

PERFECT 7

WEEKLY

CURRENT AFFAIRS

November : 2019/ Issue- 3

BRICS SUMMIT 2019

An Overview

- Indian Model of Secularism : An Analysis
- Manual Scavenging : A Practice Against Human Dignity
- CJI under RTI Ambit and Its Implications
- New Regime in Sri Lanka and Its Impact on India
- India and African Littorals in Western Indian Ocean
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DHYEYA IAS : AN INTRODUCTION



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

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Vinay Kumar Singh
CEO and Founder
Dhyeya IAS



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Q H Khan
Managing Director
Dhyeya IAS

PERFECT 7 : AN INTRODUCTION



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

Qurban Ali

Chief Editor

Dhyeya IAS

(Ex Editor- Rajya Sabha TV)



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

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

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

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

Ashutosh Singh

Managing Editor

Dhyeya IAS

Send us your suggestions, comments, views and feedback for guiding us towards continuous improvement & enhancement of 'Perfect 7' on

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PREFACE

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

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

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

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

Omveer Singh Chaudhary
Editor
Dhyeya IAS

Perfect 7

The Weekly Issue

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Our other initiative



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by Mr. Qurban Ali

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

SEVEN IMPORTANT ISSUES

1. BRICS SUMMIT 2019 : AN OVERVIEW

Why in News?

The city of Brasilia hosted the 11th BRICS Summit on 13-14 November, with the leaders of Russia, China, Brazil, India, and South Africa discussing political and economic relations within the bloc. This year the summit's theme was 'Economic Growth for an Innovative Future'.

Introduction

BRICS began 10 years ago, at a time of financial crisis and many economic problems. The journey, which started from Yekaterinburg in 2009, has crossed several notable stops. BRICS countries have been the main engines of global economic growth over the years. And BRICS have contributed to the development of the whole humanity. At the same time, BRICS countries emerged as a major factor in a peaceful, prosperous and multi polar world. The BRICS group had led to economic development despite the global economic slowdown.

BRICS has proved its naysayers wrong since the idea of grouping the world's "five emerging economies" was coined by a consultant two decades ago. India and China have buoyed the grouping with their growth, and even though the idea behind BRICS has been dimmed by sluggish growth in Brazil and South Africa, and Russia's sanction-laden slowdown, the group has adapted to the times and proven its resilience. As a result, even at a time when the five countries are heading in different directions politically, they

found ways to build a common vision for the world's economic future with an emphasis on multilateralism and a joint statement at Brasilia that decried "unilateral and protectionist" actions.

The market size, diversity and complementarities of the members of the BRICS countries were very beneficial to each other. If one BRICS country has technology, the other is related to raw materials or markets. Such possibilities are especially in electric vehicles, digital technology, fertilizer, agricultural products, food processing. BRICS countries have an opportunity to map such complementarities in five countries. BRICS forum has played a crucial role to map such complementarities in the five countries.

BRICS: Background

BRICS is the group composed by the five major emerging countries - Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa -, which together represent about 42% of the population, 23% of GDP, 30% of the territory and 18% of the global trade and 50 per cent of the world's economic growth. Despite the recession in the world, BRICS countries accelerated economic development, brought millions out of poverty and achieved new breakthroughs in technology and innovation.

The acronym BRIC was coined by an economist of Goldman Sachs in 2001 to indicate the emerging powers that would be, alongside the United States (US), the five largest economies

of the world in the 21st century. In 2006, BRIC countries started their dialogue, which since 2009 takes place at annual meetings of heads of state and government. In 2011, with South Africa joining the group, the BRICS reached its final composition, incorporating a country from the African continent.

Since the beginning of their dialogue, in 2006, these countries have sought to establish fairest international governance, one that would be more suitable to their national interests. This goal would be achieved, for example, through the reform of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) quota system, which came to include, for the first time, Brazil, Russia, India, and China amongst the top ten largest shareholders.

Throughout its first decade, BRICS has developed sectorial cooperations in different areas, such as science and technology, trade promotion, energy, health, education, innovation and fight against transnational crime. Currently, sectorial cooperation, which covers more than 30 subject areas, brings important concrete benefits to the populations of the five countries.

At the Fortaleza Summit (2014), in Brazil, important institutions were created: the New Development Bank (NDB) and the Contingent Reserve Arrangement (CRA). So far, the NDB has approved more than 8 billion-dollars in infrastructure and renewable energy financing projects in the BRICS countries. The CRA is operational and is an important financial stability

mechanism for countries affected by crises in their balance of payments.

BRICS Plus

China introduced the "BRICS Plus" format at the Xiamen summit last year by inviting a few countries from different regions. South Africa emulated it, arranging the attendance of top-level representation of five nations of its choice: Argentina, Jamaica, Turkey, Indonesia and Egypt. The precise role of "BRICS Plus" countries will take time to evolve. An immediate benefit is the immense opportunities it provides for networking among leaders.

Brasilia Declaration

The BRICS leaders emerged consensus that the trade war between China and the US and rising protectionism was hurting the global economy and that multilateralism was crucial for the emerging countries to protect their own interests. The 'Brasilia Declaration' clearly threw the group weight behind multilateralism and reaffirm its commitment to helping overcome the significant challenges currently facing multilateralism, as well as upholding the central role of the United Nations (UN) in international affairs and respecting international law.

Key Highlights of 'Brasilia Declaration':

- ◆ BRICS reiterate the urgent need to strengthen and reform the multilateral system, including the UN, the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the IMF and other international organisations, which we will continue working to make more inclusive, democratic and representative, including through greater participation of emerging markets and developing countries in international decision-making.
- ◆ Emphasising on their commitment to shaping a more fair, just, equitable and representative multipolar international order, the leaders underlined the imperative that international organisations be

fully driven by member states and promote the interests of all.

- ◆ China and Russia reiterated the importance they attach to the status and role of Brazil, India and South Africa in international affairs and support their aspiration to play a greater role in the UN.
- ◆ The BRICS nations also expressed serious concern over persistent threats to international peace and security and committed to working for lasting peace for all.
- ◆ BRICS reaffirm its commitment to the principles of good-faith, sovereign equality of states, non-intervention in matters within the domestic jurisdiction of any state, and the duty to cooperate, consistently with the Charter of the UN.
- ◆ The leaders reaffirmed their commitment to a strong, quota-based and adequately resourced IMF at the centre of the global financial safety net, while expressing their disappointment that the 15th General Review of Quotas (GRQ) failed to increase the quota size of the Fund and realigning quota shares of member countries, including in favour of Emerging Markets and Dynamic Economies (EMDEs).

BRICS and India

For India, in particular, the articulation of this vision comes at an important time, given that it faces its own economic crisis, and troubled trading ties with several nations. The failure of officials to resolve issues in time to join the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) had raised questions about whether India is reversing its market liberalisation and openness to trade. It is significant that Mr. Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping used the BRICS platform for continued talks on bringing India back

into the RCEP fold and focused on resolving their trade issues.

On the other hand, India reiterated that it is the most open and investment friendly economy in the world due to political stability, predictable policy and business friendly reforms. And By 2024, India will be a five trillion dollar economy. The infrastructure alone requires USD 1.5 trillion investments. In BRICS Business Forum, Prime Minister called on business leaders of the member nations to invest in India, particularly in its infrastructure development.

Much to India's satisfaction, the commitment of BRICS to counterterrorism seems to be getting strengthened. Its working group on countering terrorism has expanded

India's Bilateral Summit

Brazil: Today, Brazil-India trade stands at just US\$ 7 billion as compared to US\$ 100 billion with China. India pushes Brazil to promote more business with India in all fields, including agro-products, technology and manufacturing.

China: In the sideline meeting held between PM Modi and Chinese President after India decided not to join China-backed mega Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) over unresolved "core concerns". India's decision not to join the China-backed RCEP deals that adversely impact on the lives and livelihoods of all Indians. It is notable here that despite differences over many issues, from Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to blacklisting Pakistan and taking a pro-Pakistan line in the issue of Kashmir, Modi and Xi have been successful in skirting these differences and ensuring co-operation over key issues of bilateral trade and relations.

Russia: The Prime Minister, during his bilateral meeting with the Russian President on the margins of the 11th BRICS Summit, decided that the first Bilateral Regional Forum at the level of Russian Provinces and the Indian States should be held next year to dismantle the barriers of trade at regional level. Putin highlighted the potential of the Arctic region in natural gas and invited India to invest in the region. Both sides shared a common position on international issues and agreed to continue close consultations in the future.

its activities through five thematic subgroups that deal with terrorist financing, use of Internet for terrorist purposes, countering radicalisation, issue of foreign terrorist fighters, and capacity building.

Opportunities for BRICS Countries

Trade tensions and policy uncertainty have taken a toll on confidence, trade, investment and growth. It is importance of open markets, fair, just and non-discriminatory business and trade environments, structural reforms, effective and fair competition, promoting investment and innovation, as well as financing for infrastructure and development. India have proposed some measure in this direction as given below:

- ◆ First, the Council created a roadmap to achieve the \$ 500 billion Intra-BRICS trade target by the next summit. Identification of economic complementarities among us will be important in this effort.
- ◆ Secondly, several agro-tech start-ups have emerged in the five countries. Their network will be useful for sharing experiences and taking advantage of our large markets. The use of technology and data analytical tools in agriculture will also be encouraged through these start-ups.
- ◆ Thirdly, to address the challenges facing universal health coverage, the BRICS may consider organizing a Hackathon in India on the use of digital health applications.
- ◆ Fourth, a working group for small and medium industries will facilitate the exchange of best practices.
- ◆ Fifth, the contribution of BRICS to project the perspectives of developing economies is laudable. However, by hosting outreach

meetings with countries in its neighbouring (or broader) region, each chair (with Brazil's exception) gave the impression that BRICS would do more for them. But the NDB has been lagging behind on this score. It needs to start extending loans for projects in non-BRICS countries to create a solid constituency of supporters.

- ◆ And finally, the service sector has a large share of GDP in all five countries. Therefore, services have good prospects to grow the business.

Factors Limiting the Impact of the BRICS Nations

Although the group is the 'third giant' after the European Union (EU and the US. But BRICS member nations are too different, and have too few synergies, to represent a solid economic and political power.

1. The dominance of the Chinese economy and its role in trade relations makes the BRICS much more a China-with-partners group than a union of equal members.
2. **BRICS countries lack mutual economic interests:** Trade between them is now less than 320 bln dollars a year and declining. Their trade with the US and EU is 6.5 times higher. China's trade with the rest of the world is 12.5 times higher. Bilateral trade between China and South Korea is almost as large as that between BRICS nations.
3. **Members are too similar in some key areas:** All members (apart from Russia) hold huge foreign reserves (15-35% of GDP) and have low external debt (15% to 37% of GDP.) Apart from Russia, they are heavily integrated into consumer goods production with the 'West'.

4. **BRICS nations compete in third markets:** In many areas, from clothing (China, India and Brazil), through economic influence in Africa (China, South Africa and India) to international aircraft and military equipment markets (China, Russia and Brazil) BRICS countries compete with one another. All are able to re-engineer and copy technologies, which means sharing R&D results and innovations and the development of cross-country scientific cooperation has limited potential.

5. **Diversity of cultures:** Phases of economic development, ideologies, definitions of poverty and other cultural differences mean BRICS members lack common understandings about priorities that are necessary for productive sharing of experiences.

Way Forward

BRICS countries also presented a vision for "rules-based, transparent, non-discriminatory, open, free and inclusive international trade".

BRICS has emerged the voice of developing countries, or the global South. As these countries face an aggressive club of developed countries, raising challenges on issues from WTO to climate change, BRICS has to protect the rights of the developing countries. Finally, BRICS should ponder if in the short term it needs to focus on fulfilling existing commitments instead of taking on new ones.

General Studies Paper- II

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



2. INDIAN MODEL OF SECULARISM : AN ANALYSIS

Context

The historical verdict of Ayodhya Issue delivered by five judge bench of Supreme Court (SC) has once again led a national level debate on Indian model of Secularism. Since the nuances of Indian model is quite complex, the question also arises whether this model is able to address the religious diversity of India.

Introduction

During colonial rule in India, England was not a secular country with a Jeffersonian wall of separation between church and state. Instead, the Church of England was the established church. The "Act of Supremacy" enacted in 1534 declared that the monarch was the "Supreme Head of the Church of England". Initially, the East India Company (EIC) got itself intricately entangled with the administration of religious institutions. Laws were enacted which said that the "general superintendence of all lands granted for the support of mosques and Hindu temples" was vested in the colonial government.

All this annoyed Christian missionaries and members of the clergy in England and India who put pressure on the government. Consequently, in 1833, the Court of Directors of the EIC sent instructions to the colonial government outlining its policy towards India's religions. However, they wrote: "The interference of British Functionaries in the interior management of native temples, in the customs, habits and religious proceedings of their priests and attendants, in the arrangement of their ceremonies, rites and festivals, and generally in the conduct of their interior economy, shall cease."

It was in this manner that the seeds of secularism were sown in India. The colonial government was directed to disentangle itself from "superstitious" Indian religious institutions, because Indian religions were considered heathen and false. However, this colonial vision of secularism was rejected by India's founding fathers. The founding fathers of the Constitution gave us an enlightened, forward-looking basic law, which is not just a legal document but is aimed at bringing about socio-economic transformation in the country. In the Constituent Assembly, B.R. Ambedkar drafted an establishment clause which said that "[t]he State shall not recognize any religion as State religion."

The Constitution of India stands for a secular state. Hence, it does not uphold any particular religion as the official religion of the Indian State. The following provisions of the Constitution reveal the secular character of the Indian State. The article 14, 15, 16, Articles 25 to 28, article 29 and 30 and Uniform Civil Code (Article 44) are foundation of Secular nature of our constitution.

Secularism is an important precept underlying the framework of fundamental rights. But, as in several other areas, there is a considerable divergence between the precept and the reality. Significantly, the Constituent Assembly failed to agree on the definition of the word "secular". It also could not agree on calling the Constitution secular. It was only during the Emergency in 1976 that the word secular was introduced in the preamble to the Constitution by the highly controversial 42nd amendment. Secularism acquired a new status when the Supreme Court declared it as a part of the basic structure of the Constitution of India.

What is Secularism?

Secularism is a normative doctrine which seeks to realise a secular society. It is free from inter-religious and intra religious domination. It promotes freedom to practice their religion and equality between religions as well as within religions. As secularism is opposed to all forms of institutionalised religious domination, it challenges not merely interreligious but also intra-religious domination. The idea of secularism possesses a normative doctrine which seeks to realise a secular society, i.e., one devoid of either inter-religious or intra-religious domination. Put positively, it promotes freedom within religions, and equality between, as well as within, religions.

Conceptions of Secularism in India

Two related but equally distinctive conceptions of secularism developed in India:

- ◆ One constitutional, the principled distance model;
- ◆ The other, the communal harmony model, attributed to the Mahatma Gandhi.

Principled Distance Model of Secularism: Principled Distance is a new model of secularism, which is different from western model of secularism which is the separation of government institutions and persons mandated to represent the state from religious institutions and religious dignitaries. Indian secularism did not erect a strict wall of separation, but proposed a 'principled distance' between religion and state. Moreover, by balancing the claims of individuals and religious communities, it never intended a bludgeoning privatization of religion.

In India, secularism means equal treatment of all religions. Religion in India continues to assert its political authority in matters of personal law. The principled distance model, which on one hand respects the diversity (Articles 25 to 28, guaranteeing the fundamental right to freedom of religion)) and at the same time empowers the state to interfere in case of any discrimination in the name of religion. Article 29 & 30 in Constitution of India seeks a principled distance between minorities as well as majority to protect, preserve and propagate their cultural, linguistic and religious identity through establishment of cultural and education institutions.

Communal Harmony Model: It is based on Gandhian notion whereby it is held that the roads to one and the same God are many, but the goal was one, because God was one and the same. In fact, the roads are as many as there are individuals in the world... The various religions were as so many leaves of a tree; they might seem different but at the trunk they are one. It dismisses the idea that there could ever be one religion in the world, a uniform religious code, as it were, for all human kind.

What is needed then is due recognition of different religious communities and to ensure comfort and trust among their members. This is viable because, all humans had a fundamental desire for what might be called deep sociability. They value human relations as an end in itself. They desire a constructive relationship with others. The world's religious diversity, the impossibility of there ever being one religion for humankind, makes mutual respect, equal regard and communal harmony a necessity.

Although, responsibility for maintaining communal harmony lies with communities themselves. But there are times when this communally

sustained harmony is disturbed, even breaks down. When this happens, the state has to step in. And for this to be possible, it cannot already be aligned to any one religion but must be distant from all.

The Western Model of Secularism

The history of western societies naturally focused on intrareligious domination. While strict separation of the state from the church is emphasized to realise among other things, individual freedom, issues of inter-religious (and therefore of minority rights) equality are often neglected. All secular states have one thing in common: they are neither theocratic nor do they establish a religion. However, in most commonly prevalent conceptions, inspired mainly by the American model, separation of religion and state is understood as mutual exclusion: the state will not intervene in the affairs of religion and, in the same manner, religion will not interfere in the affairs of the state. Each has a separate sphere of its own with independent jurisdiction.

- ◆ No policy of the state can have an exclusively religious rationale.
- ◆ No religious classification can be the basis of any public policy.
- ◆ There is little scope for community-based rights or minority rights.

Similarly, the state cannot aid any religious institution. It cannot give financial support to educational institutions run by religious communities. Nor can it hinder the activities of religious communities, as long as they are within the broad limits set by the law of the land. For example, if a religious institution forbids a woman from becoming a priest, then the state can do little about it. If a religious community excommunicates its dissenters, the state can only be a silent witness.

Difference between Indian vs Western Secularism

Indian secularism is fundamentally different from Western secularism. Indian secularism does not focus only on church-state separation and the idea of inter-religious equality is crucial to the Indian conception. Indian secularism took on a distinct form as a result of an interaction between what already existed in a society that had religious diversity and the ideas that came from the West. It resulted in equal focus on intra-religious and inter-religious domination.

- ◆ Indian secularism equally opposed the oppression of dalits and women within Hinduism, the discrimination against women within Indian Islam or Christianity, and the possible threats that a majority community might pose to the rights of the minority religious communities. This is its first important difference from mainstream western secularism.
- ◆ Connected to it is the second difference. Indian secularism deals not only with religious freedom of individuals but also with religious freedom of minority communities. Within it, an individual has the right to profess the religion of his or her choice. Likewise, religious minorities also have a right to exist and to maintain their own culture and educational institutions.
- ◆ A third difference is this. Since a secular state must be concerned equally with intra-religious domination, Indian secularism has made room for and is compatible with the idea of state-supported religious reform. Thus, the Indian constitution bans untouchability. The Indian state has enacted several laws abolishing child marriage and lifting the taboo on inter-caste marriage sanctioned by Hinduism.

Nuances of Indian Secularism

Indian secularism has been subjected to fierce criticism. These nuances are discussed as below:

Anti-religious: First, it is often argued that secularism is anti-religious. Indian secularism is not against institutionalized religious domination. Similarly, it has been argued by some that secularism threatens religious identity. However, as we noted earlier, secularism promotes religious freedom and equality. Hence, it clearly protects religious identity rather than threatens it. Of course, it does undermine some forms of religious identity: those, which are dogmatic, violent, fanatical, exclusivist and those, which foster hatred of other religions.

Western Import: A second criticism is that secularism is linked to Christianity, that it is western and, therefore, unsuited to Indian conditions. On the surface, this is a strange complaint. A secular state may keep a principled distance from religion to promote peace between communities and it may also intervene to protect the rights of specific communities. This exactly is what has happened in India. India evolved a variant of secularism that is not just an implant from the West on Indian soil. The fact is that the secularism has both western and nonwestern origins. In the West, it was the Church-state separation which was central and in countries such as India, the idea of peaceful coexistence of different religious communities has been important.

Minoritism: A third accusation against secularism is the charge of minoritism. It is true that Indian secularism advocates minority rights. Minority rights are justified as long as these rights protect their fundamental interests. To make a separate arrangement for them is not to accord

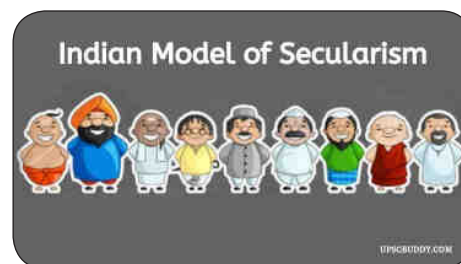
them any special treatment. It is to treat them with the same respect and dignity with which all others are being treated. The lesson is that minority rights need not be nor should be viewed as special privileges.

Interventionist: A fourth criticism claims that secularism is coercive and that it interferes excessively with the religious freedom of communities. This misreads Indian secularism. Indian secularism follows the concept of principled distance which also allows for noninterference. Besides, interference need not automatically mean coercive intervention. It is of course true that Indian secularism permits state-supported religious reform. But this should not be equated with a change imposed from above, with coercive intervention. However, state act as a facilitator by supporting liberal and democratic voices within every religion.

Vote Bank Politics: Fifth, there is the argument that secularism encourages the politics of vote banks. As an empirical claim, this is not entirely false. However, we need to put this issue in perspective. First, in a democracy politicians are bound to seek votes. That is part of their job and that is what democratic politics is largely about. But what if the welfare of the group in question is sought at the cost of the welfare and rights of other groups? What if the interests of the majority are undermined by these secular politicians? Then a new injustice is born. In short, there is nothing wrong with vote bank politics as such, but only with a form of vote bank politics that generates.

Way Forward

To be truly secular, a state must not only refuse to be theocratic but also have no formal, legal alliance with any



religion. The separation of religion-state is, however, a necessary but not a sufficient ingredient of a secular state. A secular state must be committed to principles and goals which are at least partly derived from non-religious sources. These ends should include peace, religious freedom, freedom from religiously grounded oppression, discrimination and exclusion, as also inter-religious and intra-religious equality.

What is needed then is due recognition of different religious communities and to ensure comfort and trust among their members. They value human relations as an end in itself. Humans simply can't do without one another, and no matter how much they like to be with people of their own ilk, they invariably also need to live with those with whom they differ, to reach out to people with whom they disagree. Humans can't really be good to each other unless they are respectful to each other's religious and philosophical traditions. So the Gandhian notion of secularism is the need of the hour. Yet, the realisability of Gandhian secularism depends on faith in popular wisdom traditions which in turn is sustained by a certain idea of popular moral agency. Gandhian secularism is badly needed, but who will ride it out?

General Studies Paper- I

Topic: Social empowerment, Communalism, Regionalism & Secularism.



3. MANNUAL SCAVENGING : A PRACTICE AGAINST HUMAN DIGNITY

Why in News?

Despite laws and regulations being in place in India, the practice of manual scavenging has not been curtailed but has been forced underground, according to a report released by World Health Organisation (WHO) on November 14, 2019. The report, was jointly authored by the International Labour Organization (ILO), WaterAid, World Bank, and WHO.

Overview of Current Practice

A substantial formal and permanent sanitation workforce is now in India, with basic working conditions protected by law. However, undesirable and high-risk jobs are typically subcontracted to temporary informal workers. Manual sanitation work includes daily cleaning, carrying, disposing of, or otherwise handling untreated human excreta from latrines, open drains, pits, or railway tracks. Sewer workers and drain cleaners enter sewers and manholes to manually remove solid waste and other debris blocking the sewerage system. An estimated one manhole worker dies unblocking sewers by hand every five days in India. This number may actually be larger because many deaths are underreported. Low-grade manual sanitation work is poorly paid. Workers most likely do not have fixed wages and are often victims of extortion—some workers report getting paid in leftover or basic food items.

Manual scavenging is a socio-economic problem, and has continued for decades because of unscientific technology employed in Indian latrines. Pit latrines without a proper water seal require the waste to be manually collected in buckets. Manual scavengers are also employed to clean septic tanks, gutters and sewers and all of these post significant health

threats to them. Both men and women work as manual sanitation workers. Those perceived to be of a lower caste suffer discrimination in health care, education, employment, access to land, and employment and wages. Human and employment rights are often violated because there are few real opportunities to move away from traditional low-grade occupations. Their occupation has a negative impact on their families' lifestyles and on their children's schooling and job aspirations because of stigma. Manual scavenging is prohibited by law. However, challenges remain regarding the systemic discrimination of groups perceived as being of a lower caste and the multiple layers of subcontracting the high-risk jobs to temporary and informal workers, for which oversight and enforcement of laws by local authorities are weak.

Who are Sanitation Workers?

The term sanitation workers refers to all people—employed or otherwise—responsible for cleaning, maintaining, operating, or emptying a sanitation technology at any step of the sanitation chain. This includes toilet cleaners and caretakers in domestic, public, and institutional settings; those who empty pits and septic tanks once full and other fecal sludge handlers; those who clean sewers and manholes; and those who work at sewage and fecal waste treatment and disposal sites.

Manual Scavenger: Key Challenges and Risks

The global sanitation workforce bridges the gap between sanitation infrastructure and the provision of sanitation services. Sanitation workers provide an essential public service but often at the cost of their dignity, safety, health, and living conditions. They are some of the most vulnerable workers. They are far too often

invisible, unquantified, and ostracized, and many of the challenges they face stem from this fundamental lack of acknowledgment. Sanitation workers are exposed to serious occupational and environmental health hazards risking illness, injury, and death. The challenges and risks faced by sanitation workers can be categorized in following dimensions: occupational and environmental health and safety, legal and institutional issues, financial insecurity, and social issues.

- ◆ Occupational and environmental health and safety is important because sanitation workers are exposed to multiple occupational and environmental hazards. Poor sanitation causes up to 4, 32,000 diarrhoeal deaths annually and is linked to the transmission of other diseases like cholera, dysentery, typhoid, hepatitis A and polio.
- ◆ Weak legal protection results from working informally, lack of occupational and health standards, and weak agency to demand their rights.
- ◆ Financial insecurity is a great concern because typically, informal and temporary sanitation workers are poorly paid, and income can be unpredictable.
- ◆ Social stigma and discrimination exist, and in some cases, are experienced as total and intergenerational exclusion.

Reasons for Persistence of Manual Scavenging

The persistence of manual scavenging demonstrates that legislation and court orders are insufficient for ending this degrading and dangerous practice. However, gaps between legislation and enforcement, the absence of appropriate sanitation facilities,

and limited alternative economic opportunities for scavengers work together to perpetuate the manual scavenging practice. There were many reasons why the programme proved to be ineffective:

- ◆ **Issue of Women:** Most of the provisions for the rehabilitation under the scheme were not gender sensitive and directed towards men, although around 95-98% of the individuals involved in manual scavenging are women.
- ◆ **Issue of Loan:** The key provision of the scheme was a loan provision with a subsidy. Giving loans to the vulnerable communities, which were compelled to take up manual scavenging, rooted in a caste system and face social, political and economic exclusion is not a sustainable solution.
- ◆ **Defaulters:** Most of the loans under the Scheme for the Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS) were issued through banks with 50% of a subsidy. However, most of the subsidy was spent on paying the chargeable interest to the bank and those not able to pay it become "defaulters".
- ◆ **Rural Areas:** According to SRMS Survey, around 60% of those involved in manual scavenging are in rural areas (larger villages and settlements). However, the focus of the scheme was on urban areas.
- ◆ **Caste aspect:** Government programmes have emphasised the financial aspect of rehabilitation and failed to address the caste-based oppression and related social conditions that have perpetuated this practice for centuries.
- ◆ **Corruption:** SRMS survey found that in district of Madhya Pradesh there

were more than 165 women involved in manual scavenging but not a single name was included in the list of beneficiaries. Only districts with more than 302 women were included. Our survey indicates that only 10% of those involved in manual scavenging were actually included in the list. This resulted in many eligible individuals not reaching the benefits and those not eligible benefiting of the scheme.

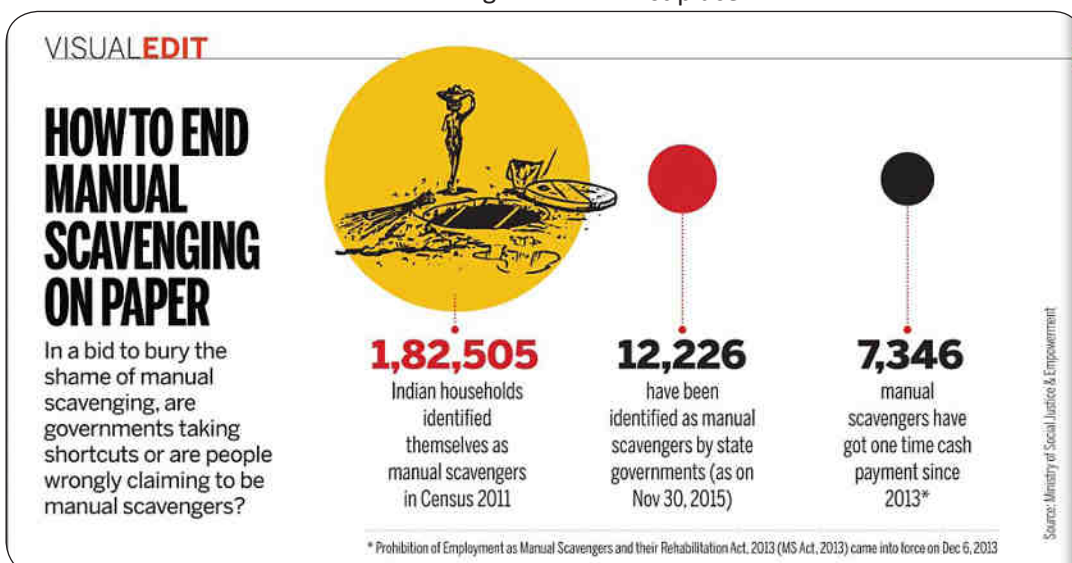
Almost all or most of the subsidy portion of the loan went into corruption and there was lack of any monitoring of the system. Issues related to corruption have surfaced openly in many of the states. India's policy attention to sanitation workers is heavily oriented towards rehabilitation of manual scavengers (by training them for alternative income-generation), and some limited forms of compensation and welfare support (as mandated by the Supreme Court). And yet, we find that the schemes for compensation and welfare have been severely underperforming.

Legislations and Government's Measures against Manual Scavenging

Articles 14, 17, 21 and 23 of the constitution of India outlawed manual scavenging practice. In addition, a number of national legislations

and international laws prohibit the practice. In 1993, the Government of India enacted the Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act which prohibited the employment of manual scavengers for manually cleaning dry latrines and also the construction of dry toilets, that is, toilets that do not operate with a flush. It provided for imprisonment of upto a year and a fine. In 2013, this was followed by the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013, which is wider in scope and importantly, acknowledged the urgency of rehabilitating manual scavengers.

The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment implements a "Self Employment Scheme for the Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers" (SRMS). This provides one-time cash assistance to the identified manual scavengers; Loan for undertaking livelihood projects upto Rs 15 lakh at concessional rate of interest; Credit linked capital subsidy upto Rs 3,25,000 and Skill development training upto two years with stipend of Rs 3000 per month. The only difference on the ground is that the government now gives compensation when a manual scavenger dies, but there is still little action to prevent such deaths in the first place.



Progress has been made in advocating for sanitation workers' rights and identifying appropriate solutions. Many local and international organizations, for example, Safai Karmachari Andolan, Navsarjan Trust in Gujarat and so on, continue to raise awareness and empower sanitation workers through capacity building and guidance and supporting leveraging trade union mechanisms to support sanitation workers. Standard operating procedures for cleaning sewers and septic tanks have been developed by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs to eliminate hazardous cleaning, prevent accidents and casualties, and limit the risk of diseases resulting from improper practice of cleaning of sewers or emptying of septic tanks.

What Needs to be Done?

We need to move towards comprehensive rehabilitation. Few suggestions in this regard could be:

- ◆ **Socio-Economic Rehabilitation:** A viable and formidable rehabilitation scheme should be developed which must include provision for social and economic rehabilitation of families liberated from scavenging. Providing adequate provision for compensation, education, accommodation and employment
- ◆ **Gender Aspect:** All rehabilitation schemes and programmes must be totally redesigned for the women that make up 98% of the workforce and are enslaved by this exploitative tradition.
- ◆ **Government Appointments:** In the appointment of workers, assistants and cooks in ICDS (Anganwadi) centres, only women from Dalit communities should be appointed. Among Dalits, the manual scavenging community should be preferred.
- ◆ **Dalit Muslim and Dalit Christian Manual Scavengers:** Non-

scheduled castes such as Dalit Muslim and Dalit Christian communities engaged in manual scavenging should receive similar facilities and security to manual scavengers from scheduled castes.

- ◆ **Indian Railway:** The Indian Railway is the largest institution in the country that use dry latrines. The Railway Ministry must immediately prohibit this practice and for the next three years present progress reports in every session of Parliament. This, so that the Government of India can ensure total abolishment of scavenging in Indian Railway in stipulated time.
- ◆ **Priority to Manual Scavengers Community:** Inclusion of manual scavengers' families and those families who have left manual scavenging in the priority list of all government schemes and entitlement.
- ◆ **Adopting Technology to End Manual Scavenging:** It is not going to be possible to eliminate manual scavenging unless we create the right technologies. There are reportedly about 15 innovations developed across the country to replace manual scavenging. While technology is considered essential to end this scourge.

Sanitation Workers and the 2030 Development Agenda

Improving the working conditions of sanitation workers would contribute to four of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), to name a few: end poverty in all its forms everywhere (SDG 1) by promoting access of the poor to basic services; ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages (SDG 3) by reducing exposure to unsafe chemicals on the job; ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all (SDG 6); and focus on decent work (SDG 8). The SDG framework offers an opportunity to revert and improve the situation of sanitation workers.

Way Forward

Manual scavengers predominantly belong to ex-untouchable castes and, therefore, are subjected to additional discrimination and social exclusion based on untouchability. Manual scavenging is a known offence now and there are laws but it is still happening. No modern country in the world forces human beings to enter sewers to clean them the technology to prevent that has existed for almost 80 years. However, availability of cheap labour was the main reason why states and central government did not invest in technology to replace manual scavenging. To prevent manual scavenging, it was important to 'de-caste' the profession.

To completely eradicate manual scavenging it is also important that both state and central level governments need to be stringent about the implementation of the Act and the 2014 Supreme Court directives.

Ensuring discrimination - free, secure and alternate livelihoods by providing skill development and livelihoods training to women, linking them to government employment schemes and entitlements as well as ensuring their land rights can be a best way forward.

General Studies Paper- II

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

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.



4. CJI UNDER RTI AMBIT AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

Why in News?

In a historic judgment, the Supreme Court (SC) has held that the office of Chief Justice of India (CJI) is a public authority under the Right to Information Act (RTI Act). The Court, however, said that judicial independence has to be kept in mind while disclosing information in public interest.

Introduction

The adage, “Sunlight is the best disinfectant” is often used to delineate the need for disclosure of matters related to public interest through the RTI mechanism. The declaration of assets by ministers and legislators, besides electoral candidates, has gone a long way in shedding light on public authorities and provided the citizenry more relevant information about their representatives. Yet, judges of the SC had hitherto refused to share information on their personal assets, citing the express lack of public interest. Voices from some quarters were also being raised that while SC was advocating transparency in all spheres, the decision in its own case was pending.

The judiciary carries the trust of the people and is accountable to the people. It is a unique wing of constitutional governance, with authority to review the decisions by the President, Prime Minister or Chief Ministers and Legislatures both at centre and states. It is the real guardian of the fundamental rights of the people.

Being a party to the litigation before the bench, the SC has just not confined itself to the disclosability of the information sought but has gone ahead to explain the nuances of various provisions of information rights. Though the appeals were nine-

year-old, the judgment has added a significant precedent to the new information jurisprudence.

The endorsement from the bench headed by CJI will give fillip to people’s quest for transparency and accountability. It sends a strong signal to all democratic institutions to adhere to the twin principles of transparency and accountability underlining the RTI Act. The decision also sends across a message to the public offices to take off the veil of secrecy and facilitate more disclosure.

Background

The issue arose from a request by Subhash Chandra Agrawal for information about the number of judges who filed their annual assets details to the CJI voluntarily. The Central Information Commission (CIC) ordered disclosure, but the Central Public Information Officer (CPIO) in the office of apex court preferred a writ in the Delhi High Court (HC). The matter went before the full bench of HC of AP Shah (CJ), Vikramjeet Sen and S Muralidhar JJ, who concurred with the CIC. It held that the administrative wing of judiciary should be transparent and furnish information held by office of CJI, if not hit by the exemption-clauses in Section 8. On January 10, 2010, Justice Shah had said that judicial independence was not a judge’s privilege but a responsibility cast upon him.

After staying the operation of Delhi HC order, the case was not taken up for hearing for a number of years. When the appellant sought to know the status, file notes were shared which revealed that, each time, it was directed to be posted after vacation or before a new CJI. Finally, the bench headed by Justice Gogoi has given a comprehensive judgment on the

entire RTI Act. Justice NV Ramana and Justice Dhananjay Chandrachud wrote separate but concurring judgments.

Supreme Court Judgment

The Supreme Court ruled that the office of the Chief Justice of India is a public authority under the RTI. The CJI office is an integral part of public authority, though not a separate entity under section 2(h), the bench has remanded the information requests back to the SC’s Central Public Information Officer (CPIO) for “reconsideration”, and to decide whether to give information or not. The order was passed by a five-judge Constitution bench with a 3:2 majority headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi. Other members of the bench are Justices NV Ramana, DY Chandrachud, Deepak Gupta and Sanjiv Khanna. It has upheld the earlier decision of the Delhi HC that the apex judiciary consisting of the CJI and other justices as per Article 124 of Constitution of India, besides the office of CJI, is a public authority covered under the RTI. The order is expected to infuse the administrative systems with substantive element of transparency, within the judiciary.

The key findings in the judgment authored by Justice Khanna (for himself, CJI Gogoi and Justice Ramana) are :

- ♦ The Supreme Court of India and the office of the CJI are not two different public authorities. The SC would necessarily include the office of CJI and other judges in view of Article 124 of the Constitution.
- ♦ Ordinarily the relationship between the Chief Justice and judges would not be that of a fiduciary and a beneficiary. However, it is not an absolute rule/code for in certain situations and acts, fiduciary relationship may arise.

- ◆ Details of personal assets of judges would not amount to personal information and disclosure of the same will not violate right to privacy of judges.

The judgment explains how disclosure or denial can be carved out of the provisions of RTI Act, adhering to its true spirit and contextual limitations found from definitions and exception clauses. Requests have to be decided after a very careful consideration of a whole range of issues, balancing disclosure with privacy.

Observations made by Judges

Justice Sanjiv Khanna: "Transparency does not undermine judicial independence. Judicial independence and accountability go hand in hand. Disclosure is a facet of public interest."

Justice NV Ramana: "In the domain of human rights, right to privacy and right to information have to be treated as coequals and none can take precedence over the other, rather a balance needs to be struck."

Justice DY Chandrachud: "There is a vital public interest in disclosing the basis on which those with judicial experience are evaluated for elevation to higher judicial office particularly having regard to merit, integrity and judicial performance. Placing the criteria followed in making judicial appointments in the public domain will fulfil the purpose and mandate of Section 4 of the RTI Act, engender public confidence in the process and provides a safeguard against extraneous considerations entering into the process."

Right to Information

The Right to Information Act, simply known as RTI, is a revolutionary Act that aims to promote transparency in government institutions in India. The Act came into existence in 2005, after sustained efforts of anti-corruption activists. It is termed revolutionary because it opens government organisations up for scrutiny. Equipped with knowledge about RTI, a common man can demand any government agency to furnish information. The organisation is bound to provide the information, that too within 30 days, failing which the officer concerned is slapped with a monetary fine.

Organisations under RTI Act

All government agencies, whether they are under a state government or the Centre, come under the purview of the Act. For example, municipal corporations, PSUs (Public Sector Units), government departments, ministries at the state as well as central level, judiciary, government owned companies, government universities, government schools, works departments, road authorities, provident fund department, etc. The list is quite an exhaustive one. Not only governments and their departments, but also smaller units such as your city corporation or gram panchayat fall under the ambit of RTI. Be it police, passport office, your electricity/water supply company or even the IRCTC, all are required to furnish RTI information.

Organisations exempted from the Act

Twenty-odd organisations are exempted from RTI. But all these entities are related to the country's defence and intelligence, such as RAW, BSF, CRPF, CISF, Intelligence Bureau, National Security Guard etc. Further, there are some specific instances whereby RTI information cannot be furnished. These instances relate to matters which:

- ◆ would affect national security, sovereignty, strategic, economic and/or scientific interest;
- ◆ relates to trade secrets or intellectual property, information which might affect/harm the competitive position of a third party;
- ◆ relates to foreign government information;
- ◆ would affect the life/physical safety of any person;
- ◆ would affect the process of an investigation;
- ◆ relates to cabinet papers; and

- ◆ relates to personal information without any public interest.

However, RTI law says that any information which cannot be denied to a Member of Parliament or state legislature cannot be denied to any citizen.

Analysis: The Right to Privacy and the Right to Information

This case concerns the balance, which is required between two important fundamental rights i.e. right to information and right to privacy. Often these two rights are seen as conflicting, however, we need to reiterate that both rights are two faces of the same coin. The purport of the Section 8(1)(j) of the Act is to balance privacy with public interest. In *K S Puttaswamy* Supreme court observed that, neither the right to information as a facet of Article 19(1)(a) nor the right to informational privacy as a facet to the right to privacy are absolute. The rights under Article 19(1)(a) may be restricted on the grounds enumerated in clause (2) of Article 19. The right to privacy and its numerous facets may be permissibly restricted where the abridgement is provided by law, pursues a legitimate State objective and complies with the principle of proportionality.

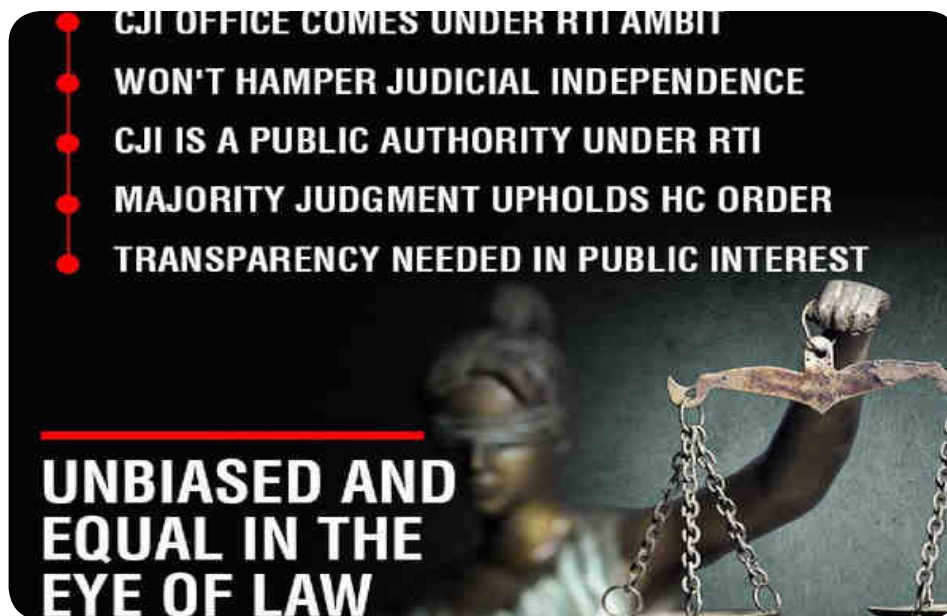
Coming to the aspect of transparency, judicial independence and the right to information act, we need to note that there needs to be a balance between the three equally important concepts. The whole bulwark of preserving our Constitution, is trusted upon judiciary, when other branches have not been able to do so. As a shield, the judicial independence is the basis with which judiciary has maintained its trust reposed by the citizens. In light of the same, the judiciary needs to be protected from attempts to breach its independence. Such interference requires calibration of appropriate amount of transparency in consonance with judicial independence. It must be

kept in the mind that the transparency cannot be allowed to run to its absolute, considering the fact that efficiency is equally important principle to be taken into fold. We may note that right to information should not be allowed to be used as a tool of surveillance. While applying the second step the concerned authority needs to balance these considerations as well.

Strengthening of Right to Information

The RTI Act, 2005 was hailed across the country as a major landmark in the country's march towards strengthening of democracy as it empowered every citizen to seek information regarding the government and its officials barring a few exceptions considered necessary and sensitive to the national security. Moving ahead, the SC declared office of the Chief Justice come under the ambits of RTI Act further strengthen the transparency in government institutions in India.

However, according to some jurist, the recent changes through the Right to Information (Amendment) Act, 2019 diluted the RTI Act, 2005. By controlling the tenure and acquiring the authority to fix salaries, allowances and other terms of service, the government has radically altered the character of the Information Commissions. At the same time, the Central government has also disempowered states by acquiring the right to appoint their Chief Information



Commissioner and Information Commissioner that is clearly against the principles of cooperative federalism. The government has defended the changes saying that Information Commissions are statutory bodies and therefore it has the right to make rules.

Way Forward

The RTI Act is a strong weapon that enhances accountability, citizen activism and, consequently, participative democracy, even if its implementation has come under strain in recent years due mainly to the Central government's apathy and disregard for the nuts and bolts of the Act. Yet, despite this, the SC judgment paves the way for greater transparency and could now impinge upon issues such as disclosure, under the RTI Act, by other institutions such as registered

political parties. This is vital as political party financing is a murky area today, marked by opacity and exacerbated by the issue of electoral bonds, precluding citizens from being fully informed on sources of party incomes. Now, civil society can hope that transparency would remain the mantra for good governance in all the three estates - judiciary, executive and legislature.

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.



5. NEW REGIME IN SRI LANKA AND ITS IMPACT ON INDIA

Why in News?

Gotabaya Rajapaksa won Presidential race in the recently held election in Sri Lanka over rival Sajith Premadasa. Gotabaya Rajapaksa, the winner, has received overwhelming backing of the majority Sinhalese-Buddhist community.

Introduction

The outcome of Sri Lanka's presidential election has surprised the winners, the losers as well as the observers. The most obvious, arguably disquieting, and unanticipated trend is the re-sharpening of the majority-minority divide in electoral choices. However,

to fulfil his promise of taking the country out of its present state of deep economic and governance crisis as well as ushering in an era of economic prosperity and political stability, the new President will need to rebuild the trust between the majority and minority communities.

The best, incurring possibly the lowest political cost, to achieving that goal lays through democratic, inclusive, dialogical, and accommodative means, despite the popular support for a possible retreat from traditional forms of democracy. Thus, the election outcome highlights once again how inter-ethnic reconciliation continues to be centrally relevant to any recovery and reform agenda for post-war Sri Lanka. Reconciliation is needed to heal the wounds in a country that is struggling to come out from a recent past of violence and democratic setbacks.

Background

No sooner did Gotabaya Rajapaksa emerge as the winner in Sri Lanka's presidential elections that the narrative about "China would be happy" was set. Following the 'pro-China' security and economic policies of Mahinda Rajapaksa that left Sri Lanka reeling under debt, the coalition government of President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Renil Wickremasinghe was elected in 2015 in the backdrop of mounting concerns in the island nation against Chinese investments.

As another member of the powerful Rajapaksa family now takes charge, analysts were saying that the return of the Rajapaksa clan may result in a pivot toward China once again.

In India, Gotabaya's victory on the back of a resounding mandate has largely been interpreted as a "setback". Memories of Mahinda — former President (2005-2015), now new Prime Minister of Sri Lanka — blaming Indian intelligence agency for his shock defeat in the 2015 elections are still fresh. India's alleged machinations, which New Delhi has vehemently denied, was thought to have been the result of Mahinda crossing a number of New Delhi's red lines including allowing Chinese nuclear submarines to dock at Sri Lanka's port and throwing an

unacceptable maritime security challenge to India.

The reality is a little more complex than assuming that Sri Lanka will swing like a pendulum between India and China. There is no denying that the strategic location of Sri Lanka — straddling vital sea lanes and being at the centre of Indian Ocean Region in a space India considers as its strategic backyard — exposes it to the risk of being a pawn in the great game of big powers. But there is an inherent risk in assuming that even small states with limited resources and hedging strategies are completely bereft of an agency or are oblivious to the benefits of pursuing a realist policy. Neither was the government of Sirisena and Wickremasinghe "anti-China" and "pro-India" nor should we expect Gotabaya to do the exact opposite.

India and Sri Lanka Relations

Both countries had a long history of international engagement, as a founding member of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and a member of the United Nations (UN), the Commonwealth of Nations, the G77, and the Non-Aligned Movement.

India's concerns in Sri Lanka, again as in the case of other neighbours, is security-centric. On the external front, India is concerned about China and Pakistan. On the internal, it is Islamic militancy, spreading out from traditional regional centres, to the neighbourhood. Despite, pro-china policy of Sri Lanka, India have to reset bilateral relations between the two strong governments in Delhi and Colombo.

The major challenges are:

- ◆ **Economic Cooperation:** Bilateral economic cooperation and a new trade agreement to replace the timed-out free trade agreement (FTA), which has served well over

two decades, is another Rajapaksa inheritance which the successors have left untouched for all practical purposes, even after changing the nomenclature from Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CEPA) to European Communities Trade Mark Association (ECTA). The two nations can consider reviving the talks, from wherever they have left them since, but it will take political will at the highest levels to make them work down the line.

- ◆ **Ethnic Issue:** If the new government in Colombo can advance reconciliation with the Tamil minority, it will be easier for India to strengthen ties with the Gotabaya government. But the Tamil issue is no longer a bilateral one between Delhi and Colombo. The Western powers have expressed deep concerns about the war crimes in the military campaign against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the need to bring those responsible to book.
- ◆ **Fishermen:** Given the proximity of the territorial waters of both countries, especially in the Palk Straits and the Gulf of Mannar, incidents of straying of fishermen are common. Both countries have agreed on certain practical arrangements to deal with the issue of bona fide fishermen of either side crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line.

In addition, India needs to invest some political capital in resolving problems such as the long-standing dispute over fisheries. Beyond its objection to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects, Delhi, either alone or in partnership with like-minded countries like Japan, should offer sustainable terms for infrastructure development. Delhi also needs to contribute more to the development of Colombo's defence and counter-terror capabilities.

China Challenges

India is acutely aware that China's economic and strategic salience in the Subcontinent will continue to grow and is not tied to the regime leadership in its neighbourhood. During his brother Mahinda's regime, China started investing heavily in infrastructure projects in the island nation as Lanka faced international isolation at the tail end of the civil war. Sri Lanka only accumulated unsustainable debt and getting into 'debt traps' with China's infrastructure and development projects as part of its BRI. China financed its projects through loans, while India's assistance comprised of 70 per cent loans and 30 per cent grants, but the scale of Chinese commitments easily outdid those of India. This was the phase of massive Chinese projects to make the Hambantota port, the Mattala international airport in Rajapakse's constituency in southern Sri Lanka as well as the Colombo Port City project to reclaim land to expand Colombo. In addition, China invested in a network of highways across the country such as the Katunayke Expressway and the Southern Expressway.

However, the Indian pressure led to a redrawing of the lease agreement that will require the China Merchant Port Holdings Company to divest a quarter of its 80 per cent share holding to a Sri Lankan entity within 10 years. Another clause obliges the Chinese to return the port and land to Sri Lanka after the 99 year period. In addition by shifting a naval base to the port which will be controlled by China, the Sri Lankans are trying to assure the international community that the facility will not be used by the Chinese military. Finally, in any case, Delhi can't expect its neighbours to shut down economic and commercial engagement with Beijing, notwithstanding the many questions about the terms of China's assistance on projects, including

those under the BRI. But Delhi will be right to ask Colombo not to take steps with Beijing that threaten India's security.

Outlook for India

The experience of the Sirisena-Wickremesinghe period makes it clear that there are limits to the influence that external parties can bring to bear on the Sri Lankan situation. Having initially taken the stand that they would reverse the Chinese connection, the two eventually compromised with Beijing. Nevertheless, the experience of the last five years has taught the Rajapakse's that there are limits to what India will accept. Sri Lanka is too important from the Indian security point of view to standby and allow a third country to get a pole position there.

In a recent interview, Basil Rajapakse said that while Sri Lanka could not afford to ignore China on economic matters, it would have to find ways to get along with India, its friend and neighbor, on political and security matters. After losing the 2015 election, Mahinda had initially attacked India for conspiring with other western countries to displace him. But months later he conceded that he had no evidence to the effect and he later visited New Delhi along with his son and met Indian Prime Minister.

Current Indian policy is focused on dealing directly with the mainstream parties in the country and its primary goal is to ensure that Chinese influence in Sri Lanka is limited. This is easier said than done. However, there is no reason to assume that whether it is Gotabaya or Sajith, that they will ignore Indian interests. The Nepal experience has shown that geography still remains an important factor in contemporary geopolitics.



Way Forward

There is little doubt that Gotabaya is the only new face for Rajapaksa family rule. India, whose relations with Sri Lanka went through a troubled patch during the Mahinda Rajapaksa presidency due to his proximity with China, now faces the challenge of rebuilding ties with the brothers. However, the great game in the subcontinent is not limited to just India and China. It is quite easy to forget the considerable interests and influence of many other powers in the region, including the US, European Union, Japan and Russia. Meanwhile, the exclusive focus on major power rivalry masks the agency of South Asian political elites and their capacity to manoeuvre among the major powers. As the world rediscovers the geopolitical value of Sri Lanka at the heart of the Indo-Pacific, Colombo has huge opportunities to leverage its location for national benefit. A prudent and important part of that strategy would be to avoid provoking India. India too would be wise to be mindful of Colombo's security concerns and find ways to develop long-term strategic cooperation with Sri Lanka.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: India and its neighborhood-relations.



6. INDIA AND AFRICAN LITTORALS IN WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN

Context

The Western Indian Ocean (WIO) connects North America, Europe and Asia, and as such is of global strategic importance. Its rich natural resource profile has pushed global players, including India, to view the region with increasing interest in recent years. India's compulsions for energy security and its dependence on overseas resources has been the biggest pull drawing India closer to the region. It can play a greater role in shaping the maritime security architecture in the WIO region.

Introduction

For a long time, India's political attention was directed towards its East, through its 'Look East' policy (later renamed 'Act East'). Yet, most of the Indian diaspora [both Non-resident Indian (NRI) and Person of Indian Origin (PIO)], remittances, border conflict (with Pakistan), energy interests (crude oil, petroleum), and inner-core of security lies to the country's West. From an Indian perspective, therefore, as important as securing the East, is its western maritime security, where the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea meet. In recent years, this viewpoint has gained prominence, and today there is a rebalancing towards the West, especially the African Indian Ocean Rim littorals. This is reflected in the 'top priority' status accorded by the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the African continent in the country's foreign and economy policy.

Indeed, there has been an unprecedented intensification in India's political engagement with Africa; one indication is the growing number of high-level visits from the two sides. Both India and African countries agree

on the need to keep the oceans open and free for the benefit of all nations. This is reflected in India's 'Ten Guiding Principles for India-Africa Engagement', as enunciated by PM Modi during his address to the Ugandan parliament last year.

Ten Guiding Principles for India-Africa Engagement

1. Africa will be at the top of India's priorities. India will continue to intensify and deepen our engagement with Africa.
2. Indian development partnership will be guided by African priorities. India will build as much local capacity and create local opportunities as possible.
3. India will keep our markets open and make it easier and more attractive for trade. Delhi will support its industry to invest in Africa.
4. India's experience with the digital revolution will be harnessed to support Africa's development; improve delivery of public services.
5. Africa has 60 percent of the world's arable land, but produces just 10 percent of the global output. India will work with African nations to improve Africa's agriculture.
6. The partnership will also address the challenges of climate change.
7. Strengthening cooperation and mutual capabilities in combating terrorism and extremism; keeping cyberspace safe and secure; and, supporting the UN in advancing and keeping peace.
8. India will work with African nations to keep the oceans open and free for the benefit of all nations.
9. As global engagement in Africa increases, both must work together to ensure that Africa does not once again turn into a theatre of rival ambitions, but becomes a nursery for the aspirations of Africa's youth.
10. Just as India and Africa fought colonialism together, both will work together for a just, representative and democratic global order that has a voice for one-third of humanity that lives in Africa and India.

The Western Indian Ocean: A Profile

The WIO region comprises 10 countries: Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, South Africa, Comoros, Madagascar, Seychelles, Mauritius, and the French overseas territory of Reunion. The region is of major global geostrategic significance and remains a space of major geopolitical and naval interaction between states. Significant proportions of global maritime trade pass through the area, including a large share of the world's crude oil supplies. Some facts about WIO are:

- ◆ The importance of ocean waters to the people of WIO is immense.
- ◆ The total natural assets of WIO have been conservatively estimated at US\$ 333.8 billion.
- ◆ Fisheries is the largest asset estimated at US\$ 135 billion, or 40 percent of the WIO's total natural assets.
- ◆ The annual Gross Marine Product of WIO (equivalent to a country's GDP) is at least US\$ 20.8 billion.
- ◆ Most countries in the region have high population growth rates and coastal development is expected to grow accordingly.
- ◆ Over 60 million people inhabit the coastal zone in the WIO region.
- ◆ The region is characterised by high biodiversity both in terms of species and ecosystems.
- ◆ The main drivers of growth in WIO littorals are the extractive, construction, and service sectors including the tourism industry.

Importance of Maritime Domain for India and Africa

A secure maritime environment in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is crucial for both India and African countries

for securing national interests and achieving sustained national development. Such security means not only guarding the coastline or territories, but also safeguarding the countries' interests in their exclusive economic zones (EEZs), as well as protecting trade and shipping routes, and sea-lanes of communications (SLOCs). Indeed, around 90 percent of the continent's trade is carried out by sea, thereby making the African Maritime Domain (AMD) crucial for commercial, security, environmental, and developmental reasons. For the longest time, however, African countries suffered from a culture of 'sea blindness', i.e. it largely ignored its maritime domain—and had little knowledge of the benefits of its water bodies. It is in the last few years that African countries have started paying more attention to the maritime domain and as a collective entity has come to realise the importance of its maritime security.

With a booming oil and mining industry, Africa has been at the centre of global attention: various global players like India, China, and the European Union, are keen to engage Africa's waters. However, with an increase in resource extraction activities in the seas, there has been a corresponding rise not only in the volume of sea-traffic but also the rate of maritime crimes. Unfortunately, most African countries lack the capacity to ensure the security of their declared maritime zones. This has resulted in vast illegal capture and exploitation of the continent's marine resources, which in turn is provoking a clamor for better maritime governance. The high incidence of piracy off the East African coast in Gulf of Aden and in the Niger Delta Region and Gulf of Guinea in West Africa, has brought the issue of African maritime security to the world's attention.

Locating India and African littorals in Western Indian Ocean

Both from a geo-strategic and geo-economic point of view, the WIO holds immense value and provides numerous opportunities for the countries in the region. India's approach to maritime cooperation with Africa has essentially revolved around its central security concerns in African waters. India has reached out to African states through offers of military aid, capacity building, and training assistance. Such a broad-based maritime security approach towards African countries entails four principle avenues of cooperation:

1. Training of African naval personnel, defence officers, and civilian personnel engaged in maritime administration in Indian institutes like Indian Naval Academy and Naval Institute of Educational and Training Institute.

2. Conducting Hydrographic Surveys and helping African littoral nations develop basic capabilities in hydrography - At present, half of the world's coastal states have no hydrographic capability, while only a few states have limited capabilities. However, India has adequate hydrographic capabilities. There is, therefore, immense scope for international cooperation in hydrography, particularly so in Africa, "where 64% of the waters is yet to be surveyed systematically." Indian Survey Ships in the past have conducted hydrographic surveys for five African countries – Kenya, Seychelles, Mauritius, Mozambique, and Tanzania. Currently, India has MoUs on Hydrographic cooperation with three African countries: Mauritius (October 2005 to 2020), Tanzania (June 2015 to 2020), and Seychelles (March 2015 to 2020).

3. Conducting anti-piracy patrols - A large percentage of India's trade,

including oil and fertilisers, passes through the Gulf of Aden. According to estimates by the Ministry of Shipping, Indian imports through the Gulf of Aden were valued at US\$ 50 billion, and exports at US\$ 60 billion. Therefore, the safety and unhindered continuity of maritime trade, by ships that use this route, is a primary national concern as it directly impacts the economy. The Indian Navy was one of the first countries to commence anti-piracy patrols in the Gulf of Aden as early as in October 2008. Since then, Indian ships have been deployed in the region continuously.

4. Port visits and development of monitoring stations - In a display of more purposeful maritime diplomacy, Indian naval ships have increased their port visits to Africa's East coast and Indian Ocean island states. Additionally, India is partnering with Indian Ocean Rim countries for the development of monitoring stations. In recent years, India has adopted an expansive maritime strategy driven by its great-power aspirations and by strategic rivalry with China, which continues to expand its own maritime capabilities as it engages in unilateral actions in the IOR. The Indian Navy is working to secure key maritime 'chokepoints' at the entrances to the Indian Ocean, like Bab-el-Mandeb, Strait of Hormuz, and Mozambique Channel.

Key Challenges

The challenges and limitations confronted by the Indian Navy in its engagement with African countries are twofold: inherent limitations, and the China factor.

1. Internal and Inherent Limitations

♦ **Low Capital Allocation**— While the Indian Navy is now more networked

and technology-enabled than it was in the past, it still continues to face budgetary constraints. The allocation to the Navy has reduced from 18 percent of the defence budget in 2012-13, to 13 percent in 2018. Such low levels negatively impact future force planning and capability development. Therefore, according to Indian Chief of Naval Staff (CNS) Admiral Karambir Singh, the need of the hour is to ensure long-term 'assured budgetary support'.

- ◆ **Gap between Promises and Delivery**— For the Indian Navy to be recognised as a 'net security provider' in the IOR, it needs to bridge the gap between commitment and implementation. Most IOR littorals lack the necessary capacity to ensure the security of their declared maritime zones and perform their rights and duties. These littorals look towards India to ensure its security. However, India has a poor track record in converting capital into deliverables or influence. Therefore, India needs to develop a defence diplomacy fund through which the current situation of poor delivery can be altered.
- ◆ **Poor Allocation of Resources**— When it comes to allocation of resources, there is no concept of prioritisation in the Ministry of Defence. There is also hardly any adequate dialogue between the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of External Affairs. India must look to engage in a participative programme between the service provider and the agencies that are the sources of funds. This will go a long way in ensuring the Indian Navy's ability to convert money into influence.
- ◆ **Weak Coordination in the Various Maritime Aspects**— Maritime security entails not only hard-

security aspects like protecting EEZ, High Availability and Disaster Recovery (HA/DR) operations, asset allocation, or conducting anti-piracy patrols, but also includes issues related to blue economy, climate change, and coastal maritime infrastructure. Coordination and building synergy between the various stakeholders is the most important and challenging task. All agencies concerned should be coalesced under one umbrella agency and work together to sort out the different inter-agency issues. The Indian National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) or a proposed National Maritime Commission (NMC), will be the most appropriate organisation to carry out this role.

2. The China Challenge

China has made massive inroads in advancing its strategic and economic interests in the IOR, particularly by gaining access to strategic ports and military bases and deploying illiberal and predatory economic practices. There is a continuous increasing presence of Chinese Navy in the Indian Ocean. China's quest for Indian Ocean military access and bases to surround India is described as "String of Pearls", or a network of strategic naval outposts constructed by Beijing to advance its military, strategic, and economic interests in the IOR. This quest is now being realised through China's 2013 Maritime Silk Infrastructure (MSR) investment programme, yielding potential naval bases via 'debt trap' acquisitions. Beijing's aggressive search for resources, markets, economy, political, and military influence, as a revisionist power with the intent of making them anti-India, could have serious implications for regional security and stability in the IOR. As a result, India wants to ensure that China

does not pursue hegemonic goals in the region.

What more should India do?

Given the broad nature of these aforementioned challenges, there is a lot more that India can do to increase its maritime partnerships with African littorals.

Develop a Pan-African Approach:

India must explore moving beyond such narrow interests and developing a Pan-African approach in accordance with African needs and priorities. However, the Indian government's meagre expenditure and allocation to the Navy is unlikely to increase in the immediate future. Therefore, the Indian Navy needs to reprioritise, develop larger commitments, and focus on its core competencies – which is war fighting. The declaration of the Ten Guiding Principles for India Africa Engagement has been a step in the right direction in this regard.

Develop Multiple Strategies and Impose Costs on Adversarial Stance

- To be successful in the emerging competition arising in the Indian Ocean, India needs to be willing to pay the costs and develop multiple strategies in various domains ranging from diplomatic, informational, military, maritime research, blue economy, industrial development, cultural and educational domain, energy, to climate and weather concerns. Developing these multiple strategies should involve not only the navy, military or the Ministry of Defence, but a multitude of other government agencies as in the case of China. Developing friendly, supportive, and accommodative relationships has always driven Indian engagement in the IOR.

Greater Cooperation on Blue Economy

— The ocean or blue economy holds immense potential for both India and African littorals. In the 2015 Delhi Declaration, both India and Africa

reiterated their desire to collaborate more closely on blue economy. If India is serious about cooperating more on blue economy with African littorals, it must look to apply innovative technology (like Triple 'A' – appropriate, affordable, adaptable) in WIO in areas such as water reuse, wastewater recycling, saltwater to freshwater conversion, marine-based renewable energy production, including wave and tidal energy, and management of the health of ocean environment for nutrient-rich food sources.

Work to Develop a Multilateral Security Architecture for the Western Indian Ocean – Over the years, various maritime security cooperation mechanisms have been developed in the WIO. However, while these frameworks exist, they remain under-optimised. While some have remained as loose, ad hoc form of cooperation, others are heavily dependent on funding from the European Union, or lack the necessary political buy-

in. Therefore, the need of the hour is developing a security architecture for the WIO by strengthening existing frameworks and working together to serve the interests of the region. The Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) and SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) can play a more prominent role in increasing regional maritime domain awareness.

Conclusion

The WIO's global strategic importance as a nexus connecting North America, Europe to Asia and its rich natural resource profile has pushed global players including India to view the region with increasing interest. India's compulsion of energy security and dependence on overseas resources has been the biggest pull drawing India closer to the region.

However, India is cautious about the assertive manner in which China is operating and demonstrating

maritime power in the Indian Ocean—with its financial prowess, industrial and manufacturing capacity, and the manner in which it has carried out financial overtures to IOR littorals. Given India's close defence and security relations with many African countries and the positive contribution of Indian Peacekeeping Forces to the peace and stability in the continent, India is increasingly being viewed as a net security provider in the IOR. In the face of common challenges like terrorism, coastal security, and climate change, these links are poised to grow further. However, a lot more needs to be done.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: India and its neighborhood-relations.

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

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7. BROWN TO GREEN REPORT 2019 : REVIEW OF G20 CLIMATE ACTION

Why in News?

Climate Transparency issued its annual 'Brown to Green Report 2019', grading all the countries in the group of G20 with large economies on their climate performance and finds none of them has much to brag about. The Climate Transparency group compiles data on countries' emissions and policies in an attempt to push them into investing in clean technology.

Introduction

The G20 nations account for 85 per cent of global economic activity and in 2018 produced 80 per cent of all greenhouse-gas emissions, which accumulate in the atmosphere and trap heat. The report says about half

the G20 members — 19 countries with advanced economies plus the European Union (EU) collectively — are on track to meet their current targets for cutting emissions by 2030 but those targets are much too mild. If every G20 member does not drastically scale up its targets, the G20 overall will produce more emissions in 2030 than it does today.

Carbon emissions from the world's 20 biggest economies are rising. None of the G20 countries have plans that will put them on track to limit global warming to 1.5°C, despite the fact that most are technically capable and have economic incentives. To keep the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C goal within reach, G20 countries will have to increase their 2030 emission

targets by 2020 and significantly scale up mitigation, adaptation and finance over the next decade.

Brown To Green: The G20 Transition towards a Net-Zero Emissions Economy

The UN Climate Action Summit in September 2019 marked the official start of a new wave of political momentum necessary to raise climate ambitions by 2020 in line with the Paris goals. Few G20 countries spoke with any specificity about enhancing their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) at the summit. Some major G20 countries, however, have not yet signalled that they are ready to commit to a net-zero emissions future.

The 'Brown to Green Report' takes stock of the climate actions of G20 countries in the context of 1.5°C benchmarks. The report describes and compares G20 countries' performance in the areas of adaptation, mitigation and finance. It thereby complements the UN Global Stocktake that assesses collective action towards the Paris Agreement goals. Through the report's independent country comparisons, it enables peer pressure and learning across the G20 countries.

Climate Transparency

Climate Transparency is a global partnership with a shared mission to stimulate a 'race to the top' in G20 climate action and to shift investments towards zero carbon technologies through enhanced transparency. Climate Transparency aims to increase awareness and peer pressure among policy-makers in G20 governments and influencers from civil society and the financial sector on a national and international level. Activities of the global partnership to empower change agents include international and country-specific media work, direct communication with decision makers and G20 groups as well as workshops in G20 countries.

Key Findings

- ◆ Energy-related CO₂ emissions in G20 countries shot up by 1.8% in 2018 due to rising energy demand. Energy supply is not getting cleaner: despite a more than 5% rise in G20 total renewable energy supply in 2018, the share of fossil fuels in the G20 energy mix remains at 82%.
- ◆ In 2018, G20 emissions in the power sector increased by 1.6%. While renewables now account for 25.5% of power generation, this is not sufficient to outweigh the growth of emissions from fossil fuel sources.
- ◆ G20 transport emissions increased by 1.2% in 2018. Low-carbon fuels accounted for less than 6% of the fuel mix. They need to increase roughly ten times by 2050 to keep global warming below 1.5°C.

- ◆ G20 emissions in the building sector grew more than in any other sector in 2018 (4.1%). Retrofitting existing buildings challenges all G20 and especially Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries.
- ◆ G20 countries still provided more than US\$ 127 billion in fossil fuel subsidies in 2017. Subsidies have shown a decrease in nine G20 countries (partly due to falling fuel prices), but subsidies for natural gas infrastructure and production have remained stable or increased in many countries (despite lower prices).

Overall CO₂ emissions go up in all sectors, but we're seeing some frontrunners emerging that others can learn from, like China's policies for promoting electric vehicles and public transport.

Analysis

1. Vulnerability & Adaptation

Extreme weather events led to around 16,000 deaths and economic losses of US\$ 142 billion in G20 countries on average every year (1998-2017). Russia, France, Italy, Germany and India are highest ranked in terms of losses. Limiting global temperature increase to 1.5°C instead of 3°C avoids over 70% of climate-related impacts in the water, health and agriculture sectors. Brazil and Mexico are highly exposed to water scarcity at 1.5°C, while Brazil, France, Italy and Turkey are highly exposed to droughts. To reduce their climate vulnerability all G20 countries have an adaptation plan, except Saudi Arabia.

2. Mitigation

Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs): China, the EU and its G20 member states, India, Indonesia, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Turkey are projected to meet or surpass their

NDC targets, excluding land use, land-use change, and forestry (LULUCF) emissions. This indicates that the NDC targets are not yet "highest possible ambition" as required by the Paris Agreement. India has the most ambitious NDC compared to its fair share of global emissions to limit global warming to 1.5°C. However, India still needs to act now to prepare sectors for stringent emission reductions.

South Korea, Canada and Australia are the G20 countries furthest off track from implementing their already unambitious NDCs.

Long-term Strategies: Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the UK and the US have submitted their long-term strategies for 2050 to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Argentina, China, the EU, India, South Africa, South Korea and Russia are currently preparing strategies. France and the UK set a precedence by enshrining net-zero carbon/GHG emissions targets by 2050 in law.

Energy Supply: 82% of the G20 energy mix continues to come from fossil fuels. The total primary energy supply of fossil fuels in 2018 increased in Australia, Canada, China, India, Indonesia, Russia, South Africa, South Korea and the US. The energy efficiency of the G20 countries has improved since 1990, but annual efficiency gains are slowing down.

Power: India is the country currently investing most in renewable energy, while Brazil and Germany are the only G20 countries with long-term renewable energy strategies. Brazil leads with 82.5% renewables, while Saudi Arabia, South Korea and South Africa lag behind with shares of only 0-5%.

Transport: Canada, France, Japan and the UK are leading in banning the sale of fossil fuelbased cars. China nearly doubled the share of electric

vehicles within one year and has the most ambitious policies to shift towards public transport. The US (24 times the levels of India), Canada and Australia have the highest transport emissions per capita.

Buildings: The US, Australia and Saudi Arabia had the highest building emissions per capita including electricity-based emissions in 2018. They also lack ambitious policies for substantially reducing emissions in the sector.

Industry: The emission intensity of the industry sector is the highest in Russia, India and China. At the same time, India and China are among the G20 countries with the most progressive energy efficiency policies.

Agriculture and Land-use: In 2016, G20 GHG emissions from agriculture decreased slightly by 0.4%. Livestock breeding accounts for 40% of agricultural emissions in G20 countries, and indirectly causes emissions through the displacement of forest for grazing and pasture.

3. Finance

Financial Policies and Regulations: All G20 countries have started to discuss green financial principles but emerging economies lead the way. Brazil and France are the only G20 countries with mandatory climate-related disclosure requirements, whereas Indonesia is the only G20 country with mandatory climate-related risk assessment by financial institutions. Both India and China have mandatory policies for commercial banks to incentivise green loans.

Public Finance: G20 public institutions still financed coal and coal-fired power production internationally at US\$ 17 billion and domestically at US\$ 11 billion on average per year

between 2016-2017. Ending coal finance is one of the most crucial steps to achieving the Paris goals. The biggest G20 financiers overseas are China, Japan and South Korea. Public financial institutions in Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, the UK and the US restrict public spending for coal.

Future Suggestions

For the first time, the report identifies untapped potential and key opportunities for countries to ramp up ambition and as such will be a valuable tool for governments when they update their climate plans.

- ◆ Coal needs to be phased out by 2030 in OECD countries and by 2040 globally.
- ◆ G20 countries need to scale up their policies to ban new fossil fuel cars by 2035 at the latest, reduce emissions from freight transport to net-zero by 2050 and shift towards non-motorised and sustainable public transport.
- ◆ Cutting government subsidies to the aviation sector, taxing jet fuel and using revenues to invest massively in new carbon free fuels would leverage huge emissions reductions and health benefits.
- ◆ For building sector, new buildings have to be near zero-energy by 2020/25 to keep global warming below 1.5°C.
- ◆ Diverting fossil fuel subsidies towards renewables could pay for the clean energy transition and reduce emissions significantly.

Way Forward

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Special Report on 1.5°C, global CO₂ emissions need to decrease to net zero by 2050 in order to keep global temperature rise

below 1.5°C. If we continue at current emissions levels, the remaining carbon budget to stay below 1.5°C, namely 420 Gigatonnes of Carbondioxide (Gt CO₂), will be expended in just over nine years. 2020 is the critical year to ramp up climate ambition. Countries must submit their updated NDCs with more ambitious emission-reduction targets as well as their long-term strategies (LTS). To keep the 1.5°C limit attainable, more ambitious 2030 targets through the NDCs and increased action in the next decade are crucial.

In order for the Paris Agreement to succeed, it is clear that the G20 countries need to be climate leaders and pave the way for solutions that developing countries can benefit from. A warming planet is an environmental challenge and a threat to humanity. Negative effects of climate change are numerous and severe, in particular climate migration is poised to become an issue of unprecedented scale.

To mitigate the harmful consequences of global warming, more ambitious climate action by countries is urgently needed.

Various international efforts have been established acknowledging the urgency of the issue. Most recently in the Paris Agreement countries have committed to increase their climate action. Within this framework, transparency has been recognized as an incremental driver.

General Studies Paper- III

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



SEVEN SUBJECTIVE QUESTIONS WITH MODEL ANSWERS

1. BRICS Summit 2019 : An Overview

Q. Although, BRICS countries are providing opportunities for the developing world, but it is not free from its ones challenges. Critically examine.

Hints:

- ◆ BRICS is the group composed by the five major emerging countries - Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa -, which together represent about 42% of the population, 23% of GDP, 30% of the territory and 18% of the global trade and 50 per cent of the world's economic growth. Despite the recession in the world, BRICS countries accelerated economic development, brought millions out of poverty and achieved new breakthroughs in technology and innovation.
- ◆ Although the group is the 'third giant' after the European Union (EU) and the US. But BRICS member nations are too different, and have too few synergies, to represent a solid economic and political power.
- ◆ BRICS countries also presented a vision for "rules-based, transparent, non-discriminatory, open, free and inclusive international trade".
- ◆ BRICS has emerged the voice of developing countries, or the global South. As these countries face an aggressive club of developed countries, raising challenges on issues from WTO to climate change, BRICS has to protect the rights of the developing countries. Finally, BRICS should ponder if in the short term it needs to focus on fulfilling existing commitments instead of taking on new ones.

2. Indian Model of Secularism : An Analysis

Q. How the Indian concept of secularism is different from the Western model of secularism? Discuss.

Hints:

- ◆ Indian secularism is fundamentally different from Western secularism. Indian secularism does not focus only on church-state separation and the idea of inter-

religious equality is crucial to the Indian conception. Indian secularism took on a distinct form as a result of an interaction between what already existed in a society that had religious diversity and the ideas that came from the West. It resulted in equal focus on intra-religious and inter-religious domination.

- ◆ Indian secularism equally opposed the oppression of dalits and women within Hinduism, the discrimination against women within Indian Islam or Christianity, and the possible threats that a majority community might pose to the rights of the minority religious communities. This is its first important difference from mainstream western secularism.
- ◆ Connected to it is the second difference. Indian secularism deals not only with religious freedom of individuals but also with religious freedom of minority communities. Within it, an individual has the right to profess the religion of his or her choice. Likewise, religious minorities also have a right to exist and to maintain their own culture and educational institutions.
- ◆ A third difference is this. Since a secular state must be concerned equally with intra-religious domination, Indian secularism has made room for and is compatible with the idea of state-supported religious reform. Thus, the Indian constitution bans untouchability. The Indian state has enacted several laws abolishing child marriage and lifting the taboo on inter-caste marriage sanctioned by Hinduism.

3. Manual Scavenging : A Practice Against Human Dignity

Q. "Despite laws and regulations being in place in India, the practice of manual scavenging has not been underground." Comment.

Hints:

- ◆ Manual scavenging is a socio-economic problem, and has continued for decades because of unscientific technology employed in Indian latrines. Pit latrines without a proper water seal require the waste to be

manually collected in buckets. Manual scavengers are also employed to clean septic tanks, gutters and sewers and all of these pose significant health threats to them.

- ◆ The persistence of manual scavenging demonstrates that legislation and court orders are insufficient for ending this degrading and dangerous practice.
- ◆ Articles 14, 17, 21 and 23 of the constitution of India outlawed manual scavenging practice. In addition, a number of national legislations and international laws prohibit the practice.
- ◆ Manual scavengers predominantly belong to untouchable castes and, therefore, are subjected to additional discrimination and social exclusion based on untouchability. Manual scavenging is a known offence now and there are laws but it is still happening. No modern country in the world forces human beings to enter sewers to clean them the technology to prevent that has existed for almost 80 years. However, availability of cheap labour was the main reason why states and central government did not invest in technology to replace manual scavenging. To prevent manual scavenging, it was important to 'de-caste' the profession.

4. CJI under RTI Ambit and Its Implications

Q. "Transparency does not undermine judicial independence. Judicial independence and accountability should go hand in hand. Comment.

Hints:

- ◆ The Supreme Court ruled that the office of the Chief Justice of India is a public authority under the RTI.
- ◆ The Supreme Court of India and the office of the CJI are not two different public authorities. The SC would necessarily include the office of CJI and other judges in view of Article 124 of the Constitution.
- ◆ Ordinarily the relationship between the Chief Justice and judges would not be that of a fiduciary and a beneficiary. However, it is not an absolute rule/code for in certain situations and acts, fiduciary relationship may arise.
- ◆ Details of personal assets of judges would not amount to personal information and disclosure of the same will not violate right to privacy of judges.
- ◆ The judgment explains how disclosure or denial can be carved out of the provisions of RTI Act, adhering to its true spirit and contextual limitations found from

definitions and exception clauses. Requests have to be decided after a very careful consideration of a whole range of issues, balancing disclosure with privacy.

5. New Regime in Sri Lanka and Its Impact on India

Q. India needs to engage with the Tamil equations and Chinese interest in Sri Lanka with an open mind. Discuss it in the context of recently elected new regime in Sri Lanka.

Hints:

- ◆ India's concerns in Sri Lanka, again as in the case of other neighbours, is security-centric. On the external front, India is concerned about China and Pakistan. On the internal, it is Islamic militancy, spreading out from traditional regional centres, to the neighbourhood. Despite, pro-china policy of Sri Lanka, India have to reset bilateral relations between the two strong governments in Delhi and Colombo.
- ◆ India is acutely aware that China's economic and strategic salience in the Subcontinent will continue to grow and is not tied to the regime leadership in its neighbourhood.
- ◆ Delhi can't expect its neighbours to shut down economic and commercial engagement with Beijing, notwithstanding the many questions about the terms of China's assistance on projects, including those under the BRI. But Delhi will be right to ask Colombo not to take steps with Beijing that threaten India's security.
- ◆ Current Indian policy is focused on dealing directly with the mainstream parties in the country and its primary goal is to ensure that Chinese influence in Sri Lanka is limited. This is easier said than done. However, there is no reason to assume that whether it is Gotabaya or Sajith, that they will ignore Indian interests. The Nepal experience has shown that geography still remains an important factor in contemporary geopolitics.

6. India and African Littorals in Western Indian Ocean

Q. Discuss the importance of African littorals in the Western Indian Ocean Region for India.

Hints:

- ◆ The WIO region comprises 10 countries: Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, South Africa, Comoros, Madagascar, Seychelles, Mauritius, and the French overseas territory of Reunion.

- ◆ The Western Indian Ocean (WIO) connects North America, Europe and Asia, and as such is of global strategic importance. Its rich natural resource profile has pushed global players, including India, to view the region with increasing interest in recent years.
- ◆ India's approach to maritime cooperation with Africa has essentially revolved around its central security concerns in African waters. India has reached out to African states through offers of military aid, capacity building, and training assistance.
- ◆ The WIO's global strategic importance as a nexus connecting North America, Europe to Asia and its rich natural resource profile has pushed global players including India to view the region with increasing interest. India's compulsion of energy security and dependence on overseas resources has been the biggest pull drawing India closer to the region.
- ◆ However, India is cautious about the assertive manner in which China is operating and demonstrating maritime power in the Indian Ocean—with its financial prowess, industrial and manufacturing capacity, and the manner in which it has carried out financial overtures to IOR littorals.

7. Brown to Green Report 2019 : Review of G20 Climate Action

Q. A warming planet is an environmental challenge and a threat to humanity. Discuss it in the context of 'Brown to Green Report' on G20 countries performance on climate action.

Hints:

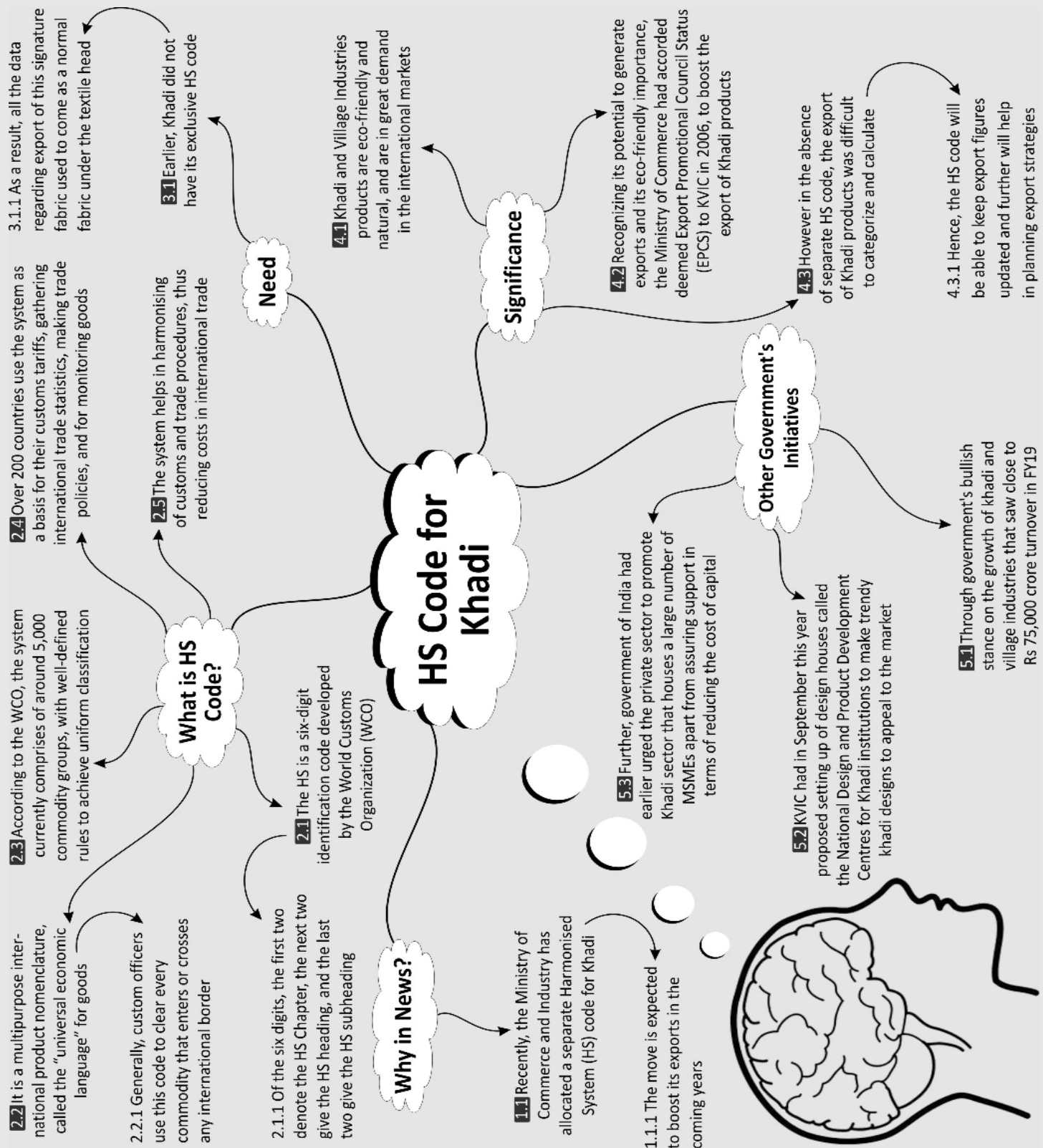
- ◆ Carbon emissions from the world's 20 biggest economies are rising. None of the G20 countries

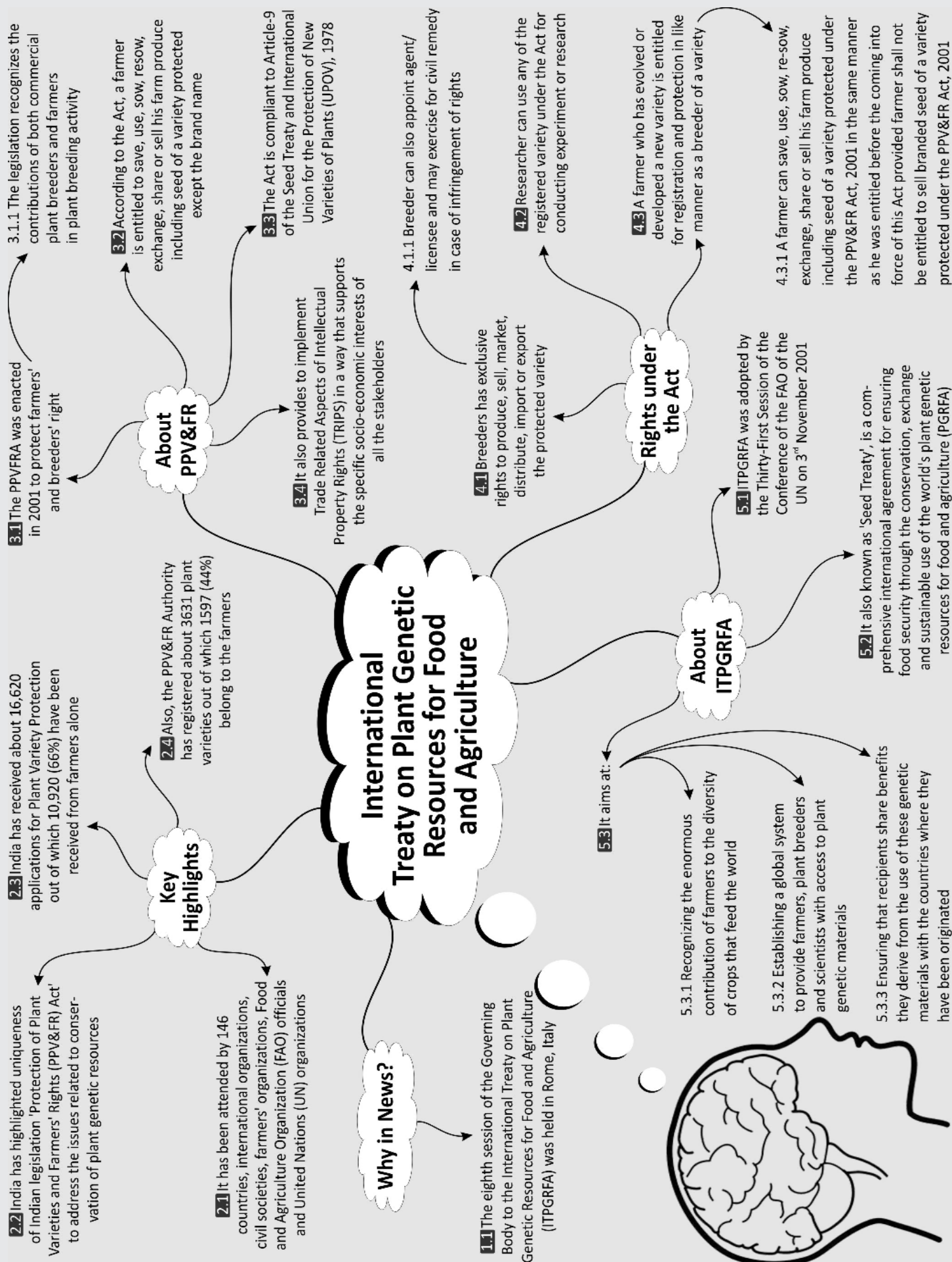
have plans that will put them on track to limit global warming to 1.5°C, despite the fact that most are technically capable and have economic incentives. To keep the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C goal within reach, G20 countries will have to increase their 2030 emission targets by 2020 and significantly scale up mitigation, adaptation and finance over the next decade.

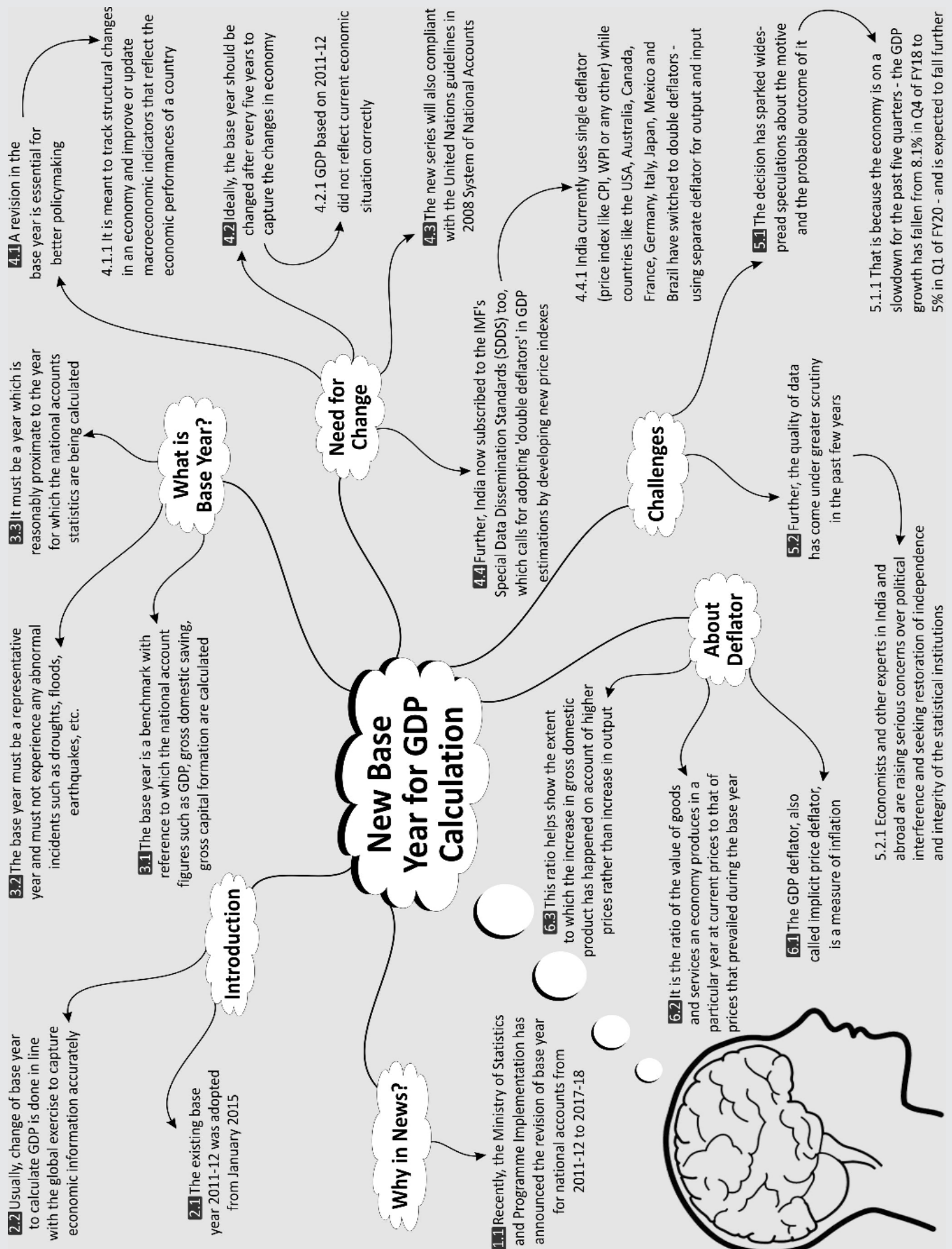
- ◆ Energy-related CO₂ emissions in G20 countries shot up by 1.8% in 2018 due to rising energy demand. Energy supply is not getting cleaner: despite a more than 5% rise in G20 total renewable energy supply in 2018, the share of fossil fuels in the G20 energy mix remains at 82%.
- ◆ G20 countries still provided more than US\$ 127 billion in fossil fuel subsidies in 2017. Subsidies have shown a decrease in nine G20 countries (partly due to falling fuel prices), but subsidies for natural gas infrastructure and production have remained stable or increased in many countries (despite lower prices).
- ◆ Overall CO₂ emissions go up in all sectors, but we're seeing some frontrunners emerging that others can learn from, like China's policies for promoting electric vehicles and public transport.
- ◆ In order for the Paris Agreement to succeed, it is clear that the G20 countries need to be climate leaders and pave the way for solutions that developing countries can benefit from. A warming planet is an environmental challenge and a threat to humanity. Negative effects of climate change are numerous and severe, in particular climate migration is poised to become an issue of unprecedented scale.

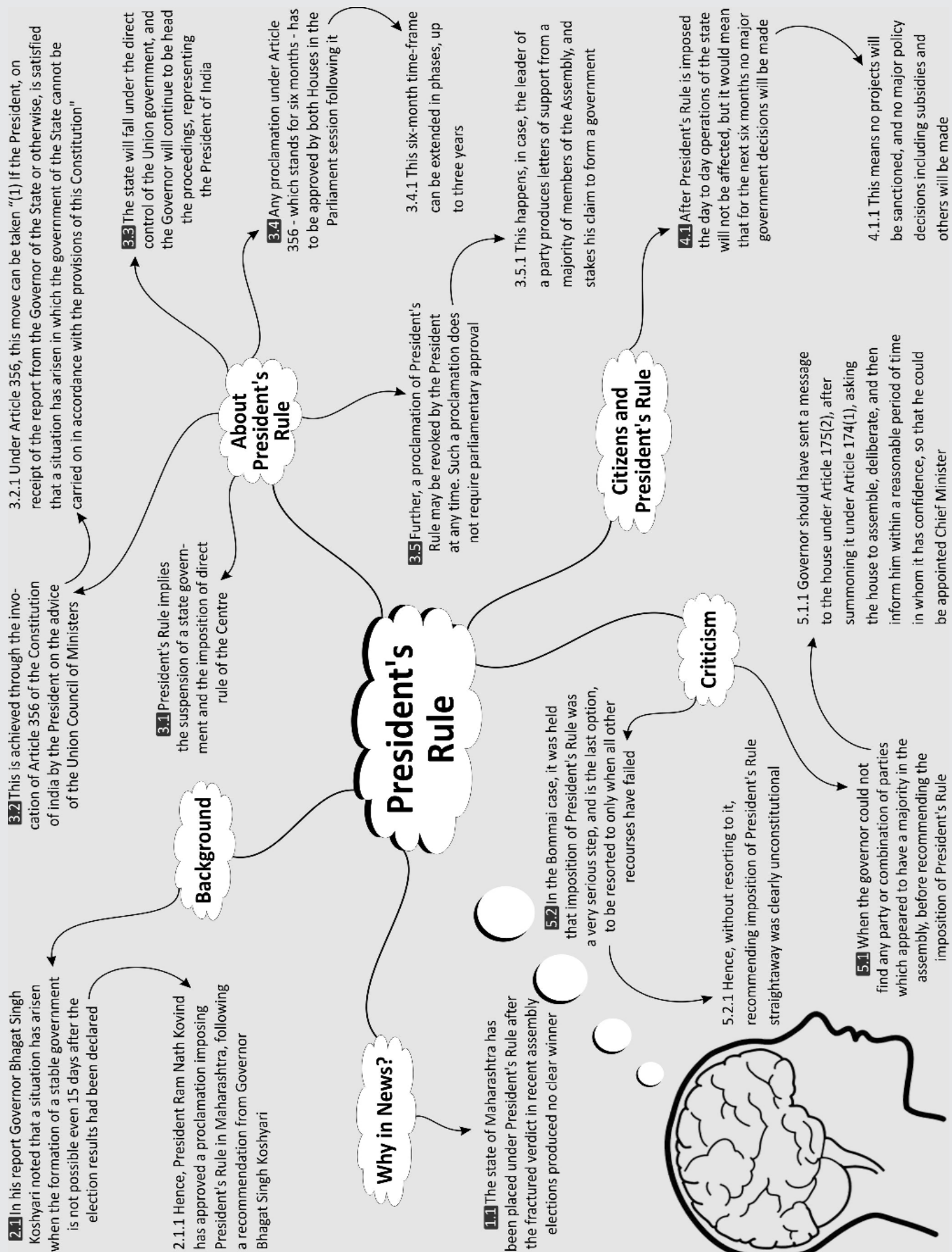


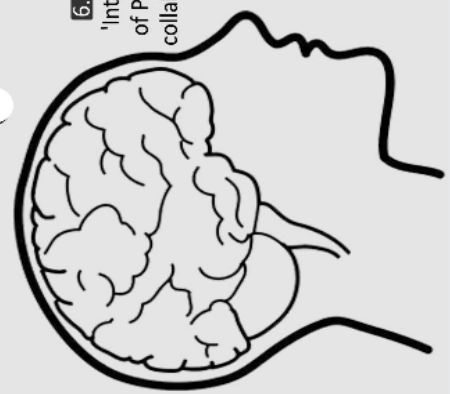
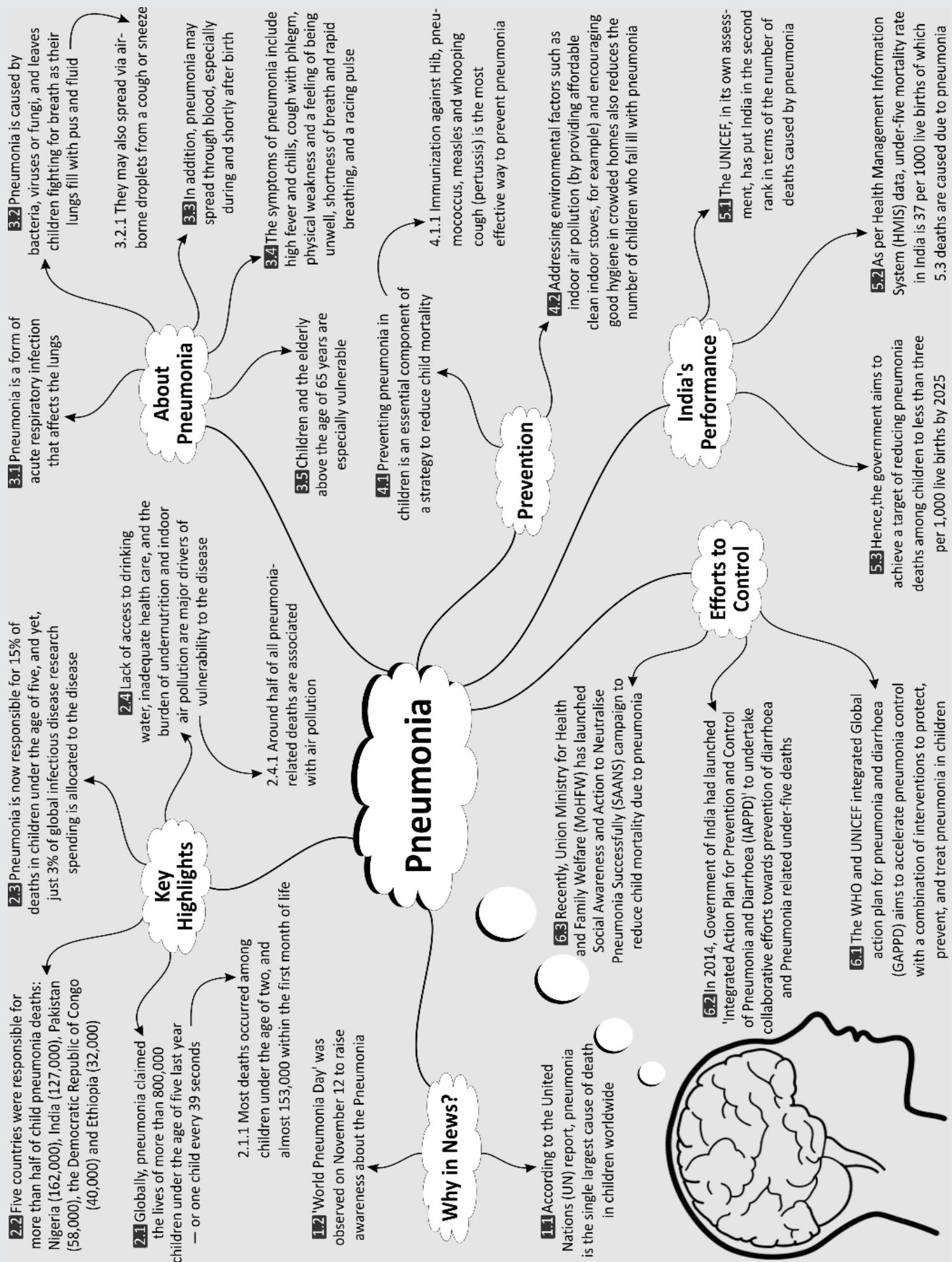
SEVEN BRAIN BOOSTERS

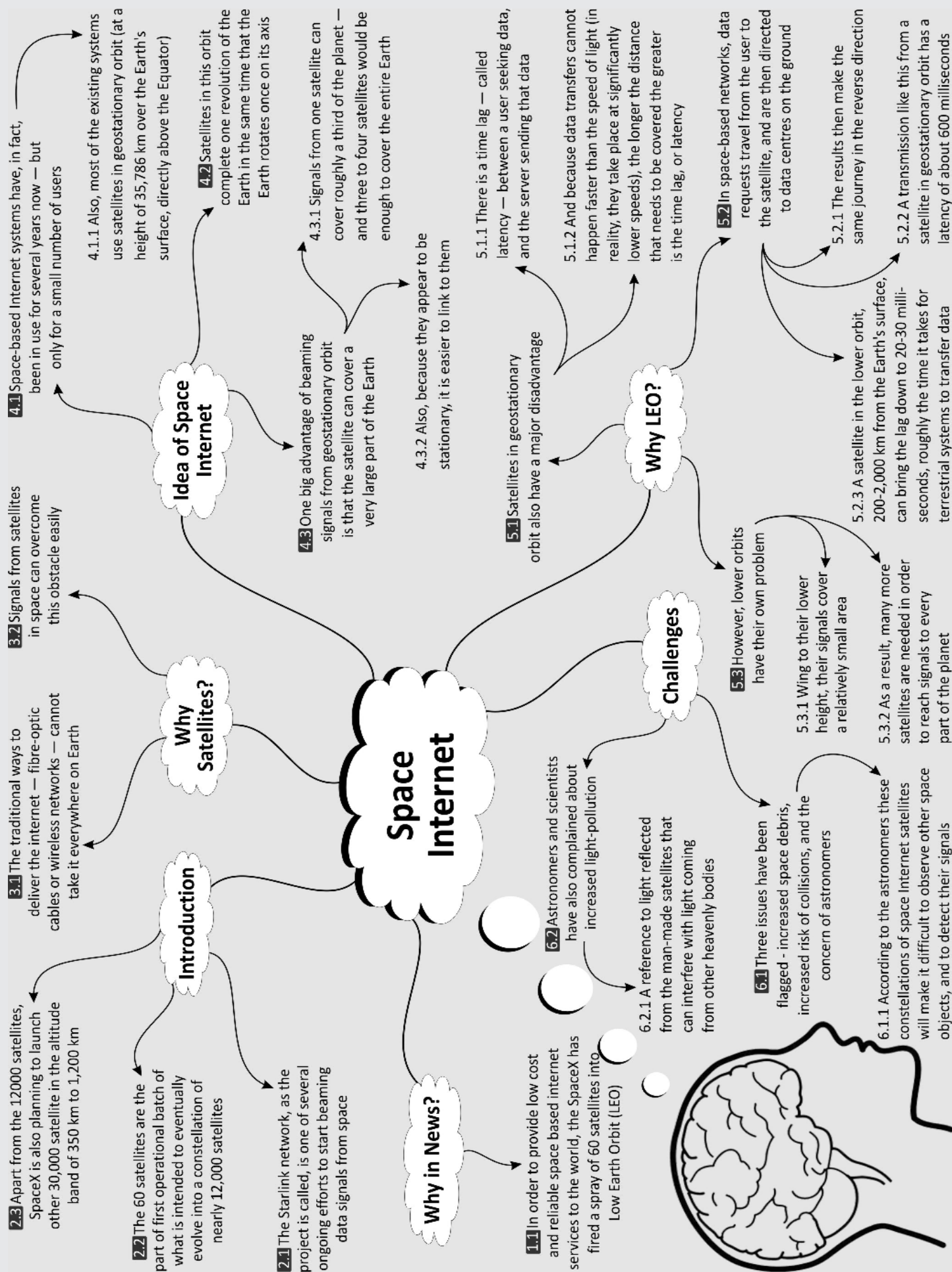


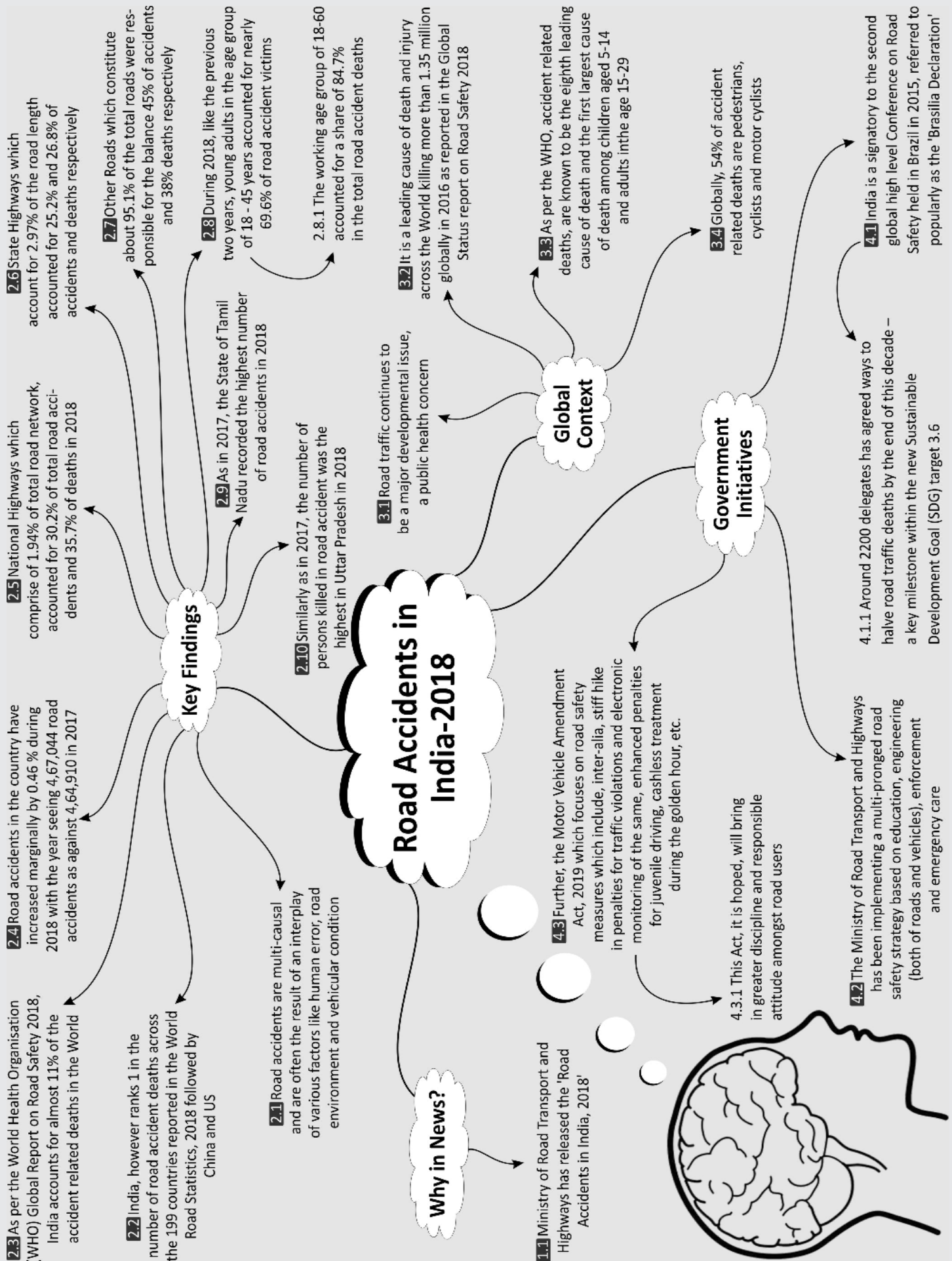












SEVEN MCQ'S WITH EXPLANATORY ANSWERS

(Based on Brain Boosters)

1. HS Code for Khadi

Q. The word 'Harmonised System (HS) code' is sometimes mentioned in news. Consider the following statements in this regard:

1. It is a six digit multipurpose international product nomenclature, developed by the 'World Trade Organisation (WTO)'.
2. Recently, the WTO has given HS code to Khadi and Village Industries of India to boost its export internationally.

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. The HS is a six-digit identification code developed by the World Customs Organization (WCO). It is a multipurpose international product nomenclature, called the "universal economic language" for goods.

Recently, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has allocated a separate Harmonised System (HS) code for Khadi. The move is expected to boost its exports in the coming years.

2. International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. The Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights (PPV&FR) Act was enacted in 2001 to protect farmers' and breeders' right.
2. As per the Act, a farmer is entitled to save, use, sow, resow, exchange, share or sell his farm produce including seed of a variety protected including the brand name.

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 PPV&FR was enacted in 2001 to protect farmers' and breeders' right. The legislation recognizes the contributions of both commercial plant breeders and farmers in plant breeding activity.

Statement 2 is not correct. According to the Act, a farmer is entitled to save, use, sow, resow, exchange, share or sell his farm produce including seed of a variety protected except the brand name.

3. New Base Year for GDP Calculation

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. The existing base year 2011-12 was adopted from January 2015.
2. The base year is a benchmark with reference to which the national account figures such as GDP are calculated.
3. Currently, India is using double deflators for GDP calculations by developing new price indexes.

Which of the statements given is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Explanation: Statement 1 and 2 are correct. The base year is a benchmark with reference to which the national account figures such as GDP, gross domestic saving, gross capital formation are calculated. The existing base year 2011-12 was adopted from January 2015.

Statement 3 is not correct. India currently uses single deflator (price index like CPI, WPI or any other) while countries like the USA, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico and Brazil have switched to double deflators - using separate deflator for output and input.

4. President's Rule

Q. With reference to the 'President's Rule', consider the following statements:

1. Any proclamation of President's Rule can be extended by six months, through the approval of either house of Parliament.

2. After the parliamentary approval, a proclamation of President's Rule may be revoked by the Parliament at any time.

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. Any proclamation under Article 356 —which stands for six months — has to be approved by both Houses in the Parliament session following it. This six-month time-frame can be extended in phases, up to three years.

Further, a proclamation of President's Rule may be revoked by the President at any time. Such a proclamation does not require parliamentary approval. This happens, in case, the leader of a party produces letters of support from a majority of members of the Assembly, and stakes his claim to form a government.

5. Pneumonia

Q. Consider the following statements:

1. Pneumonia is caused by bacteria, viruses or fungi.
2. According to the UNICEF, India has been ranked second in terms of the number of deaths caused by pneumonia.
3. Globally, around half of all pneumonia-related deaths are associated with air pollution.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (d)

Explanation: All statements are correct. Pneumonia is a form of acute respiratory infection that affects the lungs. Pneumonia is caused by bacteria, viruses or fungi.

The UNICEF, in its own assessment, has put India in the second rank in terms of the number of deaths caused by pneumonia.

6. Space Internet

Q. The term 'space internet' is sometimes mentioned in news. Consider the following statements in this regard:

1. Most of the existing Space-based internet systems use satellites in geostationary orbit.

2. Low Earth Orbit satellite system is not feasible for Space-based internet.

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. Space-based Internet systems have, in fact, been in use for several years now — but only for a small number of users. Also, most of the existing systems use satellites in geostationary orbit (at a height of 35,786 km over the Earth's surface, directly above the Equator).

Statement 2 is not correct. A transmission from a satellite in geostationary orbit has a latency of about 600 milliseconds. But a satellite in the lower orbit, 200-2,000 km from the Earth's surface, can bring the lag down to 20-30 milliseconds, roughly the time it takes for terrestrial systems to transfer data. Hence, lower orbit could be useful for space internet.

7. Road Accidents in India-2018

Q. Consider the following statements with respect of 'Road Accidents in India, 2018':

1. Road accidents in the country have increased marginally by 0.46 % during 2018 with the year seeing 4,67,044 road accidents.
2. As in 2017, the State of Tamil Nadu recorded the highest number of road accidents in 2018.
3. Similarly as in 2017, the number of persons killed in road accident was the highest in Uttar Pradesh in 2018.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only b) 2 and 3 only
c) 1, 2 and 3 d) None of the Above

Answer: (c)

Explanation: All statements are correct. Road accidents in the country have increased marginally by 0.46 % during 2018 with the year seeing 4,67,044 road accidents as against 4,64,910 in 2017. As in 2017, the State of Tamil Nadu recorded the highest number of road accidents in 2018. Similarly as in 2017, the number of persons killed in road accident was the highest in Uttar Pradesh in 2018.



SEVEN IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIMS

1. Which state government has launched 'Nadu-Nedu programme' to transform government schools into competitive institutions?

–Andhra Pradesh

2. Who has been awarded with '2019 Golden Leaf Award' in the 'Most Impressive Public Service Initiative category'?

–Tobacco Board of India (For its efforts to initiate various sustainability initiatives in Flue-Cured Virginia tobacco cultivation in India)

3. Which film has received the 'Golden Royal Bengal Tiger Award' for the best film in International Competition of the 25th Kolkata International Film Festival?

–The Weeping Woman (La llorona), Spanish movie

4. Who will be the Chief Guest at India's Republic Day celebrations in 2020?

–Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro

5. Which country will host the 2019 World Kabaddi Cup from December 1 to 9?

–India

6. Who has won the USD 25,000 BRICS-Young Innovator Prize?

–Ravi Prakash (for inventing an affordable indigenous milk chilling unit for smaller and marginal rural dairy farmers)

7. Who has been awarded with the 'Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development' for 2019?

–Sir David Attenborough (renowned naturalist and broadcaster)



SEVEN PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAINS EXAM

1. "India needs to engage with the Tamil question and Chinese interests in Sri Lanka with an open mind." Discuss.
2. Discuss the concept of 'space internet'.
3. "Poshan Abhiyaan promises to revive traditional food systems across the country while addressing malnutrition." Elaborate.
4. What is meant by 'crisis of conscience'? How does it manifest itself in the public domain?
5. "Supreme Court has always upheld and strengthened secularism, but its Ayodhya ruling is problematic on that score." Examine.
6. Effective utilisation of public funds is crucial to meet developmental goals. Critically examine the reasons for under-utilisation and mis-utilisation of public funds and their implications.
7. Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code should be the preferred option for resolution of bad loans, not the last resort. Discuss.

○○○

SEVEN IMPORTANT NEWS

1. Jordan declined to Renew Israel's Access to the 'Island of Peace'

Recently, Jordan has received two stretches of land, al-Baqura (also known as the "Island of Peace") in the North, and al-Ghamr in the South, it had allowed Israel to use for decades, amid tense relations between the neighbours 25 years after they signed a landmark peace deal.

Under the terms of two annexes in the 1994 treaty, the enclaves of al-Baqoura and al-Ghumar would remain under Jordanian sovereignty while Israeli farmers maintained access to the land. But in 2018, amid mounting public pressure not to renew the arrangement relating to the two territories, Jordan's King Abdullah

II submitted a one-year notice of termination to Israel.

Tense Ties

Jordan is one of only two Arab states that has a peace accord with Israel, and the neighbors have a long history of close security ties. But the treaty is unpopular in Jordan where pro-Palestinian sentiment is widespread.

The end of the land deal comes at a low point in Israeli-Jordanian relations.

Background

Jordan and Israel have fought two wars in historic Palestine. The first erupted in 1948, which led to the founding of

the state of Israel in the western parts of Palestine, while Jordan took control of eastern Palestine, also known as the West Bank, formally annexing it. The two sides fought another war in 1967, with Jordan's defeat resulting in its withdrawal from East Jerusalem and the West Bank, although Amman maintained its claim to sovereignty there.

Israel seized al-Baqoura, located in northern Jordan, in 1948 while it took al-Ghumar in the south after the 1967 war. They have been used for agricultural and tourism purposes.

2. Travellers Quoted in Ayodhya Judgment

In the Ayodhya judgment delivered by the Supreme Court relied in part on centuries-old travelogues, gazetteers and books to provide an account of the faith and belief that the Hindus placed in the Janmasthan. The travelogues that the court took note of included, among others, those by the European travellers Joseph Tieffenthaler, William Finch, and Montgomery Martin – these being written before the building of the grill-brick wall in front of the mosque during British rule.

Joseph Tieffenthaler

Tieffenthaler was an 18th-century missionary who travelled in India for 27 years, and wrote his travelogue titled "Description Historique et Geographique De l'Inde". Hailing

from Bozano in present-day Italy, Tieffenthaler underwent religious training in the Jesuit order before setting sail for Goa from Portugal in 1743.

In India, he was commissioned at the famous observatory of Sawai Jai Singh, the Raja of Jaipur, and was later attached at the Jesuit College in Agra which was built with the patronage of Akbar. Tieffenthaler is said to have lived in Awadh, where Ayodhya is located, for over five years.

William Finch

William Finch's account has been recorded in the 1921 book 'Early Travels in India (1583-1619)' by the historiographer Sir William Foster. Finch is known to have arrived in

India in 1608 at Surat with Sir William Hawkins, a representative of the East India Company. His is said to be the earliest English language account of Kashmir, as well as trade routes connecting Punjab and eastern Turkistan and western China.

Robert Montgomery Martin

Originally from Dublin in Ireland, Martin was an Anglo-Irish author and civil servant. He practised medicine in Ceylon (present day Sri Lanka), East Africa and Australia. Martin then went on to work in Kolkata where helped found the paper 'Bengal Herald'. Martin wrote the three-volume work 'History, Antiquities, Topography and Statistics of Eastern India'.

3. Climate Impact of Hydropower Plants

According to a new study published in Environmental Science Technology, hundreds of active hydropower plants are making a worse impact on the climate than fossil fuels.

Key Highlights

Scientists have known for a while now that hydropower facilities release greenhouse gases — mostly methane, but also CO₂ and nitrous oxide. But the way they've historically calculated a facility's climate impact has obscured methane's heat-trapping potency. The new study, which looks at data from thousands of hydropower plants to compare their long- and short-term

climate impacts, found that hundreds of active facilities around the world are worse for the climate than coal.

Setting up a hydropower facility means building a dam and creating a reservoir, often submerging plants and other organic matter in the process. Traditional calculations of hydropower's environmental impact take this destruction into account. But as the drowned plants decompose, they release methane, which bubbles out of the reservoir and into the atmosphere.

Exactly how much methane is released varies widely depending

on a wide range of factors, from temperature to precipitation to the depth of the pool — methane production can vary from year to year and even season to season.

None of this means that hydropower is "bad". Since hydropower still has the potential to be a low-emissions power source, the most important thing is for planners to choose locations and design facilities with emissions in mind, so that the plants either minimize greenhouse gas emissions or divert them before they enter the atmosphere. ■

4. New Industrial Policy

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has released the initial draft industrial policy.

Key Highlights

- ◆ The government's initial draft industrial policy targets \$1 trillion gross value addition in the manufacturing sector by 2025.
- ◆ The policy envisages setting up business enterprises which are globally competitive and can create gainful employment and sustainable livelihoods.
- ◆ The draft industrial policy involves creating an industry which is armed

with innovation, technology as well as financially sustainable and eco friendly, the benefits of which can be shared with all sections of the society.

- ◆ The policy would work in tandem with the 'Skill India Mission' to improve employability of future workforce, and with the foreign trade policy to enhance India's share in global merchandise exports.
- ◆ It would also enable harmonious implementation of macro-fiscal and monetary policies and ensure that incentive regime for industry is competitive. Further, it will work

to revive investments into industry and manufacturing with a balanced focus on both the quantity and quality of investments.

- ◆ The draft has also proposed a detailed implementation mechanism of the policy under which it has suggested setting up of a national industrial competitiveness council and a steering committee.
- ◆ This will be the third industrial policy after the ones released in 1956 and 1991. It will replace the industrial policy of 1991 which was prepared in the backdrop of the balance of payments crisis. ■

5. NISHTHA Programme

The Department of School Education and Literacy has launched a national mission to improve learning outcomes at the elementary level through an integrated teacher training programme called 'National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers'

Holistic Advancement' (NISHTHA) under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of 'Samagra Shiksha' in 2019-20.

Key Highlights

The aim of this training is to motivate and equip teachers to encourage and

foster critical thinking in students, handle diverse situations and act as first level counsellors.

This integrated programme will cover around 42 lakh participants covering all teachers and Heads of Schools at the elementary level in all

government schools, faculty members of State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs), District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs) as well as officials and Resource Persons from Block Resource Centres (BRCs) and Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs) in all States and UTs.

This massive capacity building programme has been integrated with technology to ensure smooth facilitation, availability of digital content and technology enabled teaching methods to support the teachers. A Mobile App and Learning Management System (LMS) have

been developed by NCERT. LMS is being used for registration of resource persons and teachers, dissemination of resources, training gap and impact analysis, monitoring, mentoring and measuring the progress online.

6. Development Council for Bicycle

Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry has set up a Development Council for Bicycle for vision planning in design, engineering and manufacturing of lighter, smarter, value added, safe and faster premium bicycles which are comparable with global standards for exports and domestic market.

The Council will stimulate value chain and fuel accelerated demand growth of 'Make-in-India' through the following activities:

- ◆ To improve competitiveness and level of services.
- ◆ To transform Indian bicycle technology and its value chain.
- ◆ To ensure development of holistic eco-system through close,

coordinated and continuous stakeholder persuasion.

- ◆ To undertake all possible measures for leveraging bicycle demand, it may inter-alia include ensuring enabling (safe and segregated) cycling infrastructure and operations.
- ◆ To enhance export competitiveness of bicycle through support of schemes and favourable trade policies.
- ◆ To popularize the incredible benefits of cycling through the campaigns piloted by the concerned Ministries/ Departments of Government of India such as Ministry of Health (health benefits), Ministry of Environment and Forest (air/ noise

pollution free benefits), Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (energy saving benefits), Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (decongestion benefits).

- ◆ Development of medium and small industries to usher in a new mind-set through innovative schemes in a structured and synergetic way.
- ◆ Development of skilled human resources development for bicycle manufacturing and repair shops.
- ◆ To identify and study best international practices and successful story to adopt for bicycle manufacturing, recycling and infrastructure development in India.

7. Suranga Bawadi

Suranga Bawadi has been included in the World Monument Watch list for 2020 along with 24 other monuments from across the world.

About Suranga Bawadi

- ◆ Suranga Bawadi is an integral part of the ancient Karez system of supplying water through subterranean tunnels.
- ◆ It was built by Adil Shah-I of Adilshahi dynasty of Bijapur in the 16th century to supply water to Vijayapura in Karnataka.
- ◆ The magnificent underground

system was built to supply water to the city which had a population of nearly 12 lakh then.

Significance

- ◆ The monument has been selected under the 'Ancient Water System of the Deccan Plateau' by World Monuments Fund, which monitors restoration of ancient monuments across the globe.
- ◆ With this, the Suranga Bawadi is expected to get funds for restoration within the next two years.

About Karez System

The technology is believed to have originated in the 1st millennium BC in Persia. The Muslim dynasties with ruling class descending from Persia or having influential connections with Persian kings may have invited expert engineers from Persia.

It is a water harnessing technology in which groundwater is brought to the surface by a tunnel. In this system, no mechanical pump or lift is used. Gravity alone brings the water from the underground source.

SEVEN IMPORTANT HIGHLIGHTS FROM PIB

1. Winter-grade Diesel for Ladakh Region

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has launched a special winter-grade diesel for the high-altitude regions of Ladakh that can withstand extremely low temperatures during the winter months.

Key Highlights

Motorists in high-altitude sectors like Ladakh, Kargil, Kaza and Keylong face

the problem of freezing of diesel in their vehicles when winter temperatures drop to as low as -30° Celsius. Indian Oil has come up with an innovative solution to this problem by introducing a special winter-grade diesel with a low pour-point of -33° Celsius, which does not lose its fluidity function even in extreme winter conditions.

Regular diesel fuel contains paraffin wax which is added for improving viscosity and lubrication. At low temperatures, the paraffin wax thickens or “gels” and hinders the flow of the fuel in the car engine. But

special types of diesel are thus used at low temperatures that contain additives enabling the fuel to remain fluid in such conditions. The winter-grade diesel developed by IOC has a low pour point (the temperature below which the liquid loses its flow characteristics) of -33° Celsius, making it capable of withstanding the extreme winter weather conditions in Ladakh.

The uninterrupted supply of the special fuel to Ladakh would reduce the hardships faced by the local people for transportation and mobility during winter months, helping facilitate the local economy and tourism.



2. Aadi Mahotsav 2019

The Delhi Aadi Mahotsav is being organised at Dilli Haat, New Delhi. The theme of the Mahotsav is: “A Celebration of the Spirit of Tribal Culture, Craft, Cuisine and Commerce”.

Key Highlights

The festival features exhibition-cum-sale of tribal handicrafts, art, paintings, fabric, jewellery and much more through 220 stalls.

The concept of organising Aadi Mahotsav in major cities has proved to be a boon for tribal artisans by eliminating the middle man and providing direct access to large markets, otherwise impossible to

reach for them. In line with the national aspiration to go cashless, the tribal merchandise stalls are accepting payment through major credit/debit cards.

The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) an organisation of Ministry of Tribal Affairs has started a new concept of organising “Aadi Mahotsav – National Tribal Festival” to provide direct market access to the tribal master-craftsmen and women in large metros and State capitals. Apart from handloom and handicrafts, TRIFED also promotes processing and value addition of forest

products through the Prime Minister Van Dhan Yojana, as a special scheme to promote tribal enterprise. The Aadi Mahotsav is an effort to take tribal commerce to the next level of digital and electronic transactions.

About TRIFED

TRIFED came into existence in 1987. It is a national-level apex organization functioning under the administrative control of Ministry of Tribal Affairs. TRIFED has its registered and Head Office located in New Delhi and has a network of 13 Regional Offices located at various places in the country.

3. 250th Session of Rajya Sabha

Rajya Sabha, on the first day of its historic 250th Session today took up a discussion on 'Role of Rajya Sabha in Indian Polity and the Way Forward'. Chairman Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has said that the Upper House has played significant role in the socio-economic transformation of the country during its journey of last 67 years but 'all is not well'.

Key Highlights

Chairman Shri Venkaiah Naidu made 10 suggestions for consideration by the Members of the House for making a difference to the functioning of the House, henceforth. These are;

- (i) Adequacy of the number of the sittings in the context of the House meeting for about 60-70 days in a year now, keeping in view the

nature and volume of legislations and time available for discussing issues of public importance;

- (ii) Adequacy of the present Rules of Business of the House and changes required, if any;
- (iii) Adequacy and effectiveness of various instruments presently available for the members to present their views on legislative proposals and raising issues of public concern;
- (iv) Adequacy and effectiveness of the present procedures currently being followed in the House;
- (v) Norms to be followed for enabling equitable and wider participation of members in the debates;
- (vi) Ensuring that members with right background and abilities to enrich debates are sent to the House;

- (vii) Ensuring self-discipline on the part of the members to ensure compliance with the Rules of the Business for orderly functioning of the House;

- (viii) Requirement of infrastructure support to the members to enable informed contribution to the debates in the House ;

- (ix) Ensuring adequate presence of members in the House all through the proceedings and in the meetings of the Department Related Standing Committees and other Committees of the House; and

- (x) Technology adoption for improving the functioning of the members and for more lively conduct of the proceedings of the House.

4. Journalism is a Pious Mission for the Cause of Nation

'National Press Day' is celebrated every year on November 16 to commemorate the establishment of the Press Council of India which was formed in 1966. On this occasion, the Vice President of India has urged the media to not color news with views and stressed the need to maintain objectivity, fairness and accuracy.

Key Highlights

The cardinal principle of journalism is to present fair, objective, accurate and balanced information to the reader and viewer without journalists assuming the role of the gatekeepers. Journalism has become all the more critical in the

present times after the advent of the 'fake news' phenomenon and the huge impact the social media is creating. Sensationalism, biased coverage and paid news have become the modern-day afflictions of the media.

The freedom and responsibility cannot be considered as inseparable, therefore media must not only act as the watchdog to protect democracy but must also act as the true champion of the underdog. It has to be in the vanguard of fighting the ills that are plaguing the society.

The media landscape has transformed dramatically over the

years and so have the values of journalism. Hence, the time has come for media bodies to come out with a code of conduct for journalists.

In view of the critical role journalism plays in protecting democracy and in serving the larger good of the society, we should strengthen this important fourth pillar by ensuring that 'truth' is never compromised.

Admitting that legislations alone can not bring desired change, he called upon the media to play a positive role in creating public opinion on the need to eradicate corruption and social evils like gender and caste discrimination.

5. Bharatiya Poshan Krishi Kosh

The government of India has announced 'Bharatiya Poshan Krishi Kosh (BPKK)' which is a repository

of diverse crops across 128 agro-climatic zones for better nutritional outcomes.

Key Highlights

- ◆ The Kosh aims at reducing malnutrition through a multi-

sectoral results-based framework, including agriculture, among women and children across the country.

- ◆ The country has been divided into fifteen agricultural regions based on agro climatic features, particularly soil type, climate including temperature and rainfall and its variation and water resources.

◆ During the launch of BPKK, eminent agriculture scientist, Dr. MS Swaminathan gave a 5-point action plan to make India nutrition secure.

- (i) Ensure calorie rich diet for women, expectant mothers and children.
- (ii) Ensure intake of proteins in the form of pulses to eradicate protein hunger in women and

children.

- (iii) Eradicate hidden hunger due to deficiency of micro nutrients like vitamin A, vitamin B, Iron and Zinc.
- (iv) Ensure clean drinking water supply.
- (v) Spreading nutrition literacy in every village particularly in mothers with children less than 100 days' old.

6. Madhepura Electric Locomotive Pvt. Ltd.

Indian Railways has entered into procurement cum maintenance agreement with Madhepura Electric Locomotive Pvt. Ltd. (MELPL). It is a joint venture of Indian Railways and M/s Alstom. As part of largest Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) project of Indian Railways, Ministry of Railways and Alstom came together in 2015 to transform the heavy freight transportation landscape of the country. A landmark agreement worth 3.5 billion Euro was signed to manufacture 800 electric locomotives for freight service and its associated maintenance.

Benefits

Indian Railways have taken decision to have 12000 horse power twin Bo-Bo design Locomotive with 22.5 T (Tonnes) axle load upgradable to 25Tonnes with design speed of 120 kmph.

This locomotive will be game changer for further movement of coal trains for Dedicated Freight Corridor. With the success of this project it will boost the "Make in India" programme of the Government of India. This will further develop ancillary units for locomotive components. The project will allow faster and safer

movement of heavier freight trains. It will haul 6000T trains at maximum speed of 100 kmph. With 100% electrification, the new locomotive will not only bring down operational cost for Railways, the locomotive will also reduce the congestion faced by Indian Railways. This will be used to haul heavier trains such as coal and iron ore.

As part of the project, factory has the capacity to manufacture 120 locomotives per year. The project will create more than 10,000 direct and indirect jobs in the country.

7. NITI Aayog's Report on Health System

NITI Aayog has released 'Health System for a New India: Building Blocks - Potential Pathways to Reform' Report. It is a synthesis of all the discussions and efforts initiated at the national-level workshop 'Development Dialogue' held last year.

Key Highlights

The report revealed that India's health system as a story of multiple fragmentations at the level of payers and risk pools, health care services and at digital backbone running it. The report integrates viewpoints on

the concerted efforts required for strengthening the existing fractured health system, to meet the challenges that lie ahead of the nation.

By placing health at the centre-stage of the policy narrative, this report charts a clear roadmap for the complete transformation of India's health system. It focuses on breaking silos in the health space and removing fragmentation between various initiatives, ensuring greater convergence between ministries as well as the Centre and states, as already initiated under 'Ayushman Bharat'.

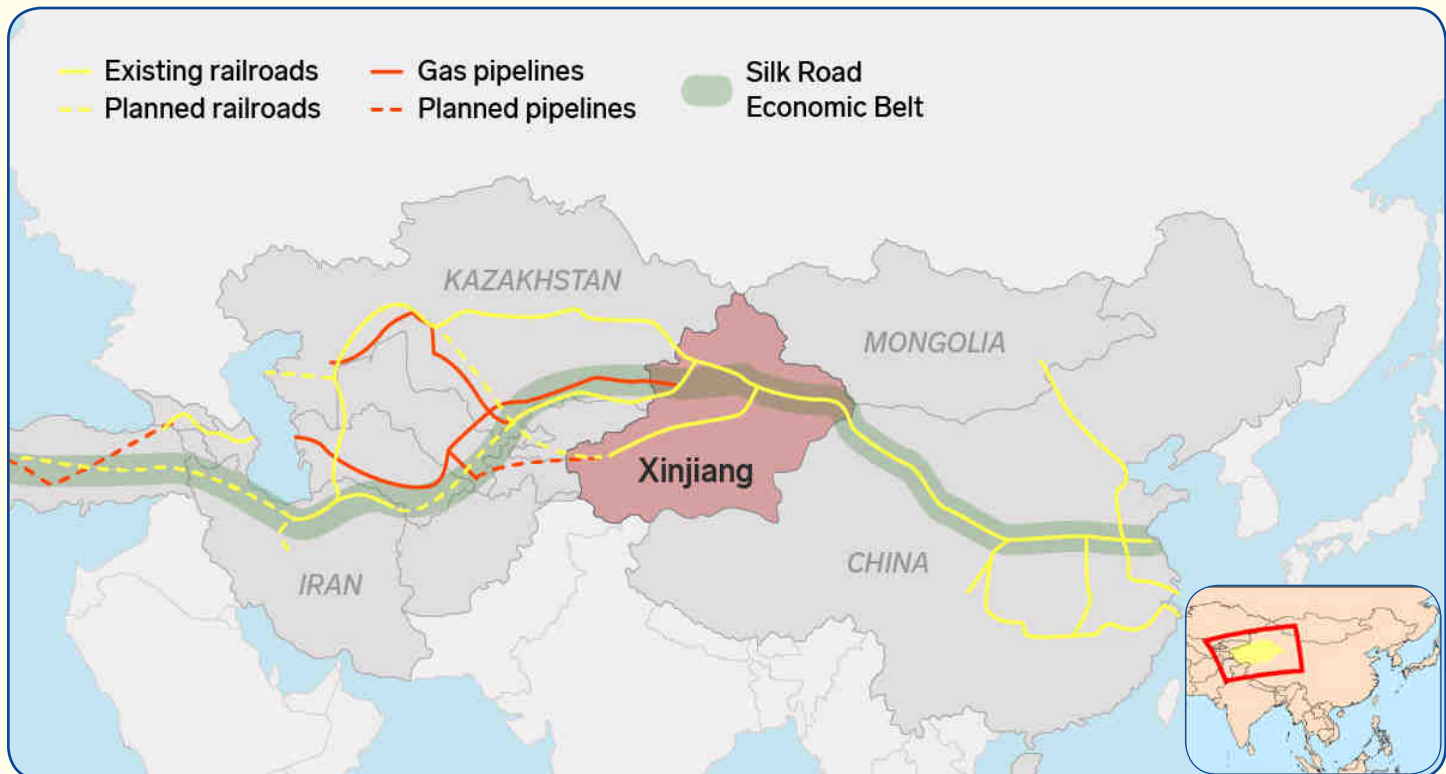
The report identified 5 focus areas of future health system, deliver on unfinished public health agenda, change health financing away from out of pocket so spend into large insurers, integrate service delivery vertically and horizontally, empower citizens to become better buyers of health, harness the power of digital health.

With insights to transform the Indian health system in the twenty-first century, the report presents a preliminary menu of strategic choices available before India to reform its healthcare system.



SEVEN IMPORTANT CONCEPTS THROUGH GRAPHICS

1. Xinjiang Province



Key Facts

- Xinjiang is an autonomous region of the People's Republic of China.
- It is the largest Chinese administrative division and spans over 1.6 million km², bordering countries such as Russia, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.
- It experienced a brief period of independence in the 1940s, but China regained control after the Communists took power in 1949. Its full name is the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.
- The name "Xinjiang", which literally means "New Frontier" or "New Border", was given during the Qing Dynasty. It is home to a number of different ethnic groups including the Uyghur, Han, Kazakh, Hui, Kyrgyz and Mongol. Among these ethnic groups, the Hans and the Uyghurs (Turkish and Muslim population) are the two major ethnic groups.
- Most Uyghurs are Muslim and Islam is an important part of their life and identity. Their language is related to Turkish, and they regard themselves as culturally and ethnically close to Central Asian nations.
- The Xinjiang autonomous region has had a long history of discord between the authorities and the indigenous ethnic Uyghur population.
- Xinjiang is home to more than 8 million people and much of the tension in the region is sourced in the claims of some Uyghur separatist groups for greater political and religious autonomy and also in resentment at the growing presence of Han Chinese domination—China's largest ethnic group—that they claim limits their economic opportunities.
- For a millennium Xinjiang's large Muslim and Turkic population has viewed itself as religiously and ethnically distinct from the Han Chinese society.
- Today Uyghurs feel that Chinese policy has ignored them or, worse, consciously worked against them and feel deeply threatened.

2. Golan Heights

Key Facts



- The Golan Heights are a fertile plateau of around 1,300 sq km area lying to the North and East of the Sea of Galilee, which Israel seized from Syria during the Six-Day War of 1967, and has occupied ever since. That unilateral annexation was not recognised internationally, and Syria demands the return of the territory.
- Around 50,000 people are estimated to live on the Golan, divided almost equally between Israeli Jewish settlers and Arabic-speaking Druze people of Syrian origin, who follow a monotheistic Abrahamic religion related to Ismaili Shia Islam.
- The Druze are an Arab minority who practice an offshoot of Islam and many of its adherents in Syria have long been loyal to the Assad regime.
- A United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) is stationed in camps and observation posts along the Golan, supported by military observers of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO).

- Between the Israeli and Syrian armies is a 400-square-km (155-square-mile) "Area of Separation" – often called a demilitarized zone – in which the two countries' military forces are not permitted under the ceasefire arrangement.
- There is a solitary crossing, which, before the beginning of the civil war in Syria, was used by UN forces, Druze civilians, and to transport agricultural produce.

3. Al-Baqura and Al-Ghamr

Key Facts

- Al-Ghamr and al-Baqura became part of Jordan in 1946 but Israel captured the lands during the Arab-Israeli war: al-Baqura in the northern Jordan Valley in 1950 and al-Ghamr, near Aqaba in southern Jordan, in 1967.
- Israel and Jordan were officially in a state of war for 46 years until the countries agreed on a peace treaty in 1994 in an attempt to normalise relations.
- The 1994 peace agreement recognised the two areas, al-Baqura and al-Ghamr, as under Jordanian sovereignty but it also gave special provisions to Israel for its farmers to work the land and for tourists to visit the area.
- In two large stretches of Jordan, al-Baqura and al-Ghamr, Israeli farmers and tourists had visa-free access for 25 years under a deal between the countries. Recently, Jordan officially declared the end of the arrangement, following the expiration of the lease.
- With the 1994 treaty, Israel also recognised the special role for Jordan at Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem, but the relations between the countries have been fraught in recent years due to a lack of progress between Palestine and Israel and the disputes over the status of Jerusalem.
- The treaty with Israel is widely unpopular in Jordan, where more than two million Palestinian refugees live. Many Jordanians see the agreement as giving a green light to Israeli occupation.



4. Kalapani Territory

Key Facts

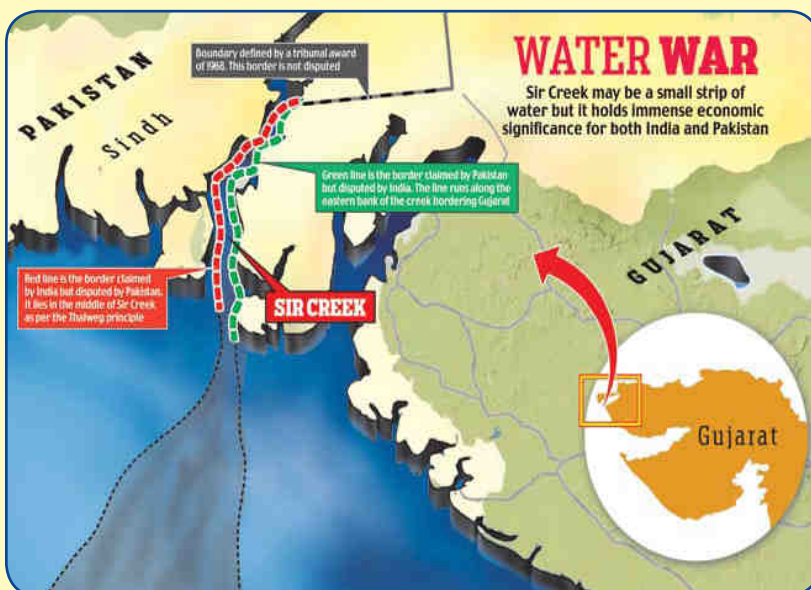


- Recently, the government of Nepal has strongly objected to the inclusion of 'Kalapani' under the Indian Territory as per the newly released political map of India, after the bifurcation of the state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) into the Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh. However, the Ministry of External Affairs said that the new map accurately depicts its sovereign territory and that it has not revised its boundary with Nepal.
- Kalapani is a 35 square kilometre area, which is claimed by both India and Nepal. Kalapani is also a tri-junction point, where the Indian, Nepalese and Tibetan (Chinese) borders meet.
- Both India and Nepal claim Kalapani as an integral part of their territories — India as part of Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh district and Nepal as part of the Darchula district.
- The region has been manned by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police since 1962.
- River Mahakali, earlier known as river Kali, flows through Kalapani, which is situated on the eastern bank of the river.
- The 1816 Treaty of Segauli, signed between British India and Nepal, defined river Mahakali as the western border of Nepal. River Mahakali has several tributaries, all of which merge at Kalapani.
- India claims that the river begins in Kalapani as this is where all its tributaries merge. But Nepal claims that it begins from Lipu Lekh Pass, the origin of most of its tributaries.

5. Sir Creek

Key Facts

- Sir Creek is a 96-km strip of water disputed between India and Pakistan in the Rann of Kutch marshlands. Originally named Ban Ganga, Sir Creek is named after a British representative.
- The Creek opens up in the Arabian Sea and roughly divides the Kutch region of Gujarat from the Sindh Province of Pakistan.
- The dispute lies in the interpretation of the maritime boundary line between Kutch and Sindh. Before India's independence, the provincial region was a part of the Bombay Presidency of British India. But after India's independence in 1947, Sindh became a part of Pakistan while Kutch remained a part of India.
- According to international law and the 'Thalweg Principle', a boundary can only be fixed in the middle of the navigable channel, which meant that it has been divided between Sindh and Kutch, and thereby India and Pakistan. India has used this para to consistently argue that the boundary needs to be fixed in the middle of the creek. Pakistan, however, claims that Sir Creek isn't navigable but India claims that since it's navigable in high tide, the boundary should be drawn from the mid channel.
- Another vital reason for two countries locking horns over this creek is the possible presence of great oil and gas concentration under the sea, which are currently unexploited.



6. Northern Syria

Key Facts



- Recently, Turkey has launched a military operation 'Operation Peace Spring' against Kurdish fighters in northeast Syria.
- The Kurds are one of the indigenous peoples of the Mesopotamian plains and the highlands in what are now south-eastern Turkey, north-eastern Syria, northern Iraq, north-western Iran and south-western Armenia. There are an estimated 25 million to 35 million ethnic Kurds inhabit a mountainous region straddling Turkey, Iraq, Syria, Iran and Armenia.
- The recent Turkish incursion 'Operation Peace Spring' against Kurdish-led forces in Syria is set to reshape the map of the Syrian conflict once again, dealing a blow to Kurdish-led forces that have battled Islamic State while widening Turkey's territorial control at the border. This would be Turkey's third such incursion since 2016.

- Turkey has two main goals in northeast Syria: to drive the Kurdish YPG militia which it deems a security threat away from its border, and to create a space inside Syria where 2 million Syria refugees currently hosted in Turkey can be settled.
- It had been pushing the US to jointly establish a "safe zone" that is 480 km wide and up to 35 km deep inside Syria. Turkey intends to relocate some of the 3.6 million Syrian refugees living in Turkey in this "safe zone". Since 2012, President Erdogan has been trying to establish a "safe zone" along the section of Turkey's border with Syria that falls to the East of the Euphrates River.

7. Dokdo/Takeshima Islands

Key Facts

- Dokdo/Takeshima Islands are a group of small islets in the Sea of Japan.
- South Korea calls it Dokdo, which means solitary islands. Japan calls it Takeshima, which means bamboo islands. And it has also been known as the Liancourt Rocks, named by French whalers after their ship in 1849.
- Both Japan and South Korea claim the islands, so too does North Korea.
- The islands themselves consist of two main islands and about 30 smaller rocks. A South Korean coastguard detachment has been stationed there since 1954.
- Both Japan and South Korea say they have long-standing historical ties to, and claims over, the island grouping.
- South Korea says Dokdo was recognised by Japan as Korean territory in 1696, after a run-in between Korean and Japanese fishermen. The island grouping was formally placed under the jurisdiction of Uldo county in 1900, it said, but annexed by Japan in 1905 ahead of its colonisation of the Korean peninsula.
- But Japan argued that it established sovereignty over the islands by the mid 17th Century, its sailors using it as a "navigational port, docking point for ships and a rich fishing ground".



सिविल सेवा परीक्षा के सर्वाधिक महत्वपूर्ण खंड
करेंट अफेयर्स के लिए ध्येय आईएस आपके समक्ष प्रस्तुत करता है



परीक्षा के दृष्टिकोण से जरूरी करेंट अफेयर्स से जुड़ी तमाम
महत्वपूर्ण जानकारी के लिए सब्सक्राइब करें ध्येय आईएस यूट्यूब चैनल को

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