

01 Jun 2022: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

**The greatest victory is that
which requires no battle.**

- Sun Tzu



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Category: POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. Questioning the safety of Aadhaar

Syllabus: Important Aspects of Governance, Transparency and Accountability

Mains: Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential

Context

- Recently after issuing an advisory asking people to refrain from sharing photocopies of their Aadhaar Card, the [Unique Identification Development Authority of India](#) (UIDAI) opted to withdraw the notification.
- The withdrawn notice had suggested holders use a masked Aadhaar card instead of the conventional photocopy, adding that the document must not be downloaded from a cybercafé or public computer and if done for some reason, must be permanently deleted from the system. **'Masked Aadhaar' veils the first eight digits of the twelve-digit ID with 'XXXX' characters.**
- The notice informed that only entities possessing a 'User License' are permitted to seek Aadhaar for authentication purposes. Private entities like hotels or film halls cannot collect or keep copies of the identification document.

Background

- As per the National Payment Corporation of India's (NPCI) data, ₹6.48 crore worth of financial frauds through 8,739 transactions involving 2,391 unique users took place in FY 2021-22.
- Under the UID project, institutions and organizations have endowed greater focus on linking their databases with Aadhaar numbers, including for bank accounts, especially in light of the compulsory linkage for direct benefit transfer schemes.
- The NPCI's Aadhaar Payments Bridge (APB) and the Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AEPS) facilitate direct benefit transfer (DBT) and allow individuals to use Aadhaar for payments. This requires bank accounts to be linked to Aadhaar. In 2017, researchers at the Centre for Internet and Society (CIS) acquired information of various beneficiaries of such social security and employment schemes such as their Aadhaar numbers, bank account details, job card status, mobile number, etc.

Important Provisions of the Aadhaar Act

- The Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies Benefits and Services) Act, 2016 says that Aadhaar authentication is necessary for availing subsidies, benefits and services that are financed from the Consolidated Fund of India.
- In the absence of Aadhaar, the individual is to be offered an alternate and viable means of identification to ensure she/he is not deprived of the same.
- Aadhaar has been described as a preferred KYC (Know Your Customer) document but is not mandatory for opening bank accounts, acquiring a new SIM or school admissions.

- The requesting entity would have to obtain the consent of the individual before collecting his/her identity and ensure that the information is only used for authentication purposes on the Central Identities Data Repository (CIDR).
- The regulator does not receive or collect the holder's bank, investment or insurance details.
- Aadhaar Act forbids sharing Core Biometric Information (such as fingerprint, iris scan, among other biometric attributes) for any purpose other than Aadhaar number generation and authentication.
- The Act makes it clear that confidentiality needs to be maintained and the authenticated information cannot be used for anything other than the specified purpose.
- No Aadhaar number (or enclosed personal information) collected from the holder can be published, displayed or posted publicly.
- Identity information or authentication records would only be liable to be produced pursuant to an order of the High Court or Supreme Court, or by someone of the Secretary rank or above in the interest of national security.
- The Aadhaar Data Vault is where all numbers collected by authentication agencies are centrally stored. Its objective is to provide a dedicated facility for the agencies to access details only on a need to know basis.

Issues with the UIDAI

- The UIDAI neither specified any encryption algorithm to secure the Aadhaar Data Vault nor a mechanism to illustrate that the entities were adhering to appropriate procedures.
- The UIDAI's unstable record with biometric authentication has not helped it with deduplication efforts, the process that ensures that each Aadhaar Number generated is unique.
- There have been instances of the same biometric data being accorded to multiple residents.
- The UIDAI relies on Automated Biometric Identification Systems for taking corrective actions. According to the CAG report, these measures are "not effective enough" in detecting the leakages and plugging them.
- Biometric authentications can be a cause of worry, especially for disabled and senior citizens with both the iris and fingerprints dilapidating.

Possibility of Identity Theft in Aadhaar

- The UIDAI stated that more than 200 central and State government websites publicly displayed details of some Aadhaar beneficiaries such as their names and addresses. Both were made possible by the lack of robust encryption. Tonnes of Aadhaar documents from mobile shops and other places are available for brokers.
- Such UID data could be potentially used to fraudulently link the rightful beneficiaries' Aadhaar with a distinct bank account, embezzling the beneficiary by impersonation, made possible by the sizable identity documents available.
- However, merely knowing the bank account number would not be enough to withdraw money from the bank, stating that the individual's fingerprint, iris data or OTP to a registered mobile number would be required.
- There have been instances where employees of service providers were caught stealing biometric information collected solely for Aadhaar authentication.
- A far-stretch means for acquiring biometrics would involve collecting fingerprints from varied places that an individual might touch unknowingly in a certain space (such as a railing of a staircase) with iris data being acquired from high-resolution cameras.
- For mobile verification, phone users in India are known to carry two or more phone numbers at one time. There could be a possibility that the number linked to the Aadhaar is not prominently used. Fraudsters could use this as an opportunity to link their phone numbers instead, update them in the bank using the available information (of the individual) and deprive them of benefits or embezzle funds.

Nut Graf

Though Aadhar was considered the one stop solution for all identification requirements, it needs fool-proof measures to safeguard the privacy of its beneficiaries.

Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Looking at the UN report on the Taliban regime

Syllabus: International relations

Mains: India and its neighbourhood, Role of external state and non-state actors in creating challenges to internal security.

Context:

- A recently released report from the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team of the [United Nations Security Council](#) (UNSC) says that foreign terrorist organisations continue to enjoy safe haven under the new Taliban regime.
- The report also says, that due to financial constraints, and possibly under political pressure not to embarrass the Taliban internationally at this juncture, the terrorist groups are currently in consolidation mode and not likely to launch major attacks outside Afghanistan before 2023.

Taliban's internal tussle

- The foremost internal division in the [Taliban](#) is between the moderate and the hardline blocs. While the moderate bloc wants working relationships with foreign partners and integration with the international system, the hardliners (consisting of senior Taliban leaders centralized around Hibatullah Akhundzada) have a more ideological stance, with little interest in international relations.
- Independent of both these blocs is the Haqqani Network which, while more aligned with the hardliners, is inclined towards a pragmatic rather than ideological approach to securing Taliban interests.
- According to the report, under the command of Hibatullah, various Taliban factions are manoeuvring for advantage, with the Haqqani Network cornering most of the influential posts in the administration.
- The Kandahari (Durrani) Taliban is in the ascendancy among the Taliban leadership, with Pashtuns getting precedence over non-Pashtuns.
- Several key Tajik and Uzbek commanders in the north have been replaced with Pashtuns from the south, and these decisions have come against the backdrop of an “organized campaign by Pashtuns to dislodge ethnic Tajik, Turkmen and Uzbek communities from rich agricultural land in the north”.
- Internal cohesion within the Taliban was easier to maintain during the insurgency period, when there was a “compelling common cause to expel foreign forces from Afghanistan”. Now that they are in power, “the Taliban’s core identity of a Pashtun nationalist cause dominated by southern Taliban has again come to the fore, generating tension and conflict with other ethnic groups.”

Presence of Foreign Terrorists

- Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) constitutes the largest component of foreign terrorist fighters in Afghanistan, with their numbers estimated at 3,000 to 4,000 and operating along the east and southeast Afghanistan - Pakistan border areas.
- The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant Khorasan (ISILK) has grown in strength through prison releases and new recruitments.
- Al-Qaeda still has a relationship with the Taliban and is renewing its pledge of allegiance to Taliban leader Hibatullah.
- However, neither ISILK nor Al-Qaeda are capable of mounting international attacks before 2023 but their presence, along with the presence of other terrorist groups on Afghan soil, remains a matter of concern for neighbouring countries and the international community.

India-focussed Terrorist Groups

- The report also highlights the threat of India-focused terrorist groups. According to the report, two India-focused terrorist groups, Jaish-i-Mohammed (JiM) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), are reported to have training camps in Afghanistan. Both the groups enjoy close links with the Taliban leadership, with the LeT having a history of providing finance and training expertise to Taliban operations.
- The Al-Qaeda in Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) has 180400 fighters in Afghanistan. "Fighters included nationals from Bangladesh, India, Myanmar and Pakistan."
- However, AQIS capabilities were weakened from losses as a result of the October 2015 joint United States Afghan raid in Kandahar's Shorabak district and financial constraints.
- The name change of the AQIS magazine from 'Nawa-i-Afghan-Jihad' to 'Nawa-e-Gazwah-e-Hind' suggests a "refocussing of AQIS from Afghanistan to Kashmir".

Nut Graf

Despite the Taliban's pledge not to allow the use of Afghan land for terror activities, Afghanistan is still a safe haven for terrorist threats to the international community including India.

C. GS 3 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. India's EV ambition rides on three wheels

Syllabus: GS-3, Science & Technology

Mains: *The growth of the EV sector in India.*

Context:

The article analyzes the EV sector of India and also talks about the dominance of e-three wheelers in the EV market.

Background:

- Phase II of the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid and) Electric ([FAME](#)) Vehicles scheme in India came in 2019 with the outlay of Rs. 10,000 crore. With this, the push for electric vehicles was also renewed. Phase 1 of FAME was launched in 2015 with an outlay of Rs. 895 crore.
- India was focused on doubling the demand for EVs in the country and simultaneously establishing its own manufacturing industry for EVs at home so that the domestic demand can be catered to.
- FAME II was introduced for three years but it got an extension for another two years in 2021 due to certain factors including the pandemic. It aims to support 10 lakh e-two wheelers, 5 lakh e-three wheelers, 55,000 e-four wheeler passenger cars, and 7,000 e-buses.
- FAME-II was lagging behind the target so the government pushed for indigenous manufacturing.
- The big automakers such as Tata Motors, Mahindra & Mahindra, Hero Electric, and TVS opened their [EV](#) segments.
- New EV manufacturers also emerged such as Ola and Bounce into the e-two-wheelers segments.
- Among all, e-three-wheelers dominate the market segment of India's EV sector.

The dominance of e-three-wheelers

- The total contribution of three-wheelers such as auto-rickshaws is 65% of all registered EVs.
- The second-biggest contribution is by two-wheelers with 30% and the four-wheeler segment contributes only 2.5%.
- The target under FAME-II was to reach 5 lakh e-three wheelers in 2019. The e-three-wheelers have crossed 4 lakh and are expected to breach the 5 lakh target by 2023.
- The data on registered EVs shows that Assam, Bihar, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal have the highest number of e-three-wheelers registered and it is around 80%. Uttar Pradesh alone contributes to the highest number of e-three-wheelers registration with 40%.

The reason behind the increase in e-three wheelers:

Affordable price:

- In all the mentioned states, there is a lack of affordable public transport while the population is very large.
- EV three-wheeler ranges between 1 to 1.5 lakh and serves the common purpose of these states.

EV Policies:

- The EV policies of these five states are focused on accelerating the adoption of EV vehicles among consumers to increase local manufacturing.
- Local manufacturers have built the EVs in a uniquely Indian style that even the big automakers are not able to compete with it.
- 100% road tax exemptions and 100% exemptions on registration fees are given by these states.

- Assam, Delhi, and West Bengal have linked the incentives to the battery size with additional benefits of loans and scrappage benefits in some cases.
- Uttar Pradesh offers 100% interest-free loans to the state government employees on purchasing EV vehicles and a 30% subsidy on the road price of EVs with a single girl child.
- There is an exemption from SGST as well in UP to promote sales of EVs. These five states have recorded significant performance in FAME-II and will cross the target of 5 lakh crore e-three wheelers.

Demand and Supply:

- The demand and supply - both factors of e-three wheelers contribute to its growth, many benefits such as tax exemptions, subsidies, interest-free loans, etc. have raised the demand for EVs.
- On the other hand, low price, ease of maintenance, low operating cost as well as manufacturing costs contribute to the increase in the supply of EVs by operators.

Issues with EVs:

- Lack of reliable manufacturers:
 - The e-four-wheelers and two-wheelers are mainly bought for personal usage, but various issues associated with EVs such as the recent case of fire in an e-scooter, etc. make the adoption of EVs difficult for the consumers.
 - Reliable manufacturers in the e-two-wheelers and e-three-wheelers are hard to come by.
- Lack of safety:
 - Local manufacturers lack various resources and due to that they do not design EV vehicles with a focus on safety and the inefficient monitoring by the governments is also adding to it.
 - There should be proper passenger safety and security standards.
- Lack of big automakers:
 - The government should focus on the issue that the big manufacturers do not feel demotivated in entering the e-three-wheelers segment because the EV policies are designed especially for local manufacturers.
 - The resources of legacy automakers are necessary for the safety and security of the consumers.
 - Hence, future EV policies should be formulated by keeping all the stakeholders in mind to fulfil the demand and supply of EVs.

Nut Graf

While the government has initiated schemes and made policies intending to push the EV segment in India considering the climate targets for India, it is also imperative that the concerns and challenges facing this segment are addressed before this segment can reach its full potential.

Category: POLITY

1. A judicial course that calls for introspection

Syllabus: Polity

Prelims: Article 142, Article 161, Article 245

Mains: Transparency and accountability of the important institutions

Context:

The article discusses the constitutional aspects of the recent verdict of the Perarivalan case.

Background:

- The Supreme Court has ordered the release of A. G. Perarivalan, one of the seven convicts in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, exercising its special powers under [Article 142](#) of the Constitution.
- The apex court was of the view that the inordinate delay in deciding Perarivalan's early release plea by the Governor under Article 161 warranted his release.
- Perarivalan was arrested on June 11, 1991, at the age of 19, weeks after former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was killed in a suicide bomb attack at Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu on May 21.

What are Article 142 and Article 161?

- Article 142 provides that the Supreme Court in the exercise of its jurisdiction may pass such decree or make such order as is necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it.
- Article 161 talks about the power of the State Governor to grant pardons, etc., and to suspend, remit or commute sentences in certain cases.

Articles and Issues:

- The State Cabinet decided to accept his remission plea and accordingly forwarded its recommendation to the Governor. Thereafter, the Governor had kept the plea in abeyance for quite some time.
- The Bench asked the Governor to decide within a week's time but, considering the President to be the competent authority to decide on the plea, the Governor had referred the recommendation of the Cabinet to him.
- The court dismissed the argument that the President exclusively, and not the Governor, had the power to grant pardon in a case under Section 302 (murder) of the [Indian Penal Code](#), saying this contention would render Article 161 a "dead-letter" and create an extraordinary situation whereby pardons granted by Governors in murder cases for the past 70 years would be rendered invalid.
- The court protected federalism by holding that States had the power to advise and aid the Governor in case of pleas of pardon under Article 161 made by convicts in murder cases.

Also read: [Pardoning power of the Governor](#)

A deeper examination is needed:

The case requires a deeper investigation due to the following reasons:

Subject matter not clear:

- The subject matter of Article 161 with respect to the exercise of power by the state governor is not clear and obvious as ruled by the Bench of the apex court.

Powers of the state:

- Under Section 432 in the code of criminal procedures, when any person has been sentenced to punishment for an offense, the appropriate Government may, at any time, without conditions or upon any conditions which the person sentenced accepts, suspend the execution of his sentence or remit the whole or any part of the punishment to which he has been sentenced.
- When the state can use this power then why it has gone with Article 161 to grant the release. This issue requires a complete constitutional clarification.

Delay by the Governor:

- There was a lot of delay from the Governor's side in taking the decision on the matter and the Supreme Court does not provide any time frame for the Governor to act on the issue.

Conclusion:

The constitutional clarity on the issues is necessary and hence, a deeper investigation is required.

Nut Graf

Recently, the Bench of the Supreme Court ordered the release of Perarivalan who was one of the convicts of Rajiv Gandhi's assassination. This was done by revoking Article 142 which flagged the concerns. Some hailed this decision while some required clarity on the verdict.

F. Prelims Facts

Nothing here for today!!!

G. Tidbits

1. India decided to oppose WTO freeze on e-com duties

- India decided to oppose the continuation of a moratorium on customs duties on e-commerce trade at the WTO's meeting. It was adversely impacting developing countries.
- Allowing the moratorium to lapse was important for developing nations to preserve policy space for their digital advancement, regulate imports and generate revenue via customs duties.
- The [World Trade Organization](#) (WTO) members had agreed not to impose customs duties on electronic transmissions since 1998.

2. Israel-UAE free trade deal

- Israel signed a free trade deal with the United Arab Emirates, its first with an Arab country, building on their U.S.-brokered normalization of diplomatic relations in 2020.
- With this FTA, businesses in both countries will benefit from faster access to markets and lower tariffs as the nations work together to increase trade, create jobs, promote new skills and deepen cooperation.

- The 2020 deal was part of the U.S.-brokered [Abraham Accords](#) that also saw Israel establish diplomatic ties with Bahrain and Morocco.

3. Ministry brings out guidelines to manage monkeypox cases

- The Union Health Ministry issued guidelines on the management of monkeypox disease.
- Monkeypox (MPX) is a viral zoonotic disease with symptoms similar to smallpox, although with less clinical severity.
- The natural reservoir of the virus is yet unknown, and certain rodents (including rope squirrels, tree squirrels, Gambian pouched rats, dormice) and nonhuman primates are known to be naturally susceptible to the virus.
- The incubation period of monkeypox is usually from six to 13 days but can range from five to 21 days, and the period of communicability is a day or two before the rash until all the scabs fall off or subside. Suspected cases include a person of any age having a history of travel to affected countries within the last 21 days presenting with an unexplained acute rash and one or more symptoms, including swollen lymph nodes, fever, head/body ache and profound weakness. As per the guidelines, contacts should be monitored at least daily for the onset of signs/symptoms for a period of 21 days from the last contact during the infectious period.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. Which of the following statement/s is/are correct with respect to the index of eight core industries?

1. It is released by the Office of Economic Adviser, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade.
2. Among the eight sectors, the highest weightage is given to the electricity sector while the least weightage is given to fertilizer industry.
3. Under the electricity vertical, renewable energy is not included.

Options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- The Eight Core Industries include Natural Gas, Coal, Refinery Products, Crude Oil, Cement, Electricity, Steel, and Fertilizers. These industries are termed as the core industries owing to their strong impact on the general economic activities and the other industrial activities.
- These industries comprise a total of 40.27% of the total weight of the overall items that are included in the [Index of Industrial Production \(IIP\)](#). The Index of Eight Core Industries' highest weight is currently

possessed by the Refinery Products Industry. Earlier the highest weightage was given to the Electricity Industry.

- In the decreasing order of the weightage of these industries, the list is stated as below:
 - Refinery Products Industry
 - Electricity Industry
 - Steel Industry
 - Coal Industry
 - Crude Oil Industry
 - Natural Gas Industry
 - Cement Industry
 - Fertilizers Industry

Q2. Which of the following statement/s is/are correct with respect to textile exports from India?

1. There has been a substantial dip in the Textile and Apparel export from India in the current year owing to reduction in demand in the global market and competition from emerging players like Bangladesh and Vietnam in the export market.
2. United Arab Emirates is the top export destination for Textile and Apparel exports from India.

Options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- India scaled its highest ever exports tally at US\$ 44.4 Bn in Textiles and Apparel (T&A) including Handicrafts in FY 2021-22.
- USA was the top export destination accounting for 27% share, followed by the EU (18%), Bangladesh (12%) and UAE (6%).
- In terms of product categories, the export of cotton Textiles was US\$ 17.2 Bn with a 39% share. Man-made textiles export was US\$ 6.3 Bn with 14% share.
- Export of Ready-Made Garments was US\$ 16 Bn with 36% share.

Q3. Which of the following pairs of Indigenous livestock breeds and their main associated state is incorrectly matched?

1. Amritmahal – Punjab
2. Ongole – Rajasthan
3. Malenadu Gidda- Tamil Nadu
4. Surti – Bihar
5. Beetal- West Bengal

Options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- The Amrit Mahal is a breed of cattle that originated from the erstwhile state of Mysore in Karnataka, India. They originated from the Hallikar. They are notable for their great endurance and speed.
- Ongole cattle is an indigenous cattle breed that originates from the Prakasam District in the state of Andhra Pradesh in India. The breed possesses resistance to both foot and mouth disease and mad cow disease.
- Malenadu Gidda is a dwarf breed of cattle native to the hilly, rainy and densely forested Malenadu region of the Western Ghats in the state of Karnataka in India. They are of short stature and known for their adaptability, and disease resistance. The milk and urine are of medicinal value.
- The Surti is a breed of water buffalo found in the Kaira and Vadodara districts of Gujarat. Its average milk yield is 1600-1800 litres. The fat content of the milk is about 8-10 percent.
- Beetal is a Goat breed found mainly in the state of Punjab. These breeds are grown mainly for the purpose of milk and meat.

Q4. Which of the following statement/s is/are incorrect with respect to GST compensation?

- 3. As per the provisions of the GST (Compensation to States) Act, 2017, the states are assured of compensation for loss of any revenue arising on account of the implementation of GST for a period of 15 years.
- 4. The States' protected revenue is projected at a compounded growth rate of 10%
- 5. The compensation fund is funded by the Consolidated Fund of India.

Options:

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

Answer: d

Explanation:

- Goods and Services Tax was introduced in the country w.e.f. 1st July 2017 and States were assured compensation for loss of any revenue arising on account of implementation of GST as per the provisions of the GST (Compensation to States) Act, 2017 for a period of five years. For providing compensation to States, Cess is being levied on certain goods and the amount of Cess collected is being credited to Compensation Fund.
- Bi-monthly GST compensation to States for the period 2017-18, 2018-19 was released on time out of the Compensation Fund. As the States' protected revenue has been growing at 14% compounded growth

whereas the Cess collection did not increase in the same proportion, COVID-19 further increased the gap between projected revenue and the actual revenue receipt including a reduction in cess collection.

Context:

- The Government of India has released the entire amount of GST compensation payable to States up to 31st May, 2022 by releasing an amount of Rs.86,912 crores.

Q5. Which article of the Constitution of India safeguards one's right to marry the person of one's choice?

- a. Article 19
- b. Article 21
- c. Article 25
- d. Article 29

Answer: b

Explanation:

- In the Lata Singh v/s state of Uttar Pradesh case, the Supreme Court viewed the right to marry as a component of the right to life under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution.
- Similar observations were made by the Supreme Court in the Hadiya case where it held that the right to marry a person of one's choice is integral to Article 21 (right to life and liberty) of the Constitution.
- Article 21 states that no person shall be deprived of his life and personal liberty except according to the procedure established by law.
- Article 19 embodies basic freedoms.
- Article 25 is with respect to religious rights.
- Article 29 grants protection to both religious and linguistic minorities.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. Assess the performance of FAME II scheme across the country and the roadblocks that still remain in place in expanding the EV accessibility in India. (250 words; 15 marks) (GS III- Energy)
2. What is Article 142 of the Indian constitution? Does it go against the doctrine of separation of powers? Elaborate. (250 words; 15 marks) (GS II- Polity)