Automated Facial Recognition System (AFRS)

Why in News?

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) released a Request for Proposal for an Automated Facial Recognition System (AFRS) to be used by police officers across the country.

What is AFRS?

- AFRS works by maintaining a large **database with photos and videos** of peoples' faces.
- Then, a new image of an unidentified person is compared to the existing database to find a match and identify the person.
- **Neural networking** is the artificial intelligence technology used for pattern-finding and matching.

What does the NCRB request call for?

- The National Crime Records Bureau's (NCRB) Request for Proposal calls for **gathering CCTV footage**, as well as **photos** from newspapers, raids, and sketches.
- The project is aimed at being compatible with other biometrics.
- It will be a **mobile and web application** hosted in NCRB's Data Centre in Delhi, but used by all police stations in the country.
- AFRS will play a very vital role in **improving outcomes** in the area of Criminal identification and verification.
- It facilitates easy recording, analysis, retrieval and sharing of Information between different organisations.

Are there any AFRS in use in India?

- The current facial recognition in India is done **manually**.
- AFRS (**automatic**) is a new idea the country has started to experiment with.
- "DigiYatra" using facial recognition for airport entry was trialled in the Hyderabad airport recently.
- State governments have also taken their own steps towards facial recognition. E.g. Telangana police launched their own system in 2018

How will the new database fit in what already exists?

- As NCRB has proposed integrating AFRS with multiple existing databases, there will be an improvement in the outcome.
- The databases to be integrated with AFRS are -
    1. NCRB's Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS),
    2. Integrated Criminal Justice System (ICJS),
    3. Immigration, Visa and Foreigners Registration & Tracking (IVFRT),
    4. Koya Paya portal on missing children,
    5. State-specific systems.

How far has CCTNS progressed?

- This project is accessible to the CBI, IB, NIA, ED and NCB.
- Following the Mumbai terror attacks, CCTNS was envisaged as a countrywide integrated database on crime incidents and suspects.
- It also plans to offer citizen services such as passport verification, crime reporting, online tracking of case progress, etc.
- There was a proposal for integrating CCTNS's database with the database of the Central Finger Print Bureau (CFPB).
- NCRB is currently rolling out the National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS) and its integration with CCTNS.

What are the concerns?

- Cyber experts have cautioned against **government's abuse** of this technology.
- There is an ongoing **privacy debate** in the US regarding the use of facial recognition technology.
- Indian citizens would be more vulnerable in the **absence of a Data Protection Law** in the country.
- Use of surveillance cameras and facial recognition constrict the rights of particular class of people.

Source: The Indian Express

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering