



Current Affairs of the Day

PAPER 2:

➤ **Polity & Governance:**

1. Question Hour dropped in LS schedule of monsoon session
2. What is Question Hour:
3. Mission Karmayogi

➤ **International Relations:**

1. UNSC blocks Pak. bid to name Indians in terror list
2. 'China using non-military tactics to expand influence'

PAPER 3:

➤ **Security:**

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



Question Hour dropped in LS schedule of monsoon session

- The Lok Sabha Secretariat on Wednesday officially released the schedule for the monsoon Parliament session that starts on September 14, with Question Hour being dropped.
- Opposition leaders, including Congress leader in the House Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, had written to Speaker Om Birla not to curtail Question Hour as it amounted to “encroaching upon a member’s right” and denied them an opportunity to question the government.

Value Added Information

What is Question Hour:

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

The questions are of three types, namely,

Starred questions:

- These are distinguished by an asterisk.
- It requires an oral answer and hence supplementary questions can follow.
- The list of these questions is printed in green colour.

Unstarred questions:

- It requires a written answer and hence, supplementary questions cannot follow.
- The list of these questions is printed in white colour.

Short notice questions:

- The matters of public importance and of urgent character are considered under this type of questions.



- It is asked by giving a notice of less than ten days.
- It is answered orally.
- The list of these questions is printed in light pink colour.

In addition to the ministers, the questions can also be asked to the private members.

Question to private members:

- These questions are mentioned under Rule 40 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha.
- A question may be addressed to a private member if the subject matter of the question relates to some bill, resolution for which that member is responsible.
- The list of these questions is printed in yellow colour.

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

- The government on Wednesday banned 118 applications — a majority being Chinese, including popular ones such as PUBG, WeChat Work, Baidu, CamCard, Rise of Kingdoms: Lost Crusade and Alipay, stating that these were “prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of State and public order”.
- This is in addition to the ban on 59 Chinese applications, including TikTok, Shareit, Mi Video Call, Club Factory and Cam Scanner, in June last.
- Wednesday’s 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.
- In a statement, the government said this move would safeguard the interests of crores of Indian mobile and Internet users and the decision was a targeted move to ensure safety, security and sovereignty of Indian cyberspace.
- 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, and “in view of the emergent nature of threats has decided to block 118 mobile apps...[that are] engaged in activities which is prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of state and public order”.

Complaints of misuse:

- The Ministry said it had received many complaints about the misuse of some mobile apps available on Android and iOS platforms for stealing and surreptitiously transmitting users’ data in an unauthorised manner to servers that have locations outside India. “The compilation of these data, its mining and profiling by elements hostile to national security and defence of India, which ultimately impinges upon the sovereignty and integrity of India, is a matter of very deep and immediate concern which requires emergency measures,” it stated.

Additionally, the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre, Ministry of Home Affairs, has sent an exhaustive recommendation for blocking these “malicious apps” and similar bipartisan concerns have been flagged by various public representatives, both outside and inside Parliament.

UNSC blocks Pak. bid to name Indians in terror list

- 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**.
- The UNSC committee decided to block the designations of Angara Appaji and Gobinda Patnaik on Wednesday, part of a group of four Indians that Pakistan alleged formed an Afghanistan-based “Indian terror syndicate” that was organising the banned terror groups Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and Jamaat-Ul-Ahrar to carry out attacks in Pakistan. Two other Indian names proffered by Pakistan were also blocked: Venumadhav Dongara was blocked by the US on June 19, and Ajoy Mistry had been blocked by US, UK, France, Germany and Belgium on July 16, respectively.
- The same five countries had also placed a “hold” on Mr. Appaji and Mr. Patnaik’s names, asking Pakistan to furnish evidence of their involvement.



Since the evidence was not provided, officials said the committee decided to “block” or reject all the names.

- According to sources, all five countries 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.

Mission Karmayogi to train govt. officials

Mission Karmayogi:

- The Union Cabinet on Wednesday gave its approval for Mission Karmayogi, 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, according to an official statement. An annual subscription of ₹431 will be charged per civil servant.
- Announcing the Cabinet decision, Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said the scheme was meant to be a comprehensive post-recruitment reform of the Centre’s human resource (HR) development, in much the same way as the National Recruitment Agency approved last week is pre-recruitment reform.

Roles-based:

- 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, Department of Personnel and Training Secretary C. Chandramouli told presspersons after the Cabinet meeting.

Significance:

- 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. Eventually, service matters such as



confirmation after probation period, deployment, work assignments and notification of vacancies will all be integrated into the proposed framework.

- The capacity-building programme will be delivered through an Integrated Government Online Training or iGOTKarmayogi digital platform, with content drawn from global best practices rooted in Indian national ethos. Mission Karmayogi is aimed at “building a future-ready civil service with the right attitude, skills and knowledge, aligned to the vision of New India,” said Dr. Chandramouli.
- **The Prime Minister’s Public Human Resource Council** will be set up as the apex body to direct the reforms, with an autonomous Capacity Building Commission to be established to manage the reformed system and harmonise training standards across the country, said the Secretary.

‘China using non-military tactics to expand influence’

Key findings of the report:

- An annual report from the U.S. Department of Defense to Congress describes Chinese leaders’ use of tactics short of armed conflict to further the country’s objectives, citing border conflicts with India and Bhutan among the examples.
- The report also says China is trying to establish stronger bases outside the country so the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) can project military power at greater distances.

key conclusions:

- Other key conclusions the U.S. presents include the notion that China’s military is at least as advanced as the U.S. in several military modernisation areas such as shipbuilding, land-based conventional ballistic and cruise missiles and integrated air defence systems. China also uses multilateral organisations to limit criticism of its initiatives.
- The report describes Non-War Military Activities (NWMA) as one of two kinds of military operations (the other is war) used by the PLA.



- NWMA can be conducted internationally or domestically and encompass activities in multiple domains. NWMA can notably include operations in which the PLA uses coercive threats and/or violence below the level of armed conflict against states and other actors to safeguard the PRC's sovereignty and national interests.
- "China calibrates its coercive activities to fall below the threshold of provoking armed conflict with the United States, its allies and partners, or others in the Indo-Pacific region," the DOD China Military Power Report for 2020 says.
- "These tactics are particularly evident in China's pursuit of its territorial and maritime claims in the South and East China Seas as well as along its border with India and Bhutan... China also employs non-military tools coercively, including economic tools during periods of political tensions with countries that China accuses of harming its national interests," said the report, which is in its 20th year of production.
- The report cites the role of the People's Armed Forces Maritime Militia (PAFMM), which plays a major role in coercive operations including, in 2009, "the harassment of USNS Impeccable conducting normal operations" and the 2012 Scarborough Reef standoff.

Overseas bases:

- On overseas military bases, the report says that beyond the base in Djibouti, China is "very likely already considering and planning for" additional military logistics facilities to support ground, air and naval forces. Locations in the following countries have likely been considered for use, as per the report: Myanmar, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, UAE, Kenya, Seychelles, Tanzania, Angola, and Tajikistan. It also says the PLA's military logistics network could interfere with U.S. operations and help support offensive operations against America.



- **The Belt and Road Initiative** [which the report refers to by its former name, the One Belt, One Road initiative, or OBOR] will result in a greater overseas military presence for China.
- The PRC's [China] overseas development and security interests under OBOR will drive the PRC towards expanding its overseas military footprint to protect those interests.
- China uses the economic influence it gets via the project to get participating countries to support it on a range of other issues.
- Since the report is retrospective and looks at 2019, this year's clashes and tension along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) are not discussed.
- Instead, the report says: "Chinese and Indian forces both continued construction and patrols in contested regions along the disputed border, but generally kept tensions from escalating in 2019." It describes the October meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Chennai and the August 2019 "early harvest" border proposals that China submitted to India.
- Although India was not pleased with the proposals, the 22nd meeting of the Special Representatives of India and China occurred in December 2019 and reinforced both sides' shared intent to manage tensions in the border region.

Limiting criticism:

- On multilateral forums and international organisations, the report says China uses these "to generate new opportunities to expand its influence, strengthen its political influence, promotes strategic messaging that portrays it as a responsible global actor, advance its development interests, and limit outside interference in and criticism of its initiatives."

The Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) grouping and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization are among those cited as examples of this alleged phenomenon.