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SEVEN IMPORTANT ISSUES

I. STEM CELL: EMERGING FIELD OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE

Why in News?

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, in a proposal to amend the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, is pushing to bring stem cells and cell-based products under legal regulations. As earlier notification issued on April 4, 2018 the ministry defined the category of stem cells and their derivatives.

Introduction

The Union health ministry has proposed an amendment to the Drugs and Cosmetics Act that may finally bring stem cells and cell-based products under the ambit of the law. Interestingly, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) — an arm of the health ministry that has been at the forefront of demanding stringent rules for stem cell use and even formulated guidelines last year — was apparently not consulted.

In a notification issued on April 4, 2018 the ministry defined the category of stem cells and their derivatives that

would be termed a drug and would thereby have to follow the protocols mandated for any drug development. It said stem cells and products which are substantially altered, amounting to a change in biological characteristics or those subjected to gene editing or modification, will be treated as a drug and will have to seek the regulator's approval before coming to the market. Currently, no such nod is necessary.

Background

Responsible research must focus on harnessing the potential of science to improve our understanding of human health and illness, as well as discover newer ways to prevent and treat illness. Fundamental research in the field of stem cells has taken a big leap globally in the past two decades. The excitement that this emerging area of biomedical research once generated is still alive today. Though, the expectation that it would be a panacea for all ills has not been met. Scientists across the world are working on improving existing technologies and at the same time developing novel ones for creating safer products for potential human use. The most recent and vehemently debated example is that of using the gene editing technology to cure genetic disorders. The last decade has also witnessed a spurt in translational research using different types of stem cells. It was hoped that like the well-established hematopoietic stem cell transplantation (HSCT) with clearly defined clinical indications, other stem cell based therapies too will be integrated into routine clinical practice. However, this did not happen

due to lack of systematic clinical research using common protocols and objective outcome evaluation. This still remains the major impediment in the process of translation from the bench to bedside.

The Union ministry of health and family welfare's proposal to amend the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, to regulate the import, manufacture, distribution and sale of stem cells and stem cell-based products is critical to prevent potential misuse. Since Dolly the sheep was cloned from an adult somatic cell in 1996, experiments using stem cell therapies and products to treat diseases have grown exponentially. But with great hope comes an equally great potential of misuse for exploitative stem cell treatments that are used on patients before they have been evaluated and proven to be safe and effective.

The ministry's proposed amendments define the category of stem cells and their derivatives that would be termed as a drug and would have to follow the mandatory drug development protocols for safety and efficacy before getting the drug regulator's approval to be used or marketed. It includes products with stem cells that have been "substantially altered" to change their biological characteristics or those that have been subjected to gene editing or modification.

Stem cells

Stem cells are the foundation of development in plants, animals and humans. In humans, there are many

ICMR NOT CONSULTED

- Union health ministry says **stem cells and their derivatives will have to follow the protocols mandated for any new drug development**
- Stem cells and products which are **substantially altered will now need drug regulatory authority's clearance**
- **Doctors welcome move, say it will curb unethical exploitation of the therapy in India**

different types of stem cells that come from different places in the body or are formed at different times in our lives. These include embryonic stem cells that exist only at the earliest stages of development and various types of tissue-specific (or adult) stem cells that appear during fetal development and remain in our bodies throughout life.

Stem cells are undifferentiated cells that are the body's building blocks and can generate healthy and functioning specialised cells to replace diseased or dysfunctional cells that cannot heal naturally. Until recently, scientists primarily worked with two kinds of stem cells from animals and humans: embryonic stem cells and non-embryonic "somatic" or "adult" stem cells. Scientists discovered ways to derive embryonic stem cells from early mouse embryos more than 30 years ago, in 1981. Stem cells are distinguished from other cell types by two important characteristics.

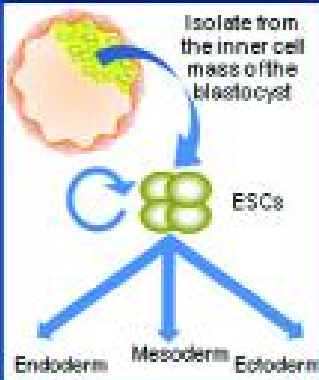
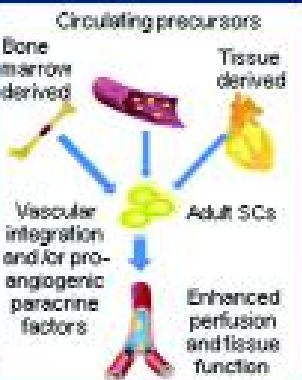
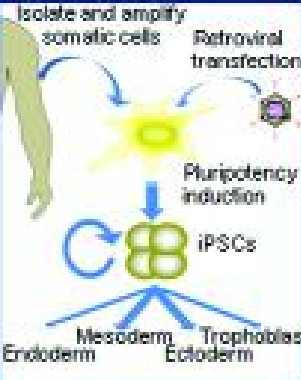
- First, they are unspecialized cells capable of renewing themselves through cell division, sometimes after long periods of inactivity.
- Second, under certain physiologic or experimental conditions, they can be induced to become tissue- or organ-specific cells with special functions.

Stem cells are defined by two characteristics:

- They can make copies of themselves, or self-renew.
- They can differentiate, or develop, into more specialized cells.

Types of Stem Cell

Stem cells classification based on the cell type/tissue of origin, stem cells are classified as 'Somatic Stem Cells' (SSCs) and 'Embryonic Stem Cells' (ESCs). SSCs may have a limited capacity of differentiation and may be multipotent or unipotent, whereas ESCs are pluripotent. The pluripotent stem cells can also be generated in the laboratory by reprogramming somatic cells and the products thus generated

ESCs	Adult SCs	iPSCs
		
Origin: • Blastocyst of embryo Strengths: • Pluripotent (3 germ layers) • Self-renewal and high replicative capacity Weaknesses: • Immunological concerns • Subject to ethical debate • Potential for teratoma and teratocarcinoma • Currently no clinical trial data	Origin: • Bone marrow, circulation or resident tissue Strengths: • Autologous • Clinical safety and efficacy data • Typically lineage committed Weaknesses: • Limited number • Limited replicative capacity • Lineage restricted	Origin: • Reprogramming of somatic cells Strengths: • Totipotent (3 germ layers and trophoblast) • Autologous • Large reservoir of cells Weaknesses: • Potential for teratoma and teratocarcinoma • No clinical data

are referred to as 'Induced Pluripotent Stem Cells (iPSCs)'. The regulatory requirements for research on each of these stem cells depend on their origin and potency. Stem cells are classified and defined as:

A. Somatic Stem Cells

Somatic Stem Cells (SSCs) are the resident, self-renewable population of cells that are present virtually in all organs/tissues of the body. They are essentially undifferentiated, resident in differentiated tissues and are committed to the lineage of that organ. They may, however, have limited plasticity. SSCs could be obtained from different sources, for example the fetus, umbilical cord, placenta, infant, child or adult; and from different organs/tissues. These may vary in their proliferative and differentiation potential. The SSCs in bone marrow, skin and gastrointestinal tract divide continuously and differentiate throughout life, but in other organs they remain dormant until required for repair and replacement.

B. Pluripotent Stem Cells

Pluripotent Stem Cells have the ability to differentiate into derivatives of all three germ layers, viz., ectoderm, mesoderm and endoderm, but not placenta.

- **Embryonic Stem Cells (ESCs):** They are derived from pre-implantation embryos (blastocysts). Those derived from embryos before differentiation of trophoectoderm and inner cell mass (i.e. morula stage) are truly totipotent, capable of giving rise to the entire organism including extra-embryonic tissues. ESCs derived from the inner cell mass (ICM) are pluripotent (not totipotent).
- **Induced Pluripotent Stem Cells (iPSCs):** As the name suggests are pluripotent in nature, quite similar to the ESCs. They are capable of indefinite expansion and differentiation into ectodermal, mesodermal and endodermal cells. The iPSCs can be generated from somatic cells by a variety of genetic and epigenetic methods.

Both ESCs and iPSCs, including their derivatives, can be maintained and expanded as pure population of undifferentiated cells. Under appropriate conditions of stimuli, they can be differentiated into lineage-specific progenitors e.g. neurons, cardiomyocytes and other cell types. The ESCs and iPSCs have tumorigenic potential which could be a major safety concern during clinical application of these cells.

Cord-Blood Banking

The trend of preserving a newborn baby's umbilical cord for possible therapeutic use in future is catching up among new-age parents. The process comes at a hefty price and the facilities offering the service are aggressively pushing parents to opt for it. But commercial banking of umbilical cord blood, which promises to preserve a newborn's cord by freezing and storing it for stem cell therapy, has risen as a largely unregulated industry, running almost parallel to childbirth in big hospitals in India. The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), after formulating guidelines for stem cell research and therapy last year, has now initiated a process to lay down norms for cord blood banking. ICMR authorities said the need to come up with the norms was felt because companies offering the facility for a fee ranging from Rs 30,000-Rs 1.5 lakh claim it can be used to treat conditions ranging from thalassaemia to aggressive forms of cancer, even though there is not enough scientific evidence to prove that.

Public health researchers, too, expressed concern that the service is virtually being forced on new parents who can pay by playing on their fears. Companies, on their part, said they adhere to existing guidelines. Stem cell transplants have now gone beyond the scope of treating just blood and immune conditions. In many countries globally, they're being approved for regeneration of tissues. Even in India few companies have got market approval for these novel stem cell based therapeutics.

Cord-blood banking basically means collecting and storing the blood from within the umbilical cord (the part of the placenta that delivers nutrients to a fetus) after a baby is born. Cord blood contains blood-forming stem cells, which are potentially useful for treating diseases that require stem cell transplants, such as certain kinds of leukemia or lymphoma, aplastic anemia, severe sickle cell disease and severe combined immunodeficiency. There are two types of banks that store cord blood:

- Public banks collect donated cord blood for research or for use by anyone who may need it. There is usually no charge associated with this service. After birth, blood is collected, anonymously marked and sent to a public bank to potentially save the life of another child one day. If you choose this option and your child or a family member later develops a disease that requires a stem cell transplant for treatment, you won't be able to obtain the donation you made to the bank.
- Private banks store cord blood for personal use by the family. There is a fee associated with this service. People who have a family history of disease that can be treated with stem cell transplants sometimes consider this option. Less commonly, people choose to privately bank their newborn's cord blood on the off chance that someday their child or a sick family member could be treated with it. This practice isn't recommended, however, since the costs associated with it are high and the chances of a family member ever using the cord blood are slim.

Stem Cell Guidelines

The 2017 guidelines, reiterate that any stem cell use in patients, other than that for hematopoietic stem cell reconstitution for approved indications, is investigational at present. Accordingly, any stem cell use in patients must only be done

within the purview of an approved and monitored clinical trial with the intent to advance science and medicine and not offering it as therapy. In accordance with this stringent definition, every use of stem cells in patients outside an approved clinical trial is unethical and shall be considered as malpractice. The document provides important definitions for and elaborates upon levels of manipulations; category of research (permissible, restrictive or prohibited); manufacturing process; release criteria among others. A list of approved indications for HSCT has been provided. The mechanism for review and monitoring of clinical research has been strengthened by making (Central Drugs Standard Control Organization) CDSCO approvals mandatory prior to initiation of any clinical trial. Some major amendments include: mandatory registration of Institutional Committee for Stem Cell Research (ICSCR) and Institutional Ethics Committee (IEC), with National Apex Committee for Stem Cell Research and Therapy (NAC-SCRT) and CDSCO respectively; undertaking clinical trials only at institutes with registered IC-SCR, IEC and only at Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) and Good Laboratory Practice (GLP) certified facilities; research undertaken by medical professionals registered with the Medical Council Of India (MCI) and an MCI approved post graduate qualification in the domain area of the specific trial.

Stem cells and their derivatives fall under definition of 'Drug' as per the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and are categorized as 'Investigational New Drug (IND)' or 'Investigational New Entity (INE)' when used for clinical application. Hence the principles of bioethics and regulation must be followed accordingly before initiating clinical trials. Adequate safeguards must be in place so that recipients of these cells in clinical trials are fully protected. Societal concerns regarding compensation for research related injuries and unforeseen adverse effects are additional concerns that

need to be adequately addressed. Last decade has witnessed a proliferation of indiscriminate use of stem cell based therapies without establishing either their safety or therapeutic efficacy has led to the exploitation of vulnerable patients. This has the risk of adversely affecting patients both in terms of their well-being and their economy.

General Principles of Ethics

The general principles of ethics for biomedical research involving human participants shall also be applicable. In addition, the guidelines specify unique provisions for stem cells, because of their inherent property for unlimited proliferation, differentiation to cells of the germ layers, oncogenic potential, unrecognised toxicities and possible involvement in pre-implantation stages of human development.

The guideline therefore focuses on:

1. Monitoring mechanism and regulatory pathway for basic, clinical research and product development based on categories of research and level of manipulation.
2. Procurement of gametes, embryos and somatic cells for derivation and propagation of any stem cell lines, their banking and distribution.
3. Other important areas like international collaboration, exchange of cell/lines and education for stakeholders and advertisement.

International Collaboration

Stem cell research is an emerging field of biomedical sciences and may require national and international collaboration. Such collaborations help the participating institutions for advancement of the field, capacity building and global competence. Participating institutions should consider the following:

- National guidelines and regulations of respective countries shall be followed.
- All international collaborations require approvals of the respective funding agencies followed by approval from the Health Ministry's Screening Committee as per Government of India Guidelines.
- In situation involving a conflict (scientific and/or ethical) between the collaborators, the existing Indian guidelines, acts and regulations shall prevail for the work to be carried out in India.
- Funding agencies/sponsors shall ensure that certification provided by the collaborating country fulfils the requirements as laid down in these guidelines.

Way Ahead

Parallel to these scientific developments, the field is unfortunately witnessing rampant malpractice, posing challenges for the regulatory authorities worldwide. In India too, science and the medical practice is at the crossroad. Clinical research is struggling to cope with the regulatory requirements, industry sponsored

clinical research is gaining momentum, but seeks greater clarity and direction. Meanwhile, unscientific or unethical stem cell therapy continues to pose a threat to the well-being of patients and other vulnerable individuals. In the prevailing scenario, one may question, if our regulatory framework and mechanisms can keep up with the rapid pace of changes in stem cell research and ground realities. The relevant government agencies have taken cognizance of these challenges and are evolving systems to address them. There is continuous endeavor to actively engage with all stakeholders and come up with timely and suitable reforms.

The notification though has practically left the use of autologous stem cells — where the individual's own stem cells are collected and minimally treated before infusing it back into the patient — unchecked. Such "therapies" meant to repair or regenerate damaged cells, tissues and organs are more rampantly used in centres across the country. The proposed amendment to the Drugs and Cosmetics Act states that these would be considered "minimal manipulation". Hence, doctors could continue to offer them without requiring a nod from the drug regulatory body.

In a country where stem cell therapy is already exploited, there has to be absolute clarity in defining it. Stem cells are currently being used for genetic disorders, dementia, autism, etc, without explaining to patients or relatives that autologous mononuclear cells transplant is not going to benefit them in any way. The health ministry has to define immune therapy, gene therapy and stem cells individually in the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, else the risk of exploiting the science will remain.

National Apex Committee for Stem Cell Research and Therapy (NAC-SCRT)

This is a multi-disciplinary committee with its Secretariat at the ICMR Headquarters, New Delhi. Main objectives of the committee are:

- i) To serve as an advisory body to promote and facilitate stem cell research in the country;
- ii) To perform a comprehensive review of the therapeutic use of stem cells and formulate policies to curb unethical practices;
- iii) To review specific controversial or ethically sensitive issues referred to the committee.

Institutional committee for Stem Cell Research (IC-SCR)

This is a multi-disciplinary self-regulatory, independently functioning body at the institutional level that oversees all stem cell related research activities and/or clinical trials in compliance with the NGSCR and existing regulatory framework. Institutions involved in stem cell research (basic science and clinical) are required to establish IC-SCR as per NGSCR and register the same with NAC-SCRT.

General Studies Paper- II

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

General Studies Paper- III

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



2. WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN INDIA

Context

Women reservation bill which is pending for 22 years is a topic of lip service for every political party but there is a lack of political will in action. To seek support from the people for passage of the Women's reservation Bill (WRB), women organisation including "CSR New Delhi", "National Alliance for Women's Reservation Bill", "Mahila Chetna Manch," "Child Rights Observatory Bhopal" and "Sangini Resource Centre, Bhopal" are jointly organising programme. Indian women have been fighting for last 22 years for passage of this Bill (this makes it the longest pending bill in the parliament).

Introduction

In order to achieve social progress, the empowerment of women in the political system is binding. As Dr B.R Ambedkar said, "political power is the key to all social progress," it obligates women participation not only at political leadership level but also at integration of women in all political spheres. Gender balance in political participation and decision-making is the internationally agreed target set in the Beijing Declaration. In fact, UN Women Report (2013) on Women's Leadership and Political Participation found that women demonstrate political leadership by working across party lines through parliamentary women's caucuses - even in the most politically combative environments.

Gender equality and women's empowerment are not only human rights; they are also imperative for achieving inclusive, equitable and sustainable development. Women's political participation is central to these goals and political parties are among the most important institutions for promoting and nurturing such participation. With less than twenty

per cent of the world's parliamentary seats occupied by women, it is clear that political parties need to do more—and should be assisted in those efforts—to support women's political empowerment.

The term 'political participation' has a very wide meaning. It is not only related to 'Right to Vote', but simultaneously relates to participation in: decision-making process, political activism, political consciousness, etc. Women in India participate in voting, run for public offices and political parties at lower levels more than men. Political activism and voting are the strongest areas of women's political participation. To combat gender inequality in politics, the government in India has instituted reservations for seats in local governments.

Advancing democratic governance requires creating and sustaining an environment of inclusive and responsive political processes and promoting the empowerment of women. The inclusion of the perspectives of women and their participation in politics are prerequisites for democratic development and contribute to good governance.

Current Status of Women

For a country with a female population that is larger than that of the United States and a thriving democracy that prides itself on being robust and responsive, India has done rather poorly when it comes to female representation in national politics. The percentage of women in the Lok Sabha has gone up by only a small margin from 4.4% in 1951 to 11% in 2014 and at this pace, it will take another 180 years to reach the gender balance that the Bill seeks to create. In the battleground of Indian politics, one demographic is ideally placed to

change this disheartening statistic — working women. However, there has been substantial representation of women at local government levels but that varied from state to state. There are 13.72 lakh elected women representatives (EWRs) in PRIs (Panchayati Raj Institutions) which constitute 44.2 per cent of total elected representatives (ERs) as on December, 2017. Women sarpanchs accounted for 43 per cent of total gram panchayats (GPs) across the country, exhibiting active leadership of women in local government.

- Nevertheless, statistics indicate alarming conditions of women participation in mainstream Indian politics.
- The current Lok Sabha has 66 women MPs compared to the First Lok Sabha, which had 22. This implies that seven decades of democracy in independent India has achieved a mere threefold increase in the number of women MPs.
- Between 1957 (the earliest data available) and 2015, the total number of women contestants has increased from 45 to 668. That is a whopping 15 fold increase in the number of women contesting. In fact it is other way around. That means if we look at male contestants during the same span, the number has increased from 1474 to 7583 meaning the rise has been five-fold. This indicates the level of willingness amongst women to be part of political leadership.
- The average share of women parliamentarians differs from region to region. As of June 2017, these were (single, lower and upper houses combined): Nordic countries, 41.7 per cent; Americas,

28.1 per cent; Europe including Nordic countries, 26.5 per cent; Europe excluding Nordic countries, 25.3 per cent; sub-Saharan Africa, 23.6 per cent; Asia, 19.4 per cent; Arab States, 17.4 per cent; and the Pacific, 17.4 per cent.

- Globally, there are 38 States in which women account for less than 10 per cent of parliamentarians in single or lower houses, as of June 2016. Only two countries have 50 per cent or more women in parliament in single or lower houses: Rwanda with 61.3 per cent and Bolivia with 53.1 per cent.

History: Women's Reservation Bill

This Bill has had a chequered history. A similar Bill was introduced in 1996, 1998 and 1999 – all of which lapsed after the dissolution of the respective Lok Sabhas. A Joint Parliamentary Committee chaired by Geeta Mukherjee examined the 1996 Bill and made seven recommendations. Five of these have been included in the latest 2008 Bill. Women's Reservation Bill [The Constitution (108th Amendment) Bill, 2008], Commonly known as the Women's Reservation Bill, it seeks

Highlights of the Bill

- The Constitution (One Hundred and Eighth Amendment) Bill, 2008 seeks to reserve one-third of all seats for women in the Lok Sabha and the state legislative assemblies. The allocation of reserved seats shall be determined by such authority as prescribed by Parliament.
- One third of the total number of seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes shall be reserved for women of those groups in the Lok Sabha and the legislative assemblies.
- Reserved seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in the state or union territory.
- Reservation of seats for women shall cease to exist 15 years after the commencement of this Amendment Act.

to reserve one-third of all seats for women in the Lok Sabha and the state legislative assemblies. Introduced by the UPA-I government in May 2008, it also provides that one third of the total number of seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes shall be reserved for women of those groups. Similar Bills have been introduced thrice before in the late 90's but lapsed with the dissolution of their respective Lok Sabhas.

Two of the recommendations are not incorporated in the 2008 Bill. The first is for reserving seats in Rajya Sabha and Legislative Councils. The second is for sub-reservation for OBC women after the Constitution extends reservation to OBCs. The 2008 Bill was referred to the Standing Committee on Law and Justice. This Committee failed to reach a consensus in its final report. The Committee has recommended that the Bill "be passed in Parliament and put in action without further delay. Two members of the Committee, Virender Bhatia and Shailendra Kumar (both belonging to the Samajwadi Party) dissented stating that they were not against providing reservation to women but disagreed with the way this Bill was drafted. They had three recommendations:

- Every political party must distribute 20% of its tickets to women.
- Even in the current form, reservation should not exceed 20% of seats.
- There should be a quota for women belonging to OBCs and minorities.

The Standing committee considered two other methods of increasing representation. One suggestion (part of election commission recommendations) was to require political parties to nominate women for a minimum percentage of seats. The committee felt that parties could bypass the spirit of the law by nominating women to losing seats. The second recommendation was to

create dual member constituencies, with women filling one of the two seats from those constituencies. The Committee believed that this move could result in women being reduced to a subservient status, which will defeat the very purpose of the Bill.

It is interesting to note that the Committee did not reject the two recommendations of the Geeta Mukherjee Committee that are not reflected in the Bill. The Committee concluded that the issue of reservations to Rajya Sabha and Legislative Councils needs to be examined thoroughly as the Upper Houses play an equally important role under the Constitution. On the issue of reservations to OBC women, the Committee said that "all other issues may be considered at an appropriate time by government without any further delay at the present time in the passage of the Bill".

The National Policy for Empowerment of Women stated that reservation shall be considered in higher legislative bodies. The United Progressive Alliance's National Common Minimum Programme includes reservation of one-third of seats in Parliament for women. All three Bills lapsed with the dissolution of their respective Lok Sabhas. The Constitution (One Hundred and Eighth Amendment) Bill, 2008 was introduced in the Rajya Sabha. It seeks to reserve one-third of total number of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and in each state legislative assembly. However, The Women's Reservation Bill or The Constitution (108th Amendment) Bill, 2008, is a lapsed in the Parliament in 2018.

Government Approach to Women Participation

The 73rd and 74th Amendments passed in 1993, which introduced panchayats and municipalities in the Constitution, reserve one-third of seats for women in these bodies. The Constitution also

provides for reservation of seats in Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in proportion to their number in the population. The Constitution makes no provision for reserving seats for women in Parliament and the state legislatures. Currently, women constitute 9% of the Lok Sabha, 10% of the Rajya Sabha and 7% of the state legislative assemblies. During the framing of the Constitution, some women members argued against reservation for women.

In 1974, the report of the Committee on Status of Women highlighted the low number of women in political bodies and recommended that seats be reserved for women in panchayats and municipal bodies. Two dissenting members of the Committee supported reservation of seats in all legislative bodies. The National Perspective Plan for Women (1988) recommended a quota of 30% in panchayats, municipalities and political parties.

In 1992, Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) were mandated as local self-governing bodies by virtue of the 73rd Amendment. The legislation aimed to improve the delivery of social services by bringing decision-making closer to the people and constitutionally empowering local village leaders. It also ensured reservations for women and Scheduled Castes and Tribes to prevent historically powerful groups from claiming political, economic and social resources. Specifically, the amendment mandated that one-third of the sarpanch/pradhan (head of a village's directly elected decision making body) positions were to be reserved for women in every state.

Challenges to Women's Participation

Stereotyping gender roles and biases are prevalent, albeit to varying degrees, in all the countries of the world and

are reflected in social, economic and political life. In many countries women continue to be discouraged from direct competition with men and from public exposure and interactions and are instead assigned roles that steer them away from decision-making and towards support roles such as child and family care and housekeeping in the private sphere. While the formal support of political parties is by no means the only factor that affects women's political participation given these manifold and multilayered gender roles and biases, such support is required to overcome the barriers to women's participation in politics and in political party life.

Lack of confidence and finance were the other major deterring factors that prevented women from entering politics. Recognising the significance of roles of women in decision making process in the society is critical to strengthen women's agencies for building a progressive society with equality of opportunities among all citizens.

Entering politics voluntarily, without a political background, is not easy. The financial, social and cultural barriers to entry are higher for women. There is more criticism and less support. Voters subject women candidates to higher standards than male candidates. But, perhaps most importantly, women themselves are too often inclined to think that they need permission and that they are not yet ready.

Even after 70 years of independence, in India crime against women is rampant and gender equality lacks in every sphere of society. If collective conscience of India, ingrained in patriarchy, is to be blamed for social injustice faced by women Indian politics does not offer any different story. Political status of women in India has failed to change despite our tall claims of being a progressive democracy.

Addressing Challenges

As representatives, we need women to eliminate the systemic biases and structural barriers that keep our girls out of the tech industry, our victims of gender-based violence in fear and our women's sports teams under-funded.

- To dismantle structural barriers, the responsibility falls on working women who have successfully overcome constraints to open the gates for other women.
- To design laws that encourages better education for girls.
- To secure financial independence and formal employment for women.
- To push up our abysmal female labour force participation rates.
- To ensure that female hygiene products are not taxed as luxury goods.

In addressing systemic biases, exposure to women in office weakens stereotypes about gender roles. Watching women in leadership positions reduces the negative perceptions men have about their effectiveness as leaders. It also induces men to dream better dreams for their daughters, and that is no mean feat.

The government has instituted quotas for women political candidates at the local level — 33 per cent of seats are reserved for them. These quotas have been successful. Yet, there is resistance to implementing them at the national level. Critics allege that these quotas are neither meritocratic nor useful because women in politics are simply representatives of the men who would have been in politics — wives and daughters of male proxies. Never mind the fact that these quotas at the local level have improved the quality of local policymaking, as women have tended to invest significantly more than their male counterparts on the provision of public goods — health, education and roads. Even as the

debate around reservation of seats continues, having professional women voluntarily run for office can overcome criticism about women being male proxies and that quotas negatively affect meritocracy.

Conclusion

Over the past few decades, women have made their mark as effective managers, bankers, professors, corporate leaders, lawyers, doctors and civil servants. These are women who know how to solve problems, get things done and manage multiple responsibilities. Electing able women professionals will help us simultaneously achieve better representation and expertise. Having more professional women in office is a matter of both representation

and capability. It is an opportunity to shape the future in a meaningful and impactful way.

The inclusion of the perspectives of women and their participation in politics are prerequisites for democratic development and contribute to good governance and political parties are the primary vehicles for political participation. It can be politically and financially advantageous for political parties to promote women's participation through reforms, political parties can alter public opinion, generate new support bases, attract new members, increase the flow of public funding to the party and improve their standing with other countries,

among other political and practical benefits.

General Studies Paper- I

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

General Studies Paper- II

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

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3. ONGOING EFFORTS TOWARDS AIR POLLUTION CONTROL

Why in News?

India is tying up with the United States and Finland to develop a pollution-forecast system that will help anticipate particulate matter (PM) levels at least two days in advance and at a greater resolution than what is possible now. The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) will be coordinating this exercise and the plan is to have a system in place by winter.

Recently, the government has released a draft of National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) as a medium term national level strategy to tackle the increasing air pollution problem across the country in a comprehensive manner.

Background

India is committed to clean environment and pollution free air and water. In fact, it is mandated in our constitution. India's commitments and obligations to conservation and protection of environment within

the ambit of targeted goals on environmental sustainability under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is manifested in the fact that several administrative and regulatory measures including a separate statute on air and water pollution are under implementation since long. The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, was enacted under Art. 253 of the Constitution to implement the decisions taken at the United Nations Conference on Human Environment held at Stockholm in June 1972, in which India participated. Sustainable development, in terms of enhancement of human well-being, is an integral part of India's development philosophy. However, a vast country and an emerging economy like India, face enormous challenges with its burgeoning population and widespread poverty, in meeting its various other significant commitments associated with poverty and hunger eradication under the SDGs.

Air pollution emission issues are associated with many sectors which inter-alia include power, transport, industry, residential, construction and agriculture. The impact of air pollution is not limited to health but it gets extended to agriculture and general well-being of human, floral and faunal population. In order to address the issue, government has undertaken many significant steps which inter-alia include notification of National Ambient Air Quality Standards and sector specific emission and effluent standards for industries; setting up of monitoring network for assessment of ambient air quality; introduction of cleaner gaseous fuels like CNG, LPG etc and ethanol blending; launching of National Air Quality Index (AQI); adoption of BS- IV for vehicles from 2018, in Delhi banning of burning of biomass; promotion of public transport network; Pollution Under Control Certificate; issuance of directions under Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981; installation of on-line continuous (24x7) monitoring

devices by 17 highly polluting industrial sectors; ban on bursting of sound emitting crackers between 10 PM to 6 AM; notification of graded response action plan for Delhi and NCR identifying source wise actions for various levels of air pollution, etc.

With these recent policy interventions, air quality has purportedly shown some minor improvement in some major cities in recent time which as of now cannot be called as trend. This is not sufficient and higher level of focused time bound initiatives at both city and rural level now appear obligatory to address the issue in comprehensive manner at national level. It is in this context, the need for a National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)-India as national level strategies for reduction in air pollution levels at both regional and urban scales is felt.

What is Air Pollution?

Pollution is now a common place term that our ears are attuned to. We hear about the various forms of pollution and read about it through the mass media. Air pollution is one such form that refers to the contamination of the air, irrespective of indoors or outside. A physical, biological or chemical alteration to the air in the atmosphere can be termed as pollution. It occurs when any harmful gases, dust, smoke enters into the atmosphere and makes it difficult for plants, animals and humans to survive as the air becomes dirty.

Air pollution can further be classified into two sections- Visible air pollution and invisible air pollution. Another way of looking at air pollution could be any substance that holds the potential to hinder the atmosphere or the well-being of the living beings surviving in it. The sustainment of all things living is due to a combination of gases that collectively form the atmosphere; the imbalance caused by the increase or decrease of the percentage of these gases can be harmful for survival.

The Ozone layer considered crucial for the existence of the ecosystems on the planet is depleting due to increased pollution. Global warming, a direct result of the increased imbalance of gases in the atmosphere has come to be known as the biggest threat and challenge that the contemporary world has to overcome in a bid for survival.

Types of Pollutants

In order to understand the causes of air pollution, several divisions can be made.

- Primarily air pollutants can be caused by primary sources or secondary sources. The pollutants that are a direct result of the process can be called primary pollutants. A classic example of a primary pollutant would be the sulfur-dioxide emitted from factories.
- Secondary pollutants are the ones that are caused by the inter mingling and reactions of primary pollutants. Smog created by the interactions of several primary pollutants is known to be as secondary pollutant.

Government Initiatives

National Air Quality Monitoring Programme

Government is executing a nation-wide programme of ambient air quality monitoring known as National Air Quality Monitoring Programme (NAMP). Under NAMP, four air pollutants viz. Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂), Oxides of Nitrogen as NO_x, Suspended Particulate Matter (PM₁₀) and Fine Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5}) have been identified for regular monitoring at all the locations. In addition, there are hundred and one (101) real-time Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring stations (CAAQMS) in 57 cities monitoring 08 pollutants viz. PM₁₀, PM_{2.5}, SO₂, NO_x, ammonia (NH₃), CO, ozone (O₃) and benzene.

PM₁₀ are inhalable coarse particles, which are particles with a diameter between 2.5 and 10 micrometers and PM_{2.5} are fine particles with a diameter of 2.5 mm or less. Particulates are the deadliest form of air pollutant due to their ability to penetrate deep into the lungs and blood streams unfiltered. The smaller PM_{2.5} are particularly deadly as it can penetrate deeper into the lungs.

The monitoring of meteorological parameters such as wind speed and wind direction, relative humidity (RH) and temperature were also integrated with the monitoring of air quality. The monitoring of pollutants is carried out for 24 hours (4-hourly sampling for gaseous pollutants and 8-hourly sampling for particulate matter) with a frequency of twice a week, to have one hundred and four (104) observations in a year. The monitoring is being carried out with the help of Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB); State Pollution Control Boards (SPCB); Pollution Control Committees (PCC); National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI), Nagpur.

Countries across the globe have unique air quality monitoring regulations to characterize local air pollution. The goal of this air quality monitoring is to protect humans and the environment from harmful air pollution.

Currently, the System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR), run out of the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, serves as the apex forecaster of pollution trends in Delhi, Mumbai, Pune and Ahmedabad. It generates a likely air quality profile, a day in advance, for these cities. IITM is an organisation under the Ministry of Earth Science (MoES).

The new system, to be jointly developed with expertise from the Finnish Meteorological Institute and the U.S.' National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration, will use a different modelling approach as well as computational techniques from that employed in the SAFAR model.

About SAFAR

"System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research" known as "SAFAR."

For greater metropolitan cities of India to provide location specific information on air quality in near real time.

Its forecast 1-3 days in advance for the first time in India.

- It has been combined with the early warning system on weather parameters.
- The SAFAR system is developed by Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, along with ESSO partner institutions namely India Meteorological Department (IMD) and National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF).
- The ultimate objective of the project is to increase awareness among general public regarding the air quality in their city well in advance so that appropriate mitigation measures and systematic action can be taken up for betterment of air quality and related health issues.
- It engineers awareness drive by educating public, prompting self-mitigation and also to help develop mitigation strategies for policy makers.

National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF & CC) finally released a concept note on the National Clean Air Programme, 17 April, 2018. The concept note acknowledges that while recent policy interventions like notification of sector-specific emission standards, augmentation of air quality monitoring network, banning the burning of biomass and leapfrogging from BSIV to BSVI for vehicles by April 1, 2020 have resulted in marginal improvements in air quality levels, the need for time-bound initiatives at both city and rural level are absolutely

essential to combat the problem of air pollution in our country holistically, thus substantiating the need for the NCAP.

The intended goal of the programme is to meet the "annual average air quality standards at all locations in the country in a stipulated timeframe". In order to achieve this, all the 100 non-attainment cities would have to design city-specific action plans with specific timelines for implementation of listed initiatives.

Objective of NCAP

The NCAP aspires to overcome the deficits of the ongoing government initiatives targeted towards air pollution control. It lays down a comprehensive strategy framework for enhanced management of air quality. Augmentation of existing air quality monitoring network by increasing number of existing manual and continuous monitoring stations, introducing rural monitoring stations, identifying alternative technology for real-time monitoring network and augmenting capabilities of existing monitoring stations to measure PM_{2.5} concentration, are integral components of the strategy framework.

- Devising air quality management plans for 100 non-attainment cities calls for detailed source apportionment (identification of pollution sources) studies for each city.
- In addition to setting up of an Air Information Centre that would analyse and disseminate monitored data, an Air Quality Forecasting system is also being envisioned.
- In addition to city-specific source apportionment studies, the NCAP lays down the need for a national-level emission inventory.
- A technology assessment cell for evaluation of new pollution prevention and control technologies has also been proposed.

- A high-level apex committee and working group has, therefore, been constituted under the Indian Council of Medical Research and the MoEF&CC to establishing the correlation between exposure to air pollution and human health.

National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS)

Ambient air quality refers to the condition or quality of air surrounding us in the outdoors. National Ambient Air Quality Standards are the standards for ambient air quality with reference to various identified pollutant notified by the Central Pollution Control Board under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981. Major objectives of NAAQS are

- (i) To indicate necessary air quality levels and appropriate margins required to ensure the protection of vegetation, health and property.
- (ii) To provide a uniform yardstick for assessment of air quality at the national level.
- (iii) To indicate the extent and need of monitoring programme.

Annual Arithmetic mean of minimum 104 measurements in a year at a particular site taken twice a week 24 hourly at a uniform interval and 24 hourly or 08 hourly or 01 hourly monitored values, as applicable shall be complied with 98% of the time in a year. 2% of the time, they may exceed the limits but not on two consecutive days of monitoring.

National Air Quality index (AQI)

Air Quality Index is a tool for effective communication of air quality status to people in terms, which are easy to understand. It transforms complex air quality data of various pollutants into a single number (Index value), nomenclature and colour. There are six AQI categories, namely Good, Satisfactory, Moderately Polluted, Poor, Very Poor and Severe. Each of these categories is decided based on ambient concentration values of

air pollutants and their likely health impacts (known as health breakpoints). AQ sub-index and health breakpoints are evolved for eight pollutants (PM10, PM2.5, NO₂, SO₂, CO, O₃, NH₃ and Pb) for which short-term (upto 24-hours) National Ambient Air Quality Standards are prescribed.

Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA)

Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA) was constituted under Section 3(3) of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. In the notification, jurisdiction of EPCA has been stated as National Capital Region as defined National Capital Region Planning Board Act, 1985. The EPCA has been subsequently re-constituted from time to time extending the tenure of the Authority and/or substituting or including new members.

Impetus on Vehicular Pollution

Vehicles being identified as major source of pollution. In this regard Bharat Stage VI (BS-VI) norms have been launched in Delhi from March 2018. Bharat stage emission standards (BSES) are emission standards instituted by the government of India, based on European regulations were first introduced in 2000.

Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)

The government has notified a Graded Response Action Plan for Delhi and NCR, which comprises of the graded measures for each source framed according to the AQI categories. It also takes note of the broad health advisory for each level of AQI that was adopted by the government of India along with the AQI. The measures are cumulative. Emergency and severe levels include cumulatively all other measures listed in the lower levels of AQI including Very Poor, Poor and Moderate. It is also clear that the actions listed in the poor category need to be implemented throughout the year.

Way Forward

A variety of measures has been undertaken or proposed and instituted to curb the effects of air pollution. Solving the air pollution problem requires joint effort and takes different ways from one region to another. For example, it primarily requires behavior change and institutionalization of measures that can considerably ameliorate the situation in the short-term and the long-term. Ordinarily, the solutions to air pollution have focused on establishing a mix of technological

solutions, regulations and policies and encouraging behavioral change.

The solutions to air pollution are straightforward and simple but they require government action: quit coal, establish clear, strict air quality standards and introduce effective policy instruments to curb the rapid growth of the number of vehicles on the roads. On a larger scale, government is taking measures to limit emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. The Paris Agreement, a voluntary agreement among 118 nations ratified on November 4, 2016, is one effort being enacted on a global scale to combat climate change. As a part of the agreement, each country agreed to take measures to combat climate change, with the ultimate goal of keeping the post-industrial global temperature rise below two degrees Celsius. Another method is to put taxes on carbon emissions or higher taxes on gasoline, so that individuals and companies will have greater incentives to conserve energy and pollute less.

General Studies Paper- III

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

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4. SUNRISE OF DEMOCRACY IN NORTH-EAST

Why in News?

The Union Home Ministry has removed the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) from Meghalaya from April 1, 2018 and reduced the number of police stations to eight (from sixteen) under the Act in Arunachal Pradesh. The Act has however been extended by another six months in three eastern districts of Arunachal Pradesh -- Tirap, Longding and Changlang -- which border Myanmar and specific areas under eight police stations of seven other districts bordering Assam. The three districts have been under the

AFSPA since January 2016. The Act was withdrawn from Tripura in 2015 and in past one year, fewer areas in the Northeast are under the Act, the official said, adding that the Act was only in place in Meghalaya for a 20-km area along the Assam border and not in operation in Mizoram.

What is a Disturbed Area?

AFSPA was enacted on 11 September 1958 to bring under control what the government considered 'disturbed areas', essentially conflict-hit areas. It was first implemented in the Northeast and then in Punjab.

Areas are considered disturbed "by reason of differences or disputes between members of different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities". Section (3) of AFSPA empowers the governor of the state/Union territory to issue an official notification declaring the state or a region within as a "disturbed area", after which the center can decide whether to send in armed forces. Thus, central government, or the Governor of the state or administrator of the Union Territory can declare the whole or part

of the state or Union Territory as a disturbed area.

The Ministry of Home Affairs would usually enforce this Act where necessary, but there have been exceptions where the Centre decided to forego its power and leave the decision to the state governments.

Once declared 'disturbed', the region has to maintain status quo for a minimum of three months, according to the Disturbed Areas (Special Courts) Act, 1976.

North-East & AFSPA

It was way back in 1857 that the British Crown took over India from the East India Company following the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857. But it was not until 1942 when in the face of Mahatma Gandhi's Quit India Movement, the British Indian Administration under Lord Lillingthorpe felt compelled to invoke the Armed Forces Special Powers Ordinance empowering personnel of the British Indian Army holding the ranks of Captain and above with draconian powers, including shooting to kill with full legal immunity. India became a republic in 1950 and it took just eight years to enact the Armed Forces (Assam-Manipur) Special Powers Act, 1958 (AFSPA), the only improvement being the powers that was hitherto bestowed on officers of Captains and above was now given to Non-Commissioned Officers (Havildars) and above with other provisions like search and destroy, arrests without warrants and others, all remaining intact.

This draconian Act was first invoked in 1958 in the then Naga Hills district of Assam and the Naga areas of Manipur to quell the Naga uprising led by the grand patriarch of all insurgent groups in the region namely Angami Zapu Phizo. It was the Centre's answer to Phizo's demand for an independent Nagaland.

The tragedy is that while in 1958 the Centre only had the Nagas to deal with, by 1980s and 90s, it had to deal

with the Manipuris, Assamese, Mizos, Bodos, Khasis, Garos, Kukis, Paites, Hmars and the Tripuris so much so that areas under the AFSPA began to encompass all the seven states that comprises the North Eastern region. And, of course following the amendment in 1972, the Centre too now has the powers to declare any area in the Northeast as disturbed and invoke the AFSPA.

The Controversy

Described by many as a draconian law, the AFSPA, or the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958, confers special powers to armed forces to respond at will in the "disturbed areas" to maintain law and order.

In a 'disturbed area' a military officer can fire upon an unlawful assembly of five or more people if the need arises or even for illegal possession of fire arms. The military is free to use force even causing death to perpetrators as per the law. No arrest and search warrants are required for any operation as per the provisions of the law. Due to the massive power it gives to soldiers there is always the fear of its misuse and such instances have occurred as well.

Which other states are under AFSPA right now?

Assam, Nagaland, Manipur (except the Imphal municipal area), Arunachal Pradesh (some districts plus a 20-km belt bordering Assam) and Jammu and Kashmir.

Under AFSPA, Central forces can tackle local issues, fight social unrest and can be redeployed if necessary to restore peace as per the request of the state administration. As per Act 7 of 1972, the Central government can declare areas as 'disturbed'.

The 'disturbed' area status is given in serious situations to help the civilian administration. It provides legal immunity to troops operating in those designated areas.

The Act has often faced flak from human rights groups as it gave sweeping powers and immunity to the army in conflict-ridden areas.

Controversial Provisions Of AFSPA

Under section 4(a), Mere suspicion gives a non-commissioned officer (or an equivalent rank in the armed forces) the power to shoot to kill. He can destroy any property, under section 4(b), if it is suspected of being used as a fortified position. Under section 4(c), anyone can be arrested without a warrant if it is suspected that he/she has committed a cognizable offence. Under section 4(d), force can be used to enter and search any house on suspicion of it being used as a hideout.

The Security Forces Perception

The army's views, as one of the important stakeholders in the entire debate are based on its perception of the ground realities, particularly in the state of J&K. A number of arguments have been given for the retention of AFSPA.

First, India is fighting a proxy war in the state and, therefore, AFSPA enables the security forces to fight both external and externally-abetted forces that threaten not only the security of the state but also of the country.

Second, the army has its military establishments, intelligence set-up and even convoys that pass through areas where AFSPA is not operative. Therefore, the security of both men and material require the legal safeguards and operational powers of AFSPA.

Third, cases of hot pursuit could well take troops from areas where the law is in force to where it may have been revoked, thus leading to legal complications, as well as allowing terrorists to create safe havens for themselves.

Fourth, the army, in its security assessment, sees a rise in terrorist violence in the coming years, given the availability of trained and willing terrorist cadres in Pakistan, who are more over likely to increasingly turn their attention towards India after the de-induction of US-led forces in Afghanistan. Under these circumstances, the army feels that once AFSPA is revoked, political compulsions will not allow its re-introduction even if the situation in the state worsens.

Protests against AFSPA

It has been a controversial one, with human rights groups opposing it as being aggressive. Irom Chanu Sharmila, who went on a 16-year-long fast for the repeal of AFSPA from Manipur, also blamed politicians and elected head of governments for AFSPA still being in force in Manipur and Nagaland. "It's an inhuman law which was first passed in 1942 by the British colonisers to repress the Quit India Movement. Even after 60 years of the British sowing the seeds of this poison law, our democratic rulers are reaping it's poison fruit. They are destroying its own people mercilessly. AFSPA targets only the common people," Sharmila said. Sharmila started a hunger-strike against the law in 2000, after an incident known as the Malom Massacre where 10 people, including a 62-year-old woman, were shot and killed by the armed forces while waiting at a bus stop in a town named Malom.

Jeevan Reddy Commission Report

The Central government appointed a five-member committee under former Supreme Court judge Justice B P Jeevan Reddy to review if the Act needs to be toned down or repealed completely and replace it by a humane one. In its 147-report, the committee on 6 June 2005 recommended the repealing of the Act. However, the government did not agree with the recommendation.

Emergency without Declaration

The declaration that an area is disturbed essentially amounts to declaring a state of emergency but bypasses the constitutional safeguards. The point that it invokes a state of emergency was raised by Mr Mahanty (Dhenkanal) in the 1958 Lok Sabha debates. In response, Mr K C Pant, then Home Minister, attempted to argue that the powers granted under the AFSPA do not resemble a state of emergency. He said that in emergency fundamental rights can be abrogated and that the AFSPA does not abrogate those rights. But under Section 4(a) the right to life is clearly violated.

An officer shooting to kill, because he is of the opinion that it is necessary, does not conform, even prima facie, with the Article 21 Constitutional requirement that the right to life cannot be abridged except according to procedure established by law.

Dr Krishnaswanmi (Chingleput) also made the argument that the AFSPA was outside the powers granted in the Constitution, since it was declaring a state of emergency without following the constitutional provisions for such a declaration.

In a state of emergency, fundamental rights may be suspended under Article 359, since the 1978 amendment to this article, rights under Articles 20 and 21 may not be suspended. As shown above, the AFSPA results in the suspension of Article 21 right to life, therefore AFSPA is more draconian than emergency rule. Emergency rule can only be declared for a specified period of time and the President's proclamation of emergency must be reviewed by Parliament. The AFSPA is in place for an indefinite period of time and there is no legislative review.

The AFSPA grants state of emergency powers without declaring an emergency as prescribed in the

Constitution. The measures taken by the military outweigh the situation in the North East, notably the power to shoot to kill. The offences are not clearly defined, since all of the Section 4 offences are judged subjectively by the military personnel. And the AFSPA is a "special jurisdiction" provision.

Other Related Developments

Foreigners can travel to Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur unrestricted: Foreign tourists, except those from Pakistan, China and Afghanistan, would now be allowed to visit some of the most pristine locations of the country which, so far, were out of bounds for them without a special permit. The Home Ministry has decided to relax the six-decade-old Protected Area Permit regime from Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur for five years with effect from April 1, 2018.

Previous guidelines for foreign tourists: As per the guidelines, a foreign national is not normally allowed to visit a protected or restricted area unless the government is satisfied that there are extraordinary reasons to justify his or her visit.

Every foreigner, except a citizen of Bhutan, who desires to enter and stay in a protected or restricted area, is required to obtain a special permit from a competent authority having the power to issue such permits.

In cases, where the power to issue such permits has not been delegated to a subordinate authority by the Union government, the application for the special permit has to be referred to the Home Affairs Ministry for prior approval, at least eight weeks before the date of the expected visit.

States that are under Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order: Under the Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order, 1958, all areas falling between the Inner line and the International Border of some states were declared as protected areas. The protected areas

currently include whole of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim, besides parts of Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Jammu and Kashmir. Some parts of Sikkim fall under the protected area regime while others under the restricted area.

Way Forward

There has been substantial improvement in the security situation in Northeastern states in the past four years and the Centre has been considering withdrawal of central forces in the coming days. The MHA in March sanctioned 10 India Reserve Battalions, two each for Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura. "MHA will reimburse 75 per cent of standard cost of raising and half the cost of infrastructure development for these

new battalions," the MHA said in a statement. These battalions will be trained at par with Central Armed Police Forces and will help the states maintain law and order.

It must be noted that despite so much controversy and protests, the task of maintaining the integrity of the nation and securing the border is also one of the prime importance. AFSPA may not be adhering to the democratic value systems of modern-state concept, but it has rendered its role in keeping the so called "disturbed areas", very much united into the union, may be by force. India has porous borders and a complex security situation. Infiltration, secessionist movements, insurgency, asymmetric warfare by other means from Pakistan and China, refugee influx from Bangladesh etc are the major problems threatening the nation as a whole. Armed forces are

to deal with such a complex scenario. AFSPA is surely a necessary devil that has now surpassed its relevancy. The need of the hour is to make the laws which adhere to the democratic values of new India and also aid the armed forces to render their role with efficiency. The revocation of AFSPA from Meghalaya, some parts of Arunachal Pradesh and earlier form Tripura shows that the efforts are moving in the right direction and also the security situation as a whole is improving in the North Eastern corner of our motherland.

General Studies Paper- II

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



5. NEW ERA FOR SILK INDUSTRY

Why in News?

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved the Integrated Scheme for Development of Silk Industry. According to the CCEA, a total allocation of Rs 2,161.68 crore has been approved for the implementation of the scheme for three years from 2017-18 to 2019-20. The scheme is expected to increase the silk production from the level of 30,348 MTs during 2016-17 to 38,500 MTs by end of 2019-20.

History of Silk

According to Confucian text, the discovery of silk production dates to about 2700 BC, although archaeological records point to silk cultivation as early as the Yangshao period (5000–3000 BC). In 1977, a piece of ceramic created

5400–5500 years ago and designed to look like a silkworm was discovered in Nancun, Hebei, providing the earliest known evidence of sericulture. Also, by careful analysis of archaeological silk fibre found on Indus Civilization sites dating back to 2450–2000 BC, it is believed that silk was being used over a wide region of South Asia. By about the first half of the 1st century AD it had reached ancient Khotan, by a series of interactions along the Silk Road. By 140 AD the practice had been established in India. In the 6th century the smuggling of silkworm eggs into the Byzantine Empire led to its establishment in the Mediterranean, remaining a monopoly in the Byzantine Empire for centuries (Byzantine silk). In 1147, during the Second Crusade,

Roger II of Sicily (1095–1154) attacked Corinth and Thebes, two important centers of Byzantine silk production, capturing the weavers and their equipment and establishing his own silkworks in Palermo and Calabria, eventually spreading the industry to Western Europe.

Key Highlights of Scheme

- The core objective of the scheme is to improve the productivity and quality of silk through R&D intervention. The focus of R&D intervention is to promote improved crossbreed silk and the import substitute Bivoltine silk so that Bivoltine silk production in India enhances to such a level that raw silk imports become nil

What is Sericulture?

Sericulture, or silk farming, is the cultivation of silkworms to produce silk. Sericulture is an agro-based industry. It involves rearing of silkworms for the production of raw silk, which is the yarn obtained out of cocoons spun by certain species of insects. The major activities of sericulture comprises of food-plant cultivation to feed the silkworms which spin silk cocoons and reeling the cocoons for unwinding the silk filament for value added benefits such as processing and weaving. Although there are several commercial species of silkworms, *Bombyxmori* (the caterpillar of the domesticated silk moth) is the most widely used and intensively studied silkworm. Silk was believed to have first been produced in China as early as the Neolithic period. Sericulture has become an important cottage industry in countries such as Brazil, China, France, India, Italy, Japan, Korea, and Russia. Today, China and India are the two main producers, with more than 60% of the world's annual production.

by 2022 thereby making India self-sufficient in silk.

- R&D interventions will include race improvement through development of improved host plant varieties and improved disease resistant silkworm breeds by having collaborative research with reputed National Research organizations like IITs, CSIR, IISc and international research institutes on Sericulture in Japan, China, Bulgaria etc.; Technological advancements with respect to pre cocoon and post cocoon sectors. Thrust will be given on technology upgradation and making mechanization affordable.
- Use of silkworm by-products (pupa) for poultry feed, sericin for cosmetic applications and product diversification into non-woven fabrics, silk denim, silk knit etc. will be given thrust for added value realisation.
- Under Seed Sector, Seed Production Units will be equipped and strengthened to bring in

quality standards in production network, besides increasing the production capacity to cater to the increased silk production target. Support would be provided for adopted seed rearers to generate quality seed cocoons, private graineurs to produce quality seed and Chawki Rearing Centres (CRCs) with incubation facilities to produce and supply chawki worms. Other efforts will include setting up new Cold storage, providing mobile disinfection units and equipment support for mechanization.

- Registration process under Seed Act and reporting by seed production centres, basic seed farms and extension centres will be automated by developing web based software. All the beneficiaries under the scheme from silk farmers, seed producers and chawki rearers will be brought on a DBT mode with Aadhaar linkage. A Helpline will be set up for timely redressal of grievances and all outreach programmes.
- Brand promotion of Indian silk will be encouraged through quality certification by Silk Mark not only in the domestic market but in the export market as well. High quality standards in silkworm seed cocoon and raw silk will be promoted by setting up Cocoon Testing Centres & Silk Testing Centres. Efforts will be strengthened for collaborating with NIFT and NID for support on design and product development.

The Scheme has Four Components:

1. Research & Development (R&D), training, transfer of technology and IT initiatives.
2. Seed organizations and farmers extension centres.
3. Coordination and market development for seed, yarn and silk products.

4. Quality Certification System (QCS) by creating amongst others a chain of Silk Testing facilities, farm based & post-cocoon technology up-gradation and export brand promotion.

Salient Features of the Scheme

- The scheme will benefit 85 lakh people in the silk sector.
- It will provide livelihood opportunities for women, those belonging to SCs and STs and other weaker sections of the society across the country, including those from Left-Wing Extremism affected areas and North Eastern region.
- Silk farmers, seed producers and chawki rearers will be brought under Direct Benefit Transfer, with Aadhaar linkage.
- Support to be given to:
 - ♦ Private graineurs to produce quality seed.
 - ♦ Chawki Rearing Centres with incubation facilities, to produce and supply chawki worms.
 - ♦ Adopted seed-rearers to generate quality seed cocoons.
- 131 new Chawki Rearing Centres (CRCs) will be established for scientific handling of silkworm eggs and rearing of young age silkworm larvae under controlled conditions to enhance quality of cocoon and their harvest.
- 81 units will be installed to provide cocoon drying facility in a scientific manner for improved reeling.
- Automatic reeling machine for mulberry, improved reeling/spinning machineries and Buniyaad Reeling machines for Vanya silk under Make in India program will be disseminated to produce quality silk.

- For government-owned facilities, 100% cost will be borne by the government of India.
- For individual beneficiaries: SC/ST- 65% cost by Central Government, 25% by State Government and 10% by the beneficiary.
- Beneficiaries from NE states, J&K, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh - 80% cost to be borne by Central Government whereas individual and State Government will bear 10% each.
- General: 50% cost will be borne by the Central Government, 25% by the State Government.

Impacts of the Scheme

The scheme is expected to increase the silk production from the level of 30348 MTs during 2016-17 to 38500 MTs by end of 2019-20 with the following interventions:

- Production of import substitute Bivoltine silk to the tune of 8500 MTs per annum by 2020.
- Research & Development to improve productivity from the present level of 100 Kgs to 111 kgs of silk per ha. of plantation by the end of 2019-20.
- Large scale propagation of improved reeling machines.

The scheme will promote women empowerment and livelihood opportunities to SC/ST and other weaker sections of the society. The scheme will help to increase productive employment from 85 lakhs to 1 crore persons by 2020.

Improvement over the Earlier Schemes

The scheme has following improvement over the earlier scheme:

- (i) The scheme aims to achieve self-sufficiency in silk production by

2022. To achieve this, production of high grade silk in India will reach 20,650 MTs by 2022 from the current level of 11,326 MTs there by reducing imports to zero.

- (ii) For the first time, there is clear focus on improving production of highest grade quality of silk. It is proposed to increase 4A grade silk from the current level of 15% to 25 % of mulberry production by 2020.
- (iii) The implementation strategy is clearly based on convergence at the state level with the schemes of other Ministers like MGNREGS of Rural Development, RKVY & PMKSY of Ministry of Agriculture, for maximizing benefits to the sericulturists.
- (iv) The R&D projects pertaining to disease resistant silkworm, host plant improvements, productivity enhancing tools and implements for reeling and waving etc. will be done in cooperation with Ministries i.e. Science and Technology, Agriculture and Human Resource Development (HRD).

Way Forward

Modern India needs neo-solution to boost its economy and to take the national development to its next step. Textiles, particularly cotton has given India a major share in world's export revenue in medieval ages and has created Indian brand of textiles most notable in global export markets. Silk has been of the major trading commodities in the world trade with China keeping the secret of silk manufacturing a secret for many centuries. Silk routes have brought fortunes to many civilizations. Its time now for India to regain and re-impose its position as world textile leader on the global export charts. The recent move of the government

for the development of "Silk Industry", while integrating it with economic growth, employment generation and research and development makes it a sustainable effort.

The aim to achieve self-sufficiency in silk production and brand building is a major move to build a global brand. Also the task of backward linkage where farmers and local levels of production are integrated and forward linkage involving promotion of the product along with the support from R&D is a new era for the silk industry as a whole. The idea of self-reliance along with brand building is all about to create a brand focused market which can bring revenue to the nation as a whole and income to all the stakeholders associated with it.

This scheme will minimize the raw silk import and make India self-sufficient in the production of Silk by 2022. Central government will focus on technology up-gradation, improvement of host plant varieties and improved disease resistant silkworm breeds. Central Silk Board (CSB) will implement this scheme to improve the quality and indigenous production of silk through R&D intervention. This scheme will also provide a solution to one of the major lacunae in our planning: "jobless growth". As this scheme is related to development of a sector along with employment aspects and livelihood issues of the people associated with it, thus we see a holistic growth objective rather than just increase in revenue and concentration of income in the hands of a few.

General Studies Paper- II

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



6. RE-ENERGISING THE COMMONWEALTH

Why in News?

Recently, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) held in London came with hopes of a “re-energised Commonwealth”. To begin with, the summit was being held in the U.K., the founder of the grouping of mostly former British colonies, after 32 years. Besides, Queen Elizabeth II, the head of CHOGM, attended the summit, which she has done infrequently in the last few years owing to her health.

Introduction

The present CHOGM (Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting) is the first since 1997 in London. It does not take too much imagination to guess that this will be the last CHOGM under the Queen’s leadership. The Empire having been reduced to a skeleton, the question has to be asked what the best structure is for the Commonwealth.

Given the expectations, the outcome of the meet was underwhelming. It was announced Prince Charles would ‘succeed’ his mother as the head of the Commonwealth, ignoring calls for the position to be more democratically shared or rotated. There were substantive statements on the Blue Charter on Ocean Governance and on the Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda for Trade and Investment, which could together counter China’s Belt and Road Initiative.

But there was little by way of a road map to achieve the goals. Prime Minister Theresa May apologised for her Home Office’s threat to deport thousands of immigrants brought as manual labour in the 1940s on the ship Empire Windrush from the Caribbean, but failed to convince most members of the Commonwealth that Britain would reverse its policies on immigration. The U.K.’s hard line on Indian “illegals”,

which prevented the signing of a bilateral agreement on immigrant “returns” between Mr. Modi and Ms. May, too indicates that post-Brexit London is likely to welcome trade in goods from the Commonwealth, not services.

Historical Background

As the British Empire began its process of decolonization and the creation of independent states from former British colonies, there arose a need for an organization of countries formerly part of the Empire. In 1884, Lord Rosebery, a British politician, described the changing British Empire as a “Commonwealth of Nations.” Thus, in 1931, the British Commonwealth of Nations was founded under the Statute of Westminster with five initial members - the United Kingdom, Canada, the Irish Free State, Newfoundland and the Union of South Africa. (Ireland permanently left the Commonwealth in 1949, Newfoundland became part of Canada in 1949 and South Africa left in 1961 due to apartheid but rejoined in 1994 as the Republic of South Africa). In 1946, the word “British” was dropped and the organization became known as simply the Commonwealth of Nations.

Since then, independent countries from Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe and the Pacific have joined the Commonwealth. In 1965 the Commonwealth Secretariat was established in London to organize and coordinate Commonwealth activities.

The Commonwealth is one of the world’s oldest political associations of states. Its roots go back to the British Empire when some countries were ruled directly or indirectly by Britain. Some of these countries became self-governing while retaining Britain’s monarch as Head of State.

Fifty three countries are members of the Commonwealth. Membership today is based on free and equal voluntary co-operation. Although membership requires having been a former dependency of the United Kingdom or a dependency of a dependency, former Portuguese colony Mozambique became a member in 1995 under special circumstances due to Mozambique’s willingness to support the Commonwealth’s fight against apartheid in South Africa. And Rwanda joined the Commonwealth in 2009, becoming only the second country which was not formerly a British colony to be admitted to the group.

Commonwealth's Charter

The Charter brings together the values and aspirations which unite the Commonwealth - democracy, human rights and the rule of law - in a single, accessible document. It expresses the commitment of member states to the development of free and democratic societies and the promotion of peace and prosperity to improve the lives of all peoples of the Commonwealth. It also acknowledges the role of civil society in supporting the goals and values of the Commonwealth.

Commonwealth and Post-Brexit Britain

As the United Kingdom negotiates its exit from the European Union, London has pushed its vision for an outward-looking Global Britain. Central to the goal of revitalizing the United Kingdom on the world stage is the Commonwealth of Nations, a loose-knit organization of nations, spanning nearly every continent that evolved out of the British Empire.

Brexit supporters skeptical of deeper integration with the

European Union have long held up the Commonwealth as a more natural forum for the UK, based on historical ties, a shared attachment to the English language and similar legal traditions. As Brexit negotiations continue, some policymakers say that the UK's post-EU future should lie in deepening trade and immigration with the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth's higher growth rates in comparison with the EU offer greater economic opportunity. Commonwealth countries have grown at an average rate of 4.4 percent over the past four decades, compared with the EU's 2 percent, with some large Commonwealth economies such as India achieving annual growth of 7 percent. In this vision, Brexit would free the UK to forge trade deals with these fast-growing regions of the world. Supporters also argue that it would allow the UK to focus on boosting highly skilled immigration from Commonwealth countries and avoid unlimited immigration from Europe as EU rules require.

Other observers, however, are skeptical that the Commonwealth can match the benefits of EU membership. Nearly 42 percent of all UK exports go to the EU and no Commonwealth countries are among the UK's top ten largest trading partners. Trade experts point to economic research establishing that geographic proximity is among the most important factors in determining trade, meaning that EU countries are likely to remain the UK's most natural trade partner.

They also note that many Commonwealth countries have highly protected economies and that lowering their trade barriers could prove harder than Brexit supporters anticipate. The EU has so far failed to secure a free trade deal with India, for instance and analysts say there is little reason why the UK, on its own, would fare much better.

India and the Commonwealth

The Commonwealth stands out as a time-tested forum where India can build, renew and redefine links with the group's other fifty-two member states in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Pacific and the Caribbean. Despite its colonial roots, it is the oldest institution that provided India with a view of the world decades before it achieved independence. After independence, the Commonwealth has served India's interests in varied ways: maintaining cordial relations with the former colonial power and other countries belonging to the Western bloc; showing solidarity with newly joined African countries, as well as small island countries, by expanding trade ties and economic assistance; and showcasing its diplomatic and organizational capabilities by hosting a Commonwealth Summit as well as the Commonwealth Games. However, in recent years, India's political leaders have not attended its summits, either for want of time or out of deliberate avoidance. Mr. Modi was the first Indian Prime Minister to attend CHOGM in a decade, after Manmohan Singh skipped the summits in Australia (2011) and Sri Lanka (2013) over bilateral differences and Mr. Modi skipped the summit in Malta (2015) out of indifference.

India's contributions to the Commonwealth's objectives have been particularly notable in two areas: promoting trade and development cooperation among members (including support for small island, developing and least-developed countries) and collective measures by members against the removal of democratically elected governments by unlawful means.

India is set gradually to increase its involvement in the affairs of the Commonwealth. Britain has been urging India, which is by far the largest member country with 55%

of the Commonwealth's 2.3 billion population and 26% of its internal trade, to become more active, with a long-term possibility of playing a leading role. Indian proponents of the country taking a larger role see the Commonwealth as an international organisation where it can operate without interference from China, its potential long-term enemy that has managed to gain access to other forums such as a South Asian grouping known as SAARC.

They argue that it would help India strengthen its presence in areas where China is increasingly active, for example in Africa where India is building a development role and in the Indian Ocean and elsewhere such as the Pacific and Caribbean where it could strengthen its relationship with the Commonwealth small island states.

The long-held counter-view is that India, as one of the world's two largest emerging economies, should not get involved in a relic of its old colonial ruler and the British Empire. There is also doubt whether the short-staffed and under-funded external affairs ministry should be stretched further by taking on a Commonwealth role. Britain sees the Commonwealth as an opportunity to build new international relationships as Brexit takes it out of Europe, though it acknowledges that it cannot hold an overt post-imperial leadership role after its two-year term in charge ends in 2020.

Criticism of the Organisation

Some analysts have highlighted the Commonwealth's weak institutional structure, as it has few concrete mechanisms to influence its members' behavior and often relies on peer pressure and moral authority. Human rights watchdogs also charge that the group has a record of overlooking rights abuses, including anti-LGBT laws in Gambia and Malawi and widespread atrocities over the course of the civil war in Sri Lanka.

More broadly, skeptics say that the group has become increasingly outmoded as the UK's global leadership has waned. For the Economist's James Astill, the Commonwealth has "hardly any geopolitical relevance," since, he argues, in the area in which it has the most natural advantage—trade—it has done little. Its level of funding is also comparatively quite modest: in 2017, the budget for the Commonwealth's main technical assistance arm, in addition to its youth fund and the rest of the Secretariat's development funding, amounted to about \$40 million. The EU spends more than \$100 billion yearly on economic development and other assistance.

Way Forward

The Commonwealth remains a great platform for development aid, democratic values and educational opportunities, but its relevance is unlikely to increase unless it adopts a more egalitarian and inclusive attitude to its next generation of Commonwealth citizens, to partake in

prosperity their forefathers built.

India and other preeminent Commonwealth members can do to reinvigorate the organization. In fact, the post-Brexit environment presents an opportunity for Indian-UK cooperation to remap the Commonwealth for the two countries' mutual benefit. Britain seems to be looking to the Commonwealth as an alternative channel for safeguarding its economic and trade interests. According to reports, the UK is interested in building a stronger partnership with India, while India is interested in using the Commonwealth to boost trade.

India is an exemplar of the Commonwealth in terms of democratic stability, social diversity and economic and technological progress. As a country eager to showcase its new activism in global institutions, it makes sense for India to deepen its relations with existing ones like the Commonwealth. At a time when the regional initiatives to which it is a party—such as the South Asian

Association for Regional Cooperation, the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation and the Indian Ocean Rim Association—are not performing to their potential, India could weigh the option of forming a distinct subgroup of Asia Pacific countries; there are eighteen such countries in the Commonwealth. Further, India could become an economic bridge between the Asia Pacific subregional cooperation to enhance economic and trade relationships with the nineteen African members of the Commonwealth. In other words, the Commonwealth could be redesigned to work at the level of viable regions and with multispeed mechanisms.

General Studies Paper- II

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

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7. INDIA COUNTERS THE MENACE OF MAOIST IDEOLOGY

Why in News?

The Union Home Ministry has been implementing the 'National Policy and Action Plan' since 2015 to combat Left Wing Extremism (LWE). This envisages a multi-pronged strategy involving security and development related measures. Recently, a report has been released in mid-April 2018, in which according to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Maoist influence has been gradually shrinking. In figures released on 16th April 2018, the MHA, which recently redrew the red corridor, brought down the number of districts affected with Naxal violence from 106 to 90, spread across 11 states. The list also includes the 30 worst-affected

district — six down from the previous one.

Background

A number of Left Wing Extremist outfits have been operating in certain remote and poorly connected pockets of the country for a few decades now. In a significant development in 2004, the People's War (PW), then operating in Andhra Pradesh and the Maoist Communist Centre of India (MCCI) and then operating in Bihar and adjoining areas, merged to form the CPI (Maoist) Party. The CPI (Maoist) Party is the major Left Wing Extremist outfit responsible for majority of incidents of violence and killing of civilians and security forces and has been included in

the Schedule of Terrorist Organisations along with all its formations and front organisations under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. The CPI (Maoist) philosophy of armed insurgency to overthrow the government is unacceptable under the Indian Constitution and the founding principles of the Indian State. The government has given a call to the Left Wing Extremists to abjure violence and come for talks. This plea has been rejected by them, since they believe in violence as the means to capture State power. This has resulted in a spiraling cycle of violence in some parts of India. The poor and the marginalised sections like the tribals are bearing the brunt of this

violence. Many well-meaning liberal intellectuals fall prey to the Maoist propaganda without understanding the true nature of Maoist insurgency doctrine which glorifies violence and believes in adopting the military line to capture power. Between 2010 to 2017 (upto 15.05.2017, official data) around 2457 civilians and 930 security force personnel have been killed by the Maoists in different parts of India. The majority of the civilians killed are tribal's, often branded as 'Police informers' before being brutally tortured and killed. In fact, the tribal and the economically underprivileged sections, whose cause the Maoists claim to espouse, have been the biggest victims of the so called 'protracted peoples war' of the CPI (Maoist) against the Indian state.

What is Maoism?

Maoism is a form of communism developed by Mao Tse Tung. It is a doctrine to capture State power through a combination of armed insurgency, mass mobilization and strategic alliances. The Maoists also use propaganda and disinformation against State institutions as other components of their insurgency doctrine. Mao called this process, the 'Protracted Peoples War', where the emphasis is on 'military line' to capture power.

What is the central theme of Maoist ideology?

The central theme of Maoist ideology is the use of violence and armed insurrection as a means to capture State power. Bearing of arms is non-negotiable as per the Maoist insurgency doctrine. The Maoist ideology glorifies violence and the 'Peoples Liberation Guerrilla Army' (PLGA) cadres are trained specifically in the worst forms of violence to evoke terror among the population under their domination. However, they

also use the subterfuge of mobilizing people over issues of purported inadequacies of the existing system, so that they can be indoctrinated to take recourse to violence as the only means of redressal.

Who are the Indian Maoists?

The largest and the most violent Maoist formation in India is the Communist Party of India (Maoist). The CPI (Maoist) is an amalgamation of many splinter groups, which culminated in the merger of two largest Maoist groups in 2004; the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist), People War and the Maoist Communist Centre of India. The CPI (Maoist) and all its front organizations formations have been included in the list of banned terrorist organizations under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.

Why do the Naxalites/Maoists/Left Wing Extremists kill civilians?

The Maoists kill civilians for a variety of reasons. First of all, they kill those who do not subscribe to their ideology in areas under their domination they are usually branded as 'police informers'. They also kill people to create a power and governance vacuum in rural areas and the space is filled by them. They also kill the so called 'class enemies'. All these killings lead to a chain of circumstances wherein the kin of victims can potentially rebel against the Maoists. This leads to further chain of killings of such targets. Finally, it reaches a stage where the 'power to kill' in their areas of dominance becomes the sole reason for the lower and the less 'politically conscious' cadres to kill innocent people.

Why do Naxalites/ Maoists attack schools and other economic infrastructure?

The Maoists wish to keep the population in their strongholds cut-

off from the mainstream milieu. The schools are attacked because education promotes a spirit of enquiry among the local population and also equips children with skills for alternative sources of livelihood. These developments are looked upon by the Maoists as potential threats to their very existence and their outdated ideology. The Maoists also destroy infrastructure like roads and telecom network to keep populations isolated from mainstream India.

Important Initiatives for LWE Affected States

In order to holistically address the LWE problem in an effective manner, government has formulated National Policy and Action Plan adopting multi pronged strategy in the areas of security, development, ensuring rights & entitlement of local communities etc.

Security Related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme: This scheme has been approved by the government on 27.09.2017 as a sub scheme of the Umbrella Scheme Modernization of Police Forces for a period of 03 years till 2020. Under the Security Related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme, the central government reimburses to the state governments of 10 LWE affected states security related expenditure of 106 districts relating to ex-gratia payment to the family of civilians/ security forces killed in LWE violence, training and operational needs of security forces, compensation to Left Wing Extremist cadres who surrendered in accordance with the surrender and rehabilitation policy of the concerned state government, community policing, security related infrastructure for village defence committees and publicity materials. There is a substantial increase in annual outlay and new items such as compensation for in cap- citation of

security forces and property damage have been included for the first time in this scheme. The SRE Schemes aims at strengthen of the capacity of the LWE affected states to fight against the LWE problem in an effective manner.

Special Central Assistance (SCA) for 35 most LWE affected districts:

This scheme has been approved by the government on 27.09.2017 as a sub scheme of the Umbrella Scheme Modernization of Police Forces for a period of 03 years i.e. from 2017-18 to 2019-20. Main objective of the scheme is to fill the critical gaps in public infrastructure and services, which are of emergent nature.

Special Infrastructure Scheme (SIS) including construction of 250 Fortified Police Stations in LWE affected states:

This scheme has been approved by the government on 27.09.2017 as a sub scheme of the Umbrella Scheme Modernization of Police Forces for a period of 03 years i.e. from 2017-18 to 2019-20. The Scheme aims at capacity building of states by strengthening the security apparatus of the states. 250 Fortified Police Stations are also envisaged under the scheme.

Scheme of Fortified Police stations: The Ministry has sanctioned 400 police stations in 10 LWE affected States. A total of 386 of PSs have been completed, work at 14 PSs is under progress.

Assistance to Central Agencies for LWE management Scheme: This scheme has been approved by the government on 27.09.2017 as a sub scheme of the Umbrella Scheme Modernization of Police Forces for a period of 03 years i.e. from 2017-18 to 2019-20. Under the Scheme assistance is provided to central Agencies like CAPFs, Indian Air Force for anti LWE operations where the states have constraints.

Civic Action Programme (CAP): This scheme has been approved by

the government on 27.09.2017 as a sub scheme of the Umbrella Scheme Modernization of Police Forces for a period of 03 years i.e. from 2017-18 to 2019-20. CAP in LWE affected areas is being implemented since 2010-11 to bridge the gaps between security forces and local people through personal interaction and bring the human face of SFs before the local population. The scheme has been very successful in achieving its goal. Under the scheme, funds are released to the CAPFs, deployed in LWE affected areas, for conducting various civic activities in welfare of the local people.

Media Plan Scheme: This scheme has been approved by the government on 27.09.2017 as a sub scheme of the Umbrella Scheme Modernization of Police Forces for a period of 03 years i.e. from 2017-18 to 2019-20. The Maoists have been misguiding and luring the innocent tribals/local population in LWE affected areas by their so called poor-friendly revolution through petty incentives or by following their coercive strategy. Their false propaganda is targeted against the security forces and the democratic set up.

Road Requirement Plan-I (RRP-I):

This scheme is being implemented by Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, since 2009 for improving road connectivity in 34 LWE affected districts of 8 States i.e. Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh. The scheme envisages construction of 5,422 km road lengths and 08 Critical bridges in LWE affected States, of which 4,523 kms roads and 02 bridges have been completed by 31.12.2017.

Road Connectivity Project for LWE affected areas (RRP-II):

The government approved this scheme on 28.12.2016 for further improving road connectivity in 44 districts of 9 LWE

affected States. This scheme envisages 5412 km roads and 126 bridges at an estimated cost of Rs. 11,725 Crores. Ministry of Rural Development is the nodal Ministry for this project. The roads included under the scheme have been identified by the Ministry of Home Affairs in consultation with the state governments and the security agencies.

LWE Mobile Tower Project: To improve mobile connectivity in the LWE areas, the government on 20.08.2014 approved installation of mobile towers in LWE affected States, namely: Andhra Pradesh (227), Bihar (184), Chhattisgarh (497), Jharkhand (782), Madhya Pradesh (22), Maharashtra (60) and Odisha (253). The Department of Telecommunication, has been implementing this scheme. 2329 mobile towers have been installed and the project stands completed.

Recent Developments

National Policy and Action Plan

The significant features of the new policy were zero tolerance towards violence coupled with a big push to developmental activities so that benefits of development reached the poor and vulnerable in the affected areas.

MHA had categorized 106 districts in 10 states as Left Wing Extremism affected. These districts are covered under the Security Related Expenditure Scheme (SRE) of the MHA for the purpose of reimbursement of security related expenditure like transportation, communication, hiring of vehicles, stipend for surrendered Maoists, temporary infrastructure for forces etc to the states. Out of 106 districts, 35 districts which accounted for 80-90 % of country-wide LWE violence were categorized as 'Most Affected Districts'. This categorization provided the basis for focused deployment

of resources - both security and development related. Over the last few years, a number of districts have been carved into smaller districts. This has resulted in the geographical area of the 106 SRE districts to be spread over 126 districts and that of the 35 most affected districts to be expanded to 36 districts.

Over the last four years, there has been a substantial improvement in the LWE scenario. Incidents of violence have seen a 20% decline with a 34% reduction in related deaths in 2017 as compared to 2013. The geographical spread of LWE violence also shrunk from 76 districts in 2013 to just 58 districts in 2017. Besides, just 30 of these districts account for 90% of the LWE violence in the country. At the same time certain new districts have emerged as the focus of expansion by the Left Wing Extremists.

MHA recently undertook a comprehensive exercise in consultation with the states to review the affected districts in order to ensure that the deployment of resources is in sync with the changed ground reality. Accordingly, 44 districts have been excluded and 08 new districts have been added to the list of SRE districts.

In order to counter Maoist efforts to expand their influence in the tribal areas at the tri-junction of Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, three districts of Kerala have been included in the list of SRE Districts. Despite the fact that there is hardly any violence in the new districts, the move is pre-emptive.

As a result of the exercise, 90 districts in 11 states will now be covered by the scheme, down from 126. The list of 'Most Affected Districts' has been pruned to 30, down from 36. The revised categorization is a more realistic representation of the actual LWE scenario.

8 New districts have been included by the Mha.

- **Kerala:** Malappuram, Palakkad and Wayanad
- **Andhra Pradesh:** West Godavari
- **Chhattisgarh:** Kabirdham
- **Madhya Pradesh:** Mandla
- **Odisha:** Angul and Boudh

As many as 44 districts have been removed from the list. Among them the majority belongs to the following states:

- **Telangana:** 19 districts
- **Odisha:** 6 districts
- **Bihar:** 6 districts
- **West Bengal:** 4 districts
- **Chhattisgarh:** 3 districts
- **Jharkhand:** 2 districts
- **Maharashtra:** 1 district

The 30 most affected lwe districts now

- **Andhra Pradesh:** Vishakhapatnam
- **Bihar:** Aurangabad, Gaya, Jamui, Lakhisarai
- **Chhattisgarh:** Bastar, Bijapur, Dantewada, Kanker, Kondagaon, Narayanpur, Rajnandgaon, Sukma
- **Jharkhand:** Bokaro, Chatra, Garhwa, Giridih, Gumla, Hazaribagh, Khunti, Latehar, Lohardaga, Palamu, Ranchi, Simdega West, Singhbhum
- **Maharashtra:** Gadchiroli
- **Odisha:** Korapur, Malkangiri
- **Telangana:** Bhadrachalam, Kothagudem

Criteria for Removing the Districts and Including New Ones

The primary criterion was 'incidents of violence'. The 44 districts, which have been excluded, did not report any significant incidents of violence due to LWE in the last three years.

Similarly, three new districts in Kerala were added following reports of Naxal movement and their underground activities. Incidents of violence have seen a 20% decline with a 34% reduction in related deaths in 2017 as compared to 2013. The geographical spread of LWE violence also shrunk from 76 districts in 2013 to 58 districts in 2017. The new districts will receive the SRE fund from the Centre, which

will monitor development and security-related projects. Last year, the combined SRE expenditure in LWE-affected districts was Rs 445 crore.

Conclusion

It is the belief of the government of India that through a holistic approach focussing on development and security related interventions, the LWE problem can be successfully tackled. However, it is clear that the Maoists do not want root causes like underdevelopment to be addressed in a meaningful manner since they resort to targeting school buildings, roads, railways, bridges, health infrastructure, communication facilities etc in a major way. They wish to keep the population in their areas of influence marginalized to perpetuate their outdated ideology. Consequently, the process of development has been set back by decades in many parts of the country under LWE influence. This needs to be recognised by the civil society and the media to build pressure on the Maoists to eschew violence, join the mainstream and recognise the fact that the socio-economic and political dynamics and aspirations of 21st Century India are far removed from the Maoist world-view. Further, an ideology based on violence and annihilation is doomed to fail in a democracy which offers legitimate forums of grievance redressal.

General Studies Paper- II

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

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



SEVEN SUBJECTIVE QUESTIONS WITH MODEL ANSWERS

Stem Cell: Emerging Field of Biomedical Science

Q1. What are stem cells? Stem cell research is an emerging field of biomedical science. Discuss the guidelines and ethical principles associated with it.

Hints:

- Stem cells are the foundation of development in plants, animals and humans. In humans, there are many different types of stem cells that come from different places in the body or are formed at different times in our lives. These include embryonic stem cells that exist only at the earliest stages of development and various types of tissue-specific (or adult) stem cells that appear during fetal development and remain in our bodies throughout life. Stem cells are undifferentiated cells that are the body's building blocks and can generate healthy and functioning specialised cells to replace diseased or dysfunctional cells that cannot heal naturally.
- Fundamental research in the field of stem cells has taken a big leap globally in the past two decades. The excitement that this emerging area of biomedical research once generated is still alive today. Though, the expectation that it would be a panacea for all ills has not been met. Scientists across the world are working on improving existing technologies and at the same time developing novel ones for creating safer products for potential human use.
- Recently, the Union health ministry has proposed an amendment to the Drugs and Cosmetics Act that may finally bring stem cells and cell-based products under the ambit of the law and will regulate the import, manufacture, distribution and sale of stem cells and stem cell-based products is critical to prevent potential misuse.
- The 2017 guidelines, reiterate that any stem cell use in patients, other than that for hematopoietic stem cell reconstitution for approved indications, is investigational at present. Accordingly, any stem cell use in patients must only be done within the purview of an approved and monitored clinical trial with the intent to advance science and medicine and not offering it as therapy. In accordance with this stringent definition, every use of stem cells in patients outside an approved clinical trial is unethical and shall be considered as malpractice.
- The principles of bioethics and regulation must be followed accordingly before initiating clinical trials. Adequate safeguards must be in place so that recipients of these cells in clinical trials are fully protected. Societal concerns regarding compensation for research related injuries and unforeseen adverse effects are additional concerns that need to be adequately addressed.
- The ethical principles specify unique provisions for stem cells, because of their inherent property for unlimited proliferation, differentiation to cells of the germ layers, oncogenic potential, unrecognised toxicities and possible involvement in pre-implantation stages of human development. The guideline therefore focuses on:
 - ♦ Monitoring mechanism and regulatory pathway for basic, clinical research and product development based on categories of research and level of manipulation.
 - ♦ Procurement of gametes, embryos and somatic cells for derivation and propagation of any stem cell lines, their banking and distribution.
 - ♦ Other important areas like international collaboration, exchange of cell/lines and education for stakeholders and advertisement.
- In a country where stem cell therapy is already exploited, there has to be absolute clarity in defining it. Stem cells are currently being used for genetic disorders, dementia, autism, etc., without explaining to patients or relatives that autologous mononuclear cells transplant is not going to benefit them in any way. The health ministry has to define immune therapy, gene therapy and stem cells individually in the Drugs and Cosmetics Act; else the risk of exploiting the science will remain.

Women's Political Participation in India

Q2. India has done rather poorly when it comes to female representation in national politics. Discuss why we need more working women in politics.

Hints:

- Women reservation bill which is pending for 22 years is a topic of lip service for every political party but there is a lack of political will in action. Indian women have been fighting for last 22 years for passage of this Bill (this makes it the longest pending bill in the parliament).
- In order to achieve social progress, the empowerment of women in the political system is binding. As Dr B.R Ambedkar said, "political power is the key to all social progress," it obligates women participation not only at political leadership level but also at integration of women in all political spheres.
- Gender balance in political participation and decision-making is the internationally agreed target set in the Beijing Declaration. In fact, UN Women Report (2013) on Women's Leadership and Political Participation found that women demonstrate political leadership by working across party lines through parliamentary women's caucuses - even in the most politically combative environments.
- Women in India participate in voting, run for public offices and political parties at lower levels more than men. Political activism and voting are the strongest areas of women's political participation. To combat gender inequality in politics, the Indian government has instituted reservations for seats in local governments.
- For a country with a female population that is larger than that of the United States and a thriving democracy that prides itself on being robust and responsive, India has done rather poorly when it comes to female representation in national politics. The percentage of women in the Lok Sabha has gone up by only a small margin from 4.4% in 1951 to 11% in 2014 and at this pace, it will take another 180 years to reach the gender balance that the Bill seeks to create.
- There are 13.72 lakh elected women representatives (EWRs) in PRIs (Panchayati Raj Institutions) which constitute 44.2 per cent of total elected representatives (ERs) as on December, 2017. Women sarpanchs accounted for 43 per cent of total gram panchayats (GPs) across the country, exhibiting active leadership of women in local government.

- Stereotyping gender roles and biases are prevalent, albeit to varying degrees, in all the countries of the world and are reflected in social, economic and political life. Even after 70 years of independence, in India crime against women is rampant and gender equality lacks in every sphere of society. If collective conscience of India, ingrained in patriarchy, is to be blamed for social injustice faced by women Indian politics does not offer any different story. Political status of women in India has failed to change despite our tall claims of being a progressive democracy.
- Over the past few decades, women have made their mark as effective managers, bankers, professors, corporate leaders, lawyers, doctors and civil servants. These are women who know how to solve problems, get things done and manage multiple responsibilities. Electing able women professionals will help us simultaneously achieve better representation and expertise. Having more professional women in office is a matter of both representation and capability. It is an opportunity to shape the future in a meaningful and impactful way.
- The inclusion of the perspectives of women and their participation in politics are prerequisites for democratic development and contribute to good governance and political parties are the primary vehicles for political participation. It can be politically and financially advantageous for political parties to promote women's participation through reforms, political parties can alter public opinion, generate new support bases, attract new members, increase the flow of public funding to the party and improve their standing with other countries, among other political and practical benefits.

Ongoing Efforts Towards Air Pollution Control

Q3. What is air pollution? Discuss the effectiveness of government of India's new initiatives to measure air quality and reduce air pollution.

Hints:

- Air pollution is one such form that refers to the contamination of the air, irrespective of indoors or outside. A physical, biological or chemical alteration to the air in the atmosphere can be termed as pollution. It occurs when any harmful gases, dust, smoke enters into the atmosphere and makes it difficult for plants, animals and humans to survive as the air becomes dirty. Air pollution can further be classified into two sections- Visible air pollution and invisible air pollution.

- India is committed to clean environment and pollution free air and water. In fact, it is mandated in our constitution. India's commitments and obligations to conservation and protection of environment within the ambit of targeted goals on environmental sustainability under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is manifested in the fact that several administrative and regulatory measures including a separate statute on air and water pollution are under implementation since long.
- Air pollution emission issues are associated with many sectors which inter alia include power, transport, industry, residential, construction and agriculture. The impact of air pollution is not limited to health but it gets extended to agriculture and general well-being of human, floral and faunal population.
- In order to address the issue, government has undertaken many significant steps which inter-alia include notification of National Ambient Air Quality Standards and sector specific emission and effluent standards for industries; setting up of monitoring network for assessment of ambient air quality; introduction of cleaner gaseous fuels like CNG, LPG etc. and ethanol blending; launching of National Air Quality Index (AQI); adoption of BS-VI for vehicles from March 2018 in Delhi; banning of burning of biomass; promotion of public transport network; Pollution Under Control Certificate; notification of graded response action plan for Delhi and NCR identifying source wise actions for various levels of air pollution, etc.
- The National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) aspires to overcome the deficits of the ongoing government initiatives targeted towards air pollution control. It lays down a comprehensive strategy framework for enhanced management of air quality. Augmentation of existing air quality monitoring network by increasing number of existing manual and continuous monitoring stations, introducing rural monitoring stations, identifying alternative technology for real-time monitoring network.
- Air Quality Index is a tool for effective communication of air quality status to people in terms, which are easy to understand. There are six AQI categories, namely Good, Satisfactory, Moderately Polluted, Poor, Very Poor and Severe. Each of these categories is decided based on ambient concentration values of air pollutants and their likely health impacts (known as health breakpoints).
- A variety of measures has been undertaken or proposed and instituted to curb the effects of air pollution.

Solving the air pollution problem requires joint effort and takes different ways from one region to another. For example, it primarily requires behavior change and institutionalization of measures that can considerably ameliorate the situation in the short-term and the long-term. Ordinarily, the solutions to air pollution have focused on establishing a mix of technological solutions, regulations and policies and encouraging behavioral change.

Sunrise of Democracy in North-East

Q4. AFSPA has been earlier withdrawn from Tripura and now from Meghalaya and parts of Arunachal Pradesh. Discuss how the revocation of AFSPA shows that the efforts are moving in the right direction.

Hints:

- The Union Home Ministry has removed the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) from Meghalaya from April 1, 2018 and reduced the number of police stations to eight (from sixteen) under the Act in Arunachal Pradesh. The Act has however been extended by another six months in three eastern districts of Arunachal Pradesh -- Tirap, Longding and Changlang -- which border Myanmar and specific areas under eight police stations of seven other districts bordering Assam. In 2015, AFSPA was lifted in Tripura. States such as Mizoram, Nagaland, Manipur, Assam, Jammu & Kashmir and parts of Arunachal Pradesh are currently under AFSPA.
- According to defence experts, Meghalaya, Tripura and parts of Arunachal Pradesh have been declared free of insurgency. The Act had been imposed in keeping with the geographical terrain of these regions and to keep at bay any influx by Bodos, Nagas or other tribes from neighbouring states. Now, say experts, state police forces can handle disturbances.
- It has been a controversial one, with human rights groups opposing it as being aggressive. Irom Chanu Sharmila, who went on a 16-year-long fast for the repeal of AFSPA from Manipur, also blamed politicians and elected head of governments for AFSPA still being in force in Manipur and Nagaland.
- Jeevan Reddy Commission Report on 6 June 2005 recommended the repealing of the Act. However, the government did not agree with the recommendation.
- In a state of emergency, fundamental rights may be suspended under Article 359, since the 1978 amendment to this article, rights under Articles 20 and 21 may not

be suspended. As shown above, the AFSPA results in the suspension of Article 21 right to life, therefore AFSPA is more draconian than emergency rule.

- There has been substantial improvement in the security situation in Northeastern states in the past four years and the Centre has been considering withdrawal of central forces in the coming days. The need of the hour is to make the laws which adhere to the democratic values of new India and also aid the armed forces to render their role with efficiency. The revocation of AFSPA from Meghalaya, some parts of Arunachal Pradesh and earlier from Tripura shows that the efforts are moving in the right direction and also the security situation as a whole is improving in the North Eastern corner of our motherland.

New Era for Silk Industry

Q5. Highlight the major features of Integrated Scheme for the Development of Silk Industry. And discuss what objectives do it serves.

Hints:

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved the Integrated Scheme for Development of Silk Industry. The scheme is expected to increase the silk production from the level of 30,348 MTs during 2016-17 to 38,500 MTs by end of 2019-20.
- The core objective of the scheme is to improve the productivity and quality of silk through R&D intervention. The focus of R&D intervention is to promote improved crossbreed silk so that Bivoltine silk production in India enhances to such a level that raw silk imports become nil by 2022 thereby making India self-sufficient in silk. Besides, the approved proposal includes provision for brand promotion of Indian silk through quality certification by Silk Mark.
- Brand promotion of Indian silk will be encouraged through quality certification by Silk Mark not only in the domestic market but in the export market as well. High quality standards in silkworm seed cocoon and raw silk will be promoted by setting up Cocoon Testing Centres & Silk Testing Centres. Efforts will be strengthened for collaborating with NIFT and NID for support on design and product development.
- The scheme has four components:
 - ♦ Research & Development (R&D), training, transfer of technology and IT initiatives.

- ♦ Seed organizations and farmers extension centres.
- ♦ Coordination and market development for seed, yarn and silk products.
- ♦ Quality Certification System (QCS) by creating amongst others a chain of Silk Testing facilities, farm based & post-cocoon technology up-gradation and export brand promotion.
- It will provide livelihood opportunities for women, those belonging to SCs and STs and other weaker sections of the society across the country, including those from Left-Wing Extremism affected areas and North Eastern region.
- For the first time, there is clear focus on improving production of highest grade quality of silk. It is proposed to increase 4A grade silk from the current level of 15% to 25 % of mulberry production by 2020.
- The aim to achieve self-sufficiency in silk production and brand building is a major move to build a global brand. Also the task of backward linkage where farmers and local levels of production are integrated and forward linkage involving promotion of the product along with the support from R&D is a new era for the silk industry as a whole. The idea of self-reliance along with brand building is all about to create a brand focused market which can bring revenue to the nation as a whole and income to all the stakeholders associated with it.
- This scheme will minimize the raw silk import and make India self-sufficient in the production of Silk by 2022. Central government will focus on technology up-gradation, improvement of host plant varieties and improved disease resistant silkworm breeds. Central Silk Board (CSB) will implement this scheme to improve the quality and indigenous production of silk through R&D intervention.

Re-energising the Commonwealth

Q6. Britain sees the Commonwealth as an opportunity to build new international relationships as Brexit takes it out of Europe. Discuss the role India can play for increasing the relevance of the organisation.

Hints:

- Recently, the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) held in London came with hopes of a “re-energised Commonwealth”.
- The present CHOGM (Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting) is the first since 1997 in London.

Given the expectations, the outcome of the meet was underwhelming. It was announced Prince Charles would 'succeed' his mother as the head of the Commonwealth, ignoring calls for the position to be more democratically shared or rotated.

- The U.K.'s hard line on Indian "illegals", which prevented the signing of a bilateral agreement on immigrant "returns" between Mr. Modi and Ms. May, too indicates that post-Brexit London is likely to welcome trade in goods from the Commonwealth, not services.
- As the United Kingdom negotiates its exit from the European Union, London has pushed its vision for an outward-looking Global Britain. Central to the goal of revitalizing the United Kingdom on the world stage is the Commonwealth of Nations, a loose-knit organization of nations, spanning nearly every continent that evolved out of the British Empire.
- The Commonwealth stands out as a time-tested forum where India can build, renew and redefine links with the group's other fifty-two member states in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Pacific and the Caribbean. Despite its colonial roots, it is the oldest institution that provided India with a view of the world decades before it achieved independence.
- India's contributions to the Commonwealth's objectives have been particularly notable in two areas: promoting trade and development cooperation among members (including support for small island, developing and least-developed countries) and collective measures by members against the removal of democratically elected governments by unlawful means.
- India is set gradually to increase its involvement in the affairs of the Commonwealth. Britain has been urging India, which is by far the largest member country with 55% of the Commonwealth's 2.3 billion population and 26% of its internal trade, to become more active, with a long-term possibility of playing a leading role.
- India can do to reinvigorate the organization. In fact, the post-Brexit environment presents an opportunity for Indian-UK cooperation to remap the Commonwealth for the two countries' mutual benefit. Britain seems to be looking to the Commonwealth as an alternative channel for safeguarding its economic and trade interests. According to reports, the UK is interested in building a stronger partnership with India, while India is interested in using the Commonwealth to boost trade.

India Counters the Menace of Maoist Ideology

Q7. With the recent claims by the government of decline in Maoist activities, highlights the major steps taken by the government to tackle the Naxal issue.

Hints:

- Recently, a report has been released in mid-April 2018, in which according to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Maoist influence has been gradually shrinking. In figures released on 16th April 2018, the MHA, which recently redrew the red corridor, brought down the number of districts affected with Naxal violence from 106 to 90, spread across 11 states. The list also includes the 30 worst-affected district — six down from the previous one.
- The government's approach is to deal with Left Wing Extremism in a holistic manner, in the areas of security, development, ensuring rights and entitlements of local communities, improvement in governance and public perception management.
- In dealing with this decades-old problem, it has been felt appropriate, after various high-level deliberations and interactions with the state governments concerned, that an integrated approach aimed at the relatively more affected areas would deliver results.
- However, 'Police' and 'Public Order' being state subjects, action on maintenance of law and order lies primarily in the domain of the state governments. The central government closely monitors the situation and supplements and coordinates their efforts in several ways.
- These include providing Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) and Commando Battalions for Resolute Action (CoBRA); sanction of India Reserve (IR) battalions, setting up of Counter Insurgency and Anti-Terrorism (CIAT) schools; modernisation and upgradation of the state police and their Intelligence apparatus under the Scheme for Modernization of State Police Forces (MPF scheme); providing helicopters for anti-naxal operations, assistance in training of state police through the Ministry of Defence, sharing of Intelligence; facilitating inter-State coordination; assistance in community policing and civic action programmes etc. The underlying philosophy is to enhance the capacity of the state governments to tackle the maoist menace in a concerted manner.

- In order to holistically address the LWE problem in an effective manner, the Union Home Ministry has been implementing the 'National Policy and Action Plan' since 2015 to combat Left Wing Extremism (LWE). This envisages a multi-pronged strategy involving security and development related measures.
- It is the belief of the government of India that through a holistic approach focussing on development and security related interventions, the LWE problem can be successfully tackled. However, it is clear that the maoists do not want root causes like underdevelopment to be addressed in a meaningful manner since they resort to targeting school buildings, roads, railways, bridges, health infrastructure, communication facilities etc. in a major way.
- This needs to be recognised by the civil society and the media to build pressure on the maoists to eschew violence, join the mainstream and recognise the fact that the socio-economic and political dynamics and aspirations of 21st Century India are far removed from the Maoist world-view.



SEVEN IMPORTANT NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWS

NATIONAL

1. Krishna Circuit

The PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) and the Indian Yoga Association (IYA) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to facilitate interaction and cooperation between the two organisations to promote wellness, spiritual and cultural tourism in the Krishna Circuit. The two organisations have joined hands to provide a holistic tourism experience to domestic and international travellers looking for

some spiritually invigorating and cultural experiences.

- Krishna Circuit is among the thirteen thematic circuits identified for development under Swadesh Darshan Scheme. Twelve destinations have been identified for development under Krishna circuit namely Dwarka (Gujarat), Nathdwara, Jaipur & Sikar (Rajasthan), Kurukshetra (Haryana), Mathura, Vrindavan, Nandgaon, Gokul, Barsana, &

Govardhan (Uttar Pradesh) and Puri (Odisha).

- Under the Swadesh Darshan scheme, thirteen thematic circuits have been identified, for development namely: North-East India Circuit, Buddhist Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Krishna Circuit, Desert Circuit, Tribal Circuit, Eco Circuit, Wildlife Circuit, Rural Circuit, Spiritual Circuit, Ramayana Circuit and Heritage Circuit.

2. First License for Liquid Chlorine on All India Basis

Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) granted first licence to M/s Gujarat Alkalies and Chemicals Ltd for Liquid Chlorine on All India basis. The licence has been made operative with effect from 12th April, 2018 for a period of one year.

About Liquid Chlorine

The product is in liquid form and stored in metal containers. It is usually used as a gas obtained by evaporating the liquid from the metal container. It

is used mainly in paper, pulp, textile bleaching, water sterilization and manufacture of chemicals.

About BIS

BIS is the National Standard Body of India established under the BIS Act, 1986 for the harmonious development of the activities of standardization, marking and quality certification of goods and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. The organisation was formerly the Indian

Standards Institution (ISI), set up under a Resolution. It works under the aegis of Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution. The Minister in charge of the Ministry or Department having administrative control of the BIS is the ex-officio President of the BIS. As a corporate body, it has 25 members drawn from central or state governments, industry, scientific and research institutions and consumer organisations.

3. GI Tag for Adilabad Dokra and Warangal Durries

Adilabad Dokra, an ancient bell metal craft popular in the tribal regions of Adilabad in Telangana and Warangal durries, which have brought much acclaim to the weaver's community of Warangal region, have been issued Geographical Indication (GI) Registration Certificate by the GI Registry, Chennai.

- The Dhokra craftsmen belong to the Woj community, called Wojaris and also called Otaris, in Telangana State. The uniqueness of Adilabad

Dokra is that no two pieces are alike in shape as well as in size and hence replicas of the antiques are nearly impossible. They use brass as their main material and an ancient casting technique called 'cireperdue'. As part of this technique, the craftsmen use clay and design a model of the sculpture that they want to create. They wrap the clay with wax threads before baking the mould, so that the wax melts away and

the molten metal is poured into the mould.

- Another product to get registered as GI is from Warangal; which has long been an important durrie-weaving centre with a strong local flavour. The Warangal durrie weavers made their mark felt across the world owing to their fine craftsmanship. The main geographical factor that made Warangal famous as Durrie weaving centre is availability of cotton. ■

4. Agreement on National Biopharma Mission

The Union Government has entered into agreement with World Bank for flexible financing arrangement to accelerate research towards early development for biopharmaceuticals under National Biopharma Mission. The agreement was signed between the project implementing agency – BIRAC a PSU of Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (on behalf of World Bank). It is envisaged that this programme will revolutionize

the Biotech market. It will help to deliver 6-10 new products in the next five years, create several dedicated facilities for next-generation skills and hundreds of jobs in the process. It is anticipated that in the long term it would benefit the Indian population at large due to availability of affordable solutions and products relevant to Indian health needs.

About National Biopharma Mission

The National Biopharma Mission has

been launched by the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology on 30th June 2017. It is an Industry-Academia mission to accelerate biopharmaceutical development in India. This mission for accelerating discovery research to early development for Biopharmaceuticals – Innovate in India (i3) Empowering biotech entrepreneurs & accelerating inclusive innovation. ■

5. Unnat Bharat Abhiyan 2.0

Human Resource Development Ministry launched the second edition of the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan under which students from 750 higher educational institutions from across the country will adopt villages and visit them to get acquainted with lifestyle of people there and the problems faced by them.

- The students are advised to involve local village people at every stage of problem identification and solving issues relating to health, cleanliness, waste management, plantation, financial inclusion, women and child development.
- Also, scope for providing Subject

Expert Groups and Regional Coordinating Institutes to handhold and guide the participating institutions has been strengthened.

- IIT Delhi has been designated to function as the National Coordinating Institute for this programme and the Ministry intends to extend the coverage to all the reputed Higher Educational Institutes, in a phased manner. Each selected institute would adopt a cluster of villages / panchayats and gradually expand the outreach over a period of time.

- Institutes through their faculty and students, will carry out studies of living conditions in the adopted villages, assess the local problems and needs, workout the possibilities of leveraging the technological interventions and the need to improve the processes in implementation of various government schemes, prepare workable action plans for the selected villages. Such knowledge inputs would make their way into the development programmes in rural areas. ■

6. Restructured National Bamboo Mission

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved Centrally Sponsored Scheme of National Bamboo Mission (NBM) under National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) during remaining period of Fourteenth Finance Commission (2018-19 & 2019-20). The Mission would ensure holistic development of the bamboo sector by addressing complete value chain and establishing effective linkage of producers (farmers) with industry.

The restructured NBM strives to-

- (i) To increase the area under bamboo plantation in non-forest government and private lands to supplement farm income and contribute towards resilience to climate change.
- (ii) To improve post-harvest management through establishment of innovative primary processing units, treatment and seasoning plants, primary treatment and seasoning plants, preservation

technologies and market infrastructure.

- (iii) To promote product development at micro, small and medium levels and feed bigger industry.
- (iv) To rejuvenate the under developed bamboo industry in India.
- (v) To promote skill development, capacity building, awareness generation for development of bamboo sector.



Beneficiaries

The scheme will benefit directly and indirectly the farmers as well as local artisans and associated personnels engaged in bamboo sector including associated industries. Since it is proposed to bring about one lakh ha area under plantation, it is expected that about one lakh farmers would be directly benefitted in terms of plantation.

States Covered

The mission will focus on development of bamboo in limited states where it has social, commercial and economical advantage, particularly in the North Eastern region and states including Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Karnataka, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

The Mission is expected to establish about 4000 treatment/product development units and bring more than 100000 ha area under plantation. ■

7. Innovate in India for Inclusiveness Project

India has signed a loan agreement with World Bank for US\$ 125 million for "Innovate in India for Inclusiveness Project".

About the Project

The objectives of the project is to nurture indigenous innovation, foster local product development and accelerate commercialization process by bridging critical skill and infrastructure gaps to

promote affordable and innovative healthcare products generation for inclusive development and increasing competitiveness in India. The project would support consortia of public, private and the academic institutions to overcome the key market failures currently holding back the development of an innovative biopharmaceutical and medical devices industry in India.

The project consists of the following parts:

- (i) Strengthening of pilot-to market innovation ecosystem.
- (ii) Acceleration of the pilot -to-market process for specific products.
- (iii) Project management and monitoring & evaluation. ■

INTERNATIONAL

1. Sentinel Earth Observation Spacecraft

The European Union has launched its latest Sentinel Earth observation spacecraft. Sentinel-3b is a multipurpose satellite, but will concentrate much of its work over the oceans, monitoring their behaviour and health. It will join an identical platform, Sentinel-3a, which was sent into orbit two years ago.

This is now the seventh satellite the EU has lofted in its ambitious Copernicus programme, which seeks to put the biggest volume of Earth observation data ever acquired into the hands of policymakers, scientists, businesses and the general public. Everything the Sentinels observe is

open information that anyone in the world can access with a computer and an internet connection.

About Copernicus Programme

Copernicus is the most ambitious Earth observation programme to date. It will provide accurate, timely and easily accessible information to improve the management of the environment, understand and mitigate the effects of climate change and ensure civil security. Copernicus is the new name for the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security programme, previously known as GMES. This initiative is



headed by the European Commission (EC) in partnership with the European Space Agency (ESA). Services provided by Copernicus are land management, the marine environment, atmosphere, emergency response, security and climate change. ■

2. Restoration of Great Barrier Reef

Australia pledged Aus \$500 million (\$379 million) in new funding to restore and protect the Great Barrier Reef. The World Heritage-listed site, which attracts millions of tourists, is reeling from significant bouts of coral bleaching due to warming sea temperatures linked to climate change. It is a critical national asset, contributing Aus \$6.4 billion a year to the Australian economy.

It is under threat from the coral-eating crown-of-thorns starfish, which has proliferated due to pollution and agricultural run-off. The predator starfish feeds on corals by spreading its stomach over them and using digestive enzymes to liquefy tissue. With its heavy use of coal-fired power and relatively small population, Australia is considered one of the world's worst per-capita greenhouse gas polluters.

About

The Great Barrier Reef is the world's largest coral reef system. It is located in the Coral Sea, off the coast of Queensland, Australia. It is the world's biggest single structure made by living organisms. This reef structure is composed of and built by billions of tiny organisms, known as coral polyps. It was selected as a World Heritage Site in 1981. ■

3. Asia Pacific Regional Workshop of the UNCCD

The four-day Asia Pacific Regional Workshop of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), jointly hosted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and UNCCD Secretariat, to build the capacity of the Asia-Pacific Region to monitor and report on land degradation was held in New Delhi.

As per the study of Economics of Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought (EDLDD), it cost India about 2.54 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2014-15. Globally, drylands lose 23 hectares per minute to drought and desertification which translated into a loss of 20 million tonnes of potential foodgrain production in a year.

The new UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework is the most comprehensive global commitment to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) in order to restore the productivity of vast expanses of degraded land, improve the livelihoods of more than 1.3 billion people and reduce the impacts of drought on vulnerable populations to build.

By sustainably managing land and striving to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality, now and in the future, not only will the impact of climate change be reduced, but a conflict over natural resources will be avoided.

- Desertification is the process of

fertile land becoming desert, typically as a result of drought, deforestation, or inappropriate agriculture.

- Land Degradation Neutrality is a state whereby the amount and quality of land resources,

necessary to support ecosystem functions and services and enhance food security, remains stable or increases within specified temporal and spatial scales and ecosystems.

4. Surviving Companion to Supernova

NASA's Hubble Space Telescope has captured the first image of a surviving companion to a Supernova, the most compelling evidence that some supernovas originate in double-star systems.

Seventeen years ago, astronomers had witnessed a supernova go off 40 million light-years away in the galaxy called NGC 7424, located in the southern constellation Grus, the Crane, the NASA statement said. The image of the companion star was seen in the fading afterglow of that

supernova, called SN 2001ig. SN 2001ig is categorised as a Type IIb stripped-envelope supernova. This type of supernova is unusual because most, but not all, of the hydrogen is gone prior to the explosion.

A supernova is an astronomical event that occurs during the last evolutionary stages of a massive star's life.

About Hubble Space Telescope

The Hubble Space Telescope is a large telescope in space. NASA launched

Hubble in 1990. It was built by the United States space agency NASA, with contributions from the European Space Agency. Hubble travels around Earth at about 5 miles per second. Expanding the frontiers of the visible Universe, the Hubble Space Telescope looks deep into space with cameras that can see across the entire optical spectrum from infrared to ultraviolet.

5. World Immunization Week

World Immunization Week was celebrated from 24th- 30th of April by the World Health Organization (WHO) in order to increase awareness about the importance of immunization. Immunization prevents illness, disability and death from diseases which can be prevented from vaccines. These diseases include diphtheria, hepatitis B, cervical cancer, mumps, measles, pertussis, pneumonia, diarrhea, rubella, tetanus and polio amongst others. Immunization is considered to be one of the most cost-effective

and successful plans in the health industry. Theme of the latest edition was "Protected together, #VaccinesWork".

Background

Immunization saves millions of lives and is widely recognized as one of the world's most successful and cost-effective health interventions. Yet, there are more than 19 million unvaccinated or under-vaccinated children in the world, putting them at serious risk of these potentially fatal diseases.

Global Vaccine Action Plan (GVAP)

It endorsed by 194 member states of the World Health Assembly in May 2012. It aims to prevent millions of deaths from vaccine-preventable diseases by 2020 through universal access to immunization. Despite improvements in individual countries and a strong global rate of new vaccine introduction, all of the GVAP targets for disease elimination—including measles, rubella and maternal and neonatal tetanus are behind schedule.

6. Infinitely Recyclable Plastic Invented

A new type of plastic has been invented by a team of chemists at Colorado State University, which they say can theoretically be recycled “infinitely”. While plastics are incredibly useful,



their impact on the environment has become increasingly clear in recent years and current plastic recycling is thought to be inadequate.

Newly invented material has many of the same characteristics of everyday plastics, including strength, durability and heat resistance. However, unlike conventional plastics it can be converted back to the molecules that form its building blocks with ease. This process of “chemical recycling” can be undertaken without toxic chemicals or intensive lab procedures and the

scientists think it has potential to be rolled out industrially.

The research paves the way for a future in which new, green plastics, rather than surviving in landfills and oceans for millions of years, can be simply placed in a reactor and, in chemical parlance, de-polymerised to recover their value - not possible for today's petroleum plastics. This would prevent plastic from entering the environment and reduce the demand for new plastics.

7. IMF's New Corruption Policy for Member States

The International Monetary Fund launched new guidelines for systematically address corruption and its impact on economic growth with all its member countries. The new policy also tackles how rich countries contribute to corruption in the developing world by failing to prevent bribery and money laundering or by allowing anonymous corporate ownership. However, the IMF will not investigate specific instances of corruption. Rather it will focus on the strength of key economic institutions: fiscal and central bank governance, market regulation, the rule of law and policies on money laundering and countering terrorism financing.

Corruption and poor governance sap economic growth and exacerbate inequality, according to the IMF and the new policy framework ensures the institutions will hold all members to the same standards -- something it had not always done.

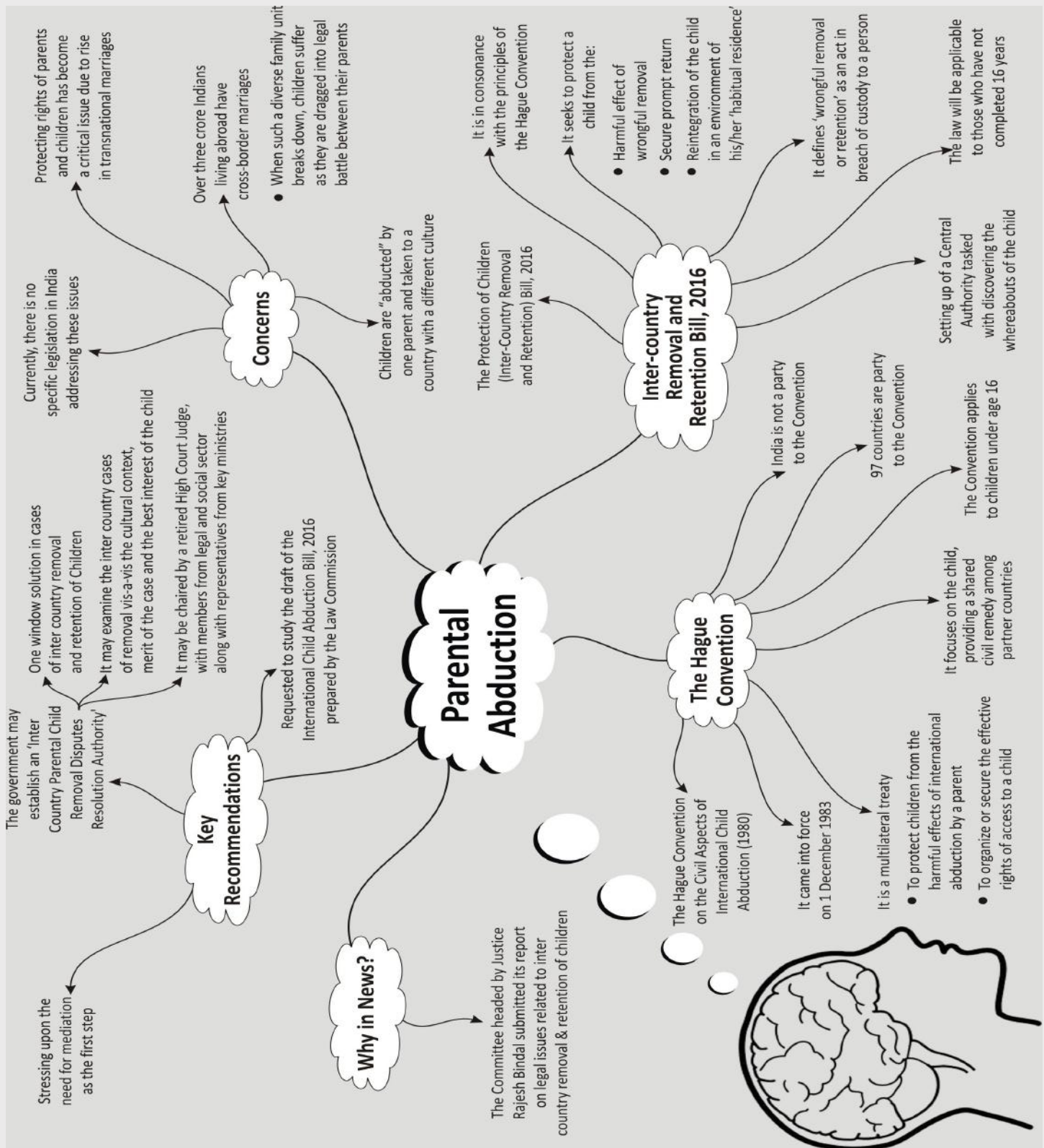
About IMF

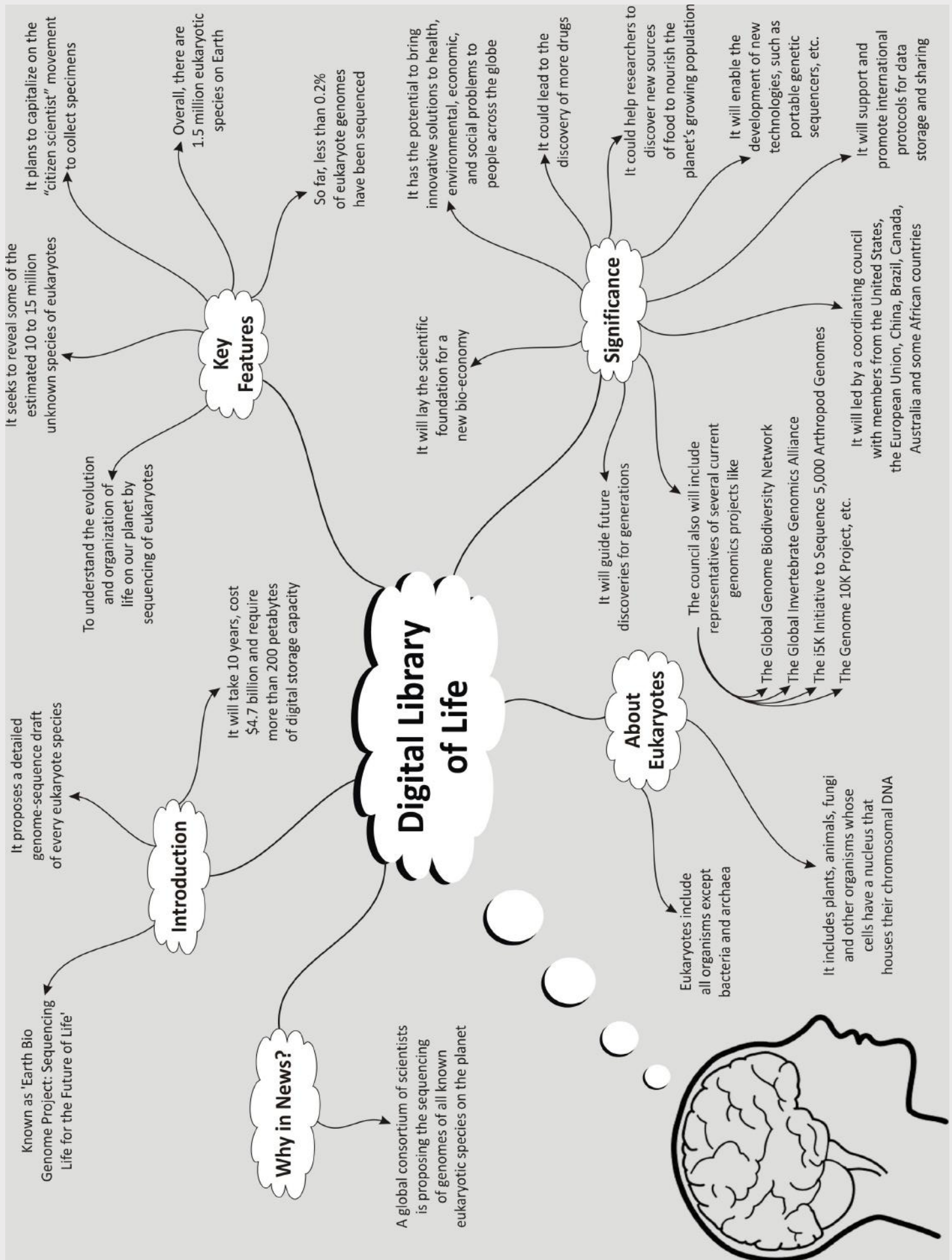
The International Monetary Fund (IMF) was created in 1945 at the Bretton Woods Conference. It is an organization of 189 countries, working to foster global monetary cooperation,

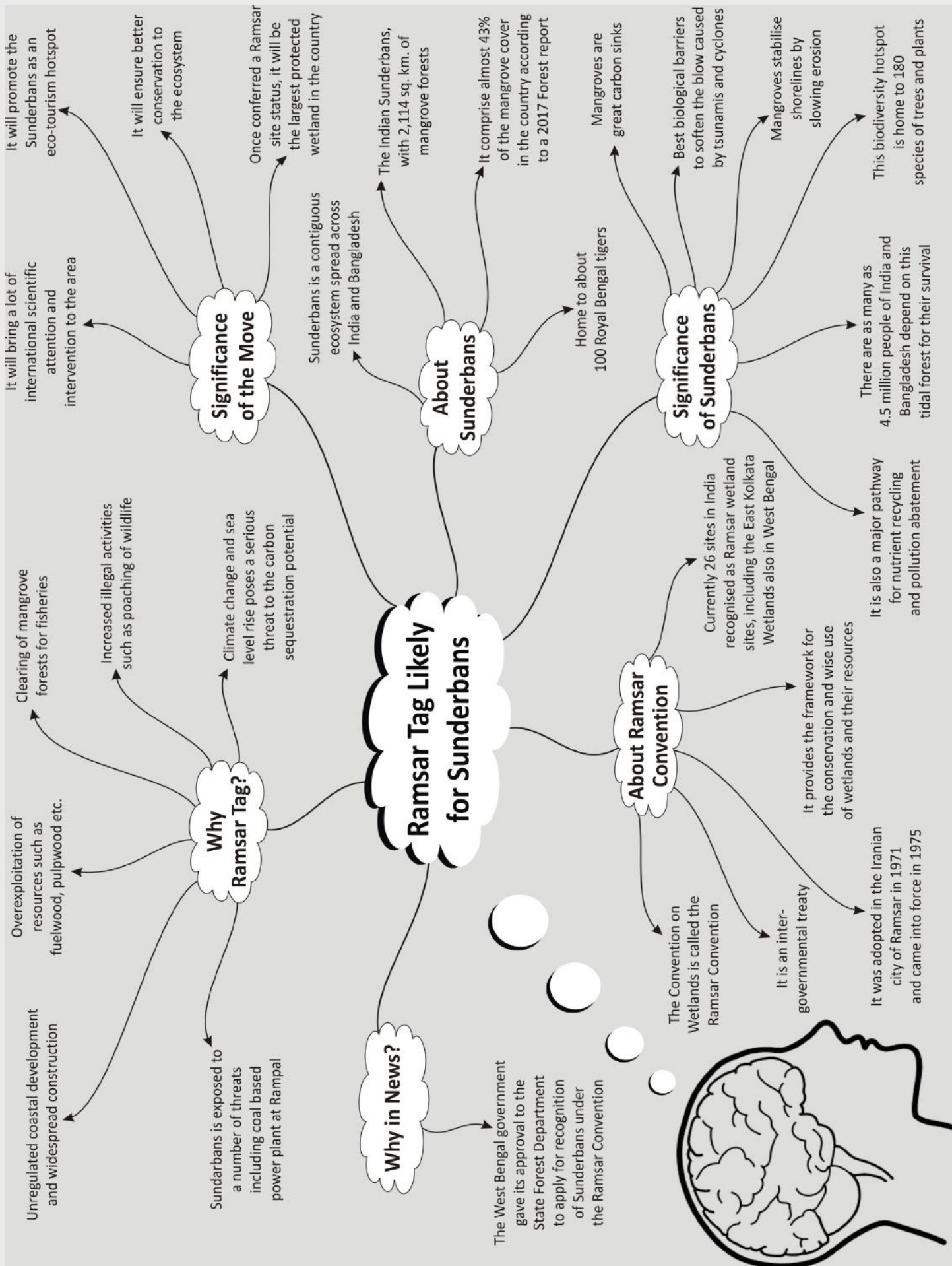
secure financial stability, facilitate international trade, promote high employment and sustainable economic growth and reduce poverty around the world.

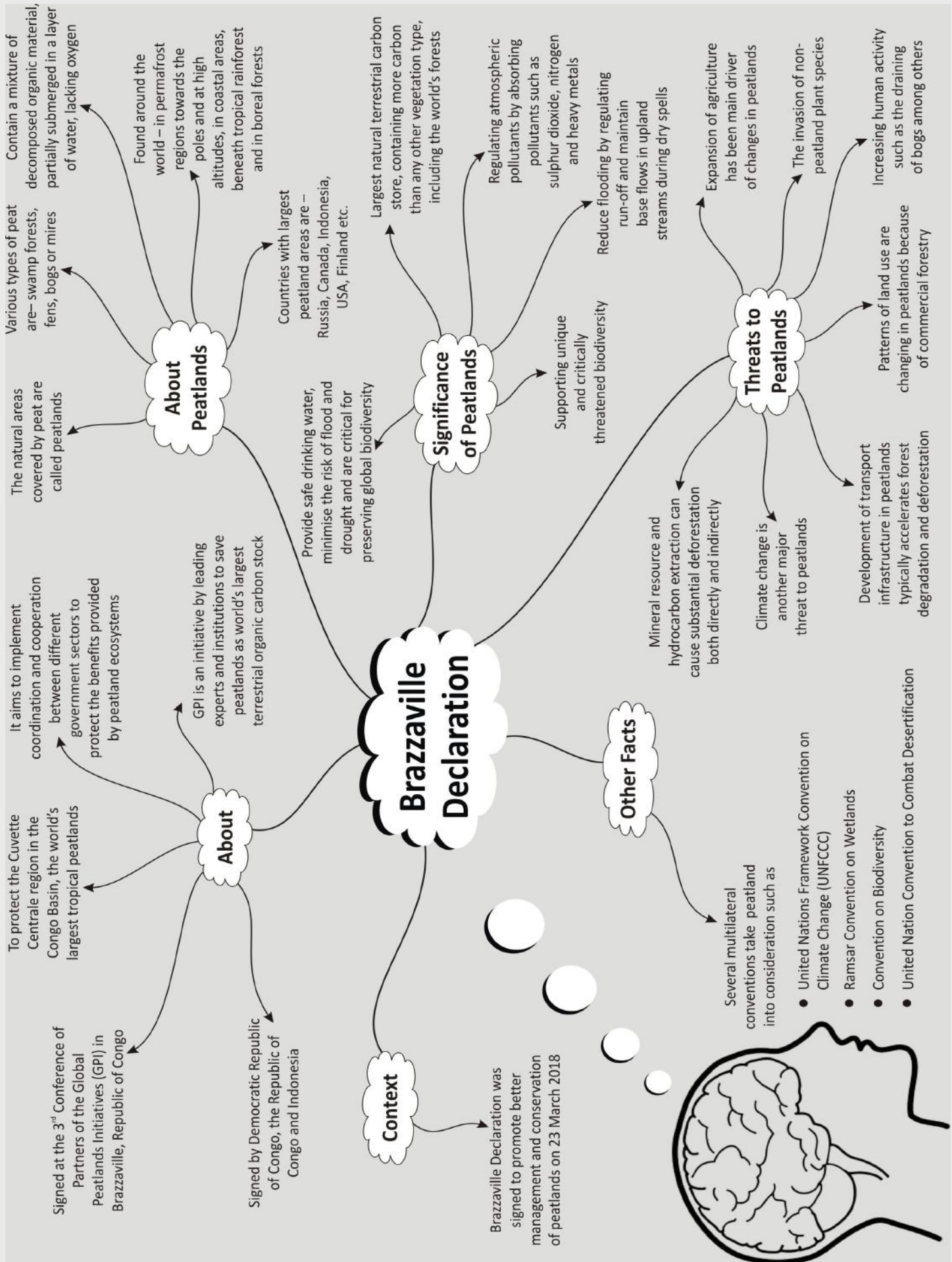


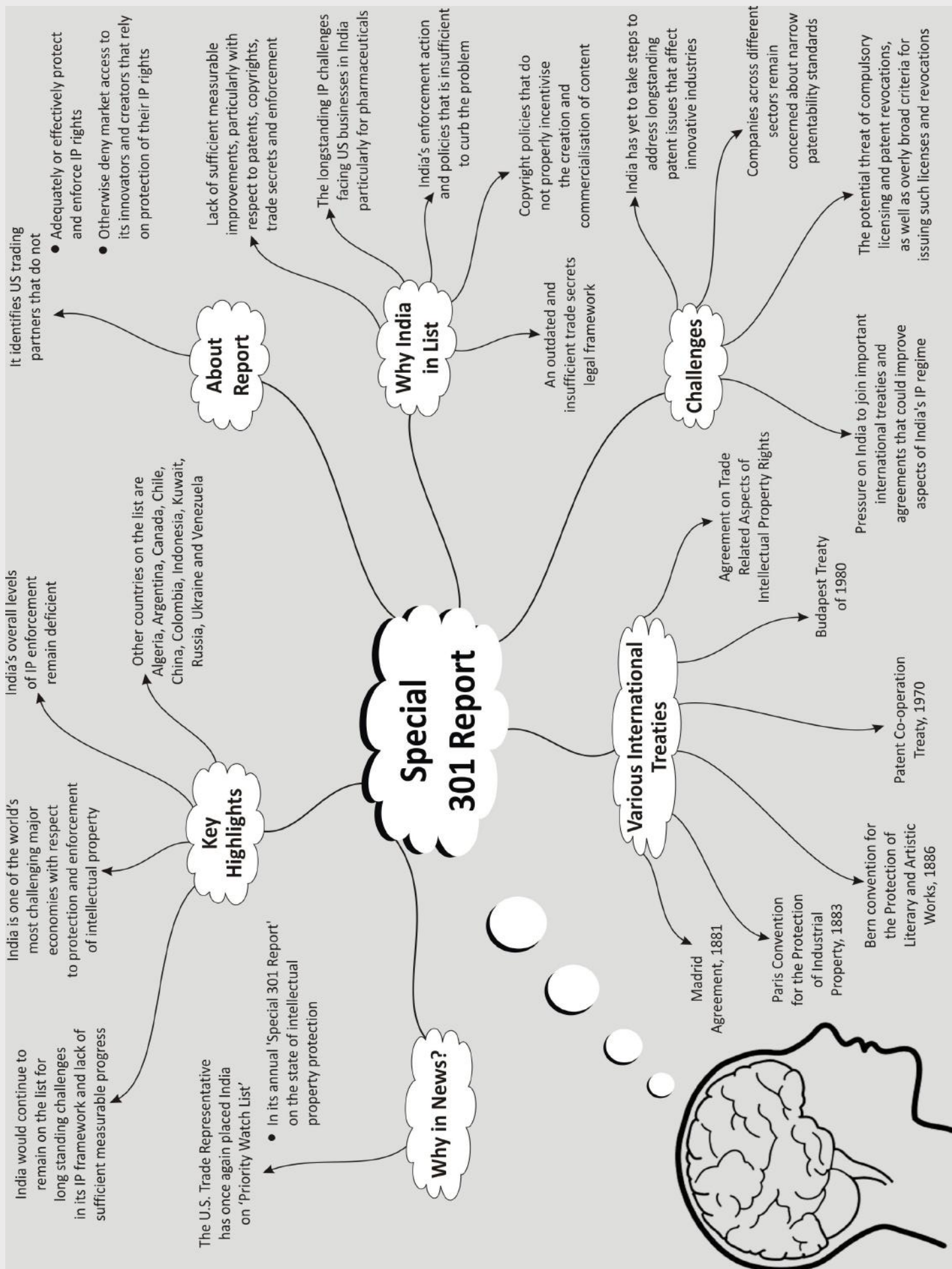
SEVEN BRAIN BOOSTERS

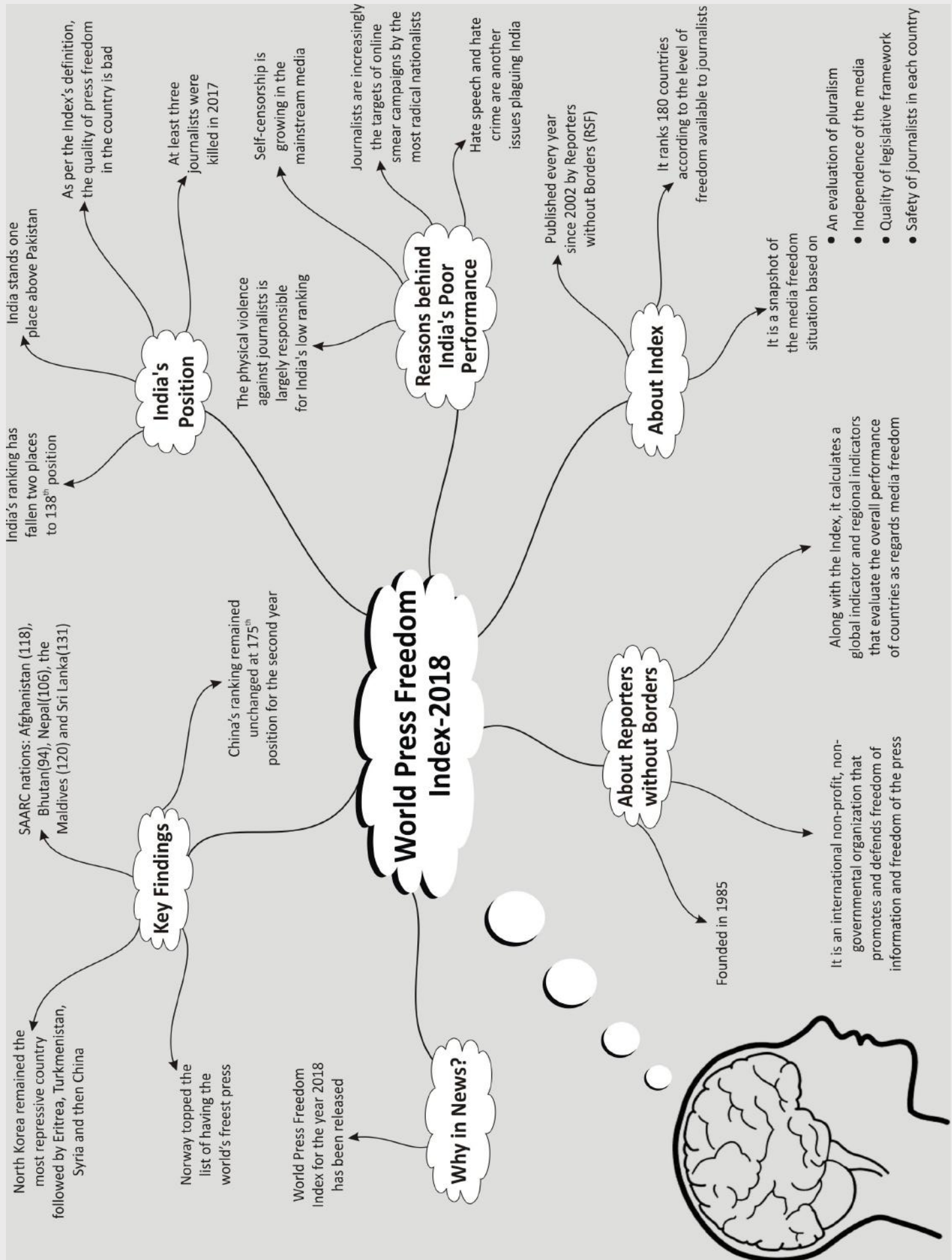


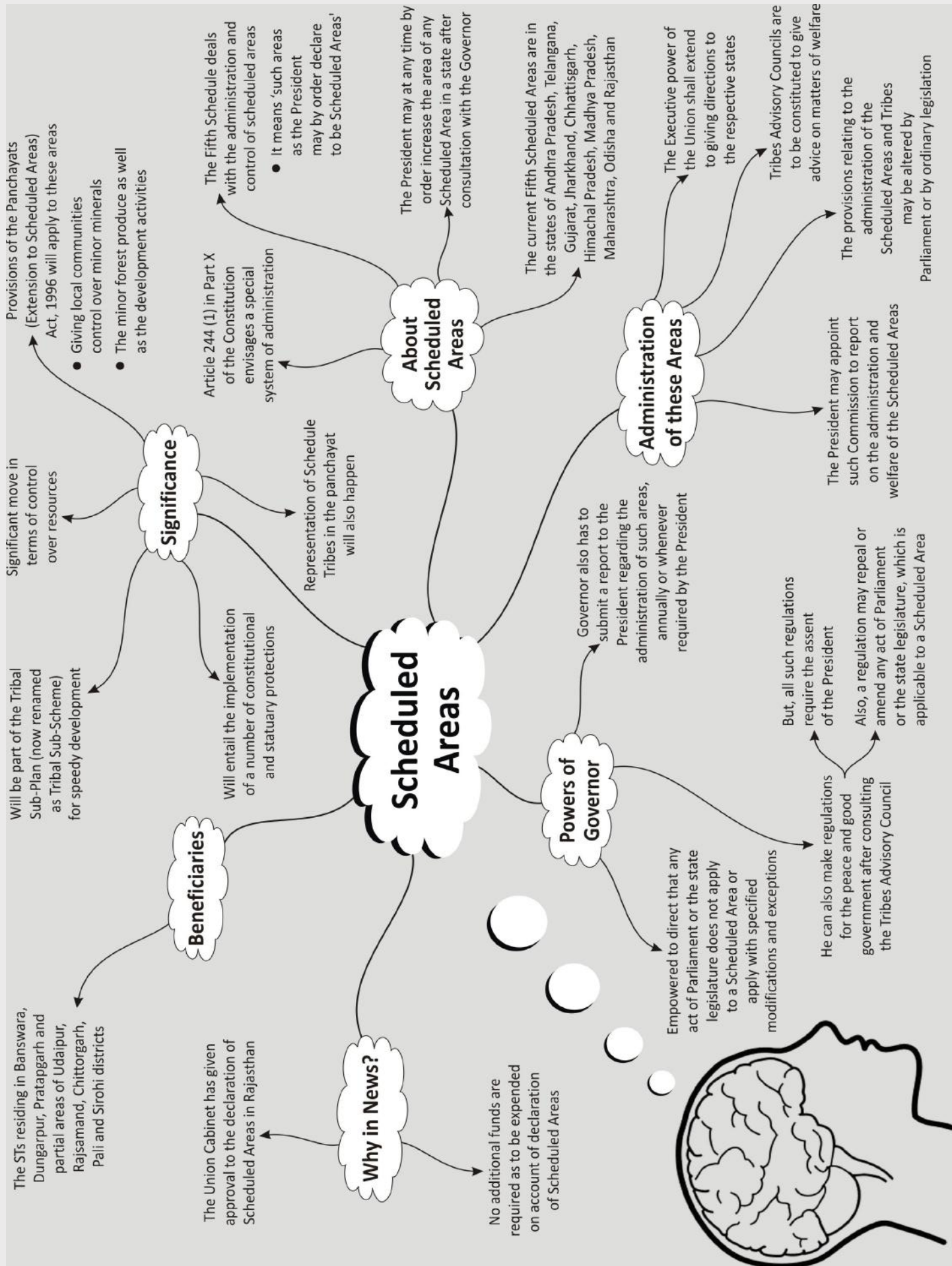












SEVEN MCQ's WITH EXPLANATORY ANSWERS

(Based on Brain Boosters)

Parental Abduction

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. India is a party to the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction (1980).
2. Rajesh Bindal committee has proposed to establish an 'Inter Country Parental Child Removal Disputes Resolution Authority'.

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. India is not signatory to the Hague Convention (as country has to have domestic law in place before it can become signatory). Currently, there is no specific legislation in India addressing issues related to abduction of children from and into India.

Statement 2 is correct. The Justice Rajesh Bindal committee has submitted its report on legal issues related to inter country removal & retention of children to Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD). The Committee has recommended that the government may establish an 'Inter Country Parental Child Removal Disputes Resolution Authority'. The authority has been envisaged to provide a one window solution in cases of inter country removal and retention of Children.

Digital Library of Life

Q2. Which of the following statements is/are correct regarding the 'Digital Library of Life'?

1. A proposed project to sequence, catalog and analyze the genomes of all known eukaryotic species on the planet.
2. It has the potential to bring innovative solutions to health, environmental, economic and social problems to people across the globe.
3. Eukaryotes include all organisms except bacteria and archaea.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Answer: (d)

Explanation: Statement 1 and 2 are correct. An international consortium of scientists is proposing a massive project to sequence, catalog and analyze the genomes of all known eukaryotic species on the planet. It is also known as Earth BioGenome Project. The central goal of this project is to understand the evolution and organization of life on our planet by sequencing and functionally annotating the genomes of 1.5 million known species of eukaryotes. It has the potential to bring innovative solutions to health, environmental, economic and social problems to people across the globe.

Statement 3 is also correct. Eukaryotes include all organisms except bacteria and archaea. It includes plants, animals, fungi and other organisms whose cells have a nucleus that houses their chromosomal DNA.

Ramsar Tag Likely for Sunderbans

Q3. Consider the following statements:

1. Currently 26 sites in India recognised as Ramsar wetland sites, including the Sunderban mangrove forest in West Bengal.
2. The Sundarbans is located in the delta region of Ganga, Meghna and Brahmaputra river basins.
3. Ramsar Convention on Wetlands was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1975.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d)

Explanation: Statement 1 is not correct. There are currently 26 sites in India recognised as Ramsar wetland sites of international importance, including the East Kolkata Wetlands also in West Bengal. Recently, the West Bengal government gave its approval to the State Forest Department to apply for recognition of Sunderbans under the Ramsar Convention.

Statement 2 is correct. Sunderbans is a contiguous ecosystem spread across India and Bangladesh. It is a vast forest in the coastal region of the Bay of Bengal and considered one of the largest mangrove forests in the world. It is located in the delta region of Ganga (Padma in Bangladesh), Meghna and Brahmaputra river basins.

Statement 3 is not correct. The Convention was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971 and came into force in 1975. Since then, almost 90% of UN member states, from all the world's geographic regions, have acceded to become "Contracting Parties".

Brazzaville Declaration

Q4. Consider the following statements in respect of the 'Brazzaville Declaration':

1. It is related to better management and conservation of peatlands all over the world.
2. It was signed by Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Congo, Indonesia and India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d)

Explanation: Both statements are not correct. The Brazzaville declaration was signed to promote better management and conservation world's largest tropical peatlands-Cuvette Centrale region in Congo Basin from unregulated land use and prevent its drainage and degradation. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Republic of Congo and Indonesia have jointly signed the Brazzaville declaration in the backdrop of the 3rd Conference of Partners of the Global Peatlands Initiatives (GPI) on 23rd March 2018.

Special 301 Report

Q5. With reference to the 'Special 301 Report' of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR), consider the following statements:

1. Apart from India, Russia is also in "priority foreign country" list.
2. Indian laws permit ever greening of patents by domestic companies but deny the same to foreign companies.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d)

Explanation: Both statements are not correct. In its latest 2018 Special 301 Report, the US Trade Representative has placed 12 countries along with India on its Priority Watch List. Other countries are Algeria, Argentina, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Indonesia, Kuwait, Russia, Ukraine and Venezuela.

It is not the reason why USTR included India under the "priority watchlist" in its Special 301 report. India alongside Brazil, Thailand, South Africa and Israel is one of the few

countries with laws against evergreening. Prior to the TRIPS agreement, India did not provide patent protection for pharmaceutical products. India's first independent Patents Act sought to create a domestic pharmaceutical market and decrease the cost of medication. Thus the Patents Act turned away many foreign pharmaceutical companies and resulted in a larger market share for domestically owned companies.

World Press Freedom Index-2018

Q6. Consider the following statements in respect of 'World Press Freedom Index-2018':

- 1) India is ranked 138 in the 2018 Index.
- 2) It is published every year by Reporters without Borders.
- 3) India's ranking on the index has been increasing over the years.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation: Statement 1 and 2 are correct. World Press Freedom Index for the year 2018 has been released by the Reporters without Borders (RSF). India is ranked 138th in a ranking of 180 countries.

Statement 3 is not correct. India's ranking has fallen two places to 138th position in a ranking of 180 countries in the latest annual report. The physical violence against journalists is largely responsible for India's low ranking. The report warned that hate crime is another issue plaguing India.

Scheduled Areas

Q7. Which of the following comes under criteria for declaring any area as Scheduled Area under Fifth Schedule?

1. Preponderance of tribal population.
2. Compactness and reasonable size of the area.
3. A viable administrative entity such as a district, block or taluk.
4. Economic backwardness of the area as compared to neighbouring areas.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1, 2 and 4 only b) 2, 3 and 4 only
c) 3 and 4 only d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: (d)

Explanation: All statements are correct. These are all criteria for declaring any area as a "Scheduled Area" under the Fifth Schedule. These criteria are not spelt out in the Constitution of India but have become well established. Accordingly, since the year 1950 to 2007 constitutional order relating to Scheduled Areas has been notified.



SEVEN IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIMS

1. Who has been selected for Saraswati Samman-2017?

–Sitanshu Yashaschandra

2. Which country hosted International Buddhist Conference-2018?

–Nepal

3. Which state has emerged as best in the country in prevention of parent-to-child transmission of HIV?

–West Bengal

4. Which city became India's first city to run on 100% Renewable Energy during daytime?

–Diu

5. Which city hosted the 2018 Secure India Conclave?

–New Delhi

6. Who won the 2018 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize?

–Mahmoud Abu Zeid

7. In which country, the 6th edition of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium was held?

–Iran

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SEVEN PERFECT QUOTES

(IMPORTANT FOR ESSAY AND ANSWER WRITING)

"The tree laden with fruits always bends low. If you wish to be great, be lowly and meek."

– *Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa*

"All that we are is the result of what we have thought. The mind is everything.
What we think we become."

– *Gautama Buddha*

"Failure comes only when we forget our ideals and objectives and principles."

– *Jawaharlal Nehru*

"To succeed in your mission, you must have single-minded devotion to your goal."

– *A.P.J Abdul Kalam*

"The biggest problem in the world today is not poverty or disease but the lack of
love and charity and the feeling of being unwanted."

– *Mother Teresa*

"The aim of life is no more to control the mind, but to develop it harmoniously; not to achieve
salvation here after, but to make the best use of it here below"

– *Bhagat Singh*

"The basic idea of governance, as I see it, is to hold the society together so that it can develop
and march towards certain goals."

– *Lal Bahadur Shastri*

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SEVEN PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAIN EXAM

Answer each of the following questions in 200 words:

- Q1. Is there something India and Pakistan can learn from the unfolding prospects for a major transformation in the relations between South Korea and North Korea? Explain.
- Q2. Panchayati raj institutions are simultaneously a remarkable success and a staggering failure. Critically discuss it in light of silver jubilee year of panchayati raj.
- Q3. Most of the institutional architecture of Indian federalism is focused on relations between the Union government and the states and there is far less space to settle inter-state frictions. Discuss why the Inter-State Council needs to be rejuvenated.
- Q4. Although India is undeniably on a path toward economic prosperity, losing millions of children every year to preventable deaths undermines this progress. Comment.
- Q5. While the IMD's forecast of a normal South-west monsoon has brought cheer to farmers and the government, there are long-term water sustainability issues that need to be addressed. Discuss it in respect of shrinking water reservoirs in India.
- Q6. What do you understand by the liberalisation of Bollywood? Critically examine the changes in Indian cinema brought about by economic liberalization.
- Q7. The crisis of ethical values in modern times is traced to a narrow perception of the good life. Discuss.

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