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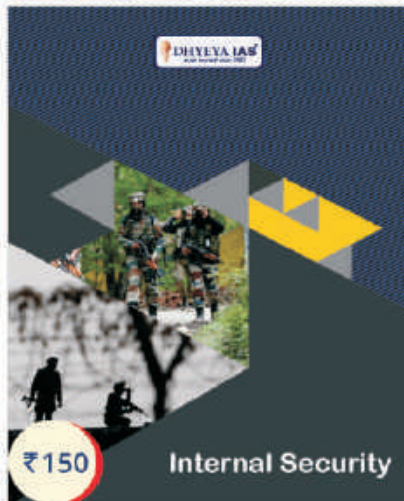
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**WEEKLY
CURRENT
AFFAIRS**

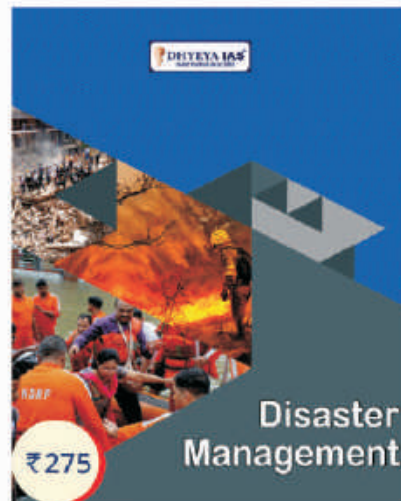
March 2019 | Issue - 3



INTERNAL SECURITY



DISASTER MANAGEMENT



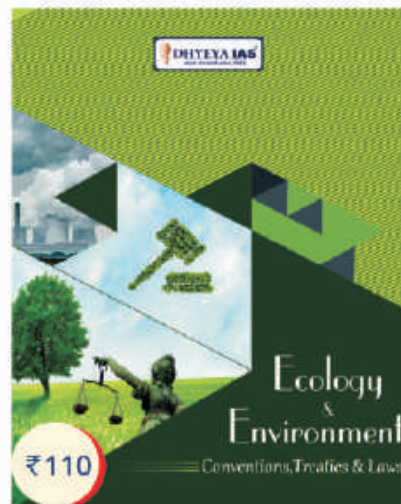
INDIAN ART & CULTURE



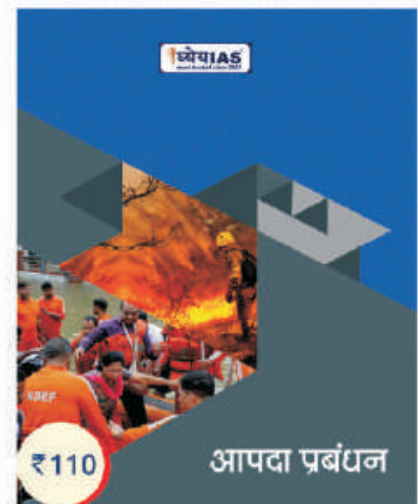
SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY (Fundamentals)



ECOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT (Conventions, Treaties & Laws)



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DHYEYA IAS : AN INTRODUCTION

Director's Message



The guiding philosophy of the institute, throughout, has been creation of knowledge base. Dhyeya IAS inculcates human values and professional ethics in the students, which help them make decisions and create path that are good not only for them, but also for the society, for the nation, and for the world as whole. To fulfill its mission in new and powerful ways, each student is motivated to strive towards achieving excellence in every endeavor. It is done by making continuous improvements in curricula and pedagogical tools.

The rigorous syllabi not only instills in them, a passion for knowledge but also attempts to teach them how to apply that knowledge in real-life situations. The programmes lay emphasis on well-rounded personality development of the students and also is inculcating the values of honesty and integrity in them.

Vinay Kumar Singh

CEO and Founder
Dhyeya IAS

Director's Message



Dhyeya IAS is an institution that aims at the complete development of the student. Our faculty are hand-picked and highly qualified to ensure that the students are given every possible support in all their academic endeavors. It is a multidisciplinary institution which ensures that the students have ready access to a wide range of academic material.

Our brand of education has broad horizons as we believe in exposure. Our students are encouraged to widen their knowledge base and study beyond the confinements of the syllabus. We aim to lend a gentle guiding hand to make our students recognize their inner potential and grow on their own accord into stalwarts of tomorrow's society.

Q H Khan

Managing Director
Dhyeya IAS

PERFECT 7 : AN INTRODUCTION



With immense pleasure and gratitude I want to inform you that the new version of 'Perfect-7', from the Dhyeya IAS, is coming with more information in a very attractive manner. Heartily congratulations to the editorial team. The 'Perfect-7' invites a wider readership in the Institute. The name and fame of an institute depends on the caliber and achievements of the students and teachers. The role of the teacher is to nurture the skills and talents of the students as a facilitator. This magazine is going to showcase the strength of our Institute. Let this be a forum to exhibit the potential of faculties, eminent writers, authors and students with their literary skills and innovative ideas.

I extend best wishes for the success of this endeavor.

Qurban Ali

Chief Editor

Dhyeya IAS

(Ex Editor- Rajya Sabha TV)



We have not only given the name 'Perfect 7' to our magazine, but also left no stone unturned to keep it 'near to perfect'. We all know that beginning of a task is most challenging as well as most important thing. So we met the same fate.

Publishing 'Perfect 7' provided us various challenges because from the beginning itself we kept our bar too high to ensure the quality. Right from the very first issue we had a daunting task to save aspirants from the 'overdose of information'. Focusing on civil services exams 'Perfect 7' embodies in itself rightful friend and guide in your preparation. This weapon is built to be precise yet comprehensive. It is not about bombardment of mindless facts rather an analysis of various facets of the issues, selected in a systematic manner. We adopted the 'Multi Filter' and 'Six Sigma' approach, in which a subject or an issue is selected after diligent discussion on various levels so that the questions in the examination could be covered with high probability.

Being a weekly magazine there is a constant challenge to provide qualitative study material in a time bound approach. It is our humble achievement that we feel proud to make delivered our promise of quality consistently without missing any issue since its inception.

The new 'avatar' of 'Perfect 7' is a result of your love and affection. We feel inspired to continue our efforts to deliver effective and valuable content in interesting manner. Our promise of quality has reached you in around 100 issues and more are yet to come.

Ashutosh Singh

Managing Editor

Dhyeya IAS



PREFACE

Dhyeya family feels honoured to present you a pandora box 'Perfect 7'. 'Perfect7' is an outstanding compilation of current affairs topics as per the new pattern of Civil Service examination (CSE). It presents weekly analysis of information and issues (national and international) in the form of articles, news analysis, brain boosters, PIB highlights and graphical information, which helps to understand and retain the information comprehensively. Hence, 'Perfect 7' will build in-depth understanding of various issues in different facets.

'Perfect7' is our genuine effort to provide correct, concise and concrete information, which helps students to crack the civil service examination. This magazine is the result of the efforts of the eminent scholars and the experts from different fields.

'Perfect 7' is surely a force multiplier in your effort and plugs the loopholes in the preparation.

We believe in environment of continuous improvement and learning. Your constructive suggestions and comments are always welcome, which could guide us in further revision of this magazine.

Omveer Singh Chaudhary
Editor
Dhyeya IAS

Perfect 7

The Weekly Issue

Perfect 7

An Initiative of Dhyeya IAS (for Civil Service Examination)

March-2019 Issue - 3

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Monthly
News Paper



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by Mr. Qurban Ali
(Ex. Editor Rajya Sabha, TV) & by Team Dhyeya IAS
(Broadcasted on YouTube & Dhyeya-TV)

SEVEN IMPORTANT ISSUES

1. CAPITAL PUNISHMENT: SHOULD IT BE ABOLISHED OR NOT

Why in News?

Recently, the Supreme Court reversed the death sentence it had upheld in 2009 and acquitted six persons in a high-profile murder and rape case. The Court ruled that the investigation in the 2003 case was “not fair and honest” and criticized the conduct of the investigating agency and the prosecution. It ordered compensation to the acquitted persons who had spent 16 years in prison and asked the state government to fix responsibility on the officers responsible for lapses in the prosecution.

Introduction

The aforementioned case concerns the murder of five persons and the rape of one in Jalna district, Maharashtra, for which a sessions court in Nashik convicted six individuals from a nomadic community and sentenced them to death in 2006. The Supreme Court upheld the convictions in 2009 — in fact, it also reversed the acquittal of three persons by the High Court, found guilty by the sessions court. However, a three-judge bench reviewed the judgment in October 2018, recalled its 2009 order and decided to hear appeals filed by the accused and the state, only to find faults with the investigation and prosecution. This rare reversal of the death sentence revives fundamental questions about the death penalty.

Capital punishment is retributive justice and its effectiveness in curbing crime is contested. In the Indian context, there is a high possibility of its misuse

given the social biases that influence police investigation and prosecution. In high-profile cases, the prosecution is under pressure to secure maximum punishment and lower courts tend to weigh in with death sentences. Many of these death sentences are overturned by higher courts on grounds of poor quality of evidence, or improper investigation. For instance, the apex court, in 2018, commuted death sentences to life imprisonment in 11 of the 12 cases it heard. However, the systemic biases and prejudices, including the lack of resources on the part of the accused to fight extended court battles, often ensures that the miscarriage of justice, which begins at the lowest court, escapes the scrutiny of even the highest court.

Arguments for Abolishment

Everyone thinks human life is valuable. Some believe that human life is so valuable that even the worst murderers should not be deprived of the value of their lives. They believe that the value of the offender's life cannot be destroyed by the offender's bad conduct - even if they have killed someone.

Everyone has an inalienable human right to life. Indian constitution under article 21, guarantees ‘Right to life’. The death penalty violates the right to life which happens to be the most basic of all human rights. It also violates the right not to be subjected to torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment. Furthermore, the death penalty

undermines human dignity which is inherent to every human being.

Most of the civilised world has abolished it. The death penalty lacks the deterrent effect which is commonly referred to by its advocates. As recently stated by the General Assembly of the United Nations, “there is no conclusive evidence of the deterrent value of the death penalty” (UNGA Resolution 65/206). It is noteworthy that in many retentionist states, the effectiveness of the death penalty in order to prevent crime is being seriously questioned by a continuously increasing number of law enforcement professionals.

India certainly does not need it as it serves no purpose. No study has shown that the death penalty deters murder more than life imprisonment. The evidence is all to the contrary. For deterrence to work, the severity of the punishment has to coexist with the certainty and swiftness of the punishment. The death penalty has not deterred terrorism, murder or even theft.

The death penalty is error-ridden. Between January 1, 2000 and June 31, 2015, the Supreme Court imposed 60 death sentences. It subsequently admitted that it had erred in 15 of them (25%). The death penalty unfairly targets the poor and marginalised. Those without capital get the punishment. Penurious prisoners on legal aid get it the most, while others with private lawyers remain untouched.

The death penalty is impossible to administer fairly or rationally. The Supreme Court has repeatedly admitted that it has arbitrarily imposed this most extreme punishment. Executions occurred in 5.2 cases for every 1 lakh murders. Such a selection cannot but be freakish. It depends overwhelmingly on the adjudicator's personal beliefs. Judges opposed to it never gave a death sentence; those in favour doled it out. Abolitionist Presidents (S. Radhakrishnan and A.P. J. Abdul Kalam) refused to reject mercy petitions, while others, differently inclined, readily denied clemency. Should the killing of a human being depend on the philosophy of a particular individual?

Abolishing the death penalty will ease, not enhance, the tax-payer's burden. The annual cost of maintaining a prisoner is about Rs. 30,000. The hangman is paid more, and we also save on the protracted litigation that death cases involve.

India's murder rate has declined continuously since 1991. The decline in murder rate in India has coincided with a decline in rate of executions. There is no evidence to show that death penalty acts as a deterrent for sexual violence or any other crime.

Arguments for Retention

India's neighbourhood is not peaceful, unlike Scandinavia, and it does not form a supranational conglomerate of nations that facilitate common growth, unlike the European Union. On the contrary, every day vested interests attempt to destabilise the very idea of our nation from across every border it shares. It is this peculiar nature of India's polity that must inform any debate for abolition. As noted by the Law Commission of India itself, cases of violent terror are constant reminders of the need to protect national stability by ensuring appropriate responses to such actions, and the death penalty forms part of the national response.

A punishment cannot be judged by its impact on criminals but by its impact on those who are still innocent. Those who defend the death penalty often do it on the basis of retributive justice. However, the retention of the death penalty is far more fundamental than an arrogant state interest to seek revenge. On the contrary, the punishment itself is a reflection of societal mores. It determines that there are certain acts which the society so essentially abhors that they justify the taking of the most crucial of rights – the right to life. For, the state acknowledges that the sacredness of life can only be seen to be protected if those who take it away are proportionately punished. The hanging of Ajmal Kasab and Yakub Memon strongly affirms India's commitment to the protection of life.

The death penalty is also often criticised on its practical implementation. Some argue that it is arbitrarily meted out and others find its irreversibility repugnant. To term the punishment as arbitrary, one has to necessarily prove the process as flawed. However, in the cases of the death penalty, the courts have made sure that caution is exercised in giving the punishment. They are conscious of its irreversibility and have therefore restricted it to only rarest of rare cases that shock the conscience of society. The Supreme Court has also covered considerable ground in limiting the scope, to the 'rarest of rare cases'. Post-appeal reviews and curative petitions are routinely admitted. Review petitions are now heard in open court. The treatment of death row prisoners has been humanised, and there is scope for judicial review even against a sovereign decision denying clemency.

International Perspective on Death Penalty

Capital punishment is a matter of active controversy in several countries and states, and positions can vary within a single political ideology or cultural

region. In the European Union, Article 2 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union prohibits the use of capital punishment. The Council of Europe, which has 47 member states, has sought to abolish the use of the death penalty by its members absolutely, through Protocol 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

The United Nations General Assembly has adopted, in 2007, 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2014, non-binding resolutions calling for a global moratorium on executions, with a view to eventual abolition. Although most nations have abolished capital punishment, over 60% of the world's population live in countries where the death penalty is retained, such as China, India, the United States, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Sri Lanka. China executes more people than all other countries combined.

India has looked to the judicial administration of death with greater constitutional scepticism. Following the gang rape of a young woman in Delhi in December 2012, amendments were made to the Indian Penal Code adding the death penalty for certain categories of rapes and repeat offenders. Last year India introduced the death penalty for those who rape minors. The polarised debate that surrounded Yakub Menon's execution in 2015 was yet another reminder of the pervasive popularity of the idea.

Conclusion

In 1980, in *Bachan Singh v. State of Punjab*, a Constitution Bench upholding the validity of the death penalty articulated the "rarest of rare" threshold stating that "judges should never be bloodthirsty". Later on, Supreme Court itself spoke of the "extremely uneven application" of

the norms laid down in Bachan Singh. The Law Commission, in its Report in 2015, said the constitutional regulation of capital punishment attempted in that case has failed to prevent death sentences from being “arbitrarily and freakishly imposed”. Commission asserted that “there exists no principled method to remove such arbitrariness from capital sentencing”.

Public support for the death penalty does not necessarily mean that taking away the life of a human being by the state is right. There are undisputed historical precedences where gross human rights violations had had the support of a majority of the people, but which were condemned vigorously

later on. It is the job of leading figures and politicians to underline the incompatibility of capital punishment with human rights and human dignity. It needs to be pointed out that public support for the death penalty is inextricably linked to the desire of the people to be free from crime. However, there exist more effective ways to prevent crime.

Political will in India is still bound by populism. However, the constitutionality of the death penalty will continue to be challenged and, sooner or later, the Supreme Court will have to answer whether absence of political will is sufficient ground to override the right to life.

According to the Supreme Court of India, death must only be imposed where the alternative option is unquestionably foreclosed. The question is, under what circumstances are the retributive and deterrent effects of a life in prison so certainly insufficient that death is the only answer? And can such an answer be delivered without human error?

General Studies Paper-II

Topic: Indian Constitution- historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.



2. RISING TREND OF LIFESTYLE DISEASES

Why in News?

According to GOQii's latest 'India Fit Report', more than 57% population across key cities such as Delhi, Hyderabad and Chennai are overweight. Further, lifestyle diseases have witnessed a steady rise – Diabetes has increased to 5.1% in 2018 from 3.6% in 2017, Cholesterol has increased to 12.1% in 2018 from 5.2% in 2017 and High Blood Pressure has increased to 9.4% in 2018 from 4.9% in 2017.

In another study by Stanford in 2017, Indians were found to be among the world's laziest citizens clocking in an average of just 4, 297 steps a day. India is ranked 39 among the 46 countries surveyed.

Introduction

Lifestyle-related diseases are on the rise in our country. These preventable chronic diseases are the outcome of our unhealthy choices. Identifying the causes of lifestyle diseases is critical, because the elimination of the causes is the obvious and only way to

achieve healing and enhanced health. Improved life expectancy by almost 15-20 years in average and reduced infant mortality has been recorded due to unprecedented improvements in public health in recent time. Advances in preventive measurement, medical diagnosis, superior treatment regimes, economic growth and better public policies have been a part of the 21st century industrialisation and urbanization process.

The changes in lifestyle and dietary choices greatly increases the risk for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, dyslipidemia, sleep-apnea, osteoarthritis, and some types of cancer. Globally almost two thirds deaths (36 million) were because of chronic NCDs. Besides, microbial infection and unhealthy food, sedentary occupational behaviour and inadequate physical activities were another emerging risk factor primarily leading to metabolic disorders. Progressive socioeconomic policies,

improved health and social sectors, increased educational opportunities and environment friendly approaches would be the major prevention strategy for NCDs in the near future.

What is Lifestyle Diseases?

“Lifestyle” originally coined by Austrian psychologist Alfred Adler in 1929, means the way a person lives. It is a pattern of individual practices and personal behavioral choices that are related to elevated or reduced health risk. Lifestyles are born of a multitude of causes, from childhood determinants to personality makeup to influences in the cultural, physical, economic, and political environments.

In recent times, these lifestyle patterns have modified significantly which has lead to increase in both physical and mental diseases in the world population. Such diseases have been grouped under the term “Lifestyle Diseases.” An alarming number of diseases fall under this category- Obesity, Cardiovascular

diseases, Depression, Diabetes Mellitus, Metabolic Syndrome to name just a few. More disturbing is the fact that a majority of these diseases are interrelated in the sense that one of them can perpetuate the other leading to a vicious cycle.

The astonishing rate at which the lifestyle diseases are rising in the population has made them diseases of public health concern.

Causes of Lifestyle Disease

The causes of NCDs can be divided into three broad categories: modifiable behavioural risk factors; non-modifiable risk factors and; metabolic risk factors.

Modifiable Behavioural Risk Factors: Behavioural risk factors such as excessive use of alcohol, bad food habits, eating and smoking tobacco, physical inactivity, wrong body posture and disturbed biological clock increase the likelihood of NCDs. The modern occupational setting (desk jobs) and the stress related to work is also being seen as a potent risk factor for NCDs.

According to the WHO, more than 7 million people die each year due to the use of tobacco and the fatality rate is projected to increase markedly in the years to come. Excessive use of sodium in the diet causes 4.1 million deaths per year while alcohol intake leads to around 1.65 million deaths due to NCDs. A simple lack of physical activity has been claiming 1.6 million lives annually.

Non-Modifiable Risk Factors: Risk factors that cannot be controlled or modified by the application of an intervention can be called non-modifiable risk factors and include:

- Age
- Race
- Gender
- Genetics

Metabolic Risk Factors: Metabolic risk factors lead to four major changes

in the metabolic systems that increase the possibility of NCDs:

- Increased blood pressure
- Obesity
- Increased blood glucose levels or hyperglycemia
- Increased levels of fat in the blood or hyperlipidemia

Increased blood pressure is the leading metabolic risk factor globally with 19% of the global deaths attributed to it, followed by obesity and hyperglycemia.

Four Major Lifestyle Diseases

Cardiovascular Diseases (CVD)

Cardiovascular diseases are a group of disorders of the heart and blood vessels and may include:

- Ischaemic heart disease
- Stroke
- Peripheral arterial disease
- Congenital heart disease

CVDs are the number 1 cause of death globally and account for more than 17 million deaths per year. The number is estimated to rise by 2030 to more than 23 million a year.

Major Modifiable Risk Factors	High blood pressure, Abnormal blood lipids, Tobacco use, Physical inactivity, Obesity, Unhealthy diet (salt), Diabetes, Heavy alcohol use
Non-Modifiable Risk Factors	Age, Heredity or family history, Gender, Ethnicity or race
Other Risk Factors	Excess homocysteine in blood - Inflammatory markers (C-reactive protein), Abnormal blood coagulation (elevated blood levels of fibrinogen), Lipoprotein(a)

Diabetes

Diabetes is a metabolism disorder that affects the way the body used food for energy and physical growth. There are 4 types of diabetes: Type 1,

Type 2, Gestational, and Pre-Diabetes (Impaired Glucose Tolerance). Type 2 is the most common diabetes in the world and is caused by modifiable behavioural risk factors.

Major Modifiable Risk Factors	Unhealthy diets Physical Inactivity Obesity or Overweight High Blood Pressure High Cholesterol Heavy alcohol use Psychological stress High consumption of sugar Low consumption of fiber, Advanced age Family history/ genetics Race Distribution of fat in the body, Presence of autoantibodies Low socioeconomic status
Non-Modifiable Risk Factors	Age, Heredity or family history, Gender, Ethnicity or race
Other Risk Factors	Excess homocysteine in blood - Inflammatory markers (C-reactive protein), Abnormal blood coagulation (elevated blood levels of fibrinogen), Lipoprotein(a)

Cancer

Cancer affects different parts of the body and is characterised by a rapid creation of abnormal cells in that part and can invade other parts of the body as well. More than 7 million people die of cancer each year and 30% of those diseases are attributed to lifestyle choices.

Type Of Cancer	Cervical cancer, Lung cancer, Breast cancer, Prostate cancer, Colorectal cancer
Modifiable Risk Factors	Smoking Poverty Human papilloma virus infection (hpv), Smoking Second hand smoke Radiation therapy Being exposed to asbestos, radon, chromium, nickel, arsenic, soot, or tar Living in air-polluted place, Hormone therapies Weight and physical activity, Obesity Bad food habits Low intake of fiber, Unhealthy diet Insufficient physical activity

Other Risk Factors	Immune deficiencies Family history, Race Genetics BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes Age, Age Race, Age Race Family history Diabetes
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Chronic Respiratory Diseases

Some of the most under-diagnosed conditions, chronic respiratory diseases (CRD) are a potent cause of death globally with 90% of the deaths taking place in low-income countries. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and asthma are the two main types of CRDs.

Modifiable Risk Factors	Non-Modifiable Risk Factors
Cigarette smoke Dust and chemicals Environmental tobacco smoke Air pollution Infections	Genetics Age

Control and Prevention of Lifestyle Diseases

An important way of controlling non-communicable diseases is by controlling the risk factors associated with it. In other words, a number of communicable diseases can be prevented by controlling the behavioural or lifestyle habits associated with those diseases. There are a number of low-cost solutions that can be implemented by the government and other involved groups to reduce the common modifiable risk factors. Monitoring the trends of non-communicable diseases and their associated risks is crucial for guiding policies and guidelines.

A comprehensive approach is essential that involves all sectors including health, finance, education, planning and others, to minimise the impact of lifestyle diseases on individuals and society. The approach needs to instigate a collaborative effort to minimise the risks associated with non-communicable diseases and at the same time inspire interventions to control and prevent them.

Lifestyle diseases are a threat to the socio-economic aspects of nations globally and appropriate actions for their management are the need of the moment. Management of lifestyle diseases includes proper diagnosis, screening and treatment of these diseases in addition to providing palliative care for people who require it. Quality lifestyle disease intervention needs to be delivered through a primary healthcare approach where early detection and proper treatment are prioritized

The Future 50 Foods
Fifty food items have been identified as 'future food' in a report released by German brand Knorr, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and Adam Drewnowski, director of The Center for Public Health Nutrition at the University of Washington on February 20, 2019.
"The Future 50 foods have been recommended to overcome health issues by following sustainable farming methods. The criteria for choosing the 50 foods has been based on their high nutritional value, relative environmental impact, flavour, accessibility, acceptability and affordability.
The 50 have been divided into various category like algae, beans and pulses, cereals and grains, fruits and vegetables, leafy greens, mushrooms, nuts and seeds, root vegetables, sprouts and tubers.

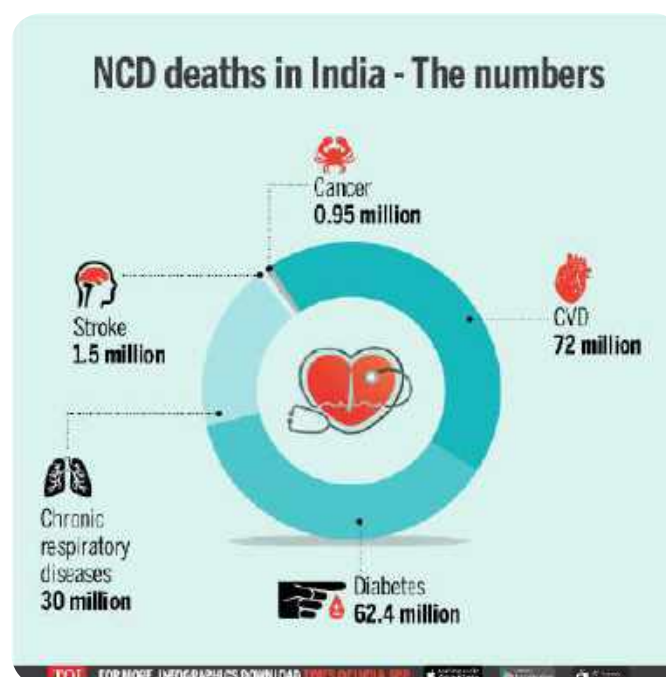
Health Promotion

Health promotion is the process of empowering people to increase control over their health and its determinants through health literacy efforts and multisectoral action to increase healthy behaviors. This process includes activities for the community-at-large or for populations at increased risk of negative health

outcomes. Health promotion usually addresses behavioral risk factors such as tobacco use, obesity, diet and physical inactivity, as well as the areas of mental health, injury prevention, drug abuse control, alcohol control, health behavior related to HIV, and sexual health.

Some methods that can be adopted for health promotion are:

- ◆ Policies and interventions to address tobacco, alcohol, physical activity and diet
- ◆ Dietary and nutritional intervention should also appropriately tackle malnutrition, defined as a condition that arises from eating a diet in which certain nutrients are lacking, in excess (too high in intake), or in the wrong proportions
- ◆ Intersectoral policies and health services interventions to address mental health and substance abuse
- ◆ Strategies to promote sexual and reproductive health, including through health education and increased access to sexual and reproductive health, and family planning services
- ◆ Strategies to tackle domestic violence, including public



awareness campaigns; treatment and protection of victims; and linkage with law enforcement and social services.

Conclusion

Certainly the urbanization process has caused poor lifestyle choices, such as smoking, overuse of alcohol, poor healthy diet, insufficient physical activity and chronic stress, leading to development and progression of various chronic diseases. Even though doctors and social media encourage

us for healthful habits to help prevent many-of-these chronic medical disorders, but we generally ignore or are reluctant to either start or maintain these appropriate, healthy behaviours.

Nevertheless, healthy lifestyle methods are now easily achievable with appropriate interventions, like nutritional counselling, exercise training, de-addiction programmes, regular medical checkups and stress management techniques. A general conclusion from most of the genetic and epidemiologic studies have

strongly suggested that reducing identified occupational hazards, modifying dietary habits and changing lifestyle-risk aspects could avert most cases of cardiovascular disorders, stroke, diabetes, neurological diseases and many types of cancers.

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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3. OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT: NEEDS A RELOOK

Why in News?

The government has threatened to invoke the Official Secrets Act (OSA) against two publications that had run reports on the Rafale deal, on the basis of documents which, the government claimed, had been stolen from the Defence Ministry. Attorney-General K.K. Venugopal submitted that the publication of secret defence documents had put national security at risk and affected relations with friendly foreign powers. Remarks made by the Attorney-General in the Supreme Court on March 6, have brought the Official Secrets Act into focus again.

Official Secrets Act (OSA) and its Background

OSA has its roots in the British colonial era. The original version was The Indian Official Secrets Act (Act XIV), 1889. This was brought in with the main objective of muzzling the voice of a large number of newspapers that had come up in several languages, and were opposing the Raj's policies, building political consciousness and facing police crackdowns and prison terms. It was amended and made more stringent in the form of The Indian Official Secrets

Act, 1904, during Lord Curzon's tenure as Viceroy of India. In 1923, a newer version was notified. The Indian Official Secrets Act (Act No XIX of 1923) was extended to all matters of secrecy and confidentiality in governance in the country.

The colonial-era law meant for ensuring secrecy and confidentiality in governance, mostly on national security and espionage issues was retained even after Independence, has often been cited by authorities for refusing to divulge information. Governments have also faced criticism for misusing the law against journalists and whistleblowers.

What Comes under its Purview?

It broadly deals with two aspects — spying or espionage, covered under Section 3, and disclosure of other secret information of the government, under Section 5. Secret information can be any official code, password, sketch, plan, model, article, note, document or information. Under Section 5, both the person communicating the information, and the person receiving the information, can be punished.

The law, applicable to government servants and citizens, provides the framework for dealing with espionage, sedition, and other potential threats to the integrity of the nation. The law makes spying, sharing 'secret' information, unauthorised use of uniforms, withholding information, interference with the armed forces in prohibited/restricted areas, among others, punishable offences. If guilty, a person may get up to 14 years' imprisonment, a fine, or both.

Classification of Official Documents

Based on the level of sensitivity of the information and the implications of its disclosure for national security, the official documents in India are classified as follows

Top Secret: It is for information whose unauthorised disclosure may cause "exceptionally grave damage" to national security or national interest. This category is reserved for the nation's closest secrets.

Secret: It is for information whose disclosure may result in "serious damage" to national security or national interest, or serious embarrassment to

the government. It is generally used for “highly important matters”.

Confidential: It is for information that might cause “damage” to national security, be prejudicial to national interest, might embarrass the government.

Restricted: It is applied to information meant only for official use and is not to be published or communicated to any person except for official purposes.

Documents which are not classified are regarded as “Unclassified”.

For classifying a document, a government Ministry or Department follows the Manual of Departmental Security Instructions, 1994, not under OSA. Also, OSA itself does not say what a “secret” document is. It is the government’s discretion to decide what falls under the ambit of a “secret” document to be charged under OSA. Despite of requests from activists, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has not disclosed the criteria for classification. It has often been argued that the law is in direct conflict with the Right to Information Act, 2005.

Observations of Empowered Committee Regarding Various Provisions of OSA

In 1971, the Law Commission became the first official body to make an observation regarding OSA. In its report on ‘Offences Against National Security’, it observed that “it agrees with the contention” that “merely because a circular is marked secret or confidential, it should not attract the provisions of the Act, if the publication thereof is in the interest of the public and no question of national emergency and interest of the State as such arises”. The Law Commission, however, did not recommend any changes to the Act.

In 2006, the Second Administrative Reforms Commission (SARC) recommended that OSA be repealed,

and replaced with a chapter in the National Security Act containing provisions relating to official secrets. Observing that OSA was “incongruous with the regime of transparency in a democratic society”, the ARC referred to the 1971 Law Commission report that had called for an “umbrella Act” to be passed to bring together all laws relating to national security.

In 2015, the present government set up a committee to look into provisions of the OSA in light of the RTI Act. It submitted its report to the Cabinet Secretariat on June 16, 2017, recommending that OSA be made more transparent and in line with the RTI Act.

Critical Analysis of OSA

The primary critique of the Act is that it flips the constitutive logic of a democratic republic, where the state is supposed to be transparent to its citizens. While it is nobody’s case that all information ought to be made public – for example, troop movements in wartime or confidential trade negotiation positions, to take two examples, obviously need to be secret – there should be a heavy presumption against secrecy. Under the OSA, however, the state is given wide powers to place information off-limits to citizens, simply by stipulating that certain documents are secret — and then draconian powers to punish them in case it is made public, regardless of the public interest involved.

Another contentious issue with the law is that its Section 5, which deals with potential breaches of national security, is often misinterpreted. The Section makes it a punishable offence to share information that may help an enemy state. The Section comes in handy for booking journalists when they publicise information that may cause embarrassment to the government or the armed forces. This makes whistle-blowing and investigative journalism

a perilous enterprise, no matter how critically important it might be to have the information public.

Major Instances of Invoking OSA

One of the oldest and longest criminal trials involving OSA is the 1985 Coomarr Narain spy case. Twelve former staff members in the Prime Minister’s Office and Rashtrapati Bhavan Secretariat were sentenced to 10 years’ imprisonment in 2002. They were found guilty of entering into a criminal conspiracy with officials of the French, Polish and German embassies, communicating secret official codes, classified documents and information pertaining to defence, shipping, transport, finance, planning, and R&AW and Intelligence Bureau reports.

In another high-profile case, then Kashmir Times journalist Iftikhar Gilani was arrested in 2002 and charged under OSA.

The other high-profile case was the ISRO spy case targeting scientist S Nambi Narayan. Before his recent acquittal, he had faced a criminal trial under OSA, and was accused of passing on rocket and cryogenic technology to Pakistan for illegal gratification.

The most recent conviction under OSA came in 2018, when a Delhi court sentenced former diplomat Madhuri Gupta, who had served at the Indian High Commission in Islamabad, to three years in jail for passing on sensitive information to the ISI.

The SARC report stated that as the OSA’s background is the colonial climate of mistrust of people and the primacy of public officials in dealing with the citizens, it created a culture of secrecy. Confidentiality became the norm and disclosure the exception. This tendency was challenged when the Right to Information Act came into existence.

Section 22 of the RTI Act provides for its primacy vis-a-vis provisions of other laws, including OSA. This gives the RTI Act an overriding effect, notwithstanding anything inconsistent with the provisions of OSA. So if there is any inconsistency in OSA with regard to furnishing of information, it will be superseded by the RTI Act. However, under Sections 8 and 9 of the RTI Act, the government can refuse

information. Effectively, if government classifies a document as “secret” under OSA Clause 6, that document can be kept outside the ambit of the RTI Act, and the government can invoke Sections 8 or 9. Legal experts see this as a loophole.

Conclusion

The attempt to target the messenger and to criminalise the whistleblower, all under cover of “national security” or “stability” of government or “official secrecy”, is an attack on the freedom of expression and the people’s right to know. What falls under the Official Secrets Act in a democracy is something that needs constant contest, the need for official secrecy has to be weighed against the citizen’s right to know. For, the same statute book that has the OSA gives pride of place to the Act that empowers citizens to access, and to demand, information under the control of public authorities in order to

promote transparency. In any conflict between the two, in a democracy that calls itself open, surely the letter and spirit of the right to freedom of speech and expression and information should trump the archaic and increasingly anachronistic OSA.

Notably, the Supreme Court has recognised this democratic imperative. Over the years, India’s apex court has enlivened and expanded the protections accorded to the whistleblower, to ensure that those who expose corruption and wrongdoing are not vulnerable to bullying and intimidation.

While the OSA had legally perpetuated a culture of secrecy (and corruption) and denial of any rights against them, the RTI Act ushered India into an era of transparency and accountability. Thus, the real difference between these two acts is in the shift of cultures of the two regimes. However, the Official Secrets Act has not been

totally overridden by the Right to Information Act, 2005.

The main challenge is the interpretation of “public interest” mentioned in RTI Act. The secrecy in government operations is has to be limited by absolute necessity by keeping the confidentiality strictly time-bound. We have to ensure that in the era of transparency and accountability, this act should not become a hiding cloak over governmental irregularities in the name of national interest.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance-applications, models, successes, limitations and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures.

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4. OIC: ANOTHER DIPLOMATIC FRONT FOR INDIA

Why in News?

India’s External Affairs Minister (EAM) Sushma Swaraj addressed the inaugural session of the 46th Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers on March 1, 2019, in Abu Dhabi as a “guest of honor” invited by this year’s OIC host country, the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Introduction

The invitation extended to India was phenomenal and has gained immense significance because of the timing. At a time when India is cornering Pakistan on all international forums due to its alleged role in Pulwama terror attack, the invitation by the OIC which was the

biggest supporter of the Pakistan and Pakistan had blocked all efforts of India to engage with OIC. This invitation is seen as a signal of changing geopolitical dynamics. Presently, the Gulf Region is our largest market, supplier of energy and source of remittances. More than 8 million Indians living in the region.

India is making rapid progress in terms of its influence in the international arena, not just as a trillion-dollar economic powerhouse, but also as a military and technological giant, all combining to make it a political heavyweight. Given the current buoyant state of the Indian economy amid a bleak world scenario, India’s formal association with the OIC could help forge mutually beneficial economic deals.

As a result, a formal place for India in the OIC would add to the collective credibility and bargaining power of the organisation. The OIC would be able to leverage India in relation to important issues of the Muslim world. This would help the OIC address the “state of disunity” among Muslims, which many see as one of the worst in 14 centuries of Islamic history. In a post-9/11 21st century, the Muslim world faces numerous challenges – poverty, terrorism, calls for political reform and unemployment. The new programme OIC-2025 focuses on 18 priority areas with 107 goals. Some of them are Peace and Security, Palestine and Al-Quds (Jerusalem), Poverty Alleviation, Counter-terrorism, Investment and Finance, Food Security, Science and

Technology, Climate Change and Sustainability, Moderation, Culture and Interfaith Harmony, Empowerment of Women, Joint Islamic Humanitarian Action and Human Rights and Good Governance. India's experiences would be more of an asset than a liability — especially envisaging joint action to promote tolerance and moderation, modernisation, extensive reforms in all spheres of activities including science and technology, education, trade, and good governance and promotion of human rights.

Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

The Organization was established upon 25 September 1969 following the criminal arson of Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem. The criterion was simple: a member State must either have a Muslim majority or have a Muslim as Head of State. The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the second largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations with a membership of 57 states spread over four continents. OIC endeavours to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim

world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among various people of the world.

Headquartered in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, it has permanent delegations to the United Nations and the European Union.

Over the last 50 years, the membership has grown from its founding members of 30 to 57 states. The member states of the OIC face many challenges in the 21st century and to address those challenges, the third session of the Islamic Summit held in Makkah in December 2005, laid down the blueprint called the Ten-Year Program of Action.

It successfully concluded with the close of 2015. A successor programme for the next decade (2016-2025) has since then been adopted.

Effort for Inclusion of India in IOC

It is the first time India is attending the OIC conference, that too as a guest of honour, that can be credited to few significant developments in past couple of years. The credit can be given to the increasing stature of India among international community.

Lack of OIC membership has prevented India from engaging more meaningfully with the organization even though India has fairly robust relations with most member states. While OIC charter stipulates that only Muslim countries willing to promote the objectives of organization are eligible for membership, many non-Muslim countries have secured observer status and even full membership. The most recent among them is Russia, which came on board as an observer status in 2005. Thailand — a predominantly Buddhist country — received the same recognition in 1998.

Qatar had first proposed observer status for India in 2002. India's longstanding demand of being included in the as an observer has found support from Bangladesh and Turkey. India enjoys cordial relations with most OIC members individually. UAE, which issued the invitation and has Indians as one-third of its population, has invested heavily in India's infrastructure. Another important development was visit to India of the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed bin Salman. West Asia and India's growing economic and energy interdependence makes it difficult for the former to ignore the latter.

India, which is home to the world's third largest Muslim population with more than 150 million Muslims, most of them part of the world's largest democratic process, India deserves to be associated with the OIC. It is also important to note that many OIC members are sympathetic to the idea. At the same time, one needs to also see the issue from the angle that by denying India any role in the OIC, one is, in fact, abandoning the duty of promoting the interests of the Muslim population of India.

AT 1ST MEET, YAHYA THREATENED PULLOUT

➤ India was offered membership status of OIC in 1969, when it was founded. **Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed**, then minister for indl development, led the Indian delegation to the Rabat conference

➤ There, a Moroccan minister asked him to either **withdraw "voluntarily" or "feign illness"** and not attend the meet

➤ Alternatively, it was suggested India attend as an "observer" — a **downgrade from the membership status**

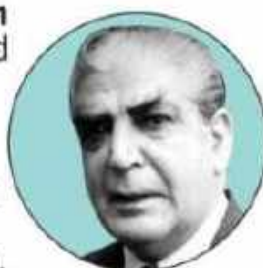
➤ The reason: Pak president **Yahya Khan** had locked

himself up in his room and threatened to boycott the summit if the Indian delegation was present.

Jordan, Turkey and Iran also supported Pakistan

➤ The reason for Khan's tantrum: **riots in Ahmedabad**

➤ The Indian delegation was not informed about any of the official meetings/sessions, which were **held in secret**



Yahya Khan

OIC & The Pakistan Angle

India's presence at the OIC meet for the first time, highlighted not just the incremental success of New Delhi's 'West Asia outreach', but also how Islamabad's own 'tried and tested' formula in its dealings with India may have fallen into disrepair.

The 'irony' was made more keen when Pakistan's foreign minister, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, boycotted the meet in protest of his Indian counterpart's attendance.

Earlier, the OIC, whose formation was taking place in the backdrop of the arson at the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem on August 21, 1969, had decided not to invite India a country with the world's third largest Muslim population. It was a Pakistani trick that ensured that India did not meet the membership criterion of the meeting set at an organisational meeting which had Pakistan and Morocco as members. India was invited to attend the first summit of the OIC in 1969 in Morocco. But the Indian delegation had to return midway due to a withdrawal of the invitation after Pakistan's objection.

Pakistan had great leverage with the conservative Arab monarchies for ideological reasons and because of the fact that its military was willing to provide the Arab monarchies with well-trained soldiers for hire that the latter needed to protect their insecure regimes. OIC over the years regarding Kashmir and India-Pakistan issues which had always favoured the Pakistani point of view.

For instance the OIC passed a resolution on March 2, condemning "in the strongest possible terms recent wave of Indian terrorism in occupied Jammu and Kashmir that has resulted in the deaths of 48 people in the month of November alone, making 2018 one

of the deadliest years. Similarly OIC held the Indian security forces responsible for killing Hizbul Commander Burhan Wani in 2016.

India Stand at OIC

As regards the resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir, India maintained that the state is an integral part of India and is a matter strictly internal to India. India's EAM Swaraj, while addressing the recent plenary, mentioned that "the fight against terrorism is not a confrontation against any religion...it is driven by distortion of religion." A similar stance has been taken by many OIC countries, which delink terrorism from any particular religion.

Moreover, the OIC 2025 Program of Action (2016-2025) stands out as a unique venture envisioning the OIC's role in peace and development in the Muslim world and beyond, focusing on priority areas like peace and security, terrorism, inter-faith harmony, poverty alleviation, food security, and women empowerment. But the exclusion of around 185 million Muslims of India from the organization, which states that it is "the collective voice of the Muslim world," would hardly help in achieving these objectives.

Strategic Importance for India

Strategic partnerships between New Delhi and a number of countries in West Asia, the Gulf region, Central Asia and with Indonesia and Malaysia in Southeast Asia hold significance for India's Indo-Pacific strategy that is aimed at maintaining international order and ensuring inclusivity in a context that sees China increasingly trying to lay an overbearing role. India is the world's third largest economy on Purchasing Power Parity; and, is the fastest growing one. With its pluralistic democracy, talent for assimilation and 'secular free-market' project, presents itself as an inviting partner.

The OIC accounts for about 29 per cent of the total membership of the U.N., 47 per cent of the African Union, and 100 per cent of the membership of the Arab League, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO). Nearer home, three of the seven members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) are in the OIC and so are three ASEAN states, with two others (Philippines and Thailand) attending meetings as guests. The OIC, therefore,

Spheres of Influence

Indonesia, Syria & Algeria have been opposing moves by Organisation of Islamic Conference during its annual meets to issue strong statements on Kashmir



India has worked overtime to increase its stakes in Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt



Central Asian states, which are also OIC members, are seeking deeper ties with India

is a factor of relevance in multilateral gatherings and does influence the outcome of elections to U.N. bodies, and their decisions.

Further, Muslim countries and societies form the immediate and proximate neighbourhood of India in South, South East, Central, and West Asia. Contacts with Muslim countries figure prominently in our external relations. These for the most part have a substantive economic content, and considerable potential in terms of our developing capabilities. They have a bearing on our strategic environment.

Opportunities and Challenges for India

From the Indian perspective, the organisation increasingly presents a congenial milieu. Many oil rich countries are member of this grouping, thus engagement with it can be beneficial for India in term of energy security. Pakistan has been using this platform to spread misinformation regarding India on the issue of Kashmir. With the presence of India, it will be easy to counter any misinformation. Lastly, these countries provide employment for almost 6 million Indians and fetch a major part of remittances to India.

Some intrinsic divergence also persists like India fundamentally is a secular nation, while OIC is an organisation formed to protect interest of muslims around the world, thus joining it would go against India's fundamental principles. India, compared to Pakistan would not be valued there as Pakistan is very close to many member countries like Iran and Turkey with whom it shared membership of CENTO (Central Treaty Organisation, formerly the Baghdad Pact).

The real challenge lies ahead in making use of the forum optimally.

Three things must be borne in mind.

- ◆ First, India holds a trump card in the growing perception of the international community that it is a future growth centre and potential locomotive of the world economy. If India goes about it with imagination, the can meet India's regional and global aspirations far more optimally than our membership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, which is ultimately a Chinese-Russian condominium in New Cold War conditions.
- ◆ Second, the OIC like the Arab League or the Gulf Cooperation Council, is already reeling under the after-effects of the divides in West Asia. India should steer clear of such tremors, which do not fundamentally concern Indian interests. India needs both Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates as well as Qatar and Iran. Besides, the quarrels within the West Asian family are often instigated by outsiders and they have a history of dying down as abruptly as they erupt. The present high tide will also pass.
- ◆ Third, the OIC's utility for Pakistan to berate India is indeed ending even for propaganda purposes and India too should not get entrapped in shadow plays that are wasteful.

India's interests are best served if it creates positive energy within the grouping by its sheer presence and its contributions, which bring into play its vast experience in leadership roles in a multilateral setting.

Way Forward

India's presence at the 46th OIC meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers is historic, but it still remains a stepping stone toward larger engagement with

the OIC and the Muslim world. India's concerns with respect to the menace of terrorism, affects the entire world. Despite the changes in the organisation, the OIC's attitude towards India remains unchanged. In his speech, the Secretary General expressed concern over the situation in Kashmir. The OIC reiterated its stand that Jammu and Kashmir was an "occupied" state.

There is nothing new in the OIC's stand on Kashmir. For its part, the Government of India has rejected the OIC resolution stating that "Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India and the OIC has no locus standi in matters concerning internal affairs of India." India probably understands the lack of teeth in OIC resolutions and feels that it should not over-react beyond issuing an official statement expressing its displeasure.

Pakistan should heed to India's concerns with respect to terrorism, which find similarity with that of its other two neighbors, Afghanistan and Iran. With mushrooming concerns like the rise of Islamophobia, cross-border terrorism, extremism, and instability in the world order, the OIC has become more relevant than ever before. Active engagement in the grouping by India, home to around 10 percent of the Muslims in the world, can add more substance to the existence and working of the OIC.

General Studies Paper- II

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

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



5. STOCK MARKET AND ECONOMY: AN ANALYSIS

Why in News?

Indian equities continue to be on fire, with benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty touching new highs every other day. However, a bullish stock market need not necessarily indicate that all is well with the economy. A recent analysis by brokerage firm Credit Suisse showed that the relationship between the economy and markets is tenuous at best.

Introduction

During the post Independence period of India the development pattern was designed through strong centralized planning, government owned basic and key industries, excessive regulations and the strict control over the private enterprise, trade protection through the tariff and non tariff barriers in addition to selective approach towards the foreign capital.

The economic reforms were set-in motion, when control on industries was reduced through the Industrial policies in the year 1985. The economic reforms program received a big boost when a new industrial policy was announced in the national parliament on 24th July, 1991, resulted in the significant growth rate. These structural changes brought into the economy, also led the significant changes to the household income level and the saving pattern as well.

Individual investment in financial market in general and savings in the form of financial assets in particular exhibited remarkable growth since late eighties. The growth of household savings during the decade of eighties has been facilitated by a simultaneous increase in physical as well as financial assets.

Balance sheets of Indian households exhibit a set of features

that are unusual in the international context. As per the household finance committee report, the average Indian household holds more than 95 per cent of total assets in physical form (which includes residential buildings, farm and non-farm land, constructions such as recreational facilities, transportation vehicles, livestock and poultry, agricultural machinery and non-farm business equipment), and in gold or other forms of jewellery. Taken together, non-financial assets account for 95 per cent of the average household balance sheet. The residual 5 per cent goes into financial assets (such as bank deposits and savings, publicly-traded shares, mutual funds, life insurance and retirement corpus).

Indians' love for physical assets has resulted in diversion of a large chunk of their savings and most of their assets into gold and real estate. Meanwhile, both gold and real estate are losing attractiveness. The huge increase in the number of mutual fund folios, domestic retail inflows into financial markets and the spurt in demat accounts all mark a strong shift to financial assets.

In recent years, the importance of household financial savings has increased compared to household physical savings. The relative rise in financial savings over the past is in all probability because real interest rates have turned positive thanks to the

steep decline in inflation, especially since physical assets are seen as good hedges against high inflation. Further, the government efforts to increase banking penetration through its Jan Dhan Yojna and the integration of PAN and Aadhar are expected to further increase the share of savings in financial assets.

Indian Financial Market

India Financial market is one of the oldest in the world and is considered to be the fastest growing and best among all the markets of the emerging economies. The history of Indian capital markets dates back 200 years toward the end of the 18th century when India was under the rule of the East India Company. The financial market in India today is more developed than many other sectors because it was organized long before with the securities exchanges of Mumbai, Ahmadabad and Kolkata were established as early as the 19th century.

In the early 1960s, the number of securities exchanges in India became eight - including Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Kolkata. Apart from these three exchanges, there was the Madras, Kanpur, Delhi, Bangalore and Pune exchanges as well. Today there are 23 regional securities exchanges in India.

Types of Financial Markets

A financial market consists of two major segments: (a) Money Market; and (b) Capital Market. While the money market deals in short-term credit, the capital market handles the medium term and long-term credit.



Money Market

The money market is a market for short-term funds, which deals in financial assets whose period of maturity is upto one year. It should be noted that money market does not deal in cash or money as such but simply provides a market for credit instruments such as bills of exchange, promissory notes, commercial paper, treasury bills, etc.

Capital Market

Capital Market may be defined as a market dealing in medium and long-term funds. It is an institutional arrangement for borrowing medium and long-term funds and which provides facilities for marketing and trading of securities. So it constitutes all long-term borrowings from banks and financial institutions, borrowings from foreign markets and raising of capital by issue various securities such as shares debentures, bonds, etc.

It consists of two different segments namely primary and secondary market. The primary market deals with new or fresh issue of securities and is, therefore, also known as new issue market; whereas the secondary market provides a place for purchase and sale of existing securities and is often termed as stock market or stock exchange.

- ◆ **Primary Market:** The Primary Market consists of arrangements, which facilitate the procurement of long term funds by companies by making fresh issue of shares and debentures.
- ◆ **Secondary Market:** The secondary market known as stock market or stock exchange plays an equally important role in mobilising long-term funds by providing the necessary liquidity to holdings in shares and debentures. It provides a place where these securities can



be encashed without any difficulty and delay.

Stock Markets and Economy

Generally speaking, the stock market will reflect the economic conditions of an economy. If an economy is growing then output will be increasing and most firms should be experiencing increased profitability. This higher profit makes the company shares more attractive – because they can give bigger dividends to shareholders. By contrast, if the stock market predicts a recession, then share prices will generally fall – in anticipation of lower profits. This is because a recession means lower profits, fewer dividends and even the prospect of firms going bankrupt, which would be bad news for shareholders.

However, share prices can fall for many reasons other than recession. Sometimes share prices fall and there is no correlation with the economy. It could be a correction of over-valued prices or a change in market sentiment. For example, in October 1987, stock markets around the world fell 25%. Many feared this predicted a major global recession. In response policymakers cut interest rates. But, the stock market crash appeared to have no bearing on the economy.

Further, India's quarterly growth saw a sharp deterioration from 7% in the third quarter of fiscal year 2017 to a three-year low of 5.7% in the first

quarter of fiscal year 2018, hurt by demonetisation and implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST). However, the market's continued ascent does not reflect the pain caused by either of these events to the large informal sector, which is a key contributor to the GDP and generates a large number of jobs.

Stock markets and the economy have different structures, meaning there exists a large informal economy, large parts of the formal economy may not be listed, and a large part of the market is driven by global factors or growing penetration and share. But, there is some correlation between them. The most important correlation between stocks and the economy has to do with time. The shorter the time frame, the weaker the relationship. But take it out to an extended time frame, for example, years or decades, and the performance of both will actually converge.

Factors Affecting Stock Market

Though, the stock markets are affected by financial conditions and investor's perception, there are other factors which affect stock markets.

- ◆ **Actions of Investors:** Actions of individuals, institutions and mutual funds investors will instantly affect the prices of stocks, bonds, and futures in the securities market.

- ◆ **Business Conditions:** Business conditions also affect the financial Market. Profits earned volume of sales and even the time of year all will determine how much an investor wants to invest in stock.
- ◆ **Government Actions:** The government makes all kinds of decisions that affect both how much an individual stock may be worth (new regulations on a business) and what sort of instruments people want to buy. The government's interest rates, tax rates, trade policy and budget deficits all have an impact on prices.
- ◆ **Economic Indicators:** General trends that signal changes in the economy are watched closely by investors to predict what is going to happen next. Such indicators include the Gross National Product (GNP), the inflation rate, the budget deficit and the unemployment rate. These indicators point to changes in the way ordinary people spend their money and how the economy is likely to perform.

Securities Exchange Board of India

As part of economic reforms programme started in June 1991, the Government of India initiated several capital market reforms, which included the abolition of the office of the Controller of Capital Issues (CCI) and granting statutory recognition to Securities Exchange Board of India (SEBI) in 1992 for:

- (a) Protecting the interest of investors in securities;
- (b) Promoting the development of securities market;
- (c) Regulating the securities market; and
- (d) Matters connected there with or incidental thereto.

As part of its efforts to protect investors' interests, SEBI has initiated many primary market reforms, which include improved disclosure standards in public issue documents, introduction of prudential norms and simplification of issue procedures.

- ◆ **International Events:** Events around the world, such as changed in currency values, trade barriers, wars, natural disasters, and changes in governments will affect the price of securities, which ultimately influence the amount of investment.

Role of Stock Market in Economy

Stock Markets apart from being hub of primary and secondary market, they have very important role to play in the economy of the country. Some of them are listed below.

- ◆ **Raising capital for businesses:** Exchanges help companies to capitalize by selling shares to the investing public.
- ◆ **Mobilizing savings for investment:** They help public to mobilize their savings to invest in high yielding economic sectors, which results in higher yield, both to the individual and to the national economy.
- ◆ **Facilitating company growth:** They help companies to expand and grow by acquisition or fusion.
- ◆ **Profit sharing:** They help both casual and professional stock investors, to get their share in the wealth of profitable businesses.
- ◆ **Corporate governance:** Stock Markets impose stringent rules to get listed in them. So listed public companies have better management records than privately held companies.
- ◆ **Creating investment opportunities for small investors:** Small investors can also participate in the growth of large companies, by buying a small number of shares.
- ◆ **Government capital raising for development projects:** They help government to raise fund for developmental activities through the issue of bonds. An investor who buys them will be lending money to the government, which is more secure, and sometimes enjoys tax benefits also.

- ◆ **Barometer of the economy:** They maintain the stock indexes which are the indicators of the general trend in the economy. They also regulate the stock price fluctuations.

Way Forward

The benefits of participating in formal financial markets are well documented, and in terms of asset allocation once the participation decision has been made, financial assets provide better liquidity and diversification properties than physical assets, and can facilitate efficient household lifecycle portfolio management.

But, decomposing savings into physical savings (in assets such as gold and real estate), and financial savings (invested in claims such as deposits, debt, and equity), a striking feature of the Indian data is that Indian households have increasingly favoured physical over financial savings. For instance, in 2011-12, nearly 70 percent of aggregate annual household savings flow into physical assets.

To shift the household saving towards financial savings, several measures are required. Creating the policy environment that incentivizes new financial savings instruments to alleviate the dependence on physical savings such as gold needs to be further stimulated. Finally, education appears to increase the allocation to financial assets substantially. Further investment in education, and in particular financial education, would appear to generate gains on this margin as well as the more obvious ones.

General Studies Paper-III

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



6. GSP AND ITS IMPACT ON INDIA

Why in News?

The US has announced that it intends to “terminate” India’s designation as a beneficiary of its Generalized System of Preferences (GSP). The move comes two days after President Trump’s reference to India as a “very-high tariff nation” and his demand for a “reciprocal tax” on goods from India, and is in line with Washington’s concerted attacks on India’s trade stance.

Background

The U.S. has ultimately acted on its threat to withdraw concessions granted to Indian imports under the Generalised System of Preferences. India-U.S. trade tensions escalated last year when the U.S. took two consecutive decisions to increase import tariffs on steel and aluminium, and place India’s eligibility for GSP benefits under review.

Washington’s decision to review India’s GSP status stemmed from complaints from American medical and dairy industries, both of which said India was not providing “equitable and reasonable access to its market”. US had launched an eligibility review of India’s compliance with the GSP market access criterion in April 2018. Most recent complaint from the side of US president was high Indian tariffs on Harley Davidson motorcycles.

According to the USTR, US have been on deficit for many years in trade with India. In 2017, India was the United States’ ninth largest goods trading partner with a trade deficit of \$22.9 billion in favor of India. USTR said India has implemented a wide array of trade barriers that create serious negative effects on United States commerce. However, there has been a limited truth in the facts present by USTR analysis. India’s tariff rates have been reducing steadily over the

decades from as high as 150% in 1991 to 10% in 2007-08. According to WTO data, India’s average applied tariff is around 13 per cent. Although there have been move to increase duties on a number of items in last 5 years.

Further, India has said it made every effort to meet the most of the U.S. demands and reach an understanding, but key points of difference, especially regarding India’s cultural concerns to do with dairy products, could not be accommodated.

What is the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP)?

The Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) is a U.S. trade program designed to promote economic growth in the developing world by providing preferential duty-free entry for up to 4,800 products from 129 designated beneficiary countries and territories. GSP was instituted on January 1, 1976, by the Trade Act of 1974. The principles underlying GSP were formally accepted in March 1968 during the 2nd UNCTAD Conference held at New Delhi. It allows members of the World Trade Organization to lower tariffs on goods from certain countries by exempting them from the Most-Favored Nation principle, under which WTO members are otherwise obliged to treat imports from all other members equally.

The declared objectives are to assist developing countries:

- In increasing their export earnings:
- In promoting their industrialization: and
- In accelerating their rates of economic growth.

The GSP program has effective dates which are specified in relevant legislation, thereby requiring periodical reauthorization in order to remain in effect. GSP expired on July 31, 2013, and was most recently reauthorized on June 29, 2015 (effective July 29, 2015) for a period of two and a half years. The relevant legislation permits retroactive extension of GSP benefits.

Benefits of GSP for India

India has been the biggest beneficiary of the GSP regime and accounted for over a quarter of the goods that got duty-free access into the US in 2017. Exports to the US from India under GSP — at \$5.58 billion — was over 12 per cent of India’s total goods exports of \$45.2 billion to the US that year.

Indian exporters benefit indirectly - through the benefit that accrues to the importer by way of reduced tariff or duty free entry of eligible Indian products. Reduction or removal of import duty on an Indian product makes it more competitive to the importer - other things (e.g. quality)



being equal. This tariff preference helps new exporters to penetrate a market and established exporters to increase their market share and to improve upon the profit margins, in the donor country.

It also allows India to integrate with global value chains (GVC) and hence, with global markets. These advantages provide opportunities for small enterprises and help in the overall livelihood creation endeavour in India. Further, it is important to note that Indian exports to the U.S. under the GSP programme are mostly intermediaries, and are not in direct competition with U.S. producers — ultimately, these goods benefit the U.S. economy. India's continued eligibility for GSP makes good economic sense given the low value, high-quality, and nature of its imports.

Analysing Impact on India

Following the U.S. announcement, the Commerce Ministry was quick to downplay the impact, saying the GSP benefits amounted to only \$190 million while India's total exports under GSP to the U.S. stood at \$5.6 billion. As per a CII survey, the U.S. remains a favoured destination for Indian companies which have invested \$18 billion in the U.S. and support as many as 1.13 lakh jobs.

INDIAN EXPORTS UNDER GSP

PRODUCT	VALUE (US\$)
Organic chemicals	1402.6 mn
Vehicle parts, accessories	1040.5 mn
Furniture, household goods	591.5 mn
Electrical apparatus	461.1 mn
Stone, sand, cement	410.5 mn
Bauxite and aluminum	359.1 mn
Iron or steel mill products	245.9 mn
Plastic materials	188.7
Wood, glass, plastic	60.1 mn
Synthetic rubber	34.3 mn
Nuclear fuel materials	6.3 mn
TV and video equipment	4.1 mn

Indian officials have stressed that talks on the issue would still continue during the 60-day period after which the GSP decision would come into effect (many Indian products can no longer enter the US market duty free after May 2019).

According to the Commerce Ministry, about 1,900-odd products exported to US with GSP may be impacted. This could impact India's competitiveness in items groups such as raw materials in the organic chemicals sector and intermediary goods in the US market, alongside items such as iron or steel, furniture, aluminum and electrical machinery.

Specific sectors, such as gems and jewellery, leather and processed foods will lose the benefits of the programme. The government must offer fiscal help to the affected sectors. The Centre could consider refund of taxes for goods not under GST. Use of electricity or petrol in the manufacture of such goods but for which an input credit is not available could qualify here. Helping such sectors would also protect jobs; especially when job creation is at a low.

Challenges for India

India's turn towards protectionism may have gone relatively unremarked in the rest of the world so far, but there was always going to be a damaging blowback. This should be a wake-up call for the government. The world trading system is in a state of flux. The weight of China's manufacturing sector has bent it out of shape. Now it is being hammered into a new configuration. An India that is busy putting up barriers will be in no position to benefit.

Compared to China, India is still a largely poor, developing country. It naturally should be allowed to benefit from the special arrangements set up for such economies but won't if it tries to throw its weight around on the assumption that it is the only

game in town. Manufacturing that is moving away from China doesn't need to shift to an India that is notoriously unfriendly to foreign business. It can go elsewhere — and is doing so, to Bangladesh or countries in South-East Asia such as Vietnam. Both those nations have seen exports grow at a smart pace while India's have stagnated.

Way Forward

Despite continued economic growth over the last two decades or so, India is a lower middle-income country. However, India will remain the world's fastest-growing large economy in the coming years, generating opportunities for US businesses in sectors ranging from defence and retail to oil. The commerce ministry has said India is a thriving market for US services and e-commerce companies like Amazon, Uber, Google and Facebook with billions of dollars of revenue. In fact, despite the price control, American companies like Abbott and Boston Scientific dominate the medical equipment market in India, while Amazon and Uber remain the top players in their segments. India has made systematic efforts to reduce trade imbalance with the U.S. and has enhanced purchases of shale gas and civilian aircraft. Adhering to the rules-based international trading system, India is in the process of examining its export subsidies.

In addition to the economic perspective, the U.S. should consider continuing India's GSP eligibility as a gesture of goodwill that reaffirms its commitment to the mutually beneficial relationship between the two countries. The India-U.S. relationship has continued to grow stronger as India liberalises along a positive and steady trajectory.

Today, both countries engage in countless areas of mutual cooperation, and a supportive stance in recognition of greater goals and shared values would promise significant progress

in the future. If viewed through a transactional prism, the broader strategic dimensions of the partnership could get blurred.

India and the U.S. will continue to intensify their economic relationship and interdependencies, and it is, therefore, critical to maintain the vision of the potential that this partnership offers. The GSP remains a central aspect of the overall trade engagement and must remain available for Indian

exporters keen to address the U.S. markets.

Both India and the US need to think harder about what they want to get out of each other. The US needs to remember that a close relationship with a prosperous India is the best way to ensure the survival of a world order that has long benefited the US above all. New Delhi also needs to remember that the US can only be pushed so far — and that India's own best interests

lie in participating fully in the trading system that has made so many other countries rich.

General Studies Paper- II

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

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7. BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY: A POTENTIAL DISRUPTOR

Why in News?

At the International Business Congress, which was Asia's largest blockchain event, the Telangana state government has announced its intention to build a 'block chain quarter' that will be one of the world's largest ecosystems. Adoption of blockchain in the Indian services sectors, such as banking, finance, retail, supply chain and insurance, can potentially add more than USD 5 billion to the Indian economy.

What is Blockchain technology

The blockchain is an undeniably ingenious invention – the brainchild of a person or group of people known by the pseudonym, Satoshi Nakamoto. Since then, it has evolved into something greater. By allowing digital information to be distributed but not copied, blockchain technology created the backbone of a new type of internet. Originally devised for the digital currency, Bitcoin, the tech community has now found other potential uses for the technology.

According to Don & Alex Tapscott, authors Blockchain Revolution (2016), "The blockchain is an incorruptible

digital ledger of economic transactions that can be programmed to record not just financial transactions but virtually everything of value."

A blockchain is, in the simplest of terms, a time-stamped series of immutable record of data that is managed by cluster of computers not owned by any single entity. Each of these blocks of data (i.e. block) are secured and bound to each other using cryptographic principles (i.e. chain).

A blockchain carries no transaction cost (An infrastructure cost yes, but no transaction cost.) The blockchain is a simple yet ingenious way of passing information from A to B in a fully automated and safe manner. One party to a transaction initiates the process by creating a block. This block is verified by thousands, perhaps millions of computers distributed around the net. The verified block is added to a chain, which is stored across the net, creating not just a unique record, but a unique record with a unique history. Falsifying a single record would mean falsifying the entire chain in millions of instances. That is virtually impossible. Bitcoin uses this model for monetary transactions, but it can be deployed in many others ways.

The Three Pillars of Blockchain Technology

The three main properties of the Blockchain Technology which has helped it gain widespread acclaim are as follows:

- ◆ Decentralization
- ◆ Transparency
- ◆ Immutability

Pillar #1: Decentralization

Before Bitcoin and BitTorrent came along, we were more used to centralized services. The idea is very simple. We have a centralized entity which stored all the data and we have to interact solely with this entity to get whatever information we required.

Example of a centralized system is banks. They store all our money, and the only way that we can pay someone is by going through the bank. Similarly when we google search for something, we send a query to the server who then gets back at us with the relevant information. That is simple client-server. However this model comes with several vulnerabilities.

- ◆ Firstly, because they are centralized, all the data is stored in one spot. This makes them easy target spots for potential hackers.

- ◆ If the centralized system were to go through a software upgrade, it would halt the entire system
- ◆ What if the centralized entity somehow shut down for whatever reason? That way nobody will be able to access the information that it possesses
- ◆ Worst case scenario, what if this entity gets corrupted and malicious? If that happens then all the data that is inside the blockchain will be compromised.

In a decentralized system, the information is not stored by one single entity. In fact, everyone in the network owns the information. If we wanted to interact with our friend then we can do so directly without going through a third party.

Pillar #2: Transparency

One of the most interesting and misunderstood concepts in the blockchain technology is

“transparency.” Person’s identity is hidden via complex cryptography and represented only by their public address. So, while the person’s real identity is secure, you will still see all the transactions that were done by their public address. This level of transparency has never existed before within a financial system. It adds that extra, and much needed, level of accountability which is required by some of these biggest institutions.

Pillar #3: Immutability

Immutability, in the context of the blockchain, means that once something has been entered into the blockchain, it cannot be tampered with. It has too much importance for financial institutes. The blockchain gets this property through cryptographic hash function. In simple terms, hashing means taking an input string of any length and giving out an output of a fixed length. In the context of cryptocurrencies like bitcoin, the

transactions are taken as an input and run through a hashing algorithm (bitcoin uses SHA-256) which gives an output of a fixed length.

Even if we make a small change in our input, the changes that will be reflected in the hash will be huge. This means that any slight changes made in block A, will change the hash which is stored in block B, now that in turn will change the data and the hash of block B which will result in changes in block C and so on and so forth. This will completely change the chain, which is impossible. This is exactly how blockchains attain immutability.

Applications of Blockchain Technology

Blockchain refers to a decentralized database. It distributes the database on millions and millions of computers. It also uses state of the art cryptography, so that once information goes in, it is virtually impossible to get it out again without the original passcode or key.

HOW BLOCKCHAIN WORKS

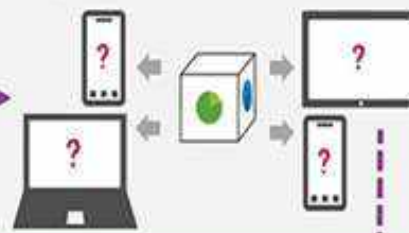
1 Someone registers a transaction



2 Transaction is represented as a block in the shared ledger



3 Block is broadcast to all participants



4 Participants approve the transaction is valid, providing consensus



5 Block is added to the chain



6 Single picture of the chain and actual state is available to all authorized participants



Thus it is revolutionary and has the potential to revolutionize nearly every industry. But here are some of the most likely:

Banking

When the average person hears the word "blockchain," they probably think "Bitcoin," and so it's no surprise that banking tops our list. Blockchain would be a more secure way to store banking records, and a faster, cheaper way of transferring money through the decentralization provided by blockchain. Plus, there's minimal risk of a run on a blockchain system or a collapse, as there's no central "vault." It's as though each person's money has its own private vault that no one else can access.

Healthcare

Some of the biggest challenges in healthcare could be solved by a blockchain system allowing all doctors and healthcare providers to access our health records securely, immediately and easily. Unlike the days of paper records, or even today when digital health records can be created and stored in a myriad of different systems, our health records could be singular, complete, and travel with us from birth to death, regardless of how many times you change doctors or insurance systems.

Education

As the power of online and distance learning grows, so does the need for an independent way of verifying students' transcripts and educational records. A blockchain based system could serve almost as a notary for educational records, creating a way for employers and other educational institutions to access secure records and transcripts.

Voting System

Voting systems secured with blockchain technology would be

completely unhackable. From voter registrations to verifying identity to tallying votes, the system would be indisputable. EVM used in our electoral system can use blockchain technology to eliminate the threat of rigged votes, "voting irregularities" or terrorist organizations hacking the vote.

Security

The whole basis of blockchain is to create decentralized and ultimately secure ways of storing, verifying, and encrypting data, so naturally, security is going to feel the force of this new technology. Decentralized data storage in the cloud eliminates many of the problems of data hacks. Advanced cryptography based on blockchain technologies can create virtually unhackable data encryption.

Government

Aside from voting systems, blockchain technologies could be used to help reduce and eliminate bureaucratic red tape and corruption in government agencies. For example, welfare, disability, veterans and unemployment benefits could be more easily verified and distributed, eliminating fraud and waste.

Real Estate

Blockchain systems could be used to simplify the process and eliminate escrow altogether. Smart contracts could be designed that only execute when certain conditions are met, including funding. Besides, all these various documents could be stored securely.

Legal Industry

Storing and retrieving documents as well as verifying their provenance are key functions of the legal industry. With blockchain technologies, questions over the legality of wills or other legal documents could be eliminated by securely storing and

verifying documents. Also, questions of digital inheritance, especially with the rise of cryptocurrencies, can be eliminated with blockchain secured documents.

Charities and Aid Organizations

Many people want to donate to charity organizations, but worry about whether their money will actually reach the intended recipients. Charities can create trust through smart contracts and online reputation management systems that can help donors trust that their money is going to the specified people and places. U.N.'s World Food Programme is implementing a blockchain based system that allows refugees to get food with an iris scan, instead of relying on cash, credit, or vouchers, all of which can be stolen.

Challenges of Blockchain Technology

To verify all the transactions huge power i.e. electricity is required, which could be a challenge to developing countries like India which is still struggling to contain power deficit. High initial cost, prevalent digital illiteracy etc are some other factors in stalling its expansion.

Also, there should be security about the private key. Every time private key must remain secret because revealing it to third parties is equivalent to giving them control over the bitcoins secured by that key. Also, it is necessary to have a back up of the private key so that it can be protected from accidental loss. We know that if it is lost ones, it cannot be recovered and the funds secured by it are lost forever.

Similarly blocks in a chain must be verified by the distributed network and it can take time. So, transaction speed could be an issue.

Way Forward

Owing to good engineering, technology and science colleges offering specialized technical courses, India

has a huge talent pool of young skilled workforce in niche technologies which is yet to be fully utilized. The ongoing improvement in the education sector is further strengthening the skillset.

Initiatives in India using Blockchain Technologies

1. Use in financial sector:
 - Yes Bank has adopted the technology to fully digitise vendor financing for one of its clients which enables timely processing of vendor payments without physical documents.
 - In Feb 2018, the SBI announced that it would use blockchain technology in its reconciliation, remittances and trade finance operations in fiscal year 2019 and manual intervention while tracking the status of transactions in real time.
2. NITI Aayog is reportedly building a platform called 'IndiaChain' — a shared, India-specific Blockchain infrastructure to leverage the trinity of Jan-Dhan-Yojana, Aadhaar and the mobile.
3. Andhra Pradesh has become the first state in India to adopt blockchain for governance. It has piloted two key projects: managing land records and streamlining vehicle registrations.

In order for India to achieve its dream of a \$5 trillion economy in the next 5 years, it is imperative that it adopts blockchain technology for international payments. Payments from non-resident Indians are crucial to the daily livelihood of millions of Indians. They also contribute to a large chunk of our country's balance of payments and assist in the stimulation of domestic consumption levels in this country, which consequently supports various industries and enterprises. In spite of this, the average cost of sending money to India is 5.63 per cent of each transaction. A great solution is to adopt blockchain technology and virtual currencies for rapid, affordable, effective remittances. The adoption of blockchain to enable more streamlined, affordable payments can change the landscape of India's economy and fuel our GDP growth.

While India does have a skilled talent pool in the country, there is an evident brain drain in areas of emerging technologies. Innovations in blockchain

and AI require huge volumes of data, which further demands a robust security infrastructure. On the other side, global companies have started to acknowledge the importance of cybersecurity. India needs to pick pace in this segment. The lack of technology infrastructure could also hinder innovation in technology space and that is a worry of sorts. To harness the potential of Blockchain technology and reach the stage of large-scale implementation, a structured approach along with adequate financial allocation is the need of the hour.

General Studies Paper- III

Topic: Science and Technology-developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

Topic: Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.



SEVEN SUBJECTIVE QUESTIONS WITH MODEL ANSWERS

Capital Punishment: Should it be Abolished or Not

Q1. 'The death penalty violates the right to life which happens to be the most basic of all human rights.' Critically discuss it in the context of relevance of death penalty.

Hints:

- ◆ Everyone thinks human life is valuable. Some believe that human life is so valuable that even the worst murderers should not be deprived of the value of their lives.
- ◆ Most of the civilised world has abolished it. The death penalty lacks the deterrent effect which is commonly referred to by its advocates.
- ◆ India certainly does not need it as it serves no purpose. No study has shown that the death penalty deters murder more than life imprisonment. The evidence is all to the contrary. For deterrence to work, the severity of the punishment has to coexist with the certainty and swiftness of the punishment. The death penalty has not deterred terrorism, murder or even theft.
- ◆ A punishment cannot be judged by its impact on criminals but by its impact on those who are still innocent. Those who defend the death penalty often do it on the basis of retributive justice. However, the retention of the death penalty is far more fundamental than an arrogant state interest to seek revenge.
- ◆ The Supreme Court has also covered considerable ground in limiting the scope, to the 'rarest of rare cases'. Post-appeal reviews and curative petitions are routinely admitted. Review petitions are now heard in open court. The treatment of death row prisoners has been humanised, and there is scope for judicial review even against a sovereign decision denying clemency.

Rising Trend of Lifestyle Diseases

Q2. Critically analyse why lifestyle diseases are becoming the biggest health risk for people all over the world.

Hints:

- ◆ Lifestyle-related diseases are on the rise in our country. These preventable chronic diseases are the outcome of our unhealthy choices. An alarming number of diseases fall under this category- Obesity, Cardiovascular diseases, Depression, Diabetes Mellitus, Metabolic Syndrome to name just a few.
- ◆ The causes of NCDs can be divided into three broad categories: modifiable behavioural risk factors, non-modifiable risk factors and metabolic risk factors.
- ◆ Health promotion is the process of empowering people to increase control over their health and its determinants through health literacy efforts and multisectoral action to increase healthy behaviors. This process includes activities for the community-at-large or for populations at increased risk of negative health outcomes. Health promotion usually addresses behavioral risk factors such as tobacco use, obesity, diet and physical inactivity, as well as the areas of mental health, injury prevention, drug abuse control, alcohol control, health behavior related to HIV, and sexual health.
- ◆ A general conclusion from most of the genetic and epidemiologic studies have strongly suggested that reducing identified occupational hazards, modifying dietary habits and changing lifestyle-risk aspects could avert most cases of cardiovascular disorders, stroke, diabetes, neurological diseases and many types of cancers.

Official Secrets Act: Needs a Rereview

Q3. 'The Official Secrets Act has no place in a democracy.' In the light of recent debate on Official Secrets Act, critically analyse the statement.

Hints:

- ◆ The government has threatened to invoke the Official Secrets Act against two publications that had run reports on the Rafale deal, on the basis of documents which, the government claimed, had been stolen from the Defence Ministry.
- ◆ It broadly deals with two aspects — spying or espionage, covered under Section 3, and disclosure of other secret information of the government, under Section 5.

- ◆ The primary critique of the Act is that it flips the constitutive logic of a democratic republic, where the state is supposed to be transparent to its citizens. While it is nobody's case that all information ought to be made public – for example, troop movements in wartime or confidential trade negotiation positions, etc.
- ◆ Another contentious issue with the law is that its Section 5, which deals with potential breaches of national security, is often misinterpreted. The Section makes it a punishable offence to share information that may help an enemy state. The Section comes in handy for booking journalists when they publicise information that may cause embarrassment to the government or the armed forces.
- ◆ Over the years, India's apex court has enlivened and expanded the protections accorded to the whistleblower, to ensure that those who expose corruption and wrongdoing are not vulnerable to bullying and intimidation.

OIC: Another Diplomatic Front for India

Q4. Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) provided India with a platform to engage with the Muslim world. Discuss how India's deepening engagements with these countries will give edge on its diplomatic front.

Hints:

- ◆ India's External Affairs Minister (EAM) Sushma Swaraj addressed the inaugural session of the 46th Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers on March 1, 2019, in Abu Dhabi as a "guest of honor" invited by this year's OIC host country, the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
 - ◆ India is making rapid progress in terms of its influence in the international arena, not just as a trillion-dollar economic powerhouse, but also as a military and technological giant, all combining to make it a political heavyweight. Given the current buoyant state of the Indian economy amid a bleak world scenario, India's formal association with the OIC could help forge mutually beneficial economic deals.
 - ◆ The OIC would be able to leverage India in relation to important issues of the Muslim world.
 - ◆ Lack of OIC membership has prevented India from engaging more meaningfully with the organization
- even though India has fairly robust relations with most member states.
- ◆ Further, Muslim countries and societies form the immediate and proximate neighbourhood of India in South, South East, Central, and West Asia. Contacts with Muslim countries figure prominently in our external relations. These for the most part have a substantive economic content, and considerable potential in terms of our developing capabilities. They have a bearing on our strategic environment.

Stock Market and Economy: An Analysis

Q5. What do you mean by 'Financial Market'? Discuss the factor affecting the stock market. Also analyse the relation between stock market and economy.

Hints:

- ◆ It is market that facilitates transfer of funds between investors/lenders and borrowers/users. It deals in financial instrument like bills of exchange, shares, debentures, bonds etc.
- ◆ A financial market consists of two major segments: (a) Money Market; and (b) Capital Market. While the money market deals in short-term credit, the capital market handles the medium term and long-term credit. The capital market further divided into primary and secondary market. The primary market deals with new or fresh issue of securities and is, therefore, also known as new issue market; whereas the secondary market provides a place for purchase and sale of existing securities and is often termed as stock market or stock exchange.
- ◆ Factors affecting stock market are actions of investors, government actions, economic indicators and international events.
- ◆ Generally speaking, the stock market will reflect the economic conditions of an economy. If an economy is growing then output will be increasing and most firms should be experiencing increased profitability. This higher profit makes the company shares more attractive – because they can give bigger dividends to shareholders. By contrast, if the stock market predicts a recession, then share prices will generally fall – in anticipation of lower profits. This is because a recession means lower profits, fewer dividends and even the prospect of firms going bankrupt, which would be bad news for shareholders.
- ◆ However, share prices can fall for many reasons other than recession. Sometimes share prices fall and there

is no correlation with the economy. It could be a correction of over-valued prices or a change in market sentiment.

- ◆ The most important correlation between stocks and the economy has to do with time. The shorter the time frame, the weaker the relationship. But take it out to an extended time frame, for example, years or decades, and the performance of both will actually converge.

GSP and its Impact on India

Q6. What is the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP)? What can India do if it has to be compliant with World Trade Organisation rules that protect all its members equally from undue sops given to exporters?

Hints:

- ◆ The US has announced that it intends to “terminate” India’s designation as a beneficiary of its Generalized System of Preferences (GSP).
- ◆ The Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) is a U.S. trade program designed to promote economic growth in the developing world by providing preferential duty-free entry for up to 4,800 products from 129 designated beneficiary countries and territories.
- ◆ India has been the biggest beneficiary of the GSP regime and accounted for over a quarter of the goods that got duty-free access into the US.
- ◆ It also allows India to integrate with global value chains (GVC) and hence, with global markets. These advantages provide opportunities for small enterprises and help in the overall livelihood creation endeavour in India. Further, it is important to note that Indian exports to the U.S. under the GSP programme are mostly intermediaries, and are not in direct competition with U.S. producers — ultimately, these goods benefit the U.S. economy. India’s continued eligibility for GSP makes good economic sense given the low value, high-quality, and nature of its imports.
- ◆ Both India and the US need to think harder about what they want to get out of each other. The US needs to remember that a close relationship with a prosperous India is the best way to ensure the survival of a world

order that has long benefited the US above all. And New Delhi needs to remember that the US can only be pushed so far — and that India’s own best interests lie in participating fully in the trading system that has made so many other countries rich.

Blockchain Technology: A Potential Disruptor

Q7. What do you understand by ‘block chain technology’? Discuss how it could be a potential disruptor in the new age of technology?

Hints:

- ◆ A blockchain is, in the simplest of terms, a time-stamped series of immutable record of data that is managed by cluster of computers not owned by any single entity. Each of these blocks of data (i.e. block) are secured and bound to each other using cryptographic principles (i.e. chain).
- ◆ Blockchain refers to a decentralized database. It distributes the database on millions and millions of computers. It also uses state of the art cryptography, so that once information goes in, it is virtually impossible to get it out again without the original passcode or key. Thus it is revolutionary and has the potential to revolutionize nearly every industry.
- ◆ The three main properties of the Blockchain Technology which has helped it gain widespread acclaim are decentralization, transparency and immutability.
- ◆ Owing to good engineering, technology and science colleges offering specialized technical courses, India has a huge talent pool of young skilled workforce in niche technologies which is yet to be fully utilized. The ongoing improvement in the education sector is further strengthening the skillset. The lack of technology infrastructure could also hinder innovation in technology space and that is a worry of sorts. To harness the potential of Blockchain technology and reach the stage of large-scale implementation, a structured approach along with adequate financial allocation is the need of the hour.



SEVEN IMPORTANT NEWS

1. Nari Shakti Puraskar

The President of India has presented the Nari Shakti Puraskar - 2017 on the occasion of International Women's Day (March 8, 2018). The Ministry of Women and Child Development confers the Nari Shakti Puraskar on women and institutions to recognise their relentless service towards the cause of women empowerment and social welfare.

Key Highlights

- ◆ The awards were conferred on 30 eminent individuals and 9 distinguished institutions in recognition of their efforts in rendering distinguished services for the cause of women, especially vulnerable and marginalized women.

- ◆ Among the institutions, the Social Welfare and Nutritious Meal Programme, Department of the Tamil Nadu government was recognised for performing well with regard to the implementation of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) campaign. The campaign is a flagship programme of the Central government to address declining child sex ratio in the country.

- ◆ The awardees include DRDO scientist Ipsita Biswas, India's first woman marine pilot Reshma Nilofer Naha, expert on subjects of agro-biodiversity, Rahibai Soma Popere, acid attack survivor, Pragya Prasun, woman commando trainer, Seema Rao and motivational

speaker Sister Shivani, among others.

- ◆ The Nari Shakti Puraskar, the highest civilian honour for women, has also been awarded to a One Stop Centre (OSC), Lucknow, Qasab-Kutch Craftswomen Producer.

About International Women's Day- 2019

International Women's Day is celebrated every year on March 8, 2019. The theme for 2019 was 'Think equal, build smart, innovate for change' focuses on innovative ways in which we can advance gender equality and the empowerment of women, particularly in the areas of social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure. ■

2. Permanent Commission to Women

Ministry of Defence has taken steps to ensure implementation of announcement by the Prime Minister on 15th August, 2018 regarding grant of Permanent Commission (IPC) to Women officers in the Armed Forces. The new development is likely to end a nine-year-old battle in the apex court, provided the Centre withdraws its appeal against the Delhi High Court 2010 verdict to induct women in permanent commission in the army.

Key Points

- ◆ In so far the Indian Air Force is concerned, all branches, including Fighter Pilots are now open for women officers.
- ◆ In Indian Navy all non sea going branches, cadre and specialisation have been opened for induction

of women officers through Short Service Commission (SSC). In addition to Education, Law & Naval Constructor branch and cadre, women SSC officers have been made eligible for grant of Permanent Commission in the Naval Armament branch, at par with the male officers.

- ◆ The proposal for induction of three new training ships for the Indian Navy is underway. This will provide the requisite infrastructure for training of both men and women officers. Indian Navy will start inducting women in all branches, once the training ships are in place.
- ◆ Women officers will be granted Permanent Commission in the Indian Army in all the ten branches where women are inducted for

Short Service Commission. So, besides the existing two streams of Judge Advocate General (JAG) and Army Education Corps, now PC will be granted in Signals, Engineers, Army Aviation, Army Air Defence, Electronics and Mechanical Engineers, Army Service Corps, Army Ordnance Corps and Intelligence also to women officers. SSC women officers will give their option for PC before completion of four years of Commissioned Service and they will exercise option for grant of PC and their choice of specialisation.

- ◆ SSC women officers will be considered for grant of PC based on suitability, merit etc. and will be employed in various staff appointment. ■

3. Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2018

The Swedish-based think tank Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) has released its report titled 'Trends in International Arms Transfers-2018'. India is no longer the largest importer of weapons.

Key Highlights

- ◆ After eight years of holding the position of the largest importer of weapons, India has been superseded by Saudi Arabia and dropped down to become the second largest importer of weapons in the world. Reasons for gradual lowering of imports by India (imports decreased by 24% between 2009-13 and 2014-18), partly due to delays in deliveries of arms produced under licence from

foreign suppliers, such as combat aircraft ordered from Russia in 2001 and submarines ordered from France in 2008.

- ◆ The five biggest exporters in five-year block period 2011-2015 were the US, Russia, France, Germany and China. The US and Russia remain by far the largest exporters, accounting for 36% and 21%, respectively, of the total global trade.
- ◆ China, which is now the fifth largest exporter of weapons, has been aiding Pakistan and Bangladesh in stepping up their military prowess in the region. The two countries accounted for 53% of Beijing's exports from 2014-2018.

- ◆ Israel, the USA and France all increased their arms exports to India in 2014-18.

- ◆ Pakistan's arms imports decreased by 39 per cent between 2009-13 and 2014-18. The US has become increasingly reluctant to provide military aid or sell arms to Pakistan: US arms exports to Pakistan fell by 81 per cent between 2009-13 and 2014-18.

About SIPRI

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) established in 1966 is an independent international institute dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament. ■

4. Return Policy for Militants in Jammu and Kashmir

The Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) government is considering a new policy to encourage militants from the state to give up arms. The policy draft is presently at the pre-SAC stage and is subject to clearance by the state Home Department and the chief secretary. The State Administrative Council (SAC) is the body governing J&K, which is under President's rule and is led by the Governor and includes his four advisors and Chief Secretary.

Key Highlights of the Policy

- ◆ The proposed scheme is a revised version of earlier initiatives, but with a fresh focus on socio-

economic re-integration.

- ◆ According to the draft, the new initiative addresses the need for rehabilitation at a policy level through a two-pronged approach: reformative measures and opportunities of livelihood.
- ◆ There is also provision for a monthly stipend of Rs 6,000 for a militant who surrenders with a view to "encourage him to join the mainstream". The initiative, however, will not cover militants found to have been involved in "heinous crimes".
- ◆ Jobs and reformative measures are also part of the new reintegration policy draft.

Significance

The successful implementation of a surrender policy is of utmost importance in J&K as there are a large number of surrendered or released militants (around 25,000).

The successful rehabilitation of one hardcore surrendered or released militant will motivate others to follow suit.

Background

An earlier policy from 2010 focused on ensuring the return of former militants from the state who had taken up arms between January 1989 and December 2009 but later gave up insurgent activities "due to a change of heart and are willing, to return to the state".

In 2004, a "rehabilitation policy" implemented by the then government sought to provide "facility to those terrorists who undergo a change of heart and eschew the path of violence. This policy had laid out provisions to provide vocational training for surrendered militants who wished to pursue a trade and a monthly stipend of Rs 2,000 for the first three years. ■



5. World Air Quality Report- 2018

According to the new report titled 'IQAir AirVisual 2018 World Air Quality Report', seven of the top 10 most polluted cities in the world are in India. The main objective behind the report was to measure the presence of fine Particulate Matter (PM) 2.5, which has been recorded in real-time in 2018.

Key Highlights

- ◆ The seven Indian cities among the worst 10 are Gurugram, Ghaziabad, Faridabad, Noida, Bhiwadi, Patna and Lucknow.
- ◆ Gurugram in Haryana was identified as the city with the worst air quality

in the world in 2018 at an annual average concentration of pollutant PM 2.5 at 135.8 micrograms per cubic meter (ug/m3).

- ◆ Delhi takes the 11th spot as the most polluted city, with a PM2.5 concentration of 113.5 micrograms per cubic metre.
- ◆ While South Asian countries are the worst affected, air pollution is a global issue. Of the 3,000 cities measured in the report, 64 per cent exceeded the World Health Organisations (WHO's) annual exposure guidelines for PM2.5.
- ◆ Dhaka is ranked the second-most

polluted national capital at 97.1 micrograms per cubic metre and Kabul is at the third position in the national capital rankings with 61.8 micrograms per cubic metre.

- ◆ The data highlights that of the 20 most polluted cities in the world, 18 are in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.
- ◆ China made a remarkable improvement since 2013 as the country's pollution levels have gone down by 40 percent. In 2013, Beijing topped the pollution charts. Beijing ranks now as the 122nd most polluted city in the world in 2018. ■

6. Enemy Properties can be put to Public Use

The Centre has allowed state governments to put to public use some enemy properties that were left behind by people who migrated to Pakistan since the Partition and to China after the 1962 Sino-Indian war. The move comes amid the central government's efforts to sell more than 9,400 enemy properties, worth over Rs 1 lakh crore, and Rs 3,000 crore worth of enemy shares.

About Enemy Properties

Enemy properties are those properties that were left behind by the people

who took citizenship of Pakistan and China. There are 9,280 such properties left behind by Pakistani nationals and 126 by Chinese nationals. Of the total properties left behind by those who took Pakistani citizenship, 4,991 are located in Uttar Pradesh, the highest in the country. West Bengal has 2,735 such estates and Delhi 487.

The highest number of properties left by Chinese nationals is in Meghalaya (57). West Bengal has 29 such properties and Assam seven. The estimated value of all enemy properties is approximately Rs 1 lakh crore.

Background

The central government last month had constituted a high-level committee to recommend the quantum and price or price band for sale of enemy shares, worth Rs 3,000 crore. The government has vested these properties in the Custodian of Enemy Property for India, an office instituted under the central government.

After the India-Pakistan War of 1965, the Enemy Property Act was enacted in 1968, which regulates such properties and lists the Custodian's powers. ■

7. Kepler-1658 b

Ten years after it was launched, the first exoplanet candidate spotted by NASA's Kepler space telescope has finally been confirmed as a real world. The exoplanet known as 'Kepler-1658 b'. Kepler 1658b remained an exoplanet candidate for a decade. Exoplanet candidates are alien worlds, which have been spotted outside of our solar system but need to be confirmed by further observations. NASA's Kepler-1658b was the very first planet candidate spotted by the space

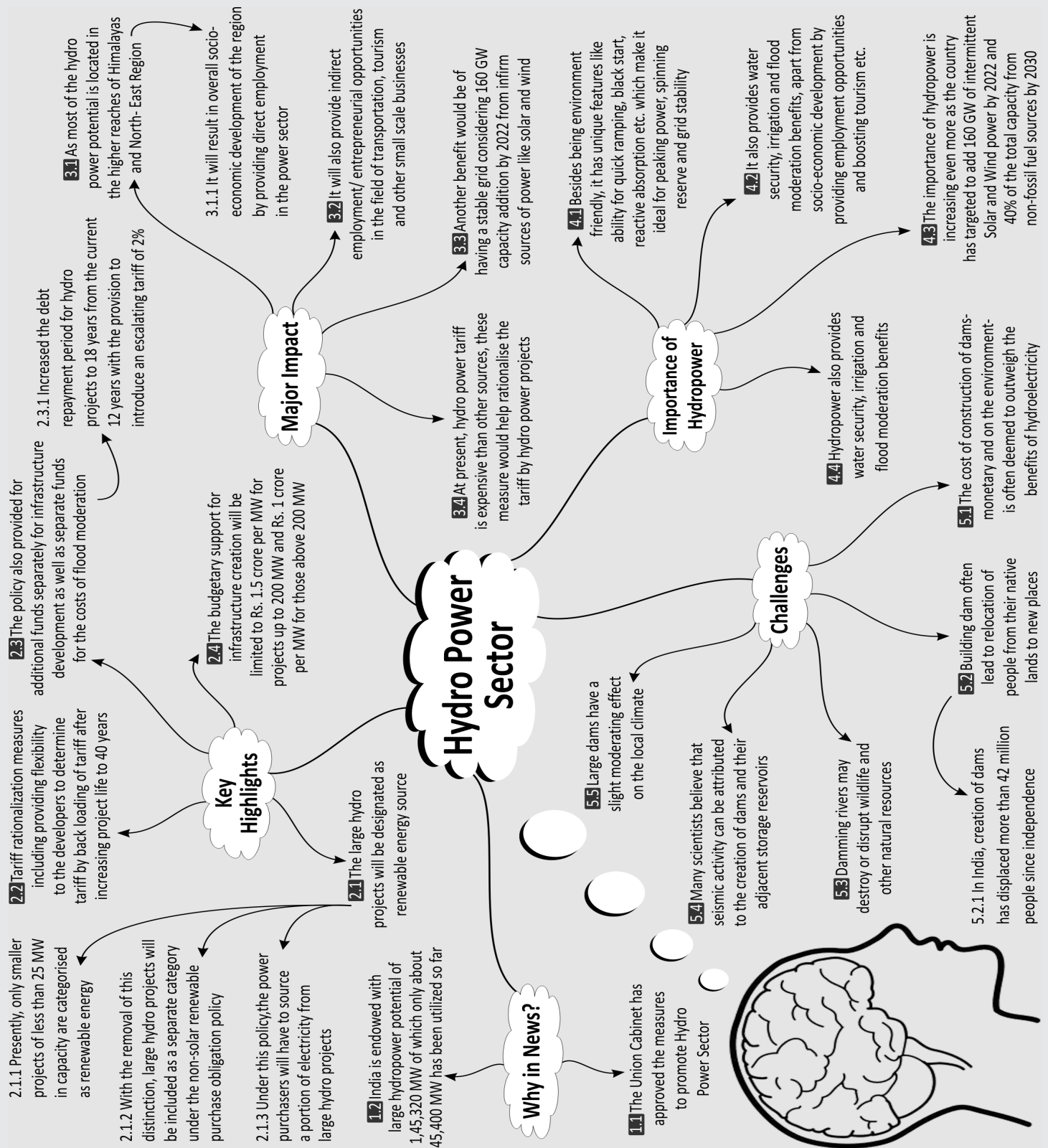
telescope but NASA said the road to its confirmation was "rocky".

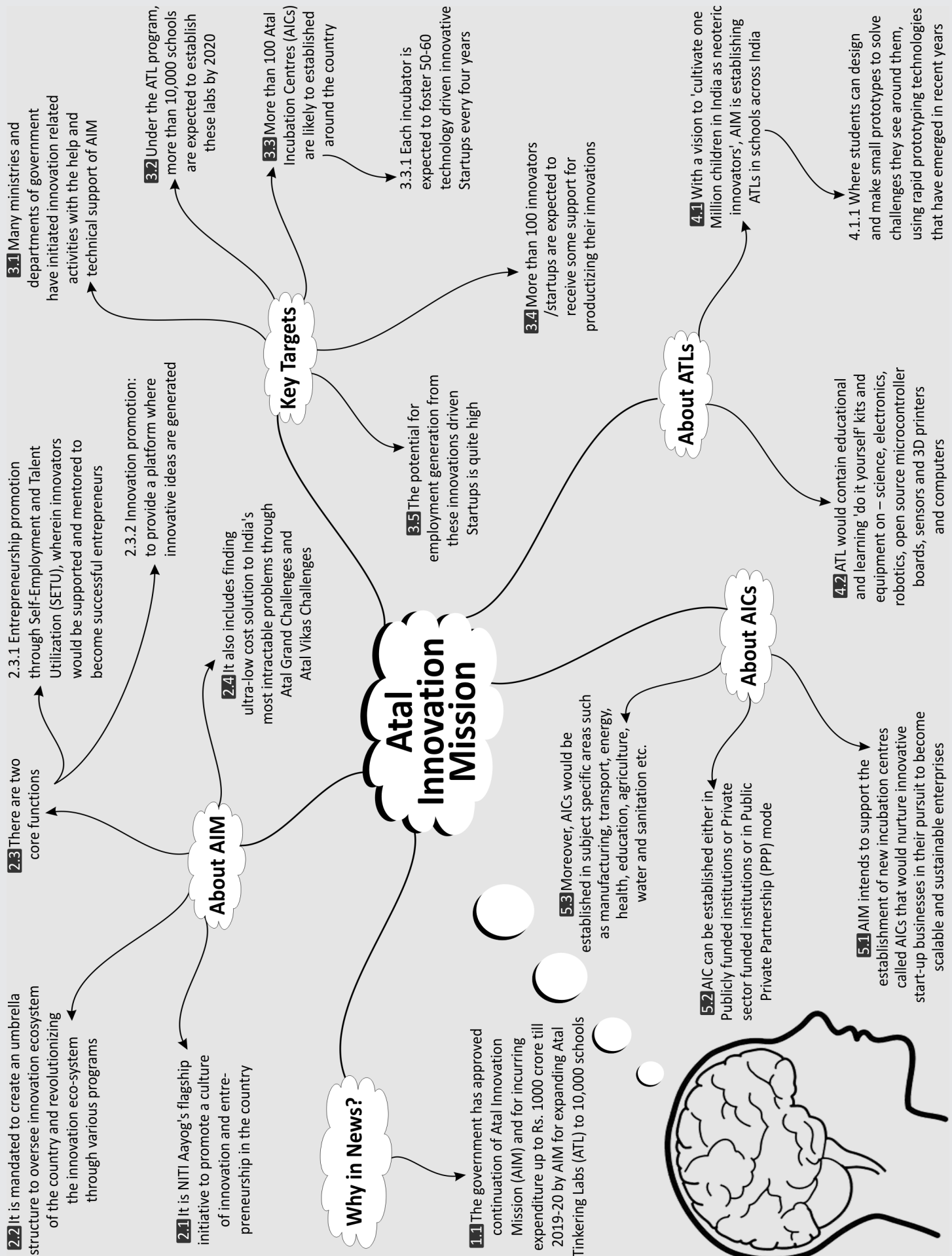
Kepler-1658 is 50% more massive and three times larger than the Sun. The newly confirmed planet orbits at a distance of only twice the star's diameter, making it one of the closest-in planets around a more evolved star - one that resembles a future version of our Sun. Standing on the planet, the star would appear 60 times larger in diameter than the Sun as seen from Earth.

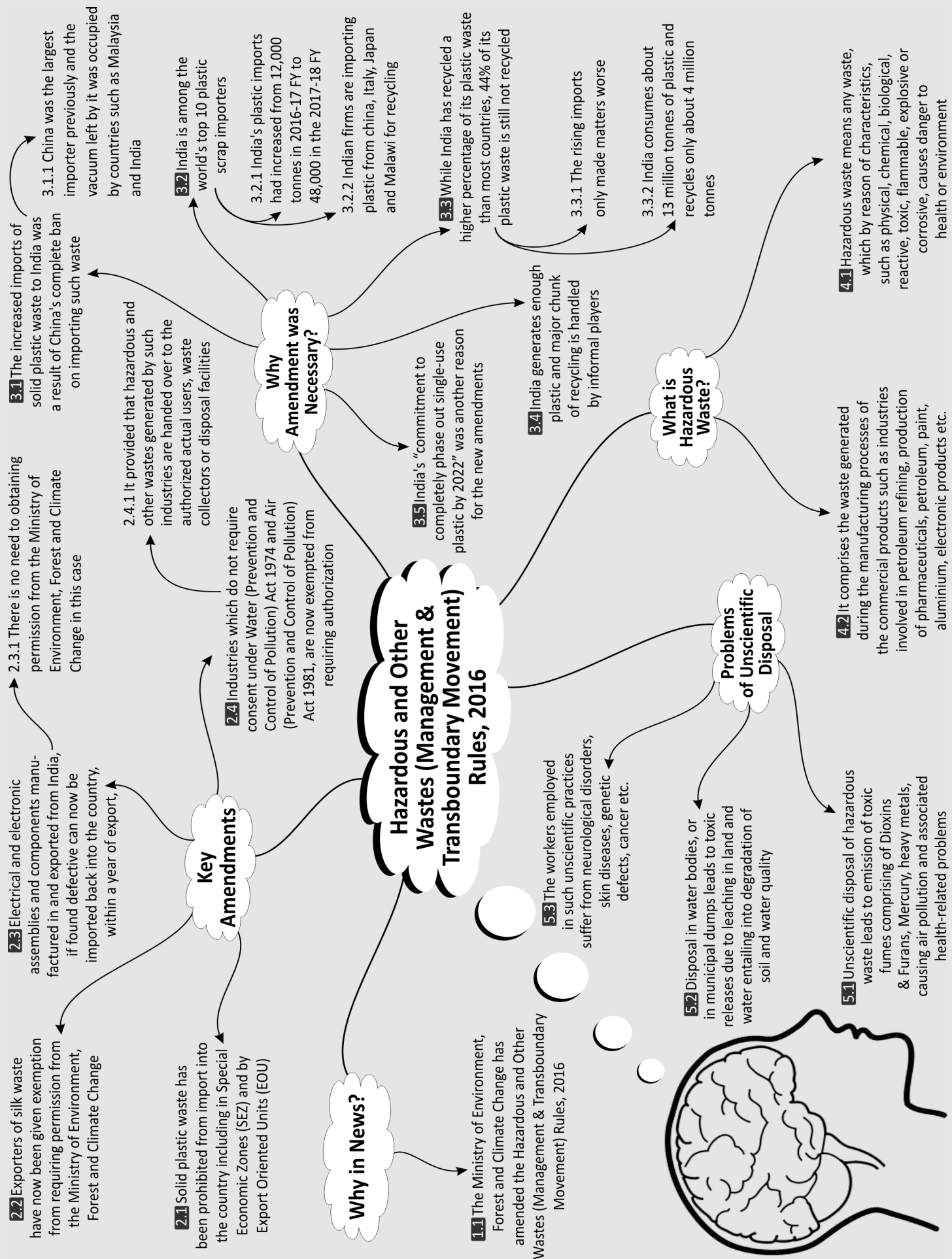
Planets orbiting evolved stars similar to Kepler-1658 are rare and the reason for this absence is poorly understood. The extreme nature of the Kepler-1658 system allows astronomers to place new constraints on the complex physical interactions that can cause planets to spiral into their host stars. The insights gained from Kepler-1658b suggest that this process happens slower than previously thought and therefore may not be the primary reason for the lack of planets around more evolved stars. ■

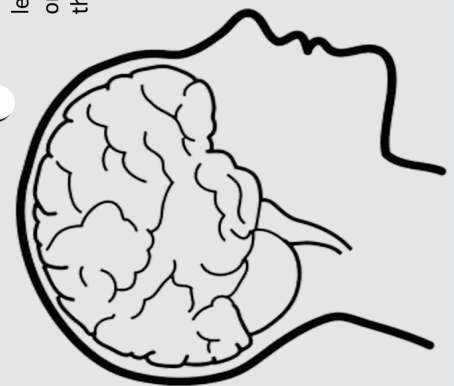
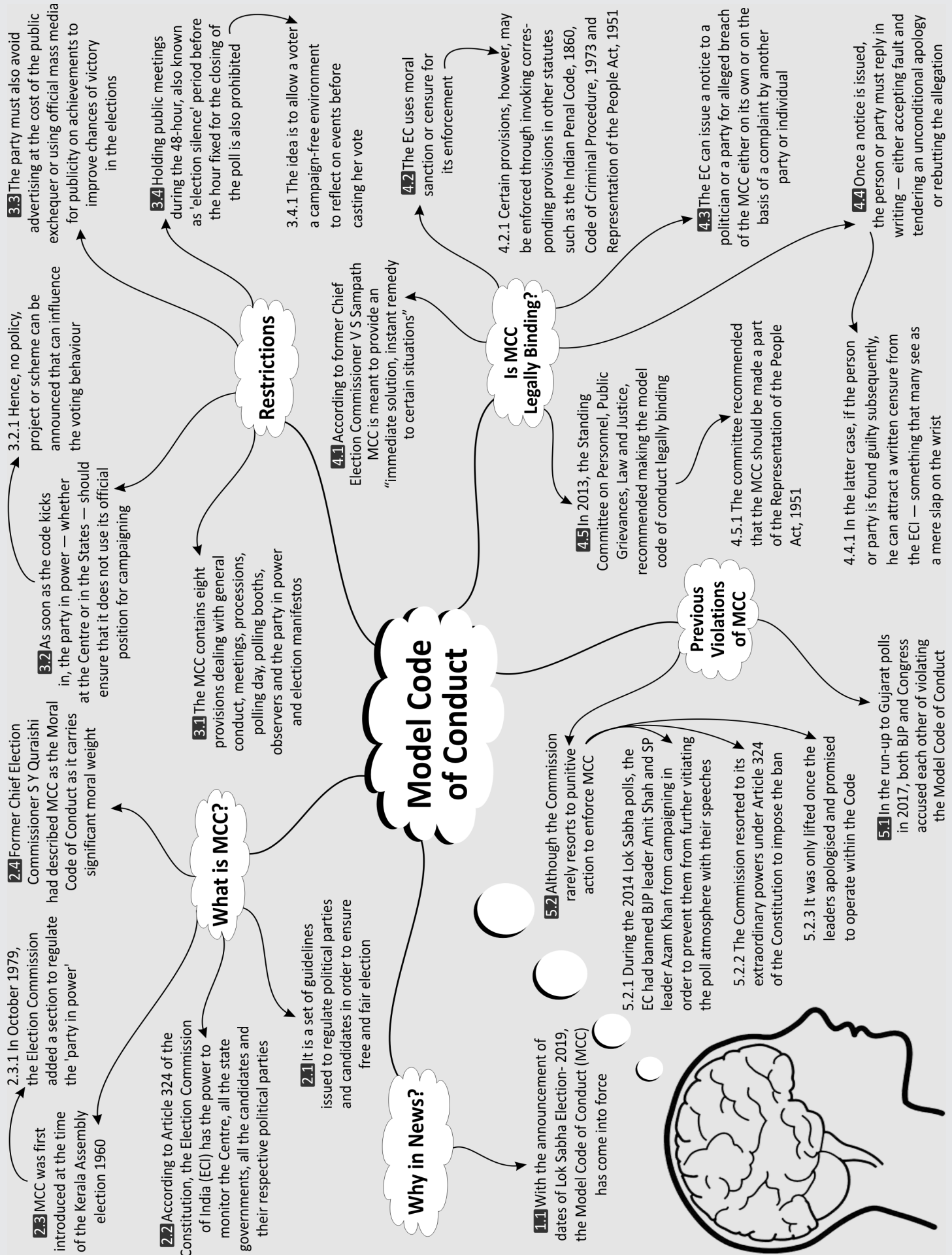


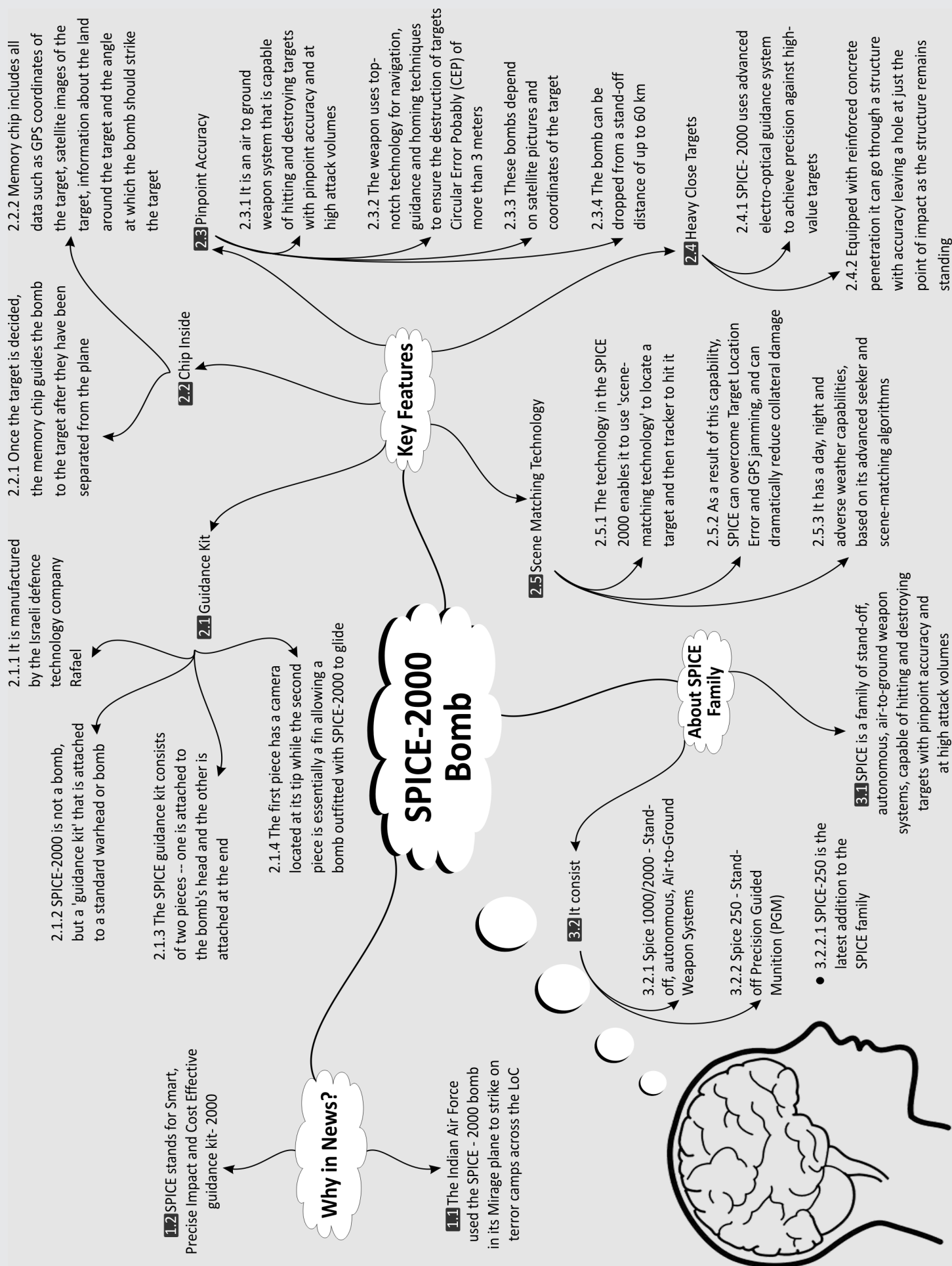
SEVEN BRAIN BOOSTERS

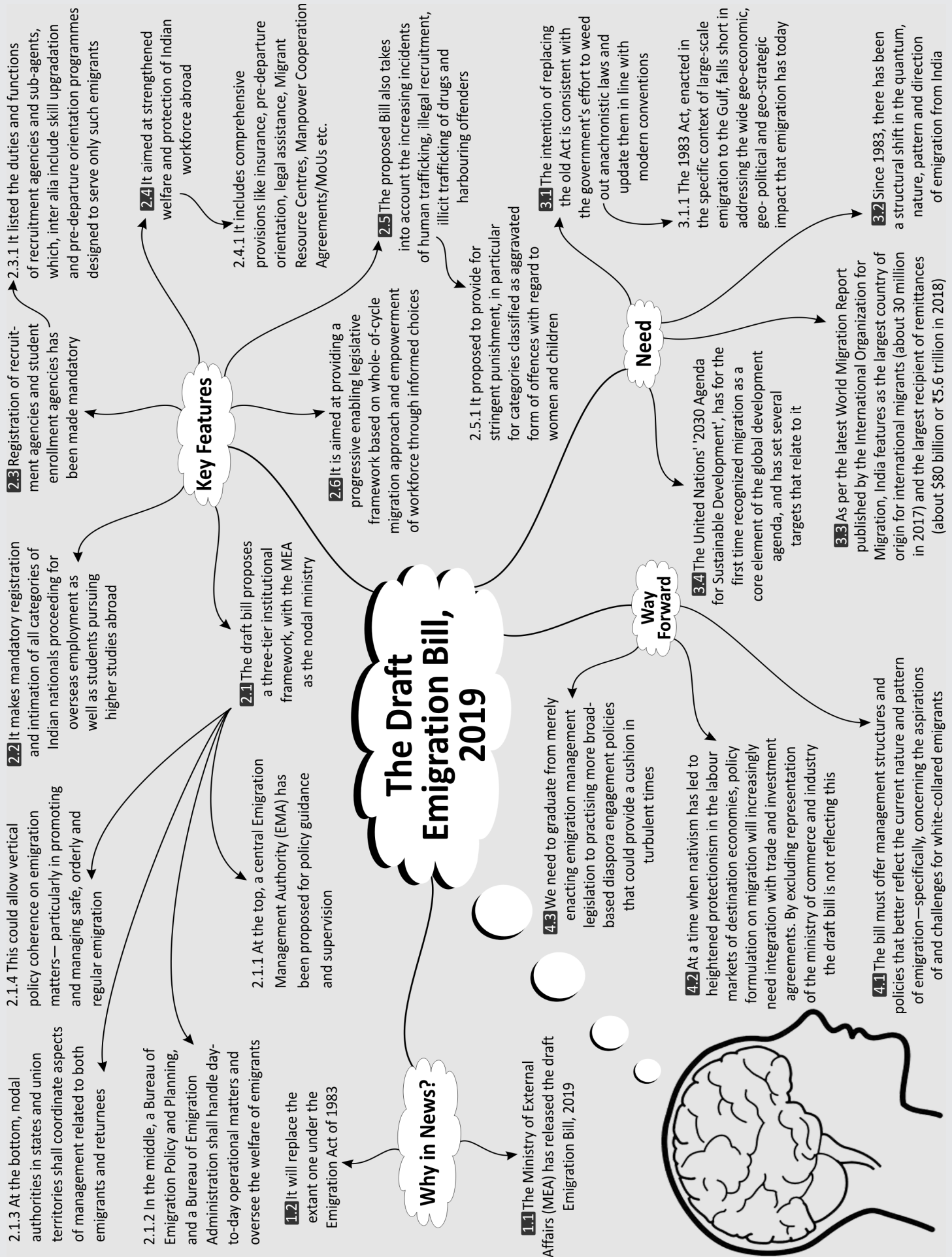


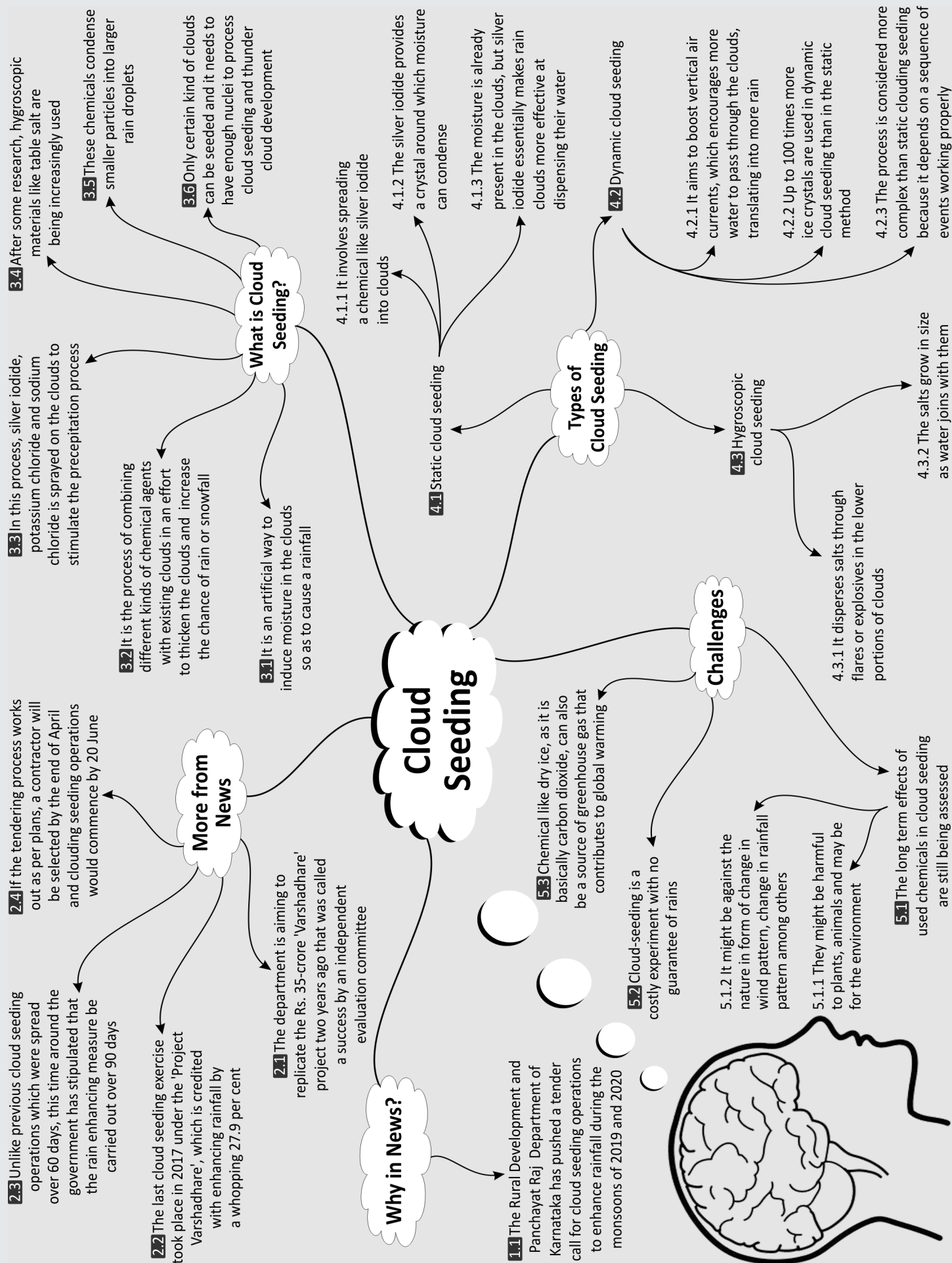












SEVEN MCQ's WITH EXPLANATORY ANSWERS

(Based on Brain Boosters)

Hydro Power Sector

Q1. Recently, the government of India has approved the measures to promote 'Hydro Power Sector'. Consider the following statements this regard:

1. Large hydro projects will also be designated as renewable energy projects.
2. Under this change, power purchasers will have to source a portion of electricity from large hydro projects.

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. According to the new policy, large hydro projects will also be designated as renewable energy projects. So far, only smaller projects of less than 25 MW in capacity were categorised as renewable energy. With the removal of this distinction, large hydro projects will be included as a separate category under the non-solar renewable purchase obligation policy. Under this policy, power purchasers will have to source a portion of electricity from large hydro projects.

Atal Innovation Mission

Q2. Consider the following statements in respect of 'Atal Innovation Mission':

1. It is Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship's flagship initiative to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in India.
2. Under AIM, Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs) are being set up to foster creativity and scientific temper in students.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Explanation: Statement 1 is not correct. The Government has set up Atal Innovation Mission

(AIM) in NITI Aayog with a view to strengthen the country's innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem by creating institutions and programs that spur innovation in schools, colleges, and entrepreneurs in general.

Statement 2 is correct. To foster creativity and scientific temper in students, AIM is helping to establish 500 ATLs in schools across India, where students can design and make small prototypes to solve challenges they see around them, using rapid prototyping technologies that have emerged in recent years.

Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management & Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016

Q3. Consider the following statements in respect of amendment in Hazardous Waste (Management & Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016:

1. It prohibits import of solid plastic waste into the country including in Special Economic Zones (SEZ) and by Export Oriented Units (EOU).
2. India is the largest importer of plastic waste in the world.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has amended the Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management & Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016. Among the other changes, it prohibits import of solid plastic waste into the country including in Special Economic Zones (SEZ) and by Export Oriented Units (EOU).

Statement 2 is not correct. India is among the world's top 10 plastic scrap importers. India's plastic imports had increased from 12,000 tonnes in 2016-17 FY to 48,000 in the 2017-18 FY. While India has recycled a higher percentage of its plastic waste than most countries, 44% of its plastic waste is still not recycled.

Model Code of Conduct

Q4. Consider the following statements in respect of 'model code of conduct (MCC)':

1. It comes into force as soon as the poll schedule is announced by the President and it remains in force until the conclusion of the electoral process.
2. A party violating the MCC can be charged for violating a section of the code as it has statutory backing under the Article 324 of the constitution.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d)

Explanation: Both statements are incorrect. It comes into force as soon as the poll schedule is announced by the Election Commission (EC) and it remains in force until the conclusion of the electoral process.

A party violating the Model code of conduct cannot be charged for violating a section of the code as it has no statutory backing.

SPICE-2000 Bomb

Q5. With reference to the 'SPICE-2000 bomb', consider the following statements:

1. It is manufactured by the French defence technology company Rafael.
2. SPICE-2000 is not a bomb, but a 'guidance kit' that is attached to a standard warhead or bomb.

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. It is manufactured by the Israeli defence technology company Rafael.

Statement 2 is correct. SPICE-2000 is not a bomb, but a 'guidance kit' that is attached to a standard warhead or bomb. The SPICE guidance kit consists of two pieces -- one is attached to the bomb's head and the other is attached at the end.

The Draft Emigration Bill, 2019

Q6. Consider the following statements in respect of 'the draft Emigration Bill, 2019':

1. It makes mandatory registration of all categories of Indian nationals proceeding for overseas employment as well as students pursuing higher studies abroad.
2. It will replace the extant one under the Emigration Act of 1983.

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. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has released the draft Emigration Bill, 2019. It will replace the extant one under the Emigration Act of 1983.

The draft bill proposes a three-tier institutional framework, with the MEA as the nodal ministry. It makes mandatory registration and intimation of all categories of Indian nationals proceeding for overseas employment as well as students pursuing higher studies abroad.

Cloud Seeding

Q7. Consider the following statements in respect of 'cloud seeding method':

1. In this process, silver iodide, potassium chloride, sodium chloride and Nitrogen is sprayed on the clouds to stimulate the precepitation process.
2. The silver iodide provides a crystal around which moisture can condense and makes rain clouds more effective at dispensng their water.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Explanation: Statement 1 is not correct. In this process, silver iodide, potassium chloride and sodium chloride is sprayed on the clouds to stimulate the precipitation process, not nitrogen. After some research, hygroscopic materials like table salt are being increasingly used.

Statement 2 is correct. The silver iodide provides a crystal around which moisture can condense. The moisture is already present in the clouds, but silver iodide essentially makes rain clouds more effective at dispensing their water.

○○○

SEVEN IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIMS

1. Which organisation has installed 22 permanent global positioning system (GPS) stations across India to identify seismically hazardous zones and encourage mapping activities?

–The Geological Survey of India

2. 'Kiru Hydroelectric Power Project' is located in which state?

–Jammu and Kashmir (over Chenab river)

3. Which special programme has been launched by Indian Space Research Organisation for school children?

–YUva Vigyani KAryakram (YUVIKA)

4. Which ministry has launched a comprehensive 'Cooling Action Plan' to address the cooling requirement and reduce the cooling demand in the country?

–Ministry for Environment, Forest and Climate Change

5. Prime Minister has launched 'National Common Mobility Card' (One Nation One Card), from which place?

–Ahmedabad, Gujarat

6. Recently, 'Formosan clouded' species of leopard was spotted in which country?

–Taiwan

7. Who has been appointed as the new Prime Minister of Palestine?

–Mahmoud Abbas



SEVEN IMPORTANT HIGHLIGHTS FROM PIB

1. PULSE POLIO PROGRAMME FOR 2019

In order to sustain polio eradication drive from the country, government has launched 'Pulse Polio programme for 2019.' The last reported cases of wild polio in India were in West Bengal and Gujarat on 13 January 2011. On 27 March 2014, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared India a polio free country.

Key Highlights

- ◆ More than 17 crore children of less than five years across the country will be given polio drops as part of the drive.
- ◆ To provide additional protection to children, government has also introduced the injectable Inactivated Polio Vaccine into its routine immunization program.
- ◆ The polio eradication programme in India aims to protect children from the crippling disease by conducting two nationwide mass polio vaccination campaigns and two to three sub-national campaigns each year.

Key Achievements

- ◆ Universal Immunization Programme is focusing to protect children from more diseases than ever before and has introduced several new vaccines like Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine, Rotavirus vaccine and

Measles-Rubella vaccine in the recent past.

- ◆ Under the Mission Indradhanush more than 90% full immunization coverage. More than 3.39 crore children and 87 lakh pregnant women have been vaccinated.
- ◆ The strengthening of immunization programme has contributed significantly to the decline of Infant Mortality Rate from 39 in 2014 to 32 per 1000 live births in 2017.

About IPV

- ◆ IPV is produced from wild-type poliovirus strains of each serotype that have been inactivated (killed) with formalin. As an injectable vaccine, it can be administered alone or in combination with other vaccines (e.g., diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, hepatitis B, and haemophilus influenza).
- ◆ IPV provides serum immunity to all three types of poliovirus, resulting in protection against paralytic poliomyelitis.
- ◆ India became the first country globally to introduce fractional doses of IPV in childhood immunisation programme in eight states and Union territories in early 2016.

2. GOLDEN CITY GATE TOURISM AWARDS - 2019

The Ministry of Tourism has won the first prize in the category of 'TV Cinema Spot' at the prestigious international 'Golden City Gate Tourism Awards - 2019' at Internationale Tourismus-Börse Berlin (ITB, Berlin).

Background

The Ministry of Tourism has launched the Incredible India 2.0 Campaign in September 2017. The 2.0 Campaign marks a shift from generic promotions across the world to market specific promotional plans and content creation. Thematic creatives on different Niche tourism products have been produced and are being used in the Campaign, to cater to diverse consumer interests. These include the above Television Commercials on Yoga, Wellness, Wildlife, Luxury and Cuisine, which have been very well received the world

over, registering about 155 million views on social media. The commercials have been produced in English with voice overs in 9 international languages, viz. German, French, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Arabic.

About Golden City Gate Awards

The Golden City Gate Tourism Multi-media Awards are given annually in various categories related to the Tourism and Hospitality sectors. The 'Golden City Gate' is a creative multi-media international competition for countries, cities, regions and hotels. The entries received for the awards are judged by an international jury comprising film and tourism experts.

3. E-DHARTI APP

The government has launched 'e-Dharti app'. It is a new online system where all the three main modules i.e. Conversion, Substitution and Mutation have been made online. The payment system in Land and Development Office (L&DO) has also been completely digitized. Work is also going on other three small modules namely Sale Permission, Mortgage Permission and Gift Permission and will be completed soon.

Key Highlights

- ◆ The public can now submit their applications online by visiting L&DO website and are not required to visit this office for submission of them and for follow up of their applications.
- ◆ Through this application each and every Government property under L&DO, whether it is allotted or still lying vacant, is proposed to be mapped on a portal called "e-Dharti Geo Portal".
- ◆ Through this portal the lessee of the property will be able to see the basic details of his/her property along with map showing its location. The Lessee can also be issued a Property Card from this office about his property if he asks for it.

- ◆ Though more than 35,000 properties have been outlined on the GIS based map all across Delhi, the actual validation is being done by checking each and every mapped property with its location and details. The whole exercise of validating all the L&DO properties and linking it with its details may take a time period of about one year. As on date, more than 2,500 properties have been mapped and verified.
- ◆ This application will not only benefit public but also the government in getting to know the actual status of its vacant properties, whether there is any encroachment on the said property, etc.

Other Facts

- ◆ Land & Development Office (L&DO) deals with public applications which are mainly related to Conversion of property from leasehold to freehold, Substitution of names of legal heirs and Mutation in the name of purchaser, etc.
- ◆ These three applications cover almost 95% of total applications received. The office also deals with applications related to Sale Permission, Mortgage Permission and Gift Permission.

4. JANAUSHADHI DIWAS

The government of India has decided 7th March 2019 to be celebrated as 'Janaushadhi Diwas' across India. The Janaushadhi medicines have played a big role in bringing down the out of pocket expenditure of patients suffering from life threatening diseases in India. The government has taken important steps to make affordable and quality generic medicines popular among the people through 'PradhanMantriBhartiyaJanaushadhiPariyojana' (PMBJP). About 10-15 lakh people benefit from Janaushadhi medicines per day and the market share of generic medicines has grown over three fold from 2% to 7% in last 3 years. The Janaushadhi medicines have played a big role in bringing down the out of pocket expenditure of patients suffering from life threatening diseases in India.

About PMBJP

- ◆ In order to provide quality medicines at affordable prices to the masses through special kendra's known as Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Kendra, the Department

of Pharmaceuticals has launched PMBJP. One of the objectives of the scheme is to create awareness about generic medicines through education and publicity so that quality is not synonymous with only high price.

- ◆ The PMBJP scheme has led to total savings of approximately Rs.1000 crores for common citizens, as these medicines are cheaper by 50% to 90% of average market price.
- ◆ PMBJP is also providing a good source of self-employment with self-sustainable and regular earnings.

About Generic Drugs

A generic drug is a medication created to be the same as an existing approved brand-name drug in dosage form, safety, strength and route of administration, quality, and performance characteristics. A generic medicine works in the same way and provides the same clinical benefit as its brand-name version.

5. QUALITY ASSURANCE SCHEME FOR BASIC COMPOSITE MEDICAL LABORATORIES

For sensitizing small laboratories to basic doable quality practices, National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) has launched another voluntary scheme called Quality Assurance Scheme (QAS) for Basic Composite (BC) Medical Laboratories (Entry Level).

Key Features

- ◆ The laboratories performing only basic routine tests like blood glucose, blood counts, rapid tests for common infections, liver & kidney function tests and routine tests of urine will be eligible to apply under this scheme.
- ◆ The scheme requires minimal documentation and a nominal fee has been prescribed for availing the scheme. Components of competence assessment have been added for assuring quality and validity of test results.
- ◆ The scheme will help to bring quality at the grass root level of India's health system where laboratories follow the imperatives of quality in all their processes. This will inculcate the habit of quality and facilitate the laboratories to achieve benchmark accreditation of ISO 15189 over a period of time.

- ◆ Through this scheme, patients availing services of small labs in primary health centers, community health centers, doctor's clinic, standalone small labs, labs in small nursing homes will also have access to quality lab results.
- ◆ This scheme will also give a much needed support to Ayushman Bharat Yojana by providing them access to quality diagnostics at villages and small towns level.

About NABL

It is a constituent board of Quality Council of India (QCI) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. NABL is Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) signatory to International bodies like International Laboratory Accreditation Co-operation (ILAC) and Asia Pacific Accreditation Co-operation (APAC) for accreditation of testing including medical and calibration laboratories. NABL is also having APAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) for Proficiency Testing Provider (PTP) & Reference Materials Producers (RMP). The NABL accredited laboratory results are accepted across more than 80 economies around the world.

6. STAR RATING PROGRAM

Ministry of Power has expanded its ambitious Standards & Labelling (Star Rating) program for Energy Efficient for Appliances to cover the Microwave Ovens and Washing Machines (with revised parameters) in the country. The Star Labelling Programs has been formulated by Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE).

Key Points

The program will now include these two appliances for grant of Star Rating in terms of their energy performance. Initially, the program for above two appliances will be implemented on a voluntary basis and will be valid up to 31st December 2020.

This initiative will promote advancement of technology and energy efficiency in Microwaves Ovens which is becoming a popular household gadget.

It is estimated that savings of over 3.0 Billion Units of electricity at consume-end through adoption of Star Rated Microwave Ovens and Washing Machines by 2030. This would be equivalent to Green House Gases (GHG) reduction of 2.4 Million-ton of CO₂ by the year 2030 through these initiatives.

Need

- ◆ The size of Indian Microwave Oven market stood at 1.21 million units in year FY 2017-18 and is projected to grow at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of around 2%, whereas, the size of Indian Washing Machine market stood at 6.1 million units in year FY 2017-18 and is projected to grow at a CAGR of around 8% fuelled by a growth in urbanization. Therefore, it is important to optimize energy performance of Microwave Ovens and Washing Machines.

About UNNATEE

The government of India has also launched 'National Energy Efficiency Strategy Plan 2031- Unlocking NATional Energy Efficiency potential (UNNATEE). It is a strategy document which is developed by BEE. The document offers a comprehensive roadmap to address India's environmental and climate change mitigation action through energy efficiency measures.

The BEE is a statutory body under the Ministry of Power, Government of India. It assists in developing policies and strategies with the primary objective of reducing the energy intensity of the Indian economy.

7. GI WEBSITE & TUTORIAL VIDEO ON IPR

The government has launched a tutorial video on 'Intellectual Property Rights' (IPRs) for school students and the Geographical Indication (GI) website. India's huge geography and ancient history has given rise to a diverse and distinct identity and CIPAM has the mandate to protect and promote this diversity through GI.

Key Features

- ◆ The video explains the fundamentals of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) such as Patents, Copyrights and Trademarks.
- ◆ The tutorial video can be used in schools without any external intervention from teachers or experts and will aid in reaching a large number of schools and students, thereby overcoming issues of bandwidth and limited resources.
- ◆ 'IP Nani', India's first Intellectual Property (IP) Mascot, features in a series of short animated videos, to spread awareness about the importance of IPRs amongst children.



- ◆ The website will help in promoting creativity and motivate more of India's skilled artisans to apply for GI registration.

India's Progress on IPRs

- ◆ India is not only a signatory to TRIPS Agreement but has also enacted fresh legislations, amended existing laws and strengthened domestic legal framework to fulfil the harmonisation with the WTO's TRIPS Agreement. Fresh legislation has also been put in place to upgrade the countries IPR.
- ◆ CIPAM, DPIIT, has been actively involved in many IPR related initiatives, including a nation-wide IPR awareness campaign drive in the country. Training sessions have been conducted in over 300 schools till now, reaching over 12,000 students.
- ◆ IP Content on IPR has also been included in the NCERT curriculum of Commerce for class XII.
- ◆ New IPR Policy, 2016 has been launched in convergence with TRIPS agreement. Similarly 'Creative India Innovative India' has been launched to sustain entrepreneurship and boost 'Make in India' scheme.

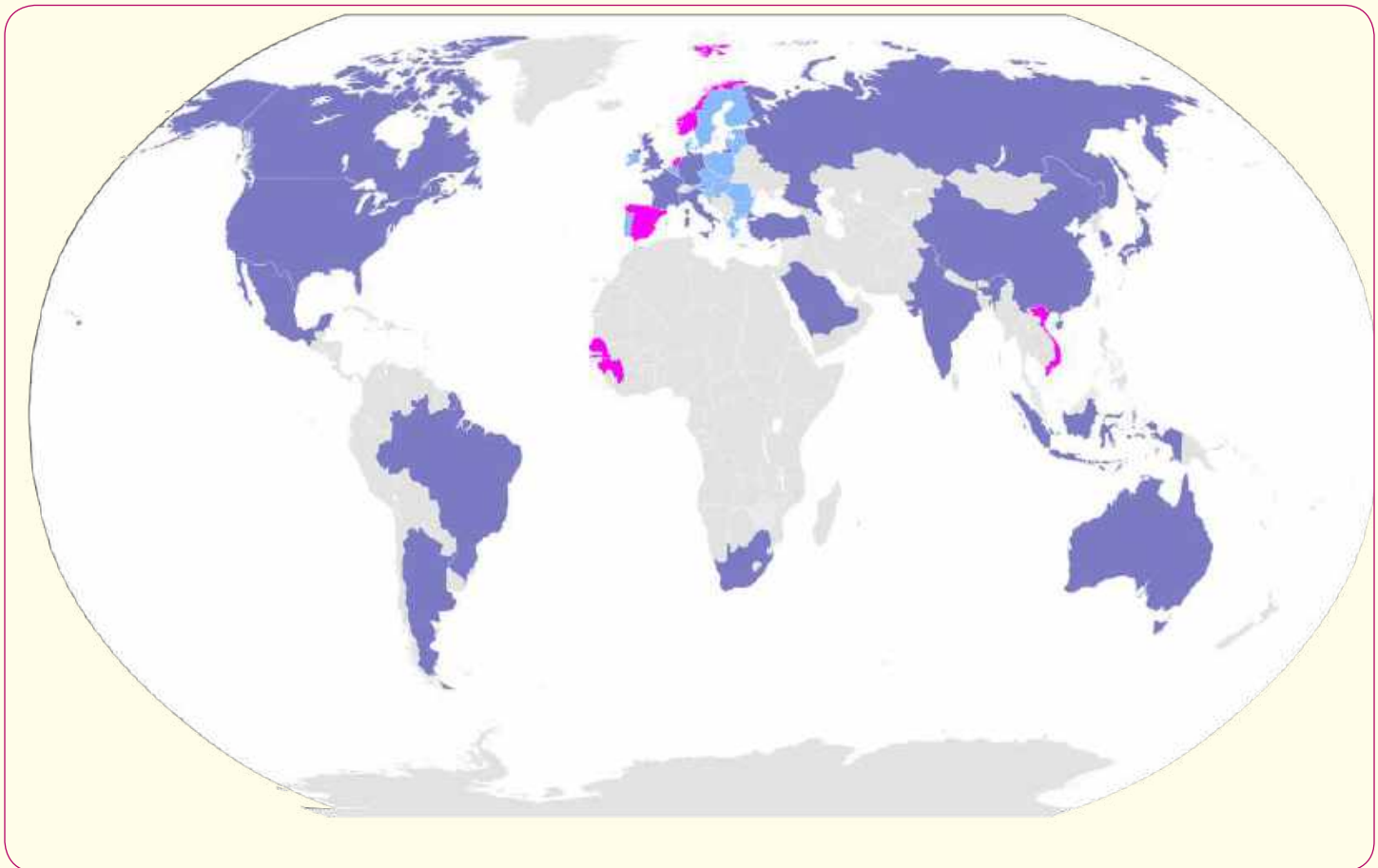
About GI

GI is a manifestation of India's deep knowledge and skill in various crafts and protecting this knowledge will further encourage people to invent, create and innovate. It is a sign that identifies a product as originating from a particular location which gives that product a special quality or reputation or other characteristic.



SEVEN IMPORTANT CONCEPT THROUGH GRAPHICS

1 . G20



■ Member Countries in the G-20 ■ Members of the European Union not individually represented ■ 2018 Guests Countries

Key Facts

- The G20 (or Group of Twenty) is an international forum for the governments and central bank governors from 19 countries and the European Union.
- Founded in 1999 with the aim to discuss policy pertaining to the promotion of international financial stability, the G20 has expanded its agenda since 2008. It seeks to address issues that go beyond the responsibilities of any one organization.
- The latest G20 Summit 2018 concluded on December 1, 2018 in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina. The theme of the summit was 'Building Consensus for Fair and Sustainable Development'.
- The summit ended with the pledge to combat climate change and fixing world trade system
- India will host G20 Summit in 2022.

2. BIMSTEC



Key Facts

- The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a regional organization comprising seven Member States lying in the littoral and adjacent areas of the Bay of Bengal.
- Out of the seven Member States, five are deriving from South Asia, including Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and two from Southeast Asia, including Myanmar and Thailand.
- It came into force on 6 June 1997 through the Bangkok Declaration.
- Its permanent secretariat is located at Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- The Chairmanship of BIMSTEC rotates among the Member States. Sri Lanka is the present chair of BIMSTEC.
- The 5th BIMSTEC Summit will be held in Sri Lanka.
- The 4th BIMSTEC Summit was held in Nepal in 2018.

3. ASEAN

Key Facts

- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) by the founding fathers of ASEAN, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.
- Brunei Darussalam then joined on 7 January 1984, Viet Nam on 28 July 1995, Lao PDR and Myanmar on 23 July 1997 and Cambodia on 30 April 1999, making up what is today the ten Member States of ASEAN.
- According to Article 31 of the ASEAN Charter, the Chairmanship of ASEAN shall rotate annually, based on the alphabetical order of the English names of Member States.
- Thailand is the Chair of ASEAN for 2019 and the theme of its ASEAN Chairmanship is "Advancing Partnership for Sustainability".
- The ASEAN Secretariat is located at Jakarta, Indonesia.



4. BRICS

Key Facts

- BRICS is the acronym coined for an association of five major emerging national economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Originally the first four were grouped as "BRIC" (or "the BRICs"), before the induction of South Africa in 2011.
- The BRICS members are known for their significant influence on regional affairs; all are members of G20. The five BRICS countries represent over 3.1 billion people, or about 41% of the world population.
- New Development Bank (NDB) or sometimes referred to as the BRICS Development Bank and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA) are some of the notable achievements of BRICS in financial architecture.
- The 10th Summit was held in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2018 with the motto 'Collaboration for Inclusive Growth and Shared Prosperity'.
- The 11th Summit will be held in Brazil in 2019.



5. SAARC

Key Facts

- The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is the regional intergovernmental organization and geopolitical union of nations in South Asia. Its member states include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, the Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
- SAARC was founded in Dhaka on 8 December 1985. Its secretariat is based in Kathmandu, Nepal. The organization promotes development of economic and regional integration. It launched the South Asian Free Trade Area in 2006.
- SAARC comprises 3% of the world's area, 21% of the world's population and 3.8% (US\$2.9 trillion) of the global economy, as of 2015.
- SAARC maintains permanent diplomatic relations at the United Nations as an observer and has developed links with multilateral entities, including the European Union.
- The 18th SAARC Summit was held at the Nepalese capital Kathmandu from November 26 to November 27, 2014. The 19th meeting in Pakistan was boycotted by all SAARC members in the wake of Uri terror attack, while the 20th will be held in Sri Lanka in 2019.



6. SCO

Key Facts

- The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), or Shanghai Pact, is a Eurasian political, economic, and security alliance, the creation of which was announced on 15 June 2001 in Shanghai, China by the leaders of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan
- The organisation has expanded its membership to eight countries when India and Pakistan joined SCO as full members on 9 June 2017 at a summit in Astana, Kazakhstan.
- With the growing power and enlargement of the organisation, its scope of unity and cooperation has expanded to many other areas, including education, science, technology, health care, environmental protection, tourism, media, sports, humanitarian and culture
- Widely regarded as the "alliance of East", the SCO regularly conducts military exercises among members to promote cooperation and coordination against terrorism and other external threats, and to maintain regional peace and stability

Member states



7. IORA



Key Facts

- The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), formerly known as the Indian Ocean Rim Initiative and Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC), is an international organisation consisting of coastal states bordering the Indian Ocean
- The organisation was first established as Indian Ocean Rim Initiative in Mauritius on March 1995 and formally launched on 6–7 March 1997 by the conclusion of a multilateral treaty known as the Charter of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Co-operation.
- Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) has identified six priority areas, namely: maritime security, trade and investment facilitation, fisheries management, disaster risk reduction, academic and scientific cooperation and tourism promotion and cultural exchanges.
- The Inaugural IORA Leaders' Summit was held on 7 March 2017 in Jakarta Indonesia, entitled "Strengthening Maritime Cooperation for a Peaceful, Stable and Prosperous Indian Ocean" which has brought together Prime Ministers and Presidents of the 21 Members States.



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AN INTRODUCTION

Dhyeya IAS, a decade old institution, was founded by Mr. Vinay Singh and Mr. Q.H. Khan. Ever since its emergence it has unparalleled track record of success. Today, it stands tall among the reputed institutes providing coaching for Civil Services Examination (CSE). The institute has been very successful in making potential realize their dreams which is evident from success stories of the previous years.

Quite a large number of students desirous of building a career for themselves are absolutely less equipped for the fairly tough competitive tests they have to appear in. Several others, who have a brilliant academic career, do not know that competitive exams are vastly different from academic examination and call for a systematic and scientifically planned guidance by a team of experts. Here one single move invariably put one ahead of many others who lag behind. Dhyeya IAS is manned with qualified & experienced faculties besides especially designed study material that helps the students in achieving the desired goal.

Civil Services Exam requires knowledge base of specified subjects. These subjects though taught in schools and colleges are not necessarily oriented towards the exam approach. Coaching classes at Dhyeya IAS are different from classes conducted in schools and colleges with respect to their orientation. Classes are targeted towards the particular exam. Classroom guidance at Dhyeya IAS is about improving the individual's capacity to focus, learn and innovate as we are comfortably aware of the fact that you can't teach a person anything you can only help him find it within himself.

DSDL Prepare yourself from distance

Distance learning Programme, DSDL, primarily caters the need for those who are unable to come to metros for economic or family reason but have ardent desire to become a civil servant. Simultaneously, it also suits to the need of working professionals, who are unable to join regular classes due to increase in work load or places of their posting. The principal characteristic of our distance learning is that the student does not need to be present in a classroom in order to participate in the instruction. It aims to create and provide access to learning when the source of information and the learners are separated by time and distance. Realizing the difficulties faced by aspirants of distant areas, especially working candidates, in making use of the institute's classroom guidance programme, distance learning system is being provided in General Studies. The distance learning material is comprehensive, concise and exam-oriented in nature. Its aim is to make available almost all the relevant material on a subject at one place. Materials on all topics of General Studies have been prepared in such a way that, not even a single point will be missing. In other words, you will get all points, which are otherwise to be taken from 6-10 books available in the market / library. That means, DSDL study material is undoubtedly the most comprehensive and that will definitely give you added advantage in your Preliminary as well as Main Examination. These materials are not available in any book store or library. These materials have been prepared exclusively for the use of our students. We believe in our quality and commitment towards making these notes indispensable for any student preparing for Civil Services Examination. We adhere all pillars of Distance education.

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