

## 27 Aug 2020: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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## A. GS 1 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## B. GS 2 Related

### Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

#### 1. SC urged to set up 11-judge Bench on quota cap

##### Context:

The Supreme Court has been urged to set up an 11-judge Bench to reconsider its 50% cap on reservation.

##### Details:

- The push for it came while the court was hearing a challenge to the Maratha reservation law which provides 12% to 13% quota for the community in Maharashtra.
- A bunch of petitions contended that it breached the 50% cap on reservation declared by a nine-judge Bench of the court in 1992.
- The High Court had concluded, “the mere fact that other OBCs would have to share their reservation quotas with the Marathas [if the Marathas were simply included in the existing OBC category] constitutes an exceptional circumstance warranting a breach of the 50 percent ceiling limit set by Indra Sawhney”.

The lawyers submitted that the court should revisit the percentage of reservation, taking into consideration the recent developments in the front, including the 10% quota for economically weaker sections introduced recently through the 103rd Constitutional Amendment.

Read more about [Indra Sawhney case](#) and Reservation Policy after the Indra Sawhney judgment covered in the [8<sup>th</sup> January 2019 CNA: Centre plans 10% quota for the poor](#).

#### 2. Draft policy on health data open for feedback

##### What's in News?

The National Health Authority (NHA) has released the draft Health Data Management Policy of the National Digital Health Mission (NDHM) in the public domain.

##### Objective:

- One of the main objectives of the draft policy is to provide adequate guidance and to set out a framework for the secure processing of personal and sensitive personal data of individuals who are a part of the national digital health ecosystem.
- It will be in compliance with all applicable laws and international standards that define the set of frameworks of consent for the collection and processing of health data by healthcare practitioners and other entities, and other relevant standards related to data interoperability and data sharing.

### **Details:**

- The draft is the maiden step in realising the NDHM's guiding principle of 'Security and Privacy by Design' for the protection of individuals' data privacy.
- It encompasses various aspects pertaining to health data such as data privacy, consent management, data sharing and protection, etc.
- The NDHM seeks to provide a unique health ID to each citizen who wishes to have one and also on-board the healthcare service providers (hospitals, pharmacies and diagnostic labs, among others). It will have an online database of doctors (DigiDoctor) and personal health records (PHRs).
  - To access one's PHR, any doctor or institution would have to seek permission from the health ID owner.
  - Access can also be revoked.
- The Centre has now reiterated the same in the draft health data management policy.
  - Everyone enrolled for the mission will get a Health ID free of cost and have complete control over his or her data.
- The government has proposed a framework and a set of minimum standards for data privacy protection to be followed across the board in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

## **Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

### **1. Won't compromise over rights at sea: Erdogan**

#### **Context:**

Turkey President Tayyip Erdogan has asserted that the country is determined to do whatever is necessary to obtain its rights in the Black Sea, the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean Sea.

- Tensions between Turkey and Greece escalated recently, after Ankara sent a survey vessel to disputed eastern Mediterranean waters, a move Athens called illegal.
- Turkey and Greece, NATO allies, disagree over claims to hydrocarbon resources in the area based on conflicting views on the extent of their continental shelves.

**This issue has been covered in the 19<sup>th</sup> August 2020 CNA: Troubled waters.**

## **C. GS 3 Related**

### **Category: ECONOMY**

#### **1. Gujarat tops exports index: NITI Aayog**

#### **Context:**

Export Preparedness Index 2020 to evaluate States' potential and capacities has been released by the NITI Aayog in partnership with the Institute of Competitiveness.

### **Export Preparedness Index (EPI)**

- It is the first report to examine the export preparedness and performance of Indian states.
- EPI intends to identify challenges and opportunities; enhance the effectiveness of government policies; and encourage a facilitative regulatory framework.
- It promotes healthy competition among states and UTs to work on parameters for promoting the country's exports, which is one of the key indicators for boosting economic growth.

#### **The structure of the EPI:**

- 4 pillars –Policy; Business Ecosystem; Export Ecosystem; Export Performance.
- 11 sub-pillars –Export Promotion Policy; Institutional Framework; Business Environment; Infrastructure; Transport Connectivity; Access to Finance; Export Infrastructure; Trade Support; R&D Infrastructure; Export Diversification; and Growth Orientation.

#### **Key findings of the report:**

- Gujarat has topped the Export Preparedness Index 2020 followed by Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.
- The other states that have made it to the top 10 include Rajasthan, Odisha, Telangana, Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka and Kerala.
- The coastal states have emerged as the best performers, with six out of eight coastal states featuring in the top 10 rankings.
- Among the Himalayan states, Uttarakhand is the highest, followed by Tripura and Himachal Pradesh.
- Across the Union Territories, Delhi has performed the best, followed by Goa and Chandigarh.
- The average score of Indian states in sub-pillars of Exports Diversification, Transport Connectivity, and Infrastructure (three sub-pillars) was above 50%.

#### **Challenges faced by India's Export Sector:**

Based on the findings of the report, export promotion in India faces three fundamental challenges:

- Intra- and inter-regional disparities in export infrastructure.
- Poor trade support and growth orientation among states.
- Poor R&D infrastructure to promote complex and unique exports.

#### **Key strategies to address these challenges:**

- A joint development of export infrastructure, strengthening industry-academia linkages and creating state-level engagements for economic diplomacy is the way forward.
- These strategies could be supported by revamped designs and standards for local products.
- Innovating tendencies to provide new use cases for local products must be harnessed with adequate support from the Centre.

#### **Conclusion:**

To achieve the target of making India a developed economy by focusing on 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', there is a need to increase exports from all the states and union territories.

## 2. 'India risks stagnation if GDP doesn't grow over 8% annually'

### Context:

McKinsey Global Institute (MGI) report on India's GDP.

### GDP Growth:

- According to MGI, India's GDP needs to grow annually at 8-8.5% to create opportunities in the post-COVID-19 era.
  - It opines that India risks a decade of stagnating incomes and quality of life if urgent steps are not taken to spur growth.
  - It said that urgent reforms are required with the aim of increasing productivity and creating jobs.
- MGI pointed out that the manufacturing and the construction sectors offer the most opportunities for economic growth and also for higher employment.

### Urbanisation Trend:

- There will be 90 million additional workers in search of non-farm jobs by 2030.
  - India will have to triple job creation to 12 million gainful non-farm jobs per year from the 4 million achieved between 2013 and 2018.

### Reforms:

On the reforms front, it advocated:

- Attention to manufacturing, real estate, agriculture, healthcare, and retail sectors.
- Unlocking land could reduce prices by up to a fourth.
- Creating flexible labour markets.
- Enabling efficient power distribution to reduce tariffs for consumers by over 20% and privatising 30 top state-run enterprises.

### Financial sector reforms:

- It said reforms and streamlining fiscal resources can deliver \$2.4 trillion in investment while boosting entrepreneurship by lowering the cost of capital for enterprises by about 3.5 percentage points.
- The report pushes for the creation of a bad bank to take care of dud assets (loans under stress).
- It added that a bulk of the reforms will have to be undertaken by the States (60%) and the remaining 40% by the Centre.

## D. GS 4 Related

*Nothing here for today!!!*

## E. Editorials

**Category: EDUCATION**

### 1. Perils of prematurely imparted literacy

This topic has been covered in the **30<sup>th</sup> July 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis: NEP Focus.**

## Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### 1. A shot in the dark

#### Background:

India has decided to approach the [UN Security Council](#) President to bring to his notice a series of false claims levelled by Pakistan on [terrorism](#), in one of the strongest responses by the Indian permanent mission so far.

**This topic has been covered in the [26<sup>th</sup> August 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).**

#### Details:

- In the letter, Pakistan’s Ambassador sought to portray Pakistan as a victim of cross-border terrorism.
- It was claimed that Pakistan is responsible for decimating al-Qaeda in the region.
- The statement then went on to list “four types of terrorism” Pakistan confronts, each of which was attributed to India.
  - Some of the attacks in Pakistan carried out by the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), a group that according to Pakistan’s unsubstantiated claim has been funded by an Indian terror syndicate based in Afghanistan.
  - That claim has been rejected by the UNSC in part already, as two of the four names forwarded by Pakistan weren’t accepted into the terror designations list.
  - The second allegation was that India has hired mercenaries to carry out attacks, in operations Pakistan claims have been organised by Kulbhushan Jadhav, a former naval officer.
  - Another contention was that policies of the government amount to “Hindutva terrorism”, with specific references to the Citizenship Amendment Act and the Ram temple construction.
  - Finally, about Indian government actions in Jammu and Kashmir which it refers to as “state terrorism”.

#### Conclusion:

- India has described these allegations as preposterous and laughable.
- India has an acclaimed role in fighting terror and cooperating on the international stage to deny terrorists funding and safe haven.
- Pakistan has consistently done the opposite. Pakistan’s continued grey-listing at the Financial Action Task Force ([FATF](#)), as well as the presence of the names of hundreds of Pakistani terror groups and individuals on UN terror lists, are proof of that.
- Even so, it is important that the Government of India takes the Pakistani attempt to build its case seriously.
- India should pre-empt Pakistan’s larger strategy of painting India in a poor light ahead of its tenure at the UN Security Council 2021-2022 and the upcoming scrutiny process at the FATF.

## Category: GOVERNANCE

### 1. Bringing the Internet to everyone

The editorial talks about the need to bridge the digital divide, for everyone to access the same economic opportunities.



### **Fast emerging trends:**

At present times, technology plays a major role in our day to day lives. The COVID-19 pandemic has amplified the influence of technology in our lives.

- Things can be bought and sold online.
- Quality access to education is possible, online.
- Quality access to healthcare, government services is possible online.
- Payment gateways enable cashless transactions.
- Verifications and signatures are digitised.

Even amidst this pandemic, technology enables some of us to stay within the safety of our homes, survive and even thrive.

### **Digital divide:**

- A substantial section of the population, including the urban poor, the elderly and those in remote areas, find themselves marginalised and isolated because of their inability to navigate the digital space.
- They find themselves unable to get access to health and welfare alerts, critical services.
- It is difficult for such people to engage in upskilling or learning, or take part in economic activities due to the persistent digital divide.

### **Government initiatives to bridge the digital divide:**

- In 2011, the Indian Government launched the National Optical Fibre Network project for providing broadband connectivity to 2,50,000 Gram Panchayats.
- In 2015, the programme was renamed Bharat Net and integrated into the government's Digital India initiative.
- It included plans for tying up with and subsidising 4G telecom operators for setting up 700,000 Wi-Fi hotspots spread across each of our villages for last-mile connectivity.
- The Punjab Government has started distributing 1.75 lakh free smartphones to its students.

### **Issues:**

- In 2016, the [UN General Assembly](#) passed a non-binding resolution that declared Internet access as a human right. This hasn't translated into affirmative governmental action.
- Despite various initiatives by the government, the rate of Internet penetration still stands at 50%.

### **Way forward:**

- Internet connectivity has to be ensured in our remotest areas by accelerating the deployment of additional optical fibres, wireless technology, drones and satellites.
- Community access points have to be installed in every nook and corner to ensure that even those who lack their own devices can access the digital space.
- Many more initiatives of distribution of subsidised smart devices along with low-cost data plans to lower-income groups are needed.
- The [National Education Policy 2020](#) advocates greater integration of technology. However, India still lacks a concrete roadmap for ICT training in various proficiency levels for our diverse population segments.

- The post-COVID world will be more digitised than before. Those with the ability to navigate the digital landscape would get more economic opportunities and receive more avenues of social mobility than others.
- Therefore, it should be a priority to ensure basic digital literacy and Internet connectivity for all citizens.

## **Category: ECONOMY**

### **1. Making agricultural market reforms successful**

#### **Context:**

The recent reforms in agricultural marketing have brought a sea change in policy. Consistency in Central policy, complementary reforms and a collaborative Centre-State approach are necessary for making agricultural market reforms successful.

**This topic has been covered in the Editorials Segment of 17<sup>th</sup> May 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis and 17<sup>th</sup> August 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis.**

## **Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

### **1. The uncharted territory of outer space**

The editorial covers outer space vision, challenges involved and the need for a space legislation.

#### **Outer space for technology demonstrations:**

- Russia's Sputnik and the U.S.'s Apollo 11 were metaphors of geopolitical competition.
- India's [Chandrayaan](#) and Mangalyaan were symbols of national pride.

#### **Issue:**

- The author opines that, in the present times, outer space no longer captures our mind space in the way cyberspace does.
- However, several space events planned well in advance have proceeded amidst the COVID-19 pandemic without much attention, all of which portray a trend that outer space is witnessing cluttered new activities.
  - The launch of missions to Mars by China and the U.S. along with the UAE's Mars orbiter.
  - The first astronaut trip to orbit on a commercial enterprise built by Space X.
  - The completion of the Chinese 'BeiDou' satellite navigation system.

#### **Growth of the space industry**

- Technological changes augur well for the peaceful use of outer space. The price tag for reaching low Earth orbit has declined by a factor of 20 in a decade.
  - In a decade, the cost could be less than \$100 per kg.
  - It not only enhances human space travel possibilities by leveraging new commercial capabilities but will usher in applications dismissed earlier as science fiction.
- According to a Bank of America Report, the \$350 billion space market today will touch \$2.7 trillion by 2050.
- Space industries are likely to follow a path akin to the software industry. In a decade, 80,000 satellites could be in space compared to less than 3,000 at present.



- **Starlink**, the constellation being constructed by SpaceX to provide global Internet access, plans more than 10,000 mass-produced small satellites in low Earth orbit.
  - It hopes to transcend the digital divide and provide everyone, everywhere access to services such as distance education and telemedicine.
- **Amazon's Project Kuiper** received U.S. Federal Communications Commission approvals for more than 3,000 micro-satellites.
- Space could prove attractive for high-tech manufacturing too. In short, an exciting new platform is opening up for entrepreneurs.

However, what is technologically feasible is not easily achievable. The challenges to fulfilling the potential of space are many.

### **Challenges in fulfilling potential:**

#### *Framework for its governance is becoming obsolescent:*

- This challenge arises as the outer space is becoming democratised, commercialised and crowded.
- **The Outer Space Treaty of 1967** enshrines the idea that space should be “the province of all mankind” and “not subject to national appropriation by claims of sovereignty”.
- **The Rescue Agreement, Space Liability Convention, and the Space Registration Convention** expanded provisions of the Outer Space Treaty.
- **The Moon Treaty of 1979** was not ratified by major space-faring nations.
- Space law does not have a dispute settlement mechanism, is silent on collisions and debris, and offers insufficient guidance on interference with others' space assets.
- These gaps heighten the potential for conflict in an era of congested orbits and breakneck technological change.

#### *Non-state entities in the fray for commercial space exploration and utilisation:*

- While non-state entities are taking part in space exploration and utilisation, the legal framework is state-centric, placing responsibility on states alone.
- Some states are providing frameworks for resource recovery through private enterprises based on the notion that this is not expressly forbidden for non-state actors.
- The lack of alignment of domestic and international normative frameworks risks a damaging free-for-all competition for celestial resources involving actors outside the space framework.

#### *Space arms race:*

- States are investing in military space systems for communications, navigation, and reconnaissance purposes, so as to ensure the operability of a range of capabilities.
- So investment in technologies that can disrupt or destroy space-based capabilities is underway.
- The space arms race is difficult to curb, especially since almost all space technologies have military applications.
  - For example, satellite constellations are commercial but governments could acquire their data to monitor military movements.
- The current geopolitical situation does not hold hope for addressing concerns of a space arms race.
  - The UN General Assembly passed a resolution on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space since 1982.

- Chinese- and Russian-backed Treaty proposals were initiated in 2008 and updated in 2014.
- The EU's International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities has not gained traction.
- For various legal, technical, and political reasons these have not advanced at the Conference on Disarmament. Groups of Governmental Experts have not helped in making progress.

### **Way forward – the Indian context:**

- India has invested enormous resources in its space programme through the Indian Space Research Organisation (**ISRO**).
- More importantly, space assets are crucial for India's development.
- India's future plans are ambitious. The plans are designed to establish India as a major space-faring nation by the end of the decade. These include :
  - landing on the Moon
  - the first Indian solar observatory
  - the first crewed orbital spaceflight mission
  - installation of a modular space station in 2030.
- The proposed involvement of private players and the creation of an autonomous body IN-SPACe (Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre) under the Department of Space for permitting and regulating activities of the private sector are welcome efforts.
- However, the space environment that India faces requires us to go beyond meeting technical milestones.
- There is a need for a space legislation enabling coherence across technical, legal, commercial, diplomatic and defence goals.
- India's space vision also needs to address global governance, regulatory and arms control issues.

## **F. Prelims Facts**

### **1. Pulikkali**

#### **What's in the News?**

Amidst the lockdown and restrictions in the wake of COVID-19, Pulikkali, or tiger dance will go online on the fourth day of Onam.

#### **Pulikkali:**

- Pulikkali, or tiger dance, is a colourful part of Onam celebrations in Thrissur.
  - The artists wear a tiger mask, paint their bodies like tigers.
  - It is a folk art form performed to the rhythm of traditional percussion instruments such as thakil, udukku and chenda.
  - It is also known as Kaduvakali.
  - The main theme of this folk art is tiger hunting with participants playing the role of tiger and hunter.
- It was introduced by Shakthan Tampuran, the ruler of yore, over two centuries ago as a street art form.

#### **Onam**

- It is a harvest festival of the state of Kerala.

- According to legends, the festival Onam is celebrated to commemorate King Mahabali, whose spirit is said to visit Kerala at the time of Onam.
- Onam celebrations include Vallam Kali (boat races), Pulikali (tiger dances), Pookkalam (flower Rangoli), Onathappan (worship), Onam Kali, Tug of War, Thumbi Thullal (women's dance), Kummattikali (mask dance), Onathallu (martial arts), Onavillu (music), Kazhchakkula (plantain offerings), Onapottan (costumes), Atthachamayam (folk songs and dance), and other celebrations.

## G. Tidbits

### 1. Panel to review charter of DRDO labs

#### What's in the News?

A five-member expert committee has been constituted to review the charter of duties for all laboratories of the Defence Research and Development Organisation ([DRDO](#)).

- The focus is on the indigenous development of futuristic technologies.

#### Terms of Reference:

- To study and review the charter of duties of all the labs of the DRDO.
- To redefine the charter of duties of the labs on the current and futuristic defence and battlefield scenario.
- To minimise the overlap of technologies amongst the labs.

### 2. U.S. blacklists 24 Chinese firms amid South China Sea dispute

#### What's in News?

The United States has blacklisted 24 Chinese companies.

- The U.S. Commerce Department said the 24 companies played a role in helping the Chinese military construct and militarise the internationally condemned artificial islands in the South China Sea.
- The Commerce Department said it was adding the firms to its entity list.
- A separate statement said it would impose visa restrictions on Chinese individuals responsible for, or complicit in, such action and those linked to China's use of coercion against Southeast Asian claimants to inhibit their access to offshore resources.

To know more about "Entity List", read [U.S. imposes more sanctions targeting Huawei](#).

#### Note:

- China claims 90% of the potentially energy-rich South China Sea, but Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam also lay claim to parts of an area through which about \$3 trillion of trade passes each year.
- The US accuses China of [militarising the South China Sea](#) and trying to intimidate Asian neighbors who might want to exploit its extensive oil and gas reserves.
- The U.S. has conducted multiple freedom of navigation operations by sending its warships through the area to assert the freedom of access to international waterways.

### 3. RS Chairman writes to panel heads on rules

#### What's in News?

Rajya Sabha Chairman has written an advisory to the heads of eight parliamentary standing committees advising them to ensure confidentiality of panel meetings.

- He said that the committees were mandated to carry out detailed scrutiny of legislative proposals which was not feasible for Parliament to do so in the transaction of its day-to-day business.
- He reiterated the rules and procedures that govern the meetings of the parliamentary panels. And stated:
  - The meetings are confidential and it is not permissible for a member of the committee or anyone who has access to its proceedings to communicate, directly or indirectly, to the media any information regarding its proceedings, including any part of the report or any conclusions arrived at by the committee finally or tentatively before the report has been presented to the House.
  - Violation of this would tantamount to breach of privilege of the House.

#### 4. SC hits out at Centre on loan moratorium scheme

##### What's in News?

The Supreme Court criticised the Union government for hiding behind the Reserve Bank of India without making its stand clear on the loan moratorium scheme introduced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The top court wanted to know whether the deferment of loan interest to prop up borrowers through their financial crisis during the national lockdown would lead to the accrual of further interest once the freeze is lifted on August 31, 2020.
- The court is hearing a petition challenging the charging of interest rate on loans even during the three-month moratorium period declared amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

## H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Consider the following statements with respect to Pulikkali:

1. It is a folk dance performed on the streets of Kerala as a part of Onam celebrations.
2. It is performed to the rhythm of traditional percussion instruments such as mridangam and ghatam.
3. The main theme of this folk art is tiger hunting.

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

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

**CHECK ANSWERS:-**

Q2. Consider the following statements with respect to UMANG App:

1. It is a common unified platform for the delivery of services of various Government Departments through the mobile platform.
2. It was developed by the National e-Governance Division (NeGD), Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY).

3. The app hosts services such as Digilocker and e-RaktKosh.

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

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

**CHECK ANSWERS:-**

**Q3. Consider the following statements with respect to Export Preparedness Index 2020:**

1. It is the first report to examine the export preparedness and performance of Indian states.
2. It ranks states on Policy, Business Ecosystem, Export Ecosystem, and Export Performance.
3. Coastal States are the best performers in EPI 2020.

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

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

**CHECK ANSWERS:-**

**Q4. Greece is bordered by which of the following countries?**

1. Albania
2. Bulgaria
3. Macedonia
4. Turkey
5. Romania
6. Serbia

**Choose the correct option:**

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

**CHECK ANSWERS:-**

## **I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions**

1. What are the challenges posed by the growing global space industry? Discuss the various aspects that India needs to consider while formulating its space vision. (GS 3 Science and Technology) (15 Marks, 250 Words)

2. The post COVID world would be more digitised than before. In this backdrop, India should make it a priority to ensure basic digital literacy and Internet connectivity for all the citizens. Elucidate. (15 Marks,

