

# 09 Jul 2020: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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## B. GS 2 Related

### Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

#### 1. **Three NGOs linked to Congress under Home Ministry scanner**

##### What's in News?

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has constituted an inter-ministerial committee to probe alleged violation of various legal provisions by three NGOs — the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation (RGF), the Rajiv Gandhi Charitable Trust (RGCT) and the Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust (IGMT).

**Details:**

- The violations being probed pertain to the legal provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, the Income Tax Act and the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA).
  - As per the MHA website, both the RGF and the RGCT are registered FCRA associations, a pre-requisite for NGOs and other associations to receive foreign donations.
  - The Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust is not an FCRA registered association.

**Note:**

- Any NGO or association that intends to receive foreign funds has to compulsorily register under the FCRA, monitored by the Union Home Ministry.
- Under the 2010 Act, registered NGOs can receive foreign contributions for five purposes — social, educational, religious, economic and cultural.

Read more about the [Prevention of Money Laundering Act \(PMLA\)](#) and the [Foreign Contribution Regulation Act \(FCRA\)](#).

## 2. Rental housing scheme for migrants cleared

**Context:**

A scheme for providing affordable rental housing to about 3 lakh urban migrants has been approved by the Union Cabinet.

**Details:**

- The creation of affordable rental housing complexes was announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in May 2020 as a part of the package to address the COVID-19 crisis.
- Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHCs) scheme will be a sub-scheme of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban that is implemented by the Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry.
- The target beneficiaries would be workers who come from rural areas or towns to work in manufacturing, hospitality, health, construction, etc.
- Also, existing vacant government-funded housing complexes will be converted into ARHCs through a concession agreement for 25 years.

**Benefits:**

- ARHCs will create a new ecosystem in urban areas making housing available at affordable rent close to the place of work.
- Investment under ARHCs is expected to create new job opportunities. ARHCs will cut down unnecessary travel, congestion and pollution.

**Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

### 1. Trump starts withdrawal of U.S. from WHO

**Context:**

President Donald Trump has formally started the withdrawal of the U.S. from the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#).

- Trump had earlier issued threats to deprive the UN body (WHO) of its top funding source over its response to the coronavirus.
  - He had also threatened to suspend \$400 million in annual U.S. contributions.
- The withdrawal is effective in one year — July 6, 2021. And could be reversed by a new administration or if circumstances change.
- The U.S. is WHO's largest donor and provides it with more than \$450 million per year, but owes about \$200 million in current and past dues.

#### Concerns:

- WHO is the only body capable of leading and coordinating the global response to COVID-19. Terminating the US relationship would undermine the global effort to beat this virus and could jeopardize global health.

#### Details:

- Since assuming office in January 2017, Trump has pulled the US out of many global organisations and treaties — the most notable being the 2015 Paris Climate Accord and the Iran nuclear deal also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).
- He pulled out of Trans-Pacific Partnership.
  - The trade deal covered nearly 40 % of the world's economy and was negotiated by countries like the US, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Mexico, among others with an aim to boost growth, improve economic ties and reduce tariffs.
  - Following the US withdrawal, the remaining 11 countries renegotiated parts of the TPP and later signed the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), also known as TPP-11.
- Trump pulled the US out of [UNESCO](#) in 2017, citing anti-Israel bias as Washington was upset with UNESCO for granting full membership to Palestine.
- The US pulled out of the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2018 citing it as a hypocritical body that "makes a mockery of human rights."

## 2. UAE in support of open skies agreement with India

#### Context:

According to the UAE's ambassador to India A.R. Albanna, UAE is keen to have an open sky agreement with India.

#### Details:

- "You need to have an open sky policy. You cannot be protective and at the same time say you want to become a hub. Open sky policy and fifth and sixth freedoms are two separate issues," Mr. Albanna said
- India has an open skies policy with [SAARC](#) countries and those beyond the 5,000-km radius, which implies that nations within this distance need to enter into a bilateral agreement and mutually determine the number of flights that their airlines can operate between the two countries.
- It is this policy that the Ambassador wants India to revisit.

- The issue of fifth and sixth freedoms of air has been a sore point between airlines in India and the UAE.

### **Freedoms of the air:**

- The freedoms of the air are a set of commercial aviation rights granting a country's airlines the privilege to enter and land in another country's airspace.
- The first freedom of air allows a carrier to take off from its home state, the second freedom of air allows it to land in a second country.
- The third and fourth freedoms of air allow the airline to take off from the country it has landed in and come back to land at its home base.
- The fifth freedom allows an airline to carry revenue traffic between foreign countries as a part of services connecting the airline's own country. It is the right to carry passengers from one's own country to a second country, and from that country onward to a third country (and so on).
- Fifth freedom traffic rights are intended to enhance the economic viability of an airline's long haul routes, but tend to be viewed by local airlines and governments as potentially unfair competition.
- Sixth freedom is the right to carry passengers or cargo from a second country to a third country by stopping in one's own country.
- An open sky air service agreement allows for airlines from the two countries to have an unlimited number of flights as well as seats to each other's jurisdictions.

### **3. Indian trawlers are back, say Sri Lanka's fishermen**

#### **Context:**

Sri Lanka's northern fishermen have reported a sudden increase in the number of Indian trawlers being spotted in the island's territorial waters.

#### **Details:**

- Fishermen along the northern coast of Jaffna Peninsula, especially Point Pedro, have complained about the large Indian trawlers that were reportedly in Sri Lanka's territorial waters.
- This is an old problem that seriously impaired their post-war recovery.
- The Indo-Lanka fisheries conflict became a strain on the countries' bilateral ties, with talks at the highest levels and among fisher leaders on both sides proving futile for years.
  - The issue started because of Indian fishermen using mechanized trawlers, which deprived the Sri Lankan fishermen (including Tamils) of their catch and damaged their fishing boats.
- In the last couple of years, Sri Lanka introduced tougher laws banning bottom-trawling, and heavy fines for trespassing foreign vessels.
  - While the Sri Lankan Navy arrested over 450 Indian fishermen in 2017, they arrested only 156 in 2018 on charges of poaching.
  - A total of 210 arrests were made in 2019, while 34 have been made so far in 2020.

#### **Concerns:**

- Familiar with the brutal impact that Indian trawlers had on their fish production and the marine habitat in the post-war decade — scooping out marine organisms, including fishes and prawns — the northern Tamil fishermen fear that their livelihoods, now under strain due to the coronavirus pandemic that has impaired exports, would be further hit by the trawlers.

### 1. Initial results of survey show ‘high’ seroprevalence in Delhi: officials

#### Context:

Blood samples of over 22,000 people were randomly collected from Delhi to test for antibodies formed against COVID-19.

#### Details:

- The initial results of the serological survey showed at least 15% of them have developed antibodies against the virus.
  - Seroprevalence surveys use serology tests to identify people in a population or community that have antibodies against an infectious disease.
- The serological survey is part of a ‘Revised COVID Response Plan’ by the Delhi Government based on the directions from the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.
- The source said that a higher seroprevalence is a good sign as it means a larger part of the population has developed antibodies against the virus and chances of them again contracting the virus are very low. Thus, they can break the chain of transmission of the virus and reduce the spread of the disease.

## C. GS 3 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## D. GS 4 Related

### Category: **ETHICS TERMINOLOGY**

#### 1. The social contract needs to be rewritten

- In moral and political philosophy, the social contract theory concerns the legitimacy of the authority of the state over the individual.
- **Social contract theory** envisages that consenting individuals have surrendered some of their freedoms and have submitted to the authority in exchange for protection of their remaining rights or **maintenance of the social order**.
  - The social contract comprises two distinct agreements; first, people agreed to establish society by collectively and reciprocally renouncing the rights they had against one another in unbridled nature and second, they agreed to confer upon one (or more) among them, the authority and power to enforce the initial contract. Thus, the social contract comprises people agreeing to live as one under common laws and enforcing those common laws justly.
- The theory had contributions from philosophers like **Hobbes and Rousseau**.

## E. Editorials

### Category: **GOVERNMENT SCHEMES**

## 1. A case for extension

### **Context:**

- The article argues for the extension of the MGNREGS.

### **Background:**

#### **Increased demand for work:**

- In nearly two-thirds of the States, **demand for MGNREGS work has doubled or even tripled in a number of districts** compared to the previous year.
- Most of the work has been subscribed to in just the last two months (May-June 2020).

#### **Significance of MGNREGS:**

- Since its implementation over a decade ago, MGNREGS has acted as **insurance for rural dwellers during crop failures and agrarian crises**.
- With the economy reeling after extended lockdowns following the COVID-19 pandemic and migrant labourers losing jobs in urban areas and returning to their rural homes to avoid destitution, the scheme has come as a huge relief to poor families.

#### **Concerns:**

- Of the total 4.6 crore households which have benefited from MGNREGS thus far in 2020, around 8.4 lakh poor households have completed at least 80 days of the 100-day limit for work under the MGNREGS and 1.4 lakh among those have completed the full quota.
- Given that the prospects of a robust economic recovery that would benefit those engaged in casual labour and daily wage-labour remain dim, there is the **threat of unemployment in the absence of government work programmes like MGNREGS**.
- Though the fairly good monsoon this season should help with providing for more agricultural jobs beyond the MGNREGS works as well, the excess supply of labour owing to **reverse migration from the cities could depress rural wages**.

#### **Way forward:**

- The surging rate of demand for work under the scheme suggests that the government **consider extending the number of workday limit, at least on a State-by-State basis** depending upon the demand.
- An **extension of the 100-day limit and comprehensive implementation of the scheme in rural areas** could be a much-needed step under the current circumstances and could also lead to the following benefits.
  - Apart from ensuring a source of livelihood for the jobless, it would also help **lift the rural wages**.
  - Even before the COVID-19-induced crisis, a lack of demand and falling consumption among the poor were constraining the Indian economy. The MGNREGS, if utilised as more than just an insurance scheme and as a vehicle for rural development, could potentially address the stagnant economic growth problem by **boosting consumption and aiding economic recovery**.
  - The lessons from the scheme's successes and failures could be used for a more comprehensive job guarantee plan that covers urban India too.

For related information, refer to:

[CNA dated July 1, 2020](#)

## Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

### 1. Green-lighting ecological decimation amidst a pandemic

#### **Context:**

- The article discusses the threat posed by ecological degradation and evaluates the current condition in India.

#### **Background:**

#### **Link between development and pandemic:**

- The 21st century has seen multiple lethal epidemics though only two were serious enough for the World Health Organization to designate as pandemics.
- The accelerating destruction of wild habitats, forests for urbanization, mining, and industry means pathogens that were once largely confined to animals and plants in the wild are capable of infecting humans.
- The expansion of monoculture cropping and livestock farming systems are eliminating the biodiversity and distance barriers that lent resilience to the human species and domesticated plants and animals.
- A virulent pathogen would be able to trigger an epidemic that much more easily under such circumstances. Unless this unsustainable approach is abandoned the world will continue to remain vulnerable to pandemic outbreaks.

#### **Concerns:**

- The article notes that India's vulnerabilities lie not just in the absence of equitable access to food, healthcare and housing but also are linked to the adopted development model that neglects environmental degradation for limitless economic growth and wealth accumulation.

#### **Environmental clearance for projects:**

- Through the lockdown, 'expert' bodies of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) have considered, and in many cases cleared, multiple industrial, mining and infrastructure proposals in critical wildlife habitats, and life and livelihood-sustaining forests.
- Some of the major projects include:
  - Etalin Hydropower Project in the biodiversity-rich Dibang valley of Arunachal Pradesh
  - A coal mine in Assam's Dehing Patkai Elephant Reserve. **For more information, refer to [CNA dated April 25, 2020](#)**
  - Diamond mining in the Panna forested belt
  - Coal mine and coal-fired power plant in Odisha's Talabira forests
  - Limestone mine in the Gir National Park
  - Geo-technical investigation in the Sharavathi Lion-Tailed Macaque Sanctuary in Karnataka
- The authorities have considered these projects via video-conferencing in contravention of environmental laws, and without all necessary documents or site inspections.

**Draft Environment Impact Assessment notification:**

**For information on the draft EIA, refer to:**

[CNA dated March 13, 2020](#)

- The recently released draft Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) notification has raised serious concerns among environmentalists.
  - As per the draft, starting a project before obtaining environmental approvals will no longer be a violation, and it can be regularised post-facto.
  - Despite the fact that public hearings remain the only opportunity of voice for project-affected peoples and environmental and social experts, public consultations are often ignored while awarding clearances. Instead of strengthening public hearing provision, the draft notification proposes to exempt a wider range of projects from hearings, including those which authorities can arbitrarily designate as 'strategic' for which clearance can be given without putting out any information in the public domain.
  - Despite demands from environmentalists, the draft notification says virtually nothing on improving monitoring, and compliance with clearance conditions and safeguards.

**For more related information on this issue, refer to:**

[CNA dated June 29, 2020](#)

**Conclusion:**

- The sum effect of all the above developments will lead to further environmental degradation, which will not only endanger habitats and lives but also intensify our vulnerability to infectious diseases and related socio-economic shocks.
- There is a need for a steadfast commitment to a sustainable development approach.

## F. Prelims Facts

### 1. Navy concludes Samudra Setu

**What's in News?**

Operation Samudra Setu, which was launched by the Navy in May 2020 as part of the national effort to repatriate Indian citizens abroad during the COVID-19 pandemic, has culminated after successfully bringing back 3,992 individuals.

Read more about [Operation Samudra Setu](#).

### 2. Measles and Rubella

**What's in News?**

The World Health Organization (WHO) has said that measles and rubella have been eradicated from Sri Lanka and the Maldives after decades of immunisation programmes.



- This makes Sri Lanka and the Maldives **the first two countries in WHO South-East Asia Region** to achieve measles and rubella elimination **ahead of the 2023 target**.
- Member countries of WHO South-East Asia Region had **in September 2019 set 2023 as the target for elimination of measles and rubella**, revising the goal of the flagship programme that since 2014 had focused on measles elimination and rubella control.
- **Bhutan, DPR Korea and Timor-Leste** are other countries in the Region that have eliminated measles.
- Under the Global Vaccine Action Plan, measles and rubella are targeted for elimination in five WHO Regions by 2020.

### Measles and Rubella:

- Both Measles and Rubella are caused by an RNA virus and are generally spread through respiratory droplets of sick people.
- Measles is a highly contagious viral disease and is a cause of death among young children globally.
- Measles is also known as rubeola or red measles.
- It is caused by a virus which causes rashes all over the body.
- Rubella causes milder infections than measles.
- A person can be vaccinated against both the disease with a Measles, Mumps, and Rubella (MMR) vaccine.

### 3. Joblessness and opportunity in Tamil Nadu

- Unemployment occurs when a person who is actively searching for employment is unable to find work. The most frequent measure of unemployment is the unemployment rate. The **unemployment rate** is computed as the number of unemployed persons “who are willing to work and are actively looking for a job expressed as a percent of the labour force”.
- **Labour force participation rate** is defined as the section of the working population in the age group of 16-64 in the economy currently employed or seeking employment.

## G. Tidbits

### 1. U.S., China trade visa curbs over Tibet

#### What's in News?

The U.S. and China imposed visa restrictions on each other in tit-for-tat moves over their disagreement on Tibet.

- Amid high tension with China, the U.S. has increasingly been issuing such visa sanctions, earlier taking action over Beijing's clampdown on free expression in Hong Kong and its incarceration of some one million Uighurs.
- The Tibet action comes under a 2018 law passed by Congress that aims to pressure China over its tight restrictions in Tibet.
- China also announced its curbs on people from the U.S. who behave badly on Tibet-related issues, in retaliation for American curbs unveiled earlier.
- Beijing has largely barred foreign journalists from visiting Tibet since 2008, when the region experienced a wave of self-immolations as protests, and has not responded to U.S. requests to set up a consulate in the regional capital Lhasa.

## H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Which of the following countries are parties to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)?

1. United States of America
2. Malaysia
3. Japan
4. Australia
5. Brunei
6. Chile

**Choose the correct option:**

- a. 1, 2, 3 and 4 only
- b. 2, 4, 5 and 6 only
- c. 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 only
- d. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6

**CHECK ANSWERS:-**

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

- Following the withdrawal of the U.S from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the remaining 11 countries renegotiated parts of the TPP and later signed the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), also known as TPP-11.
- TPP-11 is a trade agreement between Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam.

Q2. Labour Force Participation Rate is:

- a. Section of the working population in the age group of 16-64 in the economy currently employed or seeking employment.
- b. Section of the working population in the age group of 16-64 in the economy currently employed.
- c. Section of the working population in the age group of 18-60 in the economy currently employed or seeking employment.
- d. None of the above.

**CHECK ANSWERS:-**

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

Labour Force Participation Rate is the section of the working population in the age group of 16-64 in the economy currently employed or seeking employment.

Q3. Consider the following statements:

1. Member countries of the World Health Organisation South-East Asia Region have resolved to eliminate measles and rubella by 2023.

- Both Sri Lanka and the Maldives have eradicated Measles and Rubella ahead of the target.
- Both Measles and Rubella are caused by an RNA virus.

Which of the given statement/s is/are incorrect?

- 1 only
- 3 only
- 2 and 3 only
- None of the above

**CHECK ANSWERS:-**

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

All the statements are correct.

**Q4. Consider the following statements:**

- India has an open skies policy with SAARC countries and countries within the 5,000-km radius.
- Open sky air service agreement allows for airlines from the two countries to have an unlimited number of flights as well as seats to each other's jurisdictions.

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

**CHECK ANSWERS:-**

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- India has an open skies policy with SAARC countries and those **beyond the 5,000-km radius**, which implies that nations within this distance need to enter into a bilateral agreement and mutually determine the number of flights that their airlines can operate between the two countries.
- An open sky air service agreement allows for airlines from the two countries to have an unlimited number of flights as well as seats to each other's jurisdictions.

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

- Discuss the salient aspects of Thomas Hobbes's Social Contract Theory. Evaluate the major differences between the ideas propounded by Thomas Hobbes and Jean-Jacques Rousseau regarding the Social Contract Theory. (15 marks, 250 words)
- An unsustainable development model would not only lead to environmental degradation and endanger habitats and lives but also intensify human vulnerability to infectious diseases and related socio-economic shocks. Comment. (10 marks, 150 words)

