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SEVEN IMPORTANT ISSUES

INDIAN FARMERS AND YEAR 2022

Why in News?

The government's initiative to increase farmer's incomes is welcome as it is central to dealing with the agrarian crisis in India. Various mechanisms for increasing farmers' incomes from the perspective of small farmers and farm workers are critically examined. While presenting the budget, the finance minister announced that Minimum Support Price (MSP) for a majority of rabi and kharif crops would be one-and-a-half times of the production cost, which is a welcome step.

Recently Prime Minister proposed a four-pronged strategy to achieve his government's key agrarian agenda of doubling farmers' income: reducing cultivation costs, ensuring profitable prices, processing farm waste and creating non-farm sources of income.

Introduction

One of the major policy initiatives of the National Democratic Alliance government in the agricultural sector is that of doubling farmer's incomes by 2022. This is a laudable objective and, therefore, has generated a lot of academic and popular interest. The need to focus on farmer's incomes instead of production or the growth rate in agriculture stems from the fact that there has been agrarian distress in the sector for the last two decades. Official recognition of the distress and the agrarian crisis came in the form of a NSSO (National Sample Survey

Office) survey in 2003, which reported that 40% of Indian farmers disliked farming as a profession due to its low profits, high risk and the lack of social status and, therefore, would like to leave it at the first opportunity. They were continuing to farm in the absence of opportunities outside agriculture.

Further, there are caste-wise differences among farmers in terms of their interest in farming; the higher castes seem to be more disenchanted with farming than Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) farmers. Among the SCs and STs, the dislike for farming diminishes with increase in landholding size and increases in the case of other castes.

The need to focus on farmers' incomes also stems from the fact that a very large proportion of farming households in most of the central and eastern states (23%–45%) live below the poverty line (BPL), higher than the national average (22.5%). The proportion of BPL farming households (17.5%–22.5%), even in some of the so-called agriculturally progressive states, such as Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, is close to the national average. Further, the gap between farm and non-farm incomes has grown over the decades.

The Concept and Timeframe

There has been much debate in the press over the last few months about the definition of farmer's income and the time frame for doubling it. If it is a

doubling of the real incomes of farmers, then it is an important and challenging goal to achieve in five to seven years. Those who argue that it is not possible to double farmer's incomes in six years cite low and unrealisable minimum support prices (MSPs), non-remunerative prices in the market, the low share of farmers in the consumer rupee, poor penetration of crop insurance, high and increasing input costs and the absence of market infrastructure.

It is estimated that doubling incomes in nominal terms requires six years and, in real terms, 13 years and it is going to need longer time frames in both respects for marginal and small farmers. Further, it would need varied time frames across different states depending on the state-level growth rates of farming household incomes which vary from 6.7% in West Bengal to 17.5% in Haryana in nominal terms, with the average for India being 11.8% and on the absolute levels of farmer household income estimates that farmers' incomes can be increased by 75% in seven years and that it would take 10 years for it to double.

Again, it is important to clarify what is sought to be doubled. Is it the income of farmers, or the output or the income of the sector or the value added or GDP of agriculture sector? If technology, input prices, wages and labour use could result in per unit cost savings then farmers' income would rise at a much higher rate than

the output. Another very important source of increase in farmer's income is the relative increase in prices of farm products compared to the prices of non-agricultural commodities. Past estimates of farm income show a significant difference between growth in output and growth in farmer's income. During 2004-05 and 2011-12, agricultural output at constant prices increased by 34 per cent while real farm income per farmer increased by 63 per cent.

It is obvious that if inflation in agricultural prices is high, farmer's income in nominal terms will double in a much shorter period. Inflation in agricultural prices also leads to increase in real farm income if agricultural prices received by farmers increase at a faster rate relative to the prices paid by farmers i.e. when terms of trade for agriculture improves. In a situation where non-agricultural prices do not rise, or, rise at a very small rate, the growth in farmers' income at real prices tends to be almost the same as in nominal prices.

Raising Farmer's Incomes

There could be various mechanisms to achieve growth in farmers' incomes within as well as outside the farm sector. Within the farm sector, the increase in incomes can come from greater production per unit area as a result of higher yields, as there are yield gaps of the order of 25%–100% across various crops especially in dry land regions and in some high-value crops even in irrigated areas.

India's average yields in most crops are only half that of China's. The increase can also come from higher cropping intensity, lower costs of production, higher prices, or a combination thereof. But yields are not amenable to sudden change as they depend on the type of technology deployed, which cannot be altered in a very short period of time. Also, high-yielding varieties need irrigation

facilities, which cannot be expanded quickly.

The other mechanism to achieving higher volumes of production, without increases in yield, is higher cropping intensity, which would happen only if there is an increase in the area under irrigation or a greater access to water. This again is not achievable in the short-term despite the fact that there is plenty of focus on the expansion of irrigation through schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY), and the promotion of micro-irrigation.

Diversification towards high-value crops can help raise incomes and are also desirable for social and environmental reasons, as these crops account for a large proportion of the value of output but cover a relatively lower area. But, there are many policy distortions that undermine diversification, although the markets encourage it. And, success in this sector depends highly on reforming agricultural markets and improving their performance from the farmers' perspective. Further, new channels of procurement—that is, contract farming, direct purchase and private wholesale markets in these crops, which are much needed—are either missing or not adequately available due to a lack of policy direction and the political economy of such new market arrangements at the local level.

Another important measure that can help farmers protect their incomes from production risk is crop insurance, which still has not been effectively implemented despite the relaunch of crop insurance schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana. In fact, this now also covers a part of the market risk as it also provides for compensation for post-harvest losses. There have also been many issues regarding claims settlements, in addition to the lack of awareness about the scheme and the exclusion of small and marginal farmers.

The mechanisms for increasing farmers' incomes outside the farm sector include access to off-farm and non-farm employment and occupations—such as dairy farming or handicrafts—as well as moving people out of the farming sector altogether. Whereas the first measure can help provide additional and more regular incomes, the second one can increase incomes of those left behind in farming as there will be fewer people to share the same income. Having said that, moving people out of the farming sector is highly unlikely to happen as there are hardly any opportunities for unskilled or semiskilled farm hands outside the sector.

Strategy for Improving Farmer's Income

The sources of growth in output and income can be put in three categories (I) development initiatives including infrastructure, (ii) technology, (iii) policies and institutional mechanisms.

Development Initiatives

Some recent development initiatives of the Central government aiming to raise output and reduce cost include Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana; Soil health card and Prampragat Krishi Vikas Yojana. Another major initiative that provides insurance against crop and income loss is Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana. Beside coverage of risk, it will encourage investment in farming. Development initiatives include increase in productivity through better technology and varieties and increased use of quality seed, fertiliser, irrigation and agro chemicals.

Technology and Innovations

Sustainable growth in productivity and farmer income requires a paradigm shift from input intensive technologies, which have dominated Indian agriculture since the onset of green revolution. Emphasis is also laid on transformative rather than incremental

gain from agricultural research and innovation. India has a very large network of ICAR Institutes and state agricultural universities entrusted with the task of developing improved varieties, technologies, practices, breeds, products and formulations for sustainable growth of agriculture sector. The system has also been equipped with the network of Krishi Vigyan Kendras in every rural district of the country for frontline extension of technologies developed by public research institutes.

Policies and Institutional Mechanisms

Policies affect production, price realization and farmers' income in a large number of ways. Particular attention needs to be paid to various types of reforms needed in agriculture sector. India embraced new economic policy and economy wide reforms in 1991. These reforms involved liberalisation, deregulation and removal of excessive control and restrictions on private sector, which created very favourable macro environment for the private sector participation in economic activities. A set of reforms has been identified to liberalise agricultural markets and to promote competition. This includes institutional measures to reform APMC Act in states as well as use of technology in marketing. Other two areas identified for short term reforms are liberalisation of land lease and relaxation on restrictions on felling/transit of trees and wood based industry.

In recent initiatives, government has decided to keep Minimum Support Price (MSP) for all hitherto unannounced crops of Kharif & Rabi at least at one and half times of their production cost. In another measure government will launch 'Operation Greens' to address price volatility of perishable commodities like potatoes, tomatoes and onions, at an outlay of Rs. 500 crore. 'Operation Greens',

on the lines of 'Operation Flood', shall promote Farmer Producers Organizations (FPOs), agri-logistics, processing facilities and professional management in the sector.

Beyond Business as Usual

Interestingly, it is proposed by some scholars, rightly, that perhaps one of the ways to achieve the target of enhancing farmers' incomes would be to focus on rainfed areas, the eastern region and small farmers instead of an undifferentiated approach. This makes sense, as 43% of the population and more than 60% of the agricultural area in India is in dry or rainfed regions.

For raising farm incomes, there is a need to reorganise agriculture in terms of institutions at the local level, with farmers becoming part of collectives like cooperatives and producer companies. This will enable them to get involved in domestic and global value chains, which can help them, lower the costs of production and marketing and achieve scale to realise higher prices and surpluses. This requires investment in agriculture and agribusinesses by converting subsidies into investments.

Even the residue of major crops like paddy and cotton, which is burnt in many states and has become a policy and social issue, can be utilised to create a new source of income for landless and marginal farmers and other rural workers, as part of the agro-industrialisation process which is a logical corollary of agricultural growth and development. A more proactive and creative involvement of workers in agricultural mechanisation and of small farmers in the agro-industrialisation process, is crucial for the overall positive results of this intervention.

International Experience

It is also important to recognise that India is not the only country to set this kind of target regarding farmers' incomes. China set this objective of

doubling farmers' incomes in 2008, but it plans to meet it over 12 years (2008–20) and not five to seven years despite the fact that China has better functioning institutions and infrastructure in place. China, though, has a limit to what it can achieve on the yields front, as their averages yields are double that of India.

The Chinese strategy of doubling the income of farmers involves expanding channels for the generation of income, expanding the non-agricultural sector to shift surplus labour out of agriculture and into medium and large cities and building an integrated labour market. This is a part of a larger agricultural development model, which focuses on stable grain production, building and strengthening farmer cooperatives, expanding agribusinesses, food quality and safety, agricultural science and technology, creating a new social service system for agriculture for the supply of inputs, finance, insurance and extension by non-governmental organisations and public and large private agencies. It also includes subsidies for grain production and farm inputs, a minimum grain procurement price, reform of agricultural laws and regulations and opening the agricultural sector to the world.

Way Forward

Doubling farmers' income by 2022 is quite challenging but it is needed and is attainable. Three pronged strategy focused on (i) development initiatives, (ii) technology and (iii) policy reforms in agriculture is needed to double farmers' income. The country need to increase use of quality seed, fertiliser and power supply to agriculture by 12.8, 4.4 and 7.6 per cent every year. Area under irrigation has to be expanded by 1.78 million hectare and area under double cropping should be increased by 1.85 million hectare every year.

For doubling the income of the farmer if the attention is given to develop the whole country as a large

market system, then we will repeat the same mistake which happened during the Green Revolution. The benefits of Green Revolution were passed on to industries, large business houses of agriculture sector and big farmers in this sequence which resulted in end of crop diversification and increase in mono cropping pattern. This has greatly reduced the quality of food of common Indian people. The hurry of converting the entire country a big market at the outset will take us in this direction. It should be kept in mind that our system should develop not from top to bottom, but from the bottom upwards. It should

begin from the village and then the village aggregate by making towns as centre point followed by district, then the province and finally the system of the country should be developed above it. Strong villages only can make a strong nation. If the system of the village remains undeveloped, then the nation system will exploit it. We have to develop agriculture system in such a way that our most skilled and talented people can also get a glimpse of good, natural and prosperous life. Agriculture should become a glorious business again and farmers earn respect in society as it was before.

General Studies Paper- II

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

General Studies Paper- III

Topic: Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices; Public Distribution System-objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping, issues of buffer stocks and food security; Technology missions; economics of animal-rearing.

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INDIA- IRAN : OLD FRIENDS IN NEW WORLD

Why in News?

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's recent visit to India has strengthened the prospects of India-Iran relations and raised India's profile in the region. The three-day visit of Hassan Rouhani to India, his first after becoming President in 2013, is testimony that India's "Think West" Policy, like its "Act East" Policy, is thriving and blooming. India and Iran signed agreements and memorandums of understanding on a wide variety of issues. Among the announcements was the decision to award India the contract to operate the Chabahar Shahid Beheshti port terminal after the project is completed.

The Visit

This is Rouhani's second trip to India, his first having been in his capacity as National Security Adviser to then President Mohammad Khatami during the latter's visit as Chief Guest on India's Republic Day in 2003. The significant and substantive "Delhi Declaration" providing a visionary roadmap to bilateral relations was inked during that visit.

Rouhani's visit provided a welcome opportunity to the two sides to give a vigorous push to bilateral ties

in the areas of connectivity, energy, infrastructure, trade, investment, security, defence, culture and people-to-people contacts. The nine agreements signed during the visit covering a wide gamut of issues including all the above subjects will provide a strong impetus to bilateral engagement. In addition, deliberations between the two leaders were helpful to develop understanding and iron over some wrinkles that have appeared in bilateral ties during recent years.

Rouhani's presence in India was evidence of the keen interest that both countries have in promoting bilateral ties and taking them to the next higher level. Rouhani is under considerable pressure both on the domestic front, in political as well economic areas and in the realm of Iran's international ties. Rouhani's administration was recently rocked by huge street protests and demonstrations in several cities against lack of employment, corruption and high prices. Rouhani had come to power in 2013 on the slogan of improving living conditions of the common citizens. He won a second term in 2017 on the rallying cry that the nuclear deal or Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) signed with

P5+1 in 2015 would result in increased investment from foreign countries, improve production and productivity, bring in new technology, create more jobs and be beneficial to the common people. This unfortunately has failed to materialise principally because of the aggressive and belligerent posture adopted by President Trump against the nuclear Agreement. This has dissuaded foreign investors from venturing into Iran till the situation becomes clearer.

Background

During the 1950-60s, differences persisted on account of the Shah's pro-U.S. tilt and after the 1979 revolution, it was the pro-Pakistan tilt. It was only during the late 1990s and the early years of the last decade that both countries achieved a degree of strategic convergence. India and Iran (together with Russia) cooperated in supporting the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan against the expanding role of the Pakistan-backed Taliban.

In 2003, President Mohammad Khatami was the chief guest at the Republic Day when the New Delhi Declaration was signed, flagging the role of Chabahar port in providing connectivity to Afghanistan and further

into Central Asia. Then the times changed: The U.S. declared Iran as part of the 'axis of evil', as President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad accelerated Iran's nuclear enrichment programme leading to progressively more sanctions, and India's economic engagement with Iran was impacted. Simultaneously India was pursuing its nuclear deal with the U.S. which was concluded in 2008. During this period, India's vote against Iran in the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) generated unhappiness in Tehran. This is why it has taken 15 years for another Iranian presidential visit.

With Mr. Trump, Iran's uncertainties are increasing. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), spearheaded by the Obama administration, eased sanctions, helping India increase its oil imports from Iran and reactivate work at Chabahar. In January, President Trump renewed the 120-day sanctions waiver but announced that this was the last time he was extending it. Therefore, when the current waiver ends on May 12, U.S. sanctions on Iran will snap back unless a new agreement is reached. This is highly unlikely.

Connectivity

As expected, connectivity through Chabahar port emerged as one of the most significant aspects of bilateral talks. India's recent accessions to the Ashgabat Agreement in which Turkmenistan, Iran, Uzbekistan and Oman are members and to the TIR Convention will help enhance its engagement with the region. Chabahar provides a strategic option to India to connect with Afghanistan and Central Asia and beyond by side stepping an uncooperative Pakistan. An agreement was signed to provisionally hand over the management of Chabahar to India for the next 18 months. Extension of this agreement is expected to take place on the expiry of this period. It is a matter of considerable satisfaction that the Trilateral Agreement on the use of Chabahar, which was signed during Modi's visit to Tehran in May 2016 in the presence of the Iranian and Afghan Presidents, has been put into operation in a little more than a year. India has invested USD 85 million in upgrading the first phase of the port from 2.5 million tons to 8.5 million tons. India has also committed to construct the railway line from Chabahar to Zahedan, which

is close to Zaranj on the Afghanistan-Iran border. To maintain its credibility, India will need to ensure that there is no slackness in implementation of this element of the project.

Gwadar port in the Baluchistan province of Pakistan is barely a 100 kms away from Chabahar and is being developed by China. Chabahar will face stiff competition from Gwadar. India and Iran will have to make certain that to-and-fro business handled by Chabahar is significant. For Afghanistan, it could prove to be, "a Golden Gateway." Chabahar enjoys several advantages over Gwadar. Firstly, it is located in a peaceful region as opposed to Gwadar which is situated in a violent and terrorism prone province. The possibilities for establishing manufacturing and downstream petrochemical industries in Chabahar are much greater as ready, easy, cheap natural gas is available in plentiful in Iran. Above all, Chabahar is a natural harbour and can serve as the sourcing point for the International North-South Transport Corridor which has also been taken up much more seriously in recent years.

Energy

During Rouhani's visit, it was decided that India will set up plants in sectors such as fertilizers, petrochemicals and metallurgy in Chabahar Free Trade Zone (FTZ) on terms mutually beneficial to the concerned parties. This will be a win-win investment as it will promote India's energy security while providing financial resources and employment opportunities to Iran. These ventures will also provide additional cargo and business for transportation, both in and out, to Chabahar port.

Discussions on the exploitation of Farzad B gas field, which was discovered by an Indian consortium



comprising OVL (ONGC Videsh Ltd), Oil India Limited and Indian Oil Corporation in 2007, have been going on for the last many years. Its mention in the Joint Statement is significant as it implies that both sides wish to resolve the issue in the very near future.

Trade and Investment

Both sides agreed to facilitate issuance of visas to promote tourism and people-to-people contacts between the two countries. Obtaining visas for Indian citizens, even businessmen, to visit Iran has always been an extremely harrowing experience. Obtaining visas in the reverse direction has never been so difficult. It will be mutually beneficial if more businessmen and common people travel to each other's countries. More frequent travel by Indian businessmen and people will provide a huge boost to Iran's economy and also promote understanding and cooperation between the two countries.

The Agreement on Avoidance of Double taxation was signed to promote bilateral trade and investment. India has also decided to permit Indian investments in Iran in Indian rupees. Currently, this facility is available only for Bhutan and Nepal. This decision, which has been taken in view of the absence of international banking facilities in Iran as also to skirt the uncertainty due to continuing pressure by the United States on Iran, will go a long way in facilitating Indian investments in several areas in Iran. The opening of a CII Office in Iran last year can also be expected to give a strong boost to two way business and economic ties.

Bilateral cooperation in security, defence and fight against terrorism emerged as significant areas of discussion during Rouhani's visit. A Bilateral Extradition Treaty was

signed and it was also decided to have enhanced cooperation in the maritime domain. The two countries agreed to hold dialogue to look into measures for cooperation in defence sphere, including port calls by naval ships, training and regular exchanges of defence delegations.

Challenges

Ensuring security and stability in Afghanistan, which is vital to peace in the region, poses a challenge to both India and Iran. Both countries desire peace in Afghanistan but their approaches are markedly different. India maintains that there cannot be a distinction between "good Taliban" and "bad Taliban." It contends that terrorist attacks perpetrated by the Taliban and Haqqani network which enjoy safe havens in Pakistan are the root cause of the problem and that these groups cannot be a part of the solution. Moreover, it views the presence of US troops as beneficial since they maintain pressure on Pakistan to give up support for terrorist elements acting against Afghanistan. Iran's position is quite different. It wants US troops to leave Afghanistan as soon as possible. In addition, it has expressed readiness to collaborate with Pakistan and China to bring the Taliban to the negotiating table.

Other challenges in bilateral relations relate to India's growing ties with USA, Israel, Saudi Arabia and UAE, all of which are intractable rivals of Iran.

The language in the Joint Statement on India's interest in becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council reads as follows: "President Rouhani acknowledges the aspiration of India to play a greater role in international fora." This language is similar to that used in Joint Statements

after meetings between Indian and Chinese leaders and is less than encouraging or satisfying.

Way Forward

Both India and Iran seem to have come to the conclusion that there are a large number of areas in which their interests coincide and converge. They also recognize that they have divergent views on some issues. They hence appear to have taken the decision to collaborate in spheres where they agree and hold frank and candid discussions on subjects where they have a difference of views while not allowing these issues to block or vitiate bilateral ties.

The near-term developments in its neighbourhood are a priority for Tehran even as Prime Minister Modi tries to find a balance with his stated preference to develop closer ties with both the U.S. and Israel. The uncertainties surrounding the JCPOA provide the justification for adopting a 'wait and watch' approach.

Notwithstanding the fact that the two countries do not see eye to eye on some issues, India and Iran have decided to focus their energies on areas of concurrence and rapidly embark on a mutually beneficial and fruitful partnership.

General Studies Paper- II

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

General Studies Paper- II

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



POLITICS OF PURGING: RACE AND RELIGION ON CITIZENSHIP

Why in News?

Army chief general Rawat's comment about an “inversion in demographics” and a “planned migration” from Bangladesh into the Northeast are unusual by any standards. Army chief raised the issues of religious identity, demographics, and India's relations with its neighbours. The migration from Bangladesh into India is driven by two factors. The first is the acute pressure on land in Bangladesh and the other issue, is planned immigration which is taking place because of our western neighbour. It is the proxy dimension of warfare.

Historical Background

The British developed the tea industry in Assam. The Assamese people living mostly in Upper Assam and cultivating one crop per year were not interested in working as labor in the tea gardens. Therefore, the British encouraged Bengali Muslim peasants from present Bangladesh to move into Lower Assam for putting virgin land under cultivation. This set in motion a movement pattern which despite changed conditions, has been continuing to this day.

After the partition of Bengal in 1905, the over-populated Muslim peasantry from East Bengal started crossing over to the fertile lands of thinly populated Brahmaputra and Surma valleys in the Northeast corner of India. The formation of the All India Muslim League in Dhaka in 1906 encouraged the migration to increase the Muslim population in Assam for political reasons. The arrival of immigrants continued even after the creation of Bangladesh due to ethnic persecution of minorities. At the time of partition, the chairman of the Boundary Commissions, Cyril Radcliffe, was charged with dividing 1,75,000 square miles (4,50,000 km²) of territory

comprising 88 million people. Radcliffe had never visited India before. He was responsible for marking out the border in a span of six weeks.

- The commission used maps for the most part, rather than working on the ground.
- The result was an arbitrary border that ran through some thickly populated regions and even parts of houses such that some rooms were in one country while others fell in another.
- It is estimated that about 12 million people left their homes, either for crossing over to India or to migrate to East or West Pakistan.
- In 1971, after a prolonged struggle, East Pakistan became independent from Pakistan and came to be known as Bangladesh.

The porous border, along with its socio-political history, provides a fertile ground for informal border markets, smuggling and trading in commodities and persons. There are some contributory factors of illegal migration:

- Increasing pressure on land and mounting unemployment in Bangladesh due to uncontrolled steep rise in population and high density of population (964 per sq. km, according to 2011 estimate).
- The large scale migration from Bangladesh to India has been possible mainly due to the porous India-Bangladesh border of 4,096 kilometers, the fencing of which has not been completed so far.
- Better economic opportunities across the border.
- Competitive politics of vote-bank and the patronage extended to them by political parties/vested political groups in India.

- Presence of strong pro-Bangladesh lobby in India often creates myths and confuses Indians about the gravity of the problem.
- Large segments of population in Bangladesh uprooted severe floods and cyclones.

India has been increasingly focusing on extreme border-control practices with respect to Bangladesh. However, due to close socio-cultural and economic ties, it is difficult to make the Indo-Bangladesh border completely impermeable. To prevent trafficking, illegal crossing, smuggling of humans, arms and products, a border-fencing project led by the Government of India was started with Bangladesh in 1986. It has also fueled insurgency in some of these states. There are three main security concerns that India has with respect to Bangladesh:

- Territorial disputes
- Cross-border terrorism,
- Illegal immigration of Bangladeshis into India.

The Roots of the Problem

Bangladesh abuts India on three sides, sharing 4,096 kilometers (around 2,500 miles) of border with the Indian states of West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram. Ever since the partition of British India in 1947, successive waves of people facing hostile conditions, persecution, intolerance and adverse economic situations in what constitutes present-day Bangladesh have found sanctuary in India. While some of them later returned to their homes in Bangladesh, the majority chose to assimilate within India. It is important to understand what the response of the Indian state has been towards the flow of Bangladeshis into India at different points of time.

- Immediately after partition in 1947 a large number of Hindu refugees from East Bengal entered West Bengal and other parts of the country.
- In the immediate post-partition period, the concern over movement of people was not so much communal, as the majority of refugees were Hindus.
- Gradually, with increasing socio-economic pressures, Government of India tried to deter people from entering India by not recognising them as refugees and not providing them with rehabilitation, regardless of their religion.
- The passport system was initiated in 1952 and migration certificates began to be issued from 1956.
- By 1971, the year of the Bangladesh Liberation War, political discourse had begun to identify the movement of refugees as a communal issue and not as a matter of concern about their rehabilitation.
- Historically, Bangladeshi Hindus migrating to India have been viewed as “victims” of Bangladeshi majoritarian politics and, therefore, worthy of “refuge.” Bangladeshi Muslims, in contrast, were considered “infiltrators” who threatened the socio-economic structure of India.
- The influx of refugees at different points of times has resulted in “a reconceptualisation of the notion of citizenship and who should be allowed to remain within India’s territorial borders, through a series of measures designed to create a more effective’ border.

The political and socio-economic context has been changing; border controls have become more stringent as a response to the threat of terrorists and insurgents who seek shelter across the border. The influx of such a large number of illegal Bangladeshi immigrants has proved to be a huge

challenge for India with serious implications for its resources and national security. However, despite several controls and anti-immigration laws, everyday cross-border movement of Indians and Bangladeshis continue to this day.

‘Illegal’ Bangladeshi Muslims in Indian Politics

Bangladeshis without valid documents constitute the largest number of Muslim immigrants in India. They have been a cause for concern since the late 1980s. Different political parties that formed national governments at various points of times have dealt with the issue of Bangladeshi migrants in their own ways. Some have used Bangladeshis in West Bengal and other neighbouring states as “vote banks” by providing them with region-specific benefits.

Who are the illegal migrants?

Unlike a refugee, an illegal migrant is a person who crosses an international boundary and without any valid document, enters into another country for the purpose of carrying on any illegal or anti-social activities in that country or for other economic or political purposes. According to Section 2(b) of The Citizenship Act, 1955, an “illegal migrant” means a foreigner who has entered into India:

- Without a valid passport or other travel documents and such other document or authority as may be prescribed by or under any law in that behalf; or
- with a valid passport or other travel documents and such other document or authority as may be prescribed by or under any law in that behalf but remains therein beyond the permitted period of time.

Illegal migrants have been defined in Assam Accord as those who infiltrated illegally after 24 December 1971. However, the stream that infiltrated illegally between 1st January 1966 and 24 December 1971 was not to be deported and was to be given Indian citizenship after a lapse of ten years.

At the same time, political parties have been averse to migrants from Bangladesh. While right-wing political organisations perceive the Muslim Bangladeshis as “infiltrators,” posing a threat to the country, left-wing political parties have sometimes responded adversely to lower caste Hindu refugees from Bangladesh.

- In 1979, for example, the Communist Party of India (Marxist)—CPI(M)—government in West Bengal imposed an economic blockade and, later, evacuated thousands of lower caste Hindu Bangladeshi refugees from an island in the Sundarbans.
- The CPI(M) government changed its political strategy and began to perceive the lower caste Hindu Bangladeshi refugees as a burden on the state. This episode popularly came to be known as the Marichjhapi massacre.
- In 1992, the Congress government at the centre tried to deport hundreds of suspected Bangladeshis without valid documents under the banner of “Operation Pushback.” Leads to widespread communal violence in the early 1990s and the state response towards unauthorised immigrants through this operation.
- In January 1993, right after the Babri Masjid demolition in December 1992, the BJP “declared a war” on illegal Muslim Bangladeshis in India and this issue has since then been a prominent theme in national campaigns of the party.

Legality and Illegality

Through a series of amendments and proposed amendments to the Citizenship Act of 1955, one particular party has displayed an obvious bias in favour of non-Muslim minorities fleeing from other countries. In addition, attempts at inclusion of the larger “Hindu race” within the fold of Akhand Bharat, through measures such as the introduction of the OCI category, demonstrates the effort at making the Hindutva ideology mainstream. On 19 July 2016, the government introduced a bill to amend certain provisions of the Citizenship Act of 1955. The bill has now been referred to the Select and Joint Committee of Parliament.

- The object of the proposed bill is to enable Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians who have fled to India from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh—without valid travel documents or whose valid documents have expired in recent years—to acquire Indian citizenship through naturalisation.
- Under the bill, such persons shall not be treated as illegal immigrants for the purpose of the Citizenship Act.
- Rohingyas from Myanmar, Muslims from Bangladesh and Ahmadiyyas from Pakistan, who face religious persecution in their countries, are excluded from the scope of the bill, thus indicating a clear religious bias.

The granting citizenship on the basis of religion may violate Article 14 of the Constitution which guarantees the right to equality. The Indian Parliament passed the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunal) Act in 1983 in an attempt to address the problem, but the measure failed to make any impact (and was ultimately set aside by the Supreme Court in 2005). The agitation culminated in the Assam Accord that was signed on August 15, 1985, by the central and state governments and leaders of the All Assam Students Union and All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad, which spearheaded the Assam movement. The accord envisaged that all foreign nationals who had entered Assam on or after March 25, 1971—the day after the Pakistan Army began full-fledged operations against Bangladeshi civilians seeking independence, causing them to flee to India in large numbers—were to be detected, their names deleted from the electoral rolls and subsequently deported under the Foreigners Act, 1946. But little headway has been made in that direction.

Consequences of Illegal Migration

Social Consequences

- Crisis of identity: The influx of immigrants created a crisis of identity among the indigenous Assamese. Their cultural survival will be in jeopardy, their political control will be weakened and their employment opportunities will be undermined by such illegal migration. Assamese found that though the immigrants had settled in Assam, most of them failed to identify themselves with the mainstream. The recent Bodo-Muslim violence in the Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD) has its root on the issue of illegal migration.
- Environmental degradation: Large areas of forest land were encroached upon by the immigrants for settlement and cultivation. The state experienced declining percent of land area under forest from 39% in 1951-52 to about 30% now.
- Difficult to identify the illegal migrants: Due to the similar language spoken by illegal migrants from Bangladesh and the indigenous Bengali speaking Muslim of Assam, it becomes difficult to identify and deport the illegal migration from Assam soil.
- Community tension: The commission on integration and cohesion found that tension usually exist with the presence of high levels of migration combine with other forms of social exclusion like poverty, poor housing etc.

Economic Consequences

- Increase financial burden: Immigration has increased pressure on the part of state government, as the government has to increase the expenditure on education and health facilities to the immigrants.

- Displacing native workers: There is a fear particularly during a recession that immigrants take jobs which would otherwise be taken by local people; in particular place and circumstances there can be competition and conflict.
- Decreases wage level with the increase of population: Illegal immigrants in every year have been adding a good number of people in Assam. It is one of the main reasons of population explosion. Due to this there is a possibility of decreasing wage level.

Political Consequences

- Assam agitation: The failure of government to respond the issue of illegal migration led to the agitation by the Assamese under the leadership of All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) and All Assam Student's Union (AASU). Assam witnessed governmental instability, sustained civil disobedience campaigns and worst cases of ethnic violence. Assam accord was the result of this agitation.
- Illegal voters: Most of the Bangladeshi immigrants have got their names enlisted in the voting list illegally, thereby claiming themselves as citizens of the state. The immigrant's population act as a vote bank for the political parties in Assam. The recent initiative NRC (National Register of Citizens) is meant for the detection of illegal Bangladeshi migrants. However success of such initiative will depend on the strong political will.
- Issue of terrorism: Pakistan's ISI has been active in Bangladesh supporting militant movements in Assam. It is alleged that among the illegal migrants there are also militants, who enter into Assam to carry out the terrorist activities.

Some Recommendations to Meet the Problem

- The Central Government should appoint a National Immigration Commission to frame a National Migration Policy and a National Refugee Policy. The commission should examine ways of strengthening the Foreigners Act 1946, as well as feasibility of identity cards for both citizens and non-citizens and work permits for migrants.
- Border fencing in Assam must be completed forthwith on a war footing. The existing Border Security Force posts and its water wing should be strengthened.
- Our nationals in the border districts and for that matter in the whole state should be provided multipurpose photo identity card.
- The ongoing NRC updating should be completed without delay and proper arrangement for the deportation of illegal migrants should be done.
- The Illegal Migrants Determination by Tribunal (IMDT) Act of 1983 should be repealed.

Conclusion

The issue of illegal migration remains a potent political issue that is likely to cast shadow on bilateral relations especially in the context where the role of states in foreign policy is assuming increasing political salience. A problem which has its historical roots so deep cannot be solved overnight. The dangerous consequences of large scale illegal migration from Bangladesh, both for the people of Assam and more for the nation as a whole, need to be emphatically stressed. No misconceived and mistaken notions of secularism should be allowed to come in the way of doing so. Illegal migration from Bangladesh is no longer a regional problem which can be pushed under the carpet. These migrants are now spread in several states and distant places such as Rajasthan, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and so on.

This silent and invidious demographic invasion of Assam may result in the loss of the geo-strategically vital districts of lower Assam. The influx of these illegal migrants is turning these districts into a Muslim majority region. It will then

only be a matter of time when a demand for their merger with Bangladesh may be made. Thus it is high time to solve the problems of illegal migration to save Assamese people in their own land and to save the nation from the threat of immigrants.

General Studies Paper- I

Topic: Role of women and women's organization, Population and associated issues, Poverty and development issues, Urbanization, their problems and their remedies.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/ Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

General Studies Paper- III

Topic: Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security.

Topic: Security challenges and their management in border areas;- linkages of organized crime with terrorism.

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INSTITUTES OF EMINENCE

Why in News?

Recently government of India appointed former Chief Election Commissioner N Gopalaswami as the chairperson of the committee that will select 20 Institutions of Eminence.

Under Ministry of Human Resource Development, government aimed to establish ten World Class Institutions each in public and private sector in a reasonable time by providing an enabling regulatory environment that allow them to achieve the highest levels of global excellence in teaching and research.

Background

The quest to create “world-class” universities has become something of a global obsession in the past decade as governments across the world have put the development of competitive

higher education and research systems at the heart of their national economic strategies. In Russia, for example, President Vladimir Putin has made it a key policy objective to move five Russian universities into the top 100 of the Times Higher Education World University Rankings by 2020. In Japan, President Shinzo Abe has said that there should be 10 Japanese universities in the world top 100 by 2023.

This concentration of talent is one of the most important facets of a great university, but they have a few other attributes as well. They have a complete autonomy, even if they are funded by the government. They are international, and have an exceptionally good



governance system. They are located in good places to live as well. Many Asian nations have realised the link between world-class universities and economic development and have been working hard to build a few such institutions in their countries. Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong have been particularly successful in this regard, but countries like Thailand and Vietnam have also managed to raise the standards of their universities. Our neighbours, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, have also made university-building as one of their priorities.

Although the number of quality institutions in India has been slowly increasing as the government builds new IITs and IISERs, top Indian institutions have been slipping in their international rankings. It may not be because they have been declining in absolute terms, but because other institutions have been raising their standards rapidly — some with the explicit intention of grabbing higher ranks. To begin with, only a small number of Indian institutions even qualify to be judged. These are the older IITs and the IISc and to them we can add some upcoming IITs, IISERs and a few NIITs. However, no university in the real sense — with strong programmes in science, engineering, medicine, humanities and the social sciences — exists in India. Some central universities come close, but they do not have medical schools or large engineering departments. On the other hand, engineering or science institutions do not have worldclass humanities or social sciences departments. Till about a decade ago, Indian higher education separated education from research, a cardinal sin in today's academic environment.

Key Characteristics of World's Top Universities

The top 200 represents the top 1 per cent of the world's higher education institutions.

- Significant financial resources are essential to pay the salaries required to attract and retain the leading scholars and to build the facilities needed.
- Providing an intimate and intensive teaching environment for students, where they can expect to truly engage with leading academic staff can really help.
- Perhaps most importantly, a world-class university must be genuinely international.
- It must be a magnet for the planet's most talented staff and students, wherever they happen to come from.
- It must bring people together from a range of different cultures and backgrounds to tackle shared global challenges.
- It must work and think across national borders.

Why World Class Institutions Required?

The education system in India has struggled for a long time. With the country set to become one of the youngest nations in the world by 2030 — around 140 million people will be in the college-age group — can the country live up to its aims of delivering a world-class higher education system?

Despite strong ambitions, the higher education system in India still lags behind the standards of the world's best universities. In the QS World University Rankings 2015-16, only two Indian universities were featured in the top 200, while just 10 made it into the top 700.

- For years, India has had a severe problem with a shortage of teaching staff, made steadily worse as it rapidly expands its higher education system. The appeal of pursuing other career options for those graduating, coupled with the lack of facilities for postgraduate

education and the retiring generation of current professors has resulted in an unsustainable student-teacher ratio.

- Cash-starved state universities in India are often unable to hire new staff due to the lack of funds.
- The gross enrolment rate of college-aged people in tertiary education in India was 25% in 2013, the latest data available. This compares to around 60% in countries like France and Britain and 36% in Brazil — another BRICS country. Clearly, there remains a significant unmet demand for places at universities in India.
- A number of studies, including the National Skills Report, 2017, found that only around 40% of graduates were considered employable.

Because of this demand and the lenient system which regulates higher educational institutions, there are hundreds of privately set-up colleges offering a sub-par standard of education in India in order to turn a profit. This results in graduates who are unable or unfit to enter the professions their degrees are supposed to train them for. Currently with one of the highest youth population in the world, India faces its greatest opportunity as well as challenge. It is slated to become the world's youngest nation by 2022 and this population bulge not only provides for a huge reservoir of manpower, but also draws unprecedented focus towards making this talent pool employable.

World Class Educational Institutions

The central government has launched various initiatives to improve the quality of education in institutes of higher education. The HRD ministry launched National Institute Ranking Framework (NIRF) in 2015. NIRF released its first ranking list in 2016 and is set to release the ranking list for 2017 in April this year.

In the Twelfth Five Year Plan a new scheme called Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) was launched. RUSA seeks to promote equity, access and excellence in state higher education system. This scheme supports upgrading autonomous colleges to universities, clustering colleges to form a university, setting up of new professional colleges in unserved and underserved areas and providing grant to colleges and universities to help them improve their infrastructure.

India, which contributes a significant share of students and faculty in the world's leading universities, does not itself have any representation among the top-tier of global universities. Whenever a reputed international ranking agency releases its ranking of educational institutions any year, the general reaction is one of dismay at Indian institutions not finding place in the list of top institutions of the world or even of Asia. There is a pressing need for the government to provide a suitable environment to promote the growth of Indian higher educational institutions, as globally renowned centres of excellence. In order to achieve the aforementioned objective, the following regulatory architecture are proposed by UGC:

- UGC (Declaration of Government Educational Institutions as World Class Institutions) Guidelines, 2016 which would be applicable to all government owned & controlled higher educational institutions.
- UGC (World Class Institutions Deemed to be Universities) Regulations, 2016 which would be applicable to privately owned & controlled higher educational institutions.

The establishment of 20 world-class institutions, 10 public and the rest private, is one of the flagship projects

of the ministry of human resource development for internationalisation of Indian campuses and creating world class universities. The mission is to set up universities with all India character and with international standards. For a large country like India the possibility of providing globally recognized best education is what we are trying to create. Overwhelming response to the idea of Institutions of Eminence, which will become World Class Universities, is a validation of the vision of Prime Minister for improving the quality of higher education in India.

Silent Features of Guidelines

These draft Guidelines & Regulations contain eligibility criteria, selection procedure, other regulatory aspects, monitoring & evaluation, etc for World Class Institutions.

- These institutions shall be called as 'Institutions of Eminence (IoEs).
- Exceptionally high quality teaching and research standards preferably in multi-disciplinary areas.
- A significant proportion of international and meritorious students.
- A reasonably good proportion of qualified faculty from high-ranked universities worldwide.
- Transparent and need-blind system to ensure intake of meritorious students.
- Adequate financial assistance to students.
- A healthy faculty student ratio.
- Well-equipped facilities for teaching, research, administration and student-life.
- Adequate infrastructure for operations and expansion.
- Autonomous governance structures.

- Financial soundness through either a large corpus fund or recourse to public funding, as the case may be and, teaching and research collaborations with reputed global universities.
- These institutions will have the liberty to enroll up to 30% foreign students and selected public institutions will be able to recruit up to 25% foreign faculty, But no such limit for selected private institutions.
- The institutions will be free from the usual regulatory mechanism to choose their path to become institutions of global repute with emphasis on multi-disciplinary initiatives, high quality research, global best practices and international collaborations.
- Each public institution selected as IoE will be provided financial assistance up to Rs. 1000 Cr over a period of five years.
- The Indian University/institutions need to submit a 15-year vision plan to be among the top 500 globally ranked institutions, while existing institutions among the top 500 would have to offer a plan to improve their ranking to be among the top 100 in the next 10 years.

Way Ahead

It should be the government's aim that the education system, from pre-school to higher education, ensures that all young people receive a high-quality education and a solid foundation for engaging in lifelong education. The education system should also contribute to fostering a learning culture that promotes creativity, independence and responsibility. There must be cohesion between the various

education pathways and levels such that the individual can obtain qualifications and competences. The government has to set specific goals for all levels of the education system— from pre-school to university level higher education.

Pre-school

- All children should have a good start in school.
- Language assessment for all children at the age of three and again at the age of six when they start pre-school.
- Compulsory education to be extended from nine to ten years of schooling by pre-school class being made an obligatory part of the municipal primary and lower secondary school.
- Curricula to be drawn up in all daycare facilities.

The Primary and Lower Secondary School

- All pupils must have excellent academic skills and knowledge.
- The Folkeskole must provide pupils with knowledge and skills promote creativity and independence and prepare them for further education.
- The pupils must be among the best in the world in four basic subject areas: reading, Mathematics, Natural Science and English.
- All young people are to gain knowledge and skills that provide them with the basis for actively taking part in a globalised world.

Youth Education

- All young people are to have a qualifying education. At least 85 per cent of all young people are to complete a youth education by 2010 and a minimum of 95 per cent by 2015.

- The education programmes are to be attractive and of the highest quality.
- The general upper secondary education programmes are to provide pupils with good academic and general competences enabling more to complete higher education.
- The vocational education and training programmes are to challenge the most talented pupils and provide them with increased possibilities for higher education. At the same time, the programmes are to provide realistic educational and training possibilities for academically weaker pupils.

Higher Education

- At least 50 per cent of youth cohorts are to have a higher education in 2015.
- The quality of short cycle and medium cycle higher education programmes and university education programmes must match the best in the world.
- The content of all higher education programmes must match the needs of society.
- All young people are to obtain an education with a global perspective.
- Young people are to be encouraged to begin higher education programmes earlier and the education programmes are to be organised so as to minimise delay.

Conclusion

Every country wants a world-class university. No country feels it can do without one. The problem is that no one knows what a world-class university is, and no one has figured out how to get one. Creating world class education institutions (WCEI) and nurturing

them is an exciting and challenging task. While India has created several (world) reputed institutions in diverse fields with the active support of the government, their transformation into world class entities would need major policy initiatives as well as meticulous execution.

Public education systems the world over are one of the most clear expressions of a country's identity and a reflection of the cultural, economic and social values that it aims to develop and promote. In a country's schools, it is possible to see how policymakers view their country's future; by the challenges it is preparing its citizens to cope with. The resources spent on education are an investment into its workforce and can be a chance to focus on certain sectors or fields, if they are considered particularly necessary to the country's success. An education system can be an agent of social and economic mobility, lifting people out of poverty and on to better things, or a way to maintain the status quo, for better or worse.

It need of the hours to empower higher educational institutions to help them become world class teaching and research institutions. An enabling regulatory architecture will be provided to ten public and ten private institutions to emerge as world-class teaching and research institutions. This will enhance affordable access to high quality education for ordinary Indians.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/ Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

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STATE OF FOREST REPORT-2017

Why in News?

The 15th State of Forest Report shows that India's total forest cover increased by 0.94 per cent, from 7,01,673 square kilometers to 7,08,273 square kilometers since its last assessment in 2015. The biannual report is prepared by The Forest Survey of India (FSI), a body under Ministry of Environment & Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC), which conducts surveys and assessment of forest resources in the country.

Forest Survey of India

Forest Survey of India (FSI), is a premier national organization for forest resource assessment working under the Ministry of Environment and Forests. Besides, carrying out forest and tree cover assessment, Forest Survey of India is also engaged in providing the services of training, research and extension. Established on June 1, 1981, the Forest Survey of India succeeded the "Pre-investment Survey of Forest Resources" (PISFR), a project initiated in 1965 by Government of India with

the sponsorship of FAO and UNDP. The main objective of PISFR was to ascertain the availability of raw material for establishment of wood based industries in selected areas of the country. In its report in 1976, the National Commission on Agriculture (NCA) recommended the creation of a National Forest Survey Organization for collection of data on scientific lines through countrywide comprehensive forest resources survey at regular intervals. Consequently, PISFR was reorganized into FSI in June 1981. Forest Survey of India (FSI) has been assessing the forest and tree resources of our country on a biennial basis since 1987. The results of the assessment are published in its biennial report titled "India State of Forest Report (ISFR)". 'India State of Forest Report (SFR) 2017' based on satellite imagery, may present a net positive balance in the form of 24.4% of India's land area under some form of forest or tree cover. According to the report, forest and tree cover together registered a 1% rise over the previous estimate two years ago.

ISFR 2017: Special Features

- Assessment of forest cover within and outside recorded forest area: To understand the changing dynamics of forest cover within and outside the recorded forest area, the information of forest cover for sixteen States/ UTs have been provided within and outside the recorded forest areas.
- Information of forest Cover in 633 districts in place of 589 districts: As per Census 2001, information on forest cover has been given for 633 districts, using updated district boundaries and Open Series Maps from Survey of India.
- Decadal change in water bodies: Keeping in view the role of forests in maintaining hydrological balance and river flows, the status of water bodies in the forests over a period of ten years (2005-2015) has been presented in the report.
- Forest fire: FSI has been monitoring the forest fire for more than a decade. Present ISFR depicting real time monitoring of forest fire, burnt area assessment and pre fire alerts have been highlighted.
- Potential production of timber from Trees outside Forests (TOF): A large demand of wood and fuelwood of the society is being met from trees growing outside the forest area. On the basis of TOF inventory, FSI has estimated annual potential production of timber from TOF and given in present ISFR.
- Bamboo Resource: Bamboo resource assessment has always been an integral part of National Forest Inventory. Looking at its importance and the thrust of the government on bamboo, a separate chapter has been given in the current ISFR.

Forest cover of India		
Class	Area (sq km)	Percent of Geographic Area
Very Dense Forest	98,158	2.99
Moderately Dense Forest	3,08,318	9.38
Open Forest	3,01,797	9.18
Total Forest Cover *	7,08,273	21.54
Scrub	45,979	1.40
Non-Forest	25,33,217	77.06
Total Geographic Area	32,87,469	100.00
*Includes 4,921 sq km under Mangrove Cover Percentage rounded off		

- Carbon stock in India's forests at state level: In addition to national level estimates, it is for the first time that the state level estimates of carbon stock have been given under different carbon pools for major forest type groups. The information is useful for analysis and developing strategies for achieving the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) target.

ISFR 2017: Key Findings

- Forest and tree cover of the country has increased by 8,021 sq km (1%) as compared to assessment of 2015. The very dense forest (VDF) has increased by 1.36 % as compared to last assessment. This is very heartening as VDF absorbs maximum carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
- The increasing trend of forest and tree cover is largely due to the various national policies aimed at conservation and sustainable management of our forests like Green India Mission, National Agro-Forestry policy (NAP), REDD plus policy, Joint Forest Management (JFM), National Afforestation Programme and funds under Compensatory Afforestation to States.
- Successful agro-forestry practices, better conservation of forests, improvement of scrub areas to forest areas, increase in mangrove cover, conservation and protection activities have also led to increase in the forest and tree cover.
- Green Highways (Plantations & Maintenance) Policy to develop 1,40,000 km long tree line with plantation along with both sides of national highways will go a long way in enhancing the forest & tree cover.
- Top 5 states where maximum forest cover has increased are Andhra Pradesh (2,141 sqkms), Karnataka (1,101 sqkms), Kerala (1,043 sqkms), Odisha (885 sqkms) and Telangana (565 sqkms).
- Top 5 states where forest cover has decreased are Mizoram (531 sq km), Nagaland (450 sq km), Arunachal Pradesh (190 sq km), Tripura (164 sq km) and Meghalaya (116 sq km). It is important to mention here that these states are in the North Eastern region of the country where the total forest cover is very high i.e. more than 70% in each state.
- The main reasons for the decrease are - shifting cultivation, other biotic pressures, rotational felling, diversion of forest lands for developmental activities, submergence of forest cover, agriculture expansion and natural disasters.
- Water bodies inside forests have increase over a decade
 - Forests play a vital role in water conservation and improve the water regime in the area.
 - State Forest Departments besides plantation and protection also undertake steps to improve water conservation through different interventions such as building Check dams, vegetation barriers, percolation ponds, contour trenches etc. under various central & state government schemes
 - As per the latest assessment, water bodies inside forest cover have increased by 2,647 sqkms during the last decade.
 - Maharashtra (432 sqkms), Gujarat (428 sqkms), Madhya Pradesh (389 sqkms) are top three states showing increase in water bodies within forest areas. Overall, almost all the states have shown a positive change in water bodies.
- Mangrove cover of the country has shown a positive change
 - As per ISFR 2017, mangrove forests have increased by 181 sqkms. Maharashtra (82 sqkms), Andhra Pradesh (37 sqkms) and Gujarat (33 sqkms) are the top three gainers in terms of mangrove cover. 7 out of the 12 mangrove states have shown an increase in mangrove cover and none of them show any negative change.
 - Mangrove eco-systems are rich in biodiversity and provide a number of ecological services. They also play a major role in protecting coastal areas from erosion, tidal storms and tsunamis.
- Striving towards achieving NDC goal
 - India is striving towards achieving its NDC goal of creating additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3.0 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent through additional forest and tree cover by 2030.
 - As per present assessment total carbon stock in forest is estimated to be 7,082 million tonnes. There is an increase of 38 million tonnes in the carbon stock of country as compared to the last assessment.

Significance of Report

- The SFR report will serve as an important tool to monitor the country's forest resources and plan suitable scientific and policy interventions for its management.
- It will also serve as a useful source of information for the policy makers, planners, State Forest Departments, line agencies involved in various developmental works, academicians, civil society and others interested in natural resource conservation and management.

- The report contains information on forest cover, tree cover, mangrove cover, growing stock inside and outside the forest areas, carbon stock in India's forests and forest cover in different patch size classes. Special thematic information on forest cover such as hill, tribal districts and north eastern region has also been given separately in the report.
- The report for the first time contains information on decadal change in water bodies in forest during 2005-2015, forest fire, production of timber from outside forest, state wise carbon stock in different forest types and density classes.
- The spatial information given in the report is based on interpretation of LISS-III data from Indian Remote Sensing satellite data (Resourcesat-II) with a spatial resolution of 23.5.

Indian Forest

Forests provide renewable raw material; and energy, maintain biological diversity, mitigate climate change, protect land and water resources, provide recreation facilities, improve air quality and help alleviate poverty. At the same time forests are affected by fire, grazing, pest and invasive species and are also the primary targets for agricultural and urban expansion.

The forest wealth in our country is extremely diverse as a result of the huge variation in the topography of the country. Due to the impact of biotic pressure on our forests, many forest areas spread across the country has been depleted and degraded which is a serious concern.

Deforestation is of course a big part of the habitat loss issue since forests are homes to thousands and thousands of animal & plant species. Rainforests are complex ecosystems which sustain numerous relationships of all types of life forms between each other. Losing rainforests means losing this incredible wealth that the nature has endowed us with.

The role of India's forests in the national economy and in ecology was further emphasized in the 1988 National Forest Policy, which focussed on ensuring environmental stability, restoring the ecological balance and preserving the remaining forests. Other objectives of the policy were meeting the need for fuel wood, fodder and small timber for rural and tribal people while recognising the need to actively involve local people in the management of forest resources. A new target was to increase the forest cover to 33 percent of India's land area. While adequate protection and afforestation activities has contributed to the increase in the extent and quality of forest cover in some parts of the country, it is extremely important that the spatial distribution of the changes in forest cover and growing stock be monitored on a regular basis for effective planning. It is imperative for this purpose to conduct regular assessment of forest cover.

Types of Forest

SFR estimate listing very dense, moderately dense, open and scrub forests mapped through remote sensing does not really provide deep insights into the integrity of the green areas.

1. **Very dense Forest:** All Lands with tree cover (Including mangrove cover) of canopy density of 70% and above.
2. **Moderately dense forest:** All lands with tree cover (Including mangrove cover) of canopy density between 40% and 70%.
3. **Open forest:** All lands with tree cover (Including mangrove cover) of canopy density between 10% and 40%.
4. **Scrub:** All forest lands with poor tree growth mainly of small or stunted trees having canopy density less than 10%.
5. **Non Forest:** Any area not included in the above classes.

Role of Government in Forest Conservation

Government has initiated several measures to increase forest and tree cover including National Mission for a Green India, Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) and National Afforestation Programme (NAP) for regeneration of degraded forests and adjoining areas through people's participation. The scheme is being implemented through a decentralized mechanism of State Forest Development Agency (SFDA) at State level, Forest Development Agency (FDA) at Forest Division level and Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs) at village level.

The emphasis in environmental policy to raise forest cover to 33% of the geographical area will yield some dividends. There has been an increase over the baseline cover of 20% at the turn of the century. Yet, tree cover is not the same as having biodiverse, old-growth forests.

THE INDIAN FOREST ACTS

- Forest Conservation Act, 1980
- Forest (Conservation) Rules, 1981
- National Forest Policy, 1988
- Forest (Conservation) Rules, 2003
- Forest (Conservation) Amendment Rules, 2004
- Stepping up of process for conservation of forest villages into revenue villages
- Regularisation of the rights of the Tribals on the forest lands
- Guidelines for diversion of forest land
- Guidelines for Diversion / Denotification of Forest Land from National Parks / Sanctuaries for Non-Forestry purposes

Way Forward

Naturally, environmental economists have come to regard the calculation of national accounts of wealth and development as weak, because governments do not add the benefits of functions such as flood control and climate moderation to the value of forests. Such a failure erodes the gains

made by many communities, because lost natural capital contributes to material losses. India must review the programmes that it has been pursuing to revive forests, and move away from monoculture plantations that are favoured by even forest development corporations in many States. Scientific reforms to bring true nature back

are needed. The latest assessment categorises more than 300,000 sq km of area as open forests with a tree canopy of 10-40%. These lands provide the opportunity to bring back diverse, indigenous trees. Such a measure, combined with a policy against allowing open cast mining, can bring about a renaissance. Dedicated efforts

will be required to protect the precious forests of the North-East.

General Studies Paper- II

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

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PETROYUAN: OIL-FOR-YUAN CONTRACT

Why in News?

In a move that could cause a major shift in global energy markets and also allow it to play a bigger role in the global economy, China is planning the launch of a yuan-denominated oil futures exchange also known as the petroyuan. After several postponements, Beijing is finalising plans to launch its oil futures contract on the Shanghai International Energy Exchange, or what is referred by its acronym, INE, on March 26, 2018.

Introduction

After the Chinese New Year, China will flip the switch and start trading in an arcane new financial product dubbed as 'petroyuan'- one that could presage a huge shift in global energy markets and advance China's quest to play a bigger role in the global economy. After years of false starts, a long-awaited Chinese oil futures contract will make its debut on the Shanghai Futures Exchange, likely in late March. It will be the first crude oil benchmark in Asia, which is important because that's where oil consumption is growing. And it will be the first contract priced in Chinese currency, known as the renminbi or yuan. Currently, the main global benchmarks for crude oil are in New York and London — and priced in dollars.

The exchange plans to handle seven kinds of crude, particularly from the Middle East, including Iraq's Basra

Light, Dubai and Oman crude. Chinese oil companies like Sinopec and the small, independent refineries which are referred to as "teapots" that import large consignments from the region, are expected to use the INE.

If all goes according to plan, the launch will provide China with the opportunity to create an Asian crude oil benchmark that would better reflect pricing for the oil imported and consumed in Asia, the world's top importing region. The move is designed to give China more clout in crude pricing as well as promote its currency as a truly global one.

Petrodollar to Petroyuan?

The critical role of finding an alternate currency to the US dollar (USD) to trade in oil holds the key to currency domination. Most of the oil, with a few exceptions now coming to the fore, is sold and bought in USD, which means all oil consumers have to purchase dollars to buy oil. While the Bretton Woods system allowed the USD to be designated as the international reserve currency, it was the 1974 US-Saudi deal that established and ensured the dollar's position.

For years now, China has been trying to translate its growing economic strength into global influence and international acceptance and use of its currency, as in the case of the dollar, would go a long way in allowing it the

leverage it seeks. At present, the US dollar retains top position. According to recent International Monetary Fund (IMF) data, the USD accounted for 63.5 per cent of all reserves, followed by the Euro at 20 per cent, while the yuan's share in the world's forex reserves is a paltry 1.12 per cent in Q3 2017. But China wants the yuan to play an increasingly important role in global trade and where better than to start with the oil trade.

Why is this important for China?

Futures trading would wrest some control over pricing from the main international benchmarks, which are based on dollars. Denominating oil contracts in yuan would promote the use of China's currency in global trade, one of the country's key long-term goals. And China would benefit from having a benchmark that reflects the grades of oil that are mostly consumed by local refineries and differ from those underpinning Western contracts.

The Chinese currency did receive a boost, albeit symbolic, in 2016, when the IMF included the yuan in its basket of global currencies that determine the value of its international reserve asset, the Special Drawing Right (SDR). However, thereafter, the yuan depreciated and Beijing's efforts to prop up the currency, including by the imposition of curbs on capital outflows, dampened its international appeal. But recently, the Chinese government has been showing signs of relaxing the micro-management of the exchange rate, which resulted in the yuan climbing against the dollar.

Will the Chinese Gambit Succeed?

There are some takers for the yuan. Russia and Iran have been using the yuan to settle some oil transactions since 2015. Both countries have been slapped with US sanctions, including banking restrictions and both export large volumes of crude to China. Venezuela too has shown some interest in trading in yuan and Angola and Nigeria are also selling some oil and gas in the Chinese currency. And as recently as January 2018, Pakistan's central bank said it has officially adopted the yuan as a currency for trade with China. Several banks, including HSBC and Deutsche Bank, are also picking up the yuan for their currency reserves, which is indicative of the growing acceptance of the yuan as an international currency, although it remains far behind the dollar.

How do oil futures work?

Futures contracts fix prices today for delivery at a later date. Consumers use them to protect against higher prices down the line; speculators use them to bet on where prices are headed. In 2017, oil futures contracts in New York and London outstripped physical trading by a factor of 23. Crude oil is among the most actively traded commodities, with two key benchmarks: West Texas Intermediate, or WTI, which trades on the New York Mercantile Exchange, and Brent crude, which trades on ICE Futures Europe in London.

The real test of the yuan's international acceptability, however, will be Saudi Arabia. If the Kingdom, which was largely responsible for instituting the USD as the global currency, accepts the yuan, even partly, for its exports to China, that will go a long way in making the Chinese currency more acceptable internationally.

Nevertheless, the success of the yuan oil futures contract will depend largely on market regulation (and room for intervention) on the market, which could deter international investors from bringing huge volumes into the

contract. Some analysts believe that while it makes sense for the world's key oil import market to launch yuan oil futures, it would take years for the yuan to really threaten the supremacy of the 'entrenched' petrodollar.

Will foreigners buy Chinese oil futures?

That remains to be seen. Overseas oil producers and traders would need to swallow not just China's penchant for occasional market interventions but also its capital controls. Restrictions on moving money in and out of the country have been tightened in the past two years after a shock devaluation of the yuan in 2015 prompted a surge in money leaving the mainland. Similar hurdles have kept foreign investors as bit players in China's giant stock and bond markets.

China has long wanted to host a global benchmark. As the world's top energy importer, it wants more clout in a market worth trillions of dollars. It also wants more international trade overall to be done in renminbi (the yuan's official name). Hence, pricing oil in yuan would advance both goals.

Criticism

A strong argument against the petroyuan is that the yuan itself is not a very user-friendly currency, compared to the US dollar or Euro. Moving significant amounts of yuan in and out of China can be tricky and the regulations constraining yuan trading could indeed present some difficulties for the would-be users of the new oil futures contract. Users of the yuan-denominated futures contracts will have the possibility to instantaneously convert their yuan to gold on the Hong Kong Futures Exchange or the Shanghai Futures Exchange.

Way Forward

The setting up of an Asian oil benchmark will reflect the reality of the current oil pricing mechanism, which is dominated by Asia, as against the traditional one that was designed for a time when Asian countries were not major energy consumers.

It is therefore understandable that an alternate currency should be instated. But if the yuan has to be accepted as the alternative to the USD and become a safe haven in times of crises, rather than an instrument for trade and portfolio diversification only, China will have to pursue and sustain the reforms it has introduced. Further, global investors continue to buy US treasury bills and bonds whenever they seek a safe haven to park their money. It merits recalling that the US dollar superseded the British pound sterling only after World War II, although the American economy had overtaken Britain's in the late 1800s.

Therefore, while the US dollar's continued dominance is neither inevitable nor necessarily desirable, it does not mean that the renminbi/yuan will replace it. Undoubtedly, its use in trade, bond issues and sovereign reserves has grown that too in a relatively short time. But China's unreliable or illiquid financial markets remain a major impediment. China will have to pursue reforms to strengthen domestic debt markets, improve corporate governance and bring in more regulatory transparency and enforce the rule of law in order to attract and absorb huge global financial flows. There is also the danger that a considerable fall in the US dollar's value will undoubtedly have ripples in global financial markets, which will affect many of China's leading trade partners. Therefore, while no one expects the dollar to abdicate its reign just yet, the Shanghai exchange may mark the first sign of cracks forming in the US dollar's edifice.

General Studies Paper- II

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

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



EPIDEMIC OF URBAN FLOODS

Why in News?

India could see a six-fold increase in the population exposed to the risk of severe floods by 2040 to 25 million people from the 3.7 million facing this risk between 1971 and 2004—according to a new study published in Science Advances. While states such as Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Chhattisgarh will see the highest jumps in populations exposed to severe floods, states that had not experienced similar risks during the study's historical reference period—such as Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand—will also face the risk of severe flooding.

Introduction

Urban flooding is significantly different from rural flooding as urbanization leads to developed catchments, which increases the flood peaks from 1.8 to 8 times and flood volumes by up to 6

times. Consequently, flooding occurs very quickly due to faster flow times (in a matter of minutes). Urban areas are densely populated and people living in vulnerable areas suffer due to flooding, sometimes resulting in loss of life. It is not only the event of flooding but the secondary effect of exposure to infection also has its toll in terms of human suffering, loss of livelihood and, in extreme cases, loss of life. The uneven distribution of rain fall coupled with mindless urbanisation, encroaching upon and filling up natural drainage channels and urban lakes to use the high-value urban land for buildings are the cause of urban flooding. The illegal filling of urban water bodies in cities like Calcutta, Delhi and Hyderabad etc is a rampant. To contain the flood risk to present levels, India and other vulnerable countries must introduce more flood protection measures, the study concluded.

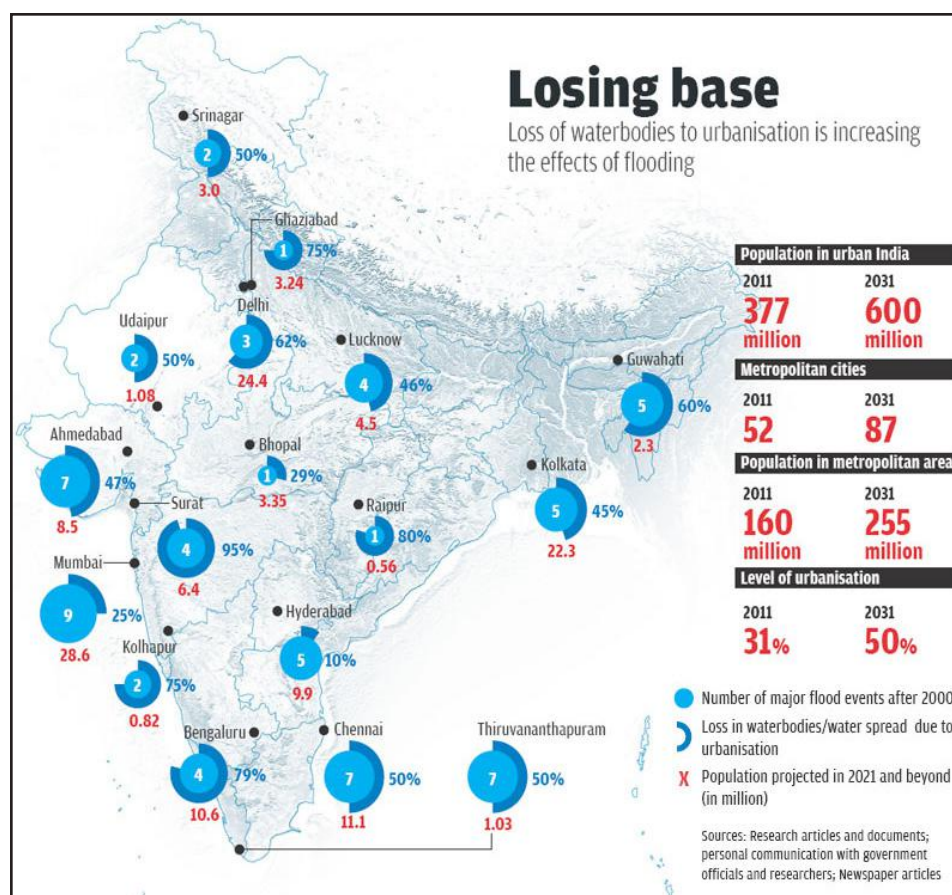
This central message should set alarm bells ringing for India given the potential loss of life and property that could result from more widespread flooding. Between 1996 and 2005, India suffered flood losses worth Rs 4,745 crore (\$713 million) annually. The Centre's allocation to the Climate Change Action Plan and the National Adaptation Fund in 2018-19 (and 2017-18) was Rs 150 crore—3% of the annual loss from floods. These losses are already mounting with single cities, such as Srinagar in 2014 and Chennai in 2015, suffered higher losses—Rs 5,000 crore and Rs 15,000 crore respectively—in a span of a few days. And these were just the immediate losses. Epidemics that break out after floods necessitate higher public and private spending on health that is mostly undocumented. Extreme rainfall shocks will reduce farmer incomes in the kharif and rabi seasons by 13.7% and 5.5%, the Economic Survey, 2017-18 estimated. High losses from floods reflect India's inadequacy to cope with the current variability in climate, let alone future climate change.

Definition

A flood is an excess of water (or mud) on land that's normally dry and is a situation wherein the inundation is caused by high flow, or overflow of water in an established watercourse, such as a river, stream, or drainage ditch; or ponding of water at or near the point where the rain fell. This is a duration type event. A flood can strike anywhere without warning, occurs when a large volume of rain falls within a short time.

Types of Flooding

The urban area is paved with roads etc and the discharge of heavy rain can't absorbed into the ground due to



drainage constraints leads to flooding of streets, underpasses, low lying areas and storm drains.

According to Duration: Slow-Onset Flooding, Rapid-Onset Flooding, Flash Flooding.

According to Location: Coastal Flooding, Arroyos Flooding, River Flooding and Urban Flooding.

Causes of Urban Flooding

Natural Causes

- **Heavy Rainfall / Flash Floods:** Heavy rainfall concentrates and flows quickly through urban paved area and impounded in to low lying area raising the water level. It creates more havoc when a main drain or a river passing through the area over-flows or breaches.
- **Lack of Lakes:** Lakes can store the excess water and regulate the flow of water. When lakes become smaller, their ability to regulate the flow become less and hence flooding.
- **Silting:** The drains carry large amounts of sediments and deposited in the lower courses making beds shallower thus channel capacity is reduced. When there is heavy rain, these silted drains can't carry full discharge and result in flooding.

Human Causes

Population Pressure : Because of large amount of people, more materials are needed, like wood, land, food, etc. This aggravates overgrazing, over cultivation and soil erosion which increases the risk of flooding.

Deforestation: Large areas of forests near the rivers/catchment of cities are used to make rooms for settlements, roads and farmlands and is being cleared due to which soil is quickly lost to drains. This raises the drain bed causing overflow and in turn urban flooding.

Trespassing on Water Storm Drains: The areas which were essentially created by the storm water drains to let their flood waters pass freely being trespassed for developmental purposes result in obstruction of water flow and thus contributed immensely to the fury of floods.

Urbanisation: It leads to paving of surfaces which decreases ground absorption and increases the speed and amount of surface flow. The water rushes down suddenly into the streams from their catchment areas leading to a sudden rise in water level and flash floods. Unplanned urbanisation is the key cause of urban flooding. Various kinds of depression and low lying areas near or around the cities which were act as cushions and flood absorbers are gradually filled up and built upon due to urbanisation pressure. This results in inadequate channel capacity causing urban flooding.

Un-Authorised Colonies : These colonies have been developed by the local colonisers on the agriculture land, earlier being used for crop has been purchased at lucrative prices from farmers, without consideration to the city plans ,drainage, sewerage etc. and thus subjected to flooding during heavy rain falls.

Urban-Flooding and Effects

The flooding affects every section of people, systems in a city, some of them are summarised below:

Economic Effects

- Concentrated population due to concentrated income earning opportunities;
- Large impermeable surfaces and construction of buildings;
- Concentration of solid and liquid waste without any formal disposal systems;
- Obstructed drainage systems;
- Intensive economic activities;

- High value of infrastructure and properties;
- Forcing out of poor from official land markets giving rise to informal settlements;
- Housing without any health and hygiene standards; and
- Changes in regions around cities.

After flooding, government has to put many resources for aiding e.g., police force, fire control, aid workers and for restoration of flood affected structures, persons, live-stock etc. The flooding cause a great economic loss to the state, individual and to the society.

Environmental Effects

- Damage to surroundings, forests, ridges, wild-life, zoo, urban community-trees, water bodies, shrubs, grass, fruits/vegetables in go downs etc result imbalance of eco-system of the city.

Effect on Traffic

- Flooding results in the damages of roads, collapse of bridges causing traffic congestion which affect day-to-day life and other transportation system.

Effect on Human Beings

- Human lives: Every year floods in India cause more than 50 lac people affected dead and become homeless.
- Psychological impact: The people of all ages who stranded in flooding suffer a great Psychological impact disturbing their whole life and the society as whole.

Live Stock

- The live stock is the most affected living being due to urban floods. It is difficult to care for them particularly when human being itself is in trouble.

Disease: Flooding usually brings infectious diseases, e.g. Military Fever,

Pneumonic Plagues, Dermatopathia, Dysentery, Common Cold, Dengue, Break Bone Fever, etc. Chances of food poisoning also become more where electric supply interrupted in food-storage area due to flooding.

Public Inconveniences

The flooding causes impairment of transport and communication system due to which all people of all section get stranded e.g. school children, college students, office goers, vegetable, milk vendors etc. The basic and essential commodities also do not reach to the common person. This result either starvation to poor persons or high priced to the common persons.

Integrated Flood Management

The primary framework concept is Integrated Flood Management (IFM). IFM, within the overall Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) promotes an integrated and holistic – rather than fragmented – approach to flood management. It integrates land and water resources development in a river basin and aims at combining the efficient use of flood plains and the reduction of loss of life due to flooding. In order to approach these aims, IFM endorses a combination of policy, regulatory, financial and physical measures which focus on coping with floods while recognizing that floods can never be fully controlled. In this sense IFM calls for a paradigm shift away from the reactive and narrow approaches of traditional ‘flood control’ and towards a ‘flood management’ approach that enables preventative action by recognizing the full range of interrelationships between floods and spaces of human development.

This is a fundamental principle of the concept of Integrated Flood Management (IFM) which deserves particular attention in context of cities

which are subdivided in different municipalities as well as in cities where the institutional setting requires the involvement of national authorities in flood management. However, if organizational structures are not led by competent and accountable leaders they are likely to exclude the concerns of some people, thereby increasing their vulnerability. If the latter applies to municipal authorities it is referred to as “bad urban governance”, which is marked by the inability or unwillingness of authorities to support their hazard prone population during emergency situations as well as in terms of preparedness and recovery.

Present Shortcomings

No single organisation is generally charged with or has an incentive to carry out a comprehensive assessment of the risks of flooding. As organisations manage different parts of the urban drainage infrastructure, they make investment decisions based on a limited cost-benefit analysis that rarely considers the wider drainage issues. The sum total of these individual and piecemeal investment strategies is unlikely to produce the most effective solution. Six categories of inefficiencies are generally noticed in dealing with urban floods. These are related to:

- Comprehensive risk assessment;
- Factoring risks in development planning;
- Coordination among different institutions;
- Lack of information sharing;
- Disintegrated investment decisions; and
- Lack of consultation with stakeholders

Institutional Arrangements

The organizational focus of urban flood risk management is therefore

the municipality. The performance of the municipality is the key factor for the success or failure of flood risk management plans. Basically, there are three main factors which are decisive for the municipal performance.

- **Organizational structure:** It is supposed to clearly assign tasks and responsibilities to the various municipal departments and other involved institutions. Both, the overlapping of responsibilities as well as gaps of non-responsibility, within institutions or between them, hinder effective urban flood risk management.
- **Urban flood management policies and plans:** At this point it has to be underlined again that such plans have to state clear and overall workable targets and measures.
- **Process of implementing:** The success of implementation depends on one hand on the quality of plans, while on the other hand it depends on the municipality’s ability to enforce plans in terms of financial and organizational capacities. This is closely linked to principles of good urban governance which comprise transparency, accountability, participation, efficiency and equity.

Flood Measures after Cessation of Floods

Restoration of power installation, public assets like road, railways, bridges, sewerage and water supply schemes and drains, merchandise and shopping areas, industries / factory equipments, public building, etc. Demarcation of land lines & removal of overlapping sand/silt layer of flooded area are to be done. System of post-monsoon surveys needs to be done and corrective measures are adopted in time bound manner to avoid flooding in future. Always boil drinking water. Electrical equipment should be checked and dried before used.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Complexity of flood risk evolution process requires a clear understanding of the construct of the typology of various components of flood risks and the factors that mitigate or abate them. Many sectoral development processes have profound influence on their management. The complex interaction between development processes and flood risk genesis requires a clear conceptual framework which is supported by appropriate organisational and institutional mechanisms to develop and implement surface water management plans. Following issues need to be addressed while developing and implementing such plans.

- Urban flood risks are more than flood waters; risks result from a combination of components, comprising hazard, exposure and vulnerability. The recognition of these components facilitates the understanding of flood risks because it underlines that only the combination of natural and human factors create flood risks.
- Municipalities are well advised to spend adequate resources for comprehensive flood risk assessments. Only if there is data which clearly indicates which neighbourhoods are most at risk,

successful measures can be planned. Information about existing flood risks forms the basis for decision-making.

- Community participation in flood risk assessment as well as in planning and implementation of risk management measures is key for the success of flood risk management plans. Meeting the needs of stakeholders is only possible if stakeholders are involved in the decision-making process.
- Flood management measures have to be planned across administrative and sectoral boundaries. Institutionalized links between concerned authorities facilitate cooperative planning.
- Up and downstream aspects have to be factored in urban flood risk management. Too extensive drainage may constitute a severe flood hazard for downstream settlements. Finding an adequate compromise between stormwater drainage and source control needs profound consideration and consultation with all stakeholders.
- Successful urban flood risk management is only possible if different measures, comprising structural and non-structural,

spatial and organizational, are combined.

- The implementation of multiple purpose measures enables municipalities to achieve multiple goals (flood mitigation, water supply, space for recreational activities, groundwater recharge, improvement of urban aesthetics etc.).
- Recognizing sustainable, flood aware urban planning as the most promising strategy for successful flood risk management in the long run. Flood aspects have to form an integral part of urban planning.
- Monitoring and evaluation of implemented measures enable the identification of best practices under the specific circumstances and help to constantly improve flood risk management plans.

General Studies Paper- I

Topic: Role of women and women's organization, Population and associated issues, Poverty and development issues, Urbanization, their problems and their remedies.

General Studies Paper- III

Topic: Disaster and disaster management.



SEVEN SUBJECTIVE QUESTIONS WITH MODEL ANSWERS

Indian Farmers and Year 2022

Q1. Discuss the strategy and mechanism of the government to double the farmer's income. Also examine what India can learn from China's similar initiative.

Hints:

- The government's initiative to increase farmers' incomes is welcome as it is central to dealing with the agrarian crisis in India. Various mechanisms for increasing farmers' incomes from the perspective of small farmers and farm workers are critically examined. While presenting the budget, the finance minister announced that Minimum Support Price (MSP) for a majority of rabi and kharif crops would be one-and-a-half times of the production cost, which is a welcome step.
- Recently Prime Minister proposed a four-pronged strategy to achieve his government's key agrarian agenda of doubling farmers' income: reducing cultivation costs, ensuring profitable prices, processing farm waste and creating non-farm sources of income.
- The need to focus on farmers' incomes instead of production or the growth rate in agriculture stems from the fact that there has been agrarian distress in the sector for the last two decades. As per NSSO (National Sample Survey Office) survey in 2003, which reported that 40% of Indian farmers disliked farming as a profession due to its low profits, high risk and the lack of social status.
- The need to focus on farmers' incomes also stems from the fact that a very large proportion of farming households in most of the central and eastern states (23%–45%) live below the poverty line (BPL), higher than the national average (22.5%). The proportion of BPL farming households (17.5%–22.5%), even in some of the so-called agriculturally progressive states, such as Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, is close to the national average. Further, the gap between farm and non-farm incomes has grown over the decades.
- It is estimated that doubling incomes in nominal terms requires six years and, in real terms, 13 years and it is going to need longer time frames in both respects for marginal and small farmers. Further, it would need varied time frames across different states depending on the state-level growth rates of farming.
- Again, it is important to clarify what is sought to be doubled. Is it the income of farmers, or the output or the income of the sector or the value added or GDP of agriculture sector? If technology, input prices, wages and labour use could result in per unit cost savings then farmers' income would rise at a much higher rate than the output. Another very important source of increase in farmers' income is the relative increase in prices of farm products compared to the prices of non-agricultural commodities.
- There could be various mechanisms to achieve growth in farmers' incomes within as well as outside the farm sector. The major sources of growth operating within agriculture sector are improvement in productivity, resource use efficiency or saving in cost of production, increase in cropping intensity and diversification towards high value crops. The sources outside agriculture include shifting cultivators from farm to non-farm occupations and improvement in terms of trade for farmers or real prices received by farmers.
- The sources of growth in output and income can be put in three categories : (i) development initiatives including infrastructure, (ii) technology, (iii) policies and institutional mechanisms.
- China set this objective of doubling farmers' incomes in 2008, but it plans to meet it over 12 years (2008–20) and not five to seven years despite the fact that China has better functioning institutions and infrastructure in place.
- The Chinese strategy of doubling the income of farmers involves expanding channels for the generation of income, expanding the non-agricultural sector to shift surplus labour out of agriculture and into medium and large cities, and building an integrated labour market. It also includes subsidies for grain production and farm inputs, a minimum grain procurement price, reform of agricultural laws and regulations and opening the agricultural sector to the world.

India-Iran : Old Friends in New World

Q2. The engagement between India and Iran is entering in a new era, as the two countries deepen cooperation in many sectors. Critically analyse the nature of relationship between two countries.

Hints:

- Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's recent state visit to India has strengthened the prospects of India-Iran relations and raised India's profile in the region.. India and Iran signed agreements and memorandums of understanding on a wide variety of issues. Among the announcements was the decision to award India the contract to operate the ChabaharShahidBeheshti port terminal after the project is completed.
- Rouhani's visit provided a welcome opportunity to the two sides to give a vigorous push to bilateral ties in the areas of connectivity, energy, infrastructure, trade, investment, security, defence and culture and people-to-people contacts. The nine agreements signed during the visit covering a wide gamut of issues including all the above subjects will provide a strong impetus to bilateral engagement. In addition, deliberations between the two leaders were helpful to develop understanding and iron over some wrinkles that have appeared in bilateral ties during recent years.
- Chabahar provides a strategic option to India to connect with Afghanistan and Central Asia and beyond by sidestepping an uncooperative Pakistan. An agreement was signed to provisionally hand over the management of Chabahar to India for the next 18 months. It is a natural harbour and can serve as the sourcing point for the International North-South Transport Corridor which has also been taken up much more seriously in recent years.
- India will set up plants in sectors such as fertilizers, petrochemicals and metallurgy in Chabahar Free Trade Zone (FTZ) on terms mutually beneficial to the concerned parties." This will be a win-win investment as it will promote India's energy security while providing financial resources and employment opportunities to Iran. These ventures will also provide additional cargo and business for transportation, both in and out, to Chabahar port.
- Bilateral cooperation in security, defence and fight against terrorism emerged as significant areas of cooperation. A Bilateral Extradition Treaty was signed and it was also decided to have enhanced cooperation in the maritime domain. The two countries agreed to hold dialogue to look into measures for cooperation in defence sphere,

including port calls by naval ships, training and regular exchanges of defence delegations.

- Ensuring security and stability in Afghanistan, which is vital to peace in the region, poses a challenge to both India and Iran. Both countries desire peace in Afghanistan but their approaches are markedly different.
- India maintains that there cannot be a distinction between "good Taliban" and "bad Taliban." It contends that terrorist attacks perpetrated by the Taliban and Haqqani network which enjoy safe havens in Pakistan are the root cause of the problem and that these groups cannot be a part of the solution. Iran's position is quite different. It wants US troops to leave Afghanistan as soon as possible. In addition, it has expressed readiness to collaborate with Pakistan and China to bring the Taliban to the negotiating table.
- Other challenges in bilateral relations relate to India's growing ties with USA, Israel, Saudi Arabia and UAE, all of which are intractable rivals of Iran.
- Notwithstanding the fact that the two countries do not see eye to eye on some issues, India and Iran have decided to focus their energies on areas of concurrence and rapidly embark on a mutually beneficial and fruitful partnership.

Politics of Purging : Race and Religion on Citizenship

Q3. Illegal migration into Assam from Bangladesh has been posing a serious security threat to the identity of Assamese people. It adversely affects the social, economic and political environment of Assam. Discuss.

Hints:

- The flow of immigrants started during the rule of British and continued till today due to the pull and push factors. The deportation of illegal migrants become difficult due to the lack of strong law and political will, as illegal migrants are used as a vote bank by different political parties. The data provided in the study indicates that if necessary steps are not taken immediately, Assam, the elder sister of North-East India would lose its identity from the map of India very soon. The illegal migration is one of the major reasons for social and ethnic violence in Assam. Therefore it is high time that India takes stringent measures against the illegal migrants who have become a real threat to the security of the country.
- Social consequences are:
 - ◆ Crisis of identity: The influx of immigrants created a crisis of identity among the indigenous Assamese. Their cultural survival will be in jeopardy, their

political control will be weakened and their employment opportunities will be undermined by such illegal migration. Assamese found that though the immigrants had settled in Assam, most of them failed to identify themselves with the mainstream. The recent Bodo-Muslim violence in the BTAD has its root on the issue of illegal migration.

- ♦ Environmental degradation: Large areas of forest land were encroached upon by the immigrants for settlement and cultivation. The state experienced declining percent of land area under forest from 39% in 1951-52 to about 30% now.
- ♦ Difficult to identify the illegal migrants: Due to the similar language spoken by illegal migrants from Bangladesh and the indigenous Bengali speaking Muslim of Assam, it becomes difficult to identify and deport the illegal migration from Assam soil.
- ♦ Community tension: The commission on integration and cohesion found that tension usually exist with the presence of high levels of migration combine with other forms of social exclusion like poverty, poor housing etc.
- Economic consequences are:
 - ♦ Increase financial burden: Immigration has increased pressure on the part of state government, as the government has to increase the expenditure on education and health facilities to the immigrants.
 - ♦ Displacing native workers: There is a fear particularly during a recession that immigrants take jobs which would otherwise be taken by local people; in particular place and circumstances there can be competition and conflict.
 - ♦ Decreases wage level with the increase of population: Illegal immigrants in every year have been adding a good number of people in Assam. It is one of the main reasons of population explosion. Due to this there is a possibility of decreasing wage level.
- Political consequences are:
 - ♦ Assam agitation: The failure of government to respond the issue of illegal migration led to the agitation by the Assamese under the leadership of All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP) and All Assam Student's Union (AASU). Assam witnessed governmental instability, sustained civil disobedience campaigns and worst cases of ethnic violence. Assam accord was the result of this agitation.
 - ♦ Illegal voters: Most of the Bangladeshi immigrants have got their names enlisted in the voting list illegally,

thereby claiming themselves as citizens of the state. The immigrant's population act as a vote bank for the political parties in Assam. The recent initiative NRC (National Register of Citizens) is meant for the detection of illegal Bangladeshi migrants. However success of such initiative will depend on the strong political will.

- ♦ Issue of terrorism: Pakistan's ISI has been active in Bangladesh supporting militant movements in Assam. It is alleged that among the illegal migrants there are also militants, who enter into Assam to carry out the terrorist activities.
- Conclusion: A problem which has its historical roots so deep cannot be solved overnight. The dangerous consequences of large scale illegal migration from Bangladesh, both for the people of Assam and more for the Nation as a whole, need to be emphatically stressed. No misconceived and mistaken notions of secularism should be allowed to come in the way of doing so. Illegal migration from Bangladesh is no longer a regional problem which can be pushed under the carpet. These migrants are now spread in several states and distant places such as Rajasthan, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra and so on.
- This silent and invidious demographic invasion of Assam may result in the loss of the geo strategically vital districts of lower Assam. The influx of these illegal migrants is turning these districts into a Muslim majority region. It will then only be a matter of time when a demand for their merger with Bangladesh may be made. Thus it is high time to solve the problems of illegal migration to save Assamese people in their own land and to save the nation from the threat of immigrants.

Institutes of Eminence

- Q4. The government of India is seeking to change the bad situation in higher education sector by establishing 20 world-class "institutions of eminence" around the country. How can India build such institutions? Why World Class Institutions Required? Discuss.**

Hints:

- Recently government of India appointed former Chief Election Commissioner N Gopalaswamias the chairperson of the committee that will select 20 Institutions of Eminence. Under the Union Human Resource Ministry, government aims to establish ten World Class Institutions (Institutes of Eminence) each in public and private sector in a reasonable time by

providing an enabling regulatory environment that allow them to achieve the highest levels of global excellence in teaching and research.

- The quest to create “world-class” universities has become something of a global obsession in the past decade as governments across the world have put the development of competitive higher education and research systems at the heart of their national economic strategies.
- This concentration of talent is one of the most important facets of a great university, but they have a few other attributes as well. Many Asian nations have realised the link between world-class universities and economic development and have been working hard to build a few such institutions in their countries.
- The number of quality institutions in India has been slowly increasing as the government builds new IITs and IISERs, top Indian institutions have been slipping in their international rankings. It may not be because they have been declining in absolute terms, but because other institutions have been raising their standards rapidly — some with the explicit intention of grabbing higher ranks.
- Despite strong ambitions, the higher education system in India still lags behind the standards of the world’s best universities. In the QS World University Rankings 2015/16, only two Indian universities were featured in the top 200, while just 10 made it into the top 700.
- Because of this demand and the lenient system which regulates higher educational institutions, there are hundreds of privately set-up colleges offering a sub-par standard of education in India in order to turn a profit. This results in graduates who are unable or unfit to enter the professions their degrees are supposed to train them for. Currently with one of the highest youth population in the world, India faces its greatest opportunity as well as challenge. It is slated to become the world's youngest nation by 2022 and this population bulge not only provides for a huge reservoir of manpower, but also draws unprecedented focus towards making this talent pool employable.
- India, which contributes a significant share of students and faculty in the world's leading universities, does not itself have any representation among the top-tier of global universities. Whenever a reputed international ranking agency releases its ranking of educational institutions any year, the general reaction is one of dismay at Indian institutions not finding place in the list of top institutions of the world or even of Asia. There is a pressing need for the Government to provide a suitable environment to promote the growth of Indian

higher educational institutions, as globally renowned centres of excellence.

- It should be the Government’s aim that the education system, from pre-school to higher education, ensures that all young people receive a high-quality education and a solid foundation for engaging in lifelong education. The education system should also contribute to fostering a learning culture that promotes creativity, independence and responsibility. There must be cohesion between the various education pathways and levels such that the individual can obtain qualifications and competences. The Government has to set specific goals for all levels of the education system— from pre-school to university level higher education.

State of Forest Report-2017

Q5. Discuss the findings of the India State of Forest Report (SFR) 2017 and its significance.

Hints:

- The 15th State of Forest Report shows that India’s total forest cover increased by 0.94 per cent, from 7,01,673 square kilometers to 7,08,273 square kilometers since its last assessment in 2015. The biannual report is prepared by The Forest Survey of India (FSI), a body under Ministry of Environment & Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC), which conducts surveys and assessment of forest resources in the country.
- Key findings of the report are: Forest and Tree Cover of the country has increased by 8,021 sq km (1 %) as compared to assessment of 2015. The very dense forest has increased by 1.36 % as compared to last assessment. This is very heartening as VDF absorbs maximum carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
- The increasing trend of forest and tree cover is largely due to the various national policies aimed at conservation and sustainable management of our forests like Green India Mission, National Agro-Forestry policy (NAP), REDD plus policy, Joint Forest Management (JFM), National Afforestation Programme and funds under Compensatory Afforestation to States.
- Successful agro-forestry practices, better conservation of forests, improvement of scrub areas to forest areas, increase in mangrove cover, conservation and protection activities have also led to increase in the forest and tree cover.
- Green Highways (Plantations & Maintenance) Policy to develop 1,40,000 km long tree line with plantation along with both sides of national highways will go a long way in enhancing the forest & tree cover.

- Top 5 states where maximum forest cover has increased are Andhra Pradesh (2,141 sqkms), Karnataka (1,101 sqkms), Kerala (1,043 sqkms), Odisha (885 sqkms) and Telangana (565 sqkms).
- Top 5 states where forest cover has decreased are Mizoram (531 sq km), Nagaland (450 sq km), Arunachal Pradesh (190 sq km), Tripura (164 sq km) and Meghalaya (116 sq km). It is important to mention here that these states are in the North Eastern region of the country where the total forest cover is very high i.e. more than 70% in each state.
- The main reasons for the decrease are - shifting cultivation, other biotic pressures, rotational felling, diversion of forest lands for developmental activities, submergence of forest cover, agriculture expansion and natural disasters.
- State Forest Departments besides plantation and protection also undertake steps to improve water conservation through different interventions such as building Check dams, vegetation barriers, percolation ponds, contour trenches etc. under various Central & State Government schemes.
- Mangrove forests have increased by 181 sqkms. Maharashtra (82 sqkms), Andhra Pradesh (37 sqkms) and Gujarat (33 sqkms) are the top three gainers in terms of mangrove cover. 7 out of the 12 mangrove states have shown an increase in mangrove cover and none of them show any negative change.
- It will also serve as a useful source of information for the policy makers, planners, State Forest Departments, line agencies involved in various developmental works, academicians, civil society and others interested in natural resource conservation and management.
- Naturally, environmental economists have come to regard the calculation of national accounts of wealth and development as weak, because governments do not add the benefits of functions such as flood control and climate moderation to the value of forests. Such a failure erodes the gains made by many communities, because lost natural capital contributes to material losses. India must review the programmes that it has been pursuing to revive forests, and move away from monoculture plantations that are favoured by even forest development corporations in many States. Scientific reforms to bring true nature back are needed.

Petroyuan : Oil-For-Yuan Contract

- Q6. China is planning the launch of a yuan-denominated oil futures exchange, dubbed as 'Petroyuan'. Will the Chinese gambit be succeed? Critically discuss how this move by China will affect global energy markets.**

Hints:

- In a move that could cause a major shift in global energy markets and also allow it to play a bigger role in the global economy, China is planning the launch of a yuan-denominated oil futures exchange also known as the petroyuan.
- It will be the first crude oil benchmark in Asia, which is important because that's where consumption of oil is growing at a faster rate. And it will be the first contract priced in Chinese currency, known as the renminbi or yuan. Currently, the main global benchmarks for crude oil are in New York and London — and priced in dollars.
- The exchange plans to handle seven kinds of crude, particularly from the Middle East, including Iraq's Basra Light, Dubai and Oman crude. Most of the oil, with a few exceptions now coming to the fore, is sold and bought in USD, which means all oil consumers have to purchase dollars to buy oil.
- The Chinese currency did receive a boost, albeit symbolic, in 2016, when the IMF included the yuan in its basket of global currencies that determine the value of its international reserve asset, the Special Drawing Right (SDR).
- There are some takers for the yuan. Russia and Iran have been using the yuan to settle some oil transactions since 2015. Venezuela too has shown some interest in trading in yuan and Angola and Nigeria are also selling some oil and gas in the Chinese currency. And as recently as January 2018, Pakistan's central bank said it has officially adopted the yuan as a currency for trade with China.
- The real test of the yuan's international acceptability, however, will be Saudi Arabia. If the Kingdom, which was largely responsible for instituting the USD as the global currency, accepts the yuan, even partly, for its exports to China, that will go a long way in making the Chinese currency more acceptable internationally.
- Nevertheless, the success of the yuan oil futures contract will depend largely on market regulation (and room for intervention) on the market, which could deter international investors from bringing huge volumes into the contract.
- Some analysts believe that while it makes sense for the world's key oil import market to launch yuan oil futures, it would take years for the yuan to really threaten the supremacy of the 'entrenched' petrodollar.
- A strong argument against the petroyuan is that the yuan itself is not a very user-friendly currency, compared to the US dollar or Euro. Moving significant amounts of yuan in and out of China can be tricky and the regulations constraining yuan trading could indeed present some difficulties for the would-be users of the new oil futures contract.

Epidemic of Urban Floods

Q7. Urban floods not only as an ecological disturbance produced due to anthropogenic factors, but also as an occurrence within a sociopolitical space. Substantiate.

Hints:

- For the last two decades, urban water bodies have been a victim of unplanned urbanisation in India, because of which they face several threats such as encroachment, disposal of sewage, groundwater decline leading to fall in the level of lake, unplanned tourism and absence of administrative framework. Management of Urban Flooding report, published by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in 2010, says that concretisation is a major problem in many cities and towns. According to the Union Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD), 31 per cent of the country was urbanised in 2011. The ministry says almost 50 per cent of the country will be urbanised by 2050. MoUD data also suggests a 54 per cent increase in the number of cities and towns between 2001 and 2011.
- Anthropogenic factor includes:
 - ♦ Pollution: There has been an explosive increase in the urban population without corresponding expansion of civic facilities. Such as adequate infrastructure for the disposal of waste. Hence, as more people are migrating to cities, the urban civic services are becoming less adequate. As a result, almost all urban water bodies in India are suffering because of pollution. In many cases the water bodies have been turned into landfills. Guwahati's Deeporbeel, for example, is used by the municipal corporation to dump solid waste since 2006. Even the Pallikarni marshland in Chennai is used for solid waste dumping. Adding to the sorry state of urban water bodies is also the misuse of these water bodies by local communities for their cultural or religious festivals such as the immersion of idols. Heavy metal concentration is found in Nagpur lakes, Bhopal lakes and Hussainsagar Lake in Hyderabad after the immersion of idols every year.
 - ♦ Encroachment: This is another major threat to urban water bodies. As more people are migrating to cities, the availability of land is getting scarce. Today, even a small piece of land in urban areas has high economic value. Hence, these urban water bodies are no more acknowledged for their ecosystem services but as real estate. Charkop Lake in Maharashtra, Ousteri Lake in Puducherry, Deeporbeel in Guwahati are well known examples of encroachment. Another interesting example of encroachment and pollution, not by some private builder but the government itself is Pallikarni marshland in Chennai. The size of this city wetland is decreasing rapidly. Once a bird sanctuary, it is now the dumping yard of the city. The dumping of solid waste, sewage discharge, and construction of new buildings such as a railway station and a new road have shrunk this wetland to a great extent. Another example of government encroachment is Sola beel in Guwahati where the state revenue department allotted the lake bed for construction, in spite of Gauhati High Court's order to protect all wetlands in the state.
 - ♦ Illegal mining activities: Illegal mining for building material such as sand and quartzite both on the catchment and on the bed of the lake have extremely damaging impact on the water body. For example, the Jaisamand Lake in Jodhpur, once the only source of drinking water for the city, has been suffering from illegal mining in the catchment area for the last 20 years, despite a court order to stop mining in 1999. Badkhal Lake in Faridabad has dried up in the same way. Unmindful sand mining from the catchment of Vembanad Lake on the outskirts of Kochi has lowered the water level in the lake.
 - ♦ Unplanned tourism activities: Using water bodies to attract tourists has become a threat to several urban lakes in India. TsoMorari and Pongsho lakes in Ladakh have become polluted because of unplanned and unregulated tourism. Another example is Ashtamudi Lake in Kerala's Kollam city that has become polluted because of spillage of oil from motor boats.
 - ♦ Absence of administrative framework: The biggest challenge remains the government apathy towards water bodies. This can be understood from the fact that the government does not even have data on the total number of urban water bodies in the country. Few cities have recorded water bodies because of court rulings. A 2010-11 Comptroller and Auditor General of India report on the plight of 22 lakes in 14 states said: MoEF&CC (Union Ministry of Environment & Climate Change) had not identified wetlands associated with each river/lake and no identifications of risks to these wetlands due to pollution of river water/lake water had been carried out by CPCB (Central Pollution Control Board). Further, CPCB had not identified the major aquatic

species, birds, plants and animals facing risks due to pollution of rivers and lakes.

- ◆ By pinpointing socio-political sources of vulnerability, risk management decision-support systems help city administrators and residents intervene appropriately. This means making explicit the spatial distribution and temporal dynamics of such social-political drivers, as well as their relationships with “hard” infrastructure and hydrological processes. In doing so, decision-makers can better evaluate how efforts to reduce vulnerability through costly hard-infrastructure investments may be derailed, for example, by the politics of water resource access or inequities in access to land for housing development.
- Conclusion: The urban flooding is the connections between humans and nature, highlighting the power geographies (re)producing the urban environment in

the city. And thus underlining the importance of re-politicising the urban flood discourse to formulate more effective and integrated flood governance. Further, the public recognition of state-sanctioned encroachments and the nuisance of unplanned, irrelevant schemes have exposed the underlying causes of the floods. Making the social and political processes that undergird urban risk dynamics tractable and transparent is a political act as much as a research challenge and one that may not be welcome in all spheres of decision making. Nevertheless, the increasing burden of managing risk and the urgency of finding more sustainable pathways of urban development provide opportunities for more transparent and democratic decision making. Sustainability science can and should help meet this challenge, using new methods that incorporate the complexities of social-hydrological risk in vulnerability assessment and planning.



SEVEN IMPORTANT NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWS

NATIONAL

1. Ombudsman Scheme for NBFCs

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced an ombudsman scheme for customers of non-banking finance companies to redress complaints against deficiency in services concerning deposits and loans among others.

- An officer at the RBI not below the rank of general manager will be appointed by the regulator as the ombudsman with territorial jurisdiction being specified by the central bank. The tenure of each ombudsman cannot exceed three years and can be reduced by the regulator if needed.
- Any customer or person can file a complaint with the ombudsman on various grounds like non-payment or inordinate delay in payment

of interest, non-repayment of deposits, lack of transparency in loan agreement, non-compliance with RBI directives on fair practices code for NBFCs, levying of charges without sufficient notice to the customers and failure or delay in returning the securities documents despite repayment of dues among others.

- If a complaint is not settled by agreement within a specified period as the ombudsman may allow the parties, he may, after affording the parties a “reasonable opportunity to present their case, either in writing or in a meeting, pass an award either allowing or rejecting the complaint”.



- The ombudsman will be required to send a report to the RBI governor annually on 30 June containing general review of the activities of his office during the preceding financial year and other information required by the central bank.
- The scheme also allows a person to appeal in case of dissatisfaction with any award by the ombudsman. ■

2. Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) on Medicinal and Aromatic Plants

An Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) on Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAPs) has been set up for the North Eastern Region (NER). This was decided after a meeting between Secretaries of DoNER and AYUSH. The IMC is to create synergy in various

programmes of the Union Government to enable medicinal and aromatic plants sector become vibrant and develop the resources to its potential. The IMC will comprise members from various Ministries, Departments and several organisations in the relevant fields.

The Ministry of Development of North-East Region (MDoNER) will be the coordinator for the IMC of MAPs. The Committee will review the existing mechanism or institutional arrangements for management and development of MAPs resources of NER. The IMC will identify gaps in

the existing mechanism or institutional arrangements, suggest a policy intervention for optimally harnessing the MAPs resources of NER and accelerating the development of MAPs sector, suggest a Plan of Action for dovetailing of the schemes and programmes of concerned Ministries and Departments. The IMC will also suggest actionable measures for enhancing the livelihood and economic transformation based on cultivation and sustainable management of MAPs resource in North East Region. ■



3. Cyber Security Incidents in 2017

As per the information reported to and tracked by Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), Over 53,000 cyber security incidents like phishing, website intrusions and defacements, virus and ransomware attacks were observed in the country

during 2017. With the proliferation and vast expansion of Information Technology and related services, there is a rise in instances of cyber-crimes including financial frauds, using bank cards and e-wallets in the country like elsewhere in the world.

Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC) for protection of critical infrastructure in the country. Besides, cyber-crime cells have been set up in all states and union territories for reporting and investigation of cyber-crime cases.



The government has taken a number of legal, technical and administrative measures to prevent incidents of cyber-crime. These include enactment of the IT Act, 2000 that has adequate provisions for dealing with prevalent cyber-crimes and establishment of National

NCIIPC

National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC) is an organisation created under Sec 70A of the Information Technology Act, 2000. It is designated as the National Nodal Agency in respect of Critical Information Infrastructure Protection.

4. Ganga Gram, New Swajal Project and Gangotri Swachh Iconic Place launched

Union Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, launched the Bagori Ganga Gram project, New Swajal Project at Bagori and Gangotri Iconic Place at Dunda village in Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand. Besides creating cleanliness, providing basic amenities to the people of Ganga bank villages, these projects would also generate employment.

About agori Ganga Gram project:

Bagori Ganga Gram project is a solid and liquid waste management scheme

with a total expense of Rs 11.88 lakh. Open Defecation Free village Bagori is one of the 24 pilot Ganga Villages picked up to be transformed into Ganga Grams this year.

New Swajal Project

Swajal is a community owned drinking water programme for sustained drinking water supply. The project was inaugurated at Bagori. It has budgetary support of more than Rs. 32 lakh. Currently, Swajal scheme is successfully running in village Sadag since 1996.

Gangotri as Swachh Iconic Places

The project aims to make Gangotri as Swachh Iconic Place (SIP). For this, CSR funds of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) will be used for making Gangotri SIP. The SIP project is coordinated by Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation (MDWS), in collaboration with Union Ministries of Housing & Urban Affairs, Tourism, Culture, state governments, municipal and local agencies.

5. Supercritical CO²-Brayton Cycle Facility Opened at IISc

A supercritical carbon dioxide Brayton cycle test loop facility, touted to be India's first supercritical-CO² Brayton cycle test bed, and perhaps the first ever coupled with a solar heat source, was inaugurated at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru. This is India's first test-bed for next generation, efficient, compact, waterless super

critical carbon dioxide Brayton cycle test loop for power generation. The technology is perhaps the first test loop coupled with solar heat source in the world.

This early stage research could potentially be useful for meeting the energy needs of the country. The new generation high efficiency power plants

with closed cycle CO² as the working fluid have the potential to replace steam based nuclear and thermal power plants, thus reducing the carbon foot print significantly. This test loop is designed to generate the necessary data for future development of scaled up S-CO² power plants, which would require overcoming several

technological challenges –developing critical components such as the turbine, compressor and heat exchangers that can work at the desired pressure and temperature ranges and using materials that can withstand these conditions. The efficiency of energy conversion could

also be significantly increased—by as much as 50 percent or more—if S-CO₂ is operated in a closed loop Brayton cycle. Besides increasing power generation and making the process more efficient, there are other advantages of using this new technology. Smaller turbines and

power blocks can make the power plant cheaper, while higher efficiency would significantly reduce CO₂ emissions for fossil fuel based plants. Moreover, if the power plant used solar or nuclear heat source, it would mean higher capacity at lower operating costs. ■

6. Government Dropped the Idea of an India EV Policy

The government has decided against formulating an electric vehicle (EV) policy in an apparent U-turn from its position so far, providing a breather to many carmakers that are unprepared for an abrupt shift to the clean-fuel technology. The government's decision to have an EV policy had created uncertainty in the automobile industry for the past year, although several companies had outlined their strategies for EVs or lobbied the government to drop the idea. The existing FAME (incentive) scheme may continue for another two years. To overcome some of the problems for electric vehicles,

NITI Aayog, along with Colorado-based Rocky Mountain Institute, in their 2017 report on the future of shared, electric and connected mobility future in India, had suggested setting up "a manufacturer consortium for batteries, common components and platforms to develop battery cell technologies and packs and to procure common components for Indian original equipment manufacturers".

About FAME India Scheme

FAME India scheme [Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles in India] was

launched in 2015, with the objective to support hybrid/electric vehicles market development and manufacturing ecosystem. The scheme has 4 focus areas i.e. technology development, demand creation, pilot projects and charging infrastructure.

The FAME India scheme is aimed at incentivising all vehicle segments i.e. 2 Wheeler, 3 Wheeler Auto, Passenger 4 Wheeler Vehicle and Light Commercial Vehicles and Buses. The scheme covers Hybrid & Electric technologies like Mild Hybrid, Strong Hybrid and Plug in Hybrid & Battery Electric Vehicles. ■

7. Atal Bhujal Yojana

The government has finalised the contours of a Rs 6,000-crore scheme to tackle the country's depleting groundwater level, called the Atal Bhujal Yojana (ABY) and piloted by the Union water resources ministry, the scheme now needs the cabinet's clearance. It will be launched in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Haryana, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, covering 78 districts, 193 blocks and more than 8,300 gram panchayats. Half of the Rs

6,000 crore earmarked for the scheme will come from government budgetary support and the World Bank will give another Rs 3,000 crore.

Background

Ground water in India provides for about 60% of the country's irrigation needs, 85% of rural drinking water requirements and 50% of urban water needs. Over-exploitation and contamination have left many blocks across the country in a critical stage.

According to a World Bank report, about 245 billion cubic metre of groundwater is abstracted each year in the country. This figure represents about 25% of the total global groundwater abstraction. In the past four to five decades, 80% of the rural and urban domestic

water supplies in India have been dependent on groundwater.

Features

- The duration of the ABY will be five years.
- The government plans to give 50% of the money to states, including gram panchayats, as incentives for achieving targets in groundwater management. That's a first-ever move to encourage community participation and behavioural changes.
- The remaining 50% of the funds will be given to states for strengthening institutional arrangements such as providing a strong database and scientific approach to help them accomplish sustainable management of groundwater. ■



INTERNATIONAL

1. Pakistan Added to FATF Grey-list

The Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF), a global money-laundering watchdog, has put the South Asian country back on its “grey list” of countries suspected of financing terrorist activities and groups, a development that will put pressure on Pakistan’s economy. Pakistan was previously on the list for three years until 2015.

The move came after a motion moved by the US, as part of its broader strategy to pile pressure on Pakistan to sever links with Islamist militant groups seen as targeting Afghanistan and India. Britain, France and Germany backed the US move. China is said to have removed its earlier objections to FATF’s move to put Pakistan on its grey list of terrorism financing because

under FATF rules, one country’s opposition is not enough to prevent a motion from being successful. Being in the “grey list” means that accessing funds from international markets, for example, would become tougher for Islamabad.

FATF

The FATF is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 by the ministers of its member jurisdictions. Its objectives are to set standards and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.



2. The US H-1B Visa Norms

The USA has announced a new US visa policy that makes the procedure of issuing H-1B visas to those to be employed at one or more third-party worksites very tough—a move that will hugely impact Indian IT firms and their employees. Under the new policy, a firm would have to go an extra mile

to prove its H-1B employee at a third-party worksite has specific and non-qualifying speculative assignments in specialty occupation. Currently, H-1B visas are issued for three years at a time. The latest policy memorandum is a part of President Donald Trump’s “Buy American and Hire American

Executive Order” and the directive to protect the interests of US workers.

Indian IT companies, which are among the major beneficiaries of H-1B visas, have a significant number of its employees deployed at third-party worksites. A significant number of American banking, travel and commercial services depend on on-site IT workers from India to get their job done.

H-1B Visa

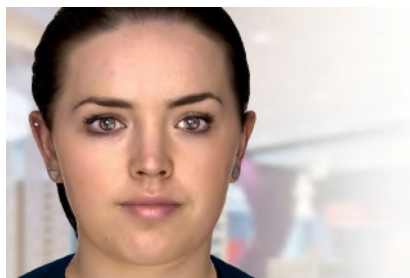
The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. The technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year.



3. Cora: An Artificial Intelligence (AI) Bot

Nat West, a bank in UK, has developed a new “digital human” prototype called Cora to have conversations with customers and help them out with banking queries. An AI powered ‘digital human’, which could in future be used as an additional way for customers to get answers to basic banking queries. It can answer 200 basic banking queries and now has 100,000 conversations a month.

The technology comes from New Zealand-based firm Soul Machines, which uses biologically inspired



models of the human brain and neural networks to create a “virtual nervous system” for its digital humans that can detect human emotion and react verbally as well as physically through facial expressions.

Artificial Intelligence

It is the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines, especially computer systems. These processes include learning (the acquisition of information and rules for using the information), reasoning (using the rules to reach approximate or definite conclusions), and self-correction. Particular applications of AI include expert systems, speech recognition and machine vision.

4. World Congress on Information Technology-2018

The World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT) 2018 was held in Hyderabad, India, with the theme ‘Future Enterprises’. The event was organised by the World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA).

WCIT

It is the largest and the most reputable international event among worldwide IT leaders. It brings together high-level officials from different countries, heads of multinational organizations, universities and scientific research



centers, non - governmental organizations’ representatives and many more. The event includes discussions of legal, political and economic trends affecting IT business processes, presentations of innovative solutions, B2B meetings and so on.

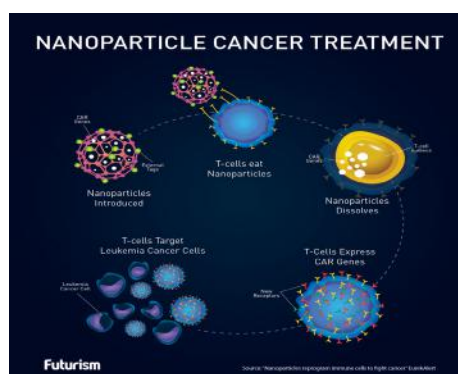
WITSA

WITSA was founded in 1978 as the World Computing Services Industry Association and participates in advocacy in international public policy that affects the global information infrastructure. The motto of WITSA’s is ‘Fulfilling the Promise of the Digital Age’. It is a consortium of associations from the information and communications technology (ICT) industry around the world.

5. Cancer Treatment using Nano Particles

Indian scientists have fabricated highly biocompatible porous polydimethylsiloxane (PDMS) nanoparticles as a versatile vehicle to deliver anti-cancer drugs to the nuclei of tumour cells without utilizing any intrinsic ligands (ions or molecules). The nucleus of any cell contains the majority of its genetic material.

Anti-cancer drugs can be delivered to the nuclei of cells either in a free drug form, or via nano-vehicles-based delivery systems. Targeting the drugs directly to the required cellular



compartments like nuclei reduces their non-specific interactions with other cell components which can limit their efficiency and cause side effects. The

research trials for prostate cancer in mice have shown promising results.

In addition to these, the nucleus is also responsible for the transcriptional regulation of oncogenes (cancerous genes) or tumour suppressor genes. Tumour suppressor gene is the one that protects a cell from one step on the path to cancer. When this gene mutates to cause a loss or reduction in its function, the cell can progress to cancer, usually in combination with other genetic changes.

6. Coral Reefs at Risk of Dissolving: Study

As per the study coral reefs could start to dissolve before 2100 as man-made climate change drives acidification of the oceans. Acidification will threaten sediments that are building blocks for reefs. Corals already face risks from ocean temperatures, pollution and overfishing. Coral reefs will transition to net dissolving before end of century. Net dissolving means reefs would lose more material than they gain from the growth of corals.



The sediments are 10 times more vulnerable to acidification than the tiny coral animals that also extract chemicals directly from the sea water

to build stony skeletons that form reefs. Coral animals will be able to keep growing and replenish reefs long after sandy sediments start to dissolve.

Carbon dioxide, the main man-made greenhouse gas, forms a weak acid in water and threatens to dissolve the reef sediments, made from broken down bits of corals and other carbonate organisms that accumulate over thousands of years.

7. Artificial Intelligence Poses Risks of Misuse by Hackers

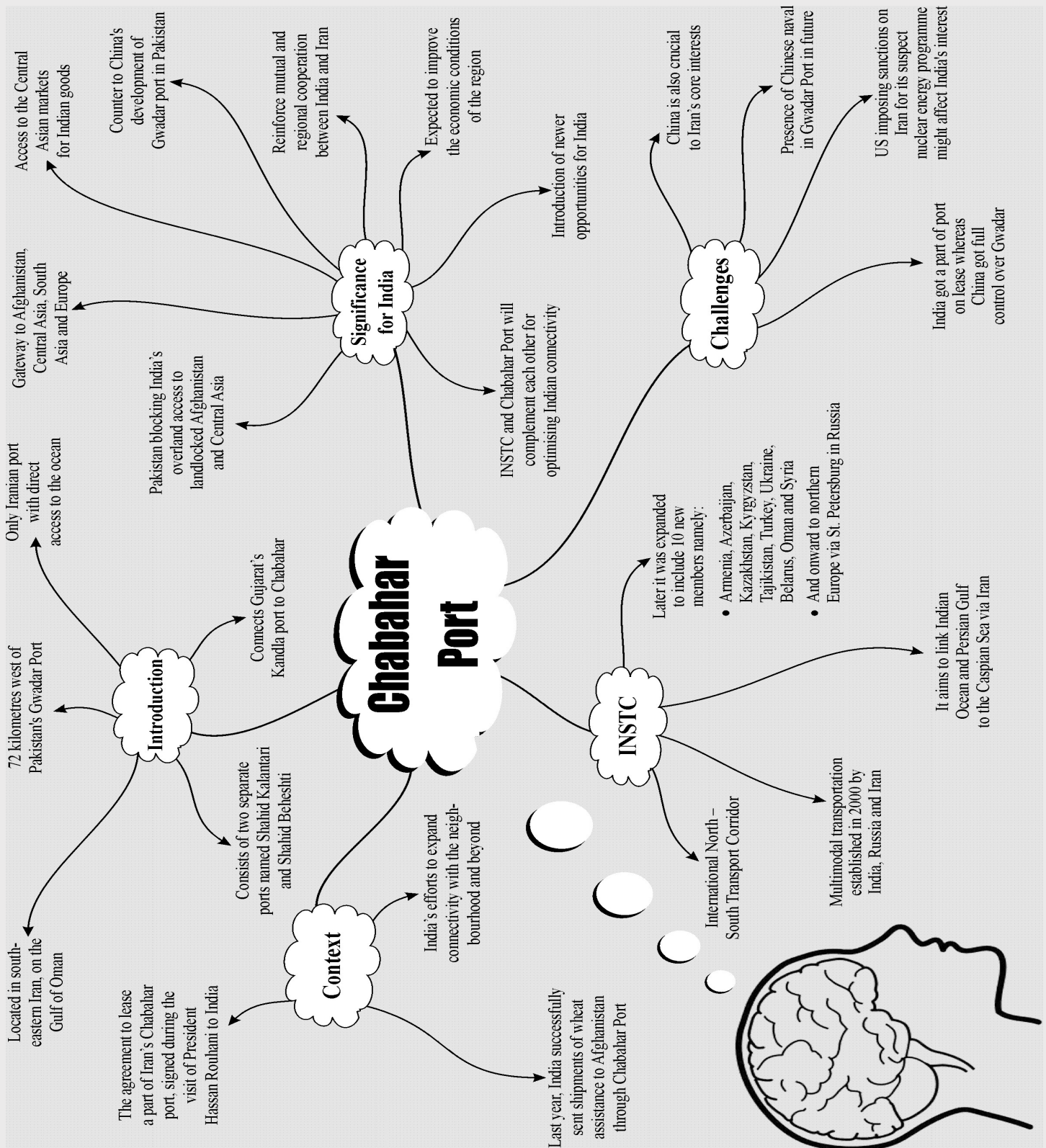
Rapid advances in artificial intelligence are raising risks that malicious users will soon exploit the technology to mount automated hacking attacks, cause driverless car crashes or turn commercial drones into targeted weapons. The researchers said the malicious use of AI poses imminent threats to digital, physical and political security by allowing for large-scale, finely targeted, highly efficient attacks.

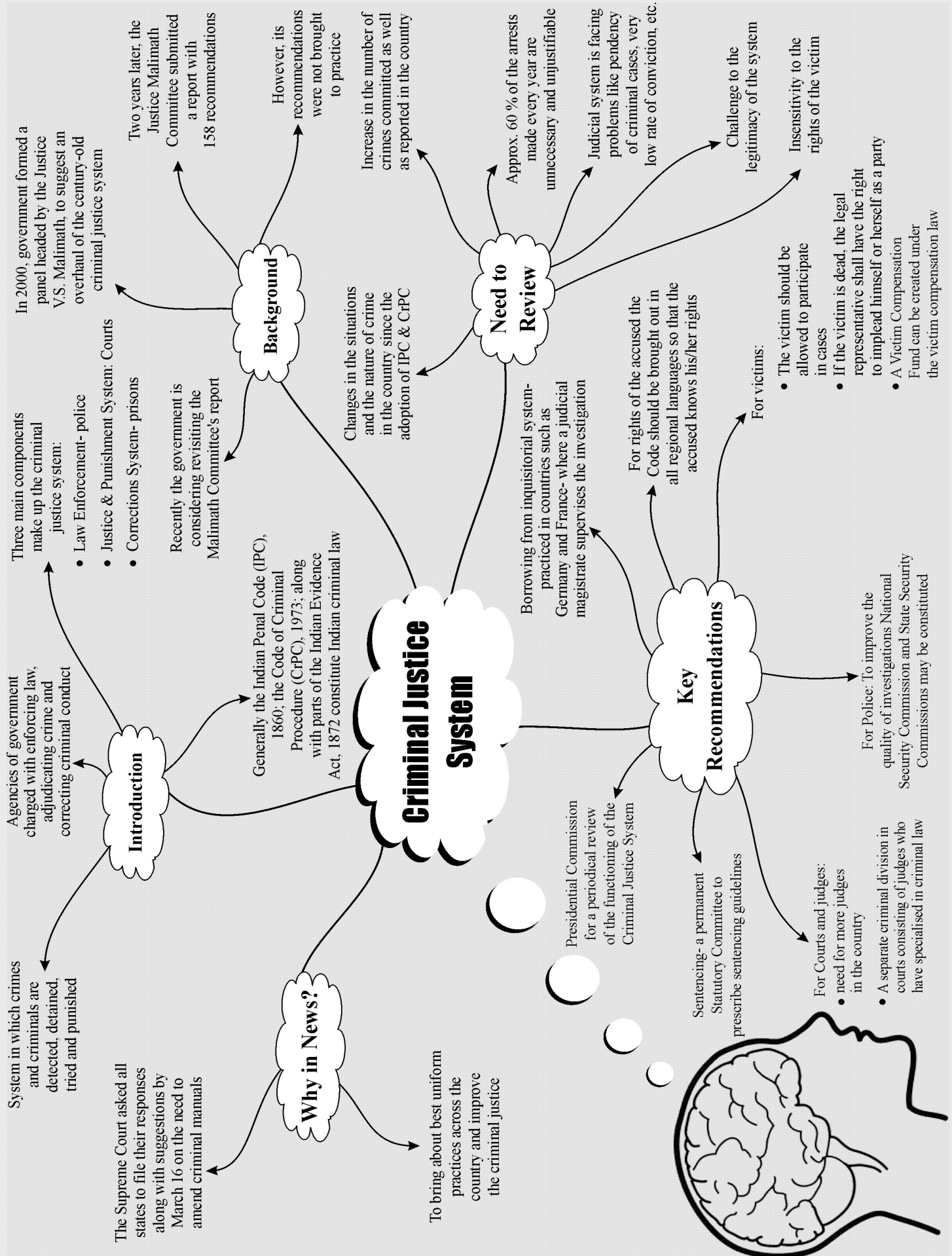
The research cautions that the cost of attacks may be lowered by the use

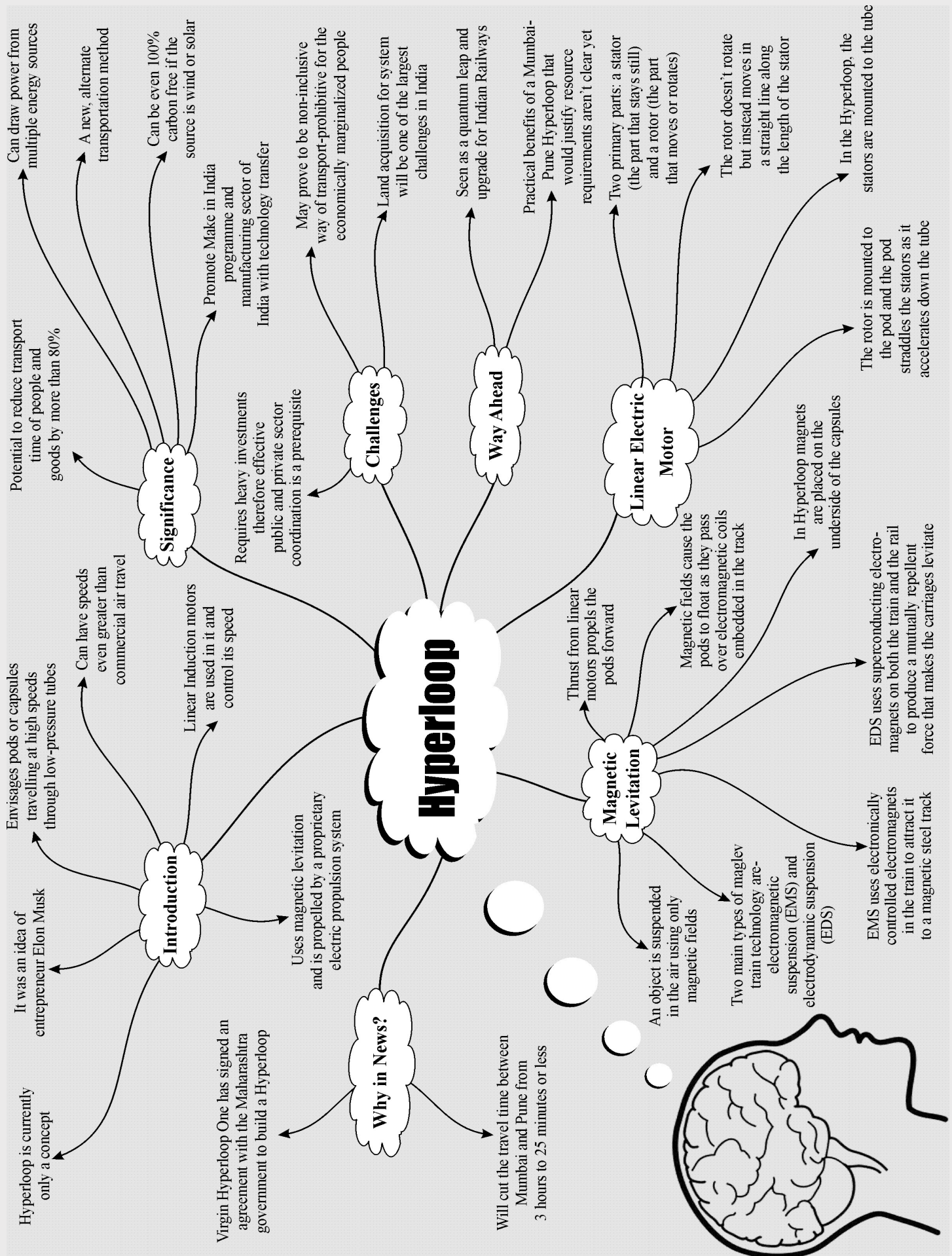
of AI to complete tasks that would otherwise require human labour and expertise. New attacks may arise that would be impractical for humans alone to develop or which exploit the vulnerabilities of AI systems themselves. The report makes a series of recommendations including regulating AI as a dual-use military/commercial technology. The researchers speculated AI could be used to create highly realistic fake audio and video of public officials for propaganda purposes.

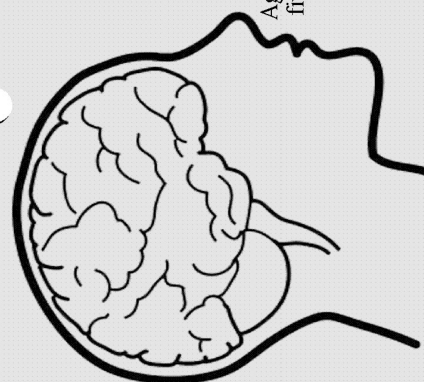
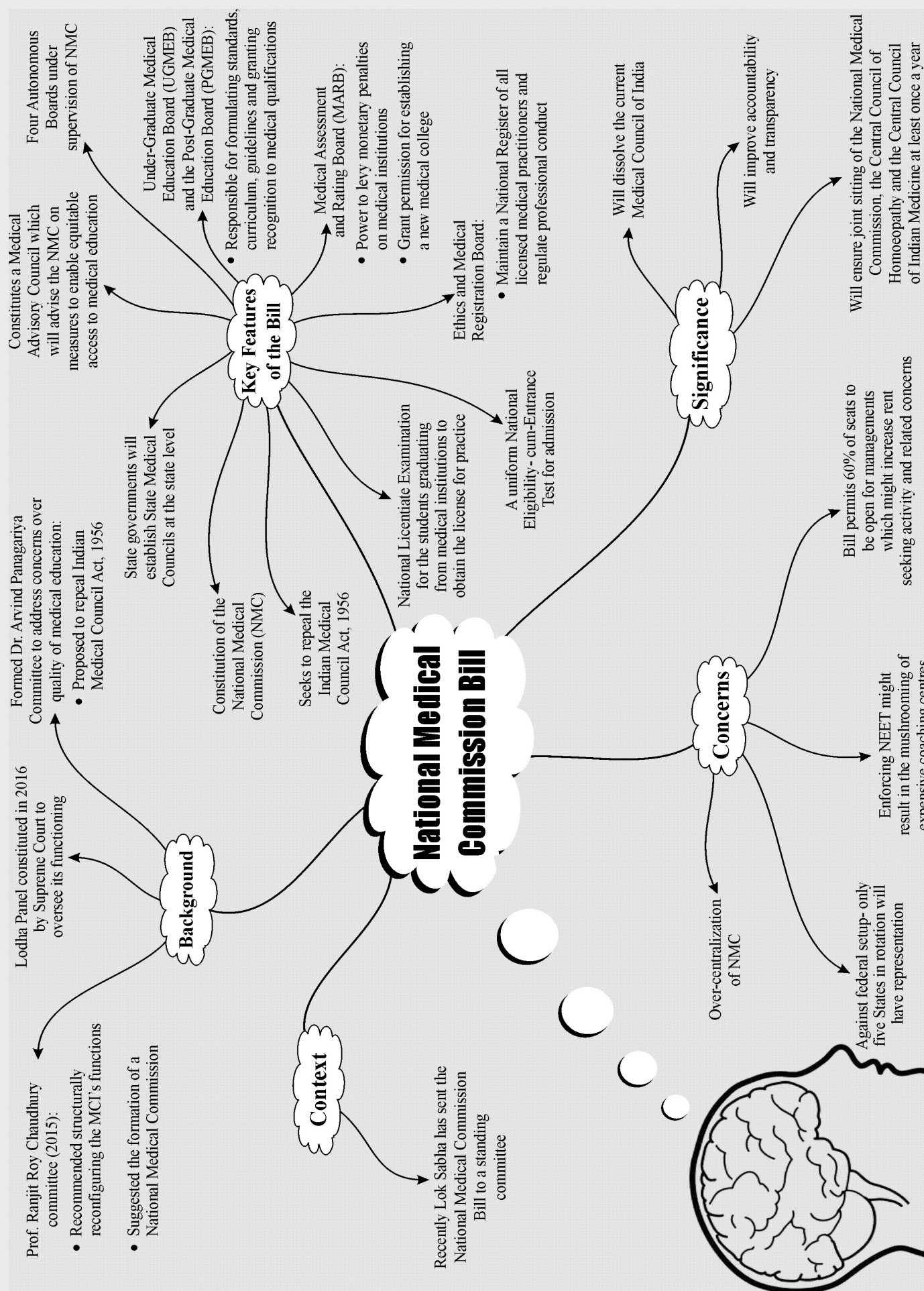
Artificial intelligence, or AI, involves using computers to perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence, such as taking decisions or recognising text, speech or visual images. It is considered a powerful force for unlocking all manner of technical possibilities but has become a focus of strident debate over whether the massive automation it enables could result in widespread unemployment and other social dislocations.

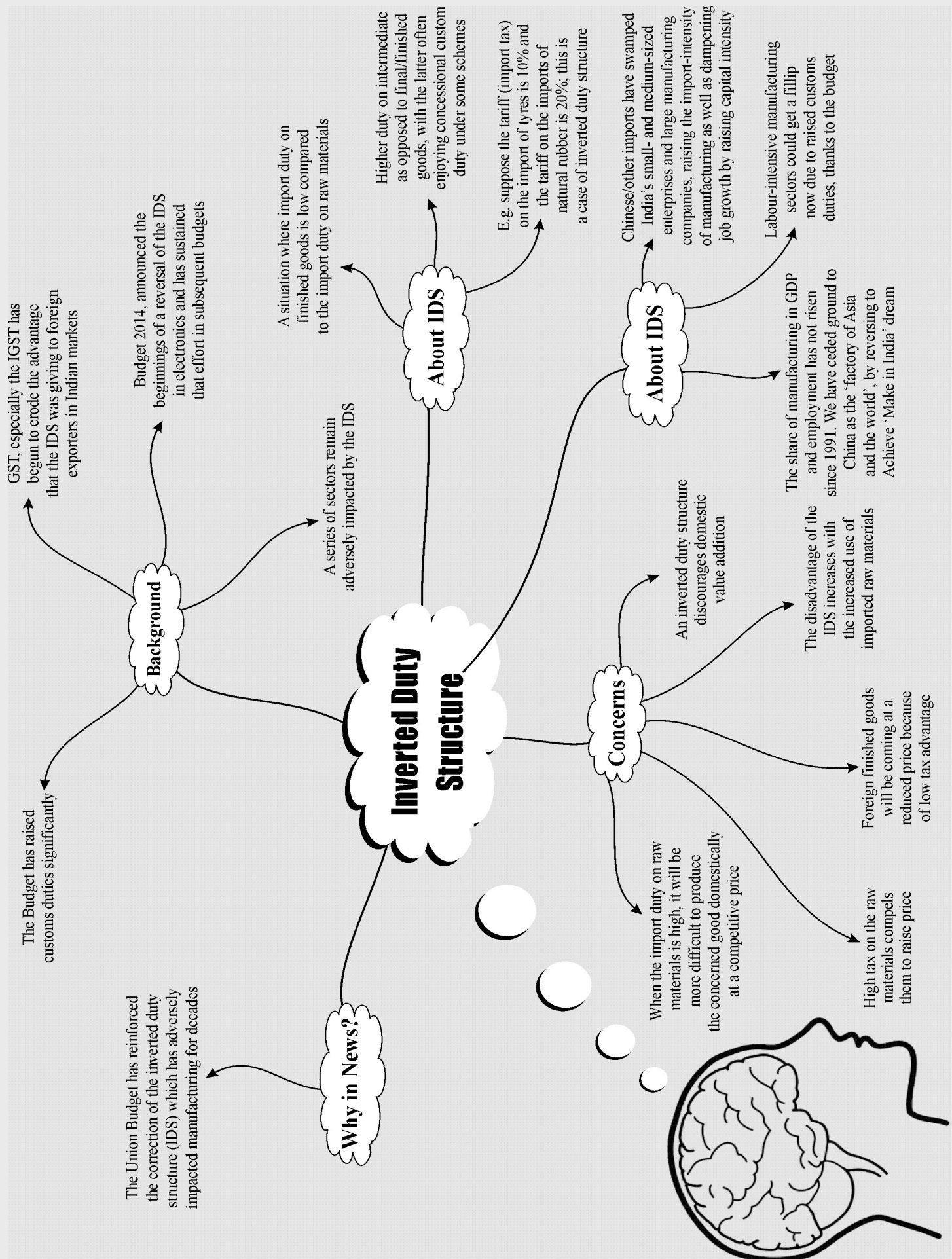
SEVEN BRAIN BOOSTERS

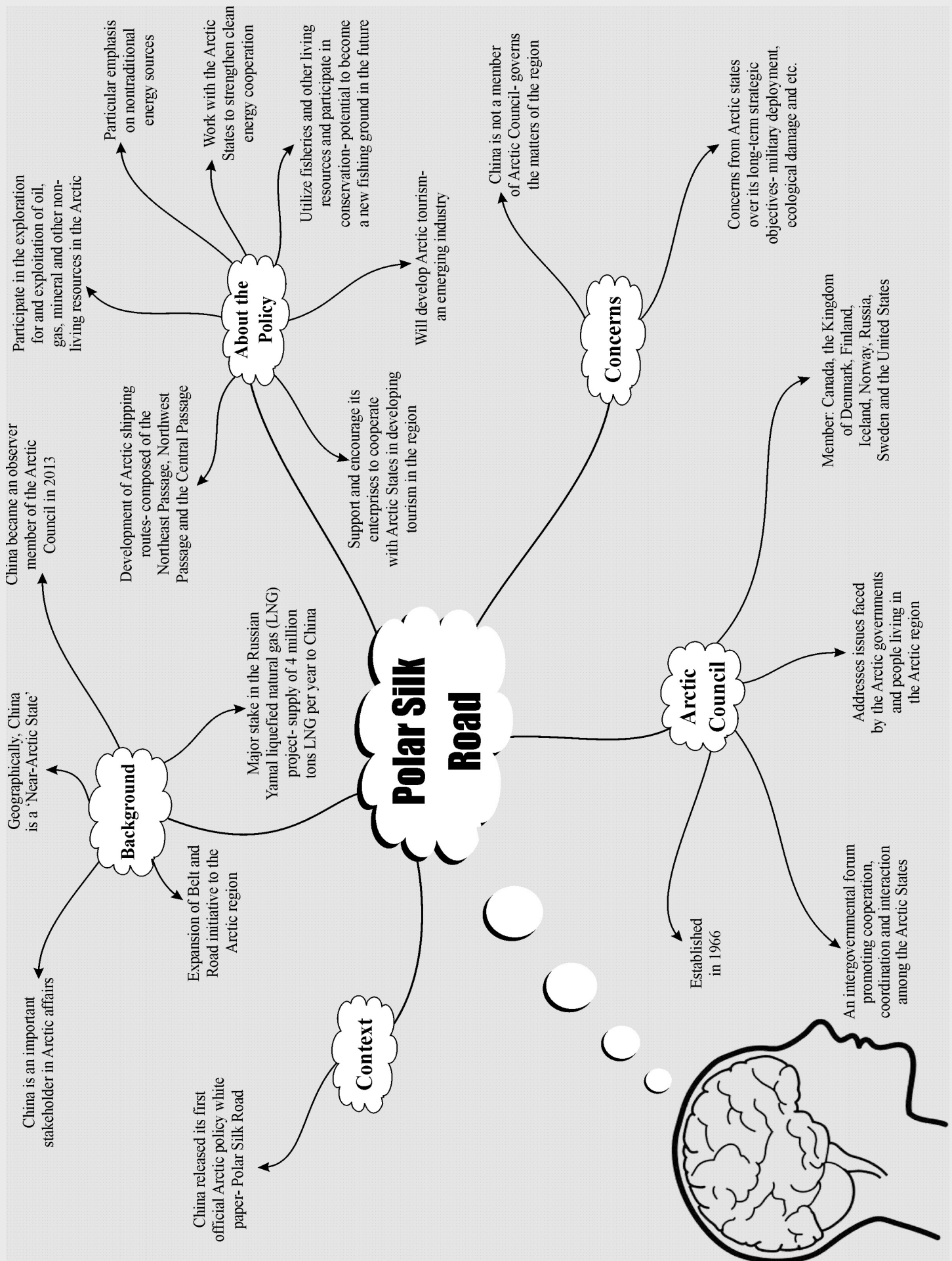


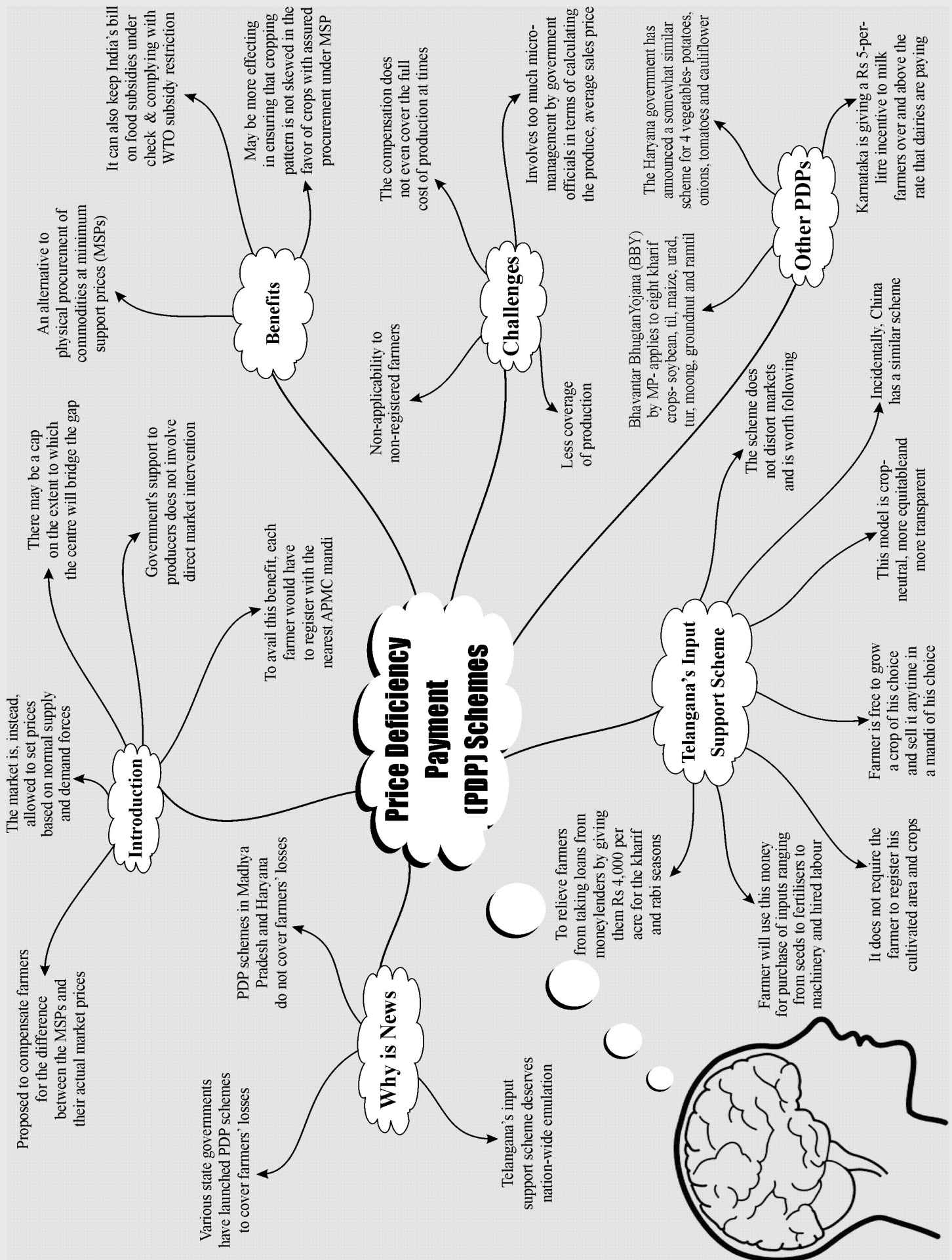












SEVEN MCQ's WITH EXPLANATORY ANSWERS

(Based on Brain Boosters)

Chabahar Port

Q1. Chabahar Port is sometimes mentioned in the news. Consider the following statements in this regard:

1. Chabahar Port is located in Sistan-Balochistan province of Iran, on the Persian Gulf.
2. India got full operational control over Chabahar port.
3. For India, it opened a new transit route to Afghanistan, Central Asia, South Asia and Europe.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only b) 2 and 3 only
c) 3 only d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (c)

Explanation:

Statement 1 and 2 are not correct because Chabahar Port, located in the Sistan-Balochistan province on the energy-rich Persian Gulf nation's southern coast, lies outside the Persian Gulf i.e on Gulf of Oman. India and Iran signed a lease for the Shahid Beheshti Port at Chabahar for 18 months to take over operations of existing port facilities in the first phase of the port development project.

Statement 3 is correct as it gives a transit route between India, Iran and Afghanistan bypassing Pakistan. It will also give India transit to Central Asia, Russia and other parts of Eurasia.

Criminal Justice System

Q2. With reference to the reforms in criminal justice system, consider the following statements:

1. Government formed a committee in 2000, headed by the Justice V.S. Malimath, to suggest an overhaul of the century-old criminal justice system.
2. The committee suggested a separate criminal division in courts consisting of judges who have specialised in criminal law.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation:

Both statements are correct. In 2000, the then NDA government formed a panel headed by the former Chief Justice of Kerala and Karnataka, Justice V.S. Malimath, to suggest an overhaul of the century-old criminal justice system. In 2003 committee submitted a report with 158 recommendations. However, its recommendations were not brought to practice. Recently the government is considering revisiting the Malimath Committee's reports.

Hyperloop

Q3. What is/are the advantage/advantages to get hyperloop, as a mode of transportation in India?

1. Its 100% electric system could reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 150,000 tons annually.
2. If the technology is adopted, it could reduce capital cost, especially when compared with alternatives such as bullet trains.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation:

Both statements are correct. Expert claims that based studies, the hyperloop could result in Rs 3.5 lakh crore in socio-economic benefits over 30 years of operation. That apart, the 100% electric system could reduce greenhouse gas emissions by up to 150,000 tons annually. And if the technology is adopted, it could reduce capital cost, especially when compared with alternatives such as bullet trains.

National Medical Commission Bill

Q4. With reference to the 'National Medical Commission Bill', consider the following statements:

1. The Bill sets up the National Medical Commission (NMC) under the chairmanship of minister of Health.
2. It seeks to repeal the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956.
3. A National Licentiate Examination for the students graduating from medical institutions to obtain the license for practice.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only b) 2 and 3 only
 c) 3 only d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

Statement 1 is not correct. The Bill sets up the National Medical Commission (NMC). The NMC will consist of 25 members, appointed by the central government. A Search Committee will recommend names to the central government for the post of Chairperson, and the part time members.

Statement 2 and 3 are correct as it seeks to repeal the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956 and provide a effective medical education system. And there will be a National Licentiate Examination for the students graduating from medical institutions to obtain the license for practice. The National Licentiate Examination will also serve as the basis for admission into post-graduate courses at medical institutions.

Inverted Duty Structure

Q5. Consider the following statements in respect of inverted duty structure:

1. It means lesser duty on intermediates as opposed to final or finished goods.
2. When the import duty on raw materials is high, it will be more difficult to produce the concerned good domestically at a competitive price.

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. Inverted duty structure is a situation where import duty on finished goods is low compared to the import duty on raw materials that are used in the production of such finished goods. For example, suppose the tariff on the import of tyres is 10% and the tariff on the imports of natural rubber which is used in the production of tyres is 20%; this is a case of inverted duty structure.

Statement 2 is correct. When the import duty on raw materials is high, it will be more difficult to produce the concerned good domestically at a competitive price. Several industries depend on imported raw materials and components.

Polar Silk Road

Q6. The term 'Polar Silk Road' is sometimes seen in news. Consider the following statements in this regard:

1. It is the expansion of China's 'One Belt, One Road' to the Arctic.

2. China is a member of Arctic Council that governs the matters of the region.
3. It is an operational shipping route of China to the Arctic region.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 3 only b) 1 only
 c) 2 and 3 only d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct. It is the expansion of China's 'One Belt, One Road' to the Arctic region.

Statement 2 and 3 are not correct. It is not an operational route to the Arctic region. China is planning to build a "Polar Silk Road" by developing the Arctic shipping routes. The Arctic shipping routes are likely to become important transport routes for international trade as a result of global warming.

Price Deficiency Payment (PDP) Schemes

Q7. With reference to the Price Deficiency Payment (PDP) Schemes, consider the following statements:

1. Proposed to be compensated for the difference between the MSPs for all crops and their actual market prices.
2. Price deficiency payment can also keep India's bill on food subsidies under check.
3. Bhavantar Bhugtan Yojana (BBY) by Madhya Pradesh and Telangana's input support scheme are the example of PDP.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only b) 2 and 3 only
 c) 1 only d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

Statement 1 is not correct. Under Price Deficiency Payment, farmers are proposed to be compensated for the difference between the government-announced MSPs for select crops (rice and wheat) and their actual market prices. However some states like Madhya Pradesh under Bhavantar Bhugtan Yojana (BBY) extended it to eight kharif crops- soybean, maize, urad, tur, moong, groundnut, til, ramtil.

Statement 2 and 3 are correct. According to the NITI Aayog it can also keep India's bill on food subsidies under check India's food subsidy schemes have frequently come under the WTO scanner. Some countries see India's procurement subsidies as trade-distorting. And Bhavantar Bhugtan Yojana (BBY) by Madhya Pradesh and Telangana's input support scheme are the example of PDP.



SEVEN IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIMS

1. Who became the first Indian woman to fly fighter aircraft solo?
– *Avani Chaturvedi*
2. Which state recently made vaccinations compulsory for school admissions?
– *Kerala*
3. Which country announced to impose ‘carbon tax’ from 2019 to cut its greenhouse gas emissions?
– *Singapore*
4. Recently government of India approved Silkyara Bend-Barkot Tunnel as part of ‘Chardham Mahamarga Pariyojana’ in which state?
– *Himachal Pradesh*
5. India was ranked at which position on Global Corruption Perception Index 2017?
– *81st*
6. Which state has launched Fiber Grid (T-Fiber) program?
– *Telangana*
7. When International Mother Language Day is celebrated every year?
– *21st February*

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SEVEN PERFECT QUOTES

(IMPORTANT FOR ESSAY AND ANSWER WRITING)

"It is strange that only extraordinary men make the discoveries, which later appear so easy and simple."

Georg C. Lichtenberg

"A man who dares to waste one hour of time has not discovered the value of life."

Charles Darwin

"Nothing in life is to be feared, it is only to be understood. Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less."

Marie Curie

"You cannot teach a man anything; you can only help him discover it in himself."

Galileo

"Imagination is more important than knowledge."

Albert Einstein

"I am the master of my failure. If I never fail how will I ever learn."

C.V Raman

"One wants permissive individuals who do not have a compelling need to reassure themselves that they are leaders."

Vikram Sarabhai

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SEVEN PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAIN EXAM

Answer each of the following questions in 200 words:-

- Q.1. What determines the balance of power between the Parliament (Legislature) and the Government (Executive), in practice? Is the power enjoyed by the Executive in any way affecting the ability of Parliament to perform its role? Discuss.
- Q. 2. Critically analyse the functioning and implementation of the existing TPDS mechanism and the role played by the centre and states. Also discuss alternatives to reform the existing machinery.
- Q. 3. Discuss the objectives, significance and prospects of the RBI's 'Ombudsman Scheme for Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs)'.
- Q. 4. In what circumstances could a Member of Parliament be presumed to have a conflict of interest between his parliamentary role and other professional roles he undertakes? Discuss how conflict of interest is defined in other democracies and in other public offices.
- Q. 5. "Organic farming should be promoted with the same spirit as Green Revolution." Critically analyse.
- Q. 6. Are development and crime twin sisters that grow and evolve together? Discuss how the development process has impacted criminal behaviour in our society.
- Q. 7. Why do our women continue to demand that laws and lawmakers guarantee them equality of opportunity and parity of wages? Doesn't our Constitution promise these as the fundamental rights of all citizens of India? Discuss.

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