



Observers for Haryana Assembly Elections | Haryana | 23 Aug 2024

Why in News?

According to the sources, [The Election Commission of India](#) would **deploy over 400 observers** for the **Assembly elections in Haryana** and Jammu and Kashmir.

Key Points

- The poll body deploys observers under [Section 20B of the Representation of the People Act, 1951](#) and **plenary powers of the Constitution**.
- In a meeting, the Election Commissioner emphasised that the officials should observe the complete election ecosystem for [free and fair polls](#) and asserted that the role of observers becomes all the more critical in these elections.
- The observers were strictly directed to remain accessible to all parties, candidates and voters for timely redressal of their grievances.

Section 20B in The Representation of the People Act, 1951

- The Election Commission may **nominate a Government officer as an Observer to monitor the conduct of elections in a constituency** or group of constituencies and perform other functions entrusted by the Commission.
- The Observer **shall have the power to direct the returning officer to stop the counting of votes or not to declare the result** if in the observer's opinion booth capturing has taken place at a large number of polling stations or ballot papers are unlawfully taken, destroyed, lost, or tampered with to such an extent that the result of the poll cannot be ascertained.
- Then the Observer shall **report the matter to the Election Commission**.

Election Commission of India

- It is an autonomous constitutional authority responsible for administering Union and State election processes in India.
 - It was established in accordance with the Constitution on **25th January 1950 (celebrated as National Voters' Day)**. The secretariat of the commission is in New Delhi.
- The body administers elections to the [Lok Sabha](#), [Rajya Sabha](#), and [State Legislative Assemblies](#) in India, and the offices of the [President and Vice President](#) in the country.
 - It is **not concerned with the elections to panchayats and municipalities** in the states. For this, the Constitution of India provides for a separate [State Election Commission](#).

Recommendation for Bifurcation of SC Quota in Haryana | Haryana | 23 Aug 2024

Why in News?

Recently, The [Haryana State Commission for Scheduled Castes](#) has recommended that **one-half of the 20% quota reserved for the Scheduled Castes in government jobs will be set aside for candidates from deprived Scheduled Castes.**

- It comprises **36 castes** such as Balmikis, Dhanaks, Khatik and Mazhabi Sikhs.

Key Points

- The commission conducted a data analysis to ascertain the **inadequacy of representation of Scheduled Castes (SCs) in public employment** because of their backwardness.
- The commission's report to the council of ministers **recommends that if suitable candidates from deprived Scheduled Castes are unavailable, candidates from other Scheduled Castes**, including Chamars, Jatav, Mochi, Raigars, Ramdasias, and Ravidasisas, **may be considered to fill vacant posts.**
 - It also suggests reserving half of the **20% Scheduled Caste quota for candidates from other Scheduled Castes.**
 - If **candidates from these groups are unavailable**, candidates from **deprived Scheduled Castes may be considered.**
 - The report emphasizes that the **order of seniority will be based on a common merit list** without the need for separate points within the existing system.
- According to [The Supreme Court](#), the **state can sub-classify SCs** based on factors such as inadequate representation of certain castes.
 - However, it stipulated that the **state must demonstrate that the inadequate representation of a caste or group is due to its backwardness**, and must gather data on the inadequacy of representation in the state's services, as it is used as an indicator of backwardness.

Use of AI for School Education in Chhattisgarh | Chhattisgarh | 23 Aug 2024

Why in News?

According to the officials, **Chhattisgarh government's education department** is using [Artificial Intelligence \(AI\)](#) to improve school education and programmes like midday meals.

Key Points

- AI systems are being **utilized to track student performance, oversee sanitation, monitor toilet cleanliness, and assess manpower status.**
 - Additionally, a [geo-fenced attendance system](#) **will be implemented to ensure teacher presence in schools**, enhancing accountability and student safety.
 - AI-powered systems will be used in **monitoring food by analysing vegetable freshness, rice texture, and oil content** to objectively assess meal quality.
- The state government is collaborating with the [Indian Institute of Technology \(IIT\) Bhubaneswar](#) to develop software and mobile apps for monitoring schools and students.
- [Vidya Samiksha Kendra](#) is set up in Raipur **to implement the AI system.** It will be used for **online monitoring and data analysis of various beneficiary-oriented schemes** operated by the school education department.
 - Information and facilities related to government schemes will be **available to students,**

parents and teachers.

- A toll-free phone number will be issued to solve problems related to students, parents, and teachers.

Vidya Samiksha Kendras (VSKs)

- VSK is aimed at **leveraging data and technology** to bring a big leap in learning outcomes.
- This will cover data of more than **15 Lakh schools**, 96 Lakh teachers and 26 Crore students and analyze them meaningfully using big data analysis, [Artificial Intelligence \(AI\)](#) and machine learning in order to enhance the overall monitoring of the education system and thereby improving learning outcomes.

Performance Review of Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) | Rajasthan | 23 Aug 2024

Why in News?

Recently, the **Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs** chaired a meeting to review performance of nine [Regional Rural Banks \(RRBs\)](#) in Udaipur.

Key Points

- RRBs of the states of **Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan** were reviewed.
- The meeting focused on business performance, digital technology upgrades, [MSME \(Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises\)](#) cluster growth, and rural financial inclusion.
- The Union Minister directed:
 - the [State Level Bankers' Committee \(SLBC\)](#) to hold meetings with State Government, Sponsor Banks and RRBs to **improve performance** of [MUDRA scheme](#) and other financial inclusion schemes in Bundelkhand and aspirational districts.
 - RRBs to **generate awareness and provide credit** under the [PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana](#) scheme in **Gujarat and Rajasthan**.
 - RRBs to identify potential trades under [PM Vishwakarma scheme](#) and increase **their share in ground level agriculture credit disbursement** to achieve the stated objectives of **Priority Sector Lending**.

Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)

- RRBs were **established in 1975** under the provisions of the Ordinance promulgated on 26th September 1975 and **Regional Rural Banks Act, 1976**.
- These are **financial institutions** which ensure adequate credit for agriculture and other rural sectors.
- They **combine the characteristics of a cooperative in terms of the familiarity of the rural problems** and a commercial bank in terms of its professionalism and ability to mobilise financial resources.
- After the reforms in the 1990s, the government in 2005-06 **initiated a consolidation program** that resulted in the number of RRBs declining from 196 in 2005 to 43 in FY21, and 30 of the 43 RRBs reported net profits.

Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY)

- PMMY was **launched by the Government of India in 2015.**
- The PMMY **provides collateral-free institutional loans up to Rs. 10 lakhs for small business enterprises.**
- It is provided by **Member Lending Institutions (MLIs)** i.e. [Scheduled Commercial Banks \(SCBs\)](#), Regional Rural Banks (RRBs), Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) and [Micro Finance Institutions \(MFIs\)](#).

PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana

- The government **introduced the Programme in 2014 to promote rooftop solar installation.**
- The original target was **40 GW installed capacity (out of 100 GW by 2030) by 2022** but the goal was not met by 2022, the deadline was extended to 2026.
 - Rooftop solar panels are [photovoltaic panels](#) installed on the roof of a building and connected to the main power supply unit.
- Its objective is to promote **grid-connected solar rooftop systems** on residential buildings.
- Key Initiatives under Rooftop Solar:
 - [SUPRABHA \(Sustainable Partnership for RTS Acceleration in Bharat\)](#).
 - [SRISTI \(Sustainable Rooftop Implementation for Solar Transfiguration of India\)](#).

SLCR Project in Varanasi | Uttar Pradesh | 23 Aug 2024

Why in News?

Recently, The [Green Strategic Partnership between the Governments of India and Denmark](#) has facilitated major cooperation, resulting in the establishment of the **Smart Laboratory on Clean Rivers (SLCR) in Varanasi.**

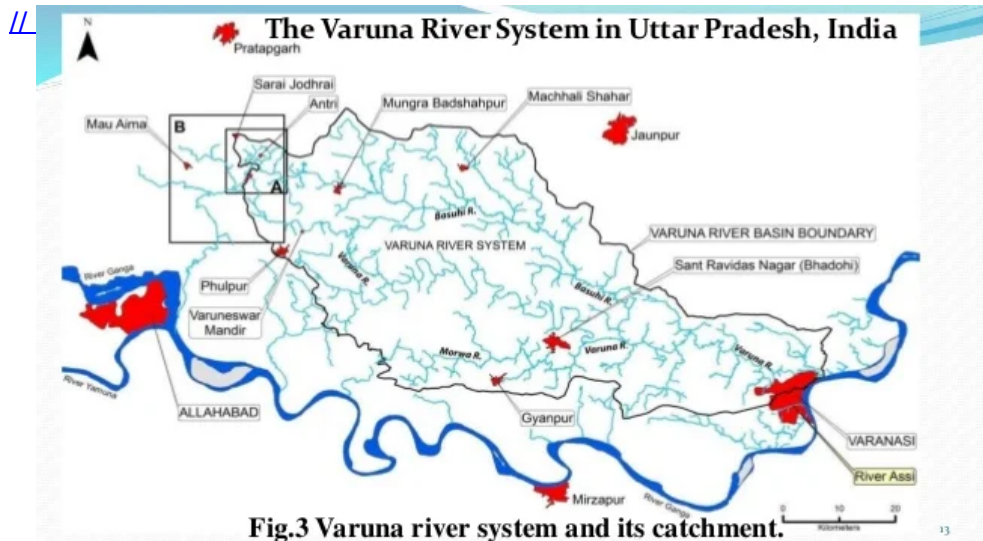
Key Points

- It is a unique tripartite initiative between the **Government of India (Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation)**, the [Indian Institute of Technology - Banaras Hindu University \(IIT-BHU\)](#), and Government of Denmark, to bring excellence in small river rejuvenation and management.
- The SLCR seeks to restore the [Varuna River](#) using sustainable methods.
 - Its goals include establishing a collaborative platform for government agencies, academic institutions, and local communities to exchange knowledge and devise solutions for maintaining clean river water.
 - The initiative includes a hybrid lab model at IIT-BHU and a living lab on the Varuna River to test and scale solutions in real-world environments.
- The **Indo-Danish Joint Steering Committee (JSC)** is the highest forum for SLCR which provides strategic guidance and reviews progress.
- The **Project Review Committee (PRC)**, with members from [National Mission on Clean Ganga \(NMCG\)](#), [Central Water Commission \(CWC\)](#), [Central Ground Water Board \(CGWB\)](#), [IIT-BHU](#) and [Denmark's Urban Sector Counsellor](#) will oversee quality control at project level.
- **Four projects** to be taken up under the collaboration. These are:
 - The First project involves creating a **Decision Support System (DSS) for water management**, designed to analyze basin water dynamics using hydrological models, scenario generation, forecasting, and data analytics.
 - The second project focuses on the **characterization of emerging pollutants and fingerprint analysis**. It will use advanced analytical techniques, such as chromatography

and mass spectrometry, to identify and quantify contaminants.

- The [Hydrogeological Model of the Varuna Basin for Recharge Sites](#) will be the fourth project. It aims to **enhance base flow through Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR)**.

Varuna River



- It is a **Minor Tributary of the Ganga River**. It **rises from** Phulpur town in the **Prayagraj district**.
 - It **flows into the Ganges river** near Sarai Mohana village **in the Varanasi district**.
- The **name 'Varanasi' district is derived from** the names of Two rivers, **Varuna and Assi** rivers.