Syllabus subtopic: Structure, Organization and Functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary

Prelims and Mains focus: about the group: its mandate and significance

News: The Union Cabinet has approved the setting up of an empowered technology group to help address issues such as “sub-optimal industrial development”.

About the group

- The 12-member panel will be headed by the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA).

- The decision to set up such a group was based on recommendations of a committee led by the Principal Scientific Adviser.

- The Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) chairs the Prime Minister’s Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC), which includes industrialists, scientists and technocrats and is tasked with recommending policy action on science and technology as well as coordinating between different Ministries.

Mandate

- Among the key issues, the group will address is “dual-use technologies not being optimally commercialised”. Dual-use technologies have civilian and military applications.

- The group is expected to develop in-house expertise in aspects of policy and use of emerging technologies, and ensure sustainability of technology being developed at public sector organisations.
• The group would also work to

1. ensure that India had an updated map of technology and technology products available and being developed;
2. develop an “indigenisation road map” for selected key technologies;
3. encourage Union Ministries and departments and State governments to develop in-house expertise in policy; and
4. use aspects of emerging technologies.

• The group will also facilitate cross-sector collaborations and research alliances with universities and private companies and formulate “standards and a common vocabulary” to screen proposals for research and development.

Significance of the move

• Today, all the Ministries procure their own technology, but they don’t know if it’s the latest. This group will give advice to all ministries, agencies and PSUs.

• The move would be useful to coordinate research.