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SEVEN IMPORTANT ISSUES

1. THEFT OF IDOLS & ANTIQUITIES: A SYSTEMIC PROBLEM

Why in News?

Tamil Nadu is rich feeding ground for idol thieves and smugglers because of the sheer number of temples within its borders. It is not surprising that the State should then have a court designated specifically to deal with such matters. Earlier this year, the then Chief Justice of the Madras High Court constituted a special bench consisting of Justices R. Mahadevan and P.D. Audikesavalu to hear cases relating to idol theft.

Introduction

Over the last two years, the Madras High Court has become the site of high drama in the most unlikely of ways. Binding spirited advocates, a famed industrialist, a gritty police force and various other state agencies is the somewhat overlooked question of antiquities conservation. Tasked with the onerous mandate of investigating theft of idols and antiquities, Tamil Nadu Police's Idol Wing has been engaged in a tense confrontation with the State's Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR&CE) Department, a body charged with, among other things, the upkeep and safety of a vast collection of invaluable temple artefacts.

From 1920 to 2017, a total of 2,145 icons and 478 idols have gone missing from 803 temples. These numbers are based on complaints preferred by temple officials to the police. Of this only around 60 have been recovered,

and 18 have been restored to temples. Around 390 idols belonging to 33 temples remain non-traceable. The hunt for missing idols and figurines from temples has, over the last few months, turned into a bitter clash between two arms of the government – the Idol Wing of the Crime Branch CID and the HR&CE Department.

A couple of weeks ago, senior staff members of the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR&CE) Department threatened to go on long leave, claiming they were fed up with “action” taken against their colleagues. They objected to the “bullying” and “arm-twisting” they were being subjected to and claimed they were “being made to give confessions implicating co-workers.”

Things came to a head in end-September when the Idol Wing of the Crime Branch CID arrested M. Kavitha, Additional Commissioner (Thirupani) of the HR&CE Department, on suspicion of involvement in the misappropriation of funds and gold collected towards making two new idols at the Sri Ekambareswar Temple in Kancheepuram. At least one former commissioner, an additional commissioner, a couple of executive officers and a senior sthpathi, who is a Padma Shri awardee, have been arrested and are out on conditional bail. Additional commissioner (general) and a leading industrialist have recently obtained anticipatory bail in matters pertaining to thirupani (works) carried out in temples at various points of time.

The Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, Indira Banerjee, has constituted a special Division Bench of Justices R. Mahadevan and P.D. Audikesavalu to hear cases related to theft of ancient idols. Justice Mahadevan made the disclosure during the hearing of a case filed by Rangarajan Narasimhan of Srirangam, seeking a direction to the Idol Wing of the Crime Branch-Criminal Investigation Department, to probe his complaint regarding the theft of idols, doors made of exotic wood, kalasams, sculptures, granite pavements and other treasures.

Major Concerns

Smuggling India's Antiquities

Existing measures to protect India's rich heritage have proven to be woefully inadequate. According to Global Financial Integrity, a Washington-based advocacy group, illegal trade in paintings, sculptures and other artifacts is one of the world's most lucrative criminal enterprises, estimated at \$6 billion a year. And India, with its redoubtable cultural heritage, bureaucratic apathy and tardy implementation of antiquities protection laws, offers pilferers fertile ground to plunder the past and spirit away booty worth billions for sale in the international bazaar.

This exploitation continues unabated despite the existence of the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972 whose aim is to protect “antiquities,” an omnibus term that includes, among

other items, sculptures in stone, shrines, terracotta, metals, jewelry, ivory, paintings in paper, wood, cloth, skin and manuscripts over a hundred years old. Indian antiquities also regularly feature in scams involving the world's two largest auction houses – Sotheby's and Christie's. Employees of these organizations have been known to work in connivance with Indian smugglers in the past to peddle stolen artifacts at auctions. Even websites like eBay claim to be selling Indian antiquities.

According to the National Mission for Monument and Antiquities (NMMA), there are approximately 7 million antiquities in India. But by March this year, only 1.3 million had been documented. Since 1987, different governments have been trying to amend the flawed legislation. Unfortunately, after two committees and several consultations, the law still remains unmodified, entirely out of sync with the current needs for heritage protection in the country or the changed dynamic of the Indian art market.

Heritage continues to be the least priority for most governments. Museums and the ASI remain gravely short-staffed with an inadequate number of licensing and registering officers. Worse, a combination of bureaucratic paperwork and staff crunch scupper the implementation of the Act. A committee has also been set up to review museum security requirements for a comprehensive security policy.

A Systemic Problem

A 2013 report by the comptroller and auditor general of India (CAG) raised concerns over the trend. It revealed that "security lapses" had led to the theft or loss of 37 art objects from site museums run by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and 131 antiquities from monuments and sites themselves over the past 50 years. Many of these

antiquities had eventually emerged at sales conducted by prominent auction houses abroad.

The ASI had never participated or collected information on Indian antiquities put on sale at well known international auction houses viz. Sotheby's, Christie's, etc. as there was no explicit provision in the AAT (Antiquities and Art Treasures) Act, 1972, for doing so. Several antiquities of national importance being sold and displayed abroad.

Despite the fact that the 1970 UNESCO convention set down a clear framework for source countries to get their stolen heritage back. Between 1976 and 2001, the CAG found, only 19 antiquities had been brought back to India by the ASI. And after 2001, not a single case had been cracked. In Tamil Nadu, for instance, 1,200 idols were stolen between 1992 and 2017, according to an audit by the Hindu religious and charitable endowments (HR&CE) department that administers the state's many temples. But despite mounting pressure from the Madras high court to address idol theft, few have been found. In fact, the state's idol wing is engaged in a fierce battle with the HR&CE, which has taken much of the focus away from the actual process of finding and bringing back stolen art.

NMMA was established in 2007 under the aegis of the National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities (now under the administration of the ASI), the Register is a publicly accessible repository of documented and registered Indian antiquities. There is also the India Pride Project, a volunteer-network of private individuals interested in protecting Indian antiquities that has been instrumental in the repatriation of several works of incalculable archaeological and aesthetic value.

But cause for concern still remains. Though the Register on Antiquities gets diligently populated on the basis of already registered antiquities and

objects catalogued in public collections of museums or universities, there are still artefacts yet to be registered or documented. And the problem of non-coordination and lack of information highlighted by the Madras High Court still looms large. One easily identifiable example is that of the quantities of registered antiquities that have found their way into the NMMA's Register. While the Ministry of Culture's annual report for 2017-18 states that a mammoth 15.2 lakh registered antiquities have been documented through the NMMA, the Register only provides information for about 4.7 lakh of these.

The NMMA fortunately does have a mandate to cultivate public engagement and awareness for the protection of India's cultural heritage. Its progress towards that realisation seems slower than planned and much remains to be completed. In the meanwhile, citizen-led initiatives and timely judicial interventions are making up for what already ought to be higher on the list of national priorities.

Archaeological Survey of India

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) was established in 1861. It is an attached office of the Ministry of Culture. ASI is engaged in the protection, preservation and conservation of all the centrally protected monuments of national importance and excavations of historical sites in the country in terms of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958. ASI is also administering the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972 and Indian Treasure Trove Act, 1878.

The Antiquities Act also mandates that owners of such art pieces register them with the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), the nodal agency responsible for archaeological excavations, conservation of monuments and protection of heritage sites. The law also prohibits export of antiquities while permitting their sale within the country only under a license. Failure to comply with these rules can result in jail sentences of up to three years, a fine, or both. In what is seen as a blatantly unfair clause, the Act also empowers the state to compulsorily acquire an art object from its owner without any reliable assessment of a fair price.

Absence of Standards and Policy Guidance

The Ministry did not have a comprehensive policy for the management of antiquities. There were no standards for acquisition, preservation, documentation and custody of objects.

Review of the AAT Act, 1972

We noticed that the ASI and the Ministry were conscious of the need for amendment in the AAT Act, 1972 since 1987. The Ministry started an exercise in 1997 to amend the Act. A draft cabinet note was also approved by the Cabinet in 2003. However, the amendment was still under process at the Ministry. Thus, the limitation of the legislation to curb illegal export and smuggling of art objects persists. The Ministry accorded no priority for this work and no timeframe was fixed for this purpose. The provisions of AAT Act and the International Conventions should be reviewed in order to make the legislation more contemporary and effective and to facilitate restoration of stolen art objects from other countries.

Security of the Monuments and Antiquities

Security of a site or a monument is integral to its protection. The ASI is also assigned the responsibility of security of the centrally protected monuments from the risk of encroachments, unauthorised access, damage of the site and theft of parts. Many of these protected sites are symbols of our nation and are therefore vulnerable to attacks and damage by miscreants. These monuments have varying security needs. The ASI made rules and issued several notifications to avoid any unauthorised construction in and around the monuments.

Management of Antiquities

The primary objective of managing heritage is to communicate its

significance and need for its conservation to the host community and to the visitors. Reasonable and well managed physical, intellectual and emotive access to heritage and cultural development was both a right and a privilege. It would bring with it a duty of respect for the heritage values, interests and equity of the present-day host community, indigenous custodians or owners of historic property and for the landscapes and cultures from which that heritage evolved.

Constitutional Mandate

As per Article 51 A (f) of the Constitution of India, 'It shall be the duty of every citizen of India to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture.'

In Independent India, the Constitution divided the jurisdiction over these monuments and archaeological sites as follows:

- Union: Ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites and remains, declared by Parliament by law to be of national importance;
- State: Ancient and historical monuments other than those declared by Parliament to be of national importance.
- Besides these, both the Union and the States would have concurrent jurisdiction over archaeological sites and remains other than those declared by Parliament by law to be of national importance.

The important enactments promulgated to protect and preserve archaeological sites are as follows:

- ◆ **The Indian Treasure Trove Act, 1878-** First legislation post-establishment of the ASI enacted to protect and preserve treasure found accidentally but having archaeological and historical value.
- ◆ **The Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904-** Enacted to provide effective preservation and authority to the ASI over the monument particularly those,

which were under the custody of individual or private ownership.

- ◆ **The Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Declaration of National Importance) Act, 1951.**
- ◆ **The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act, 1958-** Enacted on 28 August 1958, the Act provides for the preservation of ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites and remains of national importance, for the regulation of archaeological excavations and for the protection of sculptures, carvings and other like objects. The Act was followed by AMASR Rules, 1959.
- ◆ **The Antiquities and Art Treasures (AAT) Act 1972-** Enacted in September 1972 for effective control over the moveable cultural property, consisting of antiquities and art treasures. The AAT Act was followed by AAT Rules 1973 which were enforceable with effect from 5 April 1976.
- ◆ **The AMASR (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2010-** The Act prescribes the limits of regulated and prohibited area around a monument by amending section 20 of AMASR Act 1958. It also provided for creation of National Monument Authority.

World Heritage Sites (WHS)

The UNESCO Convention of 1972 was developed with the following objectives regarding world heritage sites -

- To define World Heritage in both cultural and natural aspects.
- To enlist sites and monuments from the member countries which were of exceptional interest and universal value the protection of which was the concern of all mankind.
- To promote cooperation among all nations and people to contribute for the protection of these universal treasures intact for future generation.

World Heritage Sites are designated by UNESCO and procedures followed are as laid out in the Operational Guidelines of UNESCO prepared for this purpose. Even after nomination, for each site there is a provision for periodic monitoring and assessment by UNESCO. As of July 2018, a total of 1,092 World Heritage sites (845 cultural, 209 natural and 38 mixed properties) exist across 167 countries. Italy, with 54 sites, has the most of any country, followed by China (53), Spain (47), France (44), Germany (44), India (37) and Mexico (35).

Conclusion

To ensure effective protection of monuments and sites it was imperative to update policies, publish inventories and fully document monument details. However, these activities had not completed by the concerned entities. The National Mission of Monuments and Antiquities had also failed to fulfil its purposes in a time-bound manner. This Mission lacked direction,

vision and appropriate strategy. In the context of these weaknesses, encroachment of monuments and unauthorized constructions were widespread. Further, in the absence of comprehensive planning and organisational weakness, there was no coordination among the three major wings of ASI, responsible for structural, chemical and environmental conservation.

Success of conservation works was left largely to individual initiatives and an overall departmental perspective was completely missing. The ASI was unable to implement the provisions of the Antiquities and Art Treasure Act effectively and the incidence of an illegal export of antiquities was rampant. The proposed legislation amendments to this Act were pending for years. Poor documentation of the acquired artifacts and the failure to introduce the digital technology

for documentation coupled with the absence of physical verification made the artifacts vulnerable to loss. The security system at the museums provided a grim picture in the absence of effective surveillance systems at the sites.

General Studies Paper- I

Topic: Indian culture will cover the salient aspects of Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.

General Studies Paper- II

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



2. NEED OF THE HOUR TO EMPOWER PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Why in News?

The three-day event of Global IT Challenge for Youth with Disabilities-2018 concluded in New Delhi on November 11, 2018. This year 96 youth with disabilities from 18 countries including India, Indonesia, China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Philippines, UK and UAE participated in it.

Introduction: Disability in India

One billion people, or 15% of the world's population, experience some form of disability and disability prevalence is higher for developing countries. One-fifth of the estimated global total, or between 110 million and 190 million people, experience significant disabilities.

In India, the population with disabilities is around 26.8 million,

constituting 2.21% of India's total population, if one goes by the 2011 population census data. Disability rights activists and academicians working on disability issues, however, say that these numbers in the census are a very small percentage of the actual numbers. World Bank data on the total number of persons with disabilities in India suggests the number is between 40 and 80 million. Despite constituting such a significant proportion of the total population, persons with disabilities live a very challenging life. Their 'disability' is often seen as their 'inability' by many and people in general have preconceived notions about their capabilities. There have been many cases where employers have denied a job to a candidate with a disability, citing the usual 'not found suitable'.

The main problem lies in the psyche of a significant mass which considers persons with disabilities a liability and this leads to discrimination and harassment against them and their isolation from the mainstream. While writing the foreword to the World Report on Disability 2011, professor Stephen Hawking stated:

"Disability need not be an obstacle to success. We have a moral duty to remove the barriers to participation and to invest sufficient funding and expertise to unlock the vast potential of people with disabilities. Governments throughout the world can no longer overlook the hundreds of millions of people with disabilities who are denied access to health, rehabilitation, support, education and employment and never get the chance to shine."

Global ICT Challenge for Youth with Disabilities

The Global ICT Challenge for Youth with Disabilities (GITC) is a capacity-building project that helps youth with disabilities to overcome their limitations and challenge themselves for a better future by providing them with access to ICT and related experiences, improving their ability to leverage information and social participation while setting ICT agendas for participant countries related to disabilities and boosting international cooperation and exchange.

IT affects the lives of persons with disabilities and their countries. There are about one billion persons with disabilities in the world, or 15% of the global population and of these more than 80% live in developing countries with low ICT Development Indexes. Owing to the severe information divide, persons with disabilities are being excluded from society, suffering inequality and poverty. Weak awareness of persons with disabilities and prejudice fueling the information divide breeds a vicious circle socially among the young generation of society.

Purpose

1. Alleviate the digital divide and expand participation in society by the youth with disabilities from the Asia-Pacific Region.
2. Implementation for the Incheon Strategy (Goal-3), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Article 21) and SDGs (Goal 4, 9, 17) as a leading nation for the implementation of the third Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (2013-2022).

Definitions of Disability

Disability is an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. It denotes the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual (with a health condition) and that individual's contextual factors (environmental and personal factors). Impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations. Thus

disability is a complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives.

The most important element in the discourse on disability is to assess who is a person with disability. Disability is not a homogeneous concept, as it varies from person to person. Seen through a microscopic lens, one person will always be more or less disabled than the other, in terms of their relative physical capabilities. The Social Statistics Division under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, government of India, came up with a report titled Disabled Persons in India: A statistical profile 2016. While defining disability, the report states:

"From the conceptual point of view, there is no universal definition of what constitutes a disability or of who should be considered as having a disability. Moreover, there is no one static condition of disability. A disability is a result of the interaction between a person with a health condition and a particular environmental context."

Types of Disability

Disability is generally classified into two types. One is when a person is born with a disability while the other is when a person acquires a disability during his/her life. In the first case, the reason is often the lack of good and accessible medical facilities, resulting in various medical complications for both the pregnant mother and the unborn child, often leading to a disability for the child.

The other type of disability is acquired disability. This could happen due to various reasons including accidents, disasters, wars, violence and other factors. All these are "controllable" (except natural disasters). Every year thousands of people acquire permanent disability in

road accidents; and the individual's – as well as the nation's – physical potential gets reduced.

Major Challenges Faced by Disabled Population in India

Persons with disabilities are more likely to experience adverse socioeconomic outcomes than persons without disabilities, such as less education, poorer health outcomes, lower levels of employment and higher poverty rates. Barriers to full social and economic inclusion of persons with disabilities include inaccessible physical environments and transportation, the unavailability of assistive devices and technologies, non-adapted means of communication, gaps in service delivery and discriminatory prejudice and stigma in society. Poverty may increase the risk of disability through malnutrition, inadequate access to education and health care, unsafe working conditions, a polluted environment, and lack of access to safe water and sanitation. Disability may increase the risk of poverty, through lack of employment and education opportunities, lower wages, and increased cost of living with a disability.

Socio-Economic Profile of Persons with Disabilities

Large numbers of children with disabilities remain out of school. They are 4 to 5 times less likely to be in school than SC/ST children. If they do stay in school, they rarely progress beyond primary levels. This leads to lower employment and incomes.

Attitudes

Negative attitudes held by the families of the disabled and often the disabled themselves, deter disabled persons from taking an active part in the family, community or workforce. Those suffering from mental illness or mental retardation face the worst stigma and are subject to severe social

exclusion. People with disabilities are considered ineligible to marry those without disabilities unless “adjusted” by high dowry. Disabled girls are usually married to older men, leading to a higher incidence of widowhood. Showcasing success stories of people with disabilities can challenge these deep rooted negative perceptions.

Health

A large number of disabilities in India are preventable, including those arising from medical issues during birth, maternal conditions, malnutrition, as well as accidents and injuries. However, the health sector is yet to react more proactively to disability, especially in the rural areas. There is stark regional disparity.

Education

While the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has made a concerted effort to promote the inclusion of children with special needs, the system faces challenges in identifying these children and responding to their needs. Only around 1% of funds under SSA are spent on inclusive education. And, the budget for educating children with mild to moderate disabilities in regular school settings has not increased commensurately since the focus on inclusive education began in the 1970s.

Employment

Even though many disabled adults are capable of productive work, disabled adults have far lower employment rates than the general population. In fact, employment of people with disability actually fell from 43% in 1991 to 38% in 2002, despite the country's economic growth. In the public sector, despite a 4% reservation after the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, only 10% of posts have been identified as “suitable”. The quota policy covers only persons with

autism, Down syndrome, intellectual disabilities, specific learning disabilities and acid attack victims. It specifies 1% reservation for differently abled with low vision and blindness, another 1% for deaf and hard of hearing, 1% for locomotor disability including cerebral palsy, leprosy cured, dwarfism, acid attack victims and muscular dystrophy and 1% for autism, intellectual disability, specific learning disability and mental illness. If a person has multiple disabilities, he would compete with persons in the third category with intellectual disabilities. The situation is far worse in the private sector. The sector has few incentives for hiring disabled people. In the late 1990s, employment of people with disability among large private firms was only 0.3% of their workforce.

Social Protection

Though centrally sponsored anti-poverty programmes have reservations for people with disabilities, the numbers who have benefited are well below the minimum laid down. The new National Rural Employment Guarantee Act has dropped reservations for the disabled entirely, though some states (e.g. Andhra Pradesh) are making efforts to include disabled people. Few people with disabilities are aware of such programs and many states lack focus on social protection for PWD. While the presence of self-help groups is encouraging, an ambitious Social Security Bill for the unorganised sector could deliver real benefits.

Access

Physical accessibility in buildings, transportation and the like, as well as access to services is key for persons with disability. Guidelines already exist for buildings that are friendly for both the disabled and the elderly. But these guidelines need to be adopted into building bye-laws to make them legally binding.

Priority Actions for Disabled people

- ◆ Enable access to all mainstream policies, systems and services.
- ◆ Invest in specific programmes and services for people with disabilities.
- ◆ Adopt a national disability strategy and plan of action.
- ◆ Involve people with disabilities.
- ◆ Improve human resource capacity.
- ◆ Provide adequate funding and improve affordability.
- ◆ Increase public awareness and understanding of disability.
- ◆ Improve disability data collection.
- ◆ Strengthen and support research on disability.

Concerns for India

- ◆ The number of people with disabilities in India is substantial and likely to grow - disability does not “go away” as countries get richer.
- ◆ People with disabilities in India are subject to deprivation in many dimensions of their lives.
- ◆ Social attitudes and stigma play an important role in limiting the opportunities of disabled people for full participation in social and economic life, often even within their own families.
- ◆ India has one of the more progressive disability policy frameworks in the developing world. However, there remain huge challenges in operationalizing the policy framework.

Constitutional Provisions and Laws for Disabled People

The Constitution of India through its Preamble, inter-alia seeks to secure to all its citizens; Justice, social, economic and political; Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; Equality of status and of opportunity. Part-III of the Constitution provides for

a set of six fundamental rights to all the citizens (and in a few cases to non citizens also). These include – Right to Equality; Right to Freedom; Right against Exploitation; Right to Freedom of Religion; Cultural and Educational Rights and Right to Constitutional Remedies. All these rights are also available to the persons with disabilities even though no specific mention of such persons appears in this Part of the Constitution.

The Directive Principles of State Policy have been incorporated in Part – IV of the Constitution. Even though non-justiciable, these have been declared as fundamental in the governance of the country. These principles are intended to be the imperative basis of State policy. These are really in the nature of instructions issued to future legislatures and executives for their guidance.

Article 41: Right to work, to education and to public assistance in certain cases, provides : “The State shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to work, to education and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement and in other cases of undeserved want”.

The Rehabilitation Council of India Act, 1992: The Rehabilitation Council of India was set up under the RCI Act, 1992. The Council regulates and monitors the training of rehabilitation professionals and personnel and promotes research in rehabilitation and special education.

The National Trust for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999: The National Trust is a statutory body set up by an Act of Parliament for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999.

The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016: With the twin objective of harmonising the provisions of the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 and also to ensure better implementation.

Initiatives under Accessible India Campaign

Accessible India Campaign (AIC) is the nationwide flagship campaign of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The aim of the Campaign is to make a barrier free and conducive environment for Divyangjans all over the country. It was launched by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3rd December, 2015.

I. Built Environment Accessibility

Enhancing the proportion of accessible Government Buildings

Phase-I: Completion of accessibility audit of 25- 50 most important government buildings in selected 50 cities and made fully accessible in December 2017;

Phase-II: Making 50% of all the government buildings of NCT and all the State capitals fully accessible by December 2018;

Phase- III: Completing accessibility audit of 50% of government buildings and making them fully accessible in 10 most important cities/towns of States not covered in phase (I) and (II) by December 2019.

II. Transportation System Accessibility

Enhancing proportion of accessible Airports and Railway Stations:

- ♦ All international airports made fully accessible in December 2016 and domestic airports in March 2018.
- ♦ 10% of government owned public transport carriers made fully accessible in March 2018.

- ♦ A1, A & B categories of railway stations made fully accessible in December 2016 and 50% of all railway stations made fully accessible in March 2018.

III. Information and Communication System accessibility

- ♦ Enhancing proportion of accessible documents and websites that meet internationally recognized accessibility standards.
- ♦ 50% of Central and State government websites made accessible in March 2017.

Other Initiatives

In India, several scheme have been active. For example, the Rajasthan Rural Livelihoods Project and the North East Rural Livelihoods Project (NERLP) enhanced economic opportunities for rural populations and the most vulnerable groups, including those with physical disabilities, though self-help groups. The Teacher Training on Inclusive Education initiative focused on inclusive education for children with disabilities including those with learning disabilities, while the Tamil Nadu Empowerment and Poverty Reduction Project focused on providing services for intellectual and developmental disabilities.

International Effort in Empowering Disabled People

Global awareness of disability-inclusive development is increasing. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) promotes the full integration of persons with disabilities in societies. The CRPD specifically references the importance of international development in addressing the rights of persons with disabilities. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development clearly states that disability cannot be a reason or criteria for lack of access to development programming and the realization of human rights. The

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework includes seven targets, which explicitly refer to persons with disabilities and six further targets on persons in vulnerable situations, which include persons with disabilities. The SDGs address essential development domains such as education, employment and decent work, social protection, resilience to and mitigation of disasters, sanitation, transport, and non-discrimination. The New Urban Agenda specifically commits to promoting measures to facilitate equal access to public spaces, facilities, technology, systems and services for persons with disabilities in urban and rural areas.

Conclusion

Disability is part of the human condition. Almost everyone will be temporarily or permanently impaired at some point in life and those who survive to old age will experience increasing

difficulties in functioning. India has an impressive set of policy commitments to its citizens with disabilities. The challenge facing Indian society now is to translate those commitments into better lives for disabled people. This includes identifying disabilities in young children, getting more disabled children into school and preparing them for the workplace and family life and most importantly working to reduce the social stigma which disabled people face. Despite the many challenges, concerted efforts by the government, civil society, the private sector and disabled people themselves, the untapped potential of this large group of citizens can be released for their own benefit as well as for society at large.

Increasing the status and social and economic participation of people with disabilities would have positive effects on everyone, not just disabled

people. Simple example is increasing accessibility of public transport and buildings for disabled people – a measure which would benefit a wide range of people including the elderly, pregnant women and children. More broadly, people with disabilities who are better educated and more economically active will generate higher growth in which everyone will share.

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. INDIA-JAPAN: STRATEGIC PARTNERS

Why in News?

Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi visited Japan on October 28-29, 2018 for the India-Japan Annual Summit with Prime Minister of Japan Mr. Shinzo Abe. During the visit, recognizing the unparalleled potential for development of relations between the two countries, Prime Minister Modi and Prime Minister Abe reviewed the significant milestones achieved over the last four years.

Background

Japan and India have an ancient relationship, with Buddhism acting as a common connecting factor. During the era of the ancient Silk Route, Buddhism spread to China from India. From China, Buddhism also spread to Korea and Japan. There was a dip in Indo-Japan relations during medieval

times. Yet, the cultural engagement at the level of Buddhism continued.

Post-independence, it was in the year 1952 that India and Japan concluded a Treaty of Peace and Friendship, laying the foundation of India's new diplomatic relations with Japan. However, we need to remember that relations between the two during the Cold War were not warm. During the Cold War, when India faced conflicts with China in 1962 and Pakistan in 1965 and 1971, the foreign policy stance of Japan towards India remained very neutral. The Japanese never supported India, nor supported its opponents and chose to not take sides. But somehow, Japan being a follower of the US camp in the Cold War, was always uncomfortable with India's tilt to the USSR post-1971.

However, things did improve between India and Japan after the

end of the Cold War. The ending of the Cold War brought about a radical shift in the world policy as also Indian foreign policy. India began to improve its relations with the USA. This also led India to improve its relations with other allies of the USA, including its most important partner in the East, Japan.

In the recent past, there has been a remarkable transformation in the bilateral relationship between India & Japan and the two countries have emerged as genuine strategic partners in the Indo-Pacific. Sometimes, the concept 'strategic partnership' is casually deployed to define any and every relationship. However, a relationship in international politics becomes 'strategic' when it has an impact on the overall balance-of-power in a region. This balance-of-power is often impacted by the changes in the

capabilities of nation-states. The India-Japan strategic partnership is playing out in conceptual, strategic and in economic realms.

Recent Developments

Prime Minister Modi became the first foreign leader to be invited to PM Abe's private holiday home, where the two leaders enjoyed a cosy one-on-one dinner beside a fireplace. The next day in Tokyo, Modi tirelessly met senior political and business leaders, followed by official events at Prime Minister Abe's residence.

The outcome of the visit was so extensive that it ended up releasing a 7,400-word fact sheet on 12 areas, in addition to the Japan-India Vision Statement and 24 MoUs/ MOCs. The success of the visit cannot be measured by the length of documents or the number of MoUs, but there were genuinely transformational agreements and announcements.

As mentioned in the vision statement, Japan and India have made enormous progress in fostering joint efforts towards "shared security". This year, both countries have come to demonstrate that the security and defence cooperation are rapidly catching up with the already robust economic partnership. The highly symbolic achievement was the agreement to institute the foreign and defence ministerial "2+2" Dialogue, similar to India-US process. Up to now, this meeting has been held at the junior ministerial levels, so the upgrade signified a commitment to Japan and India to a joint role in maintaining peace, stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region where China flexes its military and economic muscle.

Both countries were successful in pushing the spatial constructs such as the 'Indo-Pacific' into the discourses on international politics. There may be quibbles on the boundaries of the Indo-Pacific, but it appears that geographic

construct is here to stay. Tokyo and Delhi also share similar strategic objectives, which include the creation of a robust multipower Asian order and thriving open sea lanes of communication in the region. Consequently, the maritime cooperation between the two countries is gaining momentum. During the recent bilateral summit, both countries agreed to scale up cooperation on Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), decided to develop the smart islands, initiated a 2+2 dialogue involving foreign/ defence ministers and commenced negotiations on Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA). The ACSA will provide a framework concerning the reciprocal provision of supplies and services and enhance joint exercises and other cooperation between all three services.

In the economic realm, Japan is the third largest investor in India, with Mauritius and Singapore taking the top two positions. Since Mauritius is a mere platform through which investment gets funneled, Japan can be considered as one of the top two investors in India. Strategic considerations also drive Japanese assistance to India on connectivity projects. Japanese assistance on Aizawl-Tuipang (NH-54) road in Mizoram will strengthen the Kaladan Multi-Modal project that traverses through Myanmar.

Further, Japan agreed to release the next tranche of overseas development assistance money for the high-speed train project to link Mumbai and Ahmedabad, the financial capital of India and a major trading centre. In a significant development, the existing bilateral currency swap agreement was raised to \$75 billion from the previous \$50 billion to give greater stability to the rupee, which has fallen rapidly in recent months.

The list of outcomes in the economic field goes on to encompass digital partnership, healthcare, food

processing, International Solar Alliance and so forth.

As a way to realise Modi's "Act East" vision and Abe's "Quality Infrastructure" and connectivity projects in Asia, the two reiterated a willingness to establish collaborative projects in the Indo-Pacific region, including in Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Bangladesh. This also extended to Africa, where China's influence has grown in recent years. India is seeking to re-establish its historical bonds with Southeast Asian nations and Modi and Abe also agreed that "ASEAN unity and centrality are at the heart of the Indo-Pacific concept, which is inclusive and open to all".

Chinese Dilemma

Collaboration between the two countries is increasingly acquiring a third country dimension. The recent Vision Statement issued after the summit meeting refers to the growing synergistic collaboration between the two countries in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Africa. This expanding India-Japan strategic partnership will have to navigate complex challenges carefully viz., China and under par defence industry cooperation.

Indian premier's visit to Tokyo was preceded by PM Shinzo Abe's historic visit to Beijing for a summit meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping. Even prior to the visit, the Japanese leadership has stated that they are looking forward to participating in the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The evolving Japanese accommodative stance towards BRI seems to be a consequence of four factors. First, PM Shinzo Abe's need to maintain intra-party unity by co-opting factions that call for increased economic engagement of China. Second, the participation of some Japanese companies in BRI projects albeit on a low-key and their desire for enhanced participation in Chinese initiatives. Third, the need to

insulate Japan from a negative fallout of US-China trade war. Fourth, growing perception of unpredictability in the US foreign policy under President Trump and his preference for quick bilateral negotiations instead of multilateral conversations.

While the Japanese compulsions to participate in the BRI could be many, there is a concern in the Indian strategic community that precisely at a time when BRI projects are witnessing a pushback in many Asian countries, Japan's willingness to participate in the BRI would accord the initiative with an unwarranted legitimacy and renewed momentum. Nonetheless, there is also recognition in New Delhi that it would be unwise to indulge in hasty pronouncements till there is clarity as to whether the statements on BRI by Japanese leaders constitute a mere short-term tactical shift or if they amount to a long-term strategic shift. From the perspective of some Japanese scholars, India is also working to improve the relationship with China as was evident during the Wuhan Summit earlier this year. Hence, there is no need to see the Japan-China and India-Japan bilateral relationships in zero-sum frameworks.

Both India and Japan have initiated moves to recalibrate ties with China in the wake of an uncertain global order, thanks to US President Donald Trump's unpredictable moves such as trade sanctions on friends (such as Japan) and foes (such as China). However, both countries are cautious about Beijing, due to its aggressive stance in the region.

Asia – Africa Growth Corridor

At the 52nd Annual General Meeting of African Development Bank in Gandhinagar in May, 2017, the Indian PM, along with his Japanese and African counterparts, propounded the idea of an Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC).

The idea had its origin in the discussion of Indian and Japanese PM in 2016. Under this initiative, a mega sea corridor based on ancient sea routes connecting Africa with India and South East and East Asia is being envisaged. The idea is to create a low cost, environment friendly sea corridor to boost investment, transport, trade and connectivity. India and Japan are going to play a major role in developing infrastructure. The creation of AAGC will be akin to making an investment corridor where Japan will contribute its expertise in infrastructure creation while India will bring its core diplomatic expertise. The priority areas of AAGC include projects related to health, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, food processing, disaster management, skill development and technology. Some scholars have the opinion that the AAGC is a counter proposal to the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The AAGC is unique in many aspects. In contrast to the BRI, the AAGC is a purely sea based corridor, which means that it ensures a lesser carbon footprint. Secondly, in AAGC, the process is more democratic and consultative as the focus is to assist the African states in the ways they want. Thirdly, the AAGC is a corridor where the private sector will be playing a major role in contrast to the BRI, which will be completely state funded.

India-Japan Partnership for Economic Development in North Eastern Region

With India's Northeastern region being a pivot area of New Delhi's Act East Policy, its importance again came into focus during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's annual bilateral summit with his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe in Tokyo on October on 28-29.

The Indo-Pacific region stretches from the East coast of Japan to the East coast of Africa and both India and Japan agree that the 10-nation Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) regional bloc has to play a central role for the peace and prosperity of the region.

Under the Act East Policy, the Northeast, which shares historical and traditional bonds with the ASEAN region, is seen as the springboard for India's increasing engagements with

Southeast Asia and for this New Delhi has roped in Tokyo in a big way.

Japan's role in development work in the Northeast is also expected to boost connectivity between the member-states of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) sub-regional grouping. BIMSTEC which came into existence in 1997, comprises seven countries lying in the littoral and adjacent areas of the Bay of Bengal -- Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Membership in the bloc allows India to engage more with the extended neighbourhood in Southeast Asia under New Delhi's Neighbourhood First Policy via Northeastern India.

Last year, India and Japan established the Act East Forum to serve as a driving force for cooperation between the two countries in the Northeast. The Act East Forum was set up to discuss how Japan and India can collaborate together in many areas, including infrastructure, people-to-people exchange and disaster management in the Northeast.

Some of the key infrastructure projects in the region identified during the second meeting of the Act East Forum. These include National Highway 40 between and Shillong and Dawki, National Highway 51 between Tura and Dalu -- both in Meghalaya -- and National Highway 54 between Aizawl and Tuipang in Mizoram.

The possibility of a corridor linking Gelephu, the border area between Assam and Bhutan and Dalu, the border town between Bangladesh and Meghalaya, in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is also being explored. This will include the Dhubri-Phulbari bridge project, which will be the longest river bridge in India when completed, as the third phase of the Northeast Road Network Connectivity Improvement Project. Development of main district roads



Liquidity Boost

WHAT IS CURRENCY SWAP: One country exchanges its national currency for that of another or even a third one

INDIA-JAPAN SWAP: India can acquire yen or dollars from Japan up to \$75 billion in exchange for rupees. The exchange has to be reversed after an agreed period

TERMS OF AGREEMENT: The facility is entered into between central banks of two countries. The terms of the swap and its cost are also included. The exchange rate is typically fixed for a transaction. The borrowing bank pays interest for use of funds

How Does It Help

RBI's \$393-billion chest gets a one-shot \$75 billion boost

There is no immediate cost; only when an amount is drawn

Short-term liquidity mismatches can be met quickly

It improves market sentiment, curbs speculative pressure on the rupee

Foreign investors will draw comfort from the arrangement

(MDRs) and other district roads (ODRs), which will have positive socio-economic effect, is also being considered.

Following the October 29 summit in Tokyo, India and Japan also exchanged notes on seven yen loan agreements for key infrastructure projects in India, including two in the Northeast -- renovation and modernisation of the Uiam-Umtru Stage-III hydroelectric power station in Meghalaya and sustainable catchment forest management in Tripura.

Biodiversity conservation and forest management projects in Nagaland and Sikkim are also under consideration.

People-to-people ties also form a key aspect in Japan's engagement with Northeastern India and for this it has been decided to promote Japanese language education in the Northeast.

Challenges

Despite a comprehensive economic partnership agreement more than five years ago, India-Japan trade still remains minuscule and has stagnated well below the \$20 billion mark with the trade balance heavily in favour of Japan. Joint infrastructure projects have remained elusive despite their efforts to cooperate in Africa through an Asia-Africa Growth Corridor plan. It is still too early to know whether a willingness to undertake joint projects in India's South Asian neighbours and elsewhere will be realised.

In security and defence fields too, while Japan and India hold dialogues and meetings regularly, no military technology transfer or sale of defence equipment has yet taken place. The sale of the US2 amphibian aircraft has not materialised despite negotiations for many years now. On the question of Quad 2.0, India's position has been ambivalent. Some analysts believe that India keeps on sending mixed signals and shows incoherence in its approach to military exercises with Japan and other Indo-Pacific partners, including Australia.

Thus, an important challenge for India-Japan strategic partnership is less than satisfactory cooperation in defence equipment and technology segment. Japan historically followed a very restrictive defence export policy. However, it was only in 2014 that Prime Minister Shinzo Abe eased restrictions on defence exports. As a consequence, the institutional/procedural frameworks and culture of aggressively promoting defence exports are still evolving. Nonetheless, a true strategic partnership mandates closer defence equipment and technological cooperation.

Implementation of political declarations and joint statements may be a hostage to politics in both countries. Modi faces a general election in the first half of 2019, where his party does not look as strong as it was in 2014. In Japan, elections to the less

powerful but critically important upper house, whose consent is essential for any constitutional amendment, will be held in mid-2019. Abe will make all efforts to maintain his party's current strength in the upper house to realise his constitutional amendment plans. (It is also worth remembering that Abe resigned his prime ministership in 2007, soon after his party's defeat in the upper house.)

Conclusion

The recent developments point to the fact that the international politics is not witnessing the return of a new Cold War, with China and other democratic countries locked in a gladiatorial conflict. Today we are in a multipower order and countries are constantly exploring the economic benefits in their interactions with each other. However, as Kenneth Waltz noted in 1964 "in a multipower world...the dangers are diffused, responsibilities unclear and definition of vital interests easily obscured," which makes such an order inherently unstable. Therefore, in the interest of maintaining the stability of the multipower order, India and Japan should clearly define as well as communicate their interests and responsibilities with each other.

The convergence of strategic vision and objectives was further deepened, based on the conviction expressed by both leaders: "Strong India is in Japan's interest; strong Japan is in India's interest." The destinies of the two countries are intertwined and cooperation between both countries holds the key to the future of the entire Indo-Pacific region.

General Studies Paper- II

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

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4. EASE OF DOING BUSINESS-2019 & INDIA

Why in News?

India jumped 23 positions in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index, 2019 and is now ranked 77 out of 190 countries, a development that could help the country attract more foreign investments. It was ranked 100 in 2017, making a leap of 30 places. India has improved its rank by 53 positions in the last two years and 65 positions in the last four years.

Background

The World Bank launched the 'Doing Business' project in 2002, with the first ranking coming out in 2003. Today, the World Bank uses ten main factors in developing a nation's ranking, covering 190 nations. These factors include: starting a business; dealing with construction permits; getting electricity; registering property; getting credit; protecting minority investors; paying taxes; trading across borders; enforcing contracts; and resolving insolvency. Rankings and weightages on each of the mentioned factors are used to develop an overall Ease of Doing Business (EODB) ranking. A high EODB ranking means the regulatory environment is more conducive for starting and operating of businesses.

The Doing Business report presents results for two aggregate measures: the ease of doing business score (formerly called the distance to frontier score) and the ease of doing business ranking, which is based on the ease of doing business score. The ease of doing business ranking compares economies with one another; the ease of doing business score benchmarks economies with respect to regulatory best practice, showing the absolute distance to the best regulatory performance on each Doing Business indicator. When compared across years, the ease of doing business score shows how much

the regulatory environment for local entrepreneurs in an economy has changed over time in absolute terms, while the ease of doing business ranking can show only how much the regulatory environment has changed relative to that in other economies.

The ease of doing business score captures the gap between an economy's performance and a measure of best practice across the entire countries. For starting a business, for example, New Zealand and Georgia have the lowest number of procedures required (1). New Zealand also holds the shortest time to start a business (0.5 days), while Slovenia has the lowest cost (0.0). Australia, Colombia and 115 other economies have no paid-in minimum capital requirement.

India and EODB

In the 'Doing Business' 2019 report, the World Bank has said India improved on six of the 10 parameters relating to starting and doing business in a country. This year, India moved from 100th place up to 77th. This improved ranking was primarily due to major improvements in a few areas, notably 'dealing with construction permits' and 'trading across borders'. The World Bank notes specific reforms under each header that led to the ranking bumps:

1. Dealing with Construction Permit – India streamlined the process of obtaining a building permit and made it faster & less expensive to obtain a construction permit. It also improved building quality control by introducing decennial liability and insurance. This reform applies to both Delhi and Mumbai. Due to these measures, scores in this parameter has increased to 73.81 from previous score of 39.69.
2. Trading across borders – India reduced the time and cost to export and import through

various initiatives, including the implementation of electronic sealing of containers, the upgrading of port infrastructure and allowing electronic submission of supporting documents with digital signatures. This again improved the score in this parameter from 58.56 to 77.46.

However, in the two categories of "Paying Taxes" and "Resolving Insolvency", landmark government reforms that were expected to yield better results have had the opposite effect.

In "Paying Taxes", India actually saw its rank slip two notches to 121, despite the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST). The World Bank praised India for merging taxes and significantly revising the tax code, but it didn't lead to a better ranking.

On the other hand, the adoption of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code could not save India from shedding five positions in "Resolving Insolvency", to settle at 108.

Pros and Cons of the World Bank Methodology

The Doing Business methodology has five limitations that should be considered when interpreting the data.

- ◆ First, for most economies the collected data refer to businesses in the largest business city and may not be representatives of regulation in other parts of the economy. To address this limitation, subnational Doing Business indicators are created.
- ◆ Second, the data often focus on a specific business form – generally a limited liability company of a specified size – and mayn't be representative of the regulation on other businesses (e.g. sole proprietorships).

Central Government Initiatives

Starting a Business

- The requirement of Common company seal is eliminated.
- Introduction of form -29 by MCA. With this form three processes such as Name Availability, Director Identification Number and Incorporation of Company are clubbed into one. The company can be registered within 1-2 working days in India.
- The provision is in place for getting PAN and TAN in T+1 day using digital signature.
- ESIC and EPFO are completely online with no physical touch point for registration or document submission.

Dealing with Construction Permits

- Municipal Corporations of Delhi as well as Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai have introduced fast track approval system for issuing building permits with features such as Common application form, provision of using digital signature and online scrutiny of building plans.
- Delhi has a uniform building bye laws, 2016 which allows for risk-based classification regimes for different building types. The uniform building bye laws have provision of deemed approval of sanctioning building plans within 30 days.

Trading Across Borders

- The Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) has implemented 'Indian Customs Single Window Project' to facilitate trade. Now importers and exporters can electronically lodge their customs clearance documents at a single point only with the customs.
- The number of mandatory documents required by customs for import and export of goods have been reduced to three viz. Bill of Lading, Invoice cum Packing List and Import Declaration.

Enforcing Contracts

- The Commercial Courts, Commercial Division and Commercial Appellate Division of High Courts Act, 2015 has been enacted. The Commercial Courts and Appellate Divisions have already been established in Delhi and Bombay High Court.

Getting Credit

- SARFAESI (Central Registry) Rules, 2011 has been amended. The amendment modifies rule 4 to include additional types of charges, including: "security interest in immovable property by mortgage other than deposit of title deeds"; "security interest in hypothecation of plant and machinery, stocks, debt including book debt or receivables"; "security interest in intangible assets, being know-how, patent, copyright, trademark or any other business or commercial right of similar nature"; and "security interest in any under construction residential or commercial building or a part thereof". This amendment allows (Central Registry of Securitization Asset Reconstruction and Security Interest) CERSAI to register these additional charges.

Getting Electricity

- In both Delhi and Mumbai, the distribution companies have stipulated that electricity connections will be provided in 15 days and the number of documents required to obtain an electricity connection have been reduced to only 2. Online application for connections above 100 KVA have been made mandatory in Delhi and Mumbai. This will reduce procedures, cost and time taken to obtain an electricity connection significantly.

Registering Property

- In Delhi, all sub-registrar offices have been digitized and sub-registrars' records have been integrated with the Land Records Department and in Maharashtra all property tax records have been digitized. The digitization of property records will overcome the cumbersome and time consuming paper work for registering properties. It will ensure transparency and allow citizens to ascertain history of transactions in digital mode.

Resolving Insolvency

- The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 is expected to introduce new dimensions in Resolving Insolvency in India. This is India's first comprehensive legislation in the area of corporate insolvency.

Paying Taxes

- The ESIC has developed a fully online module for electronic return filing with online payment. This has greatly reduced the time to prepare and file returns.
- With introduction of e-Verification system, there remains no physical touch point for document submission to Income tax authorities.

- ◆ Third, transactions described in a standardised case scenario refer to a specific set of issues and may not represent the full set of issues that businesses encounters.
- ◆ Fourth, the measures of time involve an element of judgment by expert respondents. When sources

indicate different estimates, the time indicators reported in Doing Business represent the median values of several responses given under the assumptions of the standardized case.

- ◆ Finally, the methodology assumes that a business has full information

on what is required and does not waste time when completing procedures. In practice, completing a procedure may take longer time if the business lacks information or is unable to follow up promptly. Alternatively, the business may choose to disregard some burdensome procedures.



Still, the Doing Business methodology offers several advantages

- It is transparent, using factual information about what laws and regulation say and allowing multiple interactions with local respondents to clarify potential misinterpretations of questions. Having representative samples of respondents is not an issue; Doing Business is not a statistical survey and text of relevant laws and regulations are collected and answers checked for accuracy.
- The methodology is in expensive and easily replicable, so data can be collected in large sample of economies. Because standard assumptions are used in data collection, comparisons and benchmarks are valid across economies.
- Finally, the data not only highlight the extent of specific regulatory obstacles to business but also identify their source and point to what might be reformed.

EODB Flaws

Criticisms of the World Bank's rankings are well known: they do little to provide a comprehensive picture of the investment climate, it doesn't talk about prospects of growth and that its sources of data collection are primarily

limited to two cities (Mumbai and Delhi).

In 2017, a more granular-level study and analysis by the Niti Aayog and the IDFC Institute showed that the World Bank's assessment also fell short in certain areas, such as the time it takes to start a business. Shortly after the study was released, the Modi government distanced itself from the report, saying it did not represent "official views".

Further, what firms actually encounter 'on the ground' is perhaps more important, but there are limitations to our ability to measure and interpret those experiences without bias. The Doing Business reports' de jure indicators offer a snapshot of a country's regulatory cholesterol, but likewise should not be viewed in isolation

Along with this, improvement in ranking does not appear to be reflected in the sentiments conveyed by business, at least privately.

1. Increases in Custom Duties

While the U.S. 'war on trade' gets the most international attention, India has increased customs duties quite a bit, even within the World Bank's reporting period – notably with the 2018-19 Union Budget, that increased customs duties on nearly 50 product groups. There have been customs duty increases on other product groups

more recently. While 'trading across borders' is a category in the World Bank report, the covered factors focus on documentation and compliance costs.

2. Price Controls

India has expanded price controls on pharmaceuticals and more recently has expanded price controls to include medical devices – particularly stents and knee replacements joints. Other sectors, too, have fallen under price controls such as credit card transaction fees and airline tickets to smaller cities.

3. Local Content Rules for Public Procurement

The creation of local content mandates for government procurement predates the Modi government. But the concept has been augmented in recent years, despite India losing a World Trade Organization case to the U.S. on solar power content rules. One key example is a directive from the Prime Minister's Office in December 2017 to expand local preferences to a wider set of services. Or the Ministry of Heavy Industries' National Capital Goods Policy, adopted by the cabinet in 2016, calling for 30-40 percent local content for capital goods. Local content mandates are a form of trade barrier yet are not covered under the narrow 'trading across borders' category employed by the World Bank.

4. Snap Regulatory Shifts

India needs to dramatically strengthen its processes for adopting new business regulations. No government should, of course, negate its ability to change regulation of an industry. But regulatory changes should be done in a thoughtful, deliberative manner that balances multiple stakeholders. For instance, in April this year, the Reserve Bank of India adopted a tough new rule under which financial firms must keep data on domestic transactions within India. A few months later, the Finance

Ministry's think tank, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, through a Working Paper on 'Data Localisation in India', raised serious questions about the RBI's underlying thought on adopting this policy. Ill-conceived regulatory changes do not fall under the World Bank's scorecard yet are very meaningful for current and potential investors.

Further, the index does not take qualitative factors into consideration. The notion of a supportive business environment cannot be seen in isolation of a country's health and education indices, its political climate and the robustness of key institutions. Oddly enough, India's improved ranking coincides with an extraordinary outbreak of discord within India's premier investigative agency CBI and between the Centre and the Reserve Bank. Fringe elements in the political spectrum have disrupted business activity in Gujarat and elsewhere, upsetting free

movement of labour. A government that promised 'minimum government and maximum governance' seems to evoke fear among sections of industry. A liberal regulatory environment must be accompanied by transparency and consensus in policymaking. An index that takes social and physical infrastructure as well as grievance redressal systems for all stakeholders into account would be more insightful.

The index has evoked criticism in the past, notably by this year's Nobel prize winner Paul Romer who suggested that its methodology was biased. Critics have argued that the report does not take a nuanced view of regulation. While clunky regulation holds up day-to-day operations of a business, some rules are needed to protect public goods as well as vulnerable groups.

Way Forward

The World Bank's 'Doing Business' report is a critically important

document. It uses real metrics to rank nations' business environments. And in the right hands, it becomes a toolkit for reform. However, there are limitations. Some of the most important factors for an investor to consider fall outside the system, such as customs duties, price controls, local content mandates and slapdash regulatory changes. India's fast climb in the rankings in recent years is laudable, but the government must ensure that it does not slip on these measures that fall outside the formal rankings.

General Studies Paper- III

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

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

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5. INLAND WATERWAYS: NEW HIGHWAYS OF INDIA

Why in News?

Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Shipping and Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Nitin Gadkari has started India's first inland waterway cargo container movement from Kolkata to Varanasi on river Ganga (National Waterway-1). The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) marked the first container movement by shipping 16 containers of food and snacks by PepsiCo India - equivalent to 16 truckloads.

Introduction

India's first container vessel movement on the Ganga river (National Waterways-1) began last week. The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) transported the container cargo

belonging to the food and beverages giant PepsiCo (India), from Kolkata to Varanasi. The cargo movement to the East and Northeastern states of the country will become easier with the new mode of transportation through waterways. Moreover, the development of multi-modal hubs within the time duration of three years will lead to a considerable increase in the volume of cargo movement through waterways. According to the sources the Cruise tourism in the country will also improve by next year.

Currently, cargo from the Gangetic states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh takes circuitous land routes to reach the sea ports of Mumbai in Maharashtra and Kandla in Gujarat, rather than going to the much-closer port at Kolkata. The development of NW1 will help these states direct some of their freight to the

Kolkata-Haldia complex, making the movement of freight more reliable and reducing logistics costs significantly.

The central government is developing the National Waterways-1 (River Ganga). It is being developed under Jal Marg Vikas Project from Haldia to Varanasi, covering a distance of 1,390 km. It is being done at a cost of around Rs 5,369 crore, with the financial and technical assistance from the World Bank. This project would allow commercial navigation of container vessels with a capacity of 1,500 to 2,000 Deadweight Tonnage (DWT). According to IWAI officials the container cargo transport allows for easier modal shift, reduces handling cost, decreases pilferage and damage, besides enabling cargo owners to lessen their carbon footprints.

India's First Modern Inland Waterway

Through the ages, rivers have served as effective waterways, carrying people and goods over long distances. Even today, many countries depend heavily on inland water transport, especially for large and bulky cargo, as it is cheaper, more reliable and less polluting than transporting goods by road or rail. India has yet to develop this cheaper and greener mode of transportation. Goods still travel by congested road and rail networks, slowing the movement of cargo, adding to uncertainties and increasing the costs of trade. So much so that logistics costs in India are estimated to account for as much as 18 percent of the country's GDP. Until about a hundred years ago, the Ganga river, too, was a busy waterway. But with the coming of the railways, this watercourse fell into disuse. The government of India is now reviving the Ganga watercourse – known as National Waterway 1 or NW1- to ferry cargo from the Eastern seaport of Haldia to Varanasi, some 1,360 km inland. The waterway has the potential to emerge as the leading logistics artery for Northern India.

Ganga River and Waterways

Since the Ganga occupies a special place in the social, cultural and environmental landscape of the country, the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) has sought to adopt the least intrusive methods of making the river navigable. Unlike many of the world's major watercourses, the Ganga is a seasonal river that swells with the monsoon rains and recedes in the dry winters. While small boats can indeed ply along this seasonal river, large cargo barges need a minimum depth to sail in. Shipping on the Ganga has thus been limited by the varying depths of water found in the river. Currently, traffic is largely limited to the river's downstream stretch between Farakka

and the Haldia where the water is deep enough - 2.5 m to 3.0 m - for boats to sail in throughout the year.

Typically, making such a river navigable would call for large scale dredging of the riverbed to attain the depth needed by larger boats, especially for large barges carrying up to 2,000 tonnes of cargo. In the Ganga's case, special care has been taken to accommodate such vessels while keeping the need for dredging to the minimum. A 45 metre-wide channel has been earmarked in the river's deepest part and the Least Available Depths (LAD) needed for navigation has been determined keeping in mind the need to reduce dredging. The channel's depth thus follows the river's natural gradient in different stretches and is sufficient to support the two-way movement of large barges.

Under the Jal Marg Vikas project, various sub projects include, fairway development and construction of multimodal terminals at Varanasi, Sahibganj and Haldia and a new navigation lock at Farakka. On NW-2 (river Brahmaputra) a Ro-Ro service has started and a ship repair facility is being constructed at Pandu (Guwahati).

National Waterways Projects and Status

As per The National Waterways Act, 2016, 111 waterways have been declared as National Waterways (NWs) including the five existing NWs. Out of the 111 NWs, NW-1, 2, & 3 are already operational. Cargo as well as passenger / cruise vessels are plying on these waterways. Detailed Project Report (DPR) for development of NW-4 & 5 were completed in 2010. The DPR of NW 5 was updated in 2014. For the newly declared 106 NWs, prior to undertaking any developmental activities on NWs, a Techno-Economic Feasibility Study is conducted which inter-alia, includes, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Environmental Management

Plan (EMP) and Environmental & Social Impact Assessment (ESIA). Based on these study reports, necessary mitigation measures are taken up as per extant rules and regulation. The extent, scope and expenditure on development of these NWs will be known after completion of these studies. Some of the National Waterways in the country are already operational/ navigable and are being used for transportation.

The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) is working on developing the new National Waterways and enhancing their navigational potential. The development work is preceded by a feasibility study which inter-alia covers the potential of navigability, cargo availability, cost of development etc. of the NW concerned. Work is then initiated on waterways that are found feasible for development.

Harnessing Inland Waterways for Greener Economy and Inclusive Growth

India is a land of rivers. It has 7500-km long coastline with approximately 14,500 kms of navigable waterways. This offers a huge potential for developing a cheaper and greener mode of transport. But only a very small percentage of trade is currently being carried out through these waterways and coastlines. Coastal shipping accounts for only 6 % and inland water transport for about 0.4% of trade.

Nearly 60 % of goods today travel by congested roads and 25 % by rail networks. This slows down the movement of cargo, adds to uncertainties, increases the costs of trade, and leaves deep environmental footprints. It has been found that logistics costs in India account for about 18 percent of the country's GDP, which is much higher than China, USA, UK and many other countries. This makes Indian goods costlier and

Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade (PIWTT)

India and Bangladesh signed several milestone agreements, for enhancing inland and coastal waterways connectivity between the two countries for trade and cruise movements. The two sides agreed to consider inclusion of Rupnarayan river (National Waterway-86) from Geonkhali to Kolaghat in the protocol route and to declare Kolaghat in West Bengal as new Port of Call. Chilmari was agreed to as a port of call in Bangladesh. The new arrangement will facilitate movement of flyash, cement, construction materials etc from India to Bangladesh through IWT on Rupnarayan river. Further, both sides agreed to declare Badarpur on river Barak (NW 16) as an Extended Port of Call of Karimganj in Assam and Ghorasal of Ashuganj in Bangladesh on reciprocal basis. The Indian side proposed for extension of the protocol routes from Kolkata upto Silchar in Assam.

In another important understanding reached at between the two countries, the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for movement of passengers and cruise vessels on Inland Protocol route and coastal shipping routes have been finalised. These river cruise services are likely to commence between Kolkata – Dhaka - Guwahati – Jorhat and back. It was also decided that a Project Management Consultant for supervision and monitoring of dredging of Ashuganj-Zakiganj and Sirajganj-Daikhowa stretches of Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route in Bangladesh will be engaged with 80 per cent financial contribution from India and rest by Bangladesh.

Bangladesh agreed to hold stakeholder consultations and revert on the matter. Both sides have also agreed for development of Jogighopa as a hub/trans-shipment terminal for movement of cargo to Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Bhutan and notifying Munsiganj River terminal by Bangladesh Customs for routing third party Exim cargo through Kolkata Port. Discussions were also held to make Nakugaon Land Port in Bangladesh and Dalu ICP (India) operational and to connect Gelephu (Bhutan) as tripartite cross-border route.

hence less competitive. As per World Bank analysis, the cost of transport of one tonne of freight over a km by road is Rs 2.28, by rail Rs 1.41 and Rs 1.19 for waterways. So, logistics costs in the country can be brought down considerably by transporting more and more goods by waterways.

In this era of energy crisis, waterways have been found to be a fuel efficient, environment friendly and cost effective mode of transport, besides having the capacity to ease pressure on rail and road sectors. Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI), which came up in October 1986, acts as the nodal agency for optimum utilization of the vast untapped potential of our inland waterways.

While developing the waterways, the legal framework governing inland waterways vessels is also being revamped. A new Bill is on the anvil to amend the century old Inland Vessels Act, 1917, in keeping with needs of the modern inland water transport and the required legal framework. The 2017 Bill addresses the existing lacunae regarding variation of standards of inland vessels

across the states. As per the Draft Bill, Central government would be the nodal authority to stipulate uniformly applicable standards and measures for safe navigation of inland vessels.

Challenges

- ◆ The cost savings from water transportation would never be realized unless vessels are able to load to their full tonnage. This is possible only if the rivers are deepened between 2.5 and 4.5 meters and if return cargo is made available for the vessel to avoid wasteful return trips as we all well aware that most of the Indian rivers are locational, cover small geography and undergo huge seasonal fluctuations even some of the rivers generally remain dry which rendering them unsuitable for navigation. There is a need to develop water reservoirs for the conservation of rainwater to feed such rivers.
- ◆ Higher water salinity, especially in the coastal regions and estuaries and constant inflow of silt in the

rivers can be problematic. Along with the minimal water flow continuous dredging is desired as the rivers bring a large amount of siltation.

- ◆ The heavy investment will be needed for construction of locking barrages to hold water for vessel movement, concretization and building of embankments to create port terminals and procure equipment, including dredgers, shipping vessels and barges of different sizes and require river ports with their support infrastructure- road and rail connectivity, warehouses and other services.
- ◆ Inland waterways transport (IWT) is a slower mode as compared by rail and road by its very nature. So Improper navigational aids further hurt its competitiveness with other modes.
- ◆ Non-availability of permanent and mechanized handling terminals for loading and unloading with adequate infrastructure, connectivity to the other mode of transport with the terminal is another key factor.
- ◆ There are road and rail bridges with low vertical clearances which impede the passage of bigger IWT vessel on the waterways. There should be a long-term vision for the development of dams, bridges and other in-way infrastructures.

Opportunities

- ◆ As the acquisition of land for national and state highways becomes scarce and the cost of construction of roads, flyovers and bridges goes up, the government is now exploring using water as a means of public transportation.
- ◆ Water transport is not only environment-friendly but also cheaper than other modes of transport.

- ◆ It takes lesser time to transport cargo by waterways in some areas and the chances of congestion and accidents on highways are eliminated.
- ◆ There is a huge potential for domestic cargo transportation as well as for cruise, tourism and passenger traffic.
- ◆ There is huge potential for public-private partnership (PPP) led investments in dredging, construction, operation and maintenance of barges, terminals, storage facilities and navigation, as well as tourism.
- ◆ It will help in the generation of millions of job opportunities.
- ◆ It will boost the maritime trade of the states and augment their economies.

Way Forward

A sound and efficient transport infrastructure is the key to boosting economic growth and in turn, to alleviating poverty and promoting sustainable development. Inland water transport system ensures both, by way of providing access, mobility and connectivity and generating employment at the grassroots with lesser environmental footprint and cost.

The NW1 has the future of emerging as the leading logistical artery for the entire Northern India, which passes through one of India's most densely populated areas and resource-rich regions and generates an estimated 40 percent of India's traded

goods. The region's teeming markets also attract goods from other parts of the country. The network of a water-road-rail link will help the region's industries and manufacturing units to have a seamless flow of goods to markets in India and abroad. Further, it will also give wider market access to the farmers of this agriculturally-rich Gangetic plain. Once fully operational, the integrated system of water-road and rail network will herald a new era of inclusive growth and green economy in India.

General Studies Paper- III

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



6. UNIVERSITIES & PATENTS: BENEFITTING EACH OTHER

Why in News?

On October 28, the Central government conducted the competitive examination to test proficiency in patent law, a type of intellectual property right (IPR), after a hiatus of two years. Any Indian citizen with a bachelor's degree in science or technology can take the examination. Upon clearing it the person is entitled

to practice before the patent office as a registered patent agent. Qualifying the exam allows science graduates to draft, file and procure patents from the patent office on behalf of inventors.

Background

Universities and patents benefit each other. Patents help universities to improve their ranking, establish

an innovation ecosystem, incubate knowledge-based start-ups, earn additional revenue and measure research activity. In its biggest push to create entrepreneurial universities, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has now asked all universities in India to set up Intellectual Property (IP) Centers. As universities line up to set up these centers, they will face a strange human resources problem: despite the policy push to have more IP, we simply do not have enough IP professionals in the country.

Patents and Rankings

The new IPR policy has pushed universities to file more patents. Kindled by the call to have more IPRs, the higher education sector has witnessed many reforms. The UGC's call to universities has come after a series of policy directives to introduce awareness about IP in higher educational institutions.

The number of patents applied for, granted and commercialised by

Patent vs Copyright vs Trademark

Patent, Copyright and Trademark serve different and distinct uses. The validity of their life and requirement for application also vary.

Patent - Patent is an exclusive right for an invention provided by the law for a limited time to the Patentee. By patenting an invention, the patentee is able to control the making, using, selling or importing of the patented product or process for producing that product without his/her consent. An invention relating either to a product or process that is new, involving inventive step and capable of industrial application can be patented in India.

Copyright - Copyright is a right given by the law to creators of literary, dramatic, musical and artistic works and producers of cinematograph films and sound recordings. Copyright does not protect brands or names, short word combinations, slogans, short phrases, methods, plots or factual information. Copyright also does not protect ideas or concepts. Therefore, copyright is mainly used to protect the creativity of writers, artists, designers, dramatists, musicians, architects and producers of sound recordings, cinematograph films and computer software.

Trademark - Trademark is a visual symbol which may be a word signature, name, device, label, numerals or combination of colours used by one enterprise on goods or services or other articles of commerce to distinguish it from other similar goods or services originating from a different undertaking. Hence, trademarks are mostly used to protect brand names, business names, slogans and more.

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy, 2016

The IPR Policy which is in compliance with WTO's (World Trade Organisation) agreement on TRIPS (Trade Related aspects of IPRs), aims to sustain entrepreneurship and boost schemes like 'Make in India.'

Highlights of the policy are:

- The policy aims to push IPRs as a marketable financial asset, promote innovation and entrepreneurship, while protecting public interest.
- Special thrust on awareness generation and effective enforcement of IPRs, besides encouragement of IP commercialisation through various incentives.
- India will engage constructively in the negotiation of international treaties and agreements in consultation with stakeholders. The government will examine accession to some multilateral treaties which are in India's interest and become a signatory to those treaties which India has de facto implemented to enable it to participate in their decision making process.
- It suggests making the department of industrial policy and promotion (DIPP) the nodal agency for all IPR issues. Copyrights related issues will also come under DIPP's ambit from that of the Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry.
- Trademark offices have been modernised and the aim is to reduce the time taken for examination and registration to just 1 month by 2017.
- Films, music, industrial drawings will be all covered by copyright.
- The policy also seeks to facilitate domestic IPR filings, for the entire value chain from IPR generation to commercialisation. It aims to promote research and development through tax benefits.
- It also says "India will continue to utilise the legislative space and flexibilities available in international treaties and the TRIPS Agreement." These flexibilities include the sovereign right of countries to use provisions such as Section 3(d) and Compulsory Licensing (CLs) for ensuring the availability of essential and life-saving drugs at affordable prices.

The IPR policy favoured the government considering financial support for a limited period on sale and export of products based on IPRs generated from public-funded research.

universities and institutes is factored in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) rankings: no surprise that the top ranked engineering institutes in India are also the leading filers of patents. Whether a higher educational institute has an innovation ecosystem could also have a bearing, with the National Assessment and Accreditation Council, awarding up to 24 points to an institute which sets up an innovation ecosystem and has a facility for identifying and promoting IPRs. The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) model curriculum for its member institutions lays emphasis on the need for IPR education in technical institutes.

Significance of Universities in filing Patent Application

Universities and institutes are considered to be the most important foundation for growth of any country.

It is the place where most of the basic research is carried out, giving way to inventions. As Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) act as a shield to such invention from being misused by third parties and help in commercialization of these inventions, it is highly recommended that such inventions be protected under the IP domain in order to guard owner's interests in order to infuse development in respective field of invention.

Often times, since students are the ones who carry out research that may lead to inventions, it is imperative for them to get these inventions protected in order to commercialize the invention as well as thwart misuse of the same by third parties. Moreover, there are various reasons as to why academic institutes or universities should consider filing a patent application for protection of inventions that have been carried out in their campus.

IP divisions in universities and institutions help spread the awareness of importance of IPR, especially for filing patent application for an invention. Such awareness and advantages of patent protection gives an incentive to members of universities for more inventions, leading to greater skills. Thus, university, in the end produces high quality manpower that the world is chasing for.

Unlike industrial scientists and engineers who generally are hired to invent and assign rights in their inventions to their employer without any residual rights to additional compensation, university personnel are in a different position. The prime focus of universities is to educate and, in some instances, to conduct technical research. However, in case of any invention during the conduct of technical research, universities must not lose an opportunity to file a patent application and take benefits from it thereon. This helps the universities in investing more on R&D and helping them in overall development.

Academic - Industrial Linkages

There are many instances where universities collaborate with industries for innovating in a specific domain, which gives a lot of exposure to its faculties and students and help them gain a position in these industries, leading to a lot of acknowledgement of the respective universities. This, in turns, encourages the entire academic ecosystem to do more research leading to useful invention, leading the country in becoming the hub of research and development.

One such occasion where innovation ecosystem was built was for drug discovery, in which recently about 45 MoUs were exchanged between Pharmaceutical industries and central institutes such as IITs, IISCs, NIOERs, IISc-B, NIFT NITs, RGIPT, RGNIYD& SPAs.

It is steps like these that have led India to enjoy the position of leadership in the world's pharmaceutical market in generic medicines. Much of the credit also goes to policy initiative in terms of Patent Act, 1970 which allowed process patents, enabling in transforming India from medicine importing country to exporting country and private and public skill and entrepreneurship of pharma industry.

Further, It is observed that India has been increasingly getting involved in research and development, so much so that, various multinational corporations across the world has shifted their R&D base in India. This is a significant reason as to why Indian universities should file for patent applications as all of the above facts give incentives for the universities to innovate more useful products that helps grow the society as well as the economy.

Government Policies Supporting the Filing of Patent Applications

The government of India amended the Patent Act by introducing the following policies that gives incentives to academic institutions to protect their inventions under patent law.

- ◆ The act has provided a concession to small entities and individual in fees for filing applications. Under the Act, an individual is supposed to pay Rs. 1600/- and small entities shall pay 4000/-, however other legal entity are obligated to pay Rs. 8000/- .Thus, giving approximately 50% relaxation to an individual and small entities.
- ◆ Scheme for facilitating Intellectual Property Protection (SIPP) running on pilot basis till 31st March 2020, facilitating 80 % rebates to start-ups for filing patent applications. They can also avail the special facility of expedited examination of their patent applications.

IP Reforms in India - A Glimpse

- Augmentation of manpower - The number of examiner of patents has been increased to 458 from an earlier 200 and the number of examiner of trademarks is now 100.
- Reforms to encourage registration/ filing through e-File with the objective to promote the concept of Digital India 10%
- Reforms and initiatives to ensure international co-operation - International programmes for the Asia Pacific and BRICS countries have been organised. A bilateral meeting was held between Controller general Patents, Designs and Trademarks and the Japan Patent Office Commissioner. Further Members of the Chinese IP office had visited India. A MoU was signed by the Intellectual Property Office of the United Kingdom and the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion.
- Reforms to expedite the process of prosecution - Provision has been made for video conferencing of hearings even from the attorney's place of business or at the patent office.
- Reforms to simplify the process of registration - Amendments to the Trade Mark Rules 1999, notified in March 2017, has reduced the number of Forms from 74 to 8 and provided for the filing of single application form for all types of trademark applications.
- Reforms to empower Start-ups - To facilitate the implementation of the Start-up India scheme, 50% fee concession in patent and in trademark has been provided through the Patents and Trademarks Amendment Rules. Further, the Amendment in the Patent Rules, 2003, notified in 2016, has provided for the expedited examination of patent applications filed by start-ups.
- Reforms and initiatives for IP training and awareness - IPR help-desks and online guidance system through e-mail are available at each IPO location. Further, the IP office organized and participated in public outreach activities with industrial organizations like Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Associated Chambers of Commerce of India.

- ◆ The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India, has signed an Institutional agreement with Anna University to establish India's second Technology and Innovation Support Center (TISC) at the Centre for Intellectual Property Rights (CIPR), Anna University, Chennai, under the World Intellectual Property Organization's (WIPO) TISC program.

Such reduction in filing fees for individuals, small entities and start-ups will help students to file patent application without any inconvenience. The objective of the aforesaid policies is to stimulate a dynamic, vibrant and balanced Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) system in India to foster creativity and innovation, thereby promoting entrepreneurship and enhancing social, economic and cultural development.

Present Scenario

India witnessed significant changes in IPRs since the introduction of

the National IPR Policy in 2016. The grants rates at the patent office have increased: in 2017-2018, there was a 32% increase in the number of patents granted compared to the earlier year. The patent office increased its workforce with the inclusion of 459 new examiners and is on the lookout for more. The timeline for filing responses to official objections for patents has been reduced by half. While the disposal rate has increased, the filing rate for patents has not changed significantly. In 2016-17, the patent office reported a dip of 3.2% in filing compared to the previous financial year.

The Indian universities have become more and more aware about the importance of IP over the last decade. The number of patents filed by the various Indian Institutes of Technology for instance has increased from 91 in 2008-09 to 400 in 2016-17. IITs continue to top the rank list by filling the maximum number of applications in a year for the protection of their inventions within India,

following which, Amity University and Indian Institute of Science score 2nd and 3rd rank. It is to be noted that Indian Institute of Science has shown remarkable growth in number of filing patent applications in 2016-2017 as compared to the year 2008-2009. Further, Amity University recorded about more than 23% growth in the year 2012-2013. Moreover, CIPR has filed more than 185 patents, 29 trademarks, 39 copyrights, 25 industrial design and has also assisted in filing 12 international patent applications.

Challenges Ahead

The dearth of IP professionals is a problem related to the field of intellectual property itself. Its recent rise to prominence in the international arena, thanks to various international treaties and trade agreements, along with the legal-centric approach where law schools and colleges are the only institutions which mandate teaching these subjects, are reasons why the supply

of IP professionals is not keeping pace with demand. But there is a great opportunity now that should not be missed. The Central government conducts the only competitive examination in the country to check a person's proficiency in IP.

India has a poor patent agent density, with only about 2,000 registered patent agents currently in practice. The last time when the patent office conducted the patent agent exam, in 2016, around 2,600 candidates took it, a paltry number if one looks at the ambitious goals set by the IPR Policy. Despite the infrequent manner in which the examination has been conducted, the private sector does give good weightage to the examination as it is considered to be the de facto IP qualification today.

Way Forward

The ambitious goal set by India's IPR policy will be realised only when the examination becomes the foundation for making a career in IPR. In a dynamic

field such as intellectual property, in order to create a band of qualified IP professionals there should be a push towards post-qualification continuous education as well. To achieve this, the format, membership, syllabus and the frequency of the patent agent examination will need to be addressed. This will not only increase the number and quality of IP professionals in the country but also become a new career choice for graduates with a degree in science and technology. In addition to it, fine-tuning the patent agent examination to cater to the growing IP needs of the country can be a successful way to build a band of professionals and create career opportunities.

General Studies Paper- III

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

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7. HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT: NEEDS PROPER MANAGEMENT

Why in News?

A six-year-old tigress suspected of having killed 13 people over the past two years in the hills of central India was shot dead by hunters under controversial circumstances last week of October. While the killing of the mother of two nine-month-old cubs triggered celebrations by villagers in the area stalked by the big cat, wildlife activists were furious – and with good reason. The latest incident in the man-animal conflict, which comes just days after another tigress (Sundari in Odisha) was blamed for killing a woman whose post-mortem report was inconclusive, shows that we need to get better at dealing with such cases.

Introduction

Human-wildlife conflict (HWC) is fast becoming a critical threat to

the survival of many endangered species, like wild buffalo, elephants, tiger, lion, leopard etc. such conflicts affect not only its population but also has broadened environmental impacts on ecosystem equilibrium and biodiversity conservation. Laws are man-made, hence there is likelihood of anthropocentric bias towards man and rights of wild animals often tend to be of secondary importance. But in the universe man and animal are equally placed, but human rights approach to environmental protection in case of conflict, is often based on anthropocentricity.

Wildlife - human conflicts are a serious obstacle to wildlife conservation and the livelihoods of people worldwide and are becoming more prevalent as human population increases,

development expands and global climate changes and other human and environmental factors put people and wildlife in greater direct competition for a shrinking resource base. It jeopardize long-term conservation goals such as securing protected areas and building constituencies in support of biodiversity conservation.

Overview of HWC in India

Man-animal conflict often results not because animals encroach human territories but vice versa. Often, man thinks otherwise, because man's thinking is rooted in anthropocentrism. Remember, we are talking about the conflict between man and endangered species, endangered not because of natural causes alone but because man failed to preserve and protect

them, the attitude was destructive, for pleasure and gain. Often, it is said such conflicts are due to human population growth, land use transformation, species habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation, increase in eco-tourism, access to natural reserves, increase in livestock population, etc. Proper management practices have to be accepted, like conservation education for local population, resettlement of villages, curbing grazing by livestock and domestic animals in forest, etc., including prey-preservation for the wild animals. Provision for availability of natural water, less or no disturbance from the tourists has to be assured. State also has to take steps to remove encroachments and, if necessary, can also cancel the patta already granted and initiate acquisition proceedings to preserve and protect wildlife and its corridors. Areas outside Protected Areas (PAs) is reported to have the maximum number of man-animal conflict, they fall prey to poachers easily and often invite ire of the cultivators when they cause damage to their crops. These issues have to be scientifically managed so as to preserve and protect the endangered species, like wild buffalo and other species included in Schedule 1 Part 1 of the Wildlife Protection Act, as well as other species which face extinction.

Man-animal conflicts are common in various parts of the country. In India, wild elephants probably kill far more people than tiger, leopard or lion. But, surprisingly, human conflict involving leopard draws great amount of public attention compared to other animals. Other carnivores - tigers, lions and wolves, which have been known for causing a large number of human deaths in the past, are now mostly restricted in range and their impact is not as widespread as that of the leopard.

In India, HWC has given rise to many problems like the conservation of wildlife and livestock, damage to crops and property of farmers. The

conflict can be reduced by providing adequate habitat to wild animals and maintenance of physical barriers to wild animals, active guarding of crops and stopping of degradation of habitat quality, providing adequate and immediate compensation to affected families.

Conflict with wildlife may be due to the abnormal behavior of wild animals like aggressiveness of monkey, cattle lifting by carnivore, injury by bears during Mahua season etc.

Development of people is always welcome but not at the cost of negative ecological aspect in the ecosystem.

Development activities cause more interference in forest and also the privacy of wildlife and these ultimately cause conflict with wildlife. Man-animal conflict often takes place when wild animals cause damage to agricultural crop and property, killing of livestock and human beings. Human population growth, land use transformation, species loss of habitat, ecotourism, too much access to reserves, increase in livestock population bordering the forest, depletion of natural prey base etc., often stated to be reasons for such conflict. Central government, the State governments and the Union Territories should evolve better preservation strategies, in consultation with Wildlife Boards so that such conflicts can be avoided to a large extent. Participation of people who are staying in the Community Reserves is also of extreme importance.

Environmental justice could be achieved only if we drift away from the principle like sustainable development; polluter pays principle, precautionary principles which are based in the interest of humans and environment.

Ecocentrism is nature centred where humans are part of nature and non-human has intrinsic value. In other words, human interest does not take automatic precedence and humans have obligations to non-humans independently of human interest.

Ecocentrism is therefore life-centered, nature-centered where nature includes both human and non-humans.

Geographical Distribution of HWC

Although HWC was reported from 32 states and Union Territories of India (out of a total of 36), some states namely Karnataka in Southern India, Assam in North-Eastern India and Gujarat in Western India were the three top most reported locations of conflict. Although HWC in Karnataka is primarily due to elephant crop depredation and human casualties by elephant and large carnivores (mainly tiger and leopard), Assam reported crop depredation by primates and elephant and Gujarat, crop depredation by ungulates (mainly blackbuck and blue bull).

The geographical distribution of conflict also showed a dramatic increase over time; during the period 1976–1995, HWC was reported only from 11 states and Union Territories in India; whereas the number increased to 31 regions in the period 1996–2005. In the period 1976–1995, Gujarat in Western India, Kerala in southern India and Haryana in Northern India were the top three HWC locations with crop depredation due to elephant, primates and ungulates, being the major form of conflict. During 1996–2005 though, Karnataka in Southern India, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh in North-eastern India were the top three HWC locations and the main forms of conflict were human injuries and casualties by large carnivores (mainly tiger and leopard) in Karnataka and crop depredation by elephant and primates in all three locations.

Overall, 69% of conflict incidences were reported from nonprotected forest areas, although less than one-third were reported from forests with some level of government protection (such as national parks, wildlife sanctuary, elephant and tiger reserves and reserved forests).

Reasons behind Man-Animal Conflict	Results of Man-Animal Conflict	Solutions to Reduce Man-Animal Conflict
➤ Deforestation ➤ Loss of Habitat ➤ Decline in Prey ➤ Injured or Old Animal ➤ Growing Human Population ➤ Road Kills ➤ Land Use Transformations ➤ Livestock Grazing	➤ Crop Damage ➤ Animal Deaths ➤ Loss of Human Life ➤ Injuries to people ➤ Injuries to wildlife ➤ Livestock Depredation	➤ Improvement of Habitat ➤ Training Programs ➤ Awareness Programs ➤ Technical and Financial Support ➤ Eco-development activities ➤ Fencing (Chili Pepper plant, Bee) ➤ Land-Use Planning ➤ Livestock Protection ➤ Avoid Stepping out after Dark ➤ Livestock Guard Dogs

Wildlife Species Involved in HWC

A total of 88 species belonging to nine different taxonomic groups were reported to be involved in conflict. Most of the species were carnivores followed by rodents and ungulates. The number of taxonomic groups involved in conflict varied across India and the highest number (8) of unique taxonomic groups were reported from Kerala in Southern India. Out of the total 88 species in conflict, the top four species in terms of number of reports were Asian elephant: 16.5%, leopard: 7.00%, tiger: 7.00%, and rhesus macaque: 5.25%. As with conflict instances and geographical regions, the number of species involved in HWC also doubled from 38 in 1976–1995 to 76 during 1996–2015. The main conflict species during 1976–1995 were Asian elephant, blackbuck and Indian gerbil. This changed to Asian elephant, Indian tiger and common leopard during 1996–2015.

Protected Areas and Animal Conservation

In case of many wildlife animals, India does not lack protected areas, but the very idea of a protected area appears skewed. The protected areas were historically meant to be the breeding grounds for animals raised in the wild for the purpose of hunting. This space is not enough to have a full-fledged habitat for wild animals.

A territorial animal like a male tiger needs an area of 60-100 sq km. But the area allocated to an entire tiger reserve, like the Bor Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra, is 138.12 sq km. This is barely enough for one or two tigers.

The elephants need to travel at least 10-20 km a day. If a herd is restricted to an area of about 100 sq km, they are bound to move out in search of food and water. Elephants are used to travelling long distances, most of which fall outside the protected areas.

The condition of the existing protected areas is not very good, either. Wildlife experts claim that territorial animals do not have enough space within reserves and their prey do not have enough fodder to thrive on. This is forcing the wild animals to move out and venture close to human habitation in search of food.

Wildlife experts warn that if wildlife protection is confined to reserves and parks alone, several species will stand at the brink of extinction. This is best exemplified by the Great Indian Bustard, which is a Schedule-I animal. Despite having sanctuaries to itself, the bird has been driven to the brink of extinction. "Various bustard sanctuaries had sizeable population once upon a time. But as of March 2015, there are an estimated 169 birds left. The problem is how do you restrict a bird? They fly out of the protected

areas and are then hunted for their meat," says Sutirtha Dutta, a researcher at WII.

Analysis of Wildlife Conservation in India

Much of India's post-independence conservation efforts have excluded forest dwellers, completely overlooking the important role they play. Naturally, the word "conservation" now comes to haunt the forest dwellers.

Even as these guardians of their forests are displaced, the government makes way for corporation-led 'development' projects which are much more invasive and destructive.

Linear development projects like the construction of roads, rail, pipelines etc. threaten forest inhabitants as forest dweller's consent is not a prerequisite for forest clearance.

The government's indifference to protection of no-go areas leaves biodiversity-rich forest lands vulnerable to industries like mining.

The Forest Rights Act introduced to recognise dweller's rights and makes conservation more accountable was successfully used by local community in Mahan forests of Madhya Pradesh to successfully halt plans for a suggested coal mine thereby saving ancient sal forests. This provides a lesson on the importance of empowering local forest dwellers with awareness of the law to protect their rights. The BRT Tiger Reserve (Biligiriranga hills) is another example of successful co-existence of local communities and wildlife.

So far, Indian conservation of wildlife and habitats has largely succeeded because of our culture, our inherent reverence for the natural world, our tolerance for wildlife presence in human-dominated habitats and the importance accorded to it both by the government as well as civil society.

There is need to continue in this spirit, take the successes achieved thus far further, even as

“sustainable, healthy development based on partnerships involving local communities, government, civil society and all interested stakeholders” is enabled.

The focus on large mammals especially the tiger must be broadened to make efforts towards conservation of “all endangered and threatened species and habitats”.

Mitigation Method to Prevent HWC

The current situation urgently calls for establishing balance between human and animal demand for space; one that can be achieved only when all stakeholders work towards sustainable development.

Immediate Measures Towards Addressing Conflicting Situations

- ◆ A coordinated approach must replace case-by-case reactive one. Sunderbans provides a lesson on how to handle tiger attacks on humans effectively. The government has implemented reliable mechanisms over time to promptly recognize and relocate conflict-causing tigers.
- ◆ Quick response teams to thwart tigers have been deployed. Other conflict-prone areas should have such response teams made up of “wildlife veterinarians, forest department staff and local volunteers trained to contain conflict-prone animals and irate crowds.
- ◆ Local police should be trained to handle such situations in an adept manner. Educators and public health professionals need to work with communities and equip them to respond effectively to conflicts.

Over longer term, land use planning should take into account the geographic characteristics of the place and steer clear of actions that heighten the risk of conflicts.

Dr. Krithi K. Karanth and Ms. Sahila Kudalkar from the Wildlife Conservation Society (New York) and Centre for Wildlife Studies, Bangalore conducted research across villages in Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka to understand the issues around man-animal conflicts.

- ◆ Researchers found the villagers to adopt as many as 11 mitigation strategies- common ones included scare devices, keeping watch during nighttime and fences to keep wildlife at bay. But losses occur despite these measures. The researchers opined that careful analysis of effectiveness of these strategies would aid mitigation in long run.
- ◆ They also highlighted the tolerance shown by local communities and emphasized the importance of building the same.
- ◆ They stressed the need for better intervention and support for high-risk communities at the forest border.

The main point of the study is that so much time, money and effort is invested by people whether it's the farmer or the government, trying to mitigate conflict. A lot of this is ad hoc and we really need to scientifically test and evaluate these strategies, compare them against each other to see which ones will work better.

Way Forward

The fact goes without saying that wildlife conservation is an imperative which sustains life in this planet. But the sheer expanse in the population as well as lopsided perceptions on development remains as prominent threats to augmentation of forest cover and wild life conservation. It is a trite fact that forest cover is fast dwindling and wild life is pitted against multi pronged threats. On the jurisprudential scenario, the evolution of animal rights and human rights and the ensuing

conflicts and desirable convergence are now seriously deliberated around the world. A shift from anthropocentrism to eco-centrism in developing sustainable mechanisms and models of forest governance would add the much needed vigour in the quest for the symbiotic existence.

It becomes incumbent for the state to formulate ways to manage such conflicts through governance models on a sustainable basis. Now a day every single incident of causality to the life and property of human beings generates chaos. The intensity of the chaos has spiked to a level where the affected people dare to take law into their hands and has many a times took law into their hands and involved in destruction of wild life which they justify as acts for self preservation. The governments finds hard pressed between the hue and cry raised by the victims for compensation and the bounden duty fastened on it by various statutes to conserve wildlife. Hence it goes without saying that there is a social cost involved in such instances both visible as well as invisible.

The states have to design proactive programmes by involving the stakeholders including the non-state actors to redeem the main stream society from the prevailing information and knowledge asymmetry levels about the intricacies involved and design models of co-existence to harmonize the relations for enduring solutions. It is imperative that what the state has to strive is to explore the frontiers of inclusiveness having an appreciable effect on sustainable models of biodiversity conservation by integrating participatory approaches.

General Studies Paper- III

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

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SEVEN SUBJECTIVE QUESTIONS WITH MODEL ANSWERS

Theft of Idols & Antiquities: A Systemic Problem

Q1. Tamil Nadu is rich feeding ground for idol thieves and smugglers because of the sheer number of temples within its borders. The National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities (NMMA) fortunately does have a mandate to cultivate public engagement and awareness for the protection of India's cultural heritage. Its progress towards that realisation seems slower than planned and much remains to be completed. Critically Examine.

Hints:

- ◆ From 1920 to 2017, a total of 2,145 icons and 478 idols have gone missing from 803 temples. These numbers are based on complaints preferred by temple officials to the police. Of this only around 60 have been recovered, and 18 have been restored to temples. Around 390 idols belonging to 33 temples remain non-traceable. The hunt for missing idols and figurines from temples has, over the last few months, turned into a bitter clash between two arms of the government – the Idol Wing of the Crime Branch CID and the HR&CE Department.
- ◆ Existing measures to protect India's rich heritage have proven to be woefully inadequate. According to Global Financial Integrity, a Washington-based advocacy group, illegal trade in paintings, sculptures and other artifacts is one of the world's most lucrative criminal enterprises, estimated at \$6 billion a year. And India, with its redoubtable cultural heritage, bureaucratic apathy and tardy implementation of antiquities protection laws, offers pilferers fertile ground to plunder the past and spirit away booty worth billions for sale in the international bazaar.
- ◆ According to the National Mission for Monument and Antiquities, there are approximately 7 million antiquities in India. The NMMA fortunately does have a mandate to cultivate public engagement and awareness for the protection of India's cultural heritage. Its progress towards that realisation seems slower than planned and much remains to be completed. In the meanwhile,

citizen-led initiatives and timely judicial interventions are making up for what already ought to be higher on the list of national priorities.

- ◆ To ensure effective protection of monuments and sites it was imperative to update policies, publish inventories and fully document monument details. However, these activities had not completed by the concerned entities. Further, in the absence of comprehensive planning and organisational weakness, there was no coordination among the three major wings of ASI, responsible for structural, chemical and environmental conservation.
- ◆ Success of conservation works was left largely to individual initiatives and an overall departmental perspective was completely missing. The ASI was unable to implement the provisions of the Antiquities and Art Treasure Act effectively and the incidence of an illegal export of antiquities was rampant. The proposed legislation amendments to this Act were pending for years. Poor documentation of the acquired artifacts and the failure to introduce the digital technology for documentation coupled with the absence of physical verification made the artifacts vulnerable to loss. The security system at the museums provided a grim picture in the absence of effective surveillance systems at the sites.

Need of the Hour to Empower Persons with Disabilities

Q2. India has an impressive set of policy commitments to its citizens with disabilities, much remains to be done. Critically Examine.

Hints:

- ◆ More than a billion people are estimated to live with some form of disability, or about 15% of the world's population (based on 2010 global population estimates). This is higher than previous World Health Organization estimates, which date from the 1970s and suggested a figure of around 10%.
- ◆ Disability is part of the human condition. Almost everyone will be temporarily or permanently impaired

at some point in life and those who survive to old age will experience increasing difficulties in functioning. Disability is complex and the interventions required to overcome disability disadvantage are multiple, systemic and will vary depending on context.

- ◆ Barriers for Disabled people, including inadequate policies and standards, negative attitudes, lack of provision of services, problems with service delivery, inadequate funding, lack of accessibility, lack of consultation and involvement.
- ◆ India has one of the more developed national policy frameworks for disability of developing countries, though there remains scope for improvement, in particular at the sub-national level. However, as in many areas of social policy, challenges of institutional capacity and coordination have contributed to implementation that frequently leaves much to be desired.
- ◆ There are both policy and institutional reform needs in the disability sector. At this point, a focus on outcomes for people with disabilities would suggest that the priority should be on institutional reform and strengthening, reviewing the institutional framework in the disability sector and strengthening the capacity of institutions to deliver on policy commitments. Nonetheless, several broad policy reforms remain important.
- ◆ Despite having one of the most progressive policy frameworks for persons with disabilities, India falls short in implementation. There is therefore a need to strengthen public-private partnerships with NGOs. However, there are concerns about weak monitoring mechanisms and accountability of public funds. And, persons with disability need to be treated more like active participants than clients. There is thus an urgent need for reforms at all levels.

India-Japan: Strategic Partners

Q3. In view of changing geopolitics in Indo-Pacific region, India and Japan seem to find a unique congruence of views. Comment.

Hints:

- ◆ Japan and India have an ancient relationship, with Buddhism acting as a common connecting factor. Relations between the two during the Cold War were not warm. During the Cold War, when India faced conflicts with China in 1962 and Pakistan in 1965 and 1971, the foreign policy stance of Japan towards India remained very neutral. The Japanese never supported India, nor supported its opponents and chose to not take sides.
- ◆ However, things did improve between India and Japan after the end of the Cold War. In the recent past, there has been a remarkable transformation in the bilateral relationship between India & Japan and the two countries have emerged as genuine strategic partners in the Indo-Pacific.
- ◆ During recent visit of PM Modi to Japan, there was an agreement to institute the foreign and defence ministerial “2+2” Dialogue, similar to India-US process. Up to now, this meeting has been held at the junior ministerial levels, so the upgrade signified a commitment to Japan and India to a joint role in maintaining peace, stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region where China flexes its military and economic muscle.
- ◆ Both countries were successful in pushing the spatial constructs such as the ‘Indo-Pacific’ into the discourses on international politics. Tokyo and Delhi also share similar strategic objectives, which include the creation of a robust multipower Asian order and thriving open sea lanes of communication in the region. Consequently, the maritime cooperation between the two countries is gaining momentum.
- ◆ During the recent bilateral summit, both countries agreed to scale up cooperation on Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), decided to develop the smart islands, initiated a 2+2 dialogue involving foreign/defence ministers and commenced negotiations on Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA). The ACSA will provide a framework concerning the reciprocal provision of supplies and services and enhance joint exercises and other cooperation between all three services.
- ◆ As a way to realise Modi’s “Act East” vision and Abe’s “Quality Infrastructure” and connectivity projects in Asia, the two reiterated a willingness to establish collaborative projects in the Indo-Pacific region, including in Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Bangladesh. This also extended to Africa, where China’s influence has grown in recent years. India is seeking to re-establish its historical bonds with Southeast Asian nations and Modi and Abe also agreed that “ASEAN unity and centrality are at the heart of the Indo-Pacific concept, which is inclusive and open to all”.
- ◆ At the 52nd Annual General Meeting of African Development Bank in Gandhinagar in May, 2017, the Indian PM, along with his Japanese and African counterparts, propounded the idea of an Asia–Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC). Some scholars have the

opinion that the AAGC is a counter proposal to the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The AAGC is unique in many aspects. In contrast to the BRI, the AAGC is a purely sea based corridor, which means that it ensures a lesser carbon footprint. Secondly, in AAGC, the process is more democratic and consultative as the focus is to assist the African states in the ways they want. Thirdly, the AAGC is a corridor where the private sector will be playing a major role in contrast to the BRI, which will be completely state funded.

- ◆ Both India and Japan have initiated moves to recalibrate ties with China in the wake of an uncertain global order, thanks to US President Donald Trump's unpredictable moves such as trade sanctions on friends (such as Japan) and foes (such as China). However, both countries are cautious about Beijing, due to its aggressive stance in the region.

Ease of Doing Business-2019 & India

Q4. The ease of doing business score captures the gap between an economy's performance and a measure of best practice across the entire countries. But there are many limitations in methodology of the index. Examine.

Hints:

- ◆ Today, the World Bank uses ten main factors in developing a nation's ranking, covering 190 nations. These factors include: starting a business; dealing with construction permits; getting electricity; registering property; getting credit; protecting minority investors; paying taxes; trading across borders; enforcing contracts; and resolving insolvency. Rankings and weightages on each of the mentioned factors are used to develop an overall Ease of Doing Business (EODB) ranking. A high EODB ranking means the regulatory environment is more conducive for starting and operating of businesses.
- ◆ The Doing Business methodology has five limitations that should be considered when interpreting the data.
 - ◆ First, for most economies the collected data refer to businesses in the largest business city and may not be representatives of regulation in other parts of the economy. To address this limitation, subnational Doing Business indicators are created.
 - ◆ Second, the data often focus on a specific business form – generally a limited liability company of a specified size – and mayn't be representative of the regulation on other businesses (e.g. sole proprietorships).
 - ◆ Third, transactions described in a standardised case scenario refer to a specific set of issues and may not represent the full set of issues that businesses encounters.
 - ◆ Fourth, the measures of time involve an element of judgment by expert respondents. When sources indicate different estimates, the time indicators reported in Doing Business represent the median values of several responses given under the assumptions of the standardized case.
 - ◆ Finally, the methodology assumes that a business has full information on what is required and does not waste time when completing procedures. In practice, completing a procedure may take longer time if the business lacks information or is unable to follow up promptly. Alternatively, the business may choose to disregard some burdensome procedures.
- ◆ Still, the Doing Business methodology offers several advantages.
 - ◆ It is transparent, using factual information about what laws and regulation say and allowing multiple interactions with local respondents to clarify potential misinterpretations of questions. Having representative samples of respondents is not an issue; Doing Business is not a statistical survey, and text of relevant laws and regulations are collected and answers checked for accuracy.
 - ◆ The methodology is in expensive and easily replicable, so data can be collected in large sample of economies. Because standard assumptions are used in data collection, comparisons and benchmarks are valid across economies.
 - ◆ Finally, the data not only highlight the extent of specific regulatory obstacles to business but also identify their source and point to what might be reformed.
- ◆ Further in context of India, criticisms of the World Bank's rankings are well known: they do little to provide a comprehensive picture of the investment climate, it doesn't talk about prospects of growth and that its sources of data collection are primarily limited to two cities (Mumbai and Delhi).

Inland Waterways: New Highways of India

Q5. Inland waterways are recognized as a fuel efficient, cost effective and environment friendly mode of transport. Inland water navigation is an underutilized infrastructure in India, while the government is trying to change this situation. Discuss.

Hints:

- ◆ India has an extensive network of inland waterways in the form of rivers, canals, backwaters and creeks. The total navigable length is 14,500 km, out of which about 5,200 km of the river and 4,000 km of canals can be used by mechanized crafts. Inland navigation is considered to be an energy saving mode of transport. It requires the maintenance of a specified water depth and width depending upon the size of vessels expected to use that waterway. This necessitates the release of adequate discharges.
- ◆ Water transport is not only environment-friendly but also cheaper than other modes of transport. It takes lesser time to transport cargo by waterways and the chances of congestion and accidents on highways are eliminated.
- ◆ There is a huge potential for domestic cargo transportation as well as for cruise, tourism and passenger traffic. There is huge potential for public private partnership (PPP) led investments in dredging, construction, operation and maintenance of barges, terminals, storage facilities and navigation, as well as tourism. It will help in the generation of millions of job opportunities.
- ◆ It will boost the maritime trade of the states and augment their economies.
- ◆ Many of the rivers generally remain dry. There is a need to develop water reservoirs for conservation of rain water to feed such rivers. There is a need to estimate the quantum of water required on a weekly basis throughout the year to maintain the minimum depth of water in the canals for navigability, besides ensuring that drinking, irrigation and other demands of water do not get impacted. Higher water salinity, especially in the coastal regions and estuaries, and constant inflow of silt in the rivers can be problematic. The cost savings from NW would never be realized unless vessels are able to load to their full tonnage. This is possible only if the rivers are deepened between 2.5 and 4.5 meters and if return cargo is made available for the vessel to avoid wasteful return trips.
- ◆ National waterways provide a cost-effective, logistically efficient and environment-friendly mode of transport, whose development as a supplementary mode would enable diversion of traffic from over-congested roads and railways. Hence, the waterways project deserves better regulation and development across the country.

Universities & Patents: Benefitting Each Other

Q6. Patents help universities to improve their ranking, establish an innovation ecosystem, incubate knowledge-based start-ups, earn additional revenue and measure research activity. Comment.

Hints:

- ◆ Universities and institutes are considered to be the most important foundation for growth of any country. It is the place where most of the basic research is carried out, giving way to inventions. As Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) act as a shield to such invention from being misused by third parties and help in commercialization of these inventions, it is highly recommended that such inventions be protected under the IP domain in order to guard owner's interests in order to infuse development in respective field of invention.
- ◆ Universities and patents benefit each other. The new IPR policy has pushed universities to file more patents. Kindled by the call to have more IPRs, the higher education sector has witnessed many reforms.
- ◆ The number of patents applied for, granted and commercialised by universities and institutes is factored in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) rankings: no surprise that the top ranked engineering institutes in India are also the leading filers of patents. Whether a higher educational institute has an innovation ecosystem could also have a bearing, with the National Assessment and Accreditation Council, awarding up to 24 points to an institute which sets up an innovation ecosystem and has a facility for identifying and promoting IPRs. The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) model curriculum for its member institutions lays emphasis on the need for IPR education in technical institutes.
- ◆ Often times, since students are the ones who carry out research that may lead to inventions, it is imperative for them to get these inventions protected in order to commercialize the invention as well as thwart misuse of the same by third parties. Moreover, there are various reasons as to why academic institutes or universities should consider filing a patent application for protection of inventions that have been carried out in their campus.
- ◆ There are many instances where universities collaborate with industries for innovating in a specific domain, which gives a lot of exposure to its faculties and students and help them gain a position in these

industries, leading to a lot of acknowledgement of the respective universities. This, in turns, encourages the entire academic ecosystem to do more research leading to useful invention, leading the country in becoming the hub of research and development.

- ◆ That India has been increasingly getting involved in research and development, so much so that, various multinational corporations across the world has shifted their R&D base in India. This is a significant reason as to why Indian universities should file for patent applications as all of the above facts give incentives for the universities to innovate more useful products that helps grow the society as well as the economy.
- ◆ The Indian universities have become more and more aware about the importance of IP over the last decade. The number of patents filed by the various Indian Institutes of Technology for instance has increased from 91 in 2008-09 to 400 in 2016-17.
- ◆ The ambitious goal set by India's IPR Policy will be realised only when the examination becomes the foundation for making a career in IPR. In a dynamic field such as intellectual property, in order to create a band of qualified IP professionals there should be a push towards post-qualification continuous education as well. To achieve this, the format, membership, syllabus and the frequency of the patent agent examination will need to be addressed. Fine-tuning the patent agent examination to cater to the growing IP needs of the country can be a successful way to build a band of professionals and create career opportunities.

Human-Wildlife Conflict: Needs Proper Management

Q7. In India, human wildlife conflict has given rise to many problems like the conservation of wildlife, and livestock, damage to crops and property of farmers. Analyse the statement.

Hints:

- ◆ Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC) is any interaction between wildlife and humans which causes harm, whether it is to the human, the wild animal, or property. (Property includes buildings, equipment, livestock and pets, crops fields or fences.)
- ◆ Development activities cause more interference in forest and also the privacy of wildlife and these ultimately cause conflict with wildlife. Man-animal conflict often takes place when wild animals cause damage to agricultural crop and property, killing

of livestock and human beings. Human population growth, land use transformation, species loss of habitat, ecotourism, too much access to reserves, increase in livestock population bordering the forest, depletion of natural prey base etc., often stated to be reasons for such conflict.

- ◆ The conflict can be reduced by providing adequate habitat to wild animals and maintenance of physical barriers to wild animals, active guarding of crops and stopping of degradation of habitat quality, providing adequate and immediate compensation to affected families.
- ◆ The condition of the existing protected areas is not very good, either. Wildlife experts claim that territorial animals do not have enough space within reserves and their prey do not have enough fodder to thrive on. This is forcing the wild animals to move out and venture close to human habitation in search of food.
- ◆ Much of India's post-independence conservation efforts have excluded forest dwellers, completely overlooking the important role they play. Naturally, the word "conservation" now comes to haunt the forest dwellers. Even as these guardians of their forests are displaced, the government makes way for corporation-led 'development' projects which are much more invasive and destructive.
- ◆ So far, Indian conservation of wildlife and habitats has largely succeeded because of our culture, our inherent reverence for the natural world, our tolerance for wildlife presence in human-dominated habitats and the importance accorded to it both by the government as well as civil society.
- ◆ Central government, the state governments and the Union Territories should evolve better preservation strategies, in consultation with Wildlife Boards so that such conflicts can be avoided to a large extent. Participation of people who are staying in the Community Reserves is also of extreme importance.
- ◆ The evolution of animal rights and human rights and the ensuing conflicts and desirable convergence are now seriously deliberated around the world. A shift from anthropocentrism to eco-centrism in developing sustainable mechanisms and models of forest governance would add the much needed vigour in the quest for the symbiotic existence.
- ◆ It is imperative that what the state has to strive is to explore the frontiers of inclusiveness having an appreciable effect on sustainable models of biodiversity conservation by integrating participatory approaches.



SEVEN IMPORTANT NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWS

NATIONAL

1. India's First Microprocessor- Shakti

Researchers at Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IITM) have designed and booted up India's first microprocessor, Shakti, which could be used in mobile computing and other devices.

According to IITM, Shakti processor family targets clock speeds to suit various end-user application devices

such as various consumer electronic devices, mobile computing devices, embedded low-power wireless systems and networking systems, among others. The Shakti family of processors was fabricated at Semi-Conductor Laboratory (SCL), Indian Space Research Organizations (ISRO) in Chandigarh, making it the first 'RISC V Microprocessor' to be completely designed and made in India.



Significance

This development will assume huge significance when systems based on Shakti processors are adopted by strategic sectors such as defence, nuclear power installations, government agencies and departments.

The impact of this completely indigenous fabrication is that India has now attained independence in designing, developing and fabricating end-to-end systems within the country, leading to self-sufficiency.

With a large percentage of applications requiring sub 200 Mhz processors, the current success paves the way to producing many hand-held and control application devices.

Background

In July 2018, an initial batch of 300 chips, named RISECREEK was produced under Project Shakti, that were fabricated at the Multinational Chip Manufacturer Intel's facility at Oregon, USA, that successfully booted the Linux operating system. Now, the fabrication has been done in India. ■

2. Soura Jalandhi Scheme

The government of Odisha has launched the Soura Jalandhi scheme that aims to increase use of solar energy for helping farmers in irrigating their land.

Key Features

- ◆ It is a dug well based solar pump irrigation system in convergence mode.
- ◆ Under the scheme, 5,000 solar pumps will be given to Odisha

farmers at a subsidy of 90 per cent to irrigate 2,500 acres of land.

- ◆ In the first phase, the facility will be available for farmers where electricity is not available for operating pump sets.
- ◆ Farmers having valid farmer-id, belonging to small and marginal categories having minimum 0.5 acre cultivable land holding and a dug well will be covered under the programme.

Benefits

- ◆ The new scheme will lessen the cost burden of the farmers.
- ◆ Farmers will get more irrigation facility, produce more and also be able to increase farm incomes.
- ◆ It will generate 1.52 lakh human day employments annually and provided livelihood to around 5,000 families and also reduce carbon footprints. ■

3. Phase III of Regional Connectivity Scheme

With a view to connecting tourist destinations in the country, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has opened bids for the third phase of the Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS).

Key Highlights

- ◆ In total there are 60 new routes which have been identified by the Ministry of Civil Aviation for operation of RCS flights under Phase III. Apart from this, there are eight routes in the North-eastern region.
- ◆ In the third round of bidding, the Ministry of Tourism has proposed 46 routes to be connected in the coming months. The third phase will also see the launch of seaplanes at water aerodromes. There are 10 water aerodromes, located in Gujarat, Assam, Uttarakhand, Maharashtra and Telangana, including one at the Statue of Unity near Sardar Sarovar Dam in Gujarat.
- ◆ Connecting tourism spots was the main focus under Phase III of the RCS and the list of routes proposed by the Ministry of Tourism included places such as Agra, Bhopal, Jhansi, Bodhgaya, Mysore, Kullu, Dharamshala and other places.
- ◆ Amritsar has been awarded 6 new routes under UDAN (Ude Deshka Aam Naagrik) III Tourist Destinations scheme.

Background

Under the earlier two phases of RCS, 56 unserved and 31 helipads have been awarded for connectivity, but operations at several of these airports have not yet taken off and these airports are expected to see operation under Phase III.

About Regional Connectivity Scheme

It is also known as UDAN. It is government's initiative to make air travel to India's tier II and tier III cities affordable to the aam aadmi. The idea is to put smaller cities and remote regions on the aviation map, by getting domestic airlines to ply more regional routes. ■

4. Support and Outreach Initiative for MSME Sector

The government of India has launched a historic support and outreach programme for the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector with 12 key initiatives which will help the growth, expansion and facilitation of MSMEs across the country.

There are five key aspects for facilitating the MSME sector. These include access to credit, access to market, technology upgradation and ease of doing business and a sense of security for employees.

12 Key Initiatives

1. Launch of the 59 minute loan portal to enable easy access to credit for MSMEs.
2. A 2 percent interest subvention for all GST registered MSMEs, on fresh or incremental loans.
3. All companies with a turnover more than Rs. 500 crore, must now compulsorily be brought on the Trade Receivables e-Discounting System (TReDS).



Ministry of MSME, Govt. of India

4. The public sector companies have now been asked to compulsorily procure 25 percent, instead of 20 percent of their total purchases, from MSMEs.
5. Out of the 25 percent procurement mandated from MSMEs, 3 percent must now be reserved for women entrepreneurs.
6. All public sector undertakings of the Union government must now compulsorily be a part of Government e-Marketplace (GeM). They should also get all their vendors registered on GeM.
7. 20 hubs will be formed across the country and 100 spokes in the form of tool rooms will be established.
8. Clusters will be formed of pharma MSMEs. 70% cost of establishing these clusters will be borne by the Union government.
9. The return under 8 labour laws and 10 Union regulations must now be filed only once a year.
10. Now the establishments to be visited by an Inspector will be decided through a computerised random allotment.
11. Under air pollution and water pollution laws, now both these have been merged as a single consent. The return will be accepted through self-certification.
12. An Ordinance has been brought, under which, for minor violations under the Companies Act, the entrepreneur will no longer have to approach the Courts, but can correct them through simple procedures. ■

5. Greater Flamingoes visited Hope Island after 25 years

After a long gap, a flock of five greater flamingoes has been spotted on the Coast of Hope Island, a part of the Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary. The long-legged and long-necked birds were last seen in a group about two and a half decades ago, while a lone flamingo was recorded in the 2016 Asian Water Bird Census at SirraYanam village in East Godavari district.

The sighting is an important development. Generally, the birds are

always on the lookout for mudflats for nesting. The greater flamingoes are the filter feeders and get their characteristic pink colour from their diet of brine shrimps and algae available in the coastal wetlands. The flamingoes are the indicators of healthy coastal environment.

About Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary

The Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary (CWS) is a wildlife sanctuary and estuary situated in Andhra Pradesh. It spreads

over 235 sq. km, the sanctuary is an abode for about 35 species of mangrove plants and another 120 species of rare birds. In addition, 236 species of migratory birds are spotted in and around the sanctuary with over 60,000 water birds visiting the sanctuary every year. A group of greater flamingoes, however, was last seen here in 1993. It is home to the critically endangered white-backed vulture and the long billed vulture. ■

6. India-based Neutrino Observatory

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) upheld the environmental clearance granted to the India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO), a major research facility proposed in Theni district of Tamil Nadu. While this removes all current legal hurdles in building the facility, there are still other obstacles to be overcome before work can begin on this project, which has been in planning since 2001.

The INO promises to be a one-of-its-kind facility to detect and study neutrinos. These are extremely

tiny elementary particles that are omnipresent in universe but very difficult to detect because they pass seamlessly through all kinds of matter. Once built, INO would be the biggest research facility in India.

The underground laboratory will be located nearly 1.5 km below the Earth's surface, where a giant neutrino detector is to be placed. The laboratory will consist of a cavern of size 132 m × 26 m × 20 m and with several small rooms and will be accessed by a tunnel nearly 2 km long and 7.5 m wide.

About Neutrinos

Neutrinos carry no electric charge. Predicted in 1931, neutrinos were detected for the first time in 1959 and are now considered to be the second most abundant particle in the universe — after the photon, or light particle. Groups in many countries are carrying out research on neutrinos, believed to hold important clues to some of the basic questions on the universe. Research on neutrinos has led to award of the Nobel Prize in Physics in 2002 and 2015 and before that, in 1988 and 1995. ■

7. K9 Vajra and M777 Howitzers Guns

The Indian Army has received the first batch of its new artillery weapons at Devlali Field Firing Ranges in Maharashtra. The artillery gun systems include the M777 American Ultra-Light Howitzers, K9 Vajra and a 'Composite Gun Tractor' for towing some existing guns in service. More than three decades have passed since a modern artillery system was inducted by the army, the last being the Bofors FH77B02 in 1987.

K9 Vajra

The K9 VAJRA-T 155mm/ 52 is a tracked

self-propelled howitzer, which has its roots in the K9 Thunder, the mainstay of the South Korean Army. The Vajra offers a high rate of fire at a long range and is compatible with Indian and standard NATO ammunition. The design incorporates a Modular Azimuth Position System (MAPS), an automatic fire-control system (AFCS), a powered gun elevation / depression and a turret traverse system. The hydro-pneumatic suspension system provides high-ground clearance and mobility across different terrains.

M777

One of the lightest guns that have seen active duty in Iraq and Afghanistan, the M 777 will be deployed on the high altitude borders with China and Pakistan and is especially useful with the Chinook helicopters that can transport them quickly. The 155mm, 39 Calibre Ultra light Howitzers have been procured from USA under Government to Government Foreign Military Sales and will be assembled in India by BAE Systems in partnership with Mahindra Defence. ■

INTERNATIONAL

1. Chabahar Port

The United States has exempted New Delhi from the imposition of certain sanctions for the development of the strategically-located Chabahar Port in Iran as well as the construction of the railway line connecting it with Afghanistan. The move by the Donald Trump administration is considered as an endorsement by Washington of India's major role in the development of the port on the Gulf of Oman, which is of immense strategic importance for the reconstruction of war-torn Afghanistan.

The US imposed the toughest ever sanctions on Tehran aimed at altering the Iranian regime's behaviour. The

sanctions cover Iran's banking and energy sectors and reinstate penalties for countries and companies in Europe, Asia and elsewhere that do not halt Iranian oil imports. India was among the eight countries that were granted temporary waiver for purchase of Iranian oil. These countries have shown significant reduction in oil purchase from Iran.

Background

In May 2016, India, Iran and Afghanistan inked a pact which entailed establishment of Transit and Transport Corridor among the three countries using Chabahar Port as one of the

regional hubs for sea transportation in Iran, besides multi-modal transport of goods and passengers across the three nations. The port in the Sistan-Balochistan province in the energy-rich nation's Southern coast is easily accessible from India's Western coast and is increasingly seen as a counter to Pakistan's Gwadar Port, which is being developed with Chinese investment and is located at distance of around 80 kms from Chabahar. It is also considered a gateway to golden opportunities for trade by India, Iran and Afghanistan with central Asian countries besides ramping up trade among the three countries after Pakistan denied transit access to India. ■

2. Earth's Water Origin Mystery

A new study proposed a new theory to address the long-standing mystery of where Earth's water came from and how it got here. Earth's water may have originated from both asteroidal material and gas left over from the formation of the Sun. The new finding could give scientists important insights about the development of other planets and their potential to support life.

The new study challenges widely-accepted ideas about hydrogen in Earth's water by suggesting the element partially came from clouds of dust and gas remaining after the Sun's formation, called the solar nebula. In the new study, researchers developed a new theoretical model of Earth's formation to explain these differences between hydrogen in Earth's oceans and at the core-mantle boundary as

well as the presence of noble gases deep inside the planet.

Modeling Earth's beginning

According to their new model, several billion years ago, large waterlogged asteroids began developing into planets while the solar nebula still swirled around the Sun. These asteroids, known as planetary embryos, collided and grew rapidly. Eventually, a collision introduced enough energy to melt the surface of the largest embryo into an ocean of magma. This largest embryo would eventually become Earth.

- ◆ Gases from the solar nebula, including hydrogen and noble gases, were drawn in by the large, magma-covered embryo to form an early atmosphere.
- ◆ Nebular hydrogen, which contains less deuterium and is lighter than

asteroidal hydrogen, dissolved into the molten iron of the magma ocean.

- ◆ Through a process called isotopic fractionation, hydrogen was pulled towards the young Earth's center. Hydrogen, which is attracted to iron, was delivered to the core by the metal, while much of the heavier isotope, deuterium, remained in the magma which eventually cooled and became the mantle. Impacts from smaller embryos and other objects then continued to add water and overall mass until Earth reached its final size.
- ◆ This new model would leave Earth with noble gases deep inside its mantle and a lower deuterium-to-hydrogen ratio in its core than in its mantle and oceans. ■

3. Strategic Partnership to Eliminate Hunger Globally

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) and Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba Group have formed a strategic partnership to support efforts eliminate hunger globally by 2030. Under the accord, Alibaba will lend its cutting-edge technology and resources to support the digital transformation of WFP's operations. In particular, Alibaba Cloud, the cloud computing arm of Alibaba, will work with WFP to develop a digital "World Hunger Map". The map will monitor global hunger and operations to end the scourge by 2030 - one of the UN's key Sustainable Development goals - and aims to boost

the efficiency of interventions and shorten emergency response times.

The visual World Hunger Map is intended to leverage data insights to help WFP improve assessment and monitoring to increase efficiency and shorten emergency response times. To coordinate their joint efforts, the parties will also create a 'Digital Transformation Working Group' to determine priorities, assess new opportunities and review progress on projects.

About WFP

The United Nations World Food Programme - saving lives in

emergencies and changing lives for millions through sustainable development. WFP works in more than 80 countries around the world, feeding people caught in conflict and disasters and laying the foundations for a better future.

About Alibaba Group

Alibaba Group's mission is to make it easy to do business anywhere and the company aims to achieve sustainable growth for 102 years. For fiscal year ended March 2018, the company reported revenues of US\$39.9 billion. ■

4. Advanced Motor Fuels Technology Collaboration Programme

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister has been apprised of India joining as Member of Advanced Motor Fuels Technology Collaboration Programme (AMF TCP). AMF TCP works under the framework of International Energy Agency (IEA) to which India has "Association" status since 30th March, 2017.

The benefits of participation in AMF TCP are shared costs and pooled

technical resources. The duplication of efforts is avoided and national research and development capabilities are strengthened. There is an information exchange about best practices, network of researchers and linking research with practical implementation. After becoming member, India will initiate R&D in other areas of its interest in advanced biofuels and other motor fuels in view of their crucial role in substituting fossil fuel imports.

About AMF TCP

AMF TCP is an international platform for co-operation among countries to promote cleaner and more energy efficient fuels & vehicle technologies. The activities of AMF TCP relate to R&D, deployment and dissemination of Advanced Motor Fuels and looks upon the transport fuel issues in a systemic way taking into account the production, distribution and end use related aspects. ■

5. World's First Artificial Intelligence powered News Anchor

The world's first artificial intelligence (AI) news anchor has made "his" debut at the fifth World Internet Conference in east China's Zhejiang province. AI is a way of making a machine or a software 'think' and 'demonstrate' intelligently in a manner similar to humans. The AI news anchor has a male image with a voice, facial expressions and actions of a real person. The AI anchor learns from live broadcasting videos by himself and can read texts as naturally as a professional news anchor.

- ◆ The AI anchor can work through the day on its official website and various social media platforms, reducing news production costs and improving efficiency.
- ◆ AI-powered virtual assistants, such as Apple's Siri, Google Assistant, Samsung's Bixby and Microsoft's Cortana, are as intelligent as Xinhua's AI anchor, if not more, but they do not have a human face.
- ◆ Even IBM's AI system, Project Debater, which engaged in the first-ever live, public debate with

humans on 18 June at an event at the IBM Watson West site in San Francisco—delivering a four-minute opening statement, a four-minute rebuttal and a two-minute summary— remains an intelligent machine without a face.

- ◆ Xinhua's anchor falls under the category of androids or humanoids—robots that look human, making them both exciting and scary. Examples of humanoids include Honda-owned Asimo and SoftBank Robotic Holdings Group-owned Pepper. ■

6. Earth has two extra Hidden Moons

A report by National Geographic claims that the Earth has two moons. After more than half a century of speculation and controversy, astronomers and physicists said that they have finally confirmed the existence of two Earth-orbiting “moons” entirely made of dust. According to the report, the team of astronomers managed to capture snapshots of the mysterious clouds lurking just 250,000 miles away, roughly the same distance as the moon.

According to the new findings, each Kordylewski cloud is about 15

by 10 degrees wide, or equal to 30 by 20 lunar disks in the night sky. This translates to an area in space about 65,000 by 45,000 miles in actual size—nearly nine times wider than Earth.

The clouds themselves are enormous, but the individual particles that comprise them are estimated to measure just a micrometre across. Sunlight reflecting off these particles makes them glow ever so slightly—just like the pyramid-shaped glow of the zodiacal light that results from dust scattered between the orbits of the planets. These satellite clouds,

however, have remained hidden in the darkness of space until now simply because they are super faint.

About Kordylewski Clouds

The Kordylewski clouds are always changing. They might be stable in orbit and may have existed for millions of years, but the ingredients that make the clouds — the dust particles — are always getting swapped for others. Some escape to gravitational pulls from Earth or the moon, while others come from interplanetary spaces and meteor showers. ■

7. International Telecommunications Union

India has been elected as a member of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Council for another 4-year term (2019-2022). The elections to the Council were held during the ongoing ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2018 at Dubai, UAE. By securing 165 votes, India ranked third among the 13 countries elected to the Council from the Asia-Australasia region and eighth among the 48 countries elected to the Council globally. The ITU has 193 member states that elect representatives to the Council.

India has been an active member of the ITU since 1869, earnestly supporting the development and

propagation of telecom in the global community of nations. The country has been a regular member of the ITU Council since 1952 and has played an important role in harmonizing the contributions of member states from the region, always respecting the principles of equality and consensus-building.

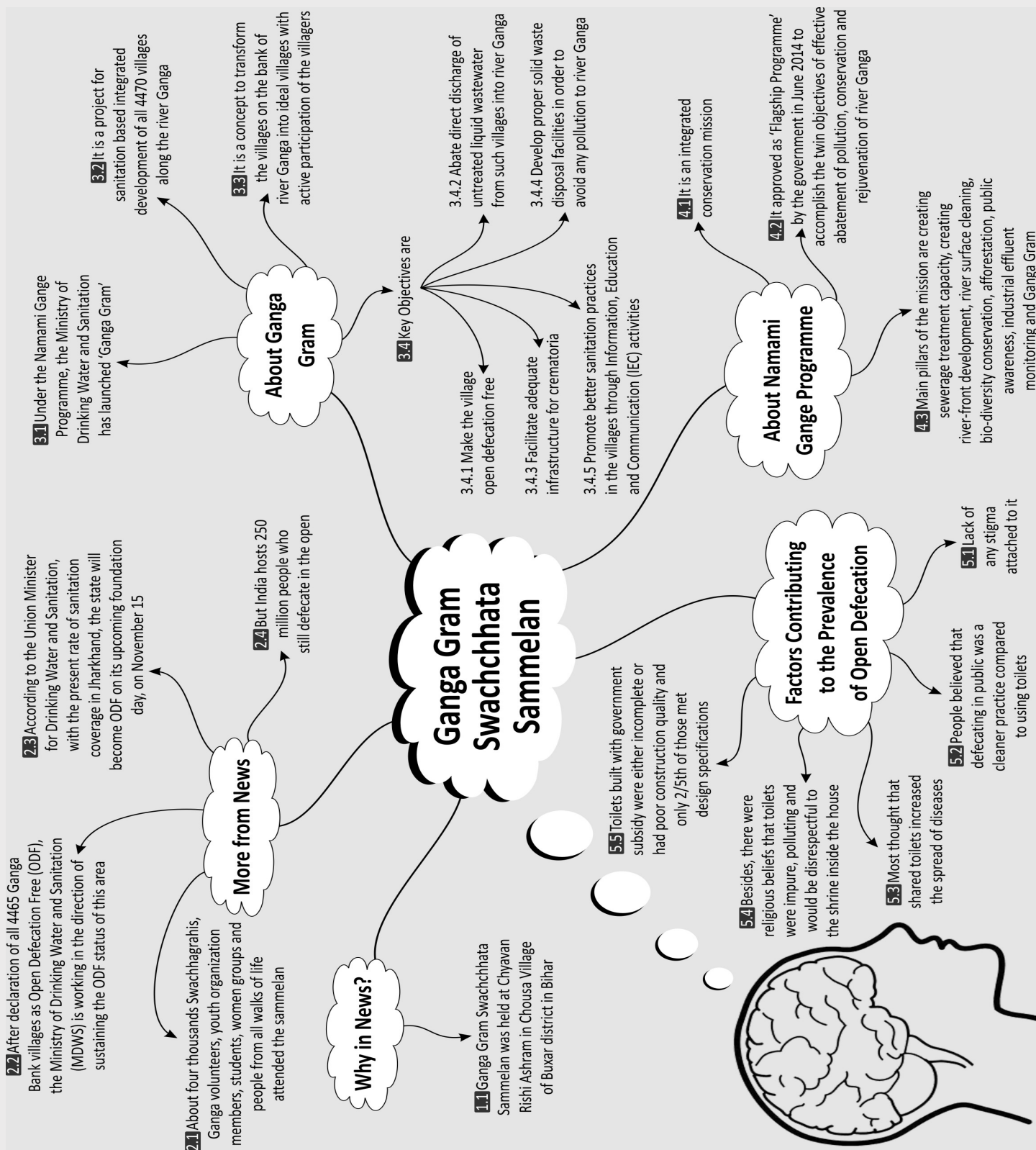
About ITU

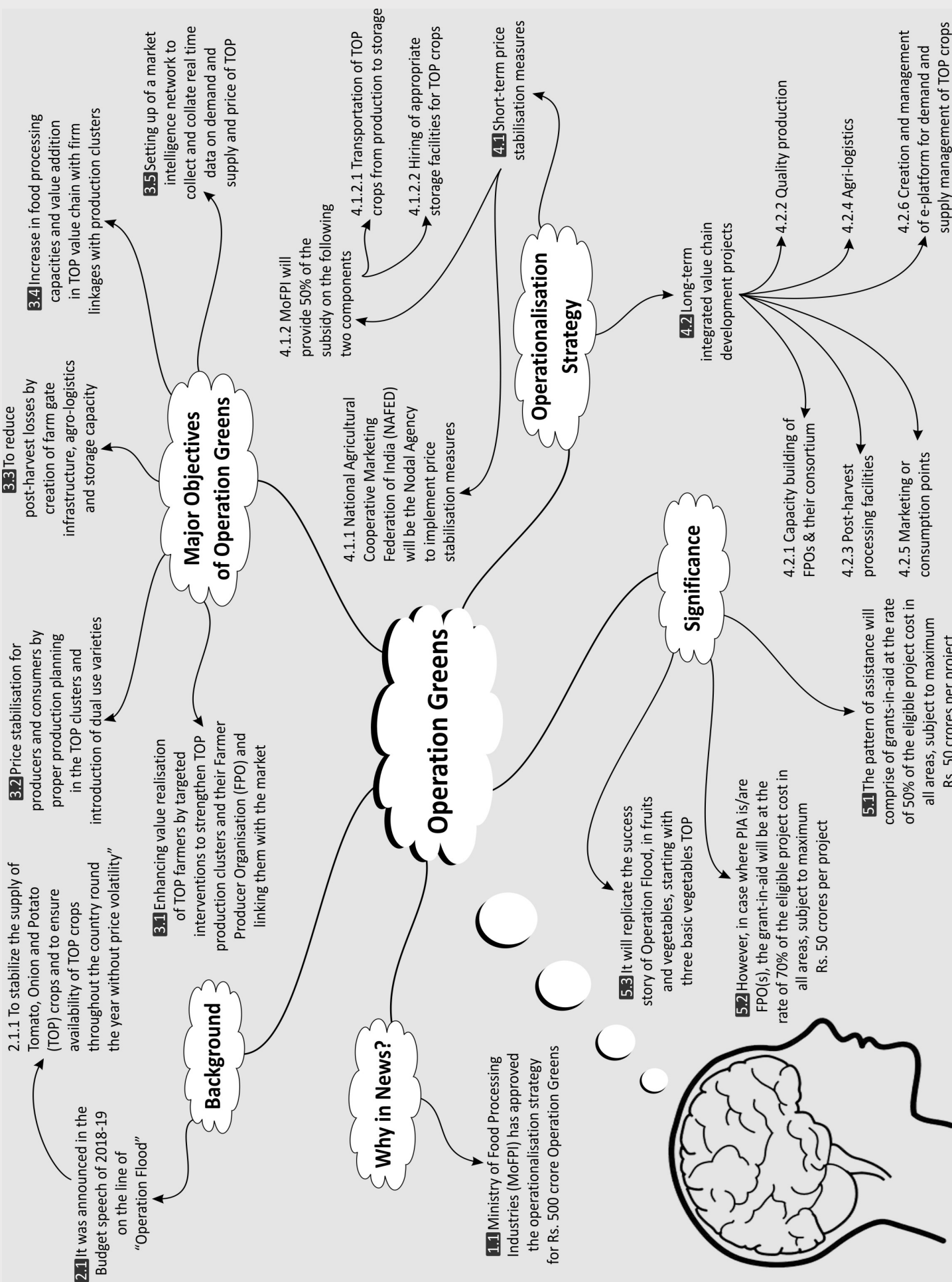
It was founded in 1865 as an agency of the United Nations (UN) whose purpose is to coordinate telecommunication operations and services throughout the world. It is the oldest existing international organization. Its headquarters are in

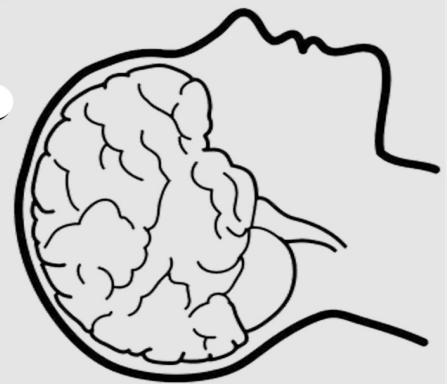
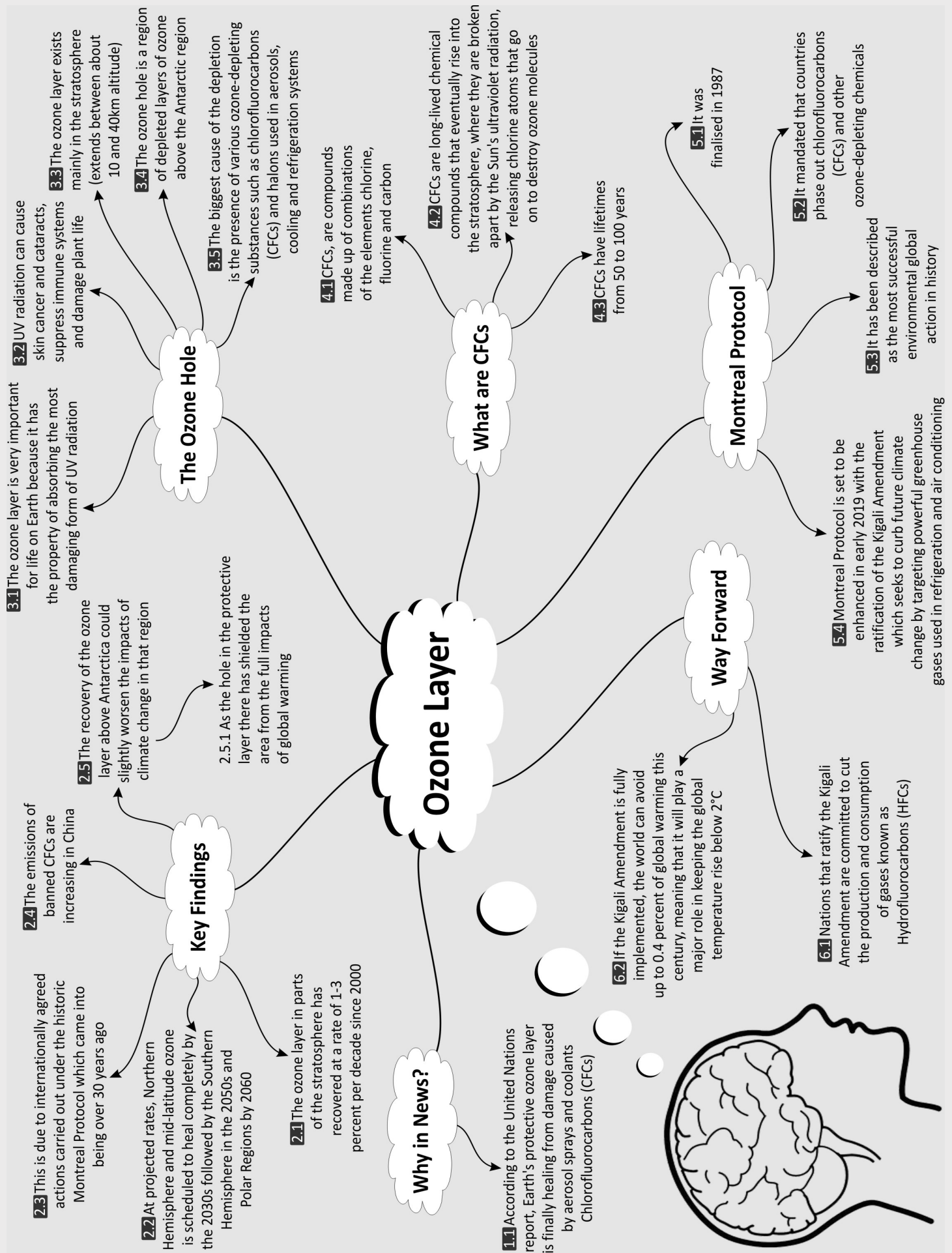
Geneva, Switzerland. The ITU consists of three sectors:

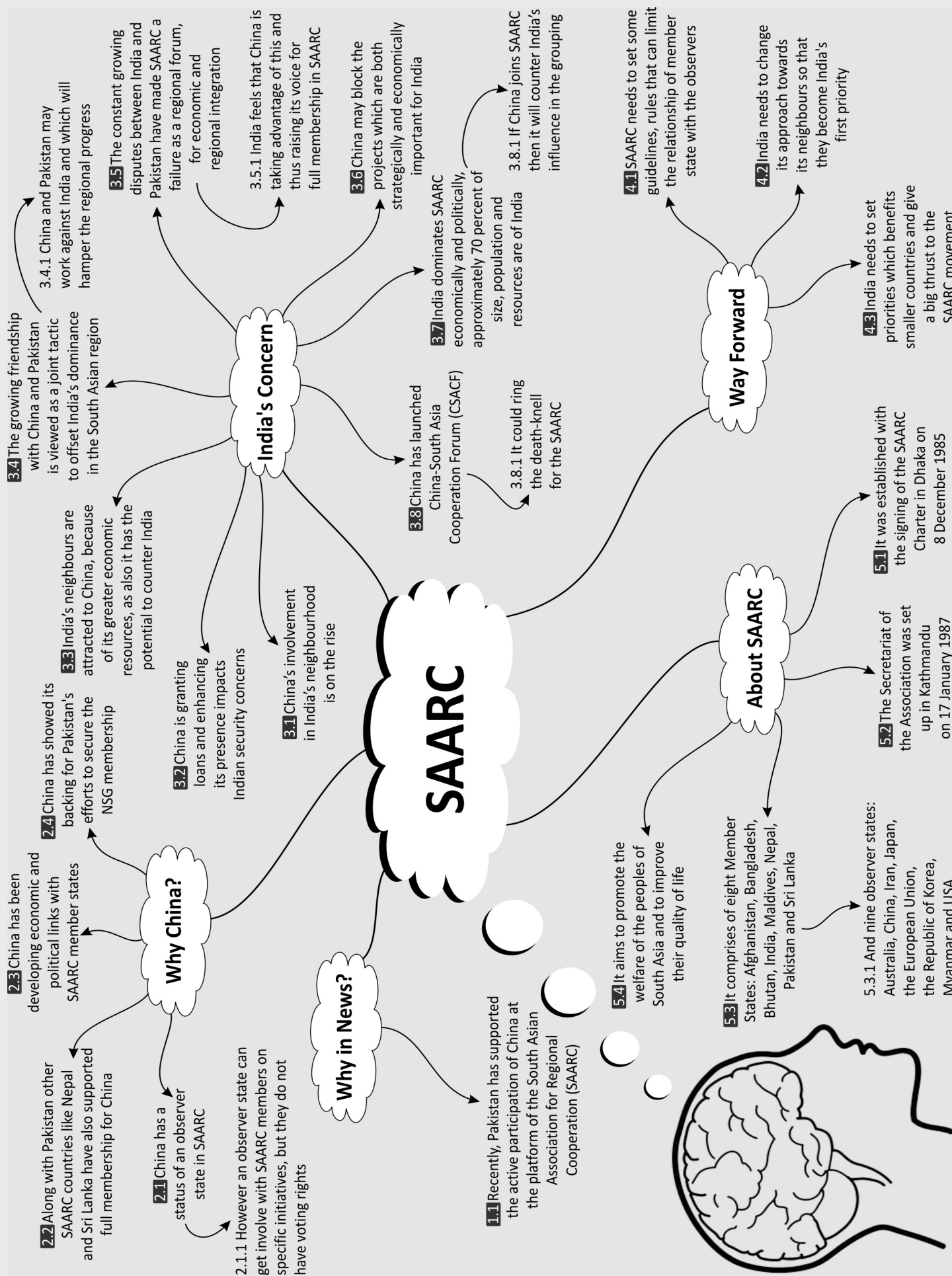
- ◆ Radiocommunication (ITU-R) — ensures optimal, fair and rational use of the radio frequency (RF) spectrum.
- ◆ Telecommunication Standardization (ITU-T) — formulates recommendations for standardizing telecommunication operations worldwide.
- ◆ Telecommunication Development (ITU-D) — assists countries in developing and maintaining internal communication operations. ■

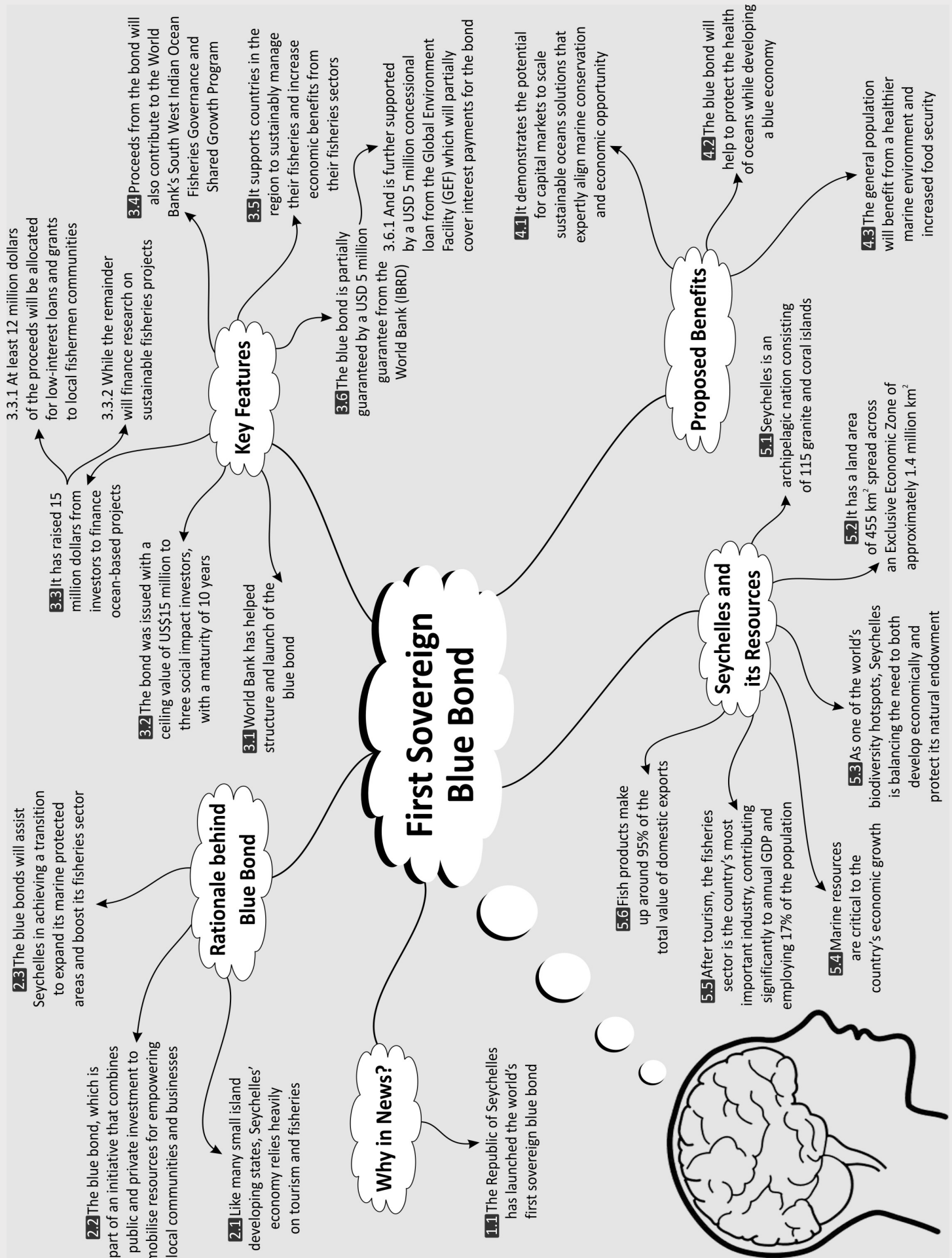
SEVEN BRAIN BOOSTERS

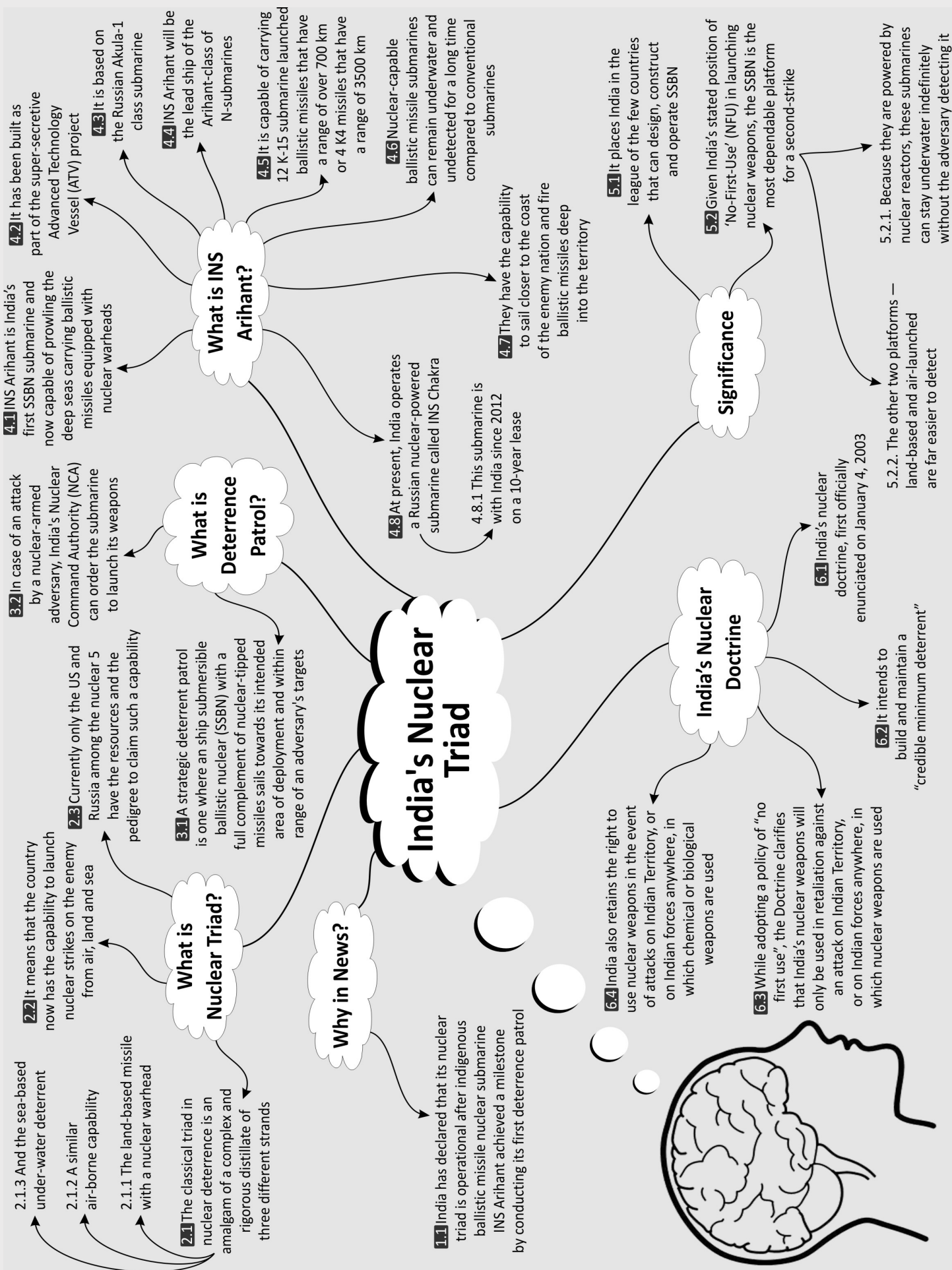


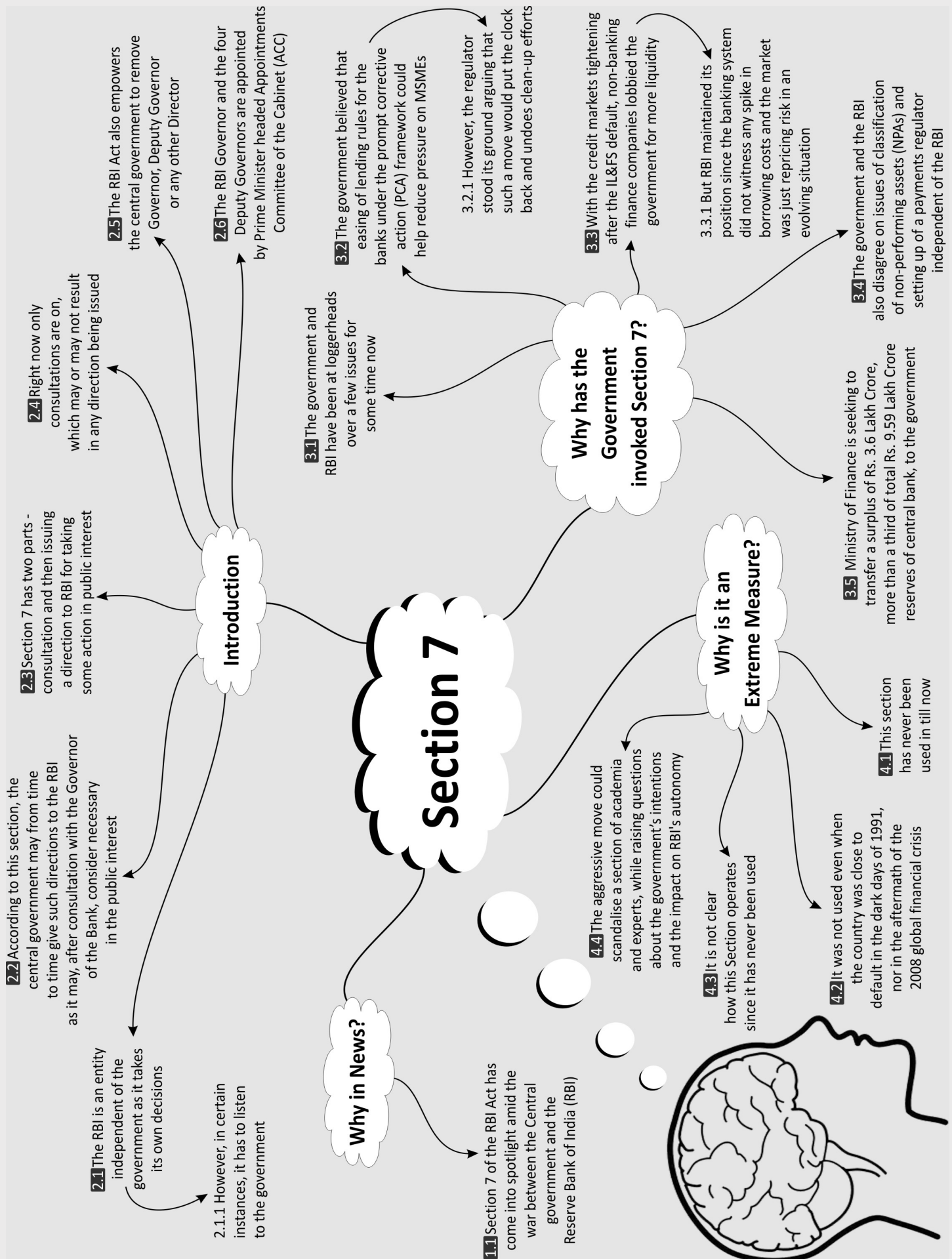












SEVEN MCQ's WITH EXPLANATORY ANSWERS (Based on Brain Boosters)

Ganga Gram Swachchhata Sammelan

Q1. Consider the following statements in respect of 'ganga gram project':

1. It is an integrated approach for holistic development of villages situated on the banks of river Ganga with active participation of the villagers.
2. The objectives of this project include solid and liquid waste management, renovation of ponds and water resources, water conservation projects, organic farming, horticulture and promotion of medicinal plants.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation: Both statements are correct. Under the "NamamiGange" Programme, the government plans to develop the villages located along the main stem of river Ganga which have historic, cultural and religious and/or tourist importance. Works related to Ganga Grams will encompass comprehensive rural sanitation, development of water bodies and river ghats, construction/ modernization of crematoria etc.

Operation Greens

Q2. With reference to the 'Operation Greens', consider the following statements:

1. Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has approved the operationalisation strategy for Rs. 500 crore Operation Greens.
2. The main objective of this scheme to stabilize the supply of fruits and vegetables and to ensure availability of these commodities throughout the country round the year without price volatility.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d)

Explanation: Both statements are incorrect. Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) has approved the operationalisation strategy for Operation Greens. Operation Greens was announced in the Budget speech of 2018-19 with an outlay of Rs 500 crores to stabilize the supply of Tomato, Onion and Potato (TOP) crops and to ensure availability of TOP crops throughout the country round the year without price volatility. A market intelligence network would also be established to collect and collate real-time data on demand and supply and price of these crops.

Ozone Layer

Q3. Consider the following statements in respect of ozone layer:

1. According to the United Nations report, Earth's protective ozone layer is depleting more rapidly at a rate of 1-3 percent per decade since 2000.
2. The biggest cause of the depletion is the presence of various ozone-depleting substances such as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and halons used in aerosols, cooling and refrigeration systems.

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. According to the United Nations report, Earth's protective ozone layer is finally healing from damage caused by aerosol sprays and coolants Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). At projected rates, Northern Hemisphere and mid-latitude ozone is scheduled to heal completely by the

2030s followed by the Southern Hemisphere in the 2050s and Polar Regions by 2060.

Statement 2 is correct. The biggest cause of the depletion is the presence of various ozone-depleting substances (ODS) such as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and halons, which constitute CFC-11 emissions and were ultimately banned in 2010. Some of the better-known CFCs are the Freon compounds, which were used as cooling ingredients in refrigerators and air conditioners. CFCs have lifetimes from 50 to 100 years.

SAARC

Q4. Consider the following statements in respect of SAARC:

1. Along with Pakistan other SAARC countries like Nepal and Sri Lanka have also supported full membership for China.
2. SAARC is one of the few (if only) regional organizations in the world that has more observers than it does member states.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation: Both statements are correct. A number of SAARC countries have reportedly supported full membership for China, including ally Pakistan, as well as Nepal and Sri Lanka. For the smaller SAARC states, China is a growing economic player in their countries. Recently, Pakistan has supported the active participation of China at the platform of the SAARC.

SAARC is one of the few (if only) regional organizations in the world that has more observers than it does member states. There are currently nine Observers to SAARC, namely Australia, China, the European Union, Iran, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mauritius, Myanmar and United States of America.

First Sovereign Blue Bond

Q5. Recently, Seychelles has launched the world's first sovereign blue bond, consider the following statements in this regard:

1. The International Monetary Fund has helped structure and launch of the blue bond.

2. It will assist Seychelles in achieving a transition to sustainable fisheries and safeguarding oceans.

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. World Bank has helped structure and launch of the blue bond, working with three U.S. impact investors. A World Bank team comprising experts from its Treasury, Legal, Environmental and Finance groups worked with investors, structured the blue bond and assisted the government in setting up a platform for channeling its proceeds.

Statement 2 is correct. The blue bond, which is part of an initiative that combines public and private investment to mobilise resources for empowering local communities and businesses, will greatly assist Seychelles in achieving a transition to sustainable fisheries and safeguarding oceans along with sustainable development of blue economy.

India's Nuclear Triad

Q6. Consider the following statements in respect of India's nuclear triad:

1. India has declared that its nuclear triad is operational after nuclear submarine INS Arihant achieved a milestone by conducting its first deterrence patrol.
2. This places India in the league of the few countries that can design, construct and operate ship submersible ballistic nuclear (SSBN).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation: Both statements are correct. India has declared that its nuclear triad, stated in its nuclear doctrine, is operational after indigenous ballistic missile nuclear submarine INS Arihant achieved a milestone by conducting its first deterrence patrol. This means that Arihant is now prowling the deep

seas carrying ballistic missiles equipped with nuclear warheads.

This places India in the league of the few countries that can design, construct and operate SSBN. It means that the country now has the capability to launch nuclear strikes on the enemy from air, land and sea. Currently only the US and Russia among the nuclear 5 have the resources and the pedigree to claim such a capability.

Section 7

Q7. Consider the following statements in respect of Section 7 of the RBI Act:

1. Section 7 of the RBI Act empowers the central government to issue directions to the RBI in public interest.
2. The government has once exercised its powers under this section in the aftermath of the 2008 global financial crisis.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct. The RBI is an entity independent of the government as it takes its own decisions. However, in certain instances, it has to listen to the government. According to this section the Central government may from time to time give such directions to the bank as it may, after consultation with the Governor of the Bank, consider necessary in the public interest.

Statement 2 is not correct. This section has never been used in till now. It was not used even when the country was close to default in the dark days of 1991, nor in the aftermath of the 2008 global financial crisis. It is not clear how this Section operates since it has never been used.



SEVEN IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIMS

1. 'Notes of a Dream' is the biography of which renowned Indian musician?
- A.R. Rahman
2. Which city hosted the 'Global Cooling Innovation Summit'?
- New Delhi
3. Which state government has approved funds worth Rs. 25000 to every girl graduating from 2018 onwards?
- Bihar
4. Which country has waived off visa-on-arrival fee for tourists from 21 countries including India?
- Thailand
5. Which organisation has won UNESCO Asia-Pacific award for conservation in 'Award of Distinction' category?
- The LAMO Center, Ladakh, India
6. Which institution has developed a portable cold storage device?
- IIT Madras
7. Recently Prime Minister has inaugurated India's first multi-modal terminal on NW-1 at which place?
- Varanasi

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SEVEN IMPORTANT SCHEMES AND PROJECTS

1. Internal Ombudsman Scheme of RBI

- ◆ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has directed banks with over 10 outlets to appoint an internal ombudsman (IO) to enhance their complaint redressal mechanism.
- ◆ The IO shall, inter alia, examine customer complaints which are in the nature of deficiency in service on the part of the bank that are partly or wholly rejected by the bank.
- ◆ In May 2015, the central bank had advised all public sector and select private and foreign banks to appoint IO as an independent authority to review complaints that were partially or wholly rejected by the respective banks.
- ◆ Ombudsman schemes in the financial sector, particularly in banking, are seen as the mainstay of grievance redressal for customers.
- ◆ An ombudsman is a person officially charged with investigating and addressing public complaints or violation of rights.
- ◆ Banks in India had an internal ombudsman but they were mostly appointed from within bank staff and did not have statutory powers. This RBI amendment gives ombudsman statutory powers under section 35 A of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.
- ◆ The tenure of the IO cannot be more than five years and it is not open to reappointment.
- ◆ An IO also cannot be removed without consent from the RBI. This new post will not report to the bank's CEO but to the customer service committee of the bank.
- ◆ The implementation of IO Scheme, 2018 will be monitored by the bank's internal audit

mechanism apart from regulatory oversight by RBI.

2. Patratu Super Thermal Power Project

- ◆ Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for the 2400MW first phase of NTPC's Patratu Super Thermal Power Project in Jharkhand.
- ◆ The project is a 74: 26 Joint Venture between Government of Jharkhand (GoJ) and Patratu Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Ltd. (PVUN), a subsidiary company of NTPC establishing a total capacity expansion of 4,000MW.
- ◆ The project will allocate 85 per cent of the power generated to Jharkhand. The project will be equipped with dry ash disposable system, zero liquid discharge system, air-cooled condenser technology and rail loading facility for transportation of ash.
- ◆ The plant also complies with the new emission norms with high-efficiency electrostatic precipitator (ESP), flue gas desulfurization (FGD) and Nox emission control systems.
- ◆ Under the Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (Saubhagya) scheme, this project will ensure providing 24x7 power availability to the households.
- ◆ The commissioning of the first unit is envisaged in 2022 and subsequently the other two units after an interval of six months each from the preceding unit.
- ◆ As the project progresses the community development will further focus on employability, health and sanitation, infrastructure development and the education of girl child.

3. PakalDul Power Project

- ◆ Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of the PakalDul Power Project in Jammu & Kashmir on 19th May, 2018.
- ◆ PakalDul, with 1000 MW capacity, will be the largest hydro power project in Jammu & Kashmir on completion.
- ◆ It is also the first storage project in Jammu.
- ◆ The proposed 1,000 megawatt PakalDul hydroelectric power project on Marusadar river, a tributary of Chenab river, in Jammu and Kashmir will be completed in 66 months and will provide 12 per cent free power to the state.
- ◆ The project is expected to generate employment for 3,000 persons during construction phase and to 500 persons during operation stage.
- ◆ It has been agreed that the government of J&K shall be getting 12 per cent free power after 10 years of commissioning of the Project and water usage charges as applicable. Additional 1 per cent free power will go towards Local Area Development Fund (LADF).
- ◆ Government of J&K has first right to purchase balance power of NHPC (49%) & PTC (2%). Furthermore, local population will be benefitted by the improvement and widening of roads and improvement of bridges under the Project.

4. Barmer Refinery Project

- ◆ Barmer refinery and petrochemical complex is a new facility that is currently being developed in the Barmer district of Rajasthan, India.
- ◆ The project is set to be the first of its kind in Rajasthan and is being developed by a joint venture (JV) between Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL, 74%) and the government of Rajasthan (26%), known as HPCL Rajasthan Refinery Limited (HRRL).

- ◆ The new refinery and petrochemical complex will have a total processing capacity of nine million metric tonnes per annum (Mmtpa).
- ◆ Construction on the project commenced in January 2018 and is slated to be completed by 2022.
- ◆ It will create approximately 1,000 direct jobs upon completion, as well as up to 40,000 indirect jobs during construction.
- ◆ The proposed facility will feature a total of 29 process units, including a 9Mmtpa crude distillation unit, a 4.8Mmtpa vacuum distillation unit and a 1.8Mmtpa naphtha hydro-treating unit.
- ◆ The refinery is expected to produce BS-VI fuel petrol and diesel, as well as petrochemical by-products such as polypropylene and polyethylene in order to help meet the growing demand for petroleum and petrochemical products in the state of Rajasthan.
- ◆ The refinery will also include offsite facilities for the storage of crude oil, intermediate products and finished products.

5. Zojila Pass Tunnel Project in J&K

- ◆ The Union Cabinet has approved the construction of Asia's longest bi-directional Zojila Pass tunnel at an estimated cost of Rs 6,089 crore, which will reduce the travel time between Srinagar and Leh to 15 minutes from the current 3.5 hours.
- ◆ It will provide all-weather connectivity between Srinagar, Kargil and Leh and, at 14.2 km, will also be the country's longest road tunnel.
- ◆ The pass is situated at an altitude of 11,578 ft on the Srinagar-Kargil-Leh National Highway and remains closed during winters due to heavy snowfall, which cuts off Ladakh region from Kashmir.
- ◆ The tunnel will have a transverse ventilation system, uninterrupted power supply, tunnel

emergency lighting, CCTV monitoring, pedestrian cross passages at every 250 metres, as well as emergency telephones and fire-fighting cabinets at every 125 metres.

- ◆ The project has strategic and socio-economic importance and will be an instrument for the development of the economically backward districts in Jammu and Kashmir.

6. Atal Bhujal Yojana

- ◆ The government has proposed Atal Bhujal Yojana (ABHY) aimed at sustainable ground water management with community participation.
- ◆ ABHY is designed as a Central Sector Scheme with a total outlay of Rs. 6,000 Crore of the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation.
- ◆ The scheme is to be implemented over a period of five years from 2018-19 to 2022-23, with World Bank assistance.
- ◆ The priority areas identified under the scheme fall in the states of Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.
- ◆ These states represent about 25% of the total number of over-exploited, critical and semi-critical blocks in terms of ground water in India.
- ◆ They also cover two major types of groundwater systems found in India - alluvial and hard rock aquifers- and have varying degrees of institutional readiness and experience in groundwater management.

- ◆ Implementation of the scheme is expected to benefit nearly 8350 Gram Panchayats in 78 districts in these states.
- ◆ Funds under the scheme will be made available to the participating states as grants.
- ◆ Community participation is also expected to facilitate bottom-up groundwater planning process to improve the effectiveness of public financing and align implementation of various government programs on groundwater in the participating states.

7. Bansagar Canal Project

- ◆ The Prime Minister has dedicated the Bansagar Canal Project to the Nation in Mirzapur on 15th July, 2018.
- ◆ This project will provide a big boost to irrigation in the region and will be greatly beneficial for the farmers of Mirzapur and Allahabad districts of Uttar Pradesh.
- ◆ Bansagar project had been first conceptualized about four decades ago, and the foundation stone was laid in 1978, but the project was unduly delayed. After 2014, this project was made a part of the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana.
- ◆ Bansagar Dam project is a joint venture between Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.
- ◆ The total canal network under it is 171 kms long. Canals under this project will bring waters from Shahdol district in Madhya Pradesh for Adwa Barrage, Meza Dam and Jirgo reservoir.



SEVEN PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAIN EXAM

Answer each of the following questions in 200 words:

- Q1. Recently, Indian Railways has rolled back its much touted 'flexi-pricing scheme'. What do you understand by 'flexi-pricing scheme'? Discuss why the government should take suitable steps to improve the share of rail transport in both freight and passenger segments.
- Q2. Government litigation places a huge burden on the citizens of India. In this context, discuss why India needs a multi-pronged approach to tackle the issue of "government litigation"
- Q3. What do you understand by RBI's economic capital framework? There were reports about how the RBI has excess capital which should be returned to the government. What is the correct level of capital for a central bank balance sheet? Discuss why government wants to fix 'appropriate economic capital framework' of the central bank.
- Q4. The government of India has launched POSHAN abhiyan to drastically reduce the prevailing high incidence of malnutrition, stunted growth and anaemia. However, certain fundamental issues need fixing for the programme to be successfully implemented. Comment.
- Q5. India's jump in Ease of Business ranking is welcome. Do such rankings reflect the reality of business in India? Comment.
- Q6. There is growth of e-commerce in India but there are some concerns too. Discuss the law and regulations to control e-commerce in India.
- Q7. Distinguish between "Code of ethics" and "Code of conduct" with suitable examples.

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AN INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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