

# 03 Sep 2020: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### A. GS 1 Related

### B. GS 2 Related

#### **POLITY AND GOVERNANCE**

- [1. Question Hour dropped in LS schedule of monsoon session](#)
- [2. Mission Karmayogi to train govt. officials](#)

### C. GS 3 Related

#### **SECURITY**

- [1. Govt. bans PUBG, WeChat Work, 116 other mobile apps](#)

#### **ECONOMY**

- [1. Capping MEIS benefits will seriously affect traders: FIEO](#)

#### **ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY**

- [1. State to declare 600 acres of Aarey as reserve forest](#)

### D. GS 4 Related

### E. Editorials

#### **SOCIAL ISSUES**

- [1. Victory in a long battle for equal opportunities](#)
- [2. One error rectified, many to go](#)

#### **GOVERNANCE**

- [1. A missed opportunity](#)

#### **ECONOMY**

- [1. A guide to flattening the curve of economic chaos](#)

### F. Prelims Facts

### G. Tidbits

- [1. Mundra terminal deal under scanner](#)
- [2. UAE flights to 'all nations' can fly over Saudi Arabia](#)
- [3. UNSC blocks Pak. bid to name Indians in terror list](#)

### H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

### I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

## A. GS 1 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## B. GS 2 Related

**Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE**

### 1. Question Hour dropped in LS schedule of monsoon session

#### **Context:**

The Lok Sabha Secretariat has released the schedule for the monsoon Parliament session.

#### **Issue:**

- In view of the pandemic and a truncated Monsoon Session, Parliament has dropped Question Hour and curtailed [Zero Hour](#).
- Stating that the Parliament is being held in the midst of an extraordinary situation, the Question Hour has been dropped from the schedule.
- The move has been strongly criticised by the opposition.

### **What is Question Hour, and what is its significance?**

- The first hour of every parliamentary sitting is termed as Question hour.
- It is mentioned in the Rules of Procedure of the House.
- It is during Question hour that the members ask questions and the ministers usually give answers.

#### **Significance:**

- The questions that MPs ask are designed to elicit information and trigger suitable action by ministries.
- Over the last 70 years, MPs have successfully used this [parliamentary device](#) to shine a light on government functioning.
- Their questions have exposed financial irregularities and brought data and information regarding government functioning to the public domain.
- With the broadcasting of Question Hour since 1991, Question Hour has become one of the most visible aspects of parliamentary functioning.

### **What is Zero Hour?**

- Zero Hour is the time when Members of Parliament (MPs) can raise Issues of Urgent Public Importance.
  - The Zero Hour starts at 12 noon immediately following the Question Hour.
- For raising matters during the Zero Hour, MPs must give the notice before 10 am to the Speaker/Chairman on the day of the sitting. The notice must state the subject they wish to raise in the House.
- However, Speaker, Lok Sabha/Chairman, Rajya Sabha may allow or decline a Member to raise a matter of importance. 'Zero Hour' is not mentioned in the Rules of Procedure. It is an Indian parliamentary innovation.
- Thus, it is an informal device available to MPs to raise matters without any notice 10 days in advance.
- This is because, generally, the matters are of public importance and such matters cannot wait for 10 days.

## **2. Mission Karmayogi to train govt. officials**

### **Context:**

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for Mission Karmayogi.

### **Mission Karmayogi:**

- Mission Karmayogi is a new, national capacity-building and performance evaluation programme for civil servants.
- The scheme will cover 46 lakh Central Government employees at all levels, and involves an outlay of ₹510 crore over a five-year period.
- An annual subscription of ₹431 will be charged per civil servant.

- The scheme is a comprehensive post-recruitment reform of the Centre’s human resource (HR) development.
- The programme will support a transition from “rules-based to roles-based” HR management so that work allocations can be done by matching an official’s competencies to the requirements of the post.
- Apart from domain knowledge training, the scheme will focus on “functional and behavioural competencies” as well, and also includes a monitoring framework for performance evaluations.
- In due course, the service matters such as confirmation after probation period, deployment, work assignments and notification of vacancies will all be integrated into the proposed framework.

Read more on Mission Karmayogi in [PIB dated Sep 2, 2020](#).

## C. GS 3 Related

### Category: SECURITY

#### 1. Govt. bans PUBG, WeChat Work, 116 other mobile apps

##### Context:

- The government has banned 118 applications — a majority being Chinese, stating that these were “prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of State and public order”.
- In June 2020, the government had banned 59 Applications citing threat to national security and sovereignty.

Read more about this issue - [TikTok among 59 apps banned by the Centre](#)

##### Details:

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (Meity) said it was invoking its power under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act read with the relevant provisions of the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking of Access of Information by Public) Rules 2009.
- The announcement comes amid renewed tensions between India and China owing to the stand-off on the disputed boundary in Ladakh that has been on since May 2020.
- It is asserted that the decision is a targeted move to ensure safety, security and sovereignty of Indian cyberspace.

Read more on the [India - China border clash](#) in the linked article.

### Category: ECONOMY

#### 1. Capping MEIS benefits will seriously affect traders: FIEO

##### Context:

Fund crunch has forced the commerce ministry to cap export benefits under Merchandise Export from India Scheme (MEIS) at ₹2 crore for every exporter.

**Details:**

- According to the [Directorate General of Foreign Trade \(DGFT\)](#) notification, the aforesaid ceiling may be subject to a further downward revision to ensure that the total claim under the scheme for the (four-month) period does not exceed the allocation prescribed by the government, which is ₹5,000 crore.

**Merchandise Export from India Scheme (MEIS):**

- MEIS was designed to provide exporters with sops to offset infrastructure inefficiencies and associate costs.
- The scheme will come to an end by December 2020 following India losing a case at the [World Trade Organisation \(WTO\)](#) after a challenge by the US.
- The Indian government has announced a new WTO-compliant scheme called Remission of Duties or Taxes On Export Product (RoDTEP).

**Remission of Duties or Taxes On Export Product (RoDTEP):**

- RoDTEP will replace MEIS starting 1 January 2021.
- The finance ministry has set up a committee under the chairmanship of GK Pillai to finalise the rates under RoDTEP that will allow reimbursement of all embedded taxes including local levies paid on inputs by exporters.

**Concerns:**

- The government had stopped paying pending MEIS incentives beginning July 2020.
- According to Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO), the government's decision to cap export incentives under MEIS scheme at ₹2 crore per exporter on outbound shipments made during September-December, 2020 is going to seriously affect traders.
- It is opined that the move would create huge uncertainty as those eligible for a cap of ₹2 crore will not be able to factor in even such benefits in their exports.
- These benefits under MEIS are a part of the export competitiveness and therefore the sudden change will affect exporters financially as buyers are not going to revise their prices upwards.
- The Centre has been urged to extend the MEIS till March 31, 2021, coterminous with the existing Foreign Trade Policy.

**Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY**

**1. State to declare 600 acres of Aarey as reserve forest**

**Context:**

Maharashtra Chief Minister has announced the reservation of 600 acres of Aarey land near Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP) as forest.

**Details:**

- It has been claimed as the first instance of an extensive forest protected within the limits of a metropolis anywhere in the world.
- It was decided to apply Section 4 of the Indian Forest Act (IFA) to almost 600 acres of the land.

- This implies that it will be declared a reserve forest after a hearing for suggestion and objections.
- The CM has assured that it will be ensured that all the rights of tribal communities which reside within it would stand protected.

#### **Reserved Forest:**

- Reserved Forest is an area mass of land duly notified under the provisions of the Indian Forest Act or the State Forest Acts having a full degree of protection.
  - In Reserved Forests, all activities are prohibited unless permitted.
- Reserved Forest is notified under Section 20 of the Indian Forest Act, 1927 or under the reservation provisions of the forest acts of the State Governments.

#### **Section 4:**

- It is within the power of a State Government to issue a preliminary notification under Section 4 of the Act declaring that it has been decided to constitute such land, as specified in a Schedule with details of its location, area and boundary description, into a Reserved Forest.
- Such a notification also appoints an officer of the State Government as Forest Settlement Officer.

Also read about [Aarey Milk Colony tree-felling case](#)

## **D. GS 4 Related**

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## **E. Editorials**

### **Category: SOCIAL ISSUES**

#### **1. Victory in a long battle for equal opportunities**

##### **Context:**

- The granting of **permanent commission for women in the Indian Army.**

##### **Background:**

- In a landmark judgment, the Supreme Court of India had ruled allowing women to serve as permanently commissioned (PC) officers in **10 combat support arms and services of the Indian Army** and had also directed the Central Government to consider removing the embargo on **command appointments for women officers.**
- Following this judgment, the government issued formal sanction offering PC to women officers of the Indian Army.

For a detailed analysis of this issue, refer to:

[CNA dated Feb 14, 2020: Should women be given command posts in the Army?](#)

## Women in Commanding Role: RSTV – Big Picture

### **Significance:**

#### **For Women in the army:**

##### *Job security:*

- With the grant of PC, women officers will now not be forced to look for alternative careers after 14 years thus ensuring job security.

##### *Attendant employee benefits:*

- The grant of PC will accrue many other employee benefits such as **pension and ex-servicemen status** for the women army recruits.

##### *Professional growth for women:*

- The grant of permanent commission to women will provide clarity on their career paths and also place women officers on an equal footing with men for **promotions and professional growth**. Women officers could be considered for command roles. They could enrol for **'In service career courses'** and even opt for higher studies.

#### **For the army:**

- The availability of experienced women officers in permanent cadre would **help address the issue of shortage of officers in the Indian Army**.
  - As per the available records, the shortage of officers in the Indian Army is estimated at 18% of the authorised strength.

#### **For society:**

- The grant of permanent commission to women has helped **address the issue of regressive patriarchal mindsets**. It **breaks gender stereotyping** and provides equal opportunities for women in the Army.

#### **Way forward:**

#### **Implementation:**

- There is a need to sincerely implement the new reform. This would require a change in the current mindset and **need gender sensitization** among the stakeholders.
- There is the possibility of challenges in implementing the new reforms but the solution to these should not be guided by gender stereotyping.

#### **Maintaining professional standards in the army:**

- The **physical and mental standards for the role must be uniform and gender-neutral**.
- The professional standards must be adhered to without any gender bias.

#### **Addressing other issues:**

- Currently, there is no provision for women to choose defence as a long-term career right at the outset as a PC officer. The article argues to **provide women with an opportunity to directly join the services as permanently commissioned officers** as against the current mode of entry being only as short service commission cadre.
- The article also argues for allowing women already in combat support arms and services, the **entry into combat positions**.

## 2. One error rectified, many to go

For information on this issue, refer to:

[CNA dated Aug 14, 2020: Right by birth](#)

**Category: GOVERNANCE**

### 1. A missed opportunity

**Context:**

- The draft report of the **Gopalakrishnan Committee** has been issued for public consultation.

**Background:**

**Significance of government data openness:**

- The government data sets should be open to the citizens of the country based on the following arguments:
  - This will result in **greater transparency** in governmental actions and hence bring in **greater accountability**.
  - Given that these data sets result from taxpayer funding the citizens should be able to enjoy the benefits accruing from such data sets.
  - Government data sets, curated according to publicly verified standards, can lead to increased **confidence in data quality and increased usage**.
  - The free flow of information can have **beneficial effects on society in the socio-economic domain**.

**Measures taken to promote openness:**

- **The Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005** mandates the disclosure of government data on a suo moto basis.
- “Information for all” is an important pillar of the Digital India Policy.
- The **National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (NDSAP), 2012** requires all non-sensitive information held by public authorities to be made publicly accessible in machine-readable formats, subject to certain conditions.
- **The Open Government Data Platform** provides open access to data sets held by ministries and other agencies of the government.

**Concerns:**

- India has **failed to create an open data society** due to the following reasons.

*Poor implementation of existing guidelines:*

- Despite the well-intended provisions of the National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (NDSAP), 2012, its implementation has been far from satisfactory.
- The **quality and quantity of data sets published by the government have not been satisfactory**. The data sets released by governments are often inconsistent, incomplete, outdated, published in non-machine readable or inconsistent formats, include duplicates, and lack quality metadata, thereby reducing re-usability.

*Reluctance to provide information:*

- The administration has been reluctant to make valuable information sets available to the public on grounds of sensitivity of the information and has been **using provisions like the exceptions provided under the RTI act and the official secrets act provisions**.

Also read: [Right to Information](#)

**Details:**

- The **Gopalakrishnan Committee** has recommended among other things, making non-personal data “open”.

**Non-personal data:**

- Non-personal data are data that do not identify an individual.
- Non-personal data sets can be useful in either framing public policy or creating and providing new services. Non-personal data are viewed as critical for the development of the AI ecosystem.

For detailed information on the mandate and suggestions of the Gopalakrishnan Committee refer to:

[CNA dated Sep 2, 2020: Treating data as commons](#)

**Lacunae in the recommendations:**

- The article discusses some of the shortcomings in the Gopalakrishnan Committee recommendations.

**Government data sets:**

- The Gopalakrishnan Committee report **does not adequately address governance frameworks around government data sets**. Instead, the report largely focuses on the dangers posed by data collection by private sector entities.
- The Gopalakrishnan Committee does not evaluate the challenges with existing policies and practices pertaining to government data, and does not offer solutions on this front.
  - Notably, some of the most important non-personal data sets are held by the government, or result from taxpayer funding.

**Conditions for data transfer:**



- Though the Committee has taken a good step forward in recommending the making of non-personal data “open”, the committee **does not lay down conditions for such data transfers**. This has raised concerns about **state interference in the private data ecosystem**.
  - The Justice B.N. Srikrishna Committee report of 2018 highlighted the need to restrict the growing power of the state to carry out **surveillance**.

#### Unaddressed issues:

- **India’s cybersecurity framework** continues to be woefully inadequate and this issue has not been addressed in the report.

#### Way forward:

- Data governance being a relatively new concept in India, the government must take an incremental approach to reforms.
- Before trying to reform private sector data governance structure, the reforms should begin with reforming how the government itself deals with citizens’ data. This would result in **greater trust in data governance practices** and also allow the development of state capacity to govern the data ecosystem.

#### Category: ECONOMY

##### 1. A guide to flattening the curve of economic chaos

For information on the issue of economic contraction, refer to:

[CNA dated Sep 2, 2020: Inevitable collapse](#)

For information on the possible solutions to the current economic downturn, refer to:

[CNA dated Aug 6, 2020: How to pay for the stimulus](#)

## F. Prelims Facts

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## G. Tidbits

### 1. Mundra terminal deal under scanner

#### What’s in News?

A proposal to transfer partial ownership of a terminal at India’s busiest Mundra port in Gujarat to a Chinese company is under the scanner of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

- The government has already put other Chinese acquisitions on hold for the past few months.

**Details:**

- According to the application submitted by CMA Terminals of France, the company that is a joint venture partner of Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited (APSEZ), engaged in “developing, operating, maintaining terminal CT-4 at Mundra Port”, wants to turn over its 50% stake to the CMA-CGM group, under a joint venture between the French company and the China Merchants Group (CMG).
  - APSEZ, which is India’s largest private port operator, entered into the Indo-French joint venture with CMA Terminals for the Mundra port in 2014, and the container terminal at Mundra was commissioned in 2017.
- CMA-CGM, the third-largest shipping company in the world announced in December 2019, that it was going to sell stakes in 10 terminals worldwide to its venture with China Merchants Group for \$968 million.
  - The list included the Mundra port in India, and others in China, Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore, Netherlands and other countries.

## 2. UAE flights to ‘all nations’ can fly over Saudi Arabia

**What’s in News?**

Saudi Arabia has agreed to allow UAE flights to “all countries” to overfly the kingdom, state media reported, days after allowing an Israeli aircraft to pass over en route to Abu Dhabi.

- Saudi Arabia has accepted an Emirati request to allow crossing the kingdom’s airspace for flights heading to the UAE and departing from it to all countries.
- Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced that the historic first commercial flight of an Israeli aircraft direct to the UAE across Saudi Arabia would not be the last.
  - The announcements come after a U.S.-Israeli delegation visited Abu Dhabi on the first direct commercial flight from Tel Aviv.
- Saudi Arabia has said it will not follow the UAE in establishing diplomatic ties with Israel until Israel has signed a peace accord with the Palestinians.
  - But the kingdom has cultivated clandestine relations with Israel in recent years.

## 3. UNSC blocks Pak. bid to name Indians in terror list

**What’s in News?**

The [UN Security Council](#), led by France, UK and the U.S., has rejected attempts by Pakistan to designate Indians as terrorists under its 1267 Committee for Counterterrorism Sanctions.

**Details:**

- The UNSC committee decided to block the designations of four Indian names proffered by Pakistan, to be designated as terrorists.
- Since the evidence was not provided by Pakistan, officials said the committee decided to block or reject all the names.
- According to sources, all five countries (US, UK, France, Germany and Belgium) placing the hold also blocked it, although U.S., UK and France were prime movers, indicating that the other permanent members, China and Russia, did not try to block the move by Pakistan.

## H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements:

1. Question hour is mentioned in the Rules of Procedure of the House.
2. A starred question is one to which a written answer is desired by the member and is deemed to be laid on the Table of the House by Minister.
3. A starred question cannot have supplementary questions.

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

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 and 3 only
- c. 2 only
- d. None of the above

**Answer: b**

**Explanation:**

- The first hour of every parliamentary sitting is termed as Question hour.
- It is mentioned in the Rules of Procedure of the House.
- It is during Question hour that the members ask questions and the ministers usually give answers.
- A starred question (distinguished by an asterisk) is one to which a member desires an oral answer from the Minister in the House. Supplementary questions can follow.
- An unstarred question, on the other hand, requires a written answer and hence, supplementary questions cannot follow.

Q2. Consider the following statements with respect to the Global Innovation Index 2020:

1. India is ranked among the top 50 nations.
2. Israel is ranked among the top 10 nations.
3. It is published by WIPO in association with Cornell University and INSEAD.

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

- a. 2 only
- b. 1 and 3 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. None of the above

**Answer: d**

**Explanation:**

- The Global Innovation Index (GII) is a global ranking of countries for their success in and capacity for innovation. It is published by a specialized agency of the United Nations – the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) in association with Cornell University and graduate business school INSEAD.
- The index ranks countries based on 80 indicators, ranging from intellectual property filing rates to Research and Development, online creativity, mobile application creation, computer software spending, education spending, scientific & technical publications and ease of starting a business.

- In Global Innovation Index 2020, India is ranked among the top 50 nations.
- The list continues to be topped by Switzerland while Israel finds its place in the top ten for the first time.

Q3. Recently approved - Mission Karmayogi is a part of:

- a. Labour Reforms
- b. Defence Sector Reforms
- c. Civil Services Reforms
- d. Health Sector Reforms

**Answer: c**

**Explanation:**

- Mission Karmayogi is a new, national capacity-building and performance evaluation programme for civil servants.
- The scheme will cover 46 lakh Central government employees at all levels, and involves an outlay of ₹510 crore over a five-year period.
- An annual subscription of ₹431 will be charged per civil servant.
- The scheme is a comprehensive post-recruitment reform of the Centre's human resource (HR) development.

Q4. Consider the following statements with respect to Pangong Tso:

1. It is an endorheic, brackish water lake.
2. It is identified as a wetland of international significance under the Ramsar Convention.

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

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

**Answer: a**

**Explanation:**

- Pangong Tso is a long narrow, deep, endorheic (landlocked) lake.
- The brackish water lake freezes over in winter, and becomes ideal for ice skating and polo.
- The lake is not a Ramsar site. It is in the process of being identified under the Ramsar Convention as a wetland of international importance.

## I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Analyze the need for the openness of government-owned data sets and enumerate the existing measures and policies to promote data openness. Also discuss the concerns with respect to their implementation. (15 marks, 250 words)(GS paper 2/Governance)
2. Given the concerns of an extended economic slowdown, discuss possible interventions to revive the economic growth in India. (15 marks, 250 words)(GS paper 3/Economy)

