2. Which state government approved a new rehabilitation policy for slum dwellers?

–Haryana

3. Which film won in the best Hindi language film category at the 65th National Film Awards?

–Newton

4. Which country recently launched the world's first microfactory to help tackle e-waste hazard?

–Australia

5. India has signed a pact to promote mineral exploration with which nation?

–Morocco

6. Which gulf nation has approved a law on equal wages for men and women?

–UAE

7. India's first high-speed electric locomotive was launched in which state?

–Bihar

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SEVEN PERFECT QUOTES

(IMPORTANT FOR ESSAY AND ANSWER WRITING)

“Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement.”

—*Helen Keller*

“Nothing will work unless you do.”

—*Maya Angelou*

“The question isn’t who’s going to let me; it’s who is going to stop me.”

—*Ayn Rand*

“If you just set out to be liked, you would be prepared to compromise on anything at any time, and you would achieve nothing.”

—*Margaret Thatcher*

“The size of your dreams must always exceed your current capacity to achieve them. If your dreams do not scare you, they are not big enough.”

—*Ellen Johnson Sirleaf*

“The power to question is the basis of all human progress.”

—*Indira Gandhi*

“Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies.”

—*Mother Teresa*

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SEVEN PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAIN EXAM

Answer each of the following questions in 200 words:

- Q1. Discuss the merits and demerits of the Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill, 2018.
- Q2. Discuss the implications of recently evolved trade war between the US and China on developing countries like India.
- Q3. What do you understand by a civil court? Explain with the help of concrete examples.
- Q4. Examine the main provisions of the National Mineral Policy-2018 and throw light on the status of its implementation.
- Q5. Evaluate the economic and strategic dimensions of India's Look West Policy in the context of the emerging strategic instability in its own neighbourhood and the structural shift in the global energy market.
- Q6. What do you understand by Green Technology? Where does India stand in this green race? Discuss India's progress in transitioning to Green Technology.
- Q7. Discuss the role of Public Accounts Committee in establishing accountability of the government to the people.

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