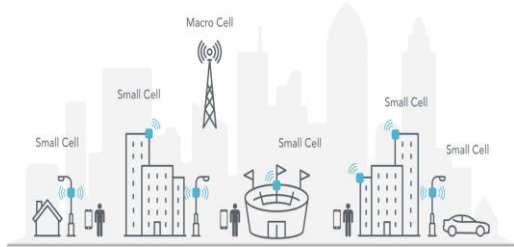


Small cell and 5G

What is a small cell?

- A small cell is an umbrella term used to describe a miniature radio access point (AP) or wireless network base station with a low radio frequency (RF) power output, footprint and range.
- Small cells enhance cellular network coverage and capacity in areas such as densely populated city centers where use demands are the highest.



- To expedite the roll-out of 5G, telecom operators in the country will leverage street furniture such as poles, advertisement hoardings and bus shelters for deploying low-power base stations called ‘small cells’ that will help bring the network closer to the consumers.

“Small cells are needed for deploying 5G.

- Leveraging of existing street infrastructure will also save the hassle and investments needed for

erecting new poles along roadside, especially in highly populated areas.

- The Department of Telecom last week also notified the amended Right of Way Rules, which pave the way for the deployment of 5G small cells on existing street infrastructure, and expects these reforms to enable the launch of 5G services in the country by October, 2022.
- The amendments rationalisation of charges, introduction of a single window clearance system and doing away with the need for consent from a government authority for installing infrastructure over private property.
- To facilitate faster 5G roll-out, RoW application procedures for small cells have been simplified and telecom licensees will be able to use street infrastructure to deploy telecom equipment at a cost of ₹150 a year in rural areas and ₹300 in urban areas.

THE HINDU

Talc powder

- India is part of the “worldwide portfolio assessment and commercial decision to transition to an all corn-starch-based baby powder portfolio” of the

pharmaceutical giant Johnson and Johnson (J&J).

- In its statement, the company said that as a result of this transition, talc-based Johnson's baby powder would be discontinued globally in 2023.
- The company's decision to stop production comes following multiple lawsuits from women who claim that the product caused ovarian cancer, due to the alleged contamination of asbestos, a known carcinogen.
- "When talc is contaminated with asbestos, it is more likely to contain highly carcinogenic tremolite or anthophyllite.
- They are considered more carcinogenic than chrysotile, the most used type of asbestos.
- Prolonged breathing of asbestos increases the risk of multiple cancers, including lung and colon cancer.
- Infants and children below the age of five are five times more likely to get affected than a 30-year-old adult to develop mesothelioma, a type of cancer linked to asbestos if they are exposed to it at the same time.
- This is because a child's organs are more tender than an adult's.
- Talcum powders are harmful for both the mother and baby.

S. Subramaniam Balaji vs Tamil Nadu judgment of 2013

The story so far:

- On Friday, the Supreme Court referred to a three-judge Bench a series of petitions seeking a judicial direction that political parties who make "wild" promises of largesse should also reveal in their poll manifestos where they will get the money to pay for them.
- The reference is a shift from the court's own stand in the S. Subramaniam Balaji vs Tamil Nadu. According to a 2020 Statista survey across 25 two-thirds India, two-third respondents said they had a smartphone.
- Of these, half said they sent and received money digitally, and about 31% said they had a mobile app for banking.
- Nearly 14% said they used their mobile phones for banking-related purposes.
- Global cybersecurity firm Kaspersky warns of an increase in cyberattacks on Android and iOS devices in the Asia Pacific (APAC) region. Nadu judgment of 2013.

What happened?

- In the Balaji case judgment, a Division Bench of the Supreme Court

had held that making promises in election manifestos do not amount to a 'corrupt practice' under Section 123 of the Representation of People Act (RP).

- However, the Supreme Court is now worried that freebies promised by political parties to win elections could bleed the public exchequer dry.
- The Court said that parties who form the government riding the wave created by their pre-poll promises of "free gifts" are bleeding the State finances dry by actually trying to fulfil their outlandish promises using public money.
- The Supreme Court has therefore decided to revisit the Balaji verdict.

Why is the Court's move to review the Balaji judgment significant?

- In its order, the court foresees that "freebies may create a situation wherein the State government cannot provide basic amenities due to lack of funds and the State is pushed towards imminent bankruptcy".
- The court said it wants a transparent debate before the three-judge Bench on whether an "enforceable" judicial order can stop political parties from promising and distributing 'irrational freebies'.

- The case is unique as the Supreme Court is exploring whether judicial parameters can be set on a purely political act of promising freebies.

THE HINDU

Cyber threat to mobile banking

- One mobile banking trojan, called Anubis, has been targeting Android users since 2017.
- Roaming Mantis is another prolific malware targeting mobile banking users.
- Some countries are already making payment platform providers change their business model.
- China, for instance, has ordered its internet companies to offer their rival firm's link and payment services on their platforms.
- In India, a new law demands all licensed mobile payment platforms to be capable of providing interoperability between wallets.
- There is push from regulators to make payment platforms interoperable at a time when the demand for technical experts is a serious concern in the banking industry.

THE HINDU

Linking Aadhaar and voter id

The story so far:

- Reports have surfaced online of instances where block-level officers have asked individuals to link their Aadhaar with their Voter IDs, failing which their Voter IDs could be cancelled.
- This comes in the aftermath of the Election Commission's (EC) campaign to promote the linkage of Voter ID and Aadhaar that began on August 1.

Why does the government want this?

- The EC conducts regular exercises to maintain an updated and accurate record of the voter base.
- A part of this exercise is to weed out duplication of voters, such as migrant workers who may have been registered more than once on the electoral rolls in different constituencies or for persons registered multiple times within the same constituency.

Is the linking of an Aadhaar with one's Voter ID mandatory?

- In December 2021, Parliament passed the Election Laws (Amendment) Act, 2021 to amend the Representation of the People Act, 1950, inter alia.

- Section 23(4) was inserted in the Representation of the People Act, 1950.
- It states that the electoral registration officer may "for the purpose of establishing the identity of any person" or "for the purposes of authentication of entries in electoral roll of more than one constituency or more than once in the same constituency" for citizens already enrolled, require them to furnish their Aadhaar numbers.
- To reflect this amendment, in June 2022, the government notified changes to the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960.
- Rule 26B was added to provide that "every person whose name is listed in the roll may intimate his Aadhaar number to the registration officer".
- Although, the use of discretionary language throughout the amendments have been accompanied by assurances by both the government and the EC that linkage of the Aadhaar with Voter ID is optional, this does not seem to be reflected in Form 6B issued under the new Rule 26B.
- Form 6B provides the format in which Aadhaar information may be submitted to the electoral registration officer.

- Form 6B provides the voter to either submit their Aadhaar number or any other listed document.
- However, the option to submit other listed documents is exercisable only if the voter is “not able to furnish their Aadhaar number because they do not have an Aadhaar number.

Why is the mandatory linking of Aadhaar to the Voter ID an issue?

- The preference to use Aadhaar for verification and authentication, both by the state and private sector, stems from two reasons.
- First, at the end of 2021, 99.7% of the adult Indian population had an Aadhaar card.
- This coverage exceeds that of any other officially valid document such as driver’s license, ration cards, PAN cards etc that are mostly applied for specific purposes.
- Second, since Aadhaar allows for biometric authentication, Aadhaar-based authentication and verification are considered more reliable, quicker, and cost-efficient when compared to other IDs.
- But these reasons do not suffice the mandating of Aadhaar except in limited circumstances as per the Puttaswamy judgment.
- It needs to be considered whether such mandatory linkage of Aadhaar

with Voter ID would pass the test of being “necessary and proportionate” to the purpose of de-duplication which is sought to be achieved.

- In Puttaswamy, one of the questions that the Supreme Court explored was whether the mandatory linking of Aadhaar with bank accounts was constitutional or not.
- The Court observed that the mandatory linking of Aadhaar with bank accounts was not only for new bank accounts but also existing ones, failing which the individual will not be able to operate their bank account.
- The Court held that depriving a person of their right to property for non-linkage fell foul of the test of proportionality
- In Lal Babu Hussein (1995), the Supreme Court had held that the Right to vote cannot be disallowed by insisting only on four proofs of identity voters can rely on any other proof of identity and obtain the right to vote.

What are the operational difficulties?

- First, the preference to Aadhaar for the purposes of determining voters is puzzling as Aadhaar is only a proof of residence and not a proof of

citizenship. Therefore, verifying voter identity against this will only help in tackling duplication but will not remove voters who are not citizens of India from the electoral rolls.

- Second, the estimate of error rates in biometric based authentication differ widely.
- Lastly, civil society has highlighted that linking of the two databases of electoral rolls and Aadhaar could lead to the linkage of Aadhaar “demographic” information with voter ID information, and lead to violation of the right to privacy and surveillance measures by the state.

THE HINDU
