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(CONSOLIDATION)

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Massive Fire in Morni Forest

Why in News?

Recently, **Morni Hills**, the solitary hill station in Haryana, faced a significant **forest fire** due to temperatures exceeding 46°C.

Key Points

- The extreme heat and arid conditions fed the fire, causing it to rapidly spread through a vast area of the hills, consuming shrubs, bushes, and trees in its wake.
- Morni Hills **located in the lower part of the Shivalik range**, this area stands at an **altitude of 3,600 feet above sea level**, boasting a diverse variety of plants and animals.
 - Various hills and ranges can be found in **different parts of Haryana**.
 - The Shivalik Range is situated in the north of Haryana, the **Aravalli Range** stretches from the southwest through Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Delhi.
 - **Morni Hills are situated in the Panchkula district**, being the sole hill station in Haryana, while **Dhosi Hills in the Mahendragarh district** are known for being an extinct volcano.

The Aravalli Range



- The Aravallis are **one of the oldest fold residual mountains of the world** composed primarily of **folded rock strata**. This formation resulted from the convergence of tectonic plates during the **Proterozoic Era (2500-541 million years ago)**.
- The Forest Survey of India (FSI) report, **defined the Aravallis** to include the **hills and a uniform 100-meter-wide buffer zone** around the downsides of the hills.

- They have an **elevation of 300m to 900m**. The mountains are divided into two main ranges – the **Sambhar Sirohi Range** and the **Sambhar Khetri Range** in Rajasthan.
- **Guru Shikhar Peak on Mount Abu** is the **highest peak** in the **Aravalli Range** (1,722 m).
- Major **tribal communities** include the **Bhil, Bhil-Meena, Meena, Garasia**, and others.
- The **Supreme Court in 2009** ordered a **complete ban on mining** in the Aravalli hills of Faridabad, Gurgaon, and Nuh districts of Haryana.

Socio-economic Criteria in Govt Jobs is Unconstitutional

Why in News?

Recently, the Punjab and Haryana High Court declared the socioeconomic criteria set by the Haryana government for granting **additional marks to certain classes of candidates in state government jobs as unconstitutional** and set it aside.

- The court ruled that this criteria **violated Articles 14, 15, and 16** of the Indian Constitution.

Key Points

- The Haryana government had **introduced the socio-economic criteria** to provide additional marks to **certain classes of candidates**, including those without family members in government jobs, state-domiciled candidates, and those with family incomes not exceeding Rs 1.80 lakh per annum.
- **Petitioners argued that:**
 - The criteria further discriminates based on domicile and descent, which are **prohibited markers under Article 162** of the Constitution.
 - The petitioner argues that there is **no rationale for granting additional marks to a certain class** when reservations for EWS, Scheduled Castes (SC), and Backward Classes (BC) **are already provided for**.

Note:

Note:

- **Article 14:** No person shall be denied treatment of equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.
- **Article 15:** No citizen shall be discriminated on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.
- **Article 16:** Provides for equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters of employment or appointment to any public office.

Rs 10,000 Crore Project to Combat Air Pollution in Haryana

Why in News?

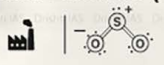
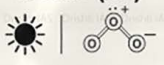


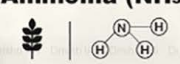


Haryana Chief Secretary reveals that the state government will soon roll out a Rs 10,000-crore project funded by the **World Bank** to address **air pollution**.


Key Points



- The project will be implemented in phases. The initial phase focuses on districts falling within the **National Capital Region (NCR)**, with later replication across the entire state.
- Enhancements to **Haryana's air quality monitoring infrastructure** are part of the project. This includes establishing a **cutting-edge laboratory** and modernizing existing ones.
 - A dedicated program management unit will oversee project implementation.
- Training programs for stakeholders engaged in **air quality management** are included.

- The project targets **transportation, industry, construction, road dust, biomass burning, and household pollution**.
 - It aims to promote **cleaner vehicles, incentivize electric vehicle adoption**, and phase out older, polluting vehicles.

Air Pollutants

<p>Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂)</p>  <p>It comes from the consumption of fossil fuels (oil, coal and natural gas). Reacts with water to form acid rain.</p> <p>Impact: Causes respiratory problems.</p>	<p>Ozone (O₃)</p>  <p>Secondary pollutant formed from other pollutants (NOx and VOC) under the action of the sun.</p> <p>Impact: Irritation of the eye and respiratory mucous membranes, asthma attacks.</p>
<p>Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂)</p>  <p>Emissions from road transport, industry and energy production sectors. Contributes to Ozone and PM formation.</p> <p>Impact: Chronic lung disease.</p>	<p>Carbon Monoxide (CO)</p>  <p>It is a product of the incomplete combustion of carbon-containing compounds.</p> <p>Impact: Fatigue, confusion, and dizziness due to inadequate oxygen delivery to the brain.</p>
<p>Ammonia (NH₃)</p>  <p>Produced by the metabolism of amino acids and other compounds which contain nitrogen.</p> <p>Impact: Immediate burning of the eyes, nose, throat and respiratory tract and can result in blindness, lung damage.</p>	<p>Lead (Pb)</p>  <p>Released as a waste product from extraction of metals such as silver, platinum, and iron from their respective ores.</p> <p>Impact: Anemia, weakness, and kidney and brain damage.</p>
<p>Particulate Matter (PM)</p>  <p>PM10: Inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 10 micrometers and smaller. PM2.5: Fine inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 2.5 micrometers and smaller. Source: Emitted from construction sites, unpaved roads, fields, fires. Impact: Irregular heartbeat, aggravated asthma, decreased lung function.</p>	
<p><i>Note: These major air pollutants are included in the Air quality index for which short-term National Ambient Air Quality Standards are prescribed.</i></p>	



 
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Note:

World Bank

- **About:**
 - It was created in **1944**, as the **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)** along with the **IMF**. The **IBRD** later became the **World Bank**.
 - The **World Bank Group** is a unique global partnership of **five institutions** working for sustainable solutions that reduce **poverty** and build shared prosperity in developing countries.
 - The **World Bank** is one of the **United Nations'** specialized agencies.
- **Members:**
 - It has **189 member countries**.
 - India is also a member country.

- **Source:**
 - It has its source in the **Yamunotri Glacier** at an elevation of **6,387 meters** on the **southwestern sides of Banderpooch crests** in the **lower Himalayan ranges**.
- **Basin:**
 - It meets the Ganges at the **Sangam (where Kumbh mela is held)** in **Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh** after flowing through **Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Delhi**.
- **Important Dam:** Lakhwar-Vyasi Dam (Uttarakhand), Tajewala Barrage Dam (Haryana) etc.
- **Important Tributaries:** Chambal, Sindh, Betwa and Ken.

Haryana Government Denies Allegation of Less Water Supply

Why in News?

Recently, the Chief Minister of Haryana dismissed the Delhi government's accusation that Haryana was **not providing Delhi with its allocated share of water**.

- The **Haryana government** has supplied water to Delhi beyond the agreed-upon quantity.

Key Points

- Delhi is currently facing an acute water shortage, and the Delhi government has blamed Haryana for not releasing the required quantity of water from the Yamuna.
 - The water dispute between Haryana and Delhi highlights the **challenges of resource allocation and management in the region**.

Yamuna River

- **About:**
 - The **Yamuna River** is one of the major tributaries of the **Ganges in Northern India**.
 - It forms an integral part of the **Yamuna-Ganga Plain**, one of the world's most extensive alluvial plains.

GST Bhawan in Haryana

Why in News?

Recently, the **Chairman of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)**, inaugurated the **Goods and Services Tax (GST) Bhawan**, an official complex of Central Goods & Services Tax (CGST) at Rohtak, Haryana.

Key Points

- Located at **one of the most preferred locations** in Rohtak, the project sits at the **hub of connectivity to major districts of Haryana** and has easy and quick access to facilitate GST Taxpayers.
 - The inauguration of project in Amrit Kaal **showcases the strength of New India**.
- CBIC is a **part of the Department of Revenue** under the Ministry of Finance.
 - The Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) was **renamed as the CBIC in 2018 after the roll out of the GST**.
 - It **deals with the tasks of formulation of policy concerning levy and collection of Customs, Central Excise duties, Central Goods & Services Tax and IGST, prevention of smuggling and administration of matters relating to Customs, Central Excise, Central Goods & Services Tax (CGST), Integrated GST and Narcotics** to the extent under CBIC's purview.

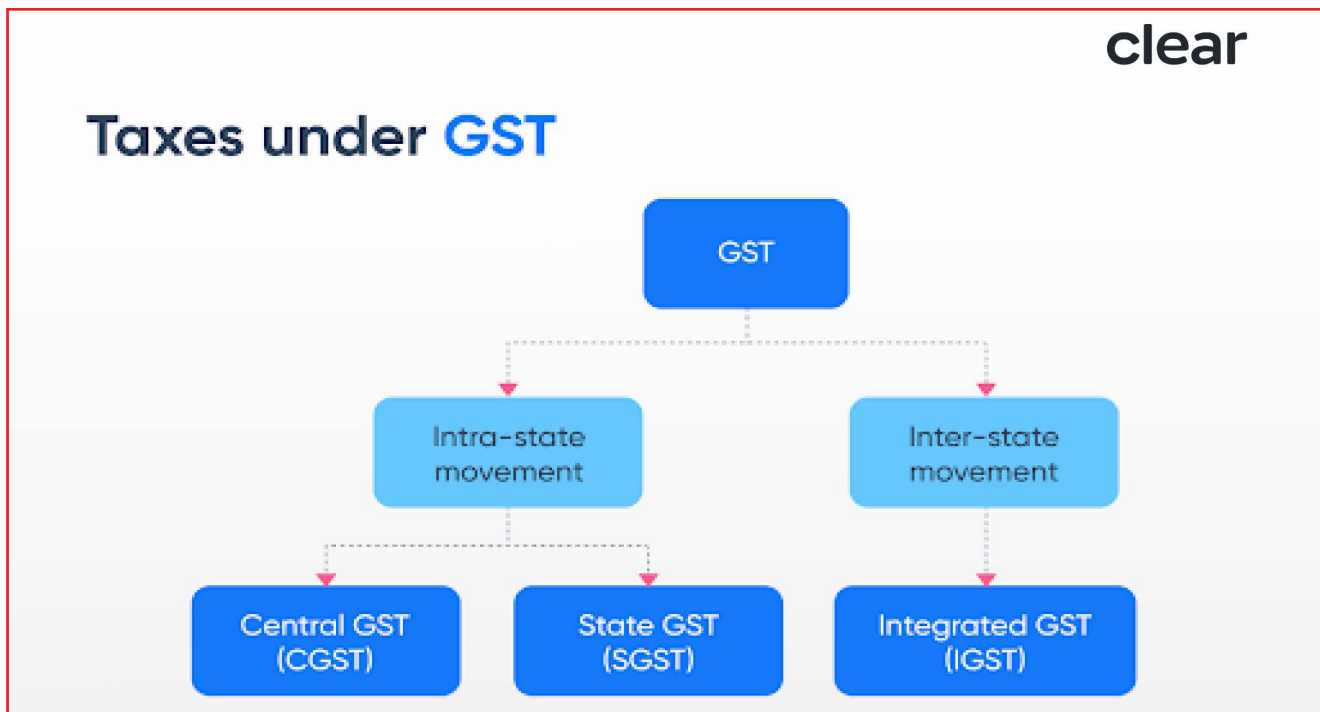
Note:



Goods & Services Tax (GST)

- **About:** ST is a **value-added tax system that is levied on the supply of goods and services** in India.
 - It is a **comprehensive indirect tax** that was **introduced in India on 1st July 2017**, through the **101st Constitution Amendment Act, 2016**, with the slogan of **'One Nation One Tax'**.
- **GST Council:** It is a constitutional body responsible for making recommendations on issues related to the implementation of the GST in India.
 - As per **Article 279A (1) of the amended Constitution**, the GST Council was constituted by the **President**.

- **CGST:** Under GST, CGST is a tax levied on intrastate supplies of both goods and services by the Central Government and collected by the Central Government and contributes to its funds.
- **IGST:** It is a tax levied on all interstate supplies of goods and/or services or across two or more states/ Union Territories.
- **SGST:** An equivalent amount of SGST is a tax levied on intrastate supplies of both goods and services by the particular state government where the product sold is consumed.



Haryana CM Administered Oath

Why in News?

Recently, **Haryana Chief Minister** Nayab Singh Saini was administered the **oath of legislator by the Assembly Speaker** Gian Chand Gupta.

Key Points

- The CM contested the **by-election** for the Karnal assembly seat after he replaced the previous Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar.

- Polling for the state's 10 Lok Sabha seats and the Karnal assembly constituency was held in the sixth phase of the **general election** on **25th May 2024** and the **results were declared on 4th June 2024**.

By-elections (Bypolls)

- **About:**
 - By-elections are also known as bypolls or **special elections**, which refer to **elections held to fill vacant seats in the legislative bodies of India**.
 - It serves as a **vital component within the broader electoral cycle** and complements regular elections by **addressing unforeseen vacancies**.

Note:

- **Purpose:**
 - The primary objective of bypolls is to ensure **the timely filing of vacant seats, enabling the representation of the affected constituency or district** in the legislative body.
- **Occurrence:**
 - Bypolls are conducted when a seat in the legislature becomes vacant due to reasons such as the **death, resignation, disqualification, or expulsion of a sitting member**.
- **Timeframe:**
 - Section 151A of the **Representation of the People Act, 1951** mandates the Election Commission to fill the casual vacancies in the Houses of Parliament and State Legislatures through **bye elections within six months from the date of occurrence of the vacancy**, provided that the **remainder of the term of a member in relation to a vacancy is one year or more**.
 - Hence, there is **no need to hold bye elections if the remaining term of the Lok Sabha is less than one year** from the date of occurrence of vacancies.

Haryana Government Removes Age Retention on Scheme

Why in News?

Recently, the Haryana government lifted the age limit cap on a scheme aimed at providing **financial assistance to farmers and farm labourers** in the **event of death or disability** while **operating agricultural machinery**.

Key Points

- The government has decided to eliminate the age restriction under the **'Mukhyamantri Kisan Evam Khetihar Mazdoor Jeevan Suraksha Yojana'** for farmers, agricultural labourers, and market yard labourers.
- Under this scheme, **financial assistance ranging from Rs 37,500 to Rs 5 lakh** is provided to farmers, agriculture labourers, and market yard labourers.
 - Previously, the scheme stipulated that the age of the beneficiary should be between 10 and 65 years.

- Now, **children younger than 10 years and persons older than 65 years will also be eligible** for benefits under the scheme.

Recruitment in Haryana to be Initiated Soon

Why in News?

Recently, Haryana Chief Minister announced that the **government will soon initiate the recruitment process** to fill 50,000 vacant posts in the state.

Key Points

- This will be done as part of the **government's ongoing efforts to provide employment opportunities and support** the aspirations of the youth.
 - He stressed on the continuation of the **"transparent" recruitment system** for government jobs.
- He asserted that the state government is committed to **safeguarding the interests of candidates** and soon present this matter to the **Supreme Court** and strongly advocate for it to ensure justice for the youth.
 - **On May 31, 2024**, the **Haryana High Court** ruled that the **socioeconomic criteria** established by the Haryana government for **awarding additional marks to certain classes** of candidates in state government jobs were **unconstitutional**.

Demand for Restoration of Old Pension Scheme

Why in News?

Recently, during a gathering of the **Pension Bahali Sangarsh Samiti in Kaithal**, it was decided to **hold a large demonstration in Panchkula on 1st September 2024** to demand for the restoration of the **Old Pension Scheme (OPS)**.

Key Points

- Before the rally, the association has decided to hold **"OPS sankalp sammelan and aakrosh march"** in every district of the state, starting from **1st July 2024**.

Note:



➤ Old Pension Scheme:

- The **scheme guarantees a lifelong income after retirement.**
- Under the old scheme, **employees get a pension under a predetermined formula which is equivalent to 50%** of the last drawn salary. They also get the benefit of the revision of Dearness Relief (DR), twice a year. The payout is fixed and there was no deduction from the salary. Moreover, under the OPS, **there was the provision of the General Provident Fund (GPF).**
 - GPF is available only for all the government employees in India. Basically, it allows all the government employees to contribute a certain percentage of their salary to the GPF and the total amount that is accumulated throughout the employment term is paid to the employee at the time of retirement.
- The Government bears the **expenditure incurred on the pension.** The scheme was **discontinued in 2004.**

Samadhan Prakoshth

Why in News?

The Haryana Government has set up “**Samadhan Prakoshth**” in the Chief Secretary’s Office to handle **public grievances.**

- This initiative will include ‘**Samadhan Shivir**’ sessions at **district and sub-divisional headquarters** every working day, with the goal of resolving public issues effectively.

Key Points

- Public grievances are divided into **policy issues and implementation bottlenecks.**
 - Policy-related issues will be handled at the **state headquarters level by the ‘Prakoshth’** in coordination with Administrative Secretaries.
 - **Implementation bottlenecks will be resolved through the ‘Samadhan Shivir’** at the district level.
- Key district officials, including the **Deputy Commissioner, Superintendent of Police, Additional Deputy Commissioner, District Municipal Commissioner, Sub**

Divisional Officers, and other relevant officers, will meet daily in the Deputy Commissioner’s and SDO (Civil) offices to resolve public grievances.

➤ Haryana’s scheme related to public grievances:

- **CM Window – Public Grievances Redressal and Monitoring System.**
 - It is a grievances redressal and monitoring system **implemented since 25 December 2014** in all districts and all departments of Haryana as Flagship programme of the State.
 - These **grievances are registered at the CM Window counters online** and the **citizens get the SMS** on his/her mobile phone with the grievance registration number.
 - This number is used by the complainant for **tracking of grievance redressal online.** CM Window is implemented at all Districts at e-Disha Kendras & Sub-Division Offices to get the grievances from common citizens.

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY)

Why in News?

The two-time CM of Haryana Manohar Lal Khattar was allocated the **Ministry of Power and Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** in the Prime Minister’s cabinet.

- During the cabinet meeting the govt announced 30 million homes under **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY).**

Key Points

- **PMAY launched in 2015, provides assistance** to eligible **rural and urban households for the construction** of houses with basic amenities.
 - Under this, a total of 42.1 million houses have been completed for eligible poor families under the housing schemes in the past 10 years, according to government data.
- The **power ministry** also faces the challenge of **maintaining power generation capacity,** largely dependent on **coal,** and balancing it against the global demand to dial down **fossil fuels.**

Note:

Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) Scheme

- **Launch:** To achieve the objective of “Housing for All” by 2022, the erstwhile rural housing scheme Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) was restructured to Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) w.e.f 1st April, 2016.
- **Ministry Involved:** Ministry of Rural development.
- **Aim:** To provide a pucca house with basic amenities to all rural families, who are homeless or living in kutcha or dilapidated houses by the end of March 2022.
 - To help rural people Below the Poverty Line (BPL) in construction of dwelling units and upgradation of existing unserviceable kutcha houses by providing assistance in the form of a full grant.

Delhi-Haryana Water Crisis

Why in News?

Recently, the Delhi Water Minister visited the Wazirabad barrage and appealed to the Haryana government to release water in the Yamuna river.

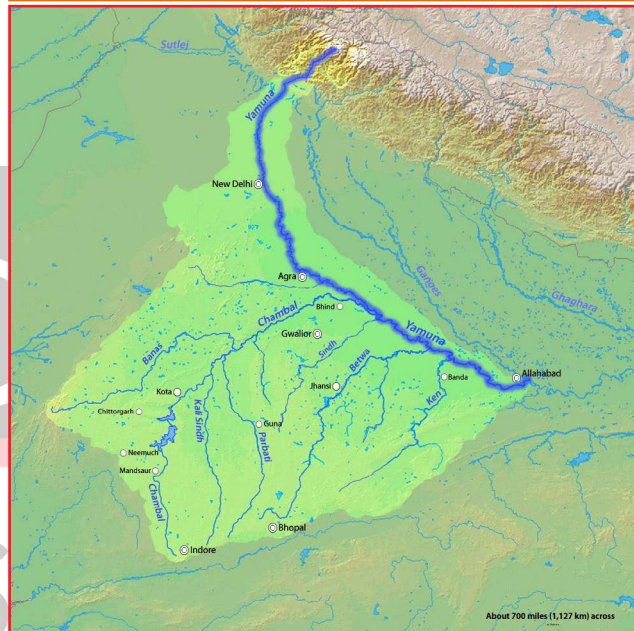
Key Points

- The Wazirabad barrage gets water from Haryana which goes to the water treatment plants of Chandrawal, Okhla and Wazirabad.
- The water dispute between Haryana and Delhi highlights the challenges of resource allocation and management in the region.

Yamuna River

- **About:**
 - The Yamuna River is one of the major tributaries of the Ganges in Northern India.
 - It forms an integral part of the Yamuna-Ganga Plain, one of the world’s most extensive alluvial plains.
- **Source:**
 - It has its source in the Yamunotri Glacier at an elevation of 6,387 meters on the southwestern sides of Banderpooch crests in the lower Himalayan ranges.

- **Basin:**
 - It meets the Ganges at the Sangam (where Kumbh mela is held) in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh after flowing through Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Delhi.
- **Important Dam:** Lakhwar-Vyasi Dam (Uttarakhand), Tajewala Barrage Dam (Haryana) etc.
- **Important Tributaries:** Chambal, Sindh, Betwa and Ken.
- **Government Initiatives Related to Yamuna River:**
 - Yamuna Action Plan
 - Delhi Government’s Six-Point Action Plan to Clean Yamuna by February 2025.



Samarth Vriddh SEWA Ashram

Why in News?

Under the Samarth Vriddh SEWA Ashram Scheme 2024, the district administration is preparing to establish an old-age home in Gurgaon.

Key Points

- This initiative marks the inauguration of the first government-operated old-age home, and proposals are being welcomed from Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), trusts, societies, and corporations as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) efforts.

Note:

- The initiative aims to provide a comfortable and safe environment for the elderly who require assistance and care.
- The old-age home will offer various facilities and services to ensure the well-being of its residents, such as nutritious meals, medical care, recreational activities, and social interaction opportunities.
- To access the scheme's benefits, individuals must possess the **Parivar Pehchan Patra (PPP)**.
- The scheme categorizes beneficiaries into two groups: one includes those earning less than Rs 2 lakh per year, while the other comprises individuals earning over Rs 2 lakh annually but facing abandonment or lack of care.
 - Those falling under the first category will receive complimentary accommodation, while those earning above Rs 2 lakh will be enrolled in the 'Pay and stay' program, with fees determined by local authorities.

Parivar Pehchan Patra (PPP) Scheme

- The PPP scheme was formally launched in July 2019 to achieve Haryana government's vision for 'paperless' and 'faceless' delivery of schemes, services and benefits offered by the state government.
 - Under this, each family is considered a **single unit** and gets an **8-digit unique identification number**, called **family ID**.
 - Family IDs are also linked to independent schemes like **scholarships, subsidies and pensions**, so as to ensure consistency and reliability.
 - It also enables **automatic selection** of beneficiaries of various schemes, subsidies and pensions.
- The primary objective of **Parivar Pehchan Patra (PPP)** is to create **authentic, verified and reliable data** of all families in Haryana.

Samarth Vriddh SEWA Ashram Scheme, 2024

- This scheme was **launched in 2024, by the Haryana government**.
- The **main objective** of the Scheme is **to improve the quality of life of Senior Citizens who are residents of the State** by providing the following amenities:
 - To provide a **secure and comfortable living space for the senior citizens**, ensuring their physical and emotional well-being.

- To **promote a sense of independence and autonomy** by assisting with daily activities such as bathing, grooming, and medication management.
- To **provide medical care and nursing support** for those with chronic illnesses or disabilities.
- To **offer recreational activities, social events, and companionship** to prevent social isolation and promote mental health.
- To **help the senior citizens learn new skills** and guide them towards success in their fields of endeavour, instilling a sense of self-confidence and self-reliance.

Increase in Income Limit of OBC

Why in News?

Recently, Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini announced an **increase in annual income** limit for **creamy layer of Other Backward Classes (OBC)** from ₹6 lakh to ₹8 lakh.

Key Points

- The primary goal is to safeguard the welfare of the OBC community in Haryana and provide **substantial benefits to the youth in government jobs**.
- The chief minister stated that the **reservation quota for backward classes** in **Group-A and Group-B positions**, presently at 15%, will be **raised to 27%**, aligning with the **policy of the Central government**.

Reservation in India

- In exercise of the powers conferred by **Article 340** of the Constitution, the President appointed a backward class commission in December 1978 under the chairmanship of **B. P. Mandal**.
- The commission was formed to determine the criteria for **defining India's "socially and educationally backward classes"** and to recommend steps to be taken for the advancement of those classes.
- The Mandal Commission concluded that India's population consisted of approximately 52 percent OBCs, therefore **27% government jobs should be reserved** for them.

Note:

- The commission has developed **eleven indicators** of social, educational, and economic backwardness.
- Apart from identifying backward classes among Hindus, the Commission has also identified **backward classes among non-Hindus** (e.g., Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, and Buddhists).
- It has generated an all-India other backward classes (OBC) list of 3,743 castes and a more underprivileged “depressed backward classes” list of 2,108 castes.

Gohana: 23rd District of Haryana

Why in News?

Addressing a gathering in Gohana on the occasion of **626th birth anniversary of saint Kabir Das**, the Haryana chief minister Nayab Singh Saini announced that **Gohana in Sonapat is set to be announced as the 23rd district of Haryana.**

Key Points

- A committee has been formed to form new districts in the state and it will submit its report within three months. After which Gohana will be declared as a new district of the state.
- **During the gathering the chief minister announced:**
 - The **construction of a chowk** named after **Saint Kabir in Gohana.**
 - Allocation of **₹31 lakh to Gohana Dhanak shiksha sabha** for the **construction of a library and langar hall.**
 - Immediate initiation of the **construction of a bypass on the Rohtak-Jind** road as soon as the required land is available.
 - Completion of the **backlog in government jobs.**
- The CM also informed that the **Haryana Antyodaya Parivar Parivahan Yojana (HAPPY)** has been introduced, which offers **free travel up to 1000 km annually** in Haryana State Transport buses to 84 lakh individuals from 23 lakh families with incomes below ₹1 lakh.
 - Under the **Chirayu yojana**, the government is providing **free medical treatment up to ₹5 lakh per year** to economically disadvantaged individuals at government and private hospitals.

- The state government has also initiated the **Mahapurush Samman Prachar Prasar Yojana** to **promote the teachings of great personalities** among the masses.

Sant Kabir Das

- He was born in the city of **Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.** He was a **15th century mystic poet, saint and social reformer** and a proponent of the **Bhakti Movement.**
 - Kabir’s legacy is still going on through a sect known as **Panth of Kabir**, a religious community that considers him as the founder.
- His early life was in a Muslim family, but he was strongly influenced by his teacher, the Hindu bhakti leader **Ramananda.**
- Kabir Das’ writings had a great influence on the Bhakti movement and includes titles like **Kabir Granthawali, Anurag Sagar, Bijak, and Sakhi Granth.**
 - His verses are found in Sikhism’s scripture **Guru Granth Sahib.**
 - The major part of his work was collected by the fifth Sikh guru, **Guru Arjan Dev.**
 - He was best known for his two-line couplets, known as **‘Kabir Ke Dohe’.**
- Kabir’s works were written in the **Hindi language** which was easy to comprehend. He used to write in couplets to enlighten people.

Mukhya Mantri Tirth Yatra Scheme

Why in News?

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini announced that the Haryana government is **facilitating pilgrims** to visit **Ayodhya and other sacred sites** through the **Mukhya Mantri Tirth Yatra scheme.**

Key Points

- Under the scheme, members of **families with annual income less than ₹1.80 lakh** who are **more than 60 years of age** are taken for pilgrimages to **Ayodhya, Varanasi, and other holy sites.**
- According to the CM, the state government has taken several steps to boost religious tourism in the State.

Note:

- Kurukshetra is becoming a center for **religious tourism**, attracting visitors from across the country and internationally.
- There are **endeavors to explore the tourism opportunities** in other locations as well.

Varanasi

- Varanasi is in **southeastern Uttar Pradesh state**. It is located on the **left bank of the Ganges (Ganga) River** and is one of the seven sacred cities of Hinduism.
- It is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. Its early history is that of the **first Aryan settlement in the middle Ganges valley**.
 - Varanasi was the **capital of the kingdom of Kashi** during the time of the **Buddha (6th century BCE)**, who gave his first sermon nearby at **Sarnath**.
 - The city remained a **centre of religious, educational, and artistic activities** as attested by the celebrated **Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Xuanzang**, who **visited it in about 635 CE**.
- Varanasi subsequently **declined during three centuries of Muslim occupation**, beginning in 1194.
- Varanasi **became an independent kingdom in the 18th century**, and under subsequent British rule it remained a commercial and religious centre.
 - **In 1910, the British made Varanasi a new Indian state**, with Ramnagar (on the opposite bank) as headquarters but with no jurisdiction over the city of Varanasi.
- In 1947, **after Indian independence**, the Varanasi state became part of the state of Uttar Pradesh.

SC Upholds HC Order to Grant Extra Marks to State Domiciles

Why in News?

Recently, **The Supreme Court** upheld the **high court** ruling to **cancel the Haryana government's decision to award 5% extra marks to state residents** for specific job recruitments **based on "socio-economic" factors**, deeming it an unjustified action.

Key Points

- The **Haryana Staff Selection Commission's** plea to challenge a **Punjab and Haryana High Court** decision

overturning a state notification providing extra marks to Haryana residents during the **Common Entrance Test of 2023 (CET 2023)** has been denied by a bench. The court ordered for new exams to be carried out.

- Under this **"socio-economic" criteria**, the Haryana government provided **extra importance to residents of Haryana** on fulfillment of certain conditions.
 - These conditions included **having no family members as permanent government employees** and a **total annual family income from all sources below Rs 1.8 lakh**.

Domicile Reservation

- On one hand the **Art 16(2) of the Constitution** says, "No citizen shall, **on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, descent, place of birth, residence or any of them, be ineligible for, or discriminated against** in respect of, any employment or office under the State."
 - On the other hand the **clause 4 of the same article says that nothing in this article shall prevent the State** from making any provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of any backward class of citizens which, in the opinion of the State, is not adequately represented in the services under the State.
 - But these provisions are applicable in government jobs.
- **Art 19(1)(g)** provides all citizens the **right to practice any profession**, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business.
 - Thus imposing such limitations by State Governments infringe upon an individual's constitutional right to engage in their chosen profession, trade, or business, as stated in **Article 19(1)(g)**.
- Furthermore, the High Court in its decision stated that "The concept of **constitutional morality has been openly violated** by introducing a secondary status to a set of citizens not belonging to the state of Haryana and curtailing their fundamental rights to earn their livelihood."
 - The **Andhra Pradesh High Court** observed that the Andhra Pradesh's Bill for providing reservation on the basis of domicile, passed in 2019, "may be unconstitutional", but it is yet to hear the case on merits.

Note:

Pension Hike for Freedom Fighters, Emergency Sufferers & Matribhasha Satyagrahis

Why in News?

Recently, Haryana Chief Minister announced a significant increase in the **monthly pension** for **freedom fighters**, their dependents, Emergency “sufferers”, and **Matribhasha Satyagrahis**.

- The new pension rates **will be applicable with effect from 1st July, 2024**.

Key Points

- The pension of freedom fighters and their dependents has been **increased from Rs 25,000 to Rs 40,000**.
- The pension of Emergency “sufferers” and the **Matribhasha Satyagrahis** has been **increased to Rs 20,000**.
- The chief minister **honored the freedom fighters for their countless sacrifices for the country’s freedom**, and also paid tribute to the ‘**satyagrahis**’ who fought during the **Emergency to uphold the spirit of the Constitution** and restore **democracy**.

Matribhasha Satyagrahis

- In **1957**, a number of people from **Hindi-speaking parts of erstwhile Punjab** launched a **crusade for the honour, promotion and implementation of their mother tongue**. They are known as ‘**Matribhasha Satyagrahis**’.

National Emergency

- The national emergency was set in motion under **Article 352 on June 25, 1975** on the grounds of ‘**internal disturbance**’ and was in **place for 21 months** till its **withdrawal on March 21, 1977**. Threat to national security and bad economic conditions were cited as reasons for the declaration.
 - The order gave the central government the authority to rule by decree wherein **civil liberties were curbed**.
 - An **external Emergency** was already in place at the **time of proclamation of national emergency**.

Swatantrata Sainik Samman Yojana (SSSY)

- The scheme provides for a **monthly Samman Pension to freedom fighters**, as a token of respect for their contribution in the national freedom struggle.
- On their demise, **pension is provided to their eligible dependents viz. spouses and thereafter, unmarried and unemployed daughters** and dependent parents, as per prescribed eligibility norms and procedure.
- It is implemented by the **Ministry of Home Affairs (Freedom Fighters Division)**.
- There are **23,566 beneficiaries** across the country covered under this scheme.

Awareness Programs on New Criminal Laws

Why in News?

Recently, Haryana Chief Secretary announced that **awareness campaigns** are scheduled to take place in **all 378 police stations and prisons** in the state **on 1st July, 2024**.

- These programs intend to inform the public about the three new Criminal Laws: **Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023, Bharatiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita 2023, and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam 2023**.

Key Points

- The Chief Secretary emphasized the measures taken for the successful implementation of these laws.
 - Around **40,000 police personnel**, including Investigating Officers (IOs), have undergone **training at various State training centers**.
 - **300 Judicial Officers from Haryana** have been **trained on the updated Criminal Laws** at the Chandigarh Judicial Academy.
 - An **online training** initiative was conducted for **IAS and HCS Officers** by the **Haryana Institute of Public Administration (HIPA), Gurugram**, with the purpose of acquainting officers with the details of the new legislation.
- Every prison in the state is **furnished with sufficient technological tools**, including approximately **300 computers**.

Note:



- To facilitate virtual court hearings, 149 **video conferencing setups** have been put in place in jails and court buildings, and an additional 178 systems will be acquired.
- All Jail Superintendents in the State have been directed to initiate a targeted **awareness campaign for inmates, their families, visitors, and prison personnel on the new Criminal Laws.**
- **Handy booklets illustrating the latest sections and procedures under these laws** have been produced for distribution among employees in the field.

BHARATIYA NYAYA SANHITA (BNS), 2023

BNS 2023 replaced Indian Penal Code 1860, incorporating 358 sections (511 in IPC), maintaining most of the IPC provisions, introducing new offences, eliminating court- struck-down offences, and enhancing penalties for various offences.

New Offences

- Ⓣ **Promise to Marry:** Criminalising “deceitful” promises to marry
- Ⓣ **Mob Lynching:** Codify offences linked to mob lynching and hate-crime murders
- Ⓣ Ordinary criminal law now covers **Organized Crime** and **Terrorism**, including a broader scope for terror financing in BNS compared to UAPA
- Ⓣ **Attempt to Suicide:** Criminalises attempts to commit suicide with intent to compel or restrain any public servant from discharging official duty
- Ⓣ **Community Service:** Added as possible form of punishment

Deletions

- Ⓣ **Unnatural Sexual Offences:** Section 377 of the IPC, which criminalised homosexuality among other “unnatural” sexual activities repealed completely
- Ⓣ **Adultery:** Offence of adultery omitted in consonance of apex court judgement
- Ⓣ **Thugs:** Section 310 of IPC fully omitted
- Ⓣ **Gender Neutrality:** Some laws dealing with children modified to bring gender neutrality

Other Modifications

- Ⓣ **Fake News:** Criminalisation of publishing false and misleading information
- Ⓣ **Sedition:** Introduced under a new name ‘deshdroh’ with wider definition
- Ⓣ **Mandatory Minimum Sentence:** In several provisions, mandatory minimum sentences prescribed which may limit scope for judicial discretion
- Ⓣ **Damage to Public Property:** Carry a graded fine (i.e. fine corresponding to the amount of damage caused)
- Ⓣ **Death by Negligence:** Elevates punishment for causing death by negligence from two to five years (for doctors - 2 yrs imprisonment)

Key Issues

- Ⓣ **Criminal Responsibility Age Discrepancy:** Criminal responsibility starts at seven, extendable to 12 based on maturity, potentially conflicting with global recommendations
- Ⓣ **Inconsistencies in Child Offense Definitions:** It sets child age below 18, but age criteria for offenses like rape differ, causing inconsistency
- Ⓣ **Retention of IPC Provisions on Rape and Sexual Harassment:** Maintains IPC provisions on rape and sexual harassment, omitting **Justice Verma Committee's 2013** suggestions for gender-neutral rape and recognizing marital rape as an offense.



Note:

BHARATIYA NAGARIK SURAKSHA SANHITA (BNSS), 2023

BNSS replaces CrPC 1973 and consists of 531 sections with 177 sections revised, 9 new sections added, and 14 sections repealed.



Key Provisions

- ⌵ **Hierarchy of Courts:** Eliminated distinction and role of Metropolitan Magistrates
- ⌵ **Mandated Use of Electronic Mode:** At stages of investigation, inquiry, and trial
- ⌵ **Detention of Undertrials:** Restriction on release on personal bond for accused persons (a) charged with life imprisonment or (b) facing multiple proceedings
- ⌵ **Alternative to Arrest:** An accused doesn't have to be arrested; instead, the police can take a security bond for their appearance before a Judicial Magistrate
- ⌵ **Community Service Defined:** 'Work which the Court may order a convict to perform as a form of punishment that benefits the community, for which he shall not be entitled to any remuneration'
- ⌵ **Substitution of Terminology:** "Mental illness" replaced by "unsoundness of mind" in majority of provisions
- ⌵ **Documentation Protocols:** Searches with/without warrants require mandatory audio-video documentation with recorded material promptly submitted to Magistrate
- ⌵ **Timelines for Procedures:** Prescribes timelines for various procedures
 - E.g. Issuing verdict within 30 days post-argument
- ⌵ **Medical Examination:** Can be requested by any police officer in certain cases
- ⌵ **Sample Collection:** Magistrate can compel individuals to submit signature specimens, handwriting samples etc. even if they haven't been arrested
- ⌵ **Forensic Investigation:** Mandated for offences punishable with ≥ 7 years of imprisonment
- ⌵ **New Procedures w.r.t. FIR Registration:**
 - After filing a **Zero FIR**, relevant police station must transfer it to the jurisdictionally appropriate station for further investigation
 - **FIRs can be electronically registered**, and the information will be officially recorded upon the person's signature within 3 days
- ⌵ **Rights of Victim/Informant:**
 - Police after filing charge sheet obligated to supply police report and other documents to victim
 - Witness protection scheme to be laid down by State Governments



Key Issues

- ⌵ **Permitted 15 days of police custody** within initial 40 or 60 days
- ⌵ **Doesn't mandate investigating officer to provide reasons** when seeking police custody
- ⌵ **Allows use of handcuffs during arrests**, contradicting SC rulings and NHRC guidelines
- ⌵ Scope of **mandatory bail limited** in case of multiple charges
- ⌵ **Limits plea bargaining in India** to sentence bargaining
- ⌵ Restricting bail, and limiting scope for plea bargaining could **deter decongesting of prisons**
- ⌵ **Power to seize property expanded** to immovable property apart from movable property
- ⌵ Several provisions **overlap** with existing laws
- ⌵ **BNSS retains CrPC provisions** related to public order, raising the question of whether laws governing trial procedure and public order maintenance should be unified or treated separately, considering their distinct functions



Drishti IAS

Note:

Haryana CM Distributes Plot Allotment Letters

Why in News?

Recently, Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini distributed plot allotment certificates to beneficiaries of the [State Housing Scheme](#).

Key Points

- The Haryana government launched the [Mukhyamantri Shehri Awas Yojana](#) to fulfill the housing aspirations of poor families in alignment with the Prime Minister's vision to provide housing for every impoverished individual.
 - Under the state scheme, **15,250 beneficiaries were given land plot allotment certificates**.
 - At the event held at **Maharshi Dayanand University** in Rohtak, the chief minister handed out plot allotment letters to the beneficiaries.
 - **Similar programmes to distribute allotment letters were also held** simultaneously at four other places - Yamunanagar, Palwal, Sirsa, and Mahendragarh.
- The state government had also recently distributed cards to families having an income of less than Rs 1 lakh annually under the [Haryana Antyodaya Parivar Parivahan Yojana](#).

Haryana Mukhyamantri Shahri Awas Yojana

- Launched in **2023**, the main objective of this scheme is **to provide houses at affordable rates to the weaker and low-income group families of the state**.
- Under the scheme, **plots will be allotted to those who do not have land to build a house**.
 - This will lead to **social and economic development of the poor families** of the state and will give them a chance to live a safe and stable life.

- Around 23 lakh families, consisting of approximately 84 lakh members, are benefiting from a scheme that provides **1,000 kilometers** of free bus travel within a year in state transport.

Landfill Waste Polluting Waterbodies in Aravalis

Why in News?

Garbage is being illegally dumped at waterbodies in [Aravalis](#). The Aravali land is protected under [Section 4 of the Punjab Land Preservation Act \(PLPA\) 1900](#), which makes the forest department's approval mandatory to carry out any non-forest activities.

Key Points

- Waterbodies in the Aravalis served as a **source of water for the local wildlife**, and are now being polluted and filled with **spillover garbage** and **leachate** from the landfill.
- It is **crucial for the authorities to prioritise the protection of the Aravali ecosystem** and take **stringent action against those violating environmental laws**.

Section 4 of the Punjab Land Preservation Act (PLPA), 1900

- Special orders under Section 4 of PLPA, 1900 are the **restrictive provisions issued by the state government** to prevent deforestation of a specified area that could lead to soil erosion.
- When the state government is satisfied that deforestation of a forest area forming part of a larger area is **likely to lead to erosion of soil**, the power under Section 4 can be exercised.
 - Therefore, the specific land which a special order under Section 4 of PLPA has been issued will have all the trappings of a forest governed by the [Forest Act, 1927](#).

Note:

