Pawar announces

Almost a month after the results of the Maharashtra polls were announced and following two weeks of intense deliberations over the formation of a government, the Shiv Sena, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the Congress on Friday unanimously agreed that Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray would be the Chief Minister of the new government. Senior Shiv Sena leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut confirmed on Friday.

Unanimous choice: Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray and his wife Krunal in Mumbai on Friday. -R

The talks between the three parties, however, remained inconclusive and an announcement of the formal details was to be sorted out. NCP chief Sharad Pawar had stated earlier in the meeting at the Uddhav Thackeray Centre, Mr Pawar said, "There will be a press conference tomorrow (Saturday) after everything is finalised."

“We have unanimously agreed that Uddhav Thackeray will lead the government," he said, while leaving the meeting.

Mr. Thackeray, who left a few minutes later, said the discussions were positive. "We have sorted out the majority of the issues, and certain small issues are yet to be solved," he said.

Page Number*

1 Dam-hit families to get solatium for crop loss
2 Aadhaar data: SC seeks govt. reply to petition
3 GDP slump will hit $5 tn target, warns NITI Aayog
4 Policy to hasten piped gas infra on the cards
5 The opacity around electoral bonds (Editorial)
6 Practice cum Revision - MCQs

Page Number

C | H | T | D | B
---|---|---|---|---
7 | 9 | 11
1, 10 | 1, 12 | 1, 14
1, 10 | 1, 12 | 1, 14
13 | 15 | 17
8 | 10 | 12

* C – Chennai; B – Bengaluru; D – Delhi; H – Hyderabad; T – Thiruvananthapuram;
Policy to hasten piped gas infra on the cards

A national policy on City Gas Distribution (CGD) to speed up development of infrastructure for supply of piped natural gas to households as well as CNG for automobiles and industrial units is on the cards.

As a first step, the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) has formed a "high-level committee" comprising its secretary officials and those of CGD entities. The committee will undertake a detailed review of all the issues to expedite the development of piped gas networks and draft such a policy.

The decision assumes significance considering challenges, especially delay in getting approvals at the state level, that industry sources say CGD entities in certain geographical areas (GAs) are facing.

The regulator also made a reference to such a situation, while inviting inputs for the draft policy.

Significant progress

The CGD industry has witnessed significant progress in the last two years in terms of authorisation of GAs. PNGRB Secretary Yashpal Sharma said in a note.

The number of such GAs has increased from 11 at the end of 2017 to 22 in present, covering 78% of the country’s population against 20% two years ago.

As per the regulations, the regulator said various authorities at the central, state and local government levels have "generally been helpful and working along with CGD entities in resolving the issues." Though the issues cited by entities mostly come under the purview of the state governments, it was felt that a national policy would serve as a guide for the states to formulate their own policy for PNGRB.

The draft policy is expected to dwell on various aspects, including the appointment of a nodal agency/authority by state governments to co ordinate for granting single window clearances in a time-bound manner.

An important aspect the policy is likely to go into is standardisation of fuel rate and tax structure across the country to ensure synergy in the process and the procedure for the availability of permissions from WAPCOS and Railways.

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Part A—Preliminary Examination

Paper I (200 marks)

- Current events of national and international importance.
- Indian Polity and Governance-Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.
- Indian and World Geography-Physical, Social, Economic Geography of India and the World.

General Science

Part B—Main Examination

PAPER-III

General Studies-II: Governance, Constitution, Polity, Social Justice and International relations.

- Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies.
- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

PAPER-IV


- Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc.
- Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.
- Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

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News

- National Policy on City Gas Distribution [CGD]

PNGRB

- Constituted under PNGRB Act, 2006

- Protects interest of consumers and entities engaged in petroleum, petroleum products, and natural gas.

Regulates

- for uninterrupted and adequate supply

- Refining
- Distribution
- Storage
- Marketing
- Transportation
- Sale

Petroleum, Petroleum products, Natural Gas

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- ConD Policy
  - Guide for states to formulate policy
  - Leading to uniform policy
  - Expedient development of ConD Infrastructure
  - Provisions → Nodal agency / officer - Single Window Clearance
    - Standardisation of road restoration, permission charges

City Gas Distribution
- Transportation and distribution of natural gas to consumers in different sectors through pipelines
- ConD Sector → 4 Segments
  - Auto-fuel → Commercial
  - Domestic → Industrial

Natural Gas
- Gas - naturally occurring gaseous hydrocarbon
  - Primarily methane
- Odourless, colourless and lighter than air
- Few emissions - cleanest fossil fuel
- Superior fuel compared to coal & other liquid fuels
  - Environment friendly
  - Safer: Cheaper
- Supplied through pipelines - save space

Uses
- Power generation
- Feedstock for fertilizer plants
- Fuels for industrial use
- Heating, cooking

Compressed Natural Gas [CNG]
- Gaseous fuel
- Viable alternative in automotive industry
  - Far-reaching environmental and economic implications
  - Safe as transportation fuel

Piped Natural Gas (PNG)
- Procured from oil or gas wells
  - Mild steel/polyethylene pipeline
  - To be used in various segments across country
Aadhaar data: SC seeks govt. reply to petition

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI
A Bench of Chief Justice of India S.A. Bobde and Justice B.R. Gavai of the Supreme Court on Friday asked the Union government and the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) to respond to a petition alleging that recent amendments to the Aadhaar law opened the back door to private players to access citizens' personal data. The petition was filed jointly by former Army officer S.G. Vombatkere and activist Bezwada Wilson.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Part A—Preliminary Examination
Paper I—(200 marks)
1. Current events of national and international importance.
2. Indian Polity and Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.

Part B—Main Examination
PAPER-III
General Studies- II: Governance, Constitution, Polity, Social Justice and International relations.
3. Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.
### Important Issues Raised

1. **S. Court judgment in Aadhaar case. (K.S. Puttaswamy case)**
   - Struck down section 57 of 2016 Act
   - It allowed private entities to use Aadhaar data for authentication
   - Violation of Right to Privacy

2. **Aadhaar Regulations, 2019**
   - Commercialisation of Aadhaar data.
     - **Eg:** Banks to get Aadhaar data for e-KYC at a price
   - Relegation of section 57 → commercial exploitation of personal information + Private surveillance

### Linking of Aadhaar Database with Database of PMLA, 2002 and Indian Telegraph Act, 1885

- Aadhaar database lacks integrity
- Threat to national security - A Trojan Horse

### Earlier Amendments to Permit ‘Voluntary Use’ of Aadhaar to get mobile connections and open bank accounts → Struck down by S. Court.

### Offline Verification System

- Bypass authorities - unauthorized parties to replicate Aadhaar related data in various databases.
GDP slump will hit $5 tn target, warns NITI Aayog

Sorhana K. Nair
T.C.A. Seshadri Ravahan
New Delhi

The road to a $5 trillion economy by 2025 is beset with many speed-breakers, the NITI Aayog has warned the government.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in her July 5 Budget presentation, had said the government would work to make India a $5 trillion economy by 2025.

To begin with, the Aayog said nominal GDP growth—a measure of growth without accounting for inflation—has to be at least 12.4% on average if that target has to be reached, according to a presentation made by its CEO Amitabh Kant at the November 8 meeting of the Standing Committee on Finance, chaired by former Union Minister and BJP MP Jayant Sinha.

The current rate was a mere 8% in the first quarter of the current financial year.

The government is expected to release data for the second quarter (July to September) later this month. Experts estimate that growth will dip in Q2 compared to Q1 in both real and nominal terms. While GDP growth in real terms in Q1 stood at 5%, state-run lender State Bank of India recently estimated that this could dip to 4.2% in Q2, with a corresponding dip in nominal growth as well.

Real GDP growth accounts for inflation. In his presentation, which The Hindu has accessed, Mr. Kant said “domestic investment and consumption” are the only dependable drivers for sustainable re-acceleration (of the economy). However, a deceleration in investment is visible, primarily in the household sector, due almost entirely to real estate,” he pointed out.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Part A—Preliminary Examination

Paper I - (200 marks)

- Current events of national and international importance.
- Indian Polity and Governance—Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.
- Economic and Social Development—Sustainable Development, Poverty, Inclusion, Demographics, Social Sector Initiatives, etc.

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Part B—Main Examination

PAPER-IV


- Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.
- Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support prices; Public Distribution System; objectives, functioning, limitations, revamping; issues of buffer stocks and food security; Technology missions; economics of animal-rearing.

News

- NITI Aayog warned govt. on State of Indian Economy

- Hurdles in becoming $5 trillion economy

1. Nominal GDP Growth
   - Q1 of FY 2019-20 → 8%.
   - To achieve target → 12.4% on avg. required
   - Q2 of FY 2019-20 estimation
     - Dip in Nominal and Real GDP
     - Real GDP (Q1) → 5%.
     - Real GDP (Q2) → estimated 4.2%.

- Dependable driver of re-acceleration
  - Domestic Investment
  - Domestic Consumption

2. Low Domestic Consumption
   - at a 40 year low

3. Deceleration in Investment → HH Sector
   - due to real estate.
   - Gross Fixed Capital Formation
     - Dwellings, other buildings and structures — fell to 6.9% in 2017-18

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The opacity around electoral bonds

If big money entirely funds elections in a secretive way, democracy as we know it will not exist.

The recent disclosures from the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) have raised serious questions about the Electoral Bonds scheme. The scheme, in its current form, is a backdoor route for wealthy individuals and corporate houses to donate to political parties without disclosing the identity of the donors. This opacity surrounding electoral bonds raises several concerns about the integrity of the electoral process.

One of the key concerns is the lack of transparency. The scheme allows donors to make anonymous contributions, which can be channeled through electoral bonds. This effectively shields the identity of donors, making it difficult to trace the source of funds.

Another concern is the potential for money laundering. Electoral bonds have been used in the past to funnel illicit funds into political parties, raising questions about the scheme's ability to deter corruption.

The opacity around electoral bonds also raises questions about the role of political parties. If political parties are seen as merely fronts for wealthy individuals, it undermines the democratic process.

In conclusion, the electoral bonds scheme needs to be reformed to ensure greater transparency and accountability. This could include requiring the disclosure of the identity of donors, increasing the transparency of the electoral process, and ensuring that political parties are not merely fronts for wealthy individuals.

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 Civispedia Team - Powered by Shankar IAS Academy
Part A—Preliminary Examination

Paper I (200 marks)
- Current events of national and international importance.
- Indian Polity and Governance—Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.
- Economic and Social Development—Sustainable Development, Poverty, Inclusion, Demographics, Social Sector Initiatives, etc.

Part B—Main Examination

PAPER-III
General Studies—II: Governance, Constitution, Polity, Social Justice and International relations.
- Salient features of the Representation of People’s Act.
- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.
- Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance—applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures.

PAPER-IV
General Studies—III: Technology, Economic Development, Biodiversity, Environment, Security and Disaster Management
- Challenges to internal security through communication networks, role of media and social networking sites in internal security challenges, basics of cyber security; money-laundering and its prevention.

PAPER-V
General Studies—IV: Ethics, Integrity and Aptitude
- Public/Civil service values and Ethics in Public administration: Status and problems; ethical concerns and dilemmas in government and private institutions; laws, rules, regulations and conscience as sources of ethical guidance; accountability and ethical governance; strengthening of ethical and moral values in governance; ethical issues in international relations and funding corporate governance.
- Probity in Governance: Concept of public service; Philosophical basis of governance and probity; Information sharing and transparency in government, Right to Information, Codes of Ethics, Codes of Conduct, Citizen’s Charters, Work culture, Quality of service delivery, Utilization of public funds, challenges of corruption.

Editorial
- Money is required for the political parties to reach the voters
  - Electoral Bonds Scheme
- Political funding in other countries
  - Public funding
  - Campaign funding laws
    - Public funding
    - Limits on Expenditure
    - Limits on donations
    - Transparency in funding
    - Penalties for non-compliance.

Electoral Bond Scheme
- Electoral Bonds - Bearer Banking instrument
  - Negotiable instrument
  - To fund political parties
  - Will not bear the name of the donor
  - Donor and party details available with the bank
  - ‘ANONYMOUS DONATIONS’
**Disadvantages of Electoral Bonds**

- **Ruling Party can use the ‘anonymity’ to demand donations for it.**
  - Prevent donations to other political parties.
- **Ruling party can misuse the law enforcement agencies to harass those who donate to rival political parties, since it has the data.**
  - Law agencies can obtain the information from the banks.
- **No donation limits for the electoral bonds**
  - Advantage for the ruling party
- **Chances of illegal foreign funds to be given to political parties.**
  - ‘Bearer instrument’ should be issued by the central bank
- **Long term effect → Democracy will not sustain.**

**Way forward:**

- Government needs to act on the recommendations for various remedies given by various commissions on reforming the Electoral Bond Scheme.
- India needs to benchmark itself against the best international practices and laws on campaign funding.
  - Principles
    1. Complete transparency in all the funding
    2. Political parties need to be under RTI Act.
- Need for spending limits and donation limits
- **Strict penalties for violating the rules and law**
- Public funding needs to be examined and introduced with proper checks and balances.
- Voters need to demand changes
  - More voter awareness campaigns required
- Electoral Bonds Scheme needs to be scrapped.
Practice Question – Prelims
Q. Consider the following statements about Electoral Bonds.

1. It is a bearer Banking Instrument to be used for funding all the Political Parties in India.
2. The maximum limit for Donation in Electoral Bonds is Rs 10 lakh.

Which of the above statement/s is/are incorrect?

a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2
d) Neither 1 nor 2

Practice Question – Mains
GS-II
Q. ‘Free and fair elections require clean and transparent funding’. In this context, define what is meant by Electoral Bonds? Do you think that the ‘Electoral Bonds Scheme’ is a move in the right direction for a democracy like India? Suggest ways to increase the transparency in the funding process in the elections. (250 words, 15 marks)
**River Narmada**

- Life line of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh
- Origin: Amarkantak plateau, M.P.
- Mouth: Gulf of Khambat (Arabian Sea), Gujarat.

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**Sardar Sarovar dam**

- Located in Gujarat
- Foundation: 1961 - Jawaharlal Nehru
- Narmada Bachao Andolan - 1990s
- Movement of tribals, farmers and environmentalists

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**Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal - 1969**

- Sharing of water: between Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan
- Narmada Control Authority - 1980
- Filling of Sardar Sarovar dam due to heavy rains
  - Villages in the upstream affected by flood
- Protesting families called off protests
Practice Question – Prelims

Q. With reference to River. Narmada, consider the following statements.

1. The Narmada River basin lies only in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra.

2. According to the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal (NWDT), Narmada water is shared among Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Rajasthan.

Select the correct statements from the codes given below,

a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2
d) Neither 1 nor 2
Practice Question – Prelims

Q1. With reference to River Narmada, consider the following statements.

1. The Narmada River basin lies only in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra.
2. According to the Narmada Water Disputes Tribunal (NWDT), Narmada water is shared among Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Rajasthan.

Select the correct statements from the codes given below,

a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2
d) Neither 1 nor 2

Practice Question – Prelims

Q2. Consider the following statements with reference to the ‘Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB)’.

1. It is a statutory body.
2. The board regulates the production, refining, processing, storage, transportation, distribution, marketing and sale of petroleum, petroleum products and natural gas to ensure uninterrupted and adequate supply of petroleum, petroleum products and natural gas in all parts of the country.

Which among the above statements is/are correct?

a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2
d) Neither 1 nor 2
Practice Question – Prelims
Q3. Consider the following statements.

1. Natural gas is a superior fuel as compared with coal and other liquid fuels.
2. The Ignition temperature of Petrol is much higher than Natural Gas.

Which among the above statements is/are incorrect?
   a) 1 only
   b) 2 only
   c) Both 1 and 2
   d) Neither 1 nor 2

Practice Question – Prelims
Q4. Consider the following statements about Electoral Bonds.

1. It is a bearer Banking Instrument to be used for funding all the Political Parties in India.
2. The maximum limit for Donation in Electoral Bonds is Rs 10 lakh.

Which of the above statement/s is/are incorrect?
   a) 1 only
   b) 2 only
   c) Both 1 and 2
   d) Neither 1 nor 2
Practice Question – Mains

GS-II

Q. ‘Free and fair elections require clean and transparent funding’. In this context, define what is meant by Electoral Bonds? Do you think that the ‘Electoral Bonds Scheme’ is a move in the right direction for a democracy like India? Suggest ways to increase the transparency in the funding process in the elections. (250 words, 15 marks)

Practice Question – Prelims

Answers

Q1. Option ‘c’ - Both 1 and 2
Q2. Option ‘c’ – Both 1 and 2
Q3. Option ‘b’ - 2 only
Q4. Option ‘c’ – Both 1 and 2