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SEVEN IMPORTANT ISSUES

1. THE GLOBAL STATE OF DEMOCRACY

Why in News?

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) has tried to evaluate the state of democracy and trends in democratisation from 1975 to 2017. The study covered a variety of important indicators such as representative government, fundamental rights and checks on the government, impartial administration and participatory engagement.

Introduction

The World saw a huge wave of democratisation after World War-II. The newly-liberated states in Latin America, Africa and Asia adopted democratic forms of government after centuries of colonial subjugation. Today more people live under various forms of democracy than ever before. More than 120 of the 192 countries in the world have some form of democracy — only 11 parliamentary democracies existed in 1941. This indicates the appeal of democratic ideas and systems.

The democratic principles of popular control and political equality are compatible with different political institutions in the form of electoral systems (proportional–majoritarian), government systems (presidential–parliamentary) and state structure (federalist–unitary) at the national, local and supranational levels. These principles are thus open to a context-

sensitive implementation of universal standards of democratic governance. In short, a democratic system can be organized in a variety of ways and countries can build their democracy in different ways and therefore may fulfil these principles to varying degrees. The broad understanding of democracy is measured by the five dimensions or ‘attributes’ of democracy: representative government, fundamental rights, checks on government, impartial administration and participatory engagement.

Today’s political landscape poses complex global challenges to democracies. The landscape is shaped by globalization, geopolitical power shifts, changing roles and structures of (supra) national organizations and institutions and the rise in modern communications technologies. Transnational phenomena such as migration and climate change influence the dynamics of conflict and development, citizenship and state sovereignty. Rising inequalities and the social polarization and exclusion they generate, skew political representation and voice, reducing the vital moderate centre of the electorate.

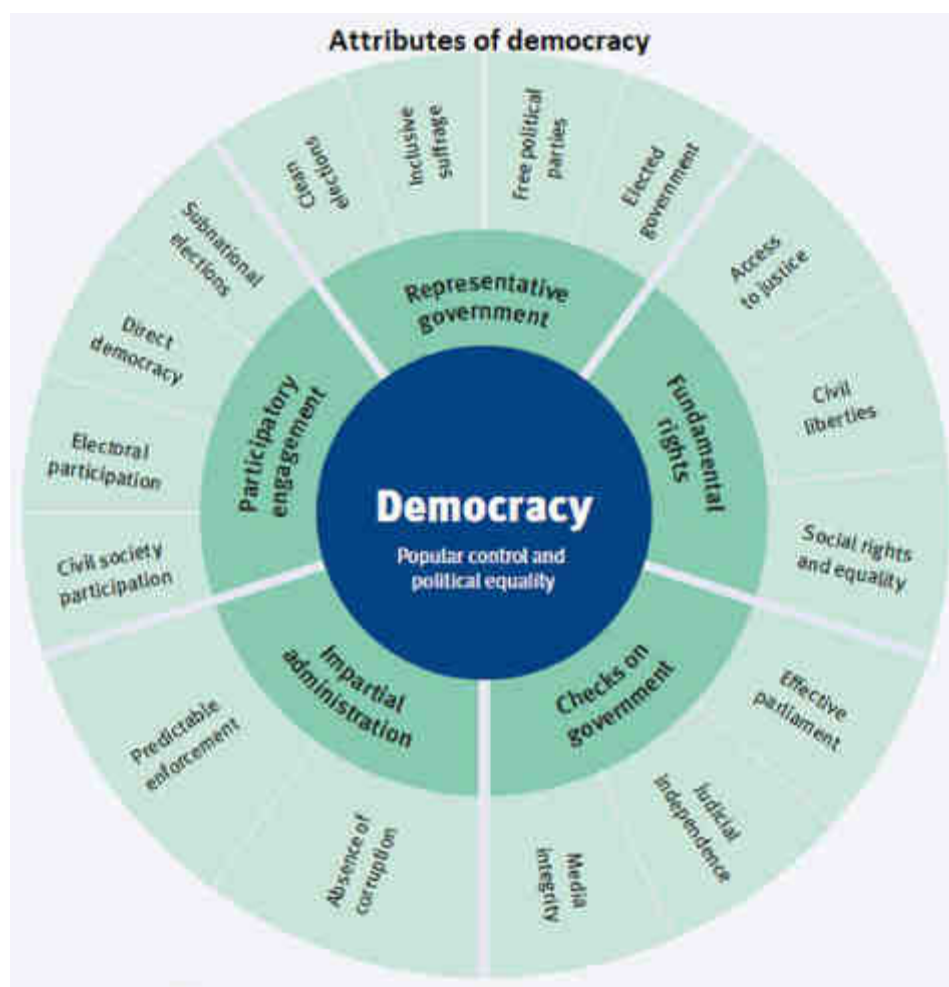
These dynamics have contributed to a widely contested view that democracy is in decline. Events around the world continue to challenge the notion of democracy’s resilience and make democratic systems appear fragile and threatened. Yet democratic

values among citizens, and within institutions at the national and international levels, continue to be expressed and defended.

Definition of Democracy

International IDEA, an inter-governmental organization that supports sustainable democracy worldwide, defines democracy as ‘popular control over decision-makers and political equality of those who exercise that control’. More particularly, the democratic ideal ‘seeks to guarantee equality and basic freedoms; to empower ordinary people; to resolve disagreements through peaceful dialogue; to respect difference; and to bring about political and social renewal without conflict’. Hence, democracy is understood in broader terms than just free elections. It is a concept with multiple dimensions, including civil and political rights, social and economic rights, democratic governance and the rule of law.

The concept of democracy has multiple dimensions, each of which is associated with one or more of the predominant conceptions of democracy found in the literature. They tap into 5 features (which are shown in figure) emphasized by various traditions of democratic thought that are associated with the concepts of electoral democracy, liberal democracy, social democracy and participatory democracy.



Understanding Democracy

About democracy it is said, “Democracy is not the best form of Government but better is not known to man”. As such affairs of the nation state, until better option is found and becomes available for experimentation; need to be governed through democracy. So, it is not a surprise that sovereign nations across the world have opted for democratic form of government. Party system is an essence of democracy. Three types of party systems are followed in a democratic system. They are; one party, two party and multi party systems.

The most popular and generally accepted definition of Democracy is what was given by Abraham Lincoln, the first President of United State of America. Abraham Lincoln defined democracy as, “Government of the people, by the people and for the people.” Thus, we see the people are

the pivot around which the wheel of democracy revolves. In democracy, people are supreme and it is not an end but a means to serve the people. The goal and purpose of democracy is to realize their aspirations; to create conditions and provide opportunities necessary for achieving their best and have leisure in their lives.

Democracy as an organic whole is composed of three ingredients. They are political democracy, social democracy and economic democracy. Democracy is not complete without the presence of all the three components.

- ◆ Political democracy means universal adult suffrage i.e. right to vote to all the adult citizens without discrimination of their social and economic status.
- ◆ Social democracy implies absence of discrimination among citizens on the basis of caste, religion, creed, gender etc. The fundamental

principle of social democracy is equality of citizens irrespective of their origin.

- ◆ And lastly economic democracy stands for providing equality of opportunities to all the citizens for choosing vocations of their choice within the ambit of law for earning their livelihood and promoting their economic well-being lawfully.

It may however; include under wanted circumstances to provide special safeguards for achieving said objective to such section(s) of society who have been denied such opportunities in the past on the basis of caste, race discrimination etc.

The next interpretation of democracy comes from Dr. BR Ambedkar. According to Dr. Ambedkar, democracy was not a form of government only. But it was essentially a form of society. A society's foundation lay on four cardinal principles of human virtues namely justice , equality , liberty and fraternity. Democracy as such could not be imposed from outside. It had to emerge from within. Indian society in essence is a feudal and caste based on the basis of birth of its people. It is discriminatory in its nature and hence inherently undemocratic. Thus the principal objective of Indian Constitution enshrined in its Preamble and the goal set before the Indian Republic after adoption of Constitution was to transform Indian society into a democratic one. This meant establishing social and economic democracy. As the political democracy would be a shame in the absence of other two components.

Democracy in India

According to IDEA, in 2017, India has done moderately well on important indicators such as representative government, fundamental rights, checks on the government, impartial administration and participatory engagement. On yardsticks such

as elected government, effective parliament and impartial administration, the country's scores hover around the world average but in the last decade, there has been a significant dip in the country's record on civil liberties, personal integrity and security, freedom of association, media integrity, gender equality and basic welfare.

In fact, India's performance on the yardstick to measure media integrity was better than the global and South Asian average between 1994 and 2012. However, the country's score has fallen below the global and Asia-Pacific average in 2017. Given that a free and fair media is crucial to a meaningful democracy, this is a worrying tendency.

About International IDEA

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) is an intergovernmental organization that supports sustainable democracy institutions and processes worldwide. International IDEA acts as a catalyst for democracy-building by providing knowledge resources and policy proposals, and supporting democratic reforms in response to specific national requests. It works with policymakers, governments, international organizations and agencies, as well as regional organizations engaged in the field of democracy-building.

The Election Commission has played an important role in conducting free and fair elections in the country. The Commission's systematic voters education for electoral participation programme role has been crucial in this respect.

An independent judiciary is another reason for the resilience of democracy in India. The apex court has given judgments that keep a check on the government and ensure a transparent and accountable system.

Democracy does not merely mean voting rights for people, it means empowering people by granting them equality. It also means the creation of mechanisms to resolve differences through dialogue and with mutual

respect and understanding. India does have the highest rating among South Asian democracies. But its performances on several yardsticks makes it a flawed democracy.

Democracy in South Asia

South Asia is home to 3 per cent of the world's area and 21 per cent of the world's population. It's significant that 50 per cent of the world's population living under some form of democratic rule resides in this region.

When it comes to representative government, India and Sri Lanka have maintained relatively high scores. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan have had periods of non-elected regimes. The general trend in South Asia in this respect has, however, been positive. With respect to ensuring fundamental rights, the region's score matches that of Asia Pacific but it is slightly below the global average. At the country level, Afghanistan and Nepal have seen the most improvement. Sri Lanka and Pakistan saw a slight decline in the 1970s and 1980s. India's score has been stable since the late 1970s. However, a decline has been observed since 2015.

South Asia shows a steady improvement on the yardstick that measures gender equality with Nepal standing out. India's score was better than the world average till 2003 but there has been a dip in the country's performance on the gender equality yardstick since then. When it comes to checks on government, South Asia has shown a steady increase from 1975 to 1994. Afghanistan, Nepal and Pakistan have shown the most improvement. Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka have remained relatively stable with scores in line with the global average.

In the yardstick on impartial administration, South Asia follows both the regional and global trends with no significant change, except in Nepal, which has seen a significant

improvement. However, the "absence of corruption" sub-indices within the "impartial administration" category shows a worrying tendency in South Asia. The region has the lowest scores in the world despite a slight improvement between 2012 and 2015. A robust civil society is essential for deliberative decision making. Civil society participation has increased in India by leaps and bounds between 1978 and 2012 after which it declined drastically to fall below the average of Asia Pacific and that of the World. In 2017, it was the lowest since 1975.

Challenges to Democracy

- ◆ Democracy relies on effective representation — responsive political leaders who can craft policy solutions for their societies. Yet particularly in well-established democracies, many citizens question whether traditional political parties can handle current challenges and crises, and this has increased apathy and distrust among voters. It has also encouraged many to support alternative paths of political action—thus triggering the rise of ideologically extremist parties and movements. Party systems in established democracies are under threat and traditional political leadership is caught between the centralization of policy decisions on the one hand and disaffected voters on the other hand.
- ◆ Threats to democracy from those in power constitute some of the gravest affronts to the global state of democracy today. These leaders manage to increase their political power by manipulating electoral norms, restricting dissent and freedom of speech and reforming the constitution to extend their terms in office—all within the legal framework of the democratic system. Most alarming, these actions have a ripple effect on the

functioning of institutions beyond those directly targeted and affect people's safety, wellbeing and livelihoods. Some countries have diverted from this dangerous path towards authoritarianism.

- ◆ Money is a necessary component of political life, big money provides a disproportionate advantage to a selected few and creates an uneven playing field for women and marginalized communities. Furthermore, current policies that are intended to provide a counterweight often fall short: they have a limited scope and the institutions that are supposed to enforce them are marred with constraints, while political parties face little accountability. A wider, holistic approach is needed to better equip democratic political institutions to resist the negative influence of money, to empower citizens and to encourage accountability.
- ◆ Over the long term, inequality can create imbalances in voice, representation, opportunity and access that disenfranchise segments of the population and undermine trust in (and support for) democracy. This kind of alienation can also increase support for populist and extremist views and violent conflict—particularly among young people.
- ◆ Fuelled by globalization, climate change and state failure and due to its transnational nature, migration

poses fundamental challenges to democratic societies on both the national and local levels, particularly in cities. It challenges the nation state and, by extension, policy areas that represent core components of state sovereignty, including citizenship.

- ◆ Despite the democratic upsurge, there are significant challenges like poverty, inequality, gender injustice, nepotism and corruption. Elected despots and authoritarian leaders are weakening democracies across the world. Political experts have argued that democratic values are on the decline, especially in the West.

Strengthening Democracy

- ◆ There are arguably no single, standardized 'best' forms of institutions or models for more resilient democracies; innovation entails adapting and adopting rules and mechanisms that are appropriate to the context and the aim they are designed to achieve.
- ◆ New, innovative avenues of voice, representation and participation are needed to open cultures and institutions to allow these communities to be heard.
- ◆ Building resilient democracies requires a continuing focus on reacting to democratic crises when they occur. Equally, outsiders seeking to help safeguard democracy internally need a

long-term vision. The focus on international democracy building has turned to the critical role of regional organizations.

- ◆ Participation in regional organizations and initiatives may represent a critical avenue for inculcating democratic norms within countries; embeddedness in regional organizations may have a safeguarding effect for democracy.

Conclusion

Democratization processes over the last four decades have created many opportunities for public participation in political life. More people today live in electoral democracies than ever before. However, numerous countries grapple with challenges to democracy, contributing to the perception that democracy is in 'decline' or has experienced 'reversals' or 'stagnation'. Some of these challenges relate to issues of corruption, money in politics and policy capture, inequality and social exclusion, migration or post-conflict transition to democracy. Many leaders and democratic actors continue to manipulate democratic processes and institutions, which often contributes to democratic backsliding in their respective countries.

Governments should build on this strong foundation in order to reduce the risk of backsliding towards authoritarianism. Democracy needs constant care and protection and there is no end to improving it. Every generation must safeguard and reclaim democracy.



General Studies Paper- II

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



2. BLUE ECONOMY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

Why in News?

Leaders of Bay of Bengal regional group have emphasized the importance of the blue economy. Together, the leaders agreed to establish an Intergovernmental Expert Group to develop an action plan on the blue economy, keeping in mind the special needs and circumstances of Bhutan and Nepal - the two landlocked BIMSTEC member states.

Introduction

Oceans cover three-quarters of the Earth's surface, contain 97% of the Earth's water and represent 99% of the living area on the planet. Oceans are claimed to be 'last frontiers' of growth and development, but the immense potential that the oceans present remains to be tapped fully. However, this potential needs to be harnessed in a balanced manner, where the preservation and health of oceans are given their due importance, along with adherence to the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal #14 that states "conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development."

Blue Economy is based on the idea to use locally available resources and employ renewable inputs, for example, "ocean-as-a-resource" that addresses the problems of resource scarcity and enables sustainable development. This marine-based economic development will reduce environmental risks and mitigate ecological challenges. As a result, the optimized and responsible resource utilization will enable to achieve balanced socio-economic development.

What is Blue Economy?

Blue Economy is all about economic activities dependent on marine resources. It comprises of various verticals like aquaculture, maritime tourism, blue-biotechnology, ocean energy, marine mining, offshore oil and gas etc.

Blue economy refers to the greening of ocean development strategies towards higher productivity and the conservation of the ocean's health. In the development of oceans, blue economy adopts the principles of green economy, including low carbon emissions, resource efficiency

and social inclusion. The concept of a blue economy is not in competition with the green economy approach, as they are interdependent. Oceans are critical to sustaining Earth's life support systems and the billions of people who are dependent on oceans for livelihoods, food security and economic development.

A blue economy recognizes marine ecosystems as its natural capital and protects and maintains them accordingly. It also aspires for social and economic stability through the use of clean technology and renewable energy. The brief characterizes a sustainable blue economy as inclusive, marked by stakeholder participation; well-informed, precautionary and adaptive; accountable and transparent; holistic, cross-sectoral and long-term; and innovative and proactive.

Indian Ocean based Blue Economy

Economic and Trade Potential

The Indian Ocean region is abundant with resources, particularly in the sectors of fisheries, aquaculture,



ocean energy, sea-bed mining and minerals and provides tremendous economic opportunities to develop marine tourism and shipping activities. Among these resources, fisheries and minerals are the most commercially viable industries.

In the Indian Ocean, fish production increased drastically from 861,000 tons in 1950 to 11.5 million tons in 2010. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) report states that while other world oceans are nearing their fisheries limit, the Indian Ocean's resources have the potential to sustain increased production.

Polymetallic nodules and polymetallic massive sulphides are the two mineral resources of commercial interest to developers in the Indian Ocean. Typically found at four to five km in water depth, polymetallic nodules are golf-to-tennis ball-sized nodules containing nickel, cobalt, iron and manganese that form over millions of years on the sediment of the seafloor. India received exclusive rights for the exploration polymetallic nodules in 1987, in the Central Indian Ocean Basin. Since then, it has explored four million square miles and established two mine sites.

- ◆ A strong impetus on research and development and innovation in the areas of ocean energy, marine biology and biotechnology must be provided for the nation to achieve significant market shares in these sectors.
- ◆ It is necessary for India to tap the enormous potential of the ocean based blue economy, which will propel the nation into a higher growth trajectory. The development of blue economy can serve as a growth catalyst in realizing the vision to become a \$10 trillion economy by 2032. Additionally, the Indian Ocean Region is of strategic importance to India's economic growth as the most of the country's oil and gas is imported through the sea. Further,

this dependency is expected to rise by 2025 exponentially.

- ◆ The Indian Ocean Region presents tremendous trade potential for the country. The countries in the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) exhibited significant dynamism in the past few years as the trade in the region increased by over four times.

The Sagarmala project, launched by the Ministry of Shipping, is the strategic initiative for port-led development through the extensive use of IT enabled services for modernisation of ports. It tackles the issue of underutilized ports by focussing on port modernization, efficient evacuation and coastal economic development. The government has allocated over Rs. 3 lakh crore to fund 199 projects under the Sagarmala programme to be implemented in the next three years. Of these identified programmes, projects of more than Rs. 1 lakh crore are already under implementation. Moreover, the Union Budget of 2017-18 has increased the allocation to the project from Rs. 406 crore to Rs. 600 crore, giving further impetus to the port-led development.

The Role of Connectivity

If India is to further its blue economy strategy, it must pay particular attention to strengthening connectivity. For one, sea routes in the Indian Ocean carry up to 90 percent of India's trade. This is only one of the reasons why sea-route and inland water connectivity assumes importance for India in its push to nurture its blue economy. Other significant benefits include employment generation and a boost to the country's industrial development through the provision of a more fuel-efficient, cheaper and reliable mode of transportation.

At present, India has 14 major ports for coastal and international trading. The number of vessels and cargo traffic of India has been increasing consistently in the past decade, reaching some 1,052.21 million tonnes in 2014-15. According to the Indian Maritime Agenda 2010-2020, it is expected that port capacity will increase to 3,130 million tonnes by 2020.

While sea-route connectivity is of critical importance, the linkage between inland water navigation (IWT) and sea routes has received insufficient attention. India has five national water ways and one more under construction. Investment in the order of \$3.4 billion is needed to meet the infrastructural deficit, including terminals, ports, roads and rail connectivity. Further evaluation is required to gauge the complementarity between sea and inland water connectivity, which can strengthen marine industrial and commercial development. The creation of the Coastal Economic Zones (CEZs) and the 'Sagarmala Project' are welcome moves in this direction. However, further efforts will be required to avoid fragmentation and overlapping of policies, while also creating a sustainable framework for the development of connectivity infrastructure. Principles of blue economy, therefore, will be important in creating complementarity between discrete plans and policies, which have a common broad objective of sustainable ocean development.

International Relations and Security

The Indian Ocean has always enjoyed a place of prominence in global strategy. Many nations have established a presence in the region to ensure their strategic interests. India was very active in the UN Adhoc Committee that was set up on the Indian Ocean and supported the cause of keeping the Indian Ocean, a zone of peace during Cold War.

However, with the re-emergence of piracy issues and growing importance to secure the oceanic ecosystem, India has been pro-actively involved in cooperative arrangements with like-minded neighboring countries. The 'trilateral cooperative in maritime security between India, Sri Lanka and Maldives, is one such example.

The India Maritime Security Strategy published by the Indian Navy articulates country's policy in the

Indian Ocean region. It states that in the Indian Ocean region, India is committed to:

- ◆ Ensuring a safe, secure and stable Indian Ocean Region.
- ◆ Deepening security cooperation, through increased surveillance and monitoring with regional partners.
- ◆ Forging a multilateral cooperative maritime security initiative in the Indian Ocean to combat terrorism and piracy.
- ◆ Deepening cultural linkages with the people in region.
- ◆ Building Indian Ocean Region as a frontier of sustainable economic development.

India also redefined its maritime strategy in 2015 to expand the geographical extent of its strategic interests by including the Indo-Pacific region, the Red Sea and South-east Indian Ocean; and to develop its role as a 'net security provider' in the IOR. India's aspiration to be a credible leader in the Indo-Pacific security architecture complements its vision for blue economy development.

A Roadmap to a Sustainable Indian Ocean Blue Economy

The Indian Ocean is a vital part of the economies, livelihoods and cultural identities of the states which border or lie within its boundaries. New opportunities are appearing in these established sectors and new emerging sectors which will require a cooperative approach to capture and exploit in a sustainable manner. The ocean does not recognise geopolitical boundaries and many of its ecosystems and much of its biodiversity are transboundary which can give rise to competitive exploitation. The continued, coordinated and proactive growth of the blue economies within the Indian Ocean need to be built upon principles of:

- ◆ Sharing of skills, data and knowledge.
- ◆ Integrated regional scale planning between nations.

- ◆ Adoption of marine - specific policies.
- ◆ Robust governance for industry and governments to work within and which the community understands and has confidence in its quality and operation.
- ◆ Collaboration between governments and industry, drawing upon the skills and capital of both of these sectors.

Together, these principles will enable Indian Ocean nations to build their critical mass in skills and grow their knowledge base that will underpin sustainable blue economic growth.

Lessons from other Countries' Blue Economy

India would do well to look to other countries for examples of best practices in blue economy. The strategies of Australia, China, and Mauritius, for example, view the potential of sustainable ocean economy in meeting their countries' development objectives. In Australia, offshore oil and gas and aquaculture industry have dominated the blue economy; in Mauritius, meanwhile, coastal tourism and seaport-related activities contribute the largest share; and for China, fisheries, tourism, and transport lead its marine economy.

The contribution of the marine services sector in economic growth and employment generation is indisputable in all these three ocean countries. The size of the blue economy is estimated to be \$47 billion in Australia and \$90 million for Mauritius. In China, the ocean economy contributed 4.03 percent to GDP in 2010 and employed 9.25 million people.

For India, the marine services sector could be the backbone of its blue economy. In line with the 'Digital India' and 'Make in India' initiatives of the present government, India must focus on marine ICTs and transport (shipping) and communication services and the creation of a knowledge hub for marine research and development,

alongside the more traditional sectors like fisheries and coastal tourism.

Conclusion

Regional focus has turned towards the Indian Ocean as the new frontier for sustainable economic development, alongside concerns of security issues. India should build on the momentum it has created thus far and take on a larger responsibility in developing and securing the Indian Ocean by developing ideas, norms and road maps for an inclusive and collaborative ocean governance society. Developing a normative framework for doing business and harnessing the ocean's potential in a sustainable manner is another area where India could demonstrate leadership. This framework must ensure a just and equitable environment for seizing the business opportunities in the IOR.

India should start by creating robust mechanisms for knowledge creation. For instance, diverse platforms for interaction between sectoral experts, professionals, scientists and the business community could be envisaged. The existing and new multilateral trading agreements should also be modified and defined in a way that enables the creation of sustainable infrastructure to meet the demands of future economic activities.

India's commitment to strengthen its cooperation with the regional partners and build a sustainable ocean economy aligns well with its domestic mega-modernisation projects that will enable the nation to harness the full potential of the Ocean based Blue Economy.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: India and its neighborhood-relations.

General Studies Paper- III

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

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3. INDIA - EUROPE RELATIONSHIP: GETTING MOMENTUM

Why in News?

President Ram Nath Kovind's has paid visit to three European states — Cyprus, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic. The visit is part of a notable effort government by put Europe back at the centre of India's global consciousness. President Ram Nath Kovind had earlier travelled to Greece and outlined a comprehensive new Indian approach to Europe.

Introduction

India's diplomatic mind space is occupied mostly by Pakistan, China and the United States. Thanks to the institutionalised high-level interaction with Asia, India's relations with the ASEAN have become a part of the foreign policy discourse. But Europe as a collective has drawn little attention. The problem is not just with the government, but also the so-called strategic community. India's accumulated neglect of Europe meant there were many countries that few Indian leaders or senior officials had not visited for decades.

The European Union (EU) is currently mapping out an "India Strategy" that is expected to lay out an ambitious new agenda for the relationship. India, on its part, is attaching a new strategic salience to the relationship with Europe. Europe is irreplaceable in India's determination to achieve the goals it has set for itself. As the world's second-largest economic entity and a major source of capital, Europe is a natural partner in India's economic transformation. But India has a lot of catching up to do with Europe — from trade liberalisation to educational exchanges and climate change to security cooperation.

Background

For years, the Europe-India partnership suffered from inertia. After the promising beginnings of the early

2000s, the EU-India partnership lost its momentum focusing largely on trade and cultural rather than political and strategic issues. Even with important European member states like Germany, bilateral ties with New Delhi remained cordial but focused on limited cooperation on trade and technology rather than broader strategic questions. Europe's main focus was on China as its key partner and market in Asia.

However with an assertive China and uncertainty of US policy under the Trump administration, Europe and India have realised they have much to offer each other. China's increasing presence in Eurasia and South Asia is creating similar economic, political and even security concerns for Europe and India. Motivated by the need to diversify its partnerships and balance Beijing, India is seeking to partner not only with other middle powers like Japan, Australia, but also the EU and member states like Germany and France. Brexit is another crucial factor, pushing India to look for new 'gateways' to Europe, as its traditional partner leaves the union. For Europe, given the fractures in the transatlantic partnership, the need to strengthen multiple partnerships in a resurgent Asia is clear.

Foreign Policy and security cooperation

The EU and India had discussed foreign policy and security matters in a number of fora and at various levels, including at the Summits. Regular ministerial-level meetings help to move forward the implementation of the Summit conclusions and steer the cooperation. Regular foreign policy and security consultations represent a useful platform to exchange views on the full spectrum of bilateral, regional and global foreign policy issues. Security dialogues or consultations are regularly held on counterterrorism, counter-piracy, cyber-security and non-proliferation/disarmament. To support these, a series of events were held, for

example a Workshop on Countering Online Radicalisation in May 2018 to exchange best practices.

Trade and Investment

The EU is India's largest trading partner, accounting for 13.2% of India's overall trade, ahead of China (11.6%) and the United States (9.6%). India is the EU's 9th largest partner, with the value of EU exports of goods to India amounting to €41.7 billion in 2017. Bilateral trade in commercial services has almost tripled over the past decade, increasing from €10.5 billion in 2005 to €28.8 billion in 2016. In 2016 the EU exported services worth €13.5 billion (top three sectors: ICT, transport and travel), while it imported €15.3 billion (top three sectors: business services, ICT and travel).

Given the significant untapped potential in EU-India trade, the two parties have been negotiating an ambitious free trade agreement (FTA) since 2007, covering, inter alia, effective market access in goods, services and public procurement, as well as a framework for investment including investment protection and rules that frame trade, such as intellectual property and competition. In 2013 the negotiations were put on hold as there was not sufficient progress on key outstanding issues that include improved market access for some goods and services, government procurement, geographical indications, sound investment protection rules and sustainable development.

Since the EU-India Summit in October 2017, both sides have engaged actively in technical discussions on key issues in order to assess whether to relaunch the negotiations.

Comprehensive Sectoral Cooperation

The EU and India share a number of interests across a range of policy areas, including energy and climate change;

environment; research and innovation; pharmaceuticals; biotechnologies; agriculture, digital economy and society; competition policy; macroeconomic issues; sustainable urban development; migration and mobility; and higher education. This is reflected in the breadth and depth of EU-India bilateral contacts, which take place in a number of fora and at various levels, including decentralised cooperation between EU and Indian cities. Policy cooperation and dialogue between EU and India in these areas are further enriched and translated into operational cooperation with the help of EU's partnership instrument.

The EU and India remain close partners in the G20 context and have developed a regular macroeconomic dialogue to exchange experience on economic policies and structural reforms.

The Belt and Road challenge

Concerns around China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) are one example of emerging new common ground

India- Union European Relations

India-EU relations date to the early 1960s, with India being amongst the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with the European Economic Community. A cooperation agreement signed in 1994 took the bilateral relationship beyond trade and economic cooperation. The first India-EU Summit took place in Lisbon on 28 June 2000 and marked a watershed in the evolution of the relationship. Since then, thirteen annual Summits have been held. At the 5th India-EU Summit held at The Hague in 2004, the relationship was upgraded to a 'Strategic Partnership'. The two sides adopted a Joint Action Plan in 2005 (which was reviewed in 2008) that provided for strengthening dialogue and consultation mechanisms in the political and economic spheres, enhancing trade and investment, and bringing peoples and cultures together. India-EU relations received another boost with the 13th India-EU Summit at Brussels in March 2016 adopting the India-EU Agenda 2020, which lays down a road map for cooperation on a wide range of issues including nuclear cooperation, investments, Internet Governance, climate change, 5G communications etc.

between Europe and India. While Europe is more interested than India in engaging with BRI, its initial enthusiasm about the initiative is tempering. European policy makers are beginning to realise the political, economic and security implications of BRI — both on the Eurasian continent and on the power balance and stability in Asia.

Most of BRI's belts and roads lead to Europe — 35 Chinese cities are now connected to 34 European cities via trade and transport links. Europe is a major recipient of Chinese investments in key sectors like energy, telecommunications and real estate. Southern, Central, and Eastern member states suffering from high unemployment and slow economic growth have welcomed Chinese investments with greater enthusiasm, while their Western counterparts have been more cautious. The extent to which BRI has already undermined EU cohesion can be seen in platforms like 16+1, the watering down of EU statements on the South China Sea, or on China's human rights records by Hungary and Greece. On other crucial questions of screening Chinese investments, the fault lines run across the EU. Western European states and Brussels are viewing this "divide and rule" tactic with great alarm. German Chancellor Merkel sees Chinese influence as one of the "greatest challenges" facing Europe, and has cautioned that Chinese economic investments should not be linked with political questions.

On many of these counts, Europe and India not only have similar concerns, but can also see the direct impact of BRI in their extended neighbourhoods in Eurasia and the Indian Ocean. These are opening up new avenues of political and security cooperation between Europe and India, making their partnership truly 'strategic'.

Both actors are now working towards shaping the norms around regional connectivity. India was one of the first countries to articulate concerns around BRI on the lack of transparency

and adherence to international norms. European member states and the EU too have articulated their position on BRI — that it should be based on transparency, a level playing field, reciprocity and economic and environmental sustainability. EU policymakers underline that connectivity is "not just a Chinese idea" and are in the process of preparing their own strategy on "Euro-Asian Connectivity". The strategy will describe Europe's approach to connectivity, financial instruments for funding projects and strategies for cooperating with partners — including China, but also Japan, India, ASEAN and others.

Way Ahead

As it deepens engagement with Europe today, India is learning to appreciate the multiple forces — religious, ethnic, economic and political — that are reshaping the continent. As it reaches out to Central Europe, India has begun to acknowledge the region's complex relations with its large neighbours — Germany and Russia. In deepening ties with the Nordic and Baltic states, India recognises their deep-seated fears about an assertive Moscow. India's long-standing friendship with Russia gives Delhi a solid understanding of Moscow's concerns on Western expansion into its "near abroad". This is not a picture that fits in with India's Cold War perceptions of Europe.

On top of all this is a new factor — the Trump Administration's pressure on Europe to take more responsibility for its own security and the maintenance of the regional order. As Europe steps out from America's protective shell, it will need partners in promoting stability in Eurasia and the Indo-Pacific. That opens up one of the most productive and exciting lines of strategic advance for India in the coming years.

General Studies Paper- II

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



4. PM-AASHA: MSP ASSURANCE TO FARMERS

Why in News?

Giving a major boost to the pro-farmer initiatives of the government and in keeping with its commitment and dedication for the Annadata, the Union Cabinet has approved a new umbrella scheme 'Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay SanraksHan Abhiyan' (PM-AASHA). The scheme is aimed at ensuring remunerative prices to the farmers for their produce as announced in the Union Budget for 2018.

Introduction

The government is committed to realizing the vision of doubling farmers' income by 2022. The emphasis is on enhancing productivity, reducing cost of cultivation and strengthening post-harvesting management, including market structure. Several market reforms have been initiated. These include Model Agricultural Produce and Livestock Marketing Act, 2017 and Model Contract Farming and Services Act, 2018. Many states have taken steps to adopt these through legislation.

Efforts are on for a new market architecture, so as to ensure that farmers get remunerative prices on their produce. These include setting up of Gramin Agricultural Markets (GrAMs) so as to promote 22,000 number of retail markets in close proximity of farm gate; competitive and transparent wholesale trade at Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC) through National Agriculture Market (eNAM) and a robust and pro-farmer export policy.

Besides, several other pro-farmers' initiatives such as implementation of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana and distribution of Soil Health Cards have been undertaken. The commitment

for farmer welfare is also reflected by unprecedented decision of announcing minimum support price (MSP) based on the formula of 1.5 times the cost of cultivation.

PM-AASHA is an unprecedented step taken by government of India to protect the farmers' income which is expected to go a long way towards the welfare of farmers.

Current Scenario

More than three-fifths of India's population draws their livelihood from agriculture that adds just one-fifth to its GDP. There should be obvious serious concerns about efficient functioning of this sector both in terms of its output / productivity and its marketing. While output and productivity are supply side factors, markets provide an intermediate link between producers and final demand by consumers. Efficiently functioning markets add to welfare of producers as well as consumers. Interventions in domestic agricultural markets can affect the efficient allocation of resources negatively thus making domestic agricultural sector less competitive in international markets. This effect can get further magnified through interventions in the border trade policies. Efficient agricultural markets can also be a potent tool for poverty reduction.

Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay SanraksHan Abhiyan

Government of India is working with the holistic approach of solving any issue rather than in fragments. Increasing MSP is not adequate and it is more important that farmers should get full benefit of the announced MSP. For this, government realizes that it is essential that if price of the agriculture produce market is less than MSP, then

in that case state government and Central government should purchase either at MSP or work in a manner to provide MSP for the farmers through some other mechanism.

It is expected that the increase in MSP will be translated to farmer's income by way of robust procurement mechanism in coordination with the state governments.

With this approach government of India has approved PM-AASHA with three sub schemes.

Components of PM-AASHA

The new umbrella scheme includes the mechanism of ensuring remunerative prices to the farmers and is comprised of:

- ◆ Price Support Scheme (PSS)
- ◆ Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS)
- ◆ Pilot of Private Procurement & Stockist Scheme (PPSS).

Price Support Scheme (PSS)

Physical procurement of pulses, oilseeds and copra to be done by central nodal agencies along with state government. Central government to bear procurement expenditure & losses due to procurement up to 25% of production.

Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS)

Under PDPS, it is proposed to cover all oilseeds for which MSP is notified. In this direct payment of the difference between the MSP and the selling/modal price will be made to pre-registered farmers selling his produce in the notified market yard through a transparent auction process. All payment will be done directly into registered bank account of the farmer. This scheme does not involve

any physical procurement of crops as farmers are paid the difference between the MSP price and sale/modal price on disposal in notified market. The support of central government for PDPS will be given as per norms.

Pilot of Private Procurement & Stockist Scheme (PPSS)

Participation of private sector in procurement operation to be piloted. It has been decided that for oilseeds, states have the option to roll out Private Procurement Stockist Scheme (PPSS) on pilot basis in selected district/APMC(s) of district involving

Minimum Support Price

Minimum Support Price (MSP) is the price at which government purchases crops from the farmers, whatever may be the price for the crops. MSP is an important part of India's agricultural price policy. The MSP was declared used first time in 1965 as a tool for agricultural price policy to meet the various objectives. Since then, the MSP performs an important function in realizing the various objectives related to agricultural price policy.

MSPs are announced by the government of India at the beginning of the sowing season for certain crops on the basis of the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP). Support prices generally affect farmers' decisions indirectly, regarding land allocation to crops, quantity of the crops to be produced etc. It is in this angle that the MSP becomes a big incentive for the farmers to produce more quantity.

The objective of the MSP is thus to ensure remunerative prices to the growers for by encouraging higher investment and production. It also aims to bring a balanced realization of sufficient food production and consumption needs at the same ensuring adequate and affordable food grains to all the people. Thus the MSP is aimed to:

- Assure remunerative and relatively stable price environment for the farmers by inducing them to increase production and thereby augment the availability of food grains.
- Improve economic access of food to people.
- Evolve a production pattern which is in line with overall needs of the economy.

the participation of private stockiest. The pilot district/selected APMC(s) of district will cover one or more crop of oilseeds for which MSP is notified. Since this is akin to PSS, in that it involves physical procurement of the notified commodity, it shall substitute PSS/PDPS in the pilot districts.

Why is it Important?

Recently, the Centre announced a hike in MSPs for several Kharif crops. It said that it will pay farmers the cost of production (as determined by CACP) plus a 50 per cent 'profit' while procuring farm produce. Except for paddy, wheat and select cash crops where there is direct procurement by the industry, government-driven procurement is almost nil in crops such as oilseeds.

The AASHA scheme tries to address the gaps in the MSP system and give better returns to farmers. It also promises to plug the holes in the procurement system through PDP. If effectively implemented, the scheme will be resulted in savings for the Centre. In the current physical procurement, government agencies end up stock-piling foodgrains, incurring storage costs and significant wastage and leakages as well.

Inflation fixation

Farm prices are suppressed to ensure that food inflation remains in control as well as to provide cheap raw material for industry. A higher MSP, if actually implemented, will play a role in alleviating farm distress, but more steps are needed. Although the government has tried to assuage farmers' anger by promising its version of 'MSP plus 50 per cent profit' (recommended by the MS Swaminathan committee) farmers' groups are not satisfied. The cost calculated here does not include land rentals. Therefore, against an MSP of Rs. 1,750 per quintal for paddy that the government has announced under the new formula, the support

price should be Rs. 2,340 per quintal. Farmers are therefore losing Rs. 590 on every quintal of paddy sold. For maize, the loss is Rs. 540 per quintal.

The moot issue is that the enhanced price would benefit only a small percentage of the farming community. As per the Shanta Kumar committee, only 6 per cent farmers will get benefit from procurement prices.

Redesigning CACP

Even under the newly rolled out PM-AASHA scheme, the government has made it clear that only 25 per cent of the marketable surplus will be procured. The better option is to redesign the existing Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP). It should be renamed 'Commission for Farmers Income and Welfare' with a mandate to work out the minimum living income for a farming family and to spell out means to provide it.

If we take the minimum income that a farmer should receive to be equivalent to the salary of a government employee at the lowest level, at Rs. 18,000 per month, the Commission must work out the average that a farmer earns in a region and ensure that the deficit be paid by way of income transfer. The Telangana model, where a fixed amount of Rs. 8,000 per acre per annum is paid to every land-owning farmer, is a form of income transfer and this should be clubbed by the Commission to provide income support to farmers.

There is a need for a course correction in the way MSP is provided. The government should continue to procure wheat from farmers at MSP, which will eventually determine the retail price. But to ensure that farmers are given 50 per cent profit over 'C2' (which includes land rentals), it should directly transfer the profit over the MSP to their Jan Dhan accounts. For example, in case of paddy the government should procure at Rs. 1,750 per quintal from

farmers and transfer the remaining Rs. 590 per quintal directly into their bank accounts. Income support can be provided by clubbing existing schemes with new approaches.

Criticism to PM-AASHA

Farmers' organisations in Punjab have described the PM-AASHA as a scheme to favour private players by bringing in private players into procurement. They said that with this the government is preparing ground for withdrawal of state from procurement responsibility. All India Kisan Sangharsh Committee (AIKSC) also said that this scheme does not provide any mechanism to strengthen marketing infrastructure needed in most parts of the country for farmers to take benefit of MSP.

This year, monsoon had a staggered start. Last year, too, the monsoon was anything but normal and not surprisingly, farmers did not gain from an erratic monsoon. This is evident from the fact that 34 major farmer protests have been recorded across 15 states since 2017. Farmers took to streets, demanding a fair price for their produce and a guarantee of assured income. Here is a low-down on how increasing input prices will diminish the gains of MSP in the kharif season.

- ◆ Fuel prices: 25 per cent additional burden on paddy farmers.
- ◆ 20 per cent projected increase in rental cost of farm equipment and operations.
- ◆ Fertiliser prices increase by at least 20 per cent.
- ◆ Insecticides India Ltd (IIL) and Dhanuka Agrotech—major players in the pesticide sector—have decided to increase the price of their products by at least 5-10 per cent.

While the idea of MSP is being sold as a silver bullet, reports show that

crops with MSP account for only 28 per cent of the total value of agricultural output. In fact, less than 5.8 per cent of agricultural households across India are actually able to sell their produce to the government, said the high-level Shanta Kumar Committee report. Under such circumstances, it is important to re-analyse the economics of farm input cost, MSPs, farm income and also ensure that farmers get access to markets at the right time, which still remains an issue.

Major Issues and Concerns

- ◆ Too many intermediaries resulting in high cost of goods and services.
- ◆ Inadequate infrastructure for storage, sorting, grading or post-harvest management.
- ◆ Private sector unwilling to invest in logistics or infrastructure under prevailing conditions.
- ◆ Price setting mechanism not transparent.
- ◆ Mandi staff ill-equipped and untrained.
- ◆ Market information not easily accessible.

Way Ahead

One of the most important initiatives of government was the creation of the e-NAM platform for creating a national market. The vested interests of commission agents in mandis and the elected leadership of APMCs ensured that e-NAM did not get implemented in its true spirit. The APMC fee generated in the states is used as discretionary fund by many chief ministers. As a result, the states have not shown any sense of urgency in freeing up agricultural markets. The large variation in mandi prices across states shows that in addition to the global downturn in commodity markets and lingering impact of demonetisation, it is the broken agri-markets which are

causing low prices rather than India becoming surplus agri-economy.

While there's no doubt on the intention behind PM-AASHA or even the new 1.5-times-cost MSP formula, the question, however, is again with regard to implementability. When market prices today are consistently ruling below MSPs, it only means that the latter do not reflect supply-demand fundamentals.

The government should ideally look for market-based solutions to the problem of prices in the agri-commodities market. Intervening through price guidance not only distorts the market but is very myopic in nature. Creating a solid structure where farmers and companies deal on commodity futures platforms to hedge the price risk is the perfect solution and the effort must be on deepening these markets. This will be a win-win solution and the constant concerns that keep governments worried about whether the farmer is realising remunerative prices and whether the consumer is paying a comfortable price is answered by the markets.

General Studies Paper- III

Topic: Major crops - cropping patterns in various parts of the country, different types of irrigation and irrigation systems - storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints; e-technology in the aid of farmers.

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



5. FUTURE OF JOBS NEEDS RESKILLING

Why in News?

In less than seven years, by 2025, machines are projected to overtake humans in workplace task hours in 12 key industry sectors, according to a 'Future of Jobs' report by the World Economic Forum (WEF).

Introduction

As technological breakthroughs rapidly shift the frontier between the work tasks performed by humans and those performed by machines and algorithms, global labour markets are likely to undergo major transformations. These transformations, if managed wisely, could lead to a new age of good work, good jobs and improved quality of life for all, but if managed poorly, pose the risk of widening skills gaps, greater inequality and broader polarization. In many ways, the time to shape the future of work is now.

As the fourth industrial revolution unfolds, companies are seeking to harness new and emerging technologies to reach higher levels of efficiency of production and consumption, expand into new markets and compete on new products for a global consumer base composed increasingly of digital natives. Yet in order to harness the transformative potential of the fourth industrial revolution, business leaders across all industries and regions will increasingly be called upon to formulate a comprehensive workforce strategy ready to meet the challenges of this new era of accelerating change and innovation.

A particular focus of this new edition of the report is on arriving at a better understanding of the potential of new technologies, including automation and algorithms, to create new high-quality jobs and vastly improve the job quality and productivity of the existing

work of human employees. As it has been the case throughout economic history, such augmentation of existing jobs through technology is expected to create wholly new tasks—from app development to piloting drones to remotely monitoring patient health to certified care workers—opening up opportunities for an entirely new range of livelihoods for workers. At the same time, however, it is also clear that the fourth industrial revolution's wave of technological advancement is set to reduce the number of workers required for certain work tasks.

Key Findings of the Report

This report finds that as workforce transformations accelerate, the window of opportunity for proactive management of this change is closing fast and business, government and workers must proactively plan and implement a new vision for the global labour market. The report's key findings include:

Drivers of Change

Four specific technological advances—ubiquitous high-speed mobile internet; artificial intelligence; widespread adoption of big data analytics; and cloud technology—are set to dominate the 2018–2022 period as drivers positively affecting business growth.

Accelerated Technology Adoption

By 2022, according to the stated investment intentions of companies surveyed for this report, 85% of respondents are likely or very likely to have expanded their adoption of user and entity big data analytics. Similarly, large proportions of companies are likely or very likely to have expanded their adoption of technologies such as the internet of things and app- & web-

enabled markets and to make extensive use of cloud computing. Machine learning are augmented and virtual reality are poised to likewise receive considerable business investment.

Trends in Robotization

While estimated used cases for humanoid robots appear to remain somewhat more limited over the 2018–2022 period under consideration in this report, collectively, a broader range of recent robotics technologies at or near commercialization—including stationary robots, non-humanoid land robots and fully automated aerial drones, in addition to machine learning algorithms and artificial intelligence—are attracting significant business interest in adoption.

Changing Geography of Production, Distribution and Value chains

By 2022, 59% of employers surveyed for this report expect that they will have significantly modified how they produce and distribute by changing the composition of their value chain and nearly half expect to have modified their geographical base of operations.

Changing Employment Types

Nearly 50% of companies expect that automation will lead to some reduction in their full-time workforce by 2022, based on the job profiles of their employee base today. However, 38% of businesses surveyed expect to extend their workforce to new productivity-enhancing roles and more than a quarter expect automation to lead to the creation of new roles in their enterprise. In addition, businesses are set to expand their use of contractors doing task-specialized work, with many respondents highlighting their intention to engage workers in a

more flexible manner, utilizing remote staffing beyond physical offices and decentralization of operations.

A Net Positive Outlook for Jobs

Across all industries, by 2022, growth in emerging professions is set to increase their share of employment from 16% to 27% (11% point growth) of the total employee base of company respondents, whereas the employment share of declining roles is set to decrease from currently 31% to 21% (10% point decline).

Emerging In-demand Roles

Among the range of established roles that are set to experience increasing demand in the period up to 2022 are data analysts and scientists, software and applications developers, and ecommerce and social media specialists. These roles are significantly based on and enhanced by the use of technology.

Growing Skills Instability

Given the wave of new technologies and trends disrupting business models and the changing division of labour between workers and machines transforming current job profiles, the vast majority of employers surveyed for this report expect that, by 2022, the skills required to perform most jobs will have shifted significantly. Global average skills stability—the proportion of core skills required to perform a job that will remain the same—is expected to be about 58%, meaning an average shift of 42% in required workforce skills over the 2018–2022 period.

Characteristics of the Indian Workforce

The Indian workforce has three distinct characteristics:

- (a) It is a young workforce.
- (b) The skills base of this workforce remains underdeveloped.

- (c) Most jobs are being created in the informal economy. These supply-side characteristics are explained first. The Indian workforce is young and will remain young in future decades – a trend that immediately separates India from advanced economies; in which ageing workforces have to carry the mantle for the fourth industrial revolution, characterised by a range of new technologies that are fusing the physical, digital and biological worlds, impacting all disciplines, economies and industries and even challenging ideas about what it means to be human.

World Economic Forum: Human-Machine Frontier

Companies expect a significant shift on the frontier between humans and machines when it comes to existing work tasks between 2018 and 2022.

- ◆ In 2018, an average of 71% of total task hours across the 12 industries covered in the report are performed by humans, compared to 29% by machines. By 2022 this average is expected to have shifted to 58% task hours performed by humans and 42% by machines.
- ◆ In 2018, in terms of total working hours, no work task was yet estimated to be predominantly performed by a machine or an algorithm.
- ◆ By 2022, this picture is projected to have somewhat changed, with machines and algorithms on average increasing their contribution to specific tasks by 57%.
- ◆ Even those work tasks that have thus far remained overwhelmingly human—communicating and interacting (23%); coordinating, developing, managing and advising (20%); as well as reasoning and decision-making (18%)—will begin to be automated (30%, 29%, and

27% respectively). Relative to their starting point today, the expansion of machines' share of work task performance is particularly marked in the reasoning and decision-making, administering, and looking for and receiving job-related information tasks.

Role of Government

As this new labour market takes shape over the 2018–2022 period, governments, businesses and individuals will also find themselves confronted with a range of wholly new questions.

For governments, firstly, there is an urgent need to address the impact of new technologies on labour markets through upgraded education policies aimed at rapidly raising education and skills levels of individuals of all ages, particularly with regard to both STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and non-cognitive soft skills, enabling people to leverage their uniquely human capabilities. Relevant intervention points include school curricula, teacher training and a reinvention of vocational training for the age of the fourth industrial revolution, broadening its appeal beyond traditional low- and medium-skilled occupations.

Secondly, improvements in education and skills provision must be balanced with efforts on the demand side. Governments can help stimulate job creation through additional public investment as well as by leveraging private investments through blended finance or government guarantees. The exact nature of desirable investments will vary from country to country. However, over the coming years, there is enormous scope and a clear unmet need in creating the hard and soft infrastructure to power the fourth industrial revolution—from digital communication networks to renewable and smart energy grids to smart schools

and hospitals to improved care homes and childcare facilities.

Thirdly, to the extent that new technologies and labour augmentation will boost productivity, incomes and wealth, governments may find that increased tax revenues provide scope to enhance social safety nets to better support those who may need support to adjust to the new labour market. This could be achieved through reforming and extending existing social protection schemes, or through moving to a wholly new model such as the idea of basic income and basic services. Learning from pilot schemes of this kind—in addition to those currently underway in places such as the Netherlands, various American and Canadian states, Kenya, India and Brazil—will be critical for all governments over the course of the 2018–2022 period.

Conclusion

The new labour market taking shape in the wake of the fourth industrial revolution holds both challenges and opportunities. As companies begin to formulate business transformation and workforce strategies over the course of the 2018–2022 period, they have a genuine window of opportunity to

leverage new technologies, including automation, to enhance economic value creation through new activities, improve job quality in traditional and newly emerging occupations, and augment their employees' skills to reach their full potential to perform new high value-added work tasks, some of which will have never before been performed by human workers.

At the same time, technological change and shifts in job roles and occupational structures are transforming the demand for skills at a faster pace than ever before. Therefore, imperative for achieving such a positive vision of the future of jobs will be an economic and societal move by governments, businesses and individuals towards agile lifelong learning, as well as inclusive strategies and programmes for skills retraining and upgrading across the entire occupational spectrum. Technology-related and non-cognitive soft skills are becoming increasingly more important in tandem and there are significant opportunities for innovative and creative multistakeholder partnerships of governments, industry employers, education providers and others to experiment and invest in new types of

education and training provision that will be most useful to individuals in this new labour market context.

Overall, a new approach is required to address new challenges linked to the future of the Indian workforce and improving both quantitative and qualitative benchmarks through which future “work” itself is measured. India must adopt a policy approach that is holistic. It cannot afford anything less at this critical stage in its development trajectory, where there is a clear risk of institutions and the overall political and administrative machinery, being overwhelmed by the sheer scale of the employment challenge. This means giving space to multiple stakeholders, fresh perspectives and as inclusive a policy approach as possible, without diluting the impetus for an urgent response.

General Studies Paper- III

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

Topic: Government Budgeting.

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6. INDIA COOLING ACTION PLAN: ADDRESSING COOLING NEEDS

Why in News?

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change has released a draft India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP). It provides a 20-year perspective (2017-18 to 2037-38) to address the cooling requirements across sectors and ways and means to provide access to sustainable cooling for all.

Introduction

India is the first country in world to develop such a document (ICAP),

which addresses cooling requirement across sectors and lists out actions which can help reduce the cooling demand. This will help in reducing both direct and indirect emissions. The thrust of the ICAP is to look for synergies in actions for securing both environmental and socio-economic benefits. The overarching goal of ICAP is to provide sustainable cooling and thermal comfort for all while securing environmental and socio-economic benefits for the society. The ICAP underscores the importance of the

development and use of a robust mix of cooling technologies, including the use of energy-efficient appliances with appropriate environment-friendly refrigerants, for meeting the growing cooling requirement of the country.

India has consciously chosen a path for most environment-friendly and energy efficient technologies, while phasing out Ozone depleting substances, unlike many of the developed countries. India is among the few countries globally and a pioneer in some cases, in the use of

technologies, which are non-ozone depleting and have low global warming potential. Cooling has been recognized as an important development need due to cross-sectoral nature and considerable use of cooling and air conditioning in different sectors of the economy such as industries, residential and commercial buildings, cold chain, transport (personal, commercial, metro and railways & ships).

The integration of topics on hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFC) phase out and energy efficiency in architectural curriculum will help the future architects to introduce energy efficiency and use ozone friendly materials in new construction of buildings. This will help not only in the protection of Ozone layer, but also reduce energy consumption in building sector, which is one of the significant consumers of electricity in urban areas.

ICAP had been prepared by the Ministry after extensive deliberations and multi-stakeholders engagement in public domain for receiving comments/suggestions. Recognizing that integrated actions, taking a holistic view on the cooling requirement across sectors with long term perspective (20 years) will have a higher impact than either of the actions taken in isolation, the Ministry had initiated the process for developing the Cooling Action Plan in July 2017.

The Ozone Factor

The draft notes a large part of the cooling demand is met through refrigerant-based cooling. These refrigerants are regulated under the Montreal Protocol regime on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. India is a signatory. In the 2016 Kigali Amendment to the Protocol, India and a few other developing countries had agreed to phase down hydrofluorocarbons — commonly used in air-conditioners — by 85% of their 2024-26 levels by 2047.

India Cooling Action Plan

The ICAP provides a 20-year perspective (2017-18 to 2037-38) and recommendations, to address the cooling requirements across sectors and ways and means to provide access to sustainable cooling for all. The ICAP has considered the interdependencies among policy interventions and strives to harmonize energy efficiency with the HCFC phase-out and high- Global Warming Potential (GWP) HFC phase-down schedules. It also re-emphasizes the principles enshrined in the country programme of India for phase-out of Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS), that is, to minimize economic dislocation and obsolescence cost and maximize indigenous production for combined environmental and economic gains.

Objectives of the ICAP

The broad objectives of the ICAP include -

- ◆ Assessment of cooling requirements across sectors in next 20 years and the associated refrigerant demand and energy use.
- ◆ Map the technologies available to cater the cooling requirement including passive interventions, refrigerant-based technologies and alternative technologies such as not-in-kind technologies.
- ◆ Suggest interventions in each sector to provide for sustainable cooling and thermal comfort for all.
- ◆ Focus on skilling of RAC service technicians.
- ◆ Develop an R&D innovation ecosystem for indigenous development of alternative technologies.

Goals of ICAP

The goals emerging from the suggested interventions stated in ICAP are:

- ◆ Recognition of “cooling and related areas” as a thrust area of research under national science and technology programme to support development of technological solutions and encourage innovation challenges.
- ◆ Reduction of cooling demand across sectors by 20% to 25 % by year 2037-38.
- ◆ Reduction of refrigerant demand by 25% to 30% by year 2037-38.
- ◆ Reduction of cooling energy requirements by 25% to 40% by year 2037-38.
- ◆ Training and certification of 100,000 servicing sector technicians by the year 2022-23, in synergy with Skill India Mission.

Priority Areas Identified by the ICAP

1. Promote development and commercialization of technology pathways, especially low- energy cooling technologies, which would reduce the energy footprint of active cooling: through the right combination of policy and market drivers.
The private sector must be enabled to lead the technology development through innovation and R&D.
2. Accelerate
 - a. Reduction of the cooling load of the building sector through fast-tracked implementation of building energy codes.
 - b. Adoption of adaptive thermal comfort standards.
 - c. Ratcheting-up energy efficiency of room air-conditioners and fans.
 - d. Enhancing consumer awareness through eco-labelling of cooling products.

In the light of significant increase (~3x) in building area by 2037-38 (over 2017-18 baseline), the role of building energy efficiency will become increasingly important in terms of reducing the cooling load requirements.

3. Public procurement of energy efficient cooling equipment and trained and certified RAC service technicians for public buildings.
4. Allocate government funding and support towards targeted programmes to enable cooling for the economically weaker segment.
5. Drive skill-building of the service sector through training and certification.
6. To ensure harmonization of policies ICAP builds on the efforts of HCFC Phase-out Management Plan. There should be synergy between the existing plans to phase-out HCFCs and the new plans to phase-down the use of high GWP HFCs.
7. A robust, comprehensive and R&D innovation ecosystem will be critically important for effectively addressing India's cooling requirement. In this context, the role of public-private-partnerships will become important.

Implementation Framework

The ICAP serves to underscore the urgency of proactively and collaboratively addressing India's projected cooling growth and lays out sector-wide priorities and pathways for interventions. Given the cross-cutting nature of cooling demand, the ICAP implementation will be best served by active collaboration among the relevant Ministries as well as the private sector entities. For effective implementation, the ICAP must be monitored and executed under the governance of a high level multi-ministerial framework.

Synergies with International Commitments

Cooling is directly linked with the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer through the refrigerants used in refrigeration and air conditioning (RAC) equipment. Presently, the HCFC Phase-out Management Plan (HPMP) is under implementation. India is phasing-out production and consumption of HCFCs per the Montreal Protocol schedule. The Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol has brought in HFCs as a controlled substance under the Protocol.

It has been recognized that sustainable cooling is at the intersection of three international multilateral agreements viz. Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol, Paris Agreement under United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of 2030. Essentially, providing thermal comfort for all is also part of the SDG 3 (Good health and well-being), 8 (Decent work and economic growth) and 10 (Reduced inequalities). It is an opportune time for international actions to be synergized to secure environmental and societal benefits.

Way Forward

While addressing the rapidly rising cooling requirement of the country, aligning the domestic policies and programmes with international multilateral environment agreements will maximize the achievable environmental and societal benefits. Acknowledging that cooling is a cross cutting requirement, an integrated and long-term vision across sectors is a prerequisite for addressing the cooling requirement in a sustainable manner and also providing access to cooling and thermal comfort to all. There are both

international and domestic regulatory instruments impacting various facets of cooling. Additionally, there

are different ongoing policies and programmes of the government that co-relate with cooling. There are also overarching priorities and thrusts of the Government in terms of developmental objectives.

Within this context, the ICAP lays out cooling demand estimates over a 20-year term in order that synergies could be forged and cross-cutting integrated policies could be developed, where required, to secure the benefits and meet the developmental needs of the country. Both refrigerant transition and energy efficiency standards necessitate changes in the equipment design. To provide a clear way forward for the industry, synchronization of regulatory measures

for energy efficiency and refrigerant phase-out/transition, while meeting the domestic objectives as well as international commitments under Kigali amendment and Paris agreement, should be carried out wherever possible. The hallmark for success of Montreal Protocol in the country is the active participation of stakeholders including the industry. The role and collaboration of industry in moving towards new technologies for addressing the rising cooling requirement is most critical. A policy framework that supports and incentivizes industry involvement in the move towards sustainable cooling and thermal comfort for all will be an important requirement.

General Studies Paper- III

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



7. URBAN NAXALISM: IS REAL OR MANUFACTURED THREAT

Why in News?

The phrase 'urban Naxal' shook the entire nation after the Maharashtra police arrested five people in connection with the Bhima Koregaon violence. Those arrested are well known social activists and professors. The police have called the arrested people urban Naxals.

Introduction

The term, Naxal entered Indian lexicons in the decade of 1960 and has acquired a certain meaning over the years. The term Naxal comes from a village called Naxalbari in Siliguri district of West Bengal. Naxalism is understood at two levels - as a socio-economic issue and a law and order problem. The people who launched Naxal operations were frustrated with growing inequality among the various classes of society and government's apathy to address the routine grievances of the poor. They launched armed rebellion against the system and the government dealt with it as a law and order problem. In 2008, the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said, "Naxalism is the greatest threat to our internal security."

The term Urban Naxals remains undefined. The phrase loosely means people of Naxalite bent of mind that reside in urban areas and work as activists, supporters and protectors of the ideology while the active Naxals battle it out in the jungles and vast swathes of Maoist-dominated areas. Though the term Urban Naxal has entered popular usage recently, the concept of Urban Naxalism, however, emerged with the birth of CPI (Maoist) in 2004. It is an age-old tactic used by the Maoists to target mainly the urban centres, organise a large number of masses which in turn will

help them provide military personnel, infrastructure and material.

The Maoists' plan for an urban movement stems from a realisation of the blunders it committed during the Naxalbari phase of the movement. Blunders of defective understanding of urban specificities and warfare landed them in bloody confrontation with the security forces, which resulted in the killing of hundreds of its cadres and sympathisers. It was during this phase that the Maoists failed to garner much intellectual support which could have helped legitimise their movement.

Strategy and Modus Operandi

Urban Naxals are the 'invisible enemies' of India, some of them have either been caught or are under the police radar for working for the movement and spreading insurgency against the Indian state. One common thread amongst all of them is that they are all urban intellectuals, influencers or activists of importance.

The new strategy focuses on a six-stage approach called SAARRC – survey, awareness, agitation, recruitment, resistance and control. A security official stated that "they have completed the first stage of survey that is, identifying the target groups, potential areas of discontent and flash-points in urban areas. Now they are in the process of implementing the second and third stages of their strategy." This is achieved through the creation of the following types of frontal organisations:

- ◆ Secret revolutionary mass organisations.
- ◆ Open and semi-open revolutionary mass organisations.
- ◆ Open legal mass organisations, which are not directly linked to the party.

Urban work within the third type of organisations can further be subdivided into three broad categories:

- ◆ Fractional work.
- ◆ Partly-formed cover organisations.
- ◆ Legal democratic organisations.

The legal democratic organisations are the most dangerous for national security, as they try to subvert constitutional authority surreptitiously by building mass support through subtle manipulation of grievances against the state.

The Naxals have been following a very systematic policy whereby the physically fit youths are shifted to hinterlands for armed struggle, with the more educated lot being retained in the cities to carry out agitations and propaganda amongst the masses.

The modus operandi of the organization remain mobilising the sections of societies like the working class, as well as other classes and sections like the semi-proletariat, students, middle-class employees and intellectuals.

The Naxal movement is engaged in Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW). This war is waged by a blurring of the lines between war and politics, combatants and civilians. This 4GW is complex and long term. It's decentralised, small in size and lacks hierarchy. The strategy is to make a direct attack on the enemy's (Indian state) culture, including genocidal acts against civilians and wage a highly sophisticated psychological and cultural warfare, especially through media manipulation and lawfare. All available pressures are used – political, economic, social and military. For this purpose, legal professionals are required, media professionals are required, creative people, varied intellectuals and

academicians are required and civil society leaders are required, especially those who are connected with non-governmental organisations. It begins with low-intensity conflicts where actors attack from different platforms.

The urban movement of the Maoists is detailed in two party documents: Strategy and Tactics of Indian Revolution (STIR), 2004 and Urban Perspective: Our Work in Urban Areas (UPUA), 2007. Immediately after the merger of the People's War Group (PWG) and the Maoist Communist Centre of India (MCCI) along with other fringe radical communist groups to form the CPI-Maoist in 2004, it was felt among the Maoist leadership that they needed a plan to have bases in urban centres. The document stresses on uniting industrial proletariats, the weak and students and use them as vanguards who can play a direct role in the revolution.

The city becomes the money source, shelter for cadre as transit points, source of weaponry and legal protection, medical aid, media attention and intelligentsia network. So, an invisible Naxal-intelligentsia-media-academia nexus works as strategic fortification with the ultimate aim of taking over the Indian state to achieve Naxal rule. They have identified Pune-Mumbai-Ahmedabad as the Golden Corridor, the Delhi-Kanpur-Patna-Kolkata as Ganga Corridor and KKT's (Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu) Chennai-Coimbatore-Bengaluru as tri-junction.

Threats to Internal Security

- ◆ The danger of Urban Naxalism is 'clear and present'.
- ◆ The Naxal movement is engaged in Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW). It is the most lethal as it intends to destroy a state from within, unlike the first, second and third generations of warfare. The fourth generation warfare primarily relies

on creating unrest and fissures within the society in the garb of 'cultural struggles' which ultimately leads to disintegration of the society and the state. One does not need an external force to invade a country to destroy it. It needs to be done from within.

- ◆ Maoists also attempt to exploit the inherent fault lines of urbanisation to their advantage. The first step of the urban mobilisation strategy is "Survey". This step involves scrutinising urban landscapes based upon their geographical profile — whether they are serving an industrialised or underdeveloped hinterland; changes in workforce composition; minute study of the linguistic and religious minorities, of the economic divergences within cities, of the processes involving ghettoisation as these are the potential breeding grounds for their recruits whom they can very easily indoctrinate to work against the interests of the Indian state.
- ◆ In case of India, we have witnessed in recent times the way radical left has been trying to create schism within the society by raising a bogey of persecution of Dalits and minorities and forge an alliance of anti-Indian forces in the country. A number of radical left organisations have registered themselves as cultural organisations. They instigate violence and anti-India sentiments in university campuses and amongst marginalised sections of the society.
- ◆ In the cities, the front "mass organisations" are generally manned by ideologues, which include academicians and activists, fully committed to the party line. Such organisations ostensibly pursue human rights-related issues and are adept at using the legal processes of the Indian state to undermine and emasculate

enforcement action by the security forces. They also attempt to malign state institutions through propaganda and disinformation to further the cause of their "revolution".

- ◆ Urban areas are important for Maoists to get cadres who have the skill sets to perform military tasks; they are also critical for developing international networks, local intelligence, reaching medical aid to rural guerilla forces, as transit facility and for cyber warfare.
- ◆ The faces of urban naxalism are intellectuals, influencers and activists of importance. They indoctrinate the young by pretending to be concerned about social issues. However, they never make an attempt to find solutions to social problems. They only exploit the situation by organising protests and mobilising the impressionable youth.
- ◆ The urban movement is one of the main sources, which provides cadres and leadership having various types of capabilities essential for the people's war and for the establishment of liberated areas. There is a dialectical relationship between the development of the urban movement and the development of the people's war. In the absence of a strong revolutionary urban movement, the people's war will face difficulties.

Way Forward

India has to confront the threat within its borders and address the danger from both physical and virtual recruitment of our young — before an extremist outlook turns them into a lost generation. These aren't hypothetical situations that require evolution. There is enough evidence to show that these are well-established systems that have been ignored for far

too long as India might have presumed that the enemy always lies on the other side of the border. Urban Naxalism is India's biggest threat. It can't be fought by the government alone. It has to be fought by exposing them, which is a responsibility of every citizen who wants India to succeed.

The fight against Maoist radicals is a must, but manufacturing Maoists

out of intellectuals and activists goes against the very democratic ethos of the Indian state and can actually aid in erroneously legitimising the Maoists' reach into the urban centres. The importance of dissent is not just that it is good for democracy. There is also a fundamental ethical principle involved in dissent. Social dissent is a necessary voice for all those who are

oppressed and are marginalised for various reasons. This is the only thing they have in a world which has denied them the basic dignity of a social life.

General Studies Paper- III

Topic: Linkages between development and spread of extremism.

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SEVEN SUBJECTIVE QUESTIONS WITH MODEL ANSWERS

The Global State of Democracy

Q1. Democracy does not merely mean voting for people; it means empowering people by granting them equality. Discuss the attributes of Democracy. Also examine the global state of democracy and the challenges to democracies posed by today's political landscape.

Hints:

- ◆ The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) has tried to evaluate the state of democracy and trends in democratisation from 1975 to 2017. The study covers a variety of important indicators such as representative government, fundamental rights and checks on the government, impartial administration and participatory engagement.
- ◆ The world saw a huge wave of democratization after World War-II. The newly-liberated states in Latin America, Africa and Asia adopted democratic forms of government after centuries of colonial subjugation. Today more people live under various forms of democracy than ever before. More than 120 of the 192 countries in the world have some form of democracy — only 11 parliamentary democracies existed in 1941.
- ◆ The democratic principles of popular control and political equality are compatible with different political institutions in the form of electoral systems (proportional-majoritarian), government systems (presidential-parliamentary) and state structure (federalist-unitary) at the national, local and supranational levels. These principles are thus open to a context-sensitive implementation of universal standards of democratic governance.
- ◆ In short, a democratic system can be organized in a variety of ways and countries can build their democracy in different ways and therefore may fulfil these principles to varying degrees.
- ◆ Democracy does not merely mean voting rights for people, it means empowering people by granting them equality. It also means the creation of mechanisms to resolve differences through dialogue and with mutual respect and understanding. India does have the highest rating among South Asian democracies. But its

performances on several yardsticks make it a flawed democracy. If we want the largest democracy to count among the world's greatest, there must be serious introspection among all stakeholders.

- ◆ Threats to democracy from those in power constitute some of the gravest affronts to the global state of democracy today. These leaders manage to increase their political power by manipulating electoral norms, restricting dissent and freedom of speech and reforming the constitution to extend their terms in office—all within the legal framework of the democratic system. Most alarming, these actions have a ripple effect on the functioning of institutions beyond those directly targeted and affect people's safety, wellbeing and livelihoods. Some countries have diverted from this dangerous path towards authoritarianism.
- ◆ Today's political landscape poses complex global challenges to democracies. The landscape is shaped by globalization, geopolitical power shifts, changing roles and structures of (supra) national organizations and institutions and the rise in modern communications technologies. Transnational phenomena such as migration and climate change influence the dynamics of conflict and development, citizenship and state sovereignty. Rising inequalities and the social polarization and exclusion they generate, skew political representation and voice, reducing the vital moderate centre of the electorate.

Blue Economy and its Implications

Q2. What do you understand by blue economy? Examine why blue economy is important for India.

Hints:

- ◆ Blue economy is all about economic activities dependent on marine resources. It comprises of various verticals like aquaculture, maritime tourism, blue-biotechnology, ocean energy, marine mining, offshore oil and gas etc.
- ◆ Blue economy is based on the idea to use locally available resources and employ renewable inputs, for example, "ocean-as-a-resource" that addresses the problems of

resource scarcity and enables sustainable development. This marine-based economic development will reduce environmental risks and mitigate ecological challenges. As a result, the optimized and responsible resource utilization will enable to achieve balanced socio-economic development.

- ◆ The Indian Ocean region is abundant with resources, particularly in the sectors of fisheries, aquaculture, ocean energy, sea-bed mining and minerals, and provides tremendous economic opportunities to develop marine tourism and shipping activities. Among these resources, fisheries and minerals are the most commercially viable industries.
- ◆ The Indian Ocean is a vital part of the economies, livelihoods and cultural identities of the States which border or lie within its boundaries. New opportunities are appearing in these established sectors and new emerging sectors which will require a cooperative approach to capture and exploit in a sustainable manner. The ocean does not recognise geopolitical boundaries and many of its ecosystems and much of its biodiversity are transboundary which can give rise to competitive exploitation.
- ◆ Although the term “blue economy” has been used in different ways, it is understood here as comprising the range of economic sectors and related policies that together determine whether the use of oceanic resources is sustainable. The “blue economy” concept seeks to promote economic growth, social inclusion, and the preservation or improvement of livelihoods while at the same time ensuring environmental sustainability of the oceans and coastal areas.

India - Europe Relationship: Getting Momentum

Q3. A nation's foreign policy is strongly influenced by the imperatives of its strategic environment, its perception of its own neighbourhood and the perception of its own status in the international community. On the basis of the above, India has sought to engage and build bridges with European Union and the Commission. Discuss.

Hints:

- ◆ President Ram Nath Kovind's has paid visit to three European states — Cyprus, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic. The Visit is part of a notable effort by government to put Europe back at the centre of

India's global consciousness. President Ram Nath Kovind had earlier travelled to Greece and outlined a comprehensive new Indian approach to Europe.

- ◆ India's diplomatic mind space is occupied mostly by Pakistan, China, and the United States. Thanks to the institutionalised high-level interaction with Asia, India's relations with the ASEAN have become a part of the foreign policy discourse. But Europe as a collective has drawn little attention. The problem is not just with the government, but also the so-called strategic community. . India's accumulated neglect of Europe meant there were many countries that few Indian leaders or senior officials had not visited for decades.
- ◆ The European Union (EU) is currently mapping out an “India Strategy” that is expected to lay out an ambitious new agenda for the relationship. India, on its part, is attaching a new strategic salience to the relationship with Europe. Europe is irreplaceable in India's determination to achieve the goals it has set itself. As the world's second-largest economic entity and a major source of capital, Europe is a natural partner in India's economic transformation. But India has a lot of catching up to do with Europe — from trade liberalisation to educational exchanges and climate change to security cooperation.
- ◆ The EU and India share a number of interests across a range of policy areas, including energy & climate change; environment; research and innovation; pharmaceuticals; biotechnologies; agriculture, Digital economy and Society; competition policy; macroeconomic issues, sustainable urban development; migration and mobility; and higher education.
- ◆ Concerns around China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) are one example of emerging new common ground between Europe and India. India was one of the first countries to articulate concerns around BRI on the lack of transparency, and adherence to international norms. European member states and the EU too have articulated their position on BRI — that is should be based on transparency, a level playing field, reciprocity, and economic and environmental sustainability.
- ◆ As it deepens engagement with Europe today, India is learning to appreciate the multiple forces — religious, ethnic, economic and political — those are reshaping the continent. As it reaches out to Central Europe, India has begun to acknowledge the region's complex relations with its large neighbours — Germany and Russia.

PM-AASHA: MSP Assurance to Farmers

Q4. 'The problems of agricultural marketing are too complex to be solved by the government schemes which constitute AASHA.' Will the new scheme give Aasha to farmers?

Hints:

- ◆ Government of India is working with the holistic approach of solving any issue rather than in fragments. Increasing MSP is not adequate and it is more important that farmers should get full benefit of the announced MSP. For this, government realizes that it is essential that if price of the agriculture produce market is less than MSP, then in that case State Government and Central Government should purchase either at MSP or work in a manner to provide MSP for the farmers through some other mechanism. With this approach, Cabinet has approved the Umbrella Scheme of PM-AASHA with three sub-schemes i.e. Price Support Scheme (PSS), Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS) and pilot of Private Procurement & Stockist Scheme (PDPS).
- ◆ In Price Support Scheme (PSS), physical procurement of pulses, oilseeds and Copra will be done by Central Nodal Agencies with proactive role of State governments. It is also decided that in addition to NAFED, Food Cooperation of India (FCI) will take up PSS operations in states /districts. The procurement expenditure and losses due to procurement will be borne by Central Government as per norms.
- ◆ Under Price Deficiency Payment Scheme this scheme (PDPS), it is proposed to cover all oilseeds for which MSP is notified. In this direct payment of the difference between the MSP and the selling/modal price will be made to pre-registered farmers selling his produce in the notified market yard through a transparent auction process. All payment will be done directly into registered bank account of the farmer. This scheme does not involve any physical procurement of crops as farmers are paid the difference between the MSP price and Sale/modal price on disposal in notified market. The support of central government for PDPS will be given as per norms.
- ◆ Besides, several other pro-farmers' initiatives such as implementation of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana and distribution of Soil Health Cards have been undertaken. The commitment for farmer welfare is also reflected by unprecedented decision of announcing minimum support price based on the formula of 1.5 times the cost of cultivation.

- ◆ The Government is committed to realizing the vision of doubling farmers' income by 2022. The emphasis is on enhancing productivity, reducing cost of cultivation and strengthening post-harvesting management, including market structure. Several market reforms have been initiated. These include Model Agricultural Produce and Livestock Marketing Act, 2017 and Model Contract Farming and Services Act, 2018. Many States have taken steps to adopt these through legislation.

Future of Jobs Needs Reskilling

Q5. As employers are deconstructing traditional job roles and re-bundling work tasks in response to new technologies, how can they minimize the risks and best leverage new partnerships with resources? Examine.

Hints:

- ◆ In less than seven years, by 2025, machines are projected to overtake humans in workplace task hours in 12 key industry sectors, according to a 'Future of Jobs' report by the World Economic Forum (WEF).
- ◆ As technological breakthroughs rapidly shift the frontier between the work tasks performed by humans and those performed by machines and algorithms, global labour markets are likely to undergo major transformations. These transformations, if managed wisely, could lead to a new age of good work, good jobs and improved quality of life for all, but if managed poorly, pose the risk of widening skills gaps, greater inequality and broader polarization.
- ◆ As the Fourth Industrial Revolution unfolds, companies are seeking to harness new and emerging technologies to reach higher levels of efficiency of production and consumption, expand into new markets, and compete on new products for a global consumer base composed increasingly of digital natives.
- ◆ Four specific technological advances—ubiquitous high-speed mobile internet; artificial intelligence; widespread adoption of big data analytics; and cloud technology—are set to dominate the 2018–2022 period as drivers positively affecting business growth.
- ◆ The Indian workforce has three distinct characteristics: (a) It is a young workforce; (b) the skills base of this workforce remains underdeveloped; and (c) most jobs are being created in the informal economy. These supply-side characteristics are explained first. The Indian workforce is young and will remain young in future decades – a trend that immediately separates India from advanced economies; in which ageing workforces have to carry the mantle for the “Fourth Industrial Revolution”, characterised by “a range of new

technologies that are fusing the physical, digital and biological worlds, impacting all disciplines, economies and industries, and even challenging ideas about what it means to be human”.

- ◆ For governments, firstly, there is an urgent need to address the impact of new technologies on labour markets through upgraded education policies aimed at rapidly raising education and skills levels of individuals of all ages, by country and region, 2018–2022 particularly with regard to both STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and non-cognitive soft skills, enabling people to leverage their uniquely human capabilities.
- ◆ To the extent that new technologies and labour augmentation will boost productivity, incomes and wealth, governments may find that increased tax revenues provide scope to enhance social safety nets to better support those who may need support to adjust to the new labour market. This could be achieved through reforming and extending existing social protection schemes, or through moving to a wholly new model such as the idea of basic income and basic services.
- ◆ The new labour market taking shape in the wake of the Fourth Industrial Revolution holds both challenges and opportunities. As companies begin to formulate business transformation and workforce strategies over the course of the 2018–2022 period, they have a genuine window of opportunity to leverage new technologies, including automation, to enhance economic value creation through new activities, improve job quality in traditional and newly emerging occupations, and augment their employees’ skills to reach their full potential to perform new high value-added work tasks, some of which will have never before been performed by human workers.

India Cooling Action Plan: Addressing Cooling Needs

Q6. Cooling is an essential part for economic growth and development involving multi-stakeholders to synergize actions for addressing cooling demand across all areas. Discuss the India’s 20-year Cooling Action Plan to address the cooling requirement across sectors.

Hints:

- ◆ The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change has released a draft India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP). It provides a 20-year perspective (2017-18 to 2037-38)

to address the cooling requirements across sectors and ways and means to provide access to sustainable cooling for all.

- ◆ India is the first country in world to develop such a document (ICAP), which addresses cooling requirement across sectors and lists out actions which can help reduce the cooling demand. This will help in reducing both direct and indirect emissions. The thrust of the ICAP is to look for synergies in actions for securing both environmental and socio-economic benefits.
- ◆ The overarching goal of ICAP is to provide sustainable cooling and thermal comfort for all while securing environmental and socio-economic benefits for the society. The ICAP underscores the importance of the development and use of a robust mix of cooling technologies, including the use of energy-efficient appliances with appropriate environment-friendly refrigerants, for meeting the growing cooling requirement of the country.
- ◆ The draft notes a large part of the cooling demand is met through refrigerant-based cooling. These refrigerants are regulated under the Montreal Protocol regime on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. India is a signatory. In the 2016 Kigali Amendment to the Protocol, India and a few other developing countries had agreed to phase down hydrofluorocarbons — commonly used in air-conditioners — by 85% of their 2024-26 levels by 2047.
- ◆ The goals emerging from the suggested interventions stated in ICAP are:
 - ◆ Recognition of “cooling and related areas” as a thrust area of research under national science and technology programme to support development of technological solutions and encourage innovation challenges,
 - ◆ Reduction of cooling demand across sectors by 20% to 25 % by year 2037-38,
 - ◆ Reduction of refrigerant demand by 25% to 30% by year 2037-38,
 - ◆ Reduction of cooling energy requirements by 25% to 40% by year 2037-38, and
 - ◆ Training and certification of 100,000 servicing sector technicians by the year 2022-23, in synergy with Skill India Mission.
- ◆ Cooling is directly linked with the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer through the refrigerants used in refrigeration and air conditioning (RAC) equipment. Presently, the HCFC Phase-out Management Plan (HPMP) is under implementation.

India is phasing-out production and consumption of HCFCs per the Montreal Protocol schedule. The Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol has brought in HFCs as a controlled substance under the Protocol.

- ◆ It has been recognized that sustainable cooling is at the intersection of three international multilateral agreements viz. Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol, Paris Agreement under United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of 2030.
- ◆ The role and collaboration of industry in moving towards new technologies for addressing the rising cooling requirement is most critical. A policy framework that supports and incentivizes industry involvement in the move towards sustainable cooling and thermal comfort for all will be an important requirement.

Urban Naxalism: Is Real or Manufactured Threat

Q7. What do you understand by urban Naxalism? Urban Naxals are the 'invisible enemies' of India. Discuss the dangers of urban Naxalism to the internal security of India.

Hints:

- ◆ The phrase 'urban Naxal' shook the entire nation after the Maharashtra police arrested five people in connection with the Bhima Koregaon violence. Those arrested are well known social activists and professors. The police have called the arrested people urban Naxals.
- ◆ The term Urban Naxals remains undefined. The phrase loosely means people of Naxalite bent of mind that reside in urban areas and work as activists, supporters and protectors of the ideology while the active Naxals battle it out in the jungles and vast swathes of Maoist-dominated areas.
- ◆ Urban naxals are the 'invisible enemies' of India, some of them have either been caught or are under the police radar for working for the movement and spreading insurgency against the Indian state. One common thread amongst all of them is that they are all urban intellectuals, influencers or activists of importance. The new strategy focuses on a six-stage approach called SAARRC – survey, awareness, agitation, recruitment, resistance and control.
- ◆ The Naxal movement is engaged in Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW). This war is waged by a blurring of

the lines between war and politics, combatants and civilians. This 4GW is complex and long term. It's decentralised, small in size and lacks hierarchy. The strategy is to make a direct attack on the enemy's (Indian state) culture, including genocidal acts against civilians, and wage a highly sophisticated psychological and cultural warfare, especially through media manipulation and lawfare.

- ◆ The city becomes the money source, shelter for cadre as transit points, source of weaponry and legal protection, medical aid, media attention and intelligentsia network. So, an invisible Naxal-intelligentsia-media-academia nexus works as strategic fortification with the ultimate aim of taking over the Indian state to achieve Naxal rule.
- ◆ In the cities, the front "mass organisations" are generally manned by ideologues, which include academicians and activists, fully committed to the party line. Such organisations ostensibly pursue human rights-related issues and are adept at using the legal processes of the Indian state to undermine and emasculate enforcement action by the security forces. They also attempt to malign state institutions through propaganda and disinformation to further the cause of their "revolution".
- ◆ The faces of urban naxalism are intellectuals, influencers and activists of importance. They indoctrinate the young by pretending to be concerned about social issues. However, they never make an attempt to find solutions to social problems. They only exploit the situation by organising protests and mobilising the impressionable youth.
- ◆ India has to confront the threat within its borders and address the danger from both physical and virtual recruitment of our young — before an extremist outlook turns them into a lost generation. These aren't hypothetical situations that require evolution. The fight against Maoist radicals is a must, but manufacturing Maoists out of intellectuals and activists goes against the very democratic ethos of the Indian State and can actually aid in erroneously legitimising the Maoists' reach into the urban centres. The importance of dissent is not just that it is good for democracy. There is also a fundamental ethical principle involved in dissent. Social dissent is a necessary voice for all those who are oppressed and are marginalised for various reasons. This is the only thing they have in a world which has denied them the basic dignity of a social life.



SEVEN IMPORTANT NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWS

NATIONAL

1. Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojna

Considering the change in employment pattern and the current scenario of employment in India which has transformed from a long term employment to fixed short term engagement in the form of contract and temping, the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) has approved a scheme named 'Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojna' for insured persons (IP) covered under the Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948. This scheme is a relief payable in cash directly to their bank account in case of unemployment, while they search for new engagement.

Key Features

- ◆ Workers who are left unemployed for whatsoever reasons will be paid money, from their own contribution towards the ESI scheme, in cash through bank account transfer.
- ◆ Workers will be able to draw 47 per cent of their total contributions towards ESIC after remaining unemployed for at least three months from the date of leaving their previous jobs.
- ◆ The new scheme will be in addition to the Rajiv Gandhi Shramik Kalyan Yojana (RGSKY) under which

ESIC subscribers are provided unemployment allowance.

- ◆ However, persons who have become unemployed after being insured for at least three years, only for three reasons – closure of factory, retrenchment or permanent invalidity – are entitled to be a part of the RGSKY scheme. Unemployment allowance equal to 50 per cent of wage for a maximum period of two years is provided, along with medical care for the worker and her family during the period of unemployment. ■

2. Sputum Sample Transportation Project

Ministry of Health has launched a pilot project for utilising services of the postal department for transport of sputum specimen for diagnosis of tuberculosis at Karawal Nagar (Delhi).

A significant number of TB patients cannot get their sputum tested due to non-availability of specimen transports mechanisms. Prompt transport of specimen followed by efficacious testing will enable appropriate management of tuberculosis patients and reduced disease transmission. If the pilot project here turns out to be a success then specimen transport mechanism through the postal department can be adopted across the country.

About Sputum

- ◆ Sputum is produced when a person's lungs are diseased or damaged. Sputum is the thick mucus or phlegm that is expelled from the lower respiratory tract (bronchi and lungs) through coughing. Sputum is not saliva but the thick mucus - sometimes called phlegm - which is coughed up from the lungs.
- ◆ The body produces mucus to keep the thin, delicate tissues of the respiratory tract moist so that small particles of foreign matter that may pose a threat can be trapped

and forced out. Sometimes, such as when there is an infection in the lungs, an excess of mucus is produced. The body attempts to get rid of this excess by coughing it up as sputum.

- ◆ The sputum test is often the first TB test to be used in countries with a high rate of TB infection. Sputum microscopy is inexpensive and simple and people can be trained to do it relatively quickly and easily. ■

3. Missile Prahar

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully flight tested the indigenously developed surface-to-surface tactical missile 'Prahar' from Balasore. Range stations and electro optical systems tracked the missile throughout its flight. 'Prahar' is a contemporary weapon system capable of carrying multiple types of warheads and neutralizing a wide variety of targets.

Key Features

- ◆ It is capable of filling the gap between the multi-barrel rocket system 'Pinaka' and medium-range ballistic missile 'Prithvi'. It can also engage multiple targets in different directions.
- ◆ It is a solid-fuelled short-range missile fitted with inertial navigation system.
- ◆ The missile is equipped with state-of-the-art navigation, guidance

and electromechanical actuation systems with advance on board computer.

- ◆ It has length of 7.3 meter, diameter of 420 mm and weighs 1,280 kg. It has operational range of 150 km and flight altitude of 35 km.
- ◆ It is a quick-reaction, all-weather, all-terrain, highly accurate battle-field support tactical weapon system.

4. Modified Operational Guidelines for PMFBY

The government of India has decided to incorporate the provision of penalties for states and insurance companies for the delay in settlement of insurance claims under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY). The new operational guidelines come at the onset of the Rabi season, which starts from 1st of October.

Modified Guidelines

- ◆ The farmers will be paid 12% interest by insurance companies for the delay in settlement claims beyond two months of prescribed cut-off date. State governments will have to pay 12% interest for the delay in release of state share of subsidy beyond three months of prescribed cut-off date submission of requisition by insurance companies.
- ◆ The government has also decided to include perennial horticultural

crops under the ambit of PMFBY on a pilot basis. The scheme, as per the new operational guidelines provides add on coverage for crop loss due to attack of wild animals, which will be implemented on a pilot basis. Aadhaar number will be mandatorily captured to avoid duplication of beneficiaries.

- ◆ In order to ensure that more non-loanee farmers are insured under the scheme, apart from various awareness activities being scheduled, the insurance companies are given a target of enrolling 10% more non-loanee farmers than the previous corresponding season. The insurance companies will have to mandatorily spend 0.5% of gross premium per company per season for publicity and awareness of the scheme.
- ◆ The new operational guidelines address the current challenges

faced while implementing the scheme by putting forth effective solutions. The much demanded rationalization of premium release process has been incorporated in the new guidelines. As per this, the insurance companies need not provide any projections for the advance subsidy. Release of upfront premium subsidy will be made at the beginning of the season based on 50% of 80% of total share of subsidy of corresponding season of previous year as government subsidy.

About PMFBY

The government of India has launched PMFBY on 18th February 2016. It envisages a uniform premium of only 2% to be paid by farmers for Kharif crops and 1.5% for Rabi crops. The premium for annual commercial and horticultural crops will be 5%. ■

5. 'Swachhata Hi Seva' Movement

The government of India has launched the 'Swachhata Hi Seva' movement, to boost nation wide public participation in the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. It aims at generating greater public participation towards Swachhata.

It is being organized in the run up to the fourth anniversary of the Swachh Bharat Mission, on October 2nd, 2018, which will also mark the commencement of the 150th year celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi.

This is being coordinated by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, the convening Ministry for the Swachh Bharat Mission. The objective of the campaign is to mobilise people and reinforce the "Jan

Aandolan” for sanitation to contribute to Mahatma Gandhi’s dream of a Clean India.

Reaching out to the poor and marginalised and providing them with

sustainable sanitation services would be the hallmark of this campaign.

About Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is a campaign

which was launched on 2nd October 2014 and aims to eradicate open defecation by 2019 and is a national campaign, covering 4,041 statutory cities and towns. ■

6. Policy on Jhum Cultivation

NITI Aayog has recommended that the Ministry of Agriculture should take up a mission on shifting cultivation to ensure inter-ministerial convergence on shifting cultivation. Central as well as state government departments of forests and environment, agriculture and allied departments often have divergent approaches towards shifting cultivation. This creates confusion among grassroots level workers and jhum farmers.

In the uplands of Northeast India—Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura—shifting cultivation, locally

known as jhum, continues to be a dominant mode of food production and the economic mainstay of many rural households.

Shifting cultivation lands fall under the purview of agriculture when they are in the cultivation phase, but the same lands come under forests during the fallow phase. Thus, the same piece of land is subjected to different laws, regulations and management, which become self-contradictory. It affects upland farmers, restricting their control, decisions and investments on such plots. According to the report, land for shifting cultivation should

be recognised as “agricultural land” where farmers practise agro-forestry for the production of food rather than as forestland.

Concern

According to NITI Aayog, land under shifting cultivation dropped by 70 % in between 2000 to 2010. People are returning to fallow land left after shifting in a shorter span. Earlier the cultivators returned to fallows after 10-12 years, now they are returning in three to five years which has impacted on the quality of the soil. ■

7. Man-portable Anti-tank Guided Missile

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has tested a low-weight indigenously developed man-portable anti-tank guided missile (MPATGM) at its Ahmednagar range. The MPATGM would complete all its trials in the next six months and be handed over to the army for user evaluation next year. The MPATGM project was started three years ago under the government's 'Make in India' programme to meet the army's requirement of over 80,000 anti-tank guided missiles (ATGMs) by fielding an indigenously designed, developed and manufactured missile.

Key Features

MPATGM is a third-generation anti-tank missile that has been designed to replace the Indian Army’s second-generation Milan and Konkurs ATGMs.

The 14.5kg fire-and-forget weapon system, equipped with a detachable command launch unit (CLU), will weigh approximately 20kg in carrying mode. With an operational range between 200m and 2.5km, the missile features a single kill probability of more than 90%, in addition to soft launch capabilities.

The missile, being developed in collaboration with Hyderabad-based private sector firm VEM Technologies, is an emerging success story for a public-private partnership.

About Anti-tank Guided Missile

An anti-tank missile, anti-tank guided missile, anti-armour guided missile or anti-tank guided weapon (ATGW) is a missile that is created to destroy vehicles that are heavily armoured.

First Generation: These missiles are guided by manual commands and

the missile is steered to the target. The operator is exposed and vulnerable while using first generation anti-tank missiles as they have to remain still and in view of the target while the missile is flying to the target.

Second Generation: Semi-automatically commanded missiles need to operate to keep the sight fixed on the target till impact. Apart from the use of laser marking or TV camera view from the nose of the missile, guidance commands are sent to the missile using wires or radio.

Third Generation: This type of guided missiles relies on electro-optical imager (IIR) seeker, a laser or a W band radar seeker in the nose of the missile. There are fire-and-forget missiles where the operator can retreat right after firing as there is no more guidance required. ■

INTERNATIONAL

1. Country Partnership Framework for India

The World Bank Group (WBG) has endorsed a new Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for India. The CPF aims to support India's transition to a higher middle-income country by addressing some of its key development priorities — resource efficient and inclusive growth, job creation and building its human capital.

The India CPF represents the largest country programme of the WBG, reflecting the strong collaboration between India and the Group's institutions — the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), International Finance Corporation (IFC) and Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA). The WBG expects to deliver \$25-30 billion during this CPF period, ending in FY22. With a fast growing economy, global stature, and

its unique experience of lifting the highest number of poor out of poverty in the past decades, India is well-positioned to become a high middle-income country by 2030.

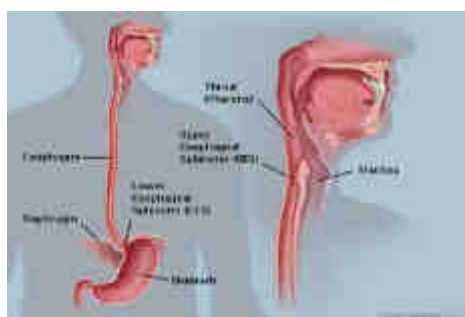
The WBG will focus on three broad areas under the new CPF: promoting a resource efficient growth path, particularly in the use of land and water, to remain sustainable; enhancing competitiveness and enabling job creation; and investing in human capital — in health, education, skills—to improve quality and efficiency of service delivery. Within these, some areas of deeper WBG's engagement will include addressing the challenge



of air pollution, facilitating jobs for women, increasing the resilience of the financial sector and investing in early years of children's development. Across the sectors, the WBG will invest in harnessing the impact of new technology.

2. Scientists Grow Miniature Human Oesophagus in Lab

Scientists have successfully grown oesophageal organoids -- miniature, functional versions of the human food pipe -- using stem cells, paving the way for new ways to study and test drugs against gut disorders. The human oesophageal tissue was grown entirely from pluripotent stem cells (PSCs),



which can form any tissue type in the body.

The oesophagus is a muscular tube that actively passes food from the mouth to the stomach. The organ can be affected by congenital diseases, such as esophageal atresia - a narrowing or malformation of the oesophagus caused by genetic mutations. There are several diseases that can afflict people later in life. Some include oesophageal cancer, gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), or a rare ailment called achalasia - a disease affecting the muscles of the lower oesophagus that prevents contraction of the organ and the passage of food.

Significance

- ◆ The research may lead to personalised diagnostic methods and focused in part on developing regenerative tissue therapies to treat or cure gastro intestinal (GI) disorders.
- ◆ In addition to being a new model to study birth defects like esophageal atresia. The organoids can be used to study diseases like eosinophilic esophagitis and Barrett's metaplasia, or to bioengineer genetically matched esophageal tissue for individual patients.

3. South Asia Area Office and Technology Innovation Centre

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) has announced that it will establish its South Asia Area Office and Technology Innovation Centre at New Delhi. The establishment of this ITU local area office will be an important milestone for India, as it signifies global recognition of the progress India have made in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

As a member of the ITU since 1869, India has traditionally played a

harmonising role in the deliberations and exchanges of the body, always respecting the core principles of equality and consensus-building. The country has also been a regular member of the ITU Council since 1952. The ITU South Asia Office will serve nine countries – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, in addition to the host country – which together account for nearly 24% of the global population.

About ITU

ITU is a United Nations specialized agency for Information and Communication Technologies, with membership of 193 countries and nearly 800 private sector entities and academic institutions. It was founded in 1865, as the International Telegraph Union and it is the oldest existing international organization. ITU headquarters are in Geneva, Switzerland. ■

4. The Case for Making Pluto a Planet Again

Scientists are arguing that denying Pluto planetary status is invalid and erroneous. A team led by Philip Metzger, planetary scientist at the University of Central Florida (UCF) in Orlando, is indicating that the basis on which Pluto was rejected as a planet does not have any support in research literature.

When Pluto was discovered in 1930, it was the ninth planet in the solar system based on an overestimation of

its size. However, Pluto seemed to look out of place among the other larger planets after the discovery of swarms of ice dwarfs – icy rocks in the Kuiper Belt, at the very edge of the solar system billions of miles from the Sun. Due to this, some astronomers suggested that Pluto could be just another Kuiper Belt Object (KBO) and not a planet.

In 2006, the International Astronomical Union (IAU) laid out some guidelines for a celestial body to

be called a planet. The IAU said that there were three conditions that must be fulfilled for a celestial body to be termed as a planet: 1) it must be round; 2) it must orbit the Sun; and 3) it must have “cleared the neighbourhood of its orbit. According to the IAU’s definition, Pluto does not meet the criteria, as Neptune’s gravity influences it and Pluto shares its orbit with frozen gases and objects in the Kuiper belt. ■

5. Asia Pacific Policy Group

Almost three months after Pakistan was placed on the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) grey list for failing to curb terror funding, Pakistan’s recent action against terror financing, particularly on the legal front, was found to be unsatisfactory, according to a review by the Asia Pacific Policy Group (APPG).

The APPG also reviewed Pakistan on its compliance with the 26-point action plan, which Islamabad, in February this year, had submitted to the FATF to choke the funding of militants groups, including Mumbai attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed-led Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) and its affiliates.

APPG will report the unsatisfactory performance by Pakistan to the FATF, at its plenary in Paris in October 2018.

About APPG

It is the FATF-style regional body for the Asia-Pacific region. It is an inter-governmental organisation founded in 1997 in Bangkok, Thailand. It is an inter-governmental organisation, consisting of 41 member jurisdictions, focused on ensuring that its members effectively implement the international standards against money laundering, terrorist financing and proliferation financing related to weapons of mass destruction.

The APPG also has a large number of observers (both jurisdictions and supporting organisations) that participate in its programmes and activities. Some of the key international organisations that support the APPG include the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the UN’s Counter Terrorism Executive Directorate, Asian Development Bank, Commonwealth Secretariat, INTERPOL and the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units. ■

6. The Newest Neuron in the Human Brain

A group of neuroscientists has discovered a new type of human brain cell in the neocortex that has never been seen in mice and other studied laboratory animals. The neocortex is involved in higher functions such as generating motor commands, conscious thought, spatial reasoning and language, accounts for almost 76% of the brain's volume. It is divided into six layers, where Layer 1 denotes the outermost layer.

According to a new study, these cells have been dubbed “rosehip neurons”. The dense bundle of each brain cell’s axon—nerve fibre projections that work as the nervous system’s transmission lines—forms around the cell’s centre “looks just like a rose after it has shed its petals”.

The rosehip neurons belong to a class of neurons called inhibitory neurons. The two main types of

neurons in the cortex are inhibitory and excitatory. Inhibitory neurons are an important part of the circuit because they put the brakes on the electrical activity in excitatory neurons. One reason that rosehip interneurons are interesting is because they can put targeted brakes on the circuit as they connect to a specific part of excitatory neurons.

7. Exoplanet Super-Earth HD 39091c

Astronomers using data from NASA’s Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) have discovered a super-Earth orbiting an unusually bright, Sun-like star called HD 39091.

Key Points

- ◆ HD 39091, also known as Pi (π) Mensae, Gliese 9189 and HIP 26394, is a naked-eye G0-type star at a distance of 60 light-years.

- ◆ The star has a radius about 1.1 times that of the Sun, 1.1 times the Sun’s mass and is already known to host HD 39091b, a gas giant with a mass about 10 times that of Jupiter and an orbital period of 5.7 years.
- ◆ The newly-discovered HD 39091c orbits its Sun every 6.27 days.
- ◆ It has a radius 2.1 times that of Earth and a mass about 4.8 times the Earth’s mass. The planet

likely has a large portion of lighter materials — such as water, methane, hydrogen and helium — in addition to a rocky/iron core.

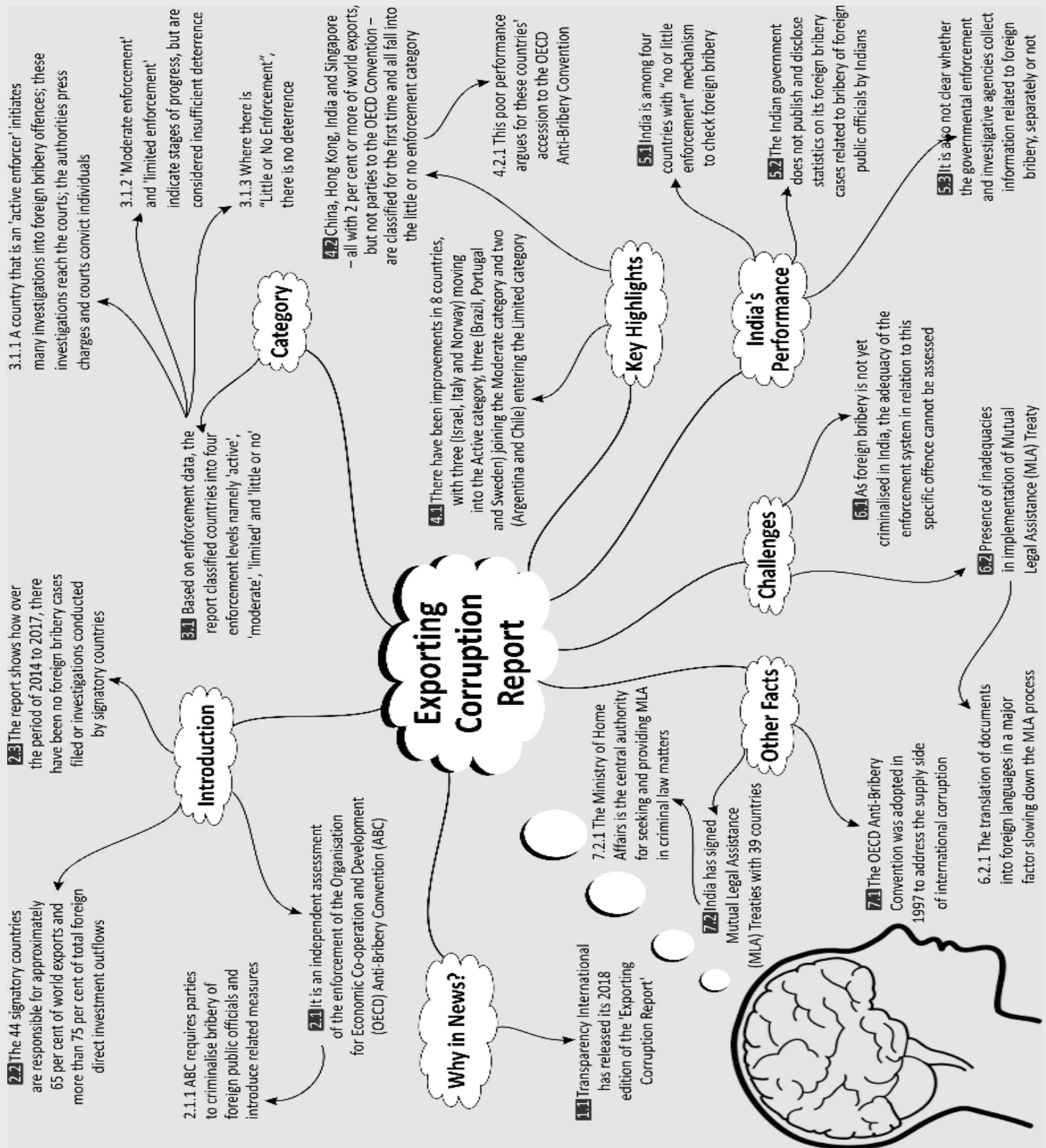
About TESS

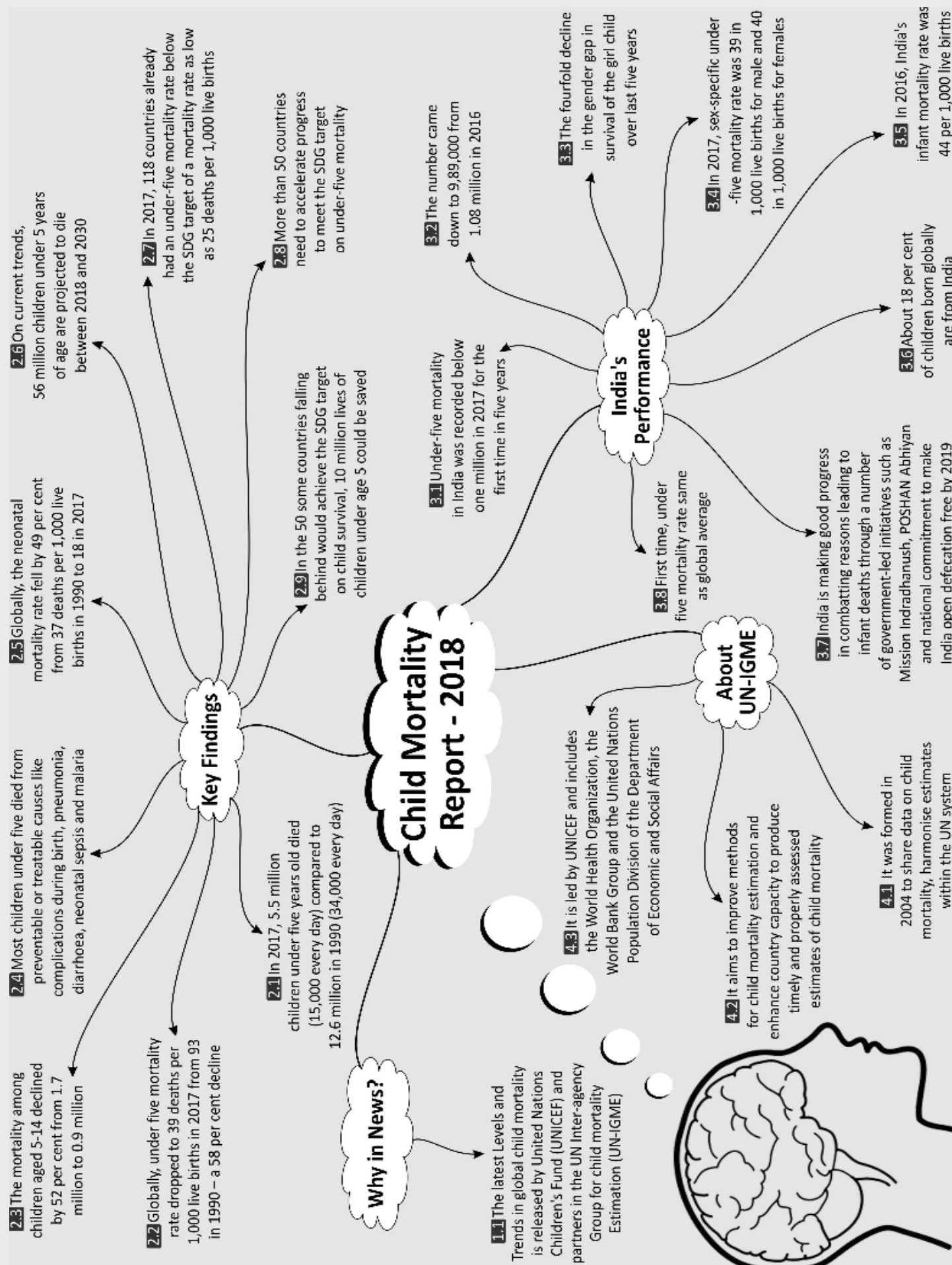
The Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) is a NASA mission that will discover thousands of exoplanets in orbit around the brightest stars in the sky.

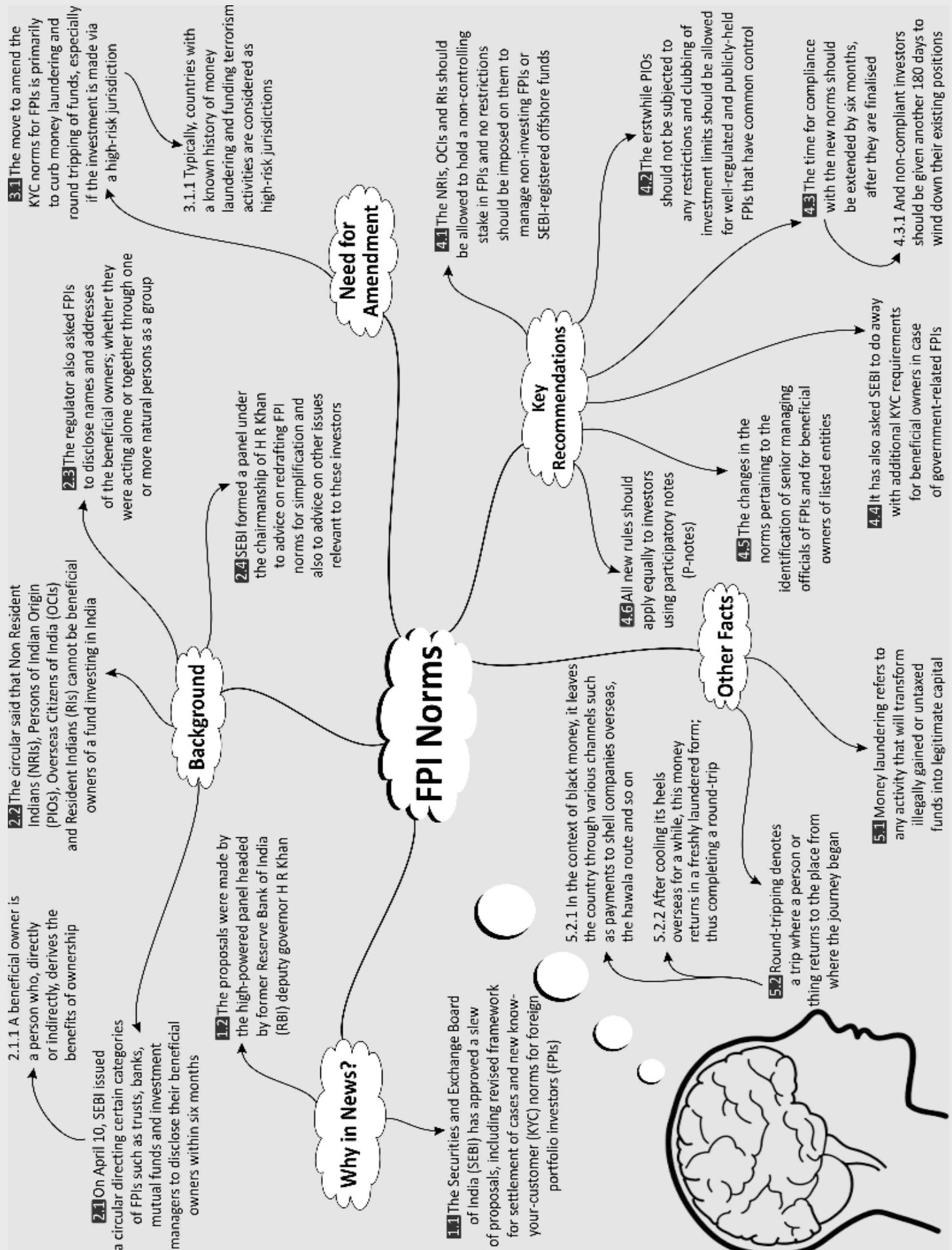
This first-ever spaceborne all-sky transit survey will identify planets ranging from Earth-sized to gas giants, around a wide range of stellar types and orbital distances. No ground-based survey can achieve this feat. TESS, however, will focus on stars that are 30 to 100 times brighter than those Kepler examined. This will help astronomers better understand the structure of solar systems outside of our Earth and provide insights into how our own solar system formed.

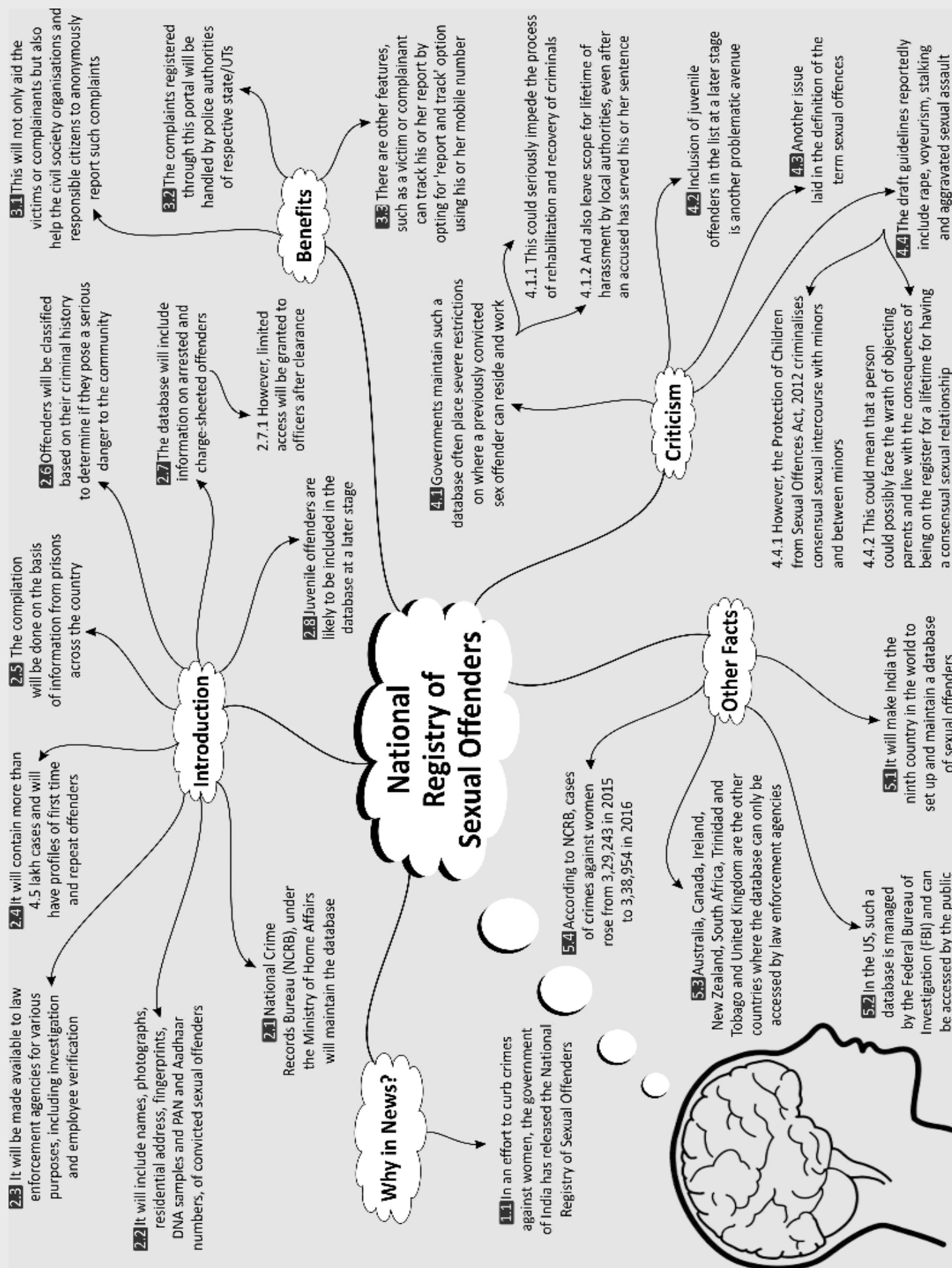


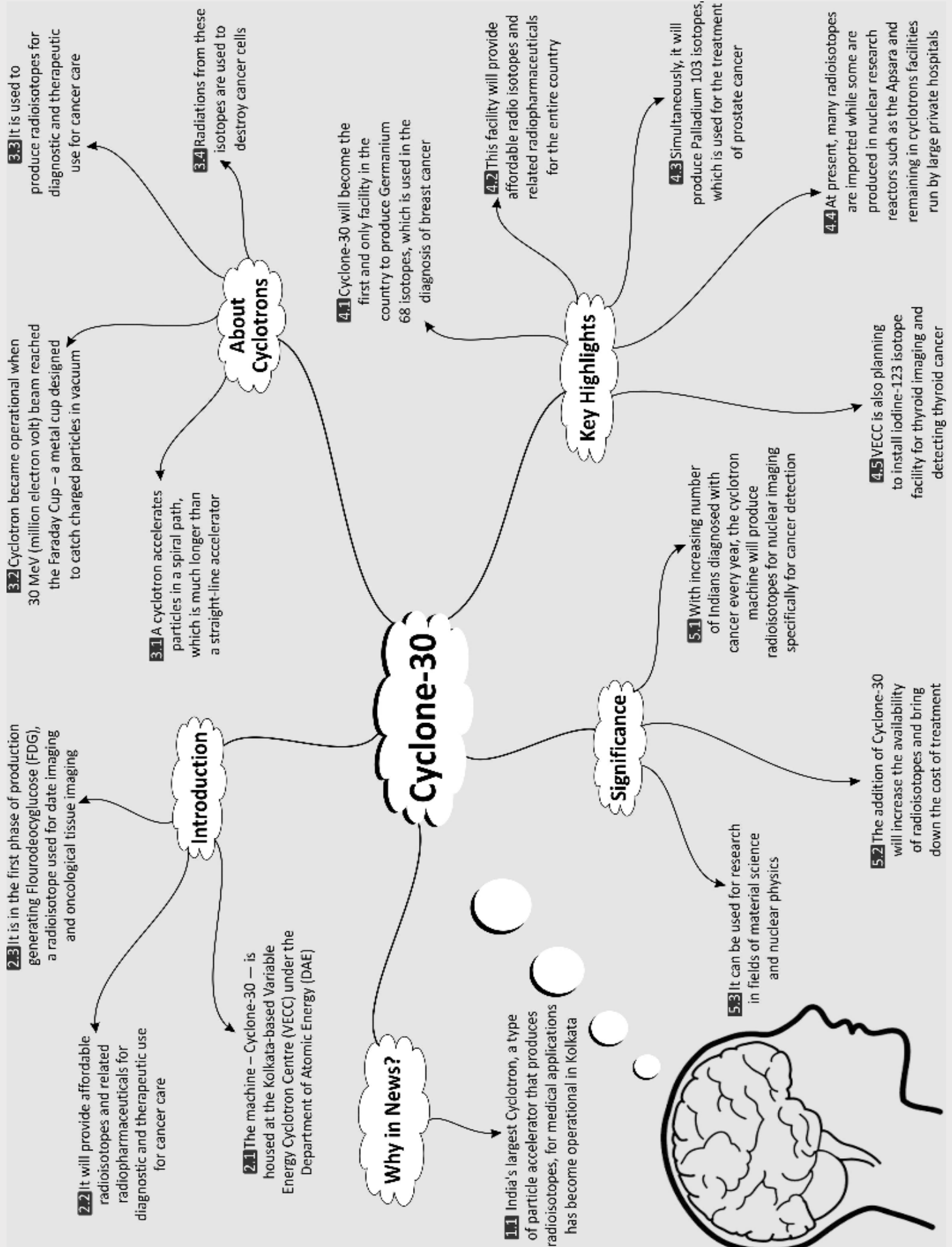
SEVEN BRAIN BOOSTERS

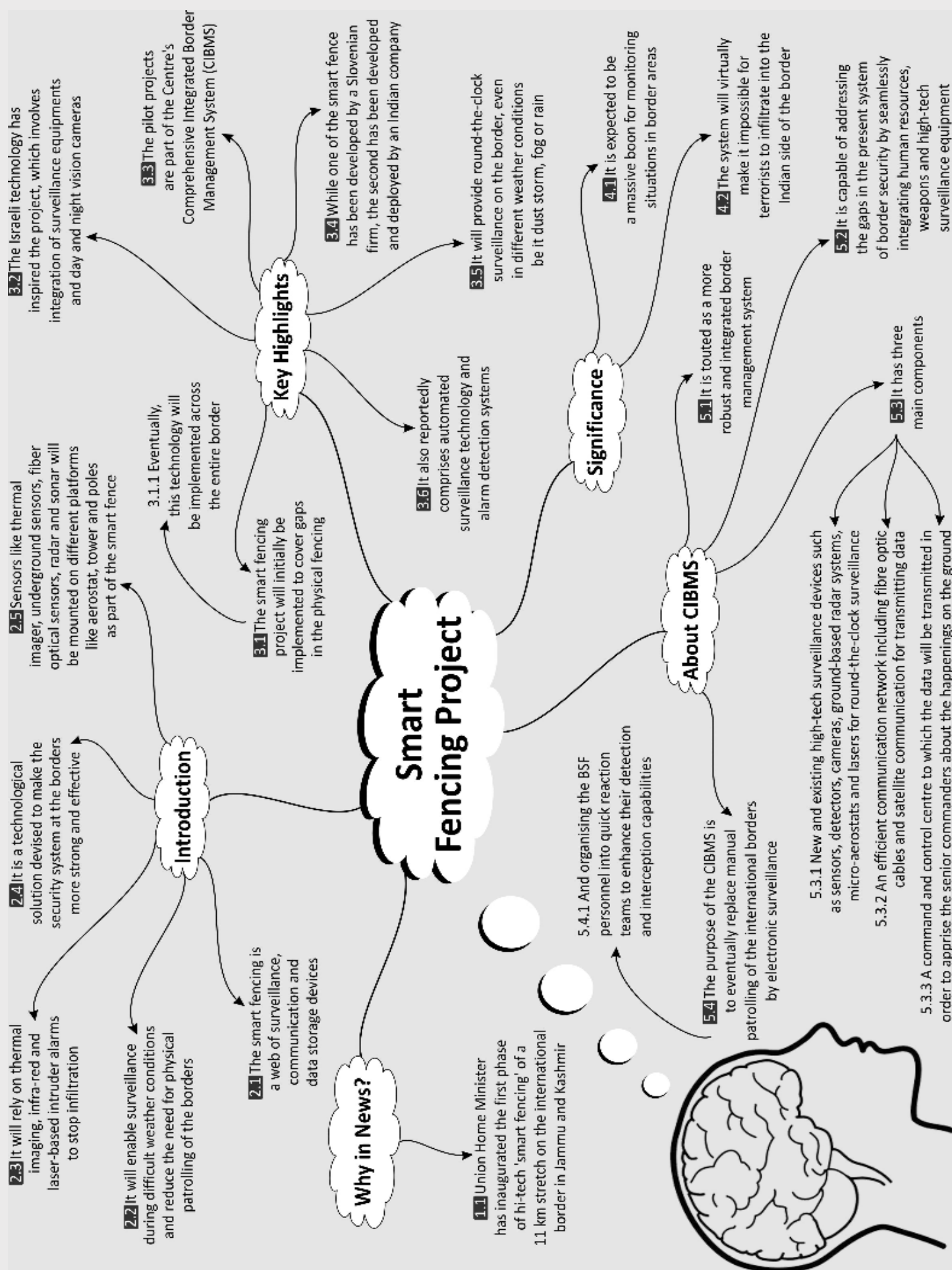


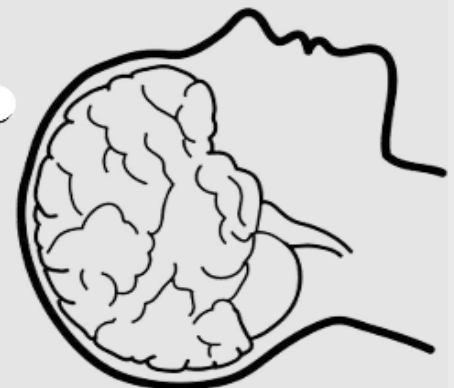
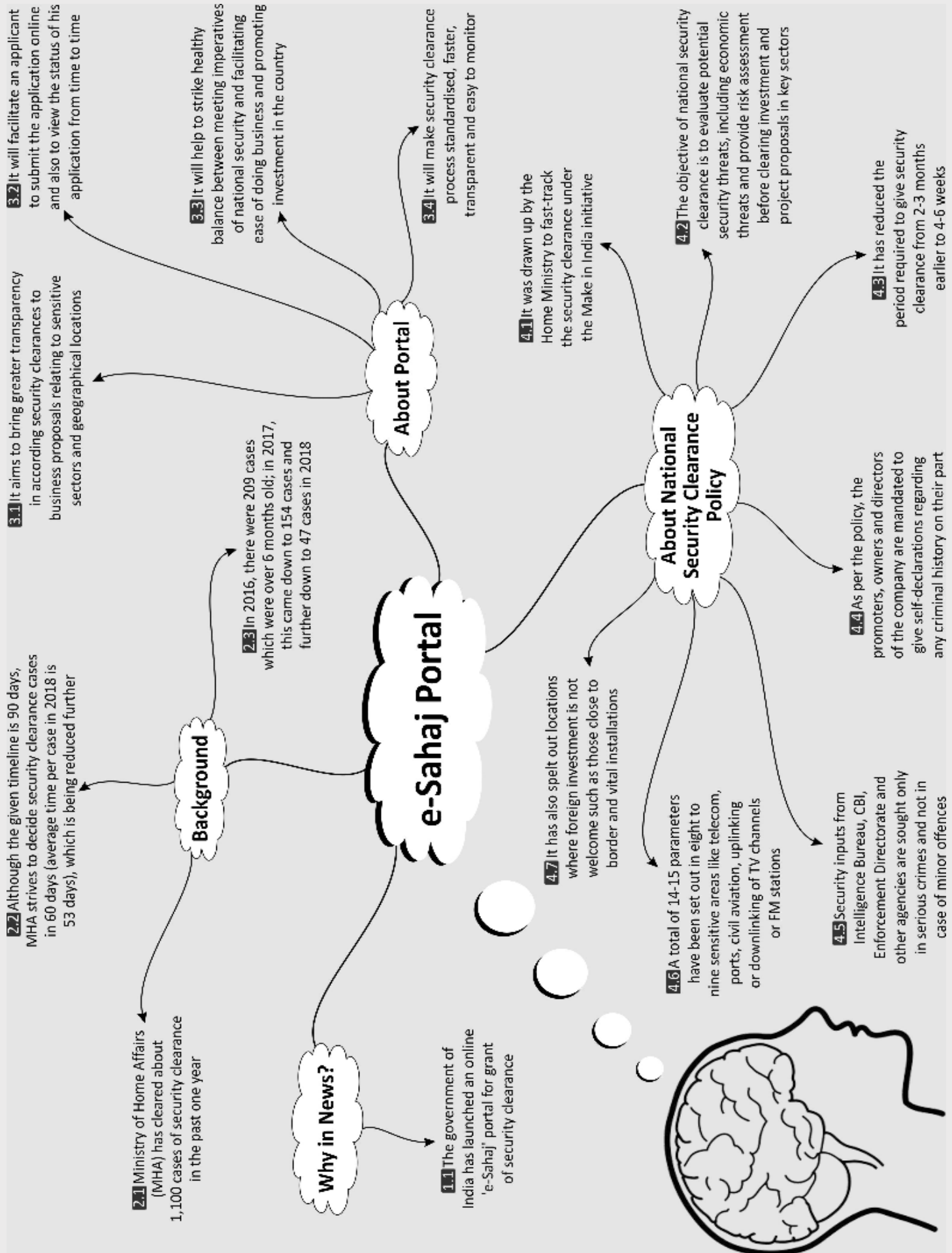












SEVEN MCQ's WITH EXPLANATORY ANSWERS

(Based on Brain Boosters)

Exporting Corruption Report

Q1. Consider the following statements in respect of 'Exporting Corruption Report':

1. It is a flagship report of World Bank and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
2. It is an assessment of the enforcement of the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Explanation: Statement 1 is not correct. Anti-corruption organisation Transparency International has released the 2018 edition of exporting corruption report.

Statement 2 is correct. It is an independent assessment of the enforcement of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Anti-Bribery Convention, which requires parties to criminalise bribery of foreign public officials and introduce related measures. The Convention is a key instrument for curbing global corruption because the 44 signatory countries are responsible for approximately 65 per cent of world exports and more than 75 per cent of total foreign direct investment outflows.

Child Mortality Report - 2018

Q2. Consider the following statements in respect of 'UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation' for 2018:

1. It is led by the United Nations, UNICEF, World Health Organization and World Bank Group.
2. According to the report, India's share of global child deaths has reduced from 22 per cent in 2012 to 18 per cent in 2017.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation: Both statements are correct. The report released by the UNICEF, the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Population Division and the World Bank Group said India's share of global child deaths has reduced from 22 per cent in 2012 to 18 per cent in 2017- a rate that outpaces the global decline. India is making good progress in combatting reasons leading to infant deaths through a number of government-led initiatives such as Mission Indradhanush, POSHAN abhiyan and national commitment to make India open defecation free by 2019.

FPI Norms

Q3. Consider the following statements:

1. SEBI formed a panel under the chairmanship of Reserve Bank of India deputy governor H R Khan to advice on redrafting foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) KYC norms for simplification.
2. The move to amend the KYC norms for FPIs is primarily to curb money laundering and round tripping of funds.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation: Both statements are correct. SEBI has approved a slew of proposals, including revised framework for settlement of cases and new know-your-customer (KYC) norms for foreign portfolio investors (FPIs). The proposals were made by the high-powered panel headed by former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) deputy governor H R Khan.

The move to amend the KYC norms for FPIs is primarily to curb money laundering and round tripping of funds, especially if the investment is made via a high-risk jurisdiction.

National Registry of Sexual Offenders

Q4. Consider the following statements in respect of 'National Registry of Sexual Offenders':

1. Its data will be available to law enforcement agencies for effectively tracking and investigating cases of sexual offences and for general public also.
2. Ministry of Women and Child Development will maintain the database.

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. In an effort to curb crimes against women, the government of India has released the National Registry of Sexual Offenders. It will include names, photographs, residential address, fingerprints, DNA samples and PAN and Aadhaar numbers, of convicted sexual offenders. Its data will not be available for general public but only to law enforcement agencies for effectively tracking and investigating cases of sexual offences. The database will be maintained by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Cyclone-30

Q5. With reference to the 'Cyclone-30', consider the following statements:

1. The machine—Cyclone-30—is housed at the Kolkata-based Variable Energy Cyclotron Centre (VECC) under the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE).
2. It will provide affordable radioisotopes and related radiopharmaceuticals for diagnostic and therapeutic use for cancer care.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation: Both statements are correct. India's largest Cyclotron, a type of particle accelerator that produces radioisotopes, for medical applications has become operational in Kolkata. According to the Department of Atomic Energy, the facility called Cyclone-30 at the Variable Energy Cyclotron Centre (VECC) will provide affordable radioisotopes and related radiopharmaceuticals. This facility will provide for affordable radio isotopes and related radiopharmaceuticals for the entire country.

Smart Fencing Project

Q6. Consider the following statements in respect of 'smart fencing project':

1. The pilot project is a part of the smart border management system.
2. The Israeli technology has inspired the project, which involves integration of surveillance equipments and day and night vision cameras.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Explanation: Statement 1 is not correct. The pilot project is a part of the Centre's Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS). CIBMS would provide for round-the-clock laser-guided surveillance of the borders.

Statement 2 is correct. The Israeli technology has inspired the project, which involves integration of surveillance equipment and day and night vision cameras. It will provide round-the-clock surveillance on the border, even in different weather conditions be it dust storm, fog or rain.

e-Sahaj Portal

Q7. With reference to the 'e-sahaj' portal, consider the following statements:

1. It will help to strike healthy balance between meeting imperatives of national security and facilitating ease of doing business and promoting investment in the country.
2. Security clearances are granted by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation: Both statements are correct. The government of India has launched an online 'e-Sahaj' portal for grant of security clearance. It will help to strike healthy balance between meeting imperatives of national security and facilitating ease of doing business and promoting investment in the country.

Ministry of Home Affairs is the nodal Ministry for security clearances in certain sensitive sectors before issue of licence to companies by the administrative Ministry.



SEVEN IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIMS

1. Which movie has been chosen as the India's official entry to Oscars 2019?

–Village Rockstars

2. Which country is set to become the world's first country to double its tiger population before 2022?

–Nepal

3. Which state government has decided to launch the 'Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Credit Society Deposit Protection Scheme'?

–Maharashtra

4. Which state government has decided to introduce a 'Mob Violence Control and Prohibition Bill'?

–Manipur

5. Who has been elected as the new President of Maldives?

–Ibrahim Mohamed Solih

6. Which state government has launched 'Swayangsiddha' to combat human trafficking?

–West Bengal

7. Which state launched 'Star-Rating' system for industries to check air pollution?

–Odisha



SEVEN IMPORTANT SPORT EVENTS

1. FIFA World Cup- 2018

- ◆ It was the 21st FIFA World Cup.
- ◆ It took place in Russia from 14th June to 15th July 2018.
- ◆ It was the first World Cup to use the video assistant referee (VAR) system.
- ◆ The final took place on 15th July at the Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow, between France and Croatia.
- ◆ France won the match 4–2 to claim their second World Cup title.
- ◆ At 19 years and 207 days, Kylian Mbappe (France) is the second youngest to score in a World Cup final, after Pele (17 years and 249 days) in 1958.
- ◆ France is the sixth team to win multiple World Cups after Brazil (5), Germany/West Germany and Italy (4), Uruguay and Argentina (2).
- ◆ The official mascot of FIFA 2018 was Zabivaka means “the one who scores”.
- ◆ The 22nd edition of the FIFA World Cup is scheduled to take place in Qatar in 2022.
- ◆ The 23rd edition of the FIFA World Cup is scheduled to take place in Canada, Mexico and United States in 2026.
- ◆ **Third position:** Belgium
- ◆ **Fourth position:** England

Awards

- ◆ **Golden Ball:** Luka Modric (Croatia)
- ◆ **Silver Ball:** Eden Hazard (Belgium)
- ◆ **Bronze Ball:** Antoine Griezmann (France)

- ◆ **Golden Boot:** Harry Kane (England), six goals
- ◆ **Silver Boot:** Antoine Griezmann (France), four goals (on number of assists)
- ◆ **Bronze Boot:** Romelu Lukaku (Belgium), four goals
- ◆ **Man of the Match (Final):** Antoine Griezmann (France)
- ◆ **Golden Glove:** Thibaut Courtois (Belgium)
- ◆ **Best Young Player:** Kylian Mbappe (France)

2. Commonwealth Games- 2018

- ◆ The XXI Commonwealth Games were held in the Gold Coast and Queensland (Australia), between 4th and 15th April 2018.
- ◆ Australia topped the medal table for the fourth time in the past five Commonwealth Games, winning the most golds (80) and most medals overall (198).
- ◆ England and India finished second and third respectively.
- ◆ Official Motto- 'Share the Dream'
- ◆ Official Theme- 'Hello Earth'
- ◆ The mascot of these games named as Borobi a blue colored male Koala.
- ◆ Canadian female swimmer Taylor Ruck won the most 8 medals.
- ◆ Canada's full-bore shooter Robert Pitcairn became the oldest player ever to participate in the Commonwealth Games.
- ◆ New Zealand's weightlifter Laurel Hubbard became the first transgender player to take part in games.
- ◆ The 2022 Commonwealth Games is scheduled to be held in Birmingham, England.

India's Performance

- ◆ India won 26 Gold medals and a total of 66 medals.
- ◆ Flag bearer- P. V. Sindhu (opening ceremony) and Mary Kom (closing ceremony)
- ◆ India's maximum medals came from shooting (16), followed by wrestling (12) and weightlifting (9).
- ◆ In table tennis Manika Batra made history by becoming the first Indian woman to win an individual table tennis Gold at the Games.
- ◆ Anish became the youngest Indian to win a gold medal in men's 25 meter Rapid Fire Pistol event.
- ◆ Mary Kom became the first Indian woman boxer to win the gold medal in the Commonwealth Games.
- ◆ Neeraj Chopra gave gold medal to India for the first time in a javelin throw event.

3. Asian Games - 2018

- ◆ The 18th Asian Games was held from August 18th to September 2nd, 2018 in Jakarta and Palembang cities of Indonesia.
- ◆ Theme- 'Feel the Energy of Asia'
- ◆ China led the medal tally for the tenth consecutive time with a total of 289 medals including 132 gold medals.
- ◆ India got 15 gold with a total of 69 medals and 8th place in the medal table.
- ◆ Indian women wrestler Vinesh Phogat became the first Indian woman wrestler to win gold medal in Asian Games.
- ◆ Indian boxer Amit Pagal won the only gold medal for India in boxing.
- ◆ Rikkolki of Japan was selected as the most valuable player of the games.
- ◆ Flag bearer- Neeraj Chopra (opening ceremony) and Rani Rampal (closing ceremony).
- ◆ Gold medalist- Bajrang Poonia (Wrestling), Neeraj Chopra (throwing spear), Swapna

Burman (women's heptathlon), Rahi Sarnobat (shooting), etc.

- ◆ Indian men's Kabaddi team missed out on gold for the first time since the sport was introduced in 1990 games. The Indian team was defeated by Iranian team in final.
- ◆ 2022 Asian Games will be held in Hangzhou, China.

4. FIFA U-17 World Cup - 2017

- ◆ It was the 17th FIFA U-17 World Cup.
- ◆ It is a biennial international football tournament.
- ◆ It was held in India for the first time between 6th and 28th October 2017.
- ◆ England won the Cup for the first time by defeating Spain 5–2 in the final.
- ◆ The official match ball of the tournament is 'Adidas Krasava'.
- ◆ The mascot of the FIFA U-17 World Cup was a leopard named 'Kheleo'.
- ◆ The 18th edition of the FIFA U-17 World Cup is scheduled to take place in Peru in 2019.

Awards

- ◆ **Golden Ball:** Phil Foden (England)
- ◆ **Silver Ball:** Sergio Gomez (Spain)
- ◆ **Bronze Ball:** Rhian Brewster (England)
- ◆ **Golden Boot:** Rhian Brewster (England), 8 goals
- ◆ **Silver Boot:** Lassana Ndiaye (Mali)
- ◆ **Bronze Boot:** Abel Ruiz (Spain)
- ◆ **Golden Glove Award:** Gabriel Brazzo (Brazil)

5. IAAF World U20 Championships- 2018

- ◆ It is also known as the World Junior Championships.
- ◆ It is an international athletics competition for athletes qualifying as juniors (born no earlier than 1 January 1999).

- ◆ It was held in Tampere (Finland) in July, 2018.
- ◆ Hima Das is the first Indian athlete to win a gold medal in a track event at the IAAF World U20 Championships.

6. Men's Hockey Champions Trophy- 2018

- ◆ It was the 37th and the last edition of the Hockey Champions Trophy for men.
- ◆ It was held from 23rd June to 1st July 2018 in Breda, Netherlands.
- ◆ The tournament will be replaced by the Hockey Pro League (HPL) in 2019.
- ◆ **Organizer:** International Hockey Federation (FIH)
- ◆ **Sponsor:** Rabobank
- ◆ **Gold Medal:** Australia (15th title), 3-1 in penalty shootout
- ◆ **Silver Medal:** India

- ◆ **Bronze Medal:** Netherlands (defeated Argentina 2-1)
- ◆ Indian team's captain was SV Sunil and Coach was Harendra Singh.

7. Intercontinental Cup - 2018

- ◆ It was a 4-team association football tournament held at the Mumbai Football Arena (Mumbai) between the 1st and 10th of June 2018.
- ◆ It was organised by the All India Football Federation (AIFF).
- ◆ Teams- India, Kenya, New Zealand and Chinese Taipei.
- ◆ India won the tournament by defeating Kenya 2-0 in the final on 10th June 2018.
- ◆ Player of the tournament- Sunil Chhetri (India), 8 goals.



SEVEN PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAIN EXAM

Answer each of the following questions in 200 words:

- Q1. What do you understand by biofuels? Discuss how biofuels are a sensible option for India to increase energy efficiency.
- Q2. The Supreme Court finds a pragmatic middle path between the AADHAR scheme's excesses and its benefits to the marginalised. Discuss the verdict of Supreme Court with respect to AADHAR and the implications of the verdict?
- Q3. In a recent judgement the Supreme Court has scrapped Section 497. Discuss its implications on the Indian society.
- Q4. Construction and demolition waste (C&D) is an environment and public health hazard. Discuss the need for effective management of C&D waste in curbing excessive consumption of natural resources.
- Q5. What do you understand by bioethics? Discuss the concerns of bioethicists over the clinical application of researches and abuse of gene editing by governments and the private sector.
- Q6. "Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana will ease burden on poor, be a catalyst for more changes in health sector." Critically discuss.
- Q7. "There is a strong correlation between economic freedom and well-being." Discuss why economic freedom is important in India.

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