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October 2018

Issue 03



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SEVEN IMPORTANT ISSUES

1. COOPERATIVE ECONOMIC MODEL: IS A BETTER ALTERNATIVE

Why in News?

Prime Minister of India has called the cooperative model is a viable economic alternative to the capitalist and socialist models. He hailed India's first home minister Vallabhbhai Patel, who was also founder of the Amul dairy cooperative movement in Gujarat, as the leader who showed people the importance of the cooperative movement as an economic model.

Introduction

The cooperative sector is one of the main partners of economy. The cooperative sector has plays a key role in the economy of the nation. The cooperative covers almost cent percent villages. The place of cooperatives in Indian economy and its role in social and economic affairs has developed a new dimension with the beginning of the planning. India emphasized the process of planning stemmed partly from the urge of backwardness and partly from line which gave an force to achieve social justice, equality and a decent livelihood for all citizens, the promotion of cooperative thought of not merely as an extension of state action but as a step towards the realization of the cooperative widespread prosperity. Thus, Ninety seventh Constitutional Amendment Act, 2011 is aimed to encourage economic activities of cooperations which in turn help progress of rural India.

Currently, capitalism and communism are the dominant

economic organizational systems. In private enterprise (capitalism) and state enterprise (communism) resources are controlled by a minority of the population. Cooperatives offer a third alternative: enterprise is owned by the workers. Economic models often reflect values of a society. Capitalist economies typically promote individual improvement, whereas communist societies reinforce dedication to the country. Cooperative economy recognizes the right to personal gain within a structure that supports each of its members.

Most economies are a combination of public and private ownership, with a small sector of non-profit or collective ownership. In a cooperative economy, the majority of industry, trade and commerce would be managed through cooperative organizations. Only the enterprises that are too large and complex (such as civil defense, public water supplies, education and transportation) would remain in the public sector. Workers in these public enterprises would elect their own representatives to a board of directors so that, as much as possible, it would fit with the cooperative model of equal representation. Currently, public sector enterprises are for-profit industries, but in a cooperative economy they would supply materials and services to other producers / cooperatives at a reduced price.

Cooperative enterprise would be the largest sector of a cooperative economy. It would be divided

into business, community-based organizations and households. Co-operatives business would produce all types of goods and services, from essential to luxury, including healthcare, legal services and agriculture. All of these businesses would operate as for-profit enterprise, but profits would be divided among members rather than executives. Cooperative community groups (charities, religious / cultural organizations, non-government organizations) reflect the cultural values of a society and fulfill many of the important works not provided by businesses or government. Child-raising and housework would be recognized in a cooperative economy as an essential facet of society.

Cooperative Thinkers and Leaders

Mahatma Gandhi envisioned 'Gram Swaraj' wherein there would be social and economic changes in the villages. His programme for Gram Swaraj included 'cooperation' also. In an article the Mahatma had penned, 'cooperative societies are ideally suited organizations not only for developing village industries but also for promoting group effort by the villagers.

Pandit Nehru clearly stated the importance of cooperative societies that-"I have no doubt theoretically in cooperation; cooperative working is good in every single department of human activity. It is a better way of life and in fact it is an inevitable way of life when you live in crowded communities. There is no other way except the cooperative way."

Indira Gandhi: "I know of no other instrument as potentially powerful and full of social purpose as the cooperative movement."

Cooperatives social enterprises include agricultural marketing cooperatives, which market and sell its members' products, while agricultural supply cooperatives, provide inputs into the agricultural process. Fair trade organizations frequently work with agriculture and commodity producer-owned cooperatives--i.e. coffee, cocoa, wine and tea, as well as nonagricultural products--i.e. handicrafts.

Economic Systems

Any system that involves the mechanism for production, distribution and exchange of goods apart from consumption of the goods and services within the different entities can be classified as an Economic System.

The various kinds of economic systems and their classifications broadly follow the methods by which means of ownership are established. Thus, the mode of ownership of capital leads to the different kinds of economic systems in vogue. The different kinds of economic systems are 'Market Economy', 'Planned Economy', 'Centrally Planned Economy', 'Socialist' and 'Communist Economies'. All these are characterized by the ownership of the economics resources and the allocation of the same.

For instance, in a Capitalist Economy, the capital is privately owned and distributed with governmental oversight and regulation. On the other hand, in a Communist Economy, the state itself takes on the task of allocation of resources according to the needs of the different sectors. In a mixed economy, the state looks after some sectors whereas it frees up the other sectors for private participation. Apart from this, the extent of governmental or state intervention determines the kinds of economic systems that are classified accordingly. In many ways, each of these systems has their own pros and cons when it comes to the welfare of the citizens.

The Amul Model

Led by Sardar Vallabhai Patel, the trio of Verghese Kurien, Tribhuvandas Patel, and H.M. Dalaya formed the Kaira District Co-operative Milk Producers Union which now is popularly known as Amul Dairy today. It was under Sardar Patel that the dairy farmers of Gujarat held a 15-day strike against British intermediary Polson Dairy and initiated the cooperative dairy model. This was the birth of the white revolution and the genesis of the Amul Model. It provided livelihood and employment to crores of small dairy farmers and allowed them to directly sell to the market bypassing all middle-men, increasing their income five folds. Kaira Cooperative helped the farmers streamline the supply chain and command a much better price for their milk production. The foreign intermediary had now been taken over by a village cooperative.

In the following years, the farmer-led Kaira Cooperative gained mass fame and received a major financial assistance fund from UNICEF, later in 1955, Prime Minister Nehru inaugurated a Rs. 50 lakh factory, where Kaira Union became a parent to the Anand Milk Union Ltd (AMUL). Over the next 10 years, the cooperative expanded and gained national limelight. In 1965, National Dairy Development Board was set up at Anand, Gujarat and the government under Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri launched 'Operation Flood'. Operation Flood replicated the success of the AMUL cooperative pattern in the rest of the country. The dairy farmers across the country saw an exponential rise in incomes following Operation Flood. The farmer incomes tripled and the per capita availability of milk doubled in India.

Amul has a cooperative form with a blend of professionalism. In the corporate form of an organization the shareholders are non-participative members whereas in this form the

members are the participative owners of the organization. There are basically three tiers a dairy co-operative viz., the village society- procurement unit, the union- which is the processing unit and the federation which is the marketing unit all being an institution in itself. The institutions at each tier have the bond of organic and inter-institutional linkages and obligations which provide sense of purpose and directions in their activities. To manage these units efficiently the leaders felt a need of the professionals. These professionals have a hierarchy similar to that of the corporate structure with the managing director as their head. The managing director of all these units is appointed by the board of directors. The board of directors comprises of the farmers members who come from the respective societies. So, at each level the decision making lies in the hands of the producers only, which give them a feeling of ownership to them.

Another unique component of the Amul Model was the establishment of the Women Dairy Cooperative (WDC). Presently, there are over 32,000 WDCs in the country with 50 lakh women and their families directly benefitting from the model. Starting off as a movement to fight an exploitative British multinational, the Amul cooperative model today is the reason behind a 38,000 crore successful business entities which supply products to over 40 countries and provide livelihood to crores of individual dairy farmers in Gujarat and rest of India.

The social and economic success of the Amul Model has provided sustained income and a better livelihood for the poor. India, today, ranks first in milk production, accounting for 18.5% of world production.

Cooperative Economy

In its original meaning 'ekonomos' was the activity a household engaged in for the purpose of meeting its members'

basic needs; it was not connected to the idea of financial investment or financial profit. This echoes the vision of the cooperative economy put forth by the Rochdale Pioneer Society in England, widely considered the first “modern” co-operative.

It is also the sentiment expressed in the International Statement of Cooperative Identity, based on the Rochdale co-op’s operating principles and repeatedly ratified by thousands of delegates representing co-ops around the world: “A cooperative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise.”

There are almost no accredited universities or colleges offering business courses based on the cooperative economy, but there is an international Master’s program designed by and for co-op and credit union managers that is based on exploring how a locally based, democratically run cooperative economy differs from an economy driven by profit-maximizing, often remote investors.

Co-operative Federalism versus Co-operative Individualism

A major historical debate in co-operative economics has been between co-operative federalism and co-operative individualism. In an Owenite village of cooperation or a commune, the residents would be both the producers and consumers of its products. However, for a co-operative, the producers and consumers of its products become two different groups of people and thus, there are two different sets of people who could be defined as its ‘users’.

As a result, we can define two different modes of co-operative organisation: Consumer cooperatives, in which the consumers of a co-

operative’s goods and services are defined as its users (including food co-operatives, credit unions, etc.), Worker cooperatives, in which the producers of a co-operatives goods and services are defined as its users. This in turn led to a debate between those who support Consumers’ Co-operatives (known as the Co-operative Federalists) and those who favor Producers Co-operatives (pejoratively labelled ‘Individualist’ co-operativists by the Federalists).

Benefits of Cooperatives

The cooperative movement has been rendering useful services for the economic progress and well-being of the country. Some of such benefits are as under-

- ◆ **Easy Formation:** Procedures for registration of cooperative society is simple with nominal fees.
- ◆ **Democratic Management:** Each member enjoys an equal right to vote and participation in decision-making process.
- ◆ **Limited Liability:** Liability of members is limited to the extent of unpaid shares held by them.
- ◆ **Open Membership:** Any person can become member by purchasing the shares of society.
- ◆ **Stability:** Continuity of cooperative society does not affected by death or insolvency of members.
- ◆ **Low Cost of Operation:** Since no salaries are paid to the office bearer and also enjoy various concessions and subsidies.
- ◆ **Tax Exemptions:** Cooperative society is exempted from income tax up to certain limit.
- ◆ **Economical Benefits:** They have played an important role in popularizing the use of various modern inputs such as fertilizers, improved seeds, new implements, pesticides; farmers are getting now better prices for their produce from these societies.

Problems (Weaknesses) of Cooperatives / Causes of Slow Progress

Despite rapid growth the overall progress of cooperative movement during 108 years of its existence is not very impressive be cause of:

- ◆ Internal and Structural weakness at primary level.
- ◆ Over-dependence on government for financial assistance.
- ◆ Restrictive provisions of co-operative law.
- ◆ Lack of professional management and lack of adequate infrastructure. Cooperatives still follow the traditional management techniques.
- ◆ Lack of proper policy support resulting to diminishing performance in mismanagement, inefficiency and corruption in the financing of cooperatives.
- ◆ The performance of cooperatives is not satisfactory. In spite of huge government grants cooperatives are not performing financially well.
- ◆ Excessive government control and political interference.
- ◆ Lack of good leadership. People are not well aware about the objectives of the movement.
- ◆ The cooperative movement has also suffered on account of limitations on its working, size of these societies has been very small and most of societies have been single purpose societies.

Way Forward

In recent years the Indian economy is in a quite stronger position than it was a few years before. Indian economy has accelerated in recent years and the average growth rate in recent years was above seven percent. This performance reveals the strength of the economy. However, it is also needed that large part of population is still

below poverty line and not experience a significant improvement in their standard of living. The percentage of the population below the poverty line is declining, but with a deliberate rate. In rural areas and in slums there are many people still lacking the access to basic services such as health, education, clean drinking water and sanitation facilities without which they cannot be empowered to claim their share in the benefits of growth. In this context co-operatives have to do many services in this respect. Apart from higher economic growth sustainable

development especially in rural areas is needed. Co-operative sector is directly related with people with their own societies which help them to uplift.

Cooperative societies have been getting a lot of encouragement from the people and the cooperatives have grown big and played a unique role. Cooperation had contributed in the success of economic planning. Government policies are implemented with the help of cooperative societies in rural areas. Through the cooperative societies government seeks public support and awareness.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: Development processes and the development industry- the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders.

General Studies Paper- III

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

Topic: Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.

Topic: Investment models.



2. SANITATION AND HYGIENE: FUNDAMENTAL TO GOOD HEALTH

Why in News?

Four years after India rolled out the ambitious Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), aiming to have a toilet in each household besides making the country open defecation free by 2019, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has initiated an almost similar move. It launched the first global guidelines on sanitation and health even as it pitched for higher investments and policy shifts to achieve the goal of universal sanitation coverage by 2032.

Introduction

Worldwide, 2.3 billion people lack basic sanitation (with almost half forced to defecate in the open). They are among the 4.5 billion are without access to safely managed sanitation services – in other words a toilet connected to a sewer or pit or septic tank that treats human waste.

Safe sanitation is essential for health, from preventing infection to improving and maintaining mental and social well-being. The lack of safe sanitation contributes to diarrhoea, a major public health concern and a leading cause of disease and death

among children under five years in low- and middle- income countries; Poor sanitation also contributes to several neglected tropical diseases, as well as broader adverse outcomes such as undernutrition. Lack of access to suitable sanitation facilities is also a major cause of risks and anxiety, especially for women and girls. For all these reasons, sanitation that prevents disease and ensures privacy and dignity has been recognized as a basic human right.

India's Sanitation Programmes

It was in 1986 that the Indian government launched the Central Rural Sanitation Programme—the first nationwide sanitation programme. The programme had no target year and in vague terms spoke about improving the quality of life. Several other sanitation programmes were launched in the next 28 years, like the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan in rural India and Basic Services for urban poor in urban India. But India's hope to be Open Defecation Free (ODF) remained as bruised as its millions of toilets that were built but never used.

Sanitation and Safe Sanitation System

Sanitation is defined as access to and use of facilities and services for the safe disposal of human urine and faeces. A safe sanitation system is a system designed and used to separate human excreta from human contact at all steps of the sanitation service chain from toilet capture and containment through emptying, transport, treatment (in-situ or offsite) and final disposal or end use. Safe sanitation systems must meet these requirements in a manner consistent with human rights, while also addressing co-disposal of greywater, associated hygiene practices and essential services required for the functioning of technologies.

A couple of months before Prime Minister launched the ambitious Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) in October 2014, the state of sanitation was still abysmal. At the time when prime minister Modi delivered his maiden Independence Day speech in 2014, less than 50 per cent of households in the country had access to sanitation facilities and only 30 per cent of the wastewater and sewage generated in urban India was treated before being let into rivers and streams. Every year, an estimated 0.4 million children died of water-borne diseases such as cholera, dysentery

and suffered from stunted growth. So, Prime Minister promise of making the country ODF by October 2, 2019—the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi—through another programme seemed just another expression of political will that would ultimately meet the fate of earlier programmes.

The newly designed SBM has turned out to be an overwhelming success, at least on the basics of making toilets available at household level. Its progress is breathtaking. In the last four years, 457,000 villages—close to 76 per cent of India's villages—have been declared ODF. Just before the programme started, only 47,000 villages had this privilege. Around 83.8 million toilets have been built so far under the scheme.

The tumultuous history of India's sanitation programmes also flags a note of caution on where this feat could go wrong. India built 61 million toilets after the first programme in 1986 (but before SBM) spending close to Rs 1, 00,000 crore. But the march to ODF halted just after building the toilet. First, because the usage was not consistent and there was slippage in ODF status. In addition to it there was rampant fudging of data to chase target. Second, millions of toilets built became dysfunctional adding to the problem. Third toilets were not connected with water supplies and then, hampering the process of proper solid and liquid waste management. It is no wonder that India missed its earlier deadline of 2017 to make the country ODF.

The success of the Swachh Bharat Mission is linked to the participation of the people. It depends

on people changing their attitudes towards cleanliness, building and using toilets and maintaining personal hygiene among other things. This means creating a 'behavioural change' in an individual is critical to help break old habits and norms.

Current Scenario

- ◆ The household toilet coverage in the country had reached almost 92 per cent.
- ◆ Around 20 of the 35 states and union territories had reached 100 per cent household coverage of toilets while two were at 99 per cent. Some 13 million households remained to be covered.
- ◆ If the rate at which toilets were constructed in 2017-18 (30 million toilets were built this year) is still maintained, India would become ODF by February 2019, at least in terms of building a toilet for each household.
- ◆ There has been also another encouraging development. Four

states— Bihar, Odisha, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh known as laggard states—accounted for 60 per cent of India's open defecating population last year. Their progress in toilet coverage unilaterally decides the country's journey to be ODF.

- ◆ Out of them, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh have shown an impressive upward trajectory in the last one year. While Jharkhand shows household coverage of 87 per cent, Uttar Pradesh has shown tremendous improvement with household coverage of 94 per cent, many districts in Uttar Pradesh have 90 per cent household coverage but the usage is much lower.
- ◆ Bihar and Odisha are a cause of concern as they still show household coverage around 65 per cent, the districts in these states that are lagging behind are the lowest in the socio-economic parameters.

The Hygiene Improvement Framework



How does Sanitation Affect Health?

The lack of safe sanitation systems leads to infection and disease, including; diarrhoea, neglected tropical diseases such as soil-transmitted helminth infections, schistosomiasis and trachoma as well as vector-borne diseases such as West Nile Virus, Lymphatic Filariasis and Japanese Encephalitis. Unsanitary conditions have been linked with stunting through several mechanisms including repeated diarrhoea, helminth infections and environmental enteric dysfunction. The lack of safe sanitation systems contributes to the emergence and spread of antimicrobial resistance.

World Health Organisation Guidelines

Implementing the WHO guidelines on health and sanitation will be key to meeting the SDGs. In 90 countries, progress towards basic sanitation is too slow, meaning they will not reach universal coverage by 2030. The four key recommendations are:

- ◆ Sanitation interventions should ensure entire communities have access to toilets that safely contain excreta.
- ◆ The full sanitation system should undergo local health risk assessments to protect individuals and communities from exposure to excreta – whether this be from unsafe toilets, leaky storage or inadequate treatment.
- ◆ Sanitation should be integrated into regular local government-led planning and service provision to avert the higher costs associated with retrofitting sanitation and to ensure sustainability.
- ◆ The health sector should invest more and play a coordinating role in sanitation planning to protect public health.

By adopting WHO's new guidelines, countries can significantly reduce the 829 000 annual diarrhoeal deaths due to unsafe water, sanitation and hygiene. For every US\$ 1 invested in sanitation, WHO estimates a nearly six-fold return as measured by lower health costs, increased productivity and fewer premature deaths.

Allocation of Responsibilities

Examples of novel arrangements that emphasize a role for a range of partners do exist, although few have extended to national level. There is no "blue-print" solution but the following broad allocations of responsibility are currently a popular approach:

National government: facilitation of programming policy development creation of facilitative laws and regulations, publication of verified national data on coverage and progress, financing for technical assistance to small scale providers, community groups etc.

Regional local government: management of hygiene promotion and community development activities (which may be carried out by in-house staff or outsourced), monitoring of technical issues, licensing of small scale providers, certification of community support organisations, coordination of local monitoring and collection of data for planning purposes. etc

Urban government: provision and management of trunk services and facilities in some cases (either directly or through a utility), management of wastes, licensing of small scale providers, oversight of credit providers, technical assistance to communities etc.

NGOs: technical support to communities, delivery of hygiene promotion and community development support provision of

credit services, oversight of progress through participatory monitoring and evaluation etc.

Small Scale Private Providers: sale and delivery of sanitation goods and services, contribution to planning and programming activities, may also provide credit directly or through dedicated credit providers etc.

Communities: participatory planning, identification of appropriate local institutions for management of resources and facilities, assessment and negotiation of local demands, management of internal cross subsidies if needed etc.

Households: key investment decision making, financing and management of facilities, hygiene behaviours and outcomes.

Roles for Communities and Households

The shift away from public construction of latrines to a more complete approach to sanitation and hygiene promotion places, the households are at the centre of decision making. But it also implies a strong role for the community in planning and management of interventions. While many of the needed changes will happen at the household level, in some contexts some decisions and actions may need to be taken collectively by the community.

Such shared action may relate to: Local decision making about the most appropriate range of sanitation solutions (communities may need to decide whether they are willing and able to manage shared facilities or whether they can all afford to invest in private household facilities).

Local management and oversight of the household actions as they

relate to the communal environment (preventing discharge of household excreta in public places for example).

Management of solid wastes, sullage and storm water drainage. Management and financing for operation and maintenance of facilities, which impact on the shared environment (this may include operation of shared facilities such as drains, but might also include a shared commitment to support maintenance and operation of household facilities such as latrines).

Organisation of joint action to lobby service providers to perform at the margins of the community (for example creating pressure for a utility service provider to operate and manage trunk sewers in an urban context or lobbying for public support to regional operation and maintenance service providers).

Way Forward

Sanitation prevents disease and promotes human dignity and well-being. The importance of access to safe sanitation for everyone, everywhere, is now rightly recognized as an essential component of universal health coverage. But a toilet on its own is not sufficient to achieve the SDGs; safe, sustainable and well-managed systems are required. Globally, billions of people live without access to even the most basic sanitation services. The world is unlikely to reach the target of universal sanitation coverage – where every person in the world has access to toilets that safely contain excreta – by 2030 unless countries make policy shifts and invest more funds. Without proper access, millions of people the world over are deprived of the dignity, safety and convenience of a decent toilet.

Human right to sanitation (UN, 2010)

The human right to sanitation entitles everyone to sanitation services that provide privacy and ensure dignity, and that are physically accessible and affordable, safe, hygienic, secure, socially and culturally acceptable. Human rights principles must be applied in the context of realising all human rights, including the human right to sanitation:

1. **Non-discrimination and equality:** All people must be able to access adequate sanitation services, without discrimination, prioritizing the most vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals and groups.
2. **Participation:** Everyone must be able to participate in decisions relating to their access to sanitation without discrimination.
3. **The right to information:** Information relating to access to sanitation, including planned programmes and projects must be freely available to those who will be affected, in relevant languages and through appropriate media.
4. **Accountability (monitoring and access to justice):** States must be able to be held to account for any failure to ensure access to sanitation and access (and lack of access) must be monitored.
5. **Sustainability:** Access to sanitation must be financially and physically sustainable, including in the long-term.

The normative content of the human right to sanitation is defined by:

1. **Availability:** A sufficient number of sanitation facilities must be available for all individuals.
2. **Accessibility:** Sanitation services must be accessible to everyone within, or in the immediate vicinity, of household, health and educational institution, public institutions and places and workplace. Physical security must not be threatened when accessing facilities.
3. **Quality:** Sanitation facilities must be hygienically and technically safe to use. To ensure good hygiene, access to water for cleansing and handwashing at critical times is essential.
4. **Affordability:** The price of sanitation and services must be affordable for all without compromising the ability to pay for other essential necessities guaranteed by human rights such as water, food, housing and health care.
5. **Acceptability:** Services, in particular sanitation facilities, have to be culturally acceptable. This will often require gender-specific facilities, constructed to ensure privacy and dignity.

All human rights are interlinked and mutually reinforcing, and no human right takes precedence over another.

The new guidelines, based on 4 principal recommendations, were developed in lieu of the weak current sanitation programmes. They focus on community action, local health risk assessments, sustainability and public health. These guidelines provide comprehensive advice on maximizing the health impact of sanitation interventions. The guidelines summarize the evidence on the links between sanitation and health, provide evidence-informed recommendations, and offer guidance for international,

national and local sanitation policies and programme actions. The guidelines also articulate and support the role of health authorities in sanitation policy and programming to help ensure that health risks are identified and managed effectively.

General Studies Paper- II

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



3. UNSAFE ABORTION: LEADING CAUSE OF MATERNAL DEATHS IN INDIA

Why in News?

Despite abortion being legal in India for almost five decades, unsafe abortion continues to be the third largest cause of maternal mortality and accounts for 8% of all maternal deaths in India. Ten women die every day and thousands more face serious and permanent injuries annually due to unsafe abortion-related causes.

Introduction

Using data from multiple sources including a representative survey of health facilities and national drug sales data estimated that only 22% of the 15 million abortions that occur in India every year take place in a public or private health facility and are performed by trained personnel, whereas the remaining 78% of abortions happen outside health facilities. Most abortions were found to occur outside health facilities using drugs, whereas 64% of all facility-based abortions were surgical. These findings confirm the observation that women are not able to obtain the abortion method of their choice at formal health-care facilities. The barriers that continue to impede women's access to safe abortion services within the formal health-care system include a shortage of number of trained providers, legal impediments, lack of privacy and confidentiality and insistence on specific contraception as a precondition for providing abortion services. Even where trained providers exist, most do not give women a choice of options.

Many barriers force women to access abortion services outside the formal healthcare system, such as lack of access to health facilities providing abortion services, lack of awareness about abortion legality,

especially among rural women, the stigma associated with abortion and the costs incurred in seeking abortion services. Research conducted by Ipas Development Foundation (IDF) among rural communities in Bihar and Jharkhand, published in 2017, indicates that not even 30% women know that abortion is legal in India and, of them, only 2% know that abortion is legal up to 20 weeks. The awareness level in the rest of the country is also abysmally low.

Further, the stigma around abortion compels women to choose less safe pathways for termination of pregnancy, when they should have access to safe, free-of-cost, non-stigmatized abortion services at public health facilities. A study has indicated that as many as 58% women feel guilty when they think about abortion and consider it a sin.

Abortion Law in India

Abortion provision in India is governed by the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971, which allows for termination of pregnancy until up to 20 weeks of gestation for a broad range of conditions. India was one of the first 15 countries to legalize abortion services in 1971. According to the Act, abortion can be provided at the discretion of a medical provider under certain conditions. When the Act was introduced, policymakers had two goals — to control the population resulting from unintended pregnancies (which even today are to the tune of 48 per cent) and to reduce the increasing maternal mortality and morbidity due to illegal and unsafe abortions.

Currently, the Act allows abortion up to 20 weeks. However, when it comes to foetal abnormalities and

pregnancies resulting from rape, this limit is proving to be a hurdle for both the woman and the provider. Women seeking an abortion after the legal gestation limit (a phenomenon that is fairly common due to later detection of abnormalities in the foetus or shame and stigma associated with rape), often have no option but to appeal to the courts and run from pillar to post for permission to terminate the pregnancy.

The progressive act has lost its relevance today given technological advancements. Newer and safer technologies have made abortion a very safe out-patient medical procedure and these technologies do not require specialist doctors. In 2014, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare recognised these barriers and proposed certain amendments to the Act. Consequently, the MTP (Amendment) Bill, 2014, was submitted, proposing changes key amongst which were increasing the gestation limit from 20 to 24 weeks for rape survivors and other vulnerable women and removing the gestation limit in case of foetal abnormalities. In 2017, these amendments were returned to the ministry with the mandate to strengthen the implementation of the MTP Act as it stands. One year later, the amendments are yet to be revised and returned to the PMO.

Issues related to Abortion in India

Unintended Pregnancies

An evident, unmet need of contraception is the key reason for unintended pregnancies, many of which result in abortions. The Lancet paper stated that half of the 48.1 million pregnancies of 2015 were unintended. Unintended pregnancies are a strong

indicator of the need for improvements in contraceptive services. An additional 6% of married women used traditional methods of contraception with relatively high failure rates. Other factors that might contribute to both an unintended pregnancy and abortion include contraceptive failure from incorrect and inconsistent use, sexual activity among unmarried women and, a woman's and couple's resolve to have small families.

Unwanted pregnancies are still very common in India, even among the middle class families who are often seen as affluent. Affluent middle class women, however, are paying a high price as they try to avoid scurrilous comments and protect their family's status. The scale of the problem is hard to determine, as the incidence of abortion in India remains unknown. The most widely cited figure quoted is 6.7 million abortions per year, out of which only 1 million are performed legally. The remaining abortions are self-administered or performed illegally by medical and non-medical practitioners. There is a lack of high-quality research and analysis of the state of population and development issues, especially on the issue of recurrent abortions that has looked at the issue of social class or provided other qualitative indicators giving a complete picture of the sexual health inequalities faced by middle class Indian women.

Confidentiality over Safety

Sex outside marriage remains a issue in India, especially for women. The social and cultural environment supports regulating even the most basic conversations on sexual and reproductive health. Seeking an abortion for a single or divorced woman is even more difficult. The issue gets muddled in the argument between sexual morality and sexual

liberty. The social stigma associated to having a sexual relationship outside the institution of marriage prevents women from seeking legal abortion services.

The lack of institutionalized abortion support places single or divorced women in extremely vulnerable situations. When these women do try seeking support from private clinics, there are fears of getting found out. The issue is made even more complex by the fact that in some cases when women try to seek support from outside their neighborhood, they end up going to unknown medical practitioners who have no legal obligations. Women often choose confidentially over safety and quality.

Not a Woman's Choice

Abortions in India are a "conditional right", offered only if there is a substantial risk of the child being born with a physical or mental handicap or in the case of contraceptive failure. But the termination must be carried out within 20 weeks – unless the mother's life is in danger – and the final decision rests with the doctor, who will often consult the woman's wider family. Abortion is not being understood as a woman's right. Women are asked to bring their spouse or in-laws if they are seeking an abortion particularly in the second trimester. So abortion is not a woman's choice, but that of the family.

And doctors fear flouting another law – the Pre Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act – that aims to stop the widespread practice of female foeticide and sex-selective abortions in India, where boys are preferred over girls. So abortion requests in the second trimester of a pregnancy – which is when foetal anomalies are detected – are often denied, despite studies showing that only a small proportion of these abortions are sex-selective.

As a result many women visit small backstreet clinics to terminate their pregnancies, where the cost of the procedure is high but care is poor. It is estimated that about 10 percent of the nearly 45,000 maternal deaths in the country annually are due to unsafe abortions.

Social Stigma

Women who want information about safe procedures for termination of pregnancy feel hesitant and medical practitioners remain judgmental. The stigma around abortion leads to the death of 10 women every day as they are forced to undergo unsafe abortions. Despite the legal sanction for abortions and presence of medical termination of pregnancy (MTP) centres even in smaller towns, the conditions attached to the legal position have complicated the issue for the young. Apart from the requirement of filling some 15-odd forms, the legal age for abortion under the MTP Act 18 years and the age of consent that has been raised from 16 to 18 years, has created several unforeseen complications for young women seeking abortion. Even 18-year-old women, in most cases, are not aware of their legal position and feel vulnerable before the service providers. The fear of being judged does not leave with adulthood, which forces them to opt for other unsafe means, risking reproductive health.

Under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POSCO) Act, which deals with cases of sexual assault on minors, the age of sexual consent was raised by two years. This was done with the good intent of protecting children from sexual abuse by ignoring the changing pattern of sexual behaviour of the young. Most young men and women are sexually active before they are 18, but the attitude of service providers for safe

abortion remains stereotyped. This raises serious issues for young women, especially those below the age of 18, who need access to safe abortion. The conflict between the laws results in a collateral damage where adolescents may be forced to turn to unsafe abortions.

Suggestions to Curb Unsafe Abortions

A parliamentary panel has recommended permitting abortions until 24 weeks of pregnancy and allowing unmarried women to medically terminate pregnancies, in an attempt to prevent women from turning to fake clinics that perform unsafe abortions. This would require an amendment to the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act 1971. The word “married” should also be done away with so that anyone can get an abortion without having to depend on sham clinics as a last recourse.

The panel report said poor women and girls are not only deprived of basic sexual and reproductive health in general as they do not possess the decision-making power to deliver a baby or maintain a time gap between pregnancies, but they also have little access to safe abortion services. The committee underscored this as the prime reason for the high percentage of abortion deaths in India. The committee also recommended that the family planning programmes should spread awareness about the legal validity of the process, campaign extensively about safe abortion services available in government facilities and that the government should also come down hard on illegal abortion clinics mushrooming in every nook and corner of society.

The Centre has issued instructions to all states and Union territories to

set up a permanent medical board which will take prompt decision in cases where pregnant women and girls seek nod for abortion. Such a board was necessary because several cases seeking approval for abortion had come up before the top court and precious time was being lost in setting up a medical board to review the cases.

To bring down the overall maternal mortality rate, it is imperative that access to safe abortion is made available.

- ◆ A woman must seek legal recourse if the pregnancy has gone over 20 weeks to terminate the pregnancy. The judicial process is so slow that the victim's pregnancy more often than not crosses the legal limit and she is unable to get the abortion done, thus pushing her further to the shoddy and shabby dealings of quacks in both rural and urban areas of our country.
- ◆ Women should be given equal reproductive rights. Many women are divorced, single or, in a live-in relationship. If they are living independently, they should also get freedom and an independent stance for taking a decision whether they want to deliver a baby or not.
- ◆ Dissemination and implementation of the comprehensive abortion care training and service delivery guidelines are imperative. It needs to be ensured that providers are trained and equipment and drugs are available at all level of facilities.
- ◆ India basically has a 'physician only' abortion law. The number of providers could be significantly increased by amending the law to authorise medical practitioners with a bachelor's degree in unani, Ayurveda or homoeopathy to provide abortion care.

- ◆ In cases where there is a diagnosis of substantial foetal abnormalities, the MTP Act should be amended to allow for later terminations, i.e. beyond 20 weeks of gestation.
- ◆ It needs to be clearly communicated that only the consent of women is required for the MTP procedure. This would address the common practice of providers insisting that a woman's husband also consent to the abortion.

Way Forward

Abortion services need to be decentralized to the last mile, so that they are accessible to women closer to the community. One way to strengthen access to safe abortion services is to speed up the amendments to the MTP Act and allow mid-level providers who are closer to the community to provide abortion.

This would significantly help expand the cadre of providers that can offer abortion services. However, this solution in itself is inadequate as there is a need to holistically address other sociocultural barriers, such as lack of awareness of abortion legality, limited understanding of the risks of unsafe abortion and the myths, misconceptions and stigma associated with abortion.

General Studies Paper- II

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

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



4. INDIA-UZBEKISTAN: DEEPENING COOPERATION

Why in News?

Recently, the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat misziyoyev has paid his maiden visit to India. India and Uzbekistan highlighted their mutual history by signing 17 agreements in areas such as defence, national security, agriculture, science, pharmaceuticals and technology, as well as the boosting of people-to-people ties. The two countries have also agreed to cooperate in combating trafficking and illicit narcotic drugs. The two countries will also cooperate in exploring the outer space for peaceful purposes.

Background

Relations between Uzbekistan and India have their roots deep in history. There are frequent references to Kamboja in Sanskrit and Pali literature, which is stated to include parts of present day Uzbekistan. Sakas participated in Mahabharata on the side of Kauravas. Ancient trade route uttarpath passed through Uzbekistan. In later years, Fergana, Samarkand, Bukhara in Uzbekistan emerged as major towns on the trade routes linking India with Europe and China. At various times the Saka / Scythian, Macedonian, Greco-Bactrian, Kushan Kingdoms included parts of both India and present day Uzbekistan and at other times they were part of neighbouring empires. Buddhism is said to have travelled to China through Uzbekistan and Central Asia. Amir Timur was born near Shahrisabz and Babur came from Fergana in Uzbekistan. Indian merchants based in Samarkand and Bukhara were an integral part of local economy. Interactions over thousands of years contributed to close cultural linkages in architecture, dance, music and cuisine. Mirza Ghalib

and Amir Khusro are notable Indians of Uzbek parentage. Indian movies have traditionally been popular in Uzbekistan.

Central Asia

Most Central Asian States particularly Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan have converted the perceived disadvantage of being landlocked into an asset by constructing a web and network of roads, railways, highways, oil and gas pipelines criss-crossing from East to West and North to South to connect industrial and production hubs with consumer markets. Last few years have seen highways and railroads traversing from the East in China through Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to Europe, Russia, Iran and the Middle East. Similarly oil from Caspian Sea offshore facilities in Kazakhstan and gas from Turkmenistan is being shipped by pipelines to the western region of China.

All Central Asian States are rich and well endowed potentially with mineral and hydroelectric resources. Kazakhstan has the world's second largest reserves and is the world's largest producer — 23,000 tons of uranium in 2014. It has almost all minerals on Mendeleev's table including iron-ore, coal, oil, gas, gold, lead, zinc, molybdenum etc. in commercially viable quantities. Uzbekistan has large reserves of gas, uranium and gold. Turkmenistan is endowed with world's fourth largest reserves of natural gas. Tajikistan is blessed with huge hydroelectric potential. Kyrgyzstan is rich in gold and hydroelectric power. Uzbekistan, for instance, is the world's 17th largest producer of natural gas, ninth largest producer of gold and sixth largest producer of cotton. Besides, their agricultural economy is also an important economic driver, with grain, cotton, meat, tobacco, wool, fruits and vegetables production.

India had close interaction with the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) during the Soviet times. Indian leaders often visited Tashkent and other places. Prime Minister, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri passed away in Tashkent on 11 January 1966 after signing the Tashkent declaration with Pakistan.

In August 1991, as the events leading to the disintegration of the USSR unfolded, President Islam Karimov, then Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Uzbekistan visited India. Uzbekistan became independent on 01st September 1991.

Opportunities for India

India's current trade with Central Asia is minimal – just about \$1.5 billion which is a mere 0.11 per cent of India's overall trade. India's trade is largest with Kazakhstan, with a turnover of USD 1,032.81 million in 2017-2018. Uzbekistan is a distant second at USD 234.39 million in the same year. But the complementary aspects of Indian and Central Asian economies mean that the potential for trade is extremely high. India and Uzbekistan have signed several trade agreements. Uzbekistan also provides most favoured nation (MFN) status to 45 countries including India, but it is not clear whether this has entered into force. Several areas present excellent opportunities for Indian investment and cooperation in Central Asia such as hydro-power sector, mining and metallurgical industries, construction industry, development of entrepreneurship, infrastructure, agro-industrial sector, information technology, pharmaceuticals industry, silk, sewing and textile industries, leather industry, tourism industry, higher education, food processing sectors, etc.

With Uzbekistan, India has signed a pact on the import of over 2,000 tonnes of uranium much like the one India just signed with Kazakhstan. India is also exploring with Uzbekistan the possibility of extending the Friendship Railway Bridge to Herat in Western Afghanistan.

India's Trade with Central Asian Countries in 2017-2018 (Values in US \$ Millions)			
Country	Exports	Imports	Total
Kazakhstan	125.37	907.43	1032.81
Kyrgyzstan	28.59	30.94	59.53
Tajikistan	23.94	50.29	74.24
Turkmenistan	54.31	26.15	80.46
Uzbekistan	132.72	101.67	234.39
Total	364.93	1,116.49	1,481.21
Source; Department of Commerce: Export Import Data Bank.			

Connectivity

India needs to remove the myth prevailing in Eurasia that India is opposed to any connectivity projects. India must tell countries in the region that its objection to joining China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) scheme relates to the violation of India's sovereignty. India is not opposed to projects passing through non-disputed areas such as the Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India (TAPI) pipeline project. On the contrary, it is fully mindful of its historic Silk Route ties with Central Asia and is hoping to make an entry into the largely untapped energy potential of the region. In fact, to break the connectivity bottlenecks, India has sufficiently invested in the International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and the Chabahar project which are close to becoming a reality.

Shavkat Mirziyoyev is likely to push for joining the 2016 Trilateral Transit Agreement on Chabahar. With the first phase of the Chabahar port being completed, it becomes the nearest sea port for Uzbekistan. So far, Tashkent has relied on Turkey, Russia and the Baltic States for port access. In fact, two days after the Shahid Beheshti terminal of chabahar port was inaugurated in December 2017, Uzbekistan signed a deal with Afghan railways for a Trans-Afghan corridor.

The 2016 Trilateral Transit Agreement with Iran provides the necessary legal framework for trans-

shipment of goods to Afghanistan. For India to use Chabahar as a vital gateway to access Eurasian markets and optimally operationalise its use requires a Central Asian state joining the project as a direct stakeholder. And here, the prospect of Uzbekistan joining the Chabahar port project through Afghanistan would bring about the biggest breakthrough in regional transport connectivity with enormous implications for the entire region.

Major Agreement signed	
➤	To access landlocked Central Asia, the two leaders discussed connectivity in the region and agreed to explore options to enhance linkages by road and rail besides air.
➤	Agreed to closely cooperate in the sphere of developing a new transport connectivity corridor.
➤	To work closely to expand and strengthen defence ties as well as defence industry cooperation. Joint military training exercises in counter-terrorism and cooperation in military education is also on the cards with Uzbekistan announcing that it would set up a defence wing in its embassy in New Delhi.
➤	A safe and secure regional environment for development and prosperity and agreed to work closely in addressing threats and challenges to national and regional security.

For India, the proposed Chabahar-Irانشahr-Zahedan-Mashad corridor is the most ideal route to connect to Sarakhs on the Turkmen border. India is committed to build a 610-kilometre north-south railway (Chabahar to Zahedan). It has already completed the 218-kilometre road from Delaram, Afghanistan, to Zaranj on the Iran-Afghanistan border.

India, Iran and Afghanistan should welcome Uzbekistan as a partner and also support the Uzbek-Afghan initiative of connecting Mazar-i-Sharif with the Herat line. The Uzbek railway company has the capacity to build 100 kilometres of rail line every eight months.

Keeping the connectivity objective in mind, India has joined the Ashgabat Agreement in February 2018. Earlier in 2017, India joined the The Convention on International Transport of Goods under cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention). With this, India is now a part of the single transport transit corridor system that would enhance the prospect of enlarging both the operational and practical scope of Chabahar and fast-tracking implementation of the INSTC. India is looking for some trading intermediaries and logistics partners.

Economic Partnership

Trade relations between India and Uzbekistan are governed by the Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation signed in May 1993. This agreement provides for mutual MFN treatment, promotion of economic, industrial, scientific and technical cooperation, including in the field of training of personnel, active participation of small and medium sized enterprises in bilateral economic cooperation, etc.

The bilateral trade between the countries stood at USD 235 million in 2017-18. It was USD 155.5 million in 2016-17. The two countries emphasised on the need to further enhance efforts to achieve the target of bilateral trade of USD 1 billion by 2020. The two sides also agreed to work towards balancing the trade between the two sides by reducing the existing trade deficit.

India needs to take note that Central Asian countries, including Uzbekistan, may not be key export markets or investment destinations for Indian companies as yet, but they are fast getting linked to the global market for production, supplies of raw materials and services. They are also increasingly getting integrated into the East-West Trans-Eurasian transit economic corridors.

Thus, the next step is to finalize the much awaited Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between India and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).

In the past decades, the economic performance of Central Asian countries had gone up due to high commodity prices. The fall in the oil and commodity prices, compounded by Western sanctions on Russia, has, however, impacted the economies of the Central Asian countries, although they have abundant mineral resources such as petroleum, natural gas, antimony, aluminium, gold, silver, coal and uranium which are yet to be exploited.

Central Asia: India & China

Some analysts speak disparagingly about India's relations with Central Asia as compared to their relations with China. Two aspects that are particularly mentioned by scholars are that China enjoys a bilateral trade of USD 50 billion with Central Asia in comparison to India's trade of USD 2 billion. Moreover China imports about 20 million tons of oil from Kazakhstan and 40 bcm of gas from Turkmenistan in addition to large quantities of uranium and other minerals from these countries. On the contrary, India has imported just around 3000 tons of uranium from Kazakhstan and its first acquisition of Satpayev oil block off the Caspian sea shore in Kazakhstan commenced drilling operations during PM Modi's maiden visit to Kazakhstan on July 8, 2015. This comparison is unfair and untenable. China shares a border of more than 1500 kms with Kazakhstan, more than 850 kms with Kyrgyzstan and over 400 kms with Tajikistan. Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are also easily accessible through the land route. This provides it with a huge advantage over India.

Deepening engagement with China is a relatively recent feature. China conducts its relations both bilaterally and through the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). China's primary

thrust has been to make use of Central Asia's vast mineral resources for its economic development — to supply the much needed consumer goods to Central Asia and to protect itself against the threat of "separatism, extremism and terrorism" from its Uyghur minority from Central Asian territories. China has sought to build connectivity through networks of rail, road, oil and gas pipelines with and through the Central Asian countries.

India's ties with the regional states are growing. India views itself as a stabilizer and security provider in Central Asia and, with its growing economic clout, an attractive economic power for regional states. India's interest in securing reliable energy supplies and trade through Central Asia remains substantial. Besides oil and gas, energy-hungry India is eyeing imports of uranium from both Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

Significance of the Region

India's "Neighborhood First" policy has given increased importance to India's proximate region. Since Central Asia comprises our "extended neighborhood", it deserves much greater attention than it has received so far.

Significance of this region in foreign policy matrix of India cannot be overemphasised. India's foreign policy is conceptualised as comprising of sets of ever widening concentric circles around a central axis of historical and cultural commonalities. Security, stability and prosperity of Central Asia is imperative for peace and economic development of India.

Afghanistan poses a rising challenge for these countries as well as India. Withdrawal of US and NATO forces as well as change in national leadership in Afghanistan in 2014 has increased violence and turbulence in the country. President Ashraf Ghani's policy of cozying up to Pakistan since his

assumption of power in Sept, 2014 in an effort to control attacks by Taliban and ensure peace in the country has failed. Central Asia finds itself exposed and vulnerable to influences like Al Qaeda, Islamic State, Taliban, IUM, Hizb-ut-Tahrir and others. India and Central Asia can collaborate to mutual benefit to strengthen the fabric of their social, inter-ethnic, inter-racial structures so that extremist and divisive pressures are contained and minimised.

Conclusion

Strengthening of relations between India and Central Asia is to mutual benefit of all countries involved. It is not directed at countering China's presence in the region. India is interested in expanding its ties with the region as it will promote security, stability, economic growth and development of all countries. Good relations with India will provide an assured market to these countries for their energy, raw materials, oil and gas, uranium, minerals, hydro electric power etc. India is the fastest growing economy in the world today and can be a stable, assured, expanding market for these countries.

The current political, strategic and economic scenario, both regionally and internationally, presents immense challenges but also potential for India and Central Asia to qualitatively enhance their engagement. Both India and Central Asia are factors of peace, stability, growth and development, in the region and the world. Stronger relations between them will contribute to increased security and prosperity of these countries and the world.

General Studies Paper- II

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



5. INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE & ITS EFFECTIVENESS

Why in News?

The U.S. has rejected an International Court of Justice ruling last week mandating that U.S. sanctions allow exemptions for exports of humanitarian and civil aviation supplies to Iran, saying those protections are already in place.

Introduction

The Donald Trump administration continued its vocal rejection of multilateral bodies after it withdrew from an International Court of Justice (ICJ) protocol and pulled out of a 1955 friendship treaty with Iran. The moves were triggered after ICJ ruling that Washington must ensure its sanctions don't hit humanitarian aid or civil aviation safety for Iran — a ruling that is binding but cannot be enforced.

The 1955 Treaty of Amity with Iran, meanwhile, signed between the Washington and the U.S.-backed Shah of Iran, before he was overthrown in 1979, established friendly relations and the right to ICJ arbitration in case of disputes. Throughout the last four decades, however, Iran and the U.S. have ignored each other's complaints brought to the ICJ and both countries' policies toward one another have long violated the treaty.

US accused the ICJ of being "politicized and ineffective." Washington has long sought to decrease its exposure to ICJ rulings, having already done so in the 1980s. This latest move highlights the administration's focus on sovereignty and its "America First" agenda, deepening worries among Western allies over Trump's disparagement of multilateral institutions. The past year has seen the President escalate his criticisms of NATO, the United Nations and the International Criminal Court, among others. The U.S. controversially

withdrew from the UN's Human Rights Council in June, calling it biased and politicized.

The United Nations

The United Nations is an international organization founded in 1945. It is currently made up of 193 Member States. The mission and work of the United Nations are guided by the purposes and principles contained in its founding Charter.

The main organs of the UN are the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice, and the UN Secretariat. All were established in 1945 when the UN was founded.

International Court of Justice

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations (UN). It was established in June 1945 by the Charter of the United Nations and began work in April 1946. The seat of the Court is at the Peace Palace in The Hague (Netherlands). Of the six principal organs of the United Nations, it is the only one not located in New York (United States of America). The Court's role is to settle, in accordance with international law, legal disputes submitted to it by States and to give advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by authorized United Nations organs and specialized agencies.

The Court is composed of 15 judges, who are elected for terms of office of nine years by the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council. It is assisted by a Registry, its administrative organ. Its official languages are English and French. The Court's jurisdiction is two fold: it decides, disputes of a legal nature that are submitted to it by States (jurisdiction in contentious cases); and it gives advisory opinions on legal questions at the request of

the organs of the United Nations, specialized agencies or one related organization authorized to make such a request (advisory jurisdiction).

Since its founding, the Court has considered over 160 cases, issued numerous judgments on disputes brought to it by states and issued advisory opinions in response to requests by UN organizations. Most cases have been dealt with by the full Court, but since 1981 six cases have been referred to special chambers at the request of the parties.

In its judgments, the Court has addressed international disputes involving economic rights, rights of passage, the non-use of force, non-interference in the internal affairs of states, diplomatic relations, hostage-taking, the right of asylum and nationality. States bring such disputes before the Court in search of an impartial solution to their differences on the basis of law. By achieving peaceful settlement on such questions as land frontiers, maritime boundaries and territorial sovereignty, the Court has often helped to prevent the escalation of disputes.

Sources of International Law

Article 38 (1) of the ICJ's statute recognizes judicial decisions and scholarly writings as subsidiary means for the determination of the law. Both municipal and international judicial decisions can serve to establish new principles and rules.

Article 38 (1) of the ICJ's statute identifies three sources of international law: treaties, custom and general principles. Because the system of international law is horizontal and decentralized, the creation of international laws is inevitably more complicated than the creation of laws in domestic systems.

International Court of Justice	International criminal Court
Justice Dalveer Bhandari currently serves as permanent judge at ICJ. Recent ruling by ICJ, awarded Bangladesh more than 9,700 square miles in the Bay of Bengal, ending a maritime dispute spanning more than three decades.	India is not a party to ICC. The major objections of India to the Rome Statute are: Since ICC is subordinate to UNSC, permanent members are vested with unbridled powers. Terrorism and nuclear weapons usage is not in the purview of ICC. There is criticism that India on signing up the Rome Statute, would immediately come under ICC jurisdiction for human right violations under AFSPA, abuses in Naga movement, Kashmir conflict.

Treaties

Treaties are known by a variety of terms—conventions, agreements, pacts, general acts, charters and covenants—all of which signify written instruments in which the participants (usually but not always states) agree to be bound by the negotiated terms. Some agreements are governed by municipal law (e.g., commercial accords between states and international enterprises), in which case international law is inapplicable. Informal, nonbinding political statements or declarations are excluded from the category of treaties.

Custom

The ICJ's statute refers to "international custom, as evidence of a general practice accepted as law," as a second source of international law. Custom, whose importance reflects the decentralized nature of the international system, involves two fundamental elements: the actual practice of states and the acceptance by states of that practice as law. The actual practice of states (termed the "material fact") covers various elements, including the duration, consistency, repetition and generality of a particular kind of behaviour by states. All such elements are relevant in determining whether a practice may form the basis of a binding international custom. Once a practice becomes a custom, all states in the international community are bound by it whether or not individual states have expressly consented—except in cases where a state has objected from the start of the custom, a stringent test

to demonstrate. A particular practice may be restricted to a specified group of states or even to two states, in which case the standard for acceptance as a custom is generally high. Customs can develop from a generalizable treaty provision and a binding customary rule and a multilateral treaty provision on the same subject matter (e.g., the right to self-defense) may exist at the same time.

General Principles of Law

A third source of international law identified by the ICJ's statute is "the general principles of law recognized by civilized nations." These principles essentially provide a mechanism to address international issues not already subject either to treaty provisions or to binding customary rules. Such general principles may arise either through municipal law or through international law and many are in fact procedural or evidential principles or those that deal with the machinery of the judicial process

Perhaps the most important principle of international law is that of good faith. It governs the creation and performance of legal obligations and is the foundation of treaty law.

Another important general principle is that of equity, which permits international law to have a degree of flexibility in its application and enforcement. The Law of the Sea treaty, for example, called for the delimitation on the basis of equity of exclusive economic zones and continental shelves between states with opposing or adjacent coasts.

Challenges Facing in the 21st Century

In order for the ICJ to creditably meet the challenges of the 21st century, it must begin to address some of the issues that have hindered its maximum performance since it began operation in 1946. Though most rules governing the ICJ strive to create an unbiased and honorable entity, the Court's legitimacy and impartiality have been compromised by issues surrounding:

- ◆ The election and re-election of its judges.
- ◆ The UN Security Council's Permanent Members' roles in the ICJ.
- ◆ The Court's compulsory jurisdiction.
- ◆ The nomination of ad hoc judges by parties before the Court.

After six decades, the ICJ is at a crossroads as it braces to adjudicate the disputes arising in the 21st century. Modern issues concerning environmental protection, terrorism and human trafficking—among many others—are global problems deserving of attention from a global court.

Criticisms

The International Court has been criticized with respect to its rulings, its procedures and its authority. Many of these criticisms refer more to the general authority assigned to the body by member states through its charter than to specific problems with the composition of judges or their rulings. Major criticisms include the following:

- ◆ Compulsory jurisdiction is limited to cases where both parties have agreed to submit to its decision and so instances of aggression tend to be automatically escalated to and adjudicated by the Security Council. According to the sovereignty principle of international law, no nation is superior or inferior against another. Therefore, there is no entity that could force the states into practice of the law or punish

the states in case of any violation of international law occurs. Therefore, the absence of binding force means that the 193 member states of the ICJ do not necessarily have to accept the jurisdiction. Moreover, membership in the UN and ICJ does not give the court automatic jurisdiction over the member states, but it is the consent of each state to follow the jurisdiction that matters.

- ◆ Organizations, private enterprises and individuals cannot have their cases taken to the International Court or appeal a national supreme court's ruling. UN agencies likewise cannot bring up a case except in advisory opinions (a process initiated by the court and non-binding). Only states can bring the cases and become the defendants of the cases. This also means that the potential victims of crimes against humanity, such as minor ethnic groups or indigenous peoples, may not have appropriate backing by a state.
- ◆ Other existing international thematic courts, such as the International Criminal Court (ICC),

are not under the umbrella of the International Court. Unlike ICJ, international thematic courts like ICC work independently from United Nations. Such dualistic structure between various international courts sometimes makes it hard for the courts to engage in effective and collective jurisdiction.

- ◆ The International Court does not enjoy a full separation of powers, with permanent members of the Security Council being able to veto enforcement of cases, even those to which they consented to be bound. Because the jurisdiction does not have binding force itself, in many cases, the instances of aggression are adjudicated by Security Council by adopting a resolution, etc. There is, therefore, a likelihood for the permanent member states of Security Council to avoid the legal responsibility brought up by International Court of Justice.

Conclusion

The ICJ continues to command the pre-eminent position as the principal

judicial organ of the United Nations, but to renew the influence and efficacy of the Court, vital reforms are necessary. With membership consisting of almost all the countries of the world, the sphere of influence of the ICJ is wide and encompassing. Such a court deserves to be most equipped to handle the increasingly evolving judicial disputes arising in the 21st century. As the world population continues to increase exponentially, so do issues arising from an ever-changing world. Issues concerning environmental protection, terrorism, drug trafficking, human trafficking, globalization, etc., are global in nature and deserve attention from an influential international court.

Although the Court has managed to do reasonably well in the last six decades, there are still areas for improvement and efficiency in order to ensure maximum performance.

General Studies Paper- II

Topic: Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

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6. IL&FS CRISIS & ITS IMPLICATIONS

Why in News?

As the world marked the 10th anniversary of the collapse of Lehman Brothers which triggered the global financial crisis in September 2008, India's leading infrastructure finance company Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services (IL&FS) defaulted on payments to lenders triggering panic in the markets.

Introduction

Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services (IL&FS) is deep down in troubled waters. The IL&FS group has a debt burden of Rs 91,000 crore that has created havoc among the investors.

IL&FS Financial Services, a group company, defaulted in payment obligations of bank loans (including interest), term and short-term deposits and failed to meet the commercial paper redemption obligations due on September 14. On September 15, the company reported that it had received notices for delays and defaults in servicing some of the inter corporate deposits accepted by it. Consequent to defaults, rating agency ICRA downgraded the ratings of its short-term and long-term borrowing programmes. The defaults also jeopardised hundreds of investors, banks and mutual funds associated with IL&FS. The defaults sparked panic

among equity investors even as several non-banking financial companies faced turmoil amid a default scare.

Shadow Bank

"Shadow bank", or shadow banking, is often used to describe informal or semiformal lenders in mainland China. Loosely, a shadow bank is an entity that offers financial services similar to a bank but without being part of the regulated banking system. In India until about a month ago, shadow banks were known as non-banking financial companies, (NBFCs). There are thousands of them and they come in all shapes and sizes. Some have specialised briefs and, often, a majority government shareholding. The Power Finance Corporation, for example, has the government as the majority shareholder and does what its name suggests.

What is IL&FS?

IL&FS Ltd is a core investment company and serves as the holding company of the IL&FS Group, with most business operations domiciled in separate companies which form an ecosystem of expertise across infrastructure, finance and social and environmental services. A brain child of the late MJ Pherwani, IL&FS was founded in 1987 with equity from Central Bank of India, Unit Trust of India and Housing Development Finance Co to fund infrastructure projects when peers IDBI and ICICI were focused more on corporate projects.

As infrastructure became the central theme in the past two decades, IL&FS used its first mover advantage to lap up projects. In the process, it has built up a debt-to-equity ratio of 18.7. The group with at least 24 direct subsidiaries, 135 indirect subsidiaries, six joint ventures and four associate companies is sitting on a debt of about Rs 91,000 crore. Of this, nearly Rs 60,000 crore of debt is at project level, including road, power and water projects. A major reason behind troubles of IL&FS is complications in land acquisition. The 2013 land acquisition law made many of its projects unviable. Cost escalation also led to many incomplete projects. Lack of timely action exacerbated the problems.

Who owns IL&FS?

IL&FS has institutional shareholders including SBI, LIC, ORIX Corporation of Japan and Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA). As on March 31, 2018, LIC and ORIX Corporation are the largest shareholders in IL&FS with their stakeholding at 25.34 per cent and 23.54 per cent, respectively. Other prominent shareholders include ADIA (12.56 per cent), HDFC (9.02 per cent), CBI (7.67 per cent) and SBI (6.42 per cent).

How IL&FS went into Crisis?

IL&FS went bust because it lent to too many projects that went sour, one way or another. It was unable to refinance after it started defaulting and its credit ratings fell. The Centre is working on rescuing IL&FS because it has many former government officials embedded in its management structure. What is more, the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) and the State Bank of India (SBI) – both state-owned – have large stakes in the troubled company as does the Central Bank of India, itself a bankrupt public sector bank. There are two big overseas shareholders, adding an embarrassing international dimension to the situation.

IL&FS is probably also too big to fail, although it has an opaque balance sheet with over 200 subsidiaries and special purpose vehicles. Continued defaults could lead to freezes across India's bond market as the company's creditors would find it hard to continue servicing their loans. The crisis, in fact, has already hit the debt mutual fund market.

- ◆ IL&FS was having huge outstanding debt of Rs 91,000 Crores out of which Rs 57,000 Crores are to Public Sector Banks.
- ◆ In July-18, IL&FS subsidiary IL&FS Transport has delayed Rs 450 Crores of repayment to SIDBI. This is where the IL&FS Crisis started.
- ◆ ICRA and CARE started downgrading the ratings due to these payment defaults.
- ◆ In Jul-18 end, its founder and Chairman Mr.Ravi Parthasarathy has stepped down citing health reasons. Mr.Hemanth Bhargva, LIC MD joined as non executive chairman during that time.
- ◆ In Aug-18, it has again defaulted 2 commercial papers to mutual fund AMCs and then later paid in 2 days late.

- ◆ In Early September, IL&FS defaulted Rs 1,000 Crores loan repayment to SIDBI. It has defaulted several times during September for various loan repayments.
- ◆ ICRA, CARE and BWR has downgraded its ratings to "default" or "junk". This is the worse of such ratings. RBI has initiated special audit about this company.
- ◆ 15th September, Former LIC Chairman, Mr.SB Mathur has taken charge as Chairman of IL&FS.
- ◆ SEBI has intervened very late in this case. Two weeks back it said it would look into this matter and assess risk on various mutual fund schemes.
- ◆ Last week of September, RBI has raised concerns about IL&FS company management and met its top shareholders.
- ◆ On 1st October, NCLT has allowed government of India to take control of the company and its matter.

Role of NBFCs in India's Economy

NBFCs face asset-liability mismatches similar to banks but there are no Reserve Bank regulations preventing them taking such risks or limiting exposures. They borrow money and roll over loans while lending to high-risk infrastructure projects. They can make long-term returns that are well above the norm for banks. They can also go bust if a sufficiency of projects fails or goes into overruns and/or cannot refinance borrowings. The system depends on high credit ratings that allow NBFCs to continue borrowing. And, of course, it depends on projects not going sour.

One key area of NBFC operations is infrastructure financing. There are inherent technical and historical reasons banks are wary of infrastructure. Most

bank funding is short to medium term, consisting of demand deposits (savings accounts that can be liquidated anytime) and fixed deposits ranging from 30 days to about five years. Banks have sector exposure and company exposure limits, that is, they cannot lend more than a certain percentage of their resources to one sector, or to a single entity.

Infrastructure projects are long-gestation and high-risk. It takes years to lay a major road, build a port terminal, roll out a telecom network, begin a mining operation, or set up a power plant. They are capital-intensive, requiring vast sums of money and the returns are zero until the project is up and running.

Government Initiative

The government has done well to contain the IL&FS contagion by superseding the company's board of directors and taking over controls at this debt-ridden mess for the next few quarters. But as the skeletons continue to tumble out from the IL&FS cupboard, it is becoming clear that the task at hand is even more complicated than thought earlier.

The National Company Law Tribunal allowed the government's petition to replace all board members of IL&FS as defaults by the infrastructure group and its subsidiaries triggered fears of a contagion in the financial markets.

Not just due to the complexity of the operations of IL&FS and its crumbling financials, but also because of the huge amount of funds needed to get this group back on its feet. The previous estimates of how much it owes the banks and other institutions are being challenged as the figure gets inflated and this had raised the prospect of a huge amount of money needed to keep the company from collapsing.

Learning from the Past

In January 2009, the government in a first "managerial rescue" appointed a new board of directors at one of India's leading information technology companies Satyam Computers Ltd. The private sector company's founder, Ramalinga Raju, had just days before confessed to overstating revenue and profit on the basis of fictitious clients and billing. The new Satyam board then arranged for the sale of a strategic stake in the company and after a two-part bidding process, Tech Mahindra Ltd. was determined winner. It acquired a 31 percent stake in Satyam and subsequent to an open offer ended up with 42 percent of the beleaguered company. The rescue was accomplished in three months.

The reasons for recounting what happened a decade ago is because the government is now attempting a similar rescue for insolvent infrastructure finance company IL&FS Ltd. After recent defaults, which were the cause of some panic in the credit markets, IL&FS urgently needs to raise more funds and restructure debt. There are distinctions between the Satyam situation and the one facing IL&FS today. Satyam was a promoter-led company and this majority shareholder stood accused of fraud, IL&FS has distributed shareholding, the two largest shareholders being Life Insurance Corporation of India and Japan's Orix Corporation. Their shareholding continues.

Besides IL&FS is a systemically important, non-deposit taking, core investment company, as per RBI's categorisation. Not like any ordinary company as Satyam was. It also has four direct subsidiaries, 132 indirect subsidiaries and six joint ventures, adding to the complexity of the situation. Satyam had fudged its

numbers, according to its promoter's confession. IL&FS is facing an immediate liquidity crisis and has over Rs 16,500 crore of standalone debt and Rs 91,000 crore of consolidated debt.

Way Ahead

The defaults by IL&FS have shut it out of the market, leaving it at the mercy of shareholders — Life Insurance Corp of India, Housing Development Finance Corp, Japan's Orix Corp and Abu Dhabi Investment Authority — who have yet to sign off on the Rs 4,500-crore rights share sale. The Mumbai-headquartered company has identified at least 25 projects for sale, which include some road and power projects. The company has already received firm offers for 14 projects. With the asset sale plan, it would be able to bring down debt by about Rs 30,000 crore. But the problem is that the completion would take about 18 months. The absence of a quick strategy by the regulator and the government, could translate into a solvency issue leading to a domestic credit crisis inflicting wounds on banks and mutual fund.

While the new board gets busy with rescue, investigating and regulatory agencies must focus on what went wrong. But a crisis of this nature puts the spotlight again on the entire framework of corporate governance, particularly the institution of independent directors. Not enough has changed, evidently, after the Satyam scam. India has a distance to go to make independent directors sufficiently accountable.

General Studies Paper- III

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



7. ASIATIC LION: INDIA'S PRIDE IN DANGER

Why in News?

In the past one month alone, at least 23 of the big cats have died in the Gir Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park in the western Indian state of Gujarat. These deaths include those of three cubs and three adult females. Tests conducted at the Indian Council of Medical Research's National Institute of Virology, Pune, have officially confirmed the presence of the deadly canine distemper virus (CDV) in at least four of the tissue samples extracted from the carcasses.

Introduction

Every schoolchild should know that Gir in Gujarat is home to the last

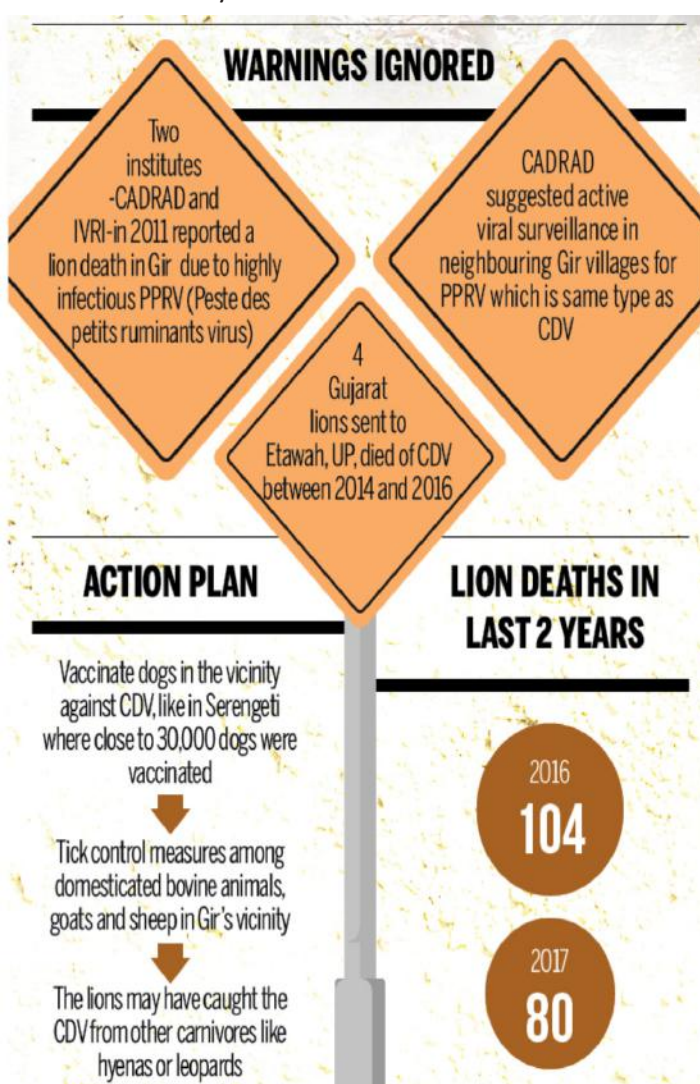
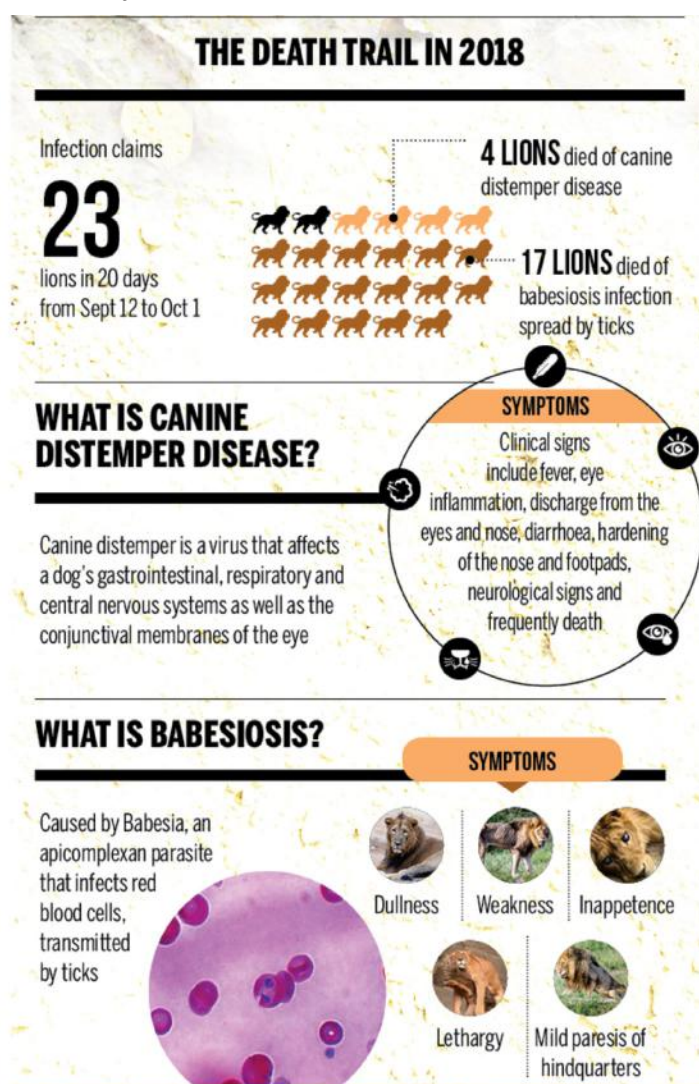
surviving population of about 300 free-ranging Asiatic lions, classified as the sub-species *Panthera leo persica*. Historically, these regal animals ranged from Palestine to Palamau in eastern India but pressure from human activity has confined them to 1,412 square kilometres today. The Nawabs of Junagadh must be given the credit for protecting these lions, starting in the early 20th century. Researchers are worried about the vulnerability of the isolated population of critically endangered Gir lions to extinction.

There is a great deal of concern in the international conservation community over the unusually large number of lions dying during recent months in the Gir Wildlife Sanctuary

and surrounding forests. While mass mortalities in wildlife are always a cause for concern, this case is even more worrisome as the big cat population in Gujarat is the last of the Asiatic lions in the wild. In 2013, the Supreme Court had issued an order that lions from Gujarat be relocated to the Kuno sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh as a check against the threat of epidemic.

Background

In its 2013 order, the Supreme Court had said: "Asiatic lion, has been restricted to only one single habitat, i.e. the Gir National Forest and its surrounding areas and an outbreak of possible epidemic or natural calamity might wipe off the entire species.



A smaller population with limited genetic strength are more vulnerable to diseases and other catastrophes in comparison to large and widespread population.” The court also noted how 30% of the lion population in Tanzania’s Serengeti was killed due to an outbreak of canine distemper, a viral disease that affects animals. Gujarat’s response to this was that lions are now spread over the Greater Gir region and this reduces the threat. It has also had an intense, managerial response to the disease — when ill, lions are routinely picked up, medically treated, and then released.

Gujarat submitted before the Supreme Court that one of the reasons it did not want to part with the lions was because there are metapopulations in the State. Metapopulations may be geographically separate but have interactions and an exchange of individuals. Gujarat had said to the Supreme Court, “Current Asiatic lion population is not a single population confined to one place. Thus, Gujarat has been unwilling to part with its lions, calling them “its pride” in an affidavit.

Undoubtedly, after the lion deaths, Gujarat should work towards colonising new habitats outside the Gir landscape within the State. However, there are spatial limitations in this industrialised State. An option is the Barda wildlife sanctuary. But Barda is close to Gir, and this cannot be confused with creating isolated populations. It would simply mean increasing suitable lion range from its present, much smaller area.

Asiatic Lion

The Asiatic lion range is restricted to the Gir Forest National Park and environs in the Indian state of Gujarat. On the IUCN Red List it is listed as Endangered because of its small size and area of occupancy.

The Asiatic lion was first described in 1826 by the Austrian zoologist Johann N. Meyer who named it *Felis leo persicus*. Until the 19th century,

it occurred in eastern Turkey, Iran, Mesopotamia, and from east of the Indus River to Bengal and Narmada River in Central India. Since the turn of the 20th century, it is restricted to the Gir Forest National Park and surrounding areas. This lion population has steadily increased since 2010. In May 2015, the 14th Asiatic Lion Census was conducted over an area of about 20,000 km² (7,700 sq mi); the lion population was estimated at 523 individuals, comprising 109 adult males, 201 adult females and 213 cubs. In August 2017, a similar census revealed 650 wild individuals.

Threats to Asiatic lion

The major threats to the long-term survival of the Asiatic lion come from genetic isolation, which results in unhealthy levels of inbreeding, and from conflicts with people living in the sanctuary area, which mean reprisal killings for livestock sporadically preyed upon by the lions. It is vitally important to protect the Gir lions from epidemic diseases. In 1994, an outbreak of canine distemper in Tanzania’s Serengeti National Park killed a third of the 2,500 lions hosted by that vast reserve. Lions may be an apex predator, but they are coming under increasing pressure from human-based threats. Two of the biggest of these threats are:

- ◆ **Habitat Encroachment** – As humans continue to expand their farmland into what was once considered lion territory, this is leading to clashes between the cats and people. If a lion takes down a farmer’s livestock, more often than not the lion is killed so the farmer can retain his animals.
- ◆ **Hunting** – Hunting is still rife throughout Africa, and once these big cats are staring down the barrel of a so-called “hunter’s” rifle, they stand no chance at all.

Asiatic Lion Conservation Efforts

Conservation efforts for Asiatic Lion were made for the first time in the year 1910. The Nawab of Junagadh imposed a ban on the hunting of lions within the boundaries of his province. The ban was continued even when India gained independence in 1947. In 1960s and 1970s, Gir forest, the home of the last surviving Indian lions, was converted into a National Park and Sanctuary. Presently, Kuno Project is being undertaken with a view to reduce the overcrowding at Gir.

Conservationists are trying to develop Kuno Wildlife Sanctuary, situated in Madhya Pradesh, into a natural habitat for the Asiatic lions. The excess population of Gir will be relocated here. However, still much is left to be done to prevent the Asiatic lions from getting extinct.

One of the major threats that the Indian lions are facing is the hostility they suffer at the hands of humans living near the sanctuary. It has become necessary to involve people in the conservation efforts being planned for the Indian lions. A step that needs to be taken in this regard is to include the local residents within the field staff of the Gir Protected Area. It will not only sensitize people about the majestic species, but also educate them about the need to protect the species from extinction. At the same time, efforts should be undertaken to relocate as many humans out of the protected area of Gir as possible.

The park boundaries can be consolidated to prevent the human-lion clash. Much attention needs to be paid on the protection of the Asiatic lions from poachers. It is becoming one of the greatest threats to the life of the lions. The natural habitat of Gir National Park also needs to be protected. The afforestation programs that were earlier carried out in the

grasslands and savannah areas of Gir need to be avoided as far as possible. Efforts should be made to open up forest canopies and to increase the range of the Gir Protected Area (PA).

Conservation status

The Asian lion population has recovered from the brink of extinction to several hundred individuals. They occupy remnant forest habitats in the two hill systems of Gir and Girnar that comprise Gujarat's largest tracts of dry deciduous forest, thorny forest and savannah. Five protected areas currently exist to protect the Asian lion: Gir Sanctuary, Gir National Park and Pania Sanctuary to form the Gir Conservation Area (GCA) covering an area of 20,000 km² of forest representing the core habitat for the Asiatic lion. The other two wildlife sanctuaries, Mitiyala and Girnar, protect satellite areas within dispersal distance of the Gir Conservation Area. An additional sanctuary is being established in the nearby Barda forest to serve as an alternative home for Gir lions.

Factors which are threats to the Gir PA and lion conservation identified as encroachment, forest fire, natural calamities, grazing, collection of fuelwood, Non-timber forest produce (NTFP), poaching, tourism, religious pilgrimage and accidental lion deaths due to human causes. Currently the Gir landscape is witnessing an unprecedented change of traditional land-use patterns owing to agro-industrial developments and urban sprawl. Lions in the human dominated landscape are long ranging, even venturing inside villages at night for food. But they need specific day time habitat patches (refuge sites) so as to avoid conflicts. Such patches are characterized by mostly grasslands, Acacia patches, Prosopis juliflora patches and orchards. Since the land ownership of these crucial habitat

patches are complex and largely privately owned, they are likely to succumb fast to such development induced habitat alterations thereby threatening the metapopulation dynamics of the lions in future.

New-age Conservation

Wildlife conservation concerns itself with maintaining ecological processes and reducing threats to endangered species. It does not entail treating wild animals for disease (in the way domestic animals are) as this can go against the processes of natural selection. Treating wild animals appears to be a caring thing to do. But it is not conducive to the 'natural' process of life and death, and ultimately compromises immunity.

- ◆ **SMART:** Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool (SMART) was developed by conservation organisations including Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and is a combination of software, training materials and patrolling standards to establish effective patrolling systems, monitor wildlife populations and movements and identify threats such as poaching or disease.
- ◆ **Veterinary support:** Living alongside human populations, Asiatic lions in the Gir face threats from human activity. Local communities in and around the Gir Forest have learned to share their space with the growing lion population. However, in the past animals got trapped in local wells, or have come into conflict with humans. Vets from ZSL worked with local vet teams to share knowledge and help get systems in place to manage any potential disease outbreak which could wipe out the remaining Gir lions. They also trained vets to intubate anaesthetised lions to help them breathe, a technique ZSL staff

learned from working with tigers, which could mean the difference between life and death for a sick lion.

- ◆ **Zookeeping:** Sakkarbaug Zoo in Gujarat is home to nearly 50 Asiatic lions and is an important conservation breeding population. ZSL partnered with zookeepers and veterinarians at Sakkarbaug to share best practices in animal care and breeding.
- ◆ **Education:** Education is a key way to engage local communities in the importance of lion conservation and other local conservation organisations to help shape their plans for the development of educational activities around wildlife conservation in the Gir Forest National Park.

To be fair, the lines of what comprises wildlife conservation are getting blurred. When wild animals go extinct locally, they are reintroduced — as in the case of tigers in Sariska, Rajasthan. When hungry, they are fed artificially, and even provided salts as supplements, an example being the Hangul (Red deer) population in Dachigam, Jammu and Kashmir.

In other parts of India, wild animals are funnelled through artificial trenches, barriers and fences. This is wildlife conservation in the age of man, where protected areas sometimes resemble zoos.

Yet even the most flexible of conservationists would agree that intensive artificial medical treatment of wild animals does not augur well for long-term sustainability. The role of wildlife managers should be to reduce unnatural threats, not unnaturally prolong life. While Gujarat has done a good job of conserving its lions, it should also turn its attention to reducing the drivers of disease, which includes controlling feral dog populations.

Conclusion

One of the solutions proposed to reduce long-term risk to the survival of the Gir lions is to create a second free-ranging population in a suitable area. There is great expectation that the proposal to relocate a small number of lions, including three females, to Kuno Wildlife Division in Madhya Pradesh will meet with success. An attempt to establish a population of lions in Chandraprabha Sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh failed in 1957, apparently because the monitoring mechanisms were weak and the sanctuary was too small. However, conservation science has made great progress in recent decades. A recent study of the prospects of the Kuno relocation plan published by A.J.T. Johnsingh and other

researchers in Oryx has identified the priority actions needed at Kuno are control of poaching, relocation of villages, grassland management, and building a rubble wall around the division to keep out livestock and thereby restore the natural prey base. Some of these conservation actions are relevant in the case of the Gir forests as well. The Central government, and the State governments of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, must give priority first to removing the threat of extinction facing Asia's last lions and then to increasing their population to a healthy level through a progressive conservation master plan.

The future of a healthy lion population calls for a rollback on a lot of decisions taken in recent times,

whether related to delineating eco-sensitive zones, promoting tourism or yielding to the demands of powerful lobby groups. We must remember that the agro-pastoral landscape around the sanctuary is as important as dedicated management, political will, people's tolerance and the lion's resilience in contributing to the success of Asiatic lion conservation. Preserving this entire matrix will determine whether there will be another milestone jubilee celebration in the future.

General Studies Paper- III

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



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SEVEN SUBJECTIVE QUESTIONS WITH MODEL ANSWERS

Cooperative Economic Model: Is a Better Alternative

Q1. Food cooperatives, in particular, can focus energies on growing the cooperative economy and which are aligned with the cooperative principles. Cooperatives are the best model for social and economic progress. Whether, Cooperative like Amul can be viable economic alternative to capitalist and socialist models. Examine.

Hints

- ◆ A cooperative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise. A cooperative economy is an economic system whereby those who employ its specific operating principles and embrace its explicit values can meet their basic needs in personally, socially and environmentally responsible ways.
- ◆ Mahatma Gandhi is the epitome of an alternative development model which was quietly forgotten after Independence. Sardar Patel, sowed the seed for a third economic model controlled neither by government nor capitalists. Instead, it was created with the cooperation of farmers and people and everybody was a part of it. Cooperatives like Amul can be viable economic alternative to capitalist and socialist models.
- ◆ Currently, capitalism and communism are the dominant economic organizational systems. In private enterprise (capitalism) and state enterprise (communism) resources are controlled by a minority of the population.
- ◆ Cooperatives offer a third alternative: enterprise is owned by the workers. Economic models often reflect values of a society. Capitalist economies typically promote individual improvement, whereas communist societies reinforce dedication to the country. Cooperative economy recognizes the right to personal gain within a structure that supports each of its members.
- ◆ Economic planning aims at the removal of all economic inequalities and an equitable distribution of wealth. Pandit Nehru clearly stated the importance of co-

operative societies that—"I have no doubt theoretically in co-operation; co-operative working is good in every single department of human activity. It is a better way of life and in fact it is an inevitable way of life when you live in crowded communities. There is no other way except the co-operative way."

Sanitation and Hygiene: Fundamental to Good Health

Q2. Attaining open defecation free status is the goal but right now only the first and arguably the easiest milestone of providing complete toilet coverage to all households is being considered the yardstick for success. Examine.

Hints:

- ◆ Four years after India rolled out the ambitious Swachhh Bharat Mission (SBM), aiming to have a toilet in each household besides making the country open defecation free by 2019 the World Health Organisation (WHO) on initiated an almost similar move. It launched the first global guidelines on sanitation and health even as it pitched for higher investments and policy shifts to achieve the goal of universal sanitation coverage by 2032.
- ◆ Safe sanitation is essential for health, from preventing infection to improving and maintaining mental and social well-being. The lack of safe sanitation contributes to diarrhoea, a major public health concern and a leading cause of disease and death among children under five years in low- and middle- income countries; poor sanitation also contributes to several neglected tropical diseases, as well as broader adverse outcomes such as undernutrition. Lack of access to suitable sanitation facilities is also a major cause of risks and anxiety, especially for women and girls. For all these reasons, sanitation that prevents disease and ensures privacy and dignity has been recognized as a basic human right.
- ◆ **Current Scenario:** Around 20 of the 35 states and union territories had reached 100 per cent household coverage of toilets while two were at 99 per cent. Some 13 million households remained to be covered. There has been also another encouraging development. Four states— Bihar, Odisha, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh

known as laggard states—accounted for 60 per cent of India's open defecating population last year.

- ◆ Their progress in toilet coverage unilaterally decides the country's journey to be ODF. Out of them, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh have shown an impressive upward trajectory in the last one year. While Jharkhand shows household coverage of 87 per cent, Uttar Pradesh has shown tremendous improvement with household coverage of 94 per cent, many districts in Uttar Pradesh have 90 per cent household coverage but the usage is much lower.
- ◆ The four key recommendation of WHO are, sanitation interventions should ensure entire communities have access to toilets that safely contain excreta; the full sanitation system should be undergo local health risk assessments to protect individuals and communities from exposure to excreta – whether this be from unsafe toilets, leaking storage or inadequate treatment; sanitation should be integrated into regular local government-led planning and service provision to avert the higher costs associated with retrofitting sanitation and to ensure sustainability and the health sector should invest more and play a coordinating role in sanitation planning to protect public health.
- ◆ These guidelines provide comprehensive advice on maximizing the health impact of sanitation interventions. The guidelines summarize the evidence on the links between sanitation and health, provide evidence-informed recommendations and offer guidance for international, national and local sanitation policies and programme actions. These guidelines also articulate and support the role of health authorities in sanitation policy and programming to help ensure that health risks are identified and managed effectively.

Unsafe Abortion: Leading Cause of Maternal Deaths in India

Q3. Despite abortion being legal in India for almost five decades, unsafe abortion continues to be the third largest cause of maternal mortality and accounts for 8% of all maternal deaths in India. Comment.

Hints:

- ◆ Despite abortion being legal in India for almost five decades, unsafe abortion continues to be the third largest cause of maternal mortality and accounts for 8% of all maternal deaths in India. Ten women die every day and thousands more face serious and permanent injuries annually due to unsafe abortion-related causes.
- ◆ Using data from multiple sources including a representative survey of health facilities and national

drug sales data estimated that only 22% of the 15 million abortions that occur in India every year take place in a public or private health facility and are performed by trained personnel, whereas the remaining 78% of abortions happen outside health facilities. Most abortions were found to occur outside health facilities using drugs, whereas 64% of all facility-based abortions were surgical.

- ◆ Many barriers force women to access abortion services outside the formal healthcare system, such as lack of access to health facilities providing abortion services, lack of awareness about abortion legality, especially among rural women, the stigma associated with abortion and the costs incurred in seeking abortion services.
- ◆ Further, the stigma around abortion compels women to choose less safe pathways for termination of pregnancy, when they should have access to safe, free-of-cost, non-stigmatized abortion services at public health facilities. A study has indicated that as many as 58% women feel guilty when they think about abortion and consider it a sin.
- ◆ Abortion provision in India is governed by the Medical Termination of Pregnancy (MTP) Act, 1971, which allows for termination of pregnancy until up to 20 weeks of gestation for a broad range of conditions. India was one of the first 15 countries to legalize abortion services in 1971. In 2014, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare recognised these barriers and proposed certain amendments to the Act. Consequently, the MTP (Amendment) Bill, 2014, was submitted, proposing changes key amongst which were increasing the gestation limit from 20 to 24 weeks for rape survivors and other vulnerable women and removing the gestation limit in case of foetal abnormalities. In 2017, these amendments were returned to the ministry with the mandate to strengthen the implementation of the MTP Act as it stands. One year later, the amendments are yet to be revised and returned to the PMO.
- ◆ Abortion services need to be decentralized to the last mile, so that they are accessible to women closer to the community. One way to strengthen access to safe abortion services is to speed up the amendments to the MTP Act and allow mid-level providers who are closer to the community to provide abortion.
- ◆ This would significantly help expand the cadre of providers that can offer abortion services. However, this solution in itself is inadequate as there is a need to holistically address other sociocultural barriers, such as lack of awareness of abortion legality, limited understanding of the risks of unsafe abortion and the myths, misconceptions and stigma associated with abortion.

India-Uzbekistan: Deepening Cooperation

Q4. What are Uzbekistan's expectations from the Chabahar Port and how can Tashkent help India in Central Asian connectivity? How can India help Uzbekistan in giving access to the Indian Ocean region? Discuss.

Hints:

- ◆ India's ties with the regional states are growing. India views itself as a stabilizer and security provider in Central Asia and, with its growing economic clout, an attractive economic power for regional states. India's interest in securing reliable energy supplies and trade through Central Asia remains substantial. Besides oil and gas, energy-hungry India is eyeing imports of uranium from both Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.
- ◆ India's current trade with Central Asia is minimal – just about \$1.5 billion which is a mere 0.11 per cent of India's overall trade. India's trade is largest with Kazakhstan, with a turnover of USD 1,032.81 million in 2017-2018. Uzbekistan is a distant second at USD 234.39 million in the same year. But the complementary aspects of Indian and Central Asian economies mean that the potential for trade is extremely high. India and Uzbekistan have signed several trade agreements. Uzbekistan also provides most favoured nation (MFN) status to 45 countries including India, but it is not clear whether this has entered into force.
- ◆ Iranian ports, in view of their geographical location, in addition to the unique economic advantages of the international transport corridor Uzbekistan-Turkmenistan-Iran-Oman, are of great importance also at the international level and could play a much more significant role in the development of the mutual relations between Uzbekistan and India in the near future.
- ◆ India needs to take note that Central Asian countries, including Uzbekistan, may not be key export markets or investment destinations for Indian companies as yet, but they are fast getting linked to the global market for production, supplies of raw materials and services. They are also increasingly getting integrated into the East-West Trans-Eurasian transit economic corridors.
- ◆ Strengthening of relations between India and Central Asia is to mutual benefit of all countries involved. It is not directed at countering China's presence in the region. India is interested in expanding its ties with the region as it will promote security, stability, economic growth and development of all countries. Good relations with India will provide an assured market to these countries for their energy, raw materials, oil and gas, uranium, minerals, hydroelectric power etc. India is the fastest growing economy in the world today and

can be a stable, assured, expanding market for these countries.

- ◆ The current political, strategic and economic scenario, both regionally and internationally, presents immense challenges but also potential for India and Central Asia to qualitatively enhance their engagement. Both India and Central Asia are factors of peace, stability, growth and development, in the region and the world. Stronger relations between them will contribute to increased security and prosperity of these countries and the world.

International Court of Justice & its Effectiveness

Q5. The effectiveness of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) is critical for global survival and progress in the 21st century. Unfortunately, after over six decades in existence, the Court's influence is declining. Examine.

Hints:

- ◆ The U.S. has rejected an International Court of Justice ruling last week mandating that U.S. sanctions allow exemptions for exports of humanitarian and civil aviation supplies to Iran, saying those protections are already in place.
- ◆ The 1955 Treaty of Amity with Iran, meanwhile, signed between the Washington and the U.S.-backed Shah of Iran before he was overthrown in 1979, established friendly relations and the right to ICJ arbitration in case of disputes. Throughout the last four decades, however, Iran and the U.S. have ignored each other's complaints brought to the ICJ, and both countries' policies toward one another have long violated the treaty. The moves were triggered by an ICJ ruling that Washington must ensure its sanctions don't hit humanitarian aid or civil aviation safety for Iran — a ruling that is binding but cannot be enforced.
- ◆ The International Court has been criticized with respect to its rulings, its procedures and its authority. As with criticisms of the United Nations, many of these criticisms refer more to the general authority assigned to the body by member states through its charter than to specific problems with the composition of judges or their rulings.
- ◆ Organizations, private enterprises and individuals cannot have their cases taken to the International Court or appeal a national supreme court's ruling. UN agencies likewise cannot bring up a case except in advisory opinions (a process initiated by the court and non-binding). Only states can bring the cases and become the defendants of the cases. This also means that the potential victims of crimes against humanity,

such as minor ethnic groups or indigenous peoples, may not have appropriate backing by a state.

- ◆ The International Court does not enjoy a full separation of powers, with permanent members of the Security Council being able to veto enforcement of cases, even those to which they consented to be bound. Because the jurisdiction does not have binding force itself, in many cases, the instances of aggression are adjudicated by Security Council by adopting a resolution, etc. There is, therefore, likelihood for the permanent member states of Security Council to avoid the legal responsibility brought up by International Court of Justice.
- ◆ To address today's more difficult environment, recent achievements must be secured and the system must be refined so that perpetrators of the most serious crimes are increasingly held to account.

IL&FS Crisis & its Implications

Q6. What is Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services (IL&FS) Crisis? What it means for the health of India's financial system? Examine.

Hints:

- ◆ Infrastructure Leasing & Finance Services, is a core investment company and serves as the holding company of the IL&FS Group, with most business operations domiciled in separate companies which form an ecosystem of expertise across infrastructure, finance and social and environmental services.
- ◆ IL&FS defaulted in payment obligations of bank loans (including interest), term and short-term deposits and failed to meet the commercial paper redemption obligations.
- ◆ A company with declining cash balances would find it difficult to fund its day-to-day operations and that has become visible in the case of IL&FS. A rising debt burden for IL&FS has left it in a rather precarious financial situation and with interest rates also rising in the domestic economy, the viability of its infrastructure projects is adversely impacted.
- ◆ "Too big to fail" became common parlance during the 2008 subprime crisis, with America's treasury department and regulatory authorities, including the Federal Reserve and the Securities and Exchange Commission, employing it to justify bailing out sundry private investment entities. The underlying concept is simple: an entity has vast exposure across the financial ecosystem and, for whatever reason, it's unable to meet its obligations; if it defaults, its creditors will also be unable to meet their obligations, leading to contagious defaults.
- ◆ Such a rescue is morally ambiguous. It usually involves forgiving the entity's transgressions and places a

financial burden on the rescuers, which generally means taxpayers and shareholders of other institutions being dragged into the mess. It may be the pragmatic thing to do, however, if indeed the entity is too big to fail.

- ◆ While the new board gets busy with rescue, investigating and regulatory agencies must focus on what went wrong. But a crisis of this nature puts the spotlight again on the entire framework of corporate governance, particularly the institution of independent directors. Not enough has changed, evidently, after the Satyam scam. India has a distance to go to make independent directors sufficiently accountable.

Asiatic Lion: India's Pride in Danger

Q7. How politicking and state apathy has put the survival of the Asiatic lion at risk in India. Critically analyze.

Hints:

- ◆ The magnificent Asiatic lion is under threat. Twenty-three lions have died in as many days in the Eastern part of Gujarat's Gir sanctuary. While mass mortalities in wildlife are always a cause for concern, this case is even more worrisome as the big cat population in Gujarat is the last of the Asiatic lions in the wild. In 2013, the Supreme Court had issued an order that lions from Gujarat be relocated to the Kuno sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh as a check against the threat of epidemic.
- ◆ The Asiatic lion range is restricted to the Gir Forest National Park and environs in the Indian state of Gujarat. On the IUCN Red List it is listed as Endangered because of its small size and area of occupancy.
- ◆ One of the major threats that the Indian lions are facing is the hostility they suffer at the hands of humans living near the sanctuary. Factors which are threats to the Gir Protected Area and lion conservation identified as encroachment, forest fire, natural calamities, grazing, collection of fuelwood, Non-timber forest produce (NTFP), poaching, tourism, religious pilgrimage and accidental lion deaths due to human causes. Currently the Gir landscape is witnessing an unprecedented change of traditional land-use patterns owing to agro-industrial developments and urban sprawl.
- ◆ The Central government and the state governments of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, must give priority first to removing the threat of extinction facing Asia's last lions and then to increasing their population to a healthy level through a progressive conservation master plan. The future of a healthy lion population calls for a rollback on a lot of decisions taken in recent times, whether related to delineating eco-sensitive zones, promoting tourism or yielding to the demands of powerful lobby groups.



SEVEN IMPORTANT NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL NEWS

NATIONAL

1. Conference on 'Women in Detention and Access to Justice'

The Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), Ministry of Home Affairs has organised the first ever regional conference at Shimla on 'Women in Detention and Access to Justice' in collaboration with the Prison Department, Himachal Pradesh on October 4-5, 2018.

This conference was organised with a view to provide a platform for the prison personnel of all ranks at the national level to share their candid views on various operational as well as administrative issues not only with their counterparts, but also with other experts of national repute in this field and also to identify best practices and standards in the working

of correctional administration to meet new challenges in the present day's context to bring out prison reforms in objective terms.

Need for Reforms

◆ The overcrowding of jails is a serious problem with women jails having more occupancy than capacity. As of December 31st, 2015, the number of inmates in central jails was 1,85,182 against the authorised capacity of 1,59,158. This leads to the lack of basic facilities to prisoners such as sanitation, food and health care in jails. It has also led to an increase in expenditure for jails.

- ◆ Re-integration of women in society is a grave problem, due to the stigma attached to incarceration. In the study conducted by MWCD, it was found that in many cases, women were abandoned by their families and were left to fend for themselves after their release.
- ◆ It is widely known that women in prisons face greater hardships than their male counterparts due to many factors such as social stigma, financial dependence on their families or husbands etc. These difficulties are further exacerbated when the woman has children.

2. Wage Compensation Scheme for Pregnant Women

The government of Assam has launched a compensation scheme to bring down the mortality rate among pregnant women in tea garden areas of the state. The scheme is aimed at providing better health and nutrition supplements to the pregnant women. It stresses on providing proper



healthcare facilities to the pregnant women working in the tea gardens of the state.

Under the scheme, each pregnant woman in tea gardens will get a sum of Rs 12,000 so that she can take better care of herself and her unborn baby without compromising the livelihood of her family. The first instalment of Rs 2,000 will be provided during the Ante-Natal Check-up (ANC) registration within the first trimester, second instalment of Rs 4000 during the sixth month of the pregnancy, the third instalment of Rs 3000 during delivery

at a government-approved health institution and the fourth installment of Rs 3,000 during the sixth week post-delivery.

Why?

Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) of the state was 480 in the year 2004-06 and that figure has come down to 237. But in tea garden areas MMR is still 404 and tea gardens in the districts of Tinsukia, Dibrugarh and Sivasagar account for the highest number maternal deaths in the state.

3. Food Security Scheme in Odisha

The government of Odisha has launched its own food security scheme on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti. It will provide subsidised rice to the poor and distressed persons not covered under National Food Security Act (NFSA). The scheme will cover 25 lakh people who will be provided five kg of rice each per month at Rs. 1 per kg.

Households having persons aged 60 or above with no regular support and assured means of subsistence

will receive benefit from the scheme. Households, where no adult member is available due to old age, lack of physical or mental fitness and social customs to care for disabled persons and engage in gainful employment will be also covered.

- ◆ The distribution of rice to selected beneficiaries will be carried out through e-Point of sale (e-Pos) device at the designated fair price shops.



- ◆ The state government had decided to launch its own food security scheme after the Centre did not respond to its request to add additional beneficiaries under the NFSA. ■

4. First Global Skills Park

India and Asian Development Bank (ADB) has signed a \$150 million loan agreement to establish the country's first multi-skills park in Madhya Pradesh to create a more skilled workforce. The Global Skills Park (GSP), to be set up in Bhopal, will help enhance the quality of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system in the state.

- ◆ The campus will consist of core advanced training institutes including the Center for Occupational Skills Acquisition and the Center for Advanced Agricultural Training as well as other support services focusing

on entrepreneurship, training of trainers and skill-related research.

- ◆ The campus will have training facilities focusing on skills for manufacturing, service and advanced agricultural jobs, benefitting about 20,000 trainees and trainers.
- ◆ The Madhya Pradesh Skills Development Project will also help in modernising 10 industrial training institutes across the state by renovating training infrastructure and upgrading skills courses to align with industry and market needs.

Background

Madhya Pradesh has one of the largest working-age populations in India, with the labour force expected to expand from 48 million in 2016 to 56 million in 2026. However, not a lot of them have the necessary skills and training that can meet the employment needs of the state's emerging sectors. More than 55 percent of the state's workforce is currently in agriculture, while 22 percent is in industry and 23 percent in services. The percentage of people in the workforce that has undergone any formal vocational training is just 1.2 percent. ■

5. 4th India International Science Festival-2018

4th India International Science Festival (IISF), 2018 was organized by Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Earth Sciences in association with VijnanaBharati at Indira Gandhi Pratishthan, Lucknow during 5th-8th October, 2018. Theme of the event was "Science for Transformation". More than 8,000 delegates from across the country took part in the fourth edition this mega science expo. At this event an attempt was made by about 500 students to isolate DNA.

About IISF

The Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Earth Sciences and VijnanaBharati (VIBHA) have come together to organize the IISF every year, since 2015 to encourage scientific temper among the masses and showcasing Indian contribution in the field of S&T over the years. Through this festival, the largest of its kind in the country and in this region, it is expected that the message of excitement of Science

and scientific temper will be spread to the students and will be inspiring for the youth.

- ◆ The 1st IISF was held at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) New Delhi in December, 2015.
- ◆ The 2nd IISF was held at CSIR-National Physical Laboratory, New Delhi in December, 2016.
- ◆ The 3rd series of IISF was held from 13th-16th October 2017, Chennai, Tamil Nadu. ■

6. DigiYatra Initiative

Ministry of Civil Aviation has released policy on biometric based digital processing of passengers at airports called DigiYatra. With this initiative, ticket booking, airport entry and boarding pass security check-in will be made digital. The initiative seeks to promote paperless and hassle-free air travel. There would be one-time verification at the departure airport while travelling for the first time using the ID. After successful verification, facial recognition biometric would be captured and stored in the DigiYatra ID.

With this initiative, ministry is looking to make ticket booking, airport entry and boarding pass security

check-in digital. The technology will soon be operational at Bengaluru and Hyderabad airports. The Airports Authority of India (AAI) is planning to roll out the initiative at Kolkata, Varanasi, Pune and Vijayawada airports by April next year.

Key Features

- ◆ The airline would share the passenger data and the ID with the airport from where the passenger would be flying out.
- ◆ Optionally linking of Aadhaar to airlines at the time of booking for faster airport entry and automated

check-ins without requiring any paper-based interventions.

- ◆ A biometrics-based digital processing system for passenger entry and related requirements at the airport.
- ◆ Voluntary for passengers on whether to opt for facial recognition biometric for air travel.
- ◆ The DigiYatra platform would be operational by February 2019.
- ◆ Real-time notifications about congestion and delays of flights.
- ◆ Passengers would be notified when their luggage reaches the baggage claim belt. ■

7. Methanol Cooking Fuel Program of India

Assam Petro-chemicals, a state-owned company has launched Asia's first cannisters based and India's first "Methanol Cooking Fuel Program".

- ◆ Under the pilot project, stove and methanol canister will be made available in a limited scale. The methanol cooking fuel will be available in canisters of 1.2 kg capacity each, which will be priced at around Rs 32 and around 18 of them would be equivalent to one conventional domestic LPG cylinder.
- ◆ The cooking medium can directly substitute LPG, Kerosene, Wood,

Charcoal and any other fuel for cooking. The gaseous form, Methanol - DME, can be blended in 20% ratio with LPG. LPG-DME blending program is expected to kickstart in the country by next year.

- ◆ In contrast to the present cooking fuel, which is used in liquefied gas form, the methanol fuel will come in vapour form. Unlike LPG, which can explode if it catches fire, the methanol canister will burn out without any explosion.
- ◆ The technology for the canister and the special burner has been

nations. As much as 10% of fuel in China's transport sector is based on methanol.

Methanol has the potential to be an enduring solution to human energy needs is because the belched out CO₂ (greenhouse gas emission) both from using Methanol and while producing Methanol can be tapped back to produce Methanol. Thereby a seamless loop of CO₂ sequestration cycle is created to perpetually burn fuels without polluting the environment at all. CO₂ from steel plants, thermal power plants, cement plants etc. can be tapped in large quantities to produce Methanol.

provided by Sweden. Initially the product will be made available for the North-Eastern region.

- ◆ The concept of 'Methanol Economy' is being actively pursued by China, Italy, Sweden, Israel, US, Australia, Japan and many other European

Through the 'Methanol Economy' programme, the NITI Aayog has been working on a roadmap to replace 20% of the country's crude imports methanol alone. Methanol will not only mitigate the ever-rising price of fuels, including that of cooking fuel, but will also bring down pollution in the country by over 40%. ■



INTERNATIONAL

1. NAFTA deal now USMCA

The US, Canada and Mexico struck a new trade deal to replace North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). It's known as the United States - Mexico - Canada Agreement (USMCA). The three countries reached a consensus after more than a year of talks. It's basically NAFTA 2.0, with major changes on cars and new policies on labor and environmental standards, intellectual property protections and some digital trade provisions.

Key Changes

Country of origin rules: Automobiles must have 75 percent of their components manufactured in Mexico, the US, or Canada to qualify for zero tariffs (up from 62.5 percent under NAFTA).

Labor provisions: 40 to 45 percent of automobile parts have to be made by workers who earn at least \$16 an

hour by 2023. Mexico has also agreed to pass laws giving workers the right to union representation, extend labor protections to migrant workers and protect women from discrimination. The countries can also sanction one another for labor violations.

US farmers get more access to the Canadian dairy market: The US got Canada to open up its dairy market to US farmers, which was a big issue for Trump.

Intellectual property and digital trade: The deal extends the terms of copyright to 70 years beyond the life of the author (up from 50). It also extends the period that a pharmaceutical drug can be protected from generic competition.

It also includes new provisions to deal with the digital economy, including prohibiting duties on things

like music and e-books and protections for internet companies so they're not liable for content their users produce.

No section 232 tariff protections: Section 232 is a trade loophole that Trump has used to impose steel and aluminum tariffs on Canada, Mexico and the European Union. Both Canada and Mexico wanted protections from these tariffs, but they didn't get them. They did get the US to make a side agreement that protects them from possible auto tariffs under 232, though.

Sunset clause: The agreement puts in a 16-year "sunset" clause — meaning the terms of the agreement expire, or "sunset," after a set period of time. The deal is also subject to a review every six years, at which point the US, Mexico and Canada can decide to extend USMCA.

2. World's First Hyperloop Passenger Capsule Unveiled

Hyperloop Transportation Technologies Inc. unveiled its first full-scale passenger capsule, offering the world a peek at the future of travel. The capsule, 105 feet (32 meters) long and weighing 5 tons, was shown in Spain and will be moved to Toulouse, France, for additional assembly before it's used on one of the first commercial tracks.



Hyperloop is a technology that gained popularity after billionaire Elon Musk touted it in 2013, prompting several companies to join the race to build a high-speed transportation system. It envisages moving passengers in capsules at speeds of more than 750 miles (1,200 kilometers) per hour through low-pressure tubes, in order to reduce friction. The technology will be able to propel trains faster than existing methods such as the Maglev, which uses a levitation technology to lift the train cars above a track to eliminate surface drag.

◆ In May, HyperloopTT had proposed to set up the Hyperloop

transportation system in Andhra Pradesh, connecting Anantapur, Amaravati, Vijayawada and Visakhapatnam as part of 700-800-km-long integrated public transit system.

- ◆ The Maharashtra government too had signed a pact with the Richard Branson-led Virgin Group to build the Mumbai-Pune Hyperloop.
- ◆ Hyperloop TT is also set to build the first Hyperloop system in China as the company struck a deal in the country to build a test track in Guizhou province.

3. Government E-Payments Adoption Ranking- 2018

Visa, a global leader in payments technology has released Government E-Payments Adoption Ranking (GEAR)-2018 study. This is the third edition of the study after those in 2007 and 2011.

The 2018 GEAR, an Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) global Index and benchmarking study commissioned by Visa, ranks governments by quantifying their e-payment capabilities based on various indicators. The EIU evaluates the extent to which major countries around the world have adopted e-payment systems, based on the digital platform and according to seven

criteria — Citizen-to-Government (C2G), Government - to - Citizen (G2C), Business - to - Government (B2G), Government - to - Business (G2B) transactions, infrastructure, socio-economic and policy environments. Norway tops the GEAR list scoring 89.7 points in seven categories.

India's Performance

India's rank has notched up eight positions, from 36th in 2011, reinforcing the country's progress towards digital transformation. India leads the Business to Government category, along with Australia, Singapore and South Korea.

The category refers to the ease with which businesses can calculate and make their tax payments, register and renew their registrations online and digitally calculate their pension fund contributions, thereby making those payments on a periodic basis. At the same time, by simplifying refund and loan application processes, wherein businesses can track status digitally, coupled with dedicated digital portals to submit proposals for government procurement services, India leads the Government to Business category as well. ■

4. Nobel Peace Prize- 2018

The Nobel Peace Prize 2018 was jointly awarded to Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad on October 5, 2018, for their efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon. Both laureates have made a crucial contribution to focusing attention on and combating, such war crimes. Murad becomes the 17th woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize and is its second-youngest

recipient after Malala Yousafzai.

Mukwege, a gynecologist and surgeon, has long worked to treat thousands of women and girls affected by rape and sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Murad is a Yazidi woman from the Northern Iraqi town of Sinjar, who was held as a sex slave by ISIS. In 2016, at age 23, she was made a UN goodwill



ambassador for the dignity of survivors of human trafficking. ■

5. Russian Arctic route

A Danish-flagged cargo ship has successfully passed through the Russian Arctic, in a trial voyage showing that melting sea ice could potentially open a new trade route from Europe to East Asia.

The Northern Sea route could be a shorter journey for ships travelling from East Asia to Europe than the Northwest Passage over Canada because it will likely be free of ice sooner due to climate change.

It could reduce the travel distance from East Asia to Europe from the 21,000 kilometres (13,000 miles) it takes to go via the Suez Canal, to

12,800 kilometres (8,000 miles). This would cut transit time by 10 to 15 days.

About Arctic

The Arctic contains a wealth of petroleum and mineral resources. Currently, the region produces about one tenth of the world's oil and a quarter of its natural gas. The Russian Arctic is the source for about 80% of this oil and virtually all of the natural gas. The most developed sector of the region, the Russian Arctic also holds abundant deposits of nickel, copper, coal, gold, uranium, tungsten and diamonds.

About Northern Sea Route

There are five important arctic shipping passages viz. Northeast Passage, Northwest Passage, Transpolar Sea Route, Northern Sea Route and Arctic Bridge. The Northern Sea Route is a shipping lane between the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean along the Russian coast of Siberia and the far East, crossing five Arctic Seas: the Barents Sea, the Kara Sea, the Laptev Sea, the East Siberian Sea and the Chukchi Sea. Today, the passage is only feasible for around three months a year which may change with time. ■

6. Operation Samudra Maitri

India has launched a massive operation to provide assistance to the earthquake and tsunami victims in Indonesia, dispatching two aircrafts and three naval ships carrying relief material to the country. 'Operation Samudra Maitri' for humanitarian assistance



was launched after a telephonic conversation between Prime Minister of India and Indonesian President on October 1st and following Indonesia's acceptance of international aid.

The C-130J aircraft is carrying a medical team along with tents and equipments to set up a field hospital. The C-17 aircraft is carrying medicines, generators, tents and water to provide immediate assistance.

Three Indian Navy ships - INS Tir, INS Sujatha and INS Shardul, have also been mobilised to carry out

humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR).

Background

More than 5,000 people could still be missing in Indonesia, following a powerful earthquake that hit the island of Sulawesi on September 28th, 2018. The confirmed death toll from the quake has now reached 1,763 and number of dead is expected to climb. An estimated 2.4 million people were affected, 61,867 displaced and 66,000 homes destroyed. ■

7. Gita Gopinath Appointed Chief Economist at IMF

Gita Gopinath has been named as Chief Economist of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), becoming the second Indian to be appointed to the position. Former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Raghuram Rajan had served as Chief Economist of the IMF.

Gopinath would succeed Maurice (Maury) Obstfeld, who is to retire at the end of 2018. Currently, Gopinath is the John Zwaanstra Professor of International Studies and Economics at Harvard University.

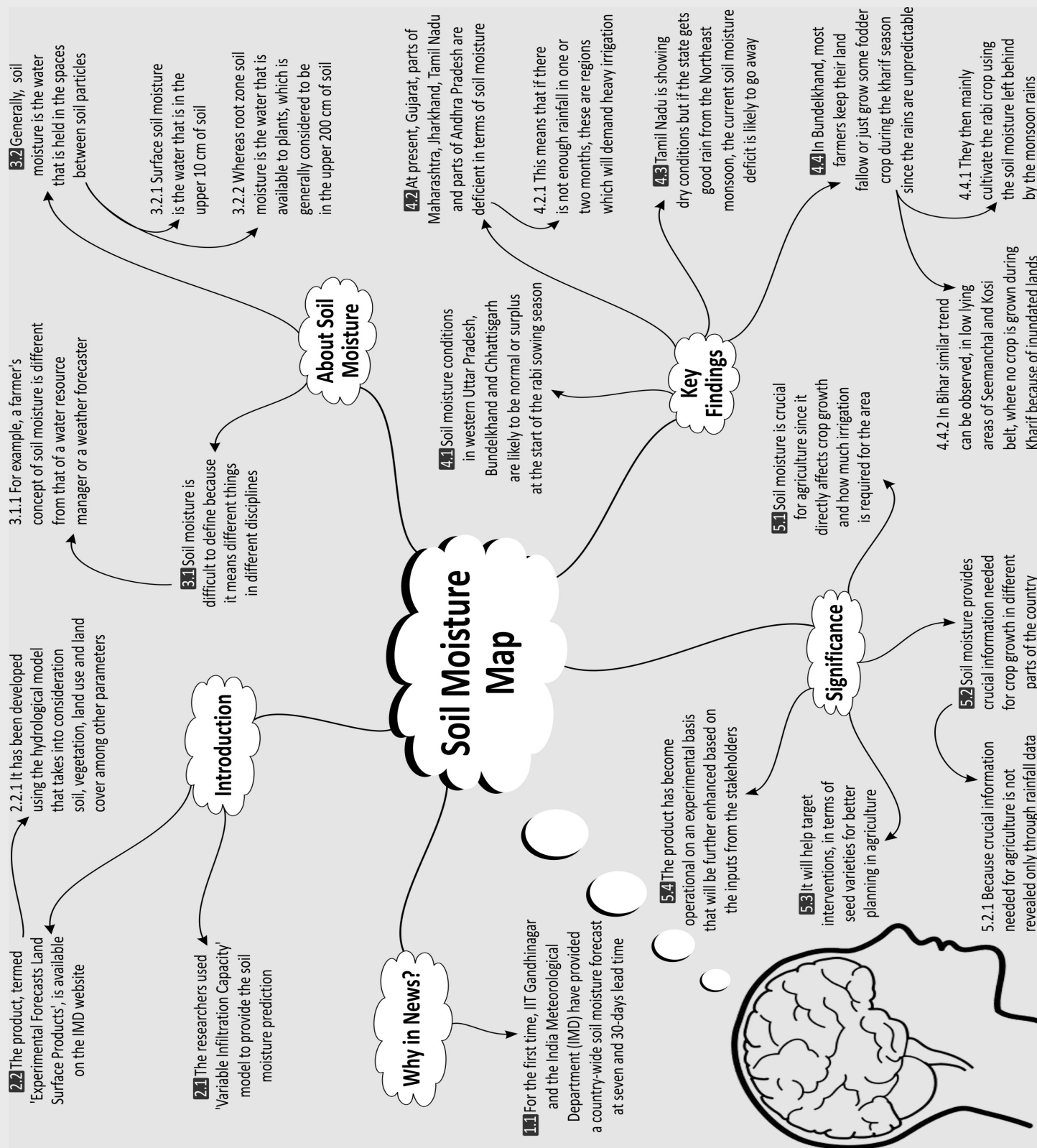
About IMF

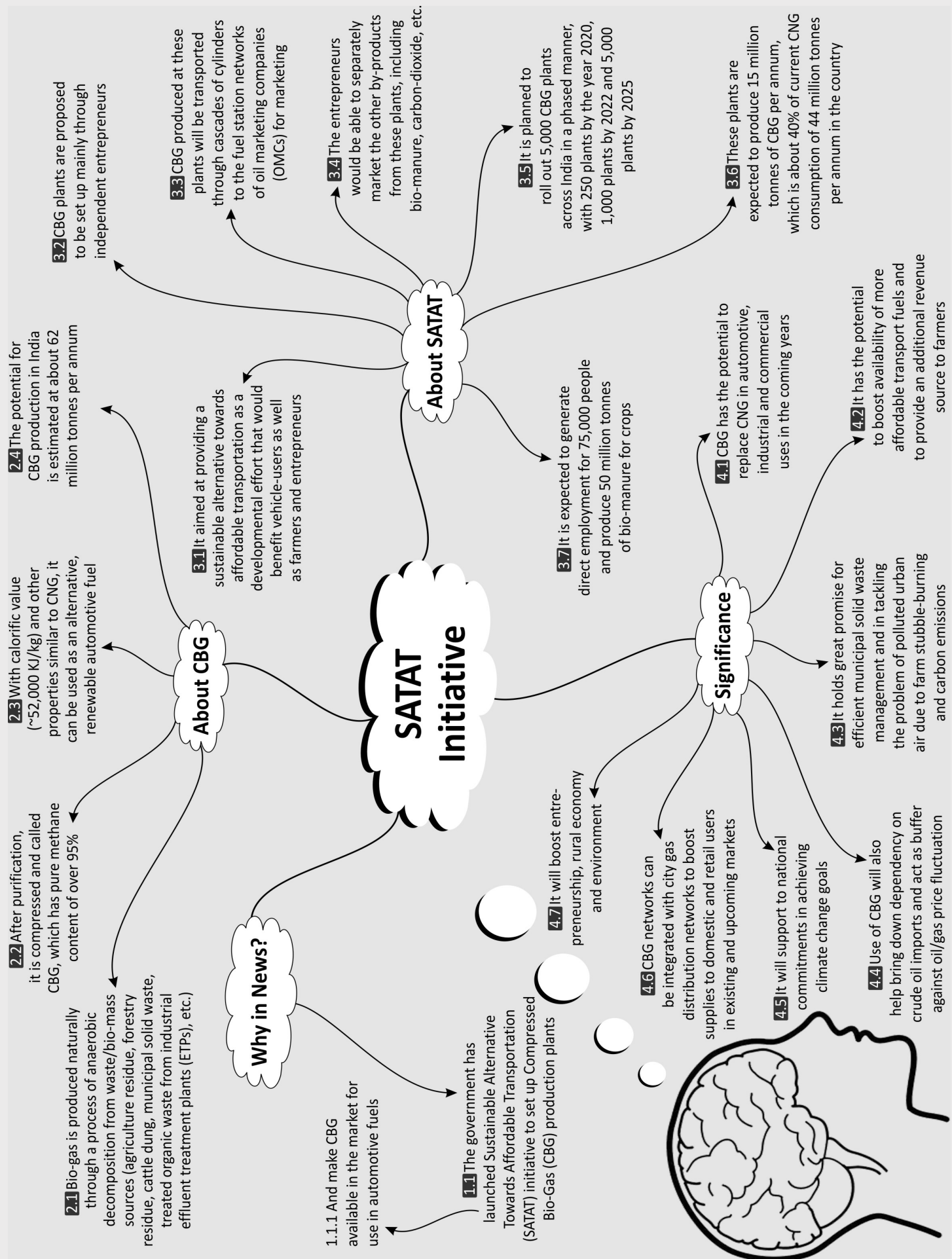
It was created in 1945. It is governed by and accountable to the 189 countries that make up its near-global membership. The IMF's primary purpose is to ensure the stability of the international monetary system—the system of exchange rates and international payments that enables countries (and their citizens) to transact with each other. It is working to foster global monetary cooperation, secure financial stability, facilitate international

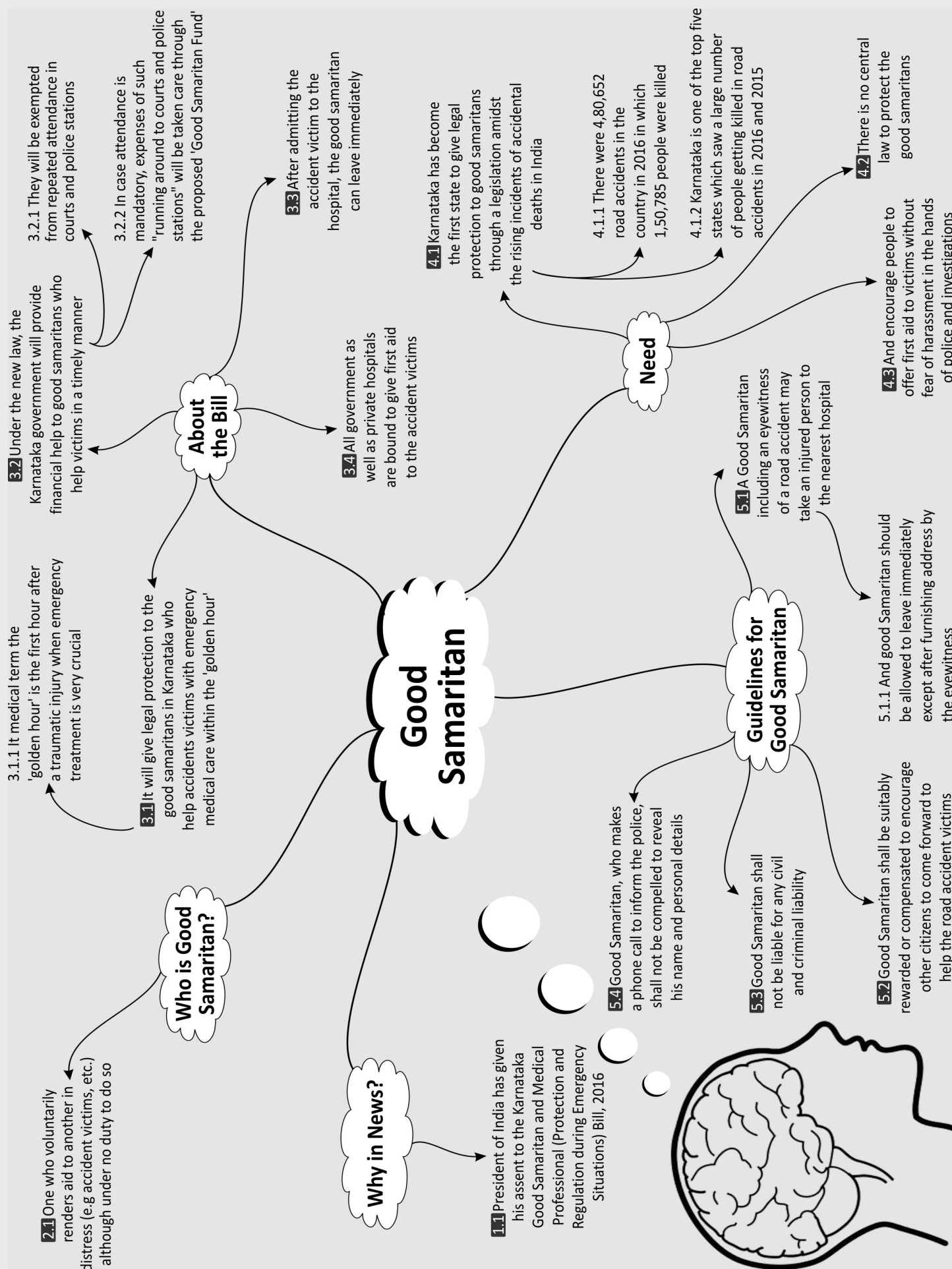
trade, promote high employment and sustainable economic growth and reduce poverty around the world.

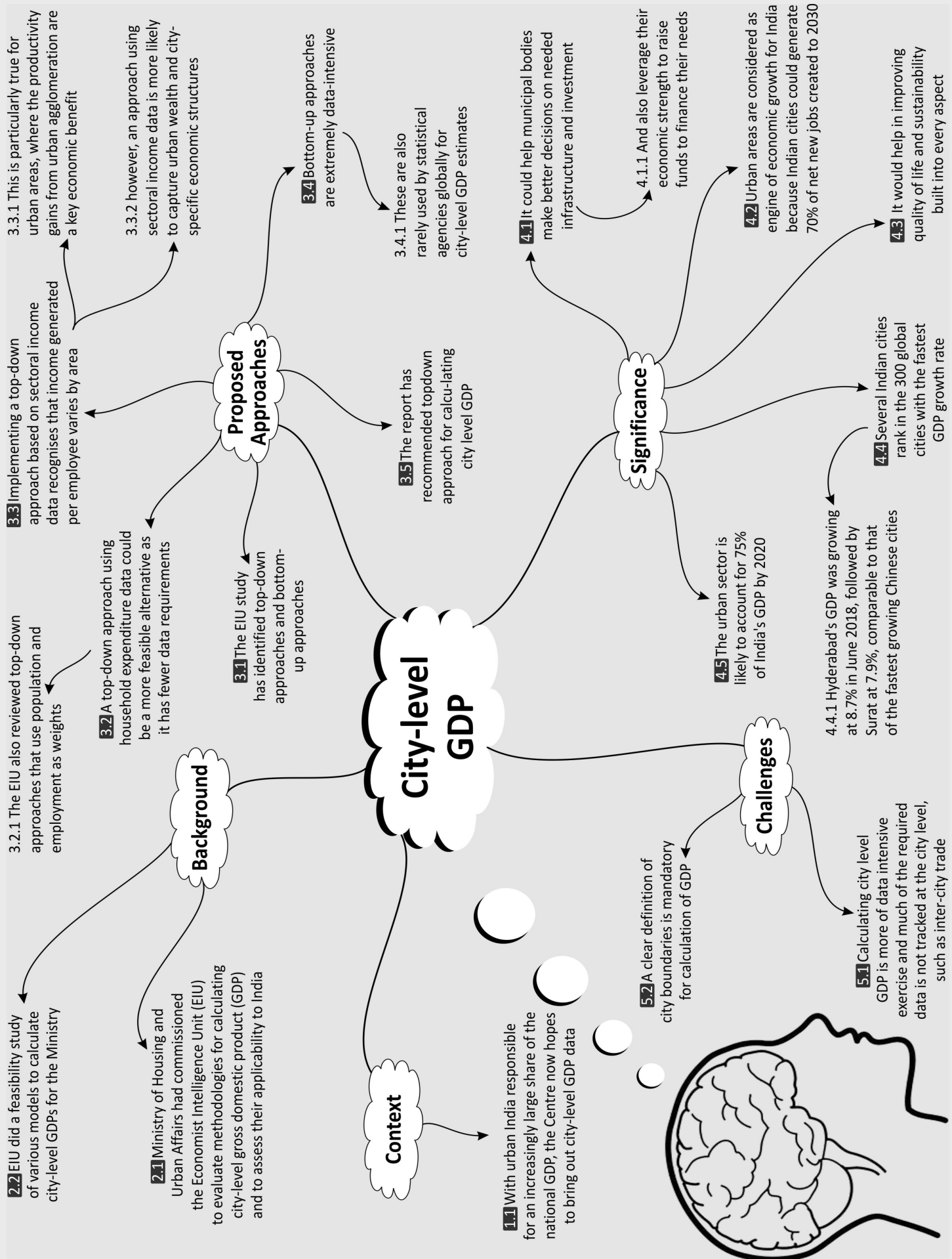
- ◆ The SDR is an international reserve asset, created by the IMF in 1969 to supplement its member countries' official reserves.
- ◆ Managing director of the IMF- Christine Lagarde

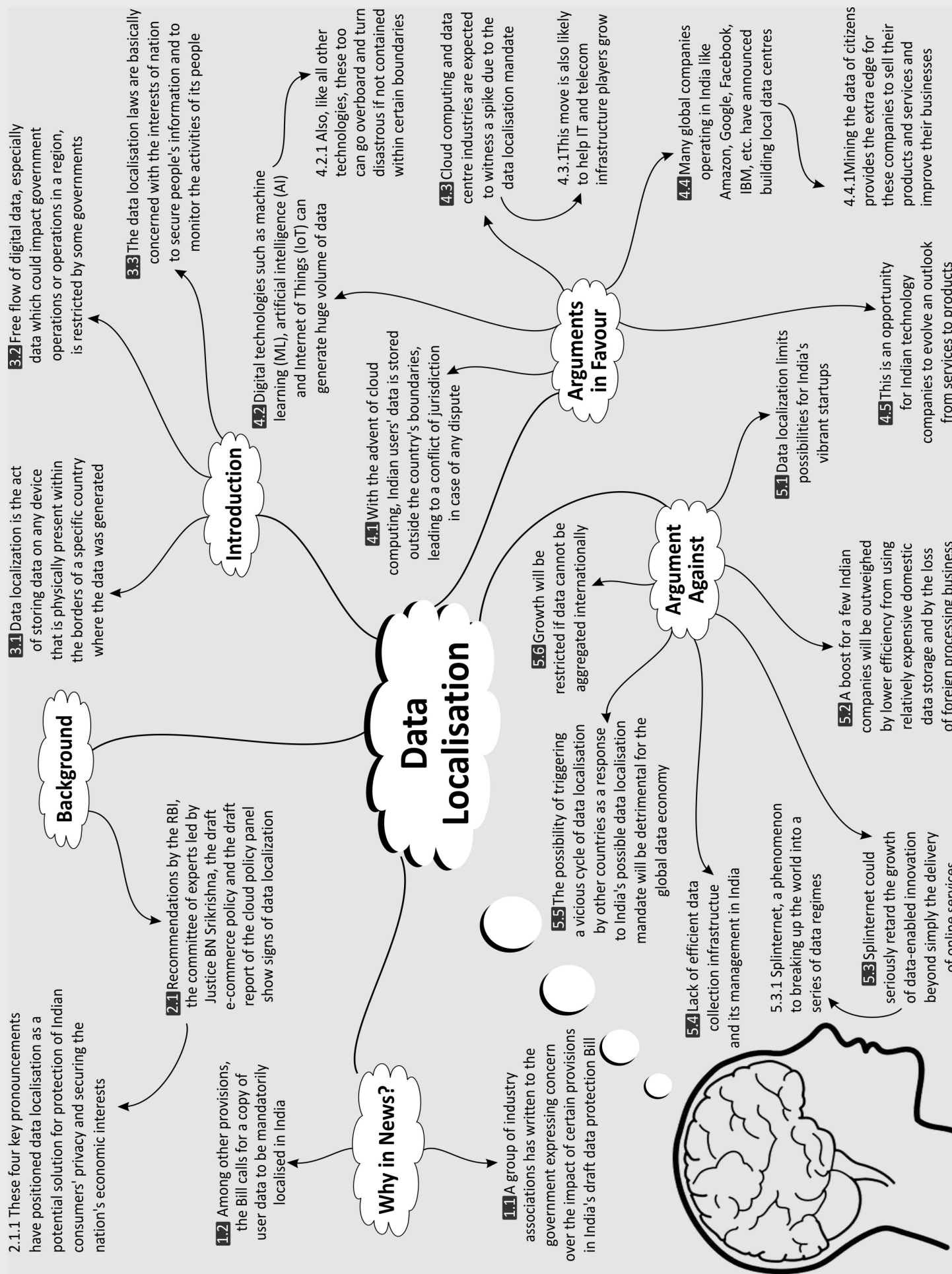
SEVEN BRAIN BOOSTERS

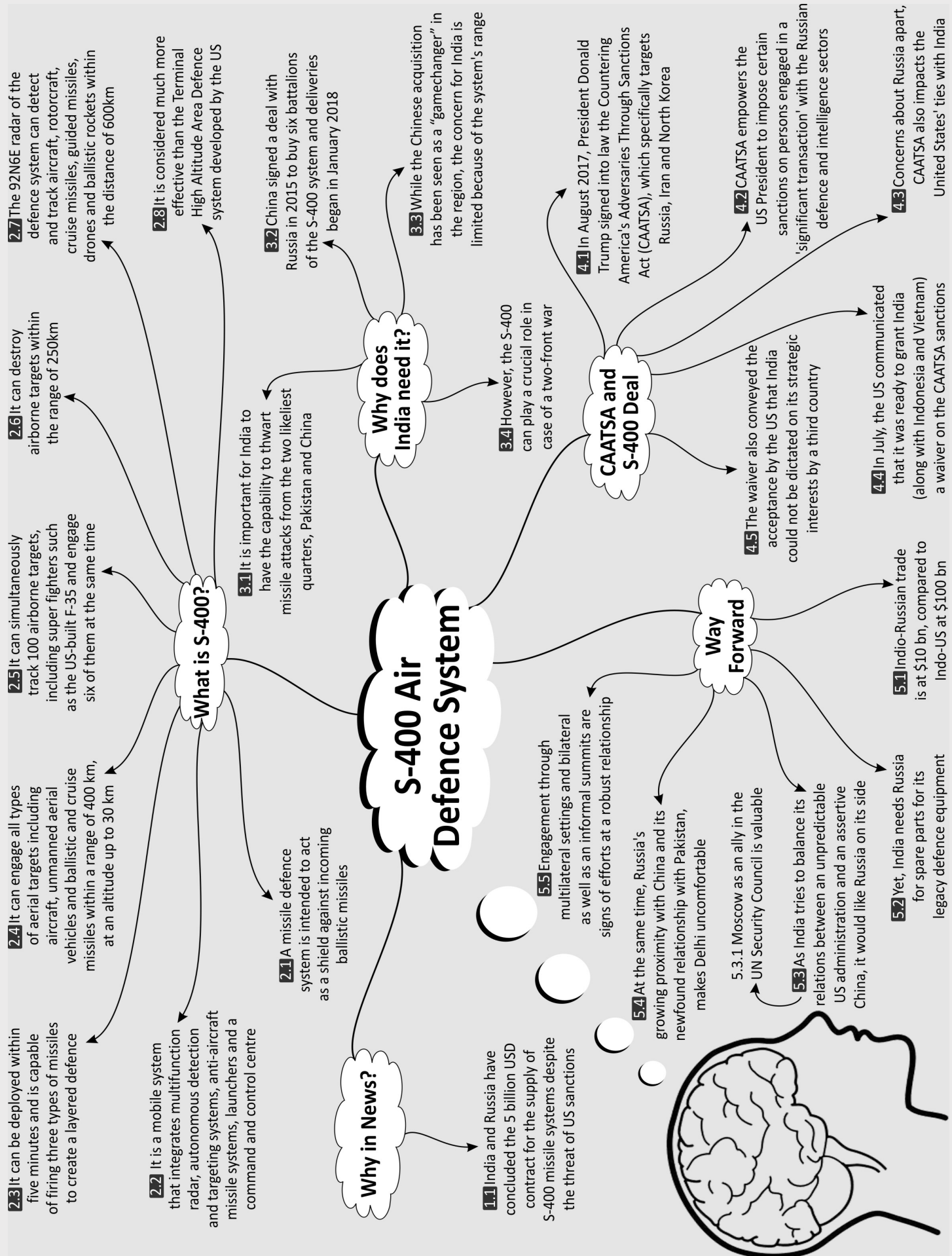


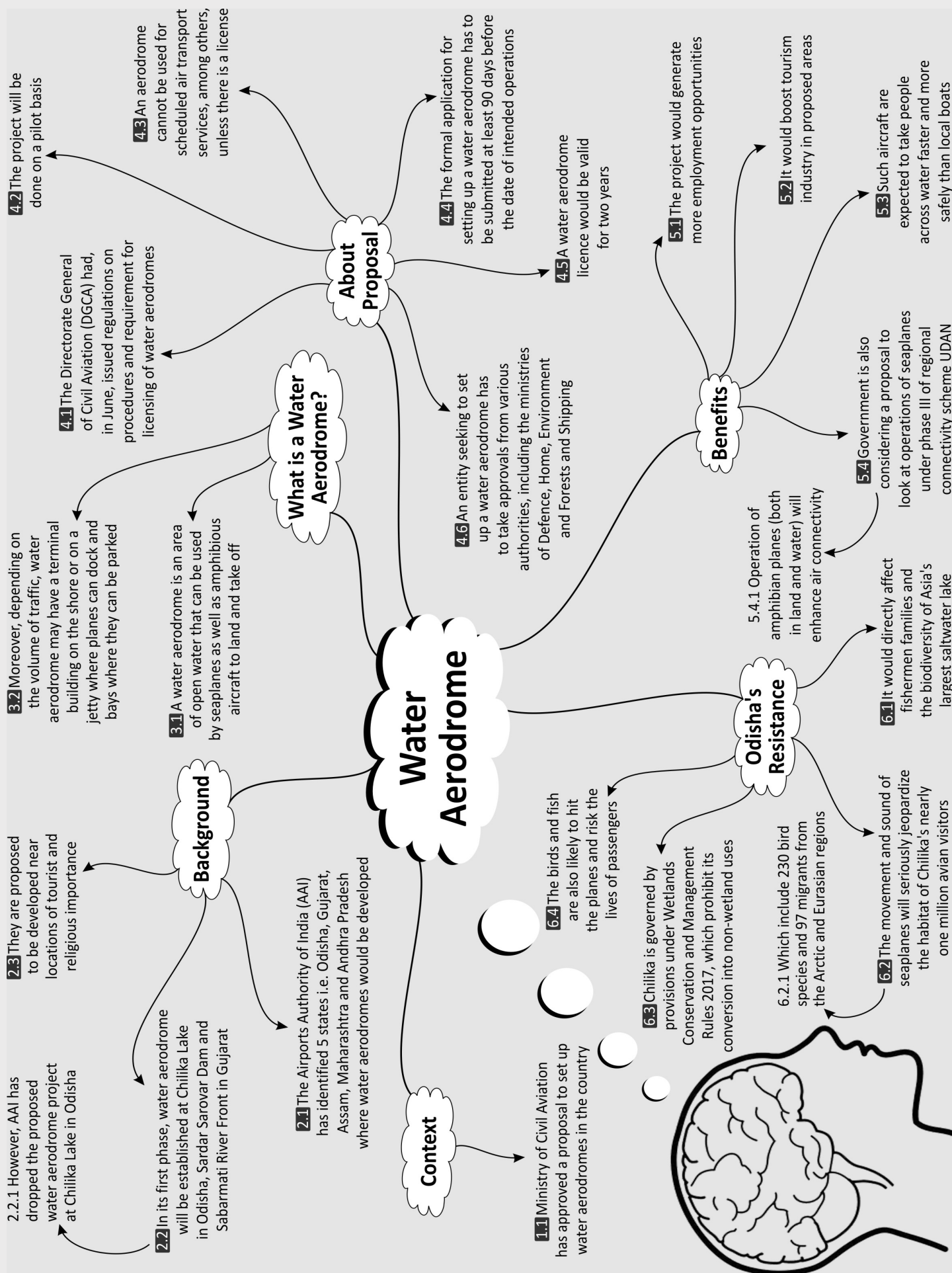












SEVEN MCQ's WITH EXPLANATORY ANSWERS

(Based on Brain Boosters)

Soil Moisture Map

Q1. Consider the following statements in respect of 'soil moisture map':

1. It has been provided by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) every year.
2. Soil moisture provides crucial information needed for crop growth in different parts of the country.

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. For the first time, IIT Gandhinagar and the India Meteorological Department (IMD) have provided a country-wide soil moisture forecast at seven and 30-day lead times.

Statement 2 is correct. Soil moisture is crucial for agriculture since it directly affects crop growth and how much irrigation is required for the area. Soil moisture provides crucial information needed for crop growth in different parts of the country because crucial information needed for agriculture is not revealed only through rainfall data.

SATAT Initiative

Q2. Consider the statements in respect of Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT) initiative:

1. It proposed to set up Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) production plants and make available CBG in the market for use in automotive fuels.
2. CBG is exactly similar to the commercially available natural gas in its composition and energy potential.

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 has launched Sustainable Alternative

Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT) Initiative to set up Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) production plants and make available CBG in the market for use in automotive fuels. CBG is exactly similar to the commercially available natural gas in its composition and energy potential. With calorific value (~52,000 KJ/kg) and other properties similar to CNG, CBG can be used as an alternative and renewable automotive fuel.

Good Samaritan

Q3. Consider the following statements in respect of 'Good Samaritan':

1. Karnataka has become the first state to give legal protection to good samaritans through a legislation.
2. At national level, government of India is also protecting good samaritans through a legislation.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (a)

Explanation: Statement 1 is correct. Karnataka has become the first state to give legal protection to good samaritans through a legislation amidst the rising incidents of accidental deaths in India.

Statement 2 is not correct. There is no central law to protect the good samaritans. However, the government had issued a set of guidelines in 2015 following a Supreme Court order to protect the good samaritans.

City-level GDP

Q4. With reference to the city level GDP, consider the following statements:

1. The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) did a feasibility study of various models to calculate city-level GDPs for Indian cities.
2. City-level GDP data could help municipal bodies make better decisions on needed infrastructure and investment and also leverage their economic strength to raise funds to finance their needs.

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. Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs had commissioned the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) to evaluate methodologies for calculating city-level gross domestic product (GDP) and to assess their applicability to India.

It could help municipal bodies make better decisions on needed infrastructure and investment and also leverage their economic strength to raise funds to finance their needs. It would help in improving quality of life and sustainability built into every aspect.

Data Localisation

Q5. With reference to the data localisation, consider the following statements:

1. Data localisation is the act of storing data on any device that is physically present within the borders of a specific country where the data was generated.
2. Data localisation is gaining significant momentum in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (c)

Explanation: Both statements are correct. Data localisation or the mandate by a sovereign government for collection, processing and storage of all data that originate first within its own national boundaries is gaining significant momentum in India.

Recently, recommendations by the RBI, the committee of experts led by Justice BN Srikrishna, the draft ecommerce policy and the draft report of the cloud policy panel show signs of data localisation are key pronouncements have positioned data localisation as a potential solution for protection of Indian consumers' privacy and securing the nation's economic interests.

S-400 Air Defence System

Q6. Consider the following statements in respect of S-400 missile system:

1. India and the USA have concluded the contract for the supply of S-400 missile systems.

2. It can engage all types of aerial targets including aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles and ballistic and cruise missiles within a range of 400 km, at an altitude up to 30 km.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Answer: (b)

Explanation: Statement 1 is not correct. India and Russia has concluded the contract for the supply of S-400 missile systems despite the threat of US sanctions. The deal has been pegged at a whopping Rs 39,000 crore (USD 5 billion) - this is arguably one of the costliest purchases in this category that India has ever gone for.

Statement 2 is correct. It can engage all types of aerial targets including aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles and ballistic and cruise missiles within a range of 400 km, at an altitude up to 30 km. It can destroy airborne targets within the range of 250km.

Water Aerodrome

Q7. Consider the following statements in respect of 'water aerodrome':

1. Ministry of Civil Aviation and Ministry of Shipping have approved a proposal to set up water aerodromes in the country.
2. A water aerodrome is an area of open water that can be used by seaplanes as well as amphibious aircraft to land and take off.

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 civil aviation ministry has approved a proposal to set up water aerodromes in the country, and has identified Chilika Lake in Odisha, Sardar Sarovar Dam and Sabarmati River Front in Gujarat in the first phase for the development of such facilities. However, AAI has dropped the proposed water aerodrome project at Chilika Lake in Odisha.

Statement 2 is correct. A water aerodrome is an area of open water that can be used by seaplanes as well as amphibious aircraft to land and take off.



SEVEN IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIMS

1. Who was awarded the 2018 Nobel Prize in Chemistry?
–Frances H. Arnold (USA) for the directed evolution of enzymes
–George P. Smith (USA) and Sir Gregory P. Winter (UK)
for the phage display of peptides and antibodies
2. Who was awarded the 2018 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences?
–William D. Nordhaus (USA) for integrating climate change
into long-run macroeconomic analysis
–Paul M. Romer (USA) for integrating technological
innovations into long-run macroeconomic analysis
3. India's first Dolphin Research Centre will be set up in which city?
–Patna (Bihar)
4. Which state has launched 'Nirman Kusuma' scheme to provide financial assistance to the children of the construction workers?
–Odisha
5. Which player has won first Youth Olympics gold for India?
–Jeremy Lalrinnunga (Weightlifting)
6. Which athlete won Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna-2018 award along with Virat Kohli?
–S. Mirabai Chanu (Weightlifting)
7. Which state was awarded as the best state under the Swachh Survekshan Grameen Awards 2018?
–Haryana



SEVEN IMPORTANT SUMMITS

1. 18th Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit- 2018

- ◆ The 18th Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit was held in Qingdao, China from June 9th-10th, 2018.
- ◆ It was attended by eight full members, four observer countries, six dialogue partners and guest attendees from the UN, CIS, ASEAN & Turkmenistan.
- ◆ China being the host country, President Xi Jinping chaired the summit.
- ◆ This was the fourth occasion when China has chaired and hosted the summit.
- ◆ At this summit, for the first time India has participated as a full time member.
- ◆ Prime Minister Modi spoke about the concept of SECURE: 'S' for security for citizens, 'E' for economic development, 'C' for connectivity in the region, 'U' for unity, 'R' for respect of sovereignty and integrity and 'E' for environment protection.
- ◆ **Member states:** China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India and Pakistan
- ◆ **Observer states:** Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran and Mongolia
- ◆ **Dialogue partners:** Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Turkey
- ◆ The 19th SCO summit will be held in Kyrgyzstan in 2019.

2. 4th BIMSTEC Summit- 2018

- ◆ The 4th summit of BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) was held in Kathmandu, Nepal from August 30th-31st, 2018.
- ◆ The theme of summit was "Towards a Peaceful, Prosperous and Sustainable Bay of Bengal Region".
- ◆ It was chaired by Nepal Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli.
- ◆ 'Kathmandu Declaration' was unanimously adopted by the member states.
- ◆ A MoU was also signed on establishing a BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection to enhance energy cooperation among BIMSTEC member countries.
- ◆ India will host International Buddhist Conclave in August 2020 and invited all BIMSTEC member states to attend the event as guest of honour.
- ◆ India will establish a 'Center for Bay of Bengal Studies' at Nalanda University for research on arts, culture, maritime law and other subjects in the Bay of Bengal region.
- ◆ **Member states:** India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bhutan and Nepal
- ◆ The next summit is proposed in Sri Lanka.

3. 10th BRICS Summit- 2018

- ◆ 10th BRICS Summit was held in Johannesburg, South Africa from July 25th-27th, 2018.

- ◆ Theme of the summit was 'BRICS in Africa: Collaboration for inclusive growth and shared prosperity in the 4th Industrial Revolution'.
- ◆ 'Johannesburg Declaration' was adopted by member states.
- ◆ The leaders reaffirmed their commitment to fully implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- ◆ Member states welcomed the hosting of the BRICS-Africa Outreach and second BRICS Plus Cooperation with Emerging Markets and Developing Countries (EMDCs).
- ◆ Member states also called for expeditious finalisation and adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) by the United Nations General Assembly.
- ◆ 11th BRICS summit will be held in Brazil in 2019.

4. 44th G7 Summit 2018

- ◆ The 44th G7 Summit was held on June 8th-9th in Quebec, Canada.
- ◆ This was the sixth opportunity when Canada hosted the summit.
- ◆ For the first time in the last 44 years, the G7 will have a 'Gender Equality Advisory Council'.
- ◆ The theme of women's empowerment is expected to dominate discussions.
- ◆ Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, French President Emmanuel Macron, US President Donald Trump, British Prime Minister Theresa May, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte, attended the G-7 Summit.
- ◆ The European Union was represented by the European Commission President Jean Claude Juncker and European Council President Donald Tusk.

- ◆ The summit received much attention due to a significant decline of relations of members with the United States.
- ◆ As a result, the summit was dubbed the "G6+1".
- ◆ The 45th G7 summit will be held in France in 2019.

5. Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting- 2018

- ◆ The 25th Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 2018, also known as CHOGM 2018, was held in the United Kingdom on 19th-20th April 2018.
- ◆ Theme of the meeting was 'Towards a Common Future'.
- ◆ During CHOGM 2018, Commonwealth Blue Charter on ocean governance Commonwealth connectivity agenda for trade and investment, declaration on cybercrime and revised Commonwealth guidelines on election observation in member countries were taken into consideration.
- ◆ It was the first Commonwealth summit after the United Kingdom was separated from the European Union.
- ◆ Member states has showed commitment to ratifying and implementing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), through legislation, policies and programmes that mainstream and promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in social, economic and political life.
- ◆ With the goal of expanding investment and boosting intra-Commonwealth trade to US\$2 Trillion by 2030, member states adopted a Declaration on the Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda for Trade and Investment.

- ◆ Prime Minister Narendra Modi represented India at this Commonwealth summit.
- ◆ 26th CHOGM is proposed in 2020 at Rwanda.
- ◆ 27th CHOGM is proposed in 2022 at Samoa.

6. 1st International Solar Alliance Summit- 2018

- ◆ It was held in New Delhi, India on 11th March, 2018.
- ◆ The summit was co-hosted by President of India Ram Nath Kovind and his French counterpart President Emmanuel Macron.
- ◆ It was attended by 47 countries with several top ministers and bureaucrats apart from participants from multilateral banks and United Nations.
- ◆ Delhi Solar Agenda was launched at summit.
- ◆ It states that countries will pursue increased share of solar energy in final energy consumption in their respective national energy mix to tackle global challenges of climate change.
- ◆ Prime Minister Narendra Modi shared 10 action points on solar energy.
- ◆ ISA is an alliance of more than 121 countries, which lie either completely or partly between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn.

- ◆ The primary objective of the alliance is to work for efficient exploitation of solar energy to reduce dependence on fossil fuels.
- ◆ Myanmar is the latest country to join this alliance.

7. 3rd Indian Ocean Conference- 2018

- ◆ The 3rd Indian Ocean Conference- 2018 was held in Hanoi, Vietnam on 27th-28th August, 2018.
- ◆ Theme of the event was "Building Regional Architectures".
- ◆ It was organized by the Bharat Foundation by the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam, S. Rajaratna School of International Studies (RSIS), Sri Lanka and Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies.
- ◆ Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj represented India at this conference.
- ◆ It was attended by 43 countries.
- ◆ Indian Ocean Conference has been initiated by Delhi based think tank India Foundation along with its partners from Singapore, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.
- ◆ Earlier, the conference was held in Singapore and Sri Lanka in 2016 and 2017 respectively.



SEVEN PRACTICE QUESTIONS FOR MAIN EXAM

Answer each of the following questions in 200 words:

- Q1. 'Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) are ideas that are proving to be the pivot of a digital revolution.' Discuss.
- Q2. UNIPCC has reported that the world could hit the 1.5°C mark as early as 2030, with any further rise having far-reaching consequences and also highlights the different pathways to limiting global warming. Discuss why it is important for local policymakers and administrators to complement the Centre's efforts.
- Q3. 'The escalation in oil and gas prices impacts both the current account and fiscal deficit.' Analyse.
- Q4. 'For Arab states, US support is not enough security against Iran. That is why they are inviting France and Britain back into the Persian Gulf.' Comment.
- Q5. Discuss why is India taking keen interest in resources of Arctic region?
- Q6. 'Communalism arises either due to power struggle or relative deprivation.' Argue by giving suitable illustrations.
- Q7. What is meant by public interest? What are the principles and procedures to be followed by the civil servants in public interest?

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