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## Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS)

- MEIS was launched with an objective to enhance the export of notified goods manufactured in a country.
- The scheme has been introduced through the Foreign Trade Policy (FTP) and came into effect on 1 April 2015.
- The Ministry of Commerce and Industry is responsible for the implementation of the MEIS.
- The MEIS will be applicable till the year 2020 and will replace the below 5 incentive schemes that were earlier available under the Foreign Trade Policy 2014-2019:

1. Market Linked Focus Product Scheme (MLFPS)
2. Focus Product Scheme (FPS)
3. Agriculture Infrastructure Incentive Scrip (AIIS)
4. Focus Market Scheme (FMS)
5. Vishesh Krishi Gramin Upaj Yojana (VKGUY)

- Under this scheme, over Rs.22,000 crore per year has been allocated by the Government of India for exports.
- Under MEIS, a percentage of realized FOB (Free on Board) value (2,3, or 5%) of the exports are payable as incentives.
- The rewards are paid in the form of the MEIS duty credit scrip that can be used to pay for a number of taxes/duties including

a. Excise duty
b. Customs duty
c. Service tax.

- Imported inputs and scrips can be transferred fully offering flexibility to exporters.
- The incentives that are available under MEIS are also available to units located in Special Economic Zones (SEZs).

- Recently a limit has been imposed on total rewards under the Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS).
- Directorate Generate of Foreign Trade (DGFT) has stated that the total

reward which may be granted to an IEC holder under the scheme shall not exceed Rs.2 Crore per IEC of exports made in the period 1.9.2020 to 31.12.2020.

- Further, it has also been informed that any IEC holder who has not made any exports for a period of one year preceding 1.9.2020 or any new IECs obtained on or after 1st September would not be eligible for submitting any claim under MEIS.
- It is estimated that 98 per cent of the exporters' claim of MEIS will be unaffected by the changes.

## Mission Karmayogi

- The Union Cabinet has introduced Mission Karmayogi, plan to train, skill, have 'ideal' civil servants.
- It will be available for civil servants from the rank of assistant section officer to Secretary, across services.
- Mission Karmayogi aims to shift the focus from 'rule-specific' to 'role-specific'.
- It is also known as National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB), will be steered by four new bodies.
- The new entities will be

a. Prime Minister's Public Human Resources Council,
b. Capacity Building Commission,
c. Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) (that will own and operate the digital assets and technological platform for online training),
d. Coordination Unit (headed by the Cabinet Secretary).

- **Structure -** The **Prime Minister's Public Human Resources Council** will be headed by the PM, and will have select Union Ministers, Chief Ministers, eminent academics, HR practitioners, global thought leaders, and public service functionaries as members.
- It will be the top body that will provide strategic direction to the task of civil services reform and capacity building, and approve and monitor the capacity building plans.
- An Integrated Government Online Training (iGOT)-Karmayogi platform will be developed for the project.
- The iGOT platform will enable the transition to a role-based HR management & continuous learning.
- A SPV will be set up as a not-for-profit company to own and manage the iGOT-Karmayogi platform.
- It will also own all Intellectual Property Rights on behalf of the

Government of India.

- **Funding of the project -** The project, which will cover around 46 lakh central government employees, will be set up at a cost of Rs 510.86 crore over the next five years.
- Initial funding to the tune of $50 million will come from multilateral agencies including the World Bank and Asian Development Bank.
- Also, all government departments will contribute Rs 431 annually for each civil servant working for them as subscription charge for the SPV.

## Question Hour in the Parliament

- Recently Lok Sabha Secretariat officially released the schedule for the monsoon Parliament session with Question Hour being dropped.
- Under the schedule Zero Hour will also be restricted in both Houses.
- **Question Hour** is the liveliest hour in Parliament, during this one hour that MPs ask questions of ministers and hold them accountable for the functioning of their ministries.
- The questions that MPs ask are designed to elicit information and trigger suitable action by ministries.
- **Rules of Questions Asked -** Parliament has comprehensive rules for dealing with every aspect of Question Hour.
- And the presiding officers of the two houses are the final authority with respect to the conduct of Question Hour.
- Parliamentary rules provide guidelines on the kind of questions that can be asked by MPs.

a. Questions have to be limited to 150 words, they have to be precise and not too general.
b. The question should also be related to an area of responsibility of the GoI.
c. Questions should not seek information about matters that are secret or are under adjudication before courts.

- It is the presiding officers of the two Houses who finally decide whether a question raised by an MP will be admitted for answering by the government.
- Exceptions - Question Hour in both Houses is held on all days of the session, but there are two days when an exception is made.

1. There is no Question Hour on the day the President addresses MPs from both Houses in the Central Hall.
2. Question Hour is not scheduled either on the day the Finance Minister presents the Budget.

### Zero Hour

- While Question Hour is strictly regulated, Zero Hour is an Indian innovation.
- The phrase does not find mention in the rules of procedure.
- The concept of Zero Hour started organically in the first decade of Indian Parliament when MPs felt the need for raising important constituency and national issues.

## J&K Official Languages Bill

- Union Cabinet has approved J&K Official Languages Bill 2020.
- The bill approves Kashmiri, Dogri and Hindi as the official language of Jammu and Kashmir apart from the existing Urdu and English.
- Jammu and Kashmir Official Languages Bill, 2020 will be introduced in Parliament in the upcoming Monsoon Session.

### Art.343

- Article 343 of the Indian constitution stated that the official language of the Union is Hindi in Devanagari script instead of the extant English.
- Later, a constitutional amendment, The Official Languages Act, 1963, allowed for the continuation of English alongside Hindi in the Indian government indefinitely until legislation decides to change it.
- Despite the misconceptions, Hindi is not the national language of India; the Constitution of India does not give any language the status of national language.

### Art.346 and 347

- Subject to the provisions of articles 346 and 347, the Legislature of a State may by law adopt any one or more of the languages in use in the State or Hindi as the language or languages to be used for all or any of the official purposes of that State.
- Provided that, until the Legislature of the State otherwise provides by law, the English language shall continue to be used for those official purposes within the State for which it was being used immediately before the commencement of this Constitution.

## Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

- JICA is a governmental agency that coordinates Official Development

Assistance (ODA) for the government of Japan.

- It is chartered with assisting economic and social growth in developing countries, and the promotion of international cooperation.
- Recently JICA has committed an official Development Assistance loan of 3,500 crore rupees for the COVID-19 Crisis Emergency Response Support to India.
- This programme loan aims to support India's efforts in fighting COVID-19 and to prepare the health system to manage future epidemics.

## Mass Spectrometry Covid-19 Test

- Mass spectrometry (MS) is an analytical technique that measures the mass-to-charge ratio of ions.
- Researchers from the New Delhi-based Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB) have developed a new method of coronavirus disease (Covid-19), that uses mass spectrometry.
- Mass spectrometry can detect the presence and quantity of various organic and inorganic compounds by detecting the ions released by them.
- The technique uses mass spectrometry to detect two peptides (building blocks of the viral protein).
- This is the only method that directly observes the RNA as compared to RT-PCR where the proteins have to bind with a primer before we can detect it.
- This eliminates the possibility of a false negative if the quality of the RNA collected it not good and it does not bind or there is lysis (detergent) that prevents the RNA from binding.
- This testing is faster, cheaper, and almost as accurate as the Reverse Transcription-Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) test.
- The method eliminates the need for a biosafety lab, which makes it possible for it to be used at airports and railway stations to test passengers before they board a plane or a train.

**Source:** PIB, the Hindu



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