

Masked Aadhaar

- Two days after issuing an advisory cautioning people against sharing a photocopy of their Aadhaar card, the Union government on Sunday withdrew the notification, claiming it could be “misinterpreted. On multiple occasions, the authority said publicly that without biometric information, Aadhaar details could not be used to impersonate a person.
- However, it was said that since the Aadhaar card is a document with details of personal information, it is akin to giving out a mobile phone number, bank account number or PAN and ought to be “ordinarily protected” to ensure a person’s privacy.

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What is a **masked Aadhaar**?

An Aadhaar number consists of 12 digits. Masking an Aadhaar number means replacing the first eight digits with some characters like “xxxx-xxxx” while only the last four digits of the original number are visible

HOW TO DOWNLOAD A MASKED AADHAAR?

Downloading an electronic version of masked Aadhaar card is a five-step process

1. Go to the link <https://aadhaar.uidai.gov.in/genricDownloadAadhaar>

2. Type your Aadhaar card number and enter the captcha



3. There will be an option “Do you want a masked Aadhaar”. Select it

4. Enter the OTP received on your mobile phone

5. Verify and download your masked Aadhaar card

THE HINDU

BRICS

- BRICS has become an important platform for win-win cooperation among China, India, Russia, Brazil and South Africa, and a significant force for the evolution of international order, the improvement of global governance and the promotion of common development.
- Since China took over the BRICS chairmanship at the beginning of this year, we have worked together with BRICS partners to press ahead with cooperation in political security, economy and finance, people-to-people exchanges, public health and other realms.

Upholding universal security

- BRICS countries should be builders of universal security.
- Coldwar mentality and bloc confrontation pose grave threats to world peace and security. Seeking one’s own security at the expense of others’ will only create new tensions and risks.
- BRICS countries need to strengthen political mutual trust and security cooperation, maintain communication and coordination on major international and regional issues, accommodate each other’s core interests and major concerns,

respect each other's sovereignty, security and development interests, oppose hegemonism and power politics, and work together to build a global community of security for all

- BRICS countries should be contributors of common development. The COVID-19 pandemic threatens to derail the world economy
- Facing the rising tide of de-globalisation and the increase of unilateral sanctions and technology barriers, BRICS countries should enhance mutually-beneficial cooperation in supply chains, energy, food and financial resilience, take solid steps to implement the Global Development Initiative, foster an open world economy and create a favourable environment for common development.

On health

- BRICS countries should be pioneers of cooperation in COVID-19 pandemic management.
- India's vision of 'One Earth, One Health' also contributes to multilateral cooperation on public health.
- BRICS countries should fully leverage their respective strengths, and jointly promote the development of global health governance in a

direction in favour of developing countries.

A governance philosophy

- BRICS countries should be leaders of global governance. Global challenges are emerging one after another.
- Only by coordinating global actions can we properly cope with them. "Small circles" cannot solve the "big challenges" facing the whole world.
- BRICS countries should firmly safeguard the international system, with the United Nations at its core and the international order underpinned by international law, and ensure that international affairs have participation by all, international rules are formulated by all, and development outcomes are shared by all.
- We should explore the 'BRICS plus' cooperation at more levels, in more areas and in a wider scope.
- China proposes to launch the BRICS expansion process and discuss standards and procedures for expansion in order to build consensus step-by-step.

THE HINDU

Reservation on public employment

- The jurisprudence of reservation relies on the symbiotic coexistence of constitutionally guaranteed equality of opportunity in public employment under Article 16 (1) of the Constitution of India and classifications thereunder various clauses of the same article, especially Article 16(4) and Article 16 (4 A), which are in the nature of facilitating provisions, vesting a discretion on the government to consider providing reservations for the socially and educationally backward sections of the society and to provide reservation in promotion to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, respectively.

Reservation not a fundamental Right

- It is a settled law, time and again reiterated by the Supreme Court, that there is no fundamental right to reservation or promotion under Article 16(4) or Article 16(4 A) of the Constitution, rather they are enabling provisions for providing reservation, if the circumstances so warrant (Mukesh Kumar and Another vs State of Uttarakhand & Ors. 2020).

- However, these pronouncements no way understate the constitutional directive under Article 46 that mandates that the state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and in particular Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe.
- The Constitution (Seventy-seventh Amendment) Act, 1995 In Indra Sawhney Case, the Supreme Court had held that Article 16(4) of the Constitution of India does not authorise reservation in the matter of promotions.
- However, the judgment was not to affect the promotions already made and hence only prospective in operation, it was ruled. By the Constitution (Seventy-seventh Amendment) Act, 1995, which, Article 16(4-A), was inserted to provide that “nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any provision for reservation in matters of promotion to any class or classes of posts in the services under the State in favour of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes which, in the opinion of the State, are not adequately represented in the services under the State”
- The Constitution Bench Judgment in M. Nagaraj (2006)

- A five-judge bench of Supreme Court declared the 1995 amendment as not vocative of basic structure of the Constitution but laid down creating conditions which included the collection of “quantifiable data showing backwardness of the class and inadequacy of representation of that class in public employment” . .
- The bench held that the creamy layer among Scheduled castes and tribes is to be excluded from reservation.

Jarnail Singh vs Lachhmi Narain Gupta (2018)

- The constitution bench invalidated the requirement to collect quantifiable data in relation to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes but upheld the principle of applicability of creamy lawyer in relation to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.
 - The Constitution (103rd Amendment) Act, 2019
 - The 10% reservation for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS), other Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and backward classes for government jobs and admission in educational institutions is currently under challenge before the Supreme Court which has referred the same to a constitution bench.
- The adjudication awaited in this regard may also turn to be a critical milestone in the jurisprudence of reservation as traditional understanding of backwardness is broadened to specifically include economic backwardness without social backwardness as is traditionally seen.
 - Dr. Jaishri Laxmanrao Patil vs Chief Minister (2021)
 - Despite the Indra Sawhney ruling, there have been attempts on the part of many States to breach the rule by way of expanding the reservation coverage and the Maharashtra Socially and Educationally Backward Classes Act 2018, (Maratha reservation law) came under challenge before the Supreme Court which referred the same to a bench of five judges and one question was whether the 1992 judgment needs a relook.
 - Interestingly, the Supreme Court not only affirmed the Indra Sawhney decision, but also struck down Section 4(1)(a) and Section 4(1)(b) of the Act which provided 12% reservation for Marathas in educational institutions and 13% reservation in public employment respectively, citing the breach of ceiling.

- “The 2018 Act as amended in 2019 granting reservation for Maratha community does not make out any exceptional circumstance to exceed the ceiling limit of 50% reservation,”, declared the apex Court.
- During the First World War, the Ottomans, aided by Azeris, attacked the south Caucasus, especially targeting ethnic Armenians.
- As the Ottomans retreated at the end of the World War, Azerbaijan and Armenia descended into a full-blown war in 1920.
- The Azeri-Armenian war of 1991

THE HINDU

Nagorno karabakh

How did the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh begin?

- Nagorno-Karabakh is a landlocked, mountainous and forested region, falling within the boundaries of Azerbaijan.
- Nagorno-Karabakh, called Artsakh in Armenian, hosts a predominantly ethnic Armenian population with an Azeri minority.
- It is located in the South Caucasus region and is roughly made up of modern-day Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia.
- Georgia. Nagorno-Karabakh, which was once a part of the Armenian kingdom, has been ruled by several empires over the centuries the Ottomans, the Persians, and the Russians. Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia later became separate Republics, with the Azeris incorporating Nagorno-Karabakh into their Republic.
- Despite the 2020 ceasefire, clashes have not stopped.
- In November last year, seven Azerbaijani and six Armenian soldiers were killed in border clashes.
- With the efforts of the Minsk Group remaining largely unsuccessful, Baku saw an opportunity to introduce its own peace proposal, which calls for the mutual recognition of each State’s territorial integrity, meaning the recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh within Azerbaijani territory.
- The European Union, meanwhile, has emerged as a potential peace broke
- Soon, the Bolsheviks took over south Caucasus to expand Soviet influence and Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia became Soviet Republics.

Who is organising the current peace talks and where do they stand?

- The Soviets officially placed Nagorno-Karabakh as an autonomous Oblast (administrative region) in Azerbaijan's territory, despite the chiefly Armenian population.
- As Soviet power began to wane in the 1980s, the ethnic Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh expressed a desire to be reunited with their roots and become a part of Armenia, organising a vote for the same in 1988.
- By 1993, Armenia had taken control of most of Nagorno-Karabakh.
- The war ended in 1994 when both countries entered into a ceasefire brokered by Russia but the borders of Armenia and Azerbaijan were not demarcated
- The Minsk Group, created by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in early 1990, was co-chaired by Russia, the United States, and France.
- The Minsk Group's proposals were continuously rejected by both Yerevan and Baku.
- The role of the Minsk Group declined during the 2020 war between the two countries, as other negotiating groups entered the scene.
- In 2016, a clash started between Azerbaijan and Armenia which lasted for four days.
- A ceasefire signed in Moscow put an end to the war but the Nagorno-Karabakh issue was far from resolved.
- Fresh clashes erupted on the Armenia-Azerbaijan border in September of 2020, which turned into a fierce six-week war in which more than 2,000 people died.

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5G

- Radio electronics refers to a broad range of technologies that can transmit, receive and process wireless signals.
- While these technologies can utilise electromagnetic spectrum that goes all the way up to 300GHz, the lower frequencies of this spectrum are particularly attractive.
- Lower frequency signals can travel longer distances and penetrate obstacles with lesser attenuation.
- Electronic components (amplifiers, transmitters, receivers) operating at lower frequencies are also easier to design and manufacture.
- New spectrum for 3GHz With the increasing demand for mobile services, the currently allocated spectrum is proving inadequate.
- At the simplest level, 5G represents the allocation of new spectrum to increase capacity. Since most of the spectrum at lower frequencies is already being utilised much of this new spectrum is being allocated at higher frequencies.
- The first deployments in India will be around 3GHz, but will expand to 25 GHz and beyond.
- As 5G services evolve to occupy higher frequencies, it will significantly increase the bandwidth available for mobile services.
- However, at these frequencies the design of the transmitting and receiving equipment becomes more complex.
- An interesting fact related to the physics of signal transmission is that at higher frequencies it becomes easier to direct a signal in specific direction.
- So, signals transmitted from a cell tower can be more precisely directed at a specific user (rather than spreading out in various directions which is just a waste of energy).
- Intuitively, this enhanced directivity results in less interference between signals meant for different users which directly translates to increased capacity.
- Thus, while operating at higher frequencies has some fundamental challenges, it offers some unique opportunities as well.
- Existing wireless communication infrastructure is primarily designed around the needs of mobile phones.
- However, several emerging applications in factory automation, gaming and remote healthcare have more stringent latency requirements. Self-driving cars is an illustrative example
- Low delays between transmission and reception of messages are

extremely critical when these cars have to co-operate with each other to avoid accidents.

- There is also a lot of research around cost and energy efficient electronic devices that can transmit and receive high frequency signals.
- This involves delving into the fundamental physics of semiconductor technologies and is expected to lay the foundation for the growth of wireless technology into higher frequency bands.

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