

Bring ID Proof Like Aadhaar Card: UPSC To Civil Services Aspirants

Civil services aspirants will have to bring a copy of Aadhaar card or other identify proof to appear in the UPSC's preliminary examination on June 18 in case the photographs on their admit cards are of poor quality.

In instructions issued to the aspirants for the test, the UPSC said those who have poor-quality photographs on the e admit cards will have to bring "a photo identity proof like Aadhar card, driving licence, passport or voter i-card and two passport-sized photographs one for each session for appearing in the examination with an undertaking". The admit cards for the examination can be downloaded from the UPSC's website. The Aadhaar card, issued by the Unique Identification Authority of India, is a 12-digit unique identity number and it can act as proof of identity and residence.

The civil services examination is conducted annually by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) in three stages – preliminary, main and interview – to select officers for Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS) and Indian Police Service (IPS) among others.

Mobile phones, calculators, IT gadgets and any other communication device such as bluetooth etc. Won't be allowed inside the premises where the examination is being conducted, the UPSC said.

"Any infringements of these instructions shall entail disciplinary action including ban from future examinations," the Commission said.

Candidates are advised not to bring any valuables/costly items and bags to the examination halls, as safe keeping of the same

can not be assured. The Commission will not be responsible for any loss in this regard, the instructions said.

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Source: xaam.in

With Nehru writing to its PM, Israel gave arms to India in 1962

Jerusalem archival record says India wanted weapons brought in ships that did not fly the Israeli flag, but Ben Gurion said,

'No flag. No weapons'

Despite his strong ties with the Arab world, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru did not hesitate to reach out to Israel when the situation demanded.

According to documents in the Israeli archives in Jerusalem, at the peak of the 1962 India-China hostilities, Israeli Prime Minister David Ben Gurion wrote to Nehru expressing Israel's "fullest sympathy and understanding", and provided weapons to the Indian forces.

In a November 18, 1962 letter to Ben Gurion, Nehru writes, "We are grateful for your concern for the serious situation that we face today in our border regions. I am sure you will appreciate that while India has never claimed an inch of territory belonging to another country and is traditionally and fundamentally wedded to ideals of peace and friendly settlement of disputes, she cannot but resist aggression on her own soil in the interest of safeguarding national integrity and maintaining respect for standards of international behaviour."

The cable, which was accessed by The Hindu at the Israeli archives, is part of a series of exchanges between the two leaders during October-November 1962. Both leaders refer to the situation on the Indian borders in their messages as the India-China conflict had begun on October 20 and continued till the last week of November.

The first cable was sent by Nehru on October 27. The Israeli leader responded on November 2, 1962 to say: "All our efforts have been and are directed to the preservation of peace – in our area and throughout the world. Jerusalem, the name of our capital in Hebrew, means the city of peace.

"I am in total agreement with the views expressed by Your Excellency that it is incumbent upon us to do all in our power. All states big or small must be guaranteed of their

sovereignty. We believe that every possible support should be lent to every measure contributing towards easing of tension on your borders so that India will once again be able to devote its undivided energies under your distinguished leadership to construction and development.”

The message was carried to the Prime Minister’s Office by the Bombay-based Consul General of Israel, Arie Eilan, who stayed at the Ashoka Hotel in the capital during this period of hectic communication.

Continued contacts

The Nehru-Ben Gurion exchanges indicate that India and Israel, which are observing the 25th anniversary of formal diplomatic relationship, maintained contacts at the highest possible level much before formal ties were established in January 1992.

A note from the same collection from 1968 reveals that India had sourced Israeli weapons during the war with China. Not wishing to alienate its Arab friends, India had requested Israel to deliver the weapons in ships that did not fly the Israeli flags.

However, Ben Gurion had put his foot down saying, “No flag. No weapons.” The weapons were eventually supplied in Israeli ships flying the Jewish state’s flag.

B.K. Nehru’s efforts

The archives reveal that Israel remained in close touch with not just Nehru but also other members of the Nehruvian regime, including India’s then ambassador to the United States B.K. Nehru, who courted the Jewish lobby in Washington to facilitate essential discussion between two sides.

B.K. Nehru wrote to Congressman Emanuel Celler on September 3, 1963 conveying that India was in favour of people-to-people

contacts between the two sides.

He assured that New Delhi had not prevented its citizens from travelling to Israel and is open to Israeli travellers.

“We have long recognised Israel as an independent, sovereign state and our relation with that country have always been harmonious and friendly,” said the envoy who had a Jewish connect through his wife Fori.

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Source: xaam.in

Charter Act 1833 and 1853

Explained

Source: xaam.in

Solar trees are beneficial in a land-scarce economy (downtoearth)

The working of a solar tree is much like that of a real one-leaf-like solar panels connected through metal branches using sunlight to make energy.

Availability of land of installing solar panels on a large scale is often a hurdle in the progress of renewable energy. A solution to this is planting solar trees, which are more ergonomic, using little space. Solar trees are complementary to rooftop solar systems, or other green building measures, symbolizing these larger investments and their environmental benefit.

The Solar tree panels charge batteries during the day. At dusk, the tree automatically switches on LED lights. It is programmed to regulate the amount of light it produces. Solar trees are flexible and rotate to face the sun and produce maximum possible amount of energy using a technique called "spiralling phyllataxy". Its calculated rotations allow even the lowermost solar panels to receive ample sunlight for electricity production. It can also be used in street lighting and industrial power supply systems.

Solar tree is made of metal structure and have solar panels at

the top instead of branches of real tree. Main body of solar tree is a simple hollow tube closed at one end to enable the attachment of the upper, smaller rod which should carry the upper panel. This panel is placed high above the other panels at a vertical angle. The angle provides a constant area for the sunlight regardless of the sun trajectory during the day. The height at where it is placed enables a greater panel area which will not cover the lower placed panels.

The innovation is suitable for use in off-the-grid remote areas or in places that need point-sourced light like car parks and street lighting. Besides, with grid connectivity or battery store, the solar tree can also supply electricity wherever needed.

The plant's design can vary according to different factors. In India, for instance, solar trees can contribute to fulfilling energy demand while saving space. The technology can ensure continuous supply of electricity in areas that do not have enough power supply and can benefit many who are not connected to the grid. Solar energy is renewable and clean in nature and presents a better alternative over other methods of electricity production.

Working models in India

Central Mechanical Engineering Research Institute (CMERI), in West Bengal's Durgapur, has designed and developed, a solar tree that takes up only four square feet of space and produces about three kilowatts of power, enough to power about five households. Conventional solar photovoltaic systems occupy 400 square feet of space to produce the same amount of electricity.

Their working model could be fit onto rooftops and on highways due to its minimal space requirement. Apart from Durgapur, solar trees are also installed in Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, New Delhi and the residential campus of

Minister of Science & Technology of India. The solar tree installation was also used by the Durgapur Municipal Corporation at its Sriyani Auditorium. The tree has been designed and developed by Indian researchers. They claim that there is no barrier in using solar trees in urban or rural areas.

The vertical solar plant makes it possible to harness 10 per cent more sunlight. They can be rotated twice a day to be aligned to the movement of the sun. CMERI has licensed the solar tree with M/s Vibes Solar Solution India, Kolkata and the process is underway to license the technology to five more companies. Researchers at CMERI are working on bringing aesthetic models to suit the need of public parks, gardens and market places.

Source: xaam.in

World Health Assembly: countries highlight progress in tackling antimicrobial resistance (downtoearth)

On the third day of the 70th World Health Assembly being held in Geneva (22-31 May) currently, experts talked about antimicrobial resistance (AMR)—one of the most relevant global public health issues in today's time.

The discussion revolved around country-wise status on AMR and the progress made by the World Health Organization (WHO) towards implementation of the Global Action Plan (GAP) to

tackle it. The plan was adopted in 2015 during the 68th assembly meeting.

There were also parallel talks on sepsis prevention as well as its diagnosis and management since AMR is responsible for sepsis treatment failures.

About 60 countries and 11 non-state actors comprising civil society groups participated in the meeting. They proposed interventions based on the report on AMR released by the Secretariat to facilitate the discussion.

Countries recognised WHO's substantial progress made on GAP implementation and welcomed it. At present, 77 countries have already finalised their National Action Plans (NAP) on AMR in alignment with GAP. Fifty-seven countries are in the process of drafting their plans while 24 are behind schedule.

India on AMR

Lav Agarwal, joint secretary of the department of health and family welfare, ministry of health, represented India at the meeting.

Recognising AMR as a critical public health challenge, India outlined the progress made in addressing this critical issue.

The country representative talked about finalisation of the strategic National Action Plan on AMR, surveillance network for pathogens in humans, amendment of laws to better regulate sale of drugs and promotion of rational use of antibiotics.

India highlighted that though its action plan was in alignment with GAP, it includes additional strategic objective of the country's leadership role in tackling AMR that entails national and international collaborations.

The following key interventions were proposed by India for consideration by the World Health Assembly

Maintenance of primacy of the WHO-FAO-OIE tripartite on any initiative related to AMR, led and coordinated by WHO

Expanding the scope of WHO's Global Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance System to include surveillance of animals, agriculture and environment, in addition to humans

A balanced and uniform focus on all aspects of stewardship, research, development and affordable access to issues related to AMR in any global framework

Adequate attention on development and equity aspects of AMR, such as technical support and mobilisation of resources, to help implementation of GAP

India's plan on AMR is ambitious, comprehensive and multi-sectoral. It follows the one-health concept and encompasses interventions and actions across human, animal, agriculture and health sectors.

This is also reflected in India's call for tripartite involvement and multi-sectoral focus on surveillance at healthy assembly.

Major focus is now on implementation, particularly at the grass-roots level, in view of which India has sought support from WHO.

Effective implementation will be achieved through sustained political will, multi-ministerial involvement, funding support from government and suitable state-level action plans.

"The plan, by itself, seems sound. Its success however, would depend on national-level programmes to support small-scale animal farms, a new AMR-centric approach to manage waste from animal farms, animal food processing and pharmaceutical manufacturing sectors and health care facilities," says Amit Khurana, head, food safety programme, at Centre for Science and Environment.

Emphasis on evaluation tool

India, along with Brazil and Egypt, also said that evaluation

of self-reported data by the joint external evaluation tool of the International Health Regulations should be kept voluntary in nature. The tool is intended to assess country-wise capacity to respond to public health threats and progress made towards achieving targets. Key features of this tool are transparency and openness of data, information sharing and public availability of data.

Limitations in AMR-related data reporting have often been discussed at various platforms in India. Historically, there has been no/limited data available in the public domain on AMR.

India's rearticulated position for keeping JEE voluntary may be in consideration of existing issues such as underreporting of data or lack of proper data collection and reporting mechanisms.

Ours being an export-oriented country, India may not also prefer to divulge resistance data in the public domain from the point of view of protecting international business.

While this needs to be understood in greater detail, an evaluation on JEE would allow for a process of stringent monitoring and sharing of data, which can further guide drafting policies and regulations on AMR.

Key deliberations

Expressing high-level commitment for tackling AMR, delegates highlighted various country-level initiatives taken to address the issue.

They stressed on the importance of surveillance of AMR related to consumption, integration of human, agriculture, animal and environment aspects of AMR, the need for innovation and research for new antibiotics, diagnostics and vaccines, collaboration between among WHO, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Organization for Animal Health and

coordination with the Interagency Coordination Group on AMR. Countries also expressed concern over key areas related to AMR and NAPs.

Developing countries such as Nepal, Tanzania, Ecuador and Bangladesh requested guidance and assistance (financial and technical) from WHO to support development and implementation of their national plans to fight AMR.

The need for supporting necessary laboratory infrastructure for AMR testing as well as building sufficient capacity and expertise was also put forth. Brazil highlighted the existing disparity in terms of access, affordability and de-linkage of research and development cost from the price of drugs between the AMR report and the UN political declaration.

The declaration was adopted during a high-level meeting on AMR at the United Nations General Assembly in 2016.

Indonesia spoke on behalf of the 11 Member States from the South-East Asian region, reaffirming commitment and responsibility towards AMR. Egypt emphasised that the JEE evaluation of country data and global monitoring framework would simultaneously amount to duplication of work done by WHO.

The US and the UK supported WHO's work on development of a global development and stewardship framework, but expressed concern on its complexity and how the goals of the framework could be achieved in a timely and multi-sectoral manner.

Canada and Germany reassured continued financial support to WHO for its efforts. The Netherlands said that the health agency should ensure that NAPs were holistic. It urged WHO not to "pick and choose" NAPs based on easily deliverable interventions.

It also emphasised on the importance of addressing issues such as antimicrobial use as a growth promoter in animals and the

environmental release of antibiotic residues during the production process. Sweden called for a subsequent information sharing mechanism from the Global Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance System.

Non-state actors expressed their views on the emerging issue of AMR and how it can be addressed in a multi-sectoral manner.

WHO Assistant Director General Hajime Inoue clarified some of the concerns raised by the countries. He assured that WHO would expedite the development of remaining NAPs through training workshops, engage with healthcare professionals to include AMR in the education curriculum, align AMR with the Sustainable Development Goals. He also outlined future endeavours being undertaken at WHO.

Source: xaam.in

Climate change to affect rice productivity, finds a new study (downtoearth)

Global climate change is projected to have wide ranging effects on environment, socio-economic and related sectors. Indian agriculture scientists have found that rising temperature will adversely hit rice productivity in the country.

Experiments done in Tamil Nadu show that elevated temperature will have a negative impact on rice productivity, even nullifying the positive effects of higher level of carbon dioxide.

Researchers at the Coimbatore-based Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) conducted a study on rice which is a staple food for most people in the region. According to Manila-based International Rice Research Institute, rice provides 23 per cent of global human per capita energy and 16 per cent of global human per capita protein.

The study involved actual cultivation of the cereal in a climate control chamber (CCC) where the temperature was maintained at four degrees above the ambient temperature and a carbon dioxide enrichment level of 650 parts per million (PPM). The experiment was carried out with four different days of planting – June 1, June 15, July 1 and July 15.

It was seen that crops grown under the projected conditions attained panicle initiation, flowering and maturity much earlier than those grown under the ambient condition. But, recorded reduced growth characters such as leaf area index, dry matter production and number of tillers. In addition, lesser percentage of dry matter was partitioned towards grain and more for the roots. Subsequently, they recorded lower grain and straw yields.

Overall, elevated temperature was found to have a negative impact on rice productivity, even nullifying the positive effects of higher level of carbon dioxide. The researchers have published a report on their work in the latest issue of journal Current Science.

Source: xaam.in

Rising CO2 emissions may increase global iron deficiency risk (downtoearth)

Increased level of CO2 in atmosphere not only causes polar ice to melt and coastal food web to collapse, but it is also directly linked to iron deficiency in human beings. According to a study published by the researchers at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, about 1.4 billion children below five years and women of childbearing age in some parts of Asia and Africa face the greatest risk of iron deficiency due to rising levels of human-generated CO2 emissions.

Their findings are based on recent studies that reveal how commonly consumed crops like wheat, rice, barley, legumes and maize have lower iron concentrations when grown under increased atmospheric CO2 concentrations.

Methodology adopted

To begin with, the researchers did an estimate on the percentage of dietary iron that would be lost due to human-induced CO2 emissions between now and 2050. They also considered the staple diet of people in 152 countries around the world and the current prevalence of anaemia.

About half of the total anaemia cases around the world are believed to be caused due to lack of adequate iron in the diet.

Those most at risk

354 million, or 58 per cent of all children under five years
06 billion, or 60 per cent of all women of childbearing age
Regions dependent on plant-based diet

Apart from South and East Asia, regions with the highest risk are also located in North and East Africa. In all these regions, people mostly depend on plant-based diets.

Across all countries, the estimated percentage of lost dietary iron under rising CO₂ levels varies from modest 1.5 per cent to severe 5.5 per cent.

Iron deficiency reduces capacity for physical activity, lowers IQ, and increases maternal and child mortality, impacting roughly a billion people worldwide.

“Certain highly consumed crops—C3 grains (wheat, rice, barley), legumes and maize—have lower iron concentrations of 4-10 per cent when grown under increased atmospheric CO₂ concentrations (550 PPM).”

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The countries with the highest anemia prevalence also derive their iron from the fewest number of foods, even after excluding countries consuming large amounts of unaccounted wild-harvest foods.

Area of concern

The researchers call for immediate intervention in the form of dietary behavioural changes, agricultural innovation and improved health delivery systems. However, they fear that it will be difficult to sensitise people about this threat as it affects the content of crops but not the yield. Hence, people might not see the health threat and don't feel the need to adapt to it.

Source: xaam.in