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- 
- 
- Home
- UPSC
 - Current Affairs IAS
 -    
 - Quiz IAS
 -     
 - UPSC News Editorial (/Eng)
 - Answer Writing ( /Eng)
 - UPSC Essay (/Eng)
 - UPSC GS (/Eng)
 - UPSC GS 1 ( /Eng)
 - UPSC GS-2 ( /Eng)
 - UPSC GS-3 ( /Eng)
 - UPSC GS-4 ( /Eng)
 - Kurukshetra ( /Eng)
 - Yojana ( /Eng)
 - IAS Strategy for Prelims
 - General Studies
 - CSAT
 - IAS Strategy for Mains
 - IAS GS 1
 - IAS GS 2
 - IAS GS 3
 - IAS GS 4
 - IAS Test Series
- Himachal HPAS
 - Himachal Daily Current Affairs
 -   
 - Daily Himachal GK Quiz

- Himachal News Editorial (Hindi/Eng)
- Answer Writing (Hindi /Eng)
- Himachal Essay (Hindi/Eng)
- Giriraj
 - Magazine
 - Giriraj Quiz
- Himachal Pradesh
 - Himachal Pradesh
 - Himachal Pradesh Government Schemes
- HP Government Schemes
- Himachal Pradesh Government Schemes
- Syllabus Prelims Himachal HPAS
 - GENERAL STUDIES
 - CSAT
 - English
 - Hindi
- Syllabus Mains Himachal HPAS
 - English,Hindi,Essay & One Optional
 - HPAS GS 3
 - HPAS GS 2
 - HPAS GS 1
- Himachal HPAS Test Series
- All You need to Know about Himachal HPAS
- HARYANA HCS
 - Haryana Current Affairs
 - Himachal Pradesh Government Schemes
 - HCS Quiz
 - Himachal Pradesh Government Schemes
 - Haryana News Editorial (Hindi/Eng)
 - Answer Writing (Hindi /Eng)
 - Haryana Essay (Hindi/Eng)
 - HR Government Schemes
 - Himachal Pradesh Government Schemes
 - Syllabus Mains Haryana HCS
 - Syllabus Prelims Haryana HCS
 - HCS Prelims Test Series

- [Punjab PCS](#)
- [Punjab PCS Current Affairs](#)
- [Daily Quiz Punjab PCS](#)
- [Punjab News Editorial \(Eng\)](#)
- [Answer Writing \(Eng\)](#)
- [Punjab Essay \(Eng\)](#)
- [All you need to know about Punjab PCS Exam 2021](#)
- [Syllabus Prelims Punjab PCS](#)
 - [General Studies](#)
 - [Prelims GS 1](#)
- [Syllabus Mains Punjab PCS](#)
 - [PCS GS 1](#)
 - [PCS GS 2](#)
 - [PCS GS 3](#)
 - [PCS GS 4](#)
 - [Online PUNJAB PCS TEST SERIES 2020](#)
- [CSAT](#)
 - [CSAT English](#)
 - [Punjab PCS CSAT](#)
- [Concept Mindmaps](#)
 - [Polity \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
 - [Geography \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
 - [Environment \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
 - [History \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
 - [Economics \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
 - [Science and Technology \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
 - [CSAT Concepts \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
 - [Maps \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
 - [Art and Culture \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
 - [International Affairs \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
 - [Punjab PCS Concepts](#)
 - [Himachal HPAS Concepts \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
 - [Haryana HCS Concepts \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
 - [Rajasthan RAS Concepts \(Hindi / Eng\)](#)
- [Concept Quiz](#)
 - [Polity Quiz \(Hindi/Eng\)](#)

- Geography Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- Environment Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- History Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- Economics Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- Science and Technology Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- CSAT Concepts Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- Maps Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- Art and Culture Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- Punjab PCS Concepts Quiz
- Himachal HPAS Concepts Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- Haryana HCS Concepts Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- Rajasthan RAS Concepts Quiz (हिंदी/Eng)
- Mains
 - UPSC Answer Writing (हिंदी/Eng)
 - HPPSC Answer Writing (हिंदी/Eng)
 - Haryana HCS Answer Writing (हिंदी/Eng)
 - Punjab PCS Answer Writing
- Exam Blogs
 - UPSC Exam Blogs
 - Himachal Exam Blogs
 - Punjab exam Blogs
 - Haryana Exam Blogs
 - Rajasthan Exam Blogs
 - E-Magazine
 - E-Magazine for HPAS
 - हिंदी/English में हिंदी-हिंदी
 - E-Magazine for Punjab PCS
- UPCOMING EXAMS
 - National Exams
 - Himachal Pradesh Exams
 - Punjab Exams
 - Test Series Planner
- About US
- Sign Up
- Login
- facebook 

▪ instagram 

▪ youtube 

MENU

Click on Drop Down for Current Affairs

13th, August, 2022

Today's Topic Covered



01

News 1

New Pension Scheme & Old Pension Scheme

02

News 2

Himachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion (Amendment) Bill 2022

03

News 3

Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Amendment Act 2022

04

News 4 & 5

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the *HPU and Tribhuvan University Nepal & E-Governance and More News*

Topic: New Pension Scheme

Importance: Himachal HPAS Prelims and Mains

What is the news?

- A delegation of New Pension Scheme Employees Association called on the Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur here today and apprised him about the various demands of the NPS employees.
- The Chief Minister while giving patience, listening to the demands of the delegation assured them that the State Government would sympathetically consider their genuine demands.

Basic difference between old and new:

- The basic difference between the old and the new scheme is that while the earlier system was defined the new one is totally based on investment returns along with accumulations until retirement age, annuity type and its levels.
- Before the implementation of NPS in January 2004, when a government employee retired, his pension was fixed equal to 50 percent of his last salary. Whether it is 40 years of job in OPS or 10 years, the amount of pension was decided by the last salary that is, it was the Definitive Benefit Scheme.
- In contrast, NPS is a Definitive Contribution Scheme, that is, the pension amount depends on the number of years the job has been done and the annuity amount.
- A fixed amount is contributed every month under NPS. At retirement, 60 percent of the total amount can be withdrawn in a lump sum and the remaining 40 percent has to be purchased from the insurance company's annuity plan, on which the interest amount is given as pension every month.
- According to tax and investment expert Balwant Jain, OPS is a safer option, but NPS money is also invested in equities, due to which it can get higher returns on

retirement after a long service period.

(Source: CMO Himachal & informalnewz)

Topic: Anti-Conversion Law

Importance: Himachal HPAS Prelims and Mains

What is the news?

- Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur tabled the **Himachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion (Amendment) Bill 2022** in the Vidhan Sabha today to enhance punishment and add a specific mention of “mass conversion” to the existing law.



Proposes higher jail term of up to 10 yrs

- The HP Freedom of Religion (Amendment) Bill 2022 adds a provision to curb 'mass conversions' and proposes higher jail term up to 10 years and a fine of up to Rs 2 lakh.
- Following the amendment, a police officer not below the rank of Sub-Inspector will investigate complaints of the offense.
- A sessions court will try offenses punishable under the Act.

The law was enacted with a view to providing freedom of religion by prohibiting religious conversions by misrepresentation, force, undue influence, coercion, inducement or by any fraudulent means or marriage. Now, some amendments need to be made to make it stricter.

The Himachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion (Amendment) Bill, 2022, was passed unanimously with a voice vote.

Background:

- Himachal was among the first states in the country to enact the anti-conversion law during the government of Virbhadra Singh in 2006. However, the BJP government repealed the Act and enacted the Himachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act, 2019 citing rise in cases of forced conversion in Rampur and Kinnaur areas.

New Changes:

- There was no provision in the Act to curb mass conversions. Therefore, a provision to this effect is being made. The jail for mass conversions shall be between five and 10 years and a fine of Rs 1.50 lakh.
- The imprisonment for concealing religion at the time of marriage has been enhanced from three years to 10 years.

Besides, the fine in such cases has been increased from Rs 50,000 to Rs one lakh. In case of a repeat offence, the imprisonment shall be between seven and 10 years and a fine of up to Rs 2 lakh.

Few Important Points:

1) The Bill inserts the reference to “mass conversion”, which is described as two or more people converting at the same time, in the 2019 Act and proposes to increase the punishment for forced conversions to a maximum of 10 years from seven years.

2) The Jai Ram Thakur-led government introduced the bill on Friday. It is a more stringent version of The Himachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act, 2019, which came into force barely 18 months ago.

The 2019 Act was notified on December 21, 2020, 15 months after it was passed in the state assembly. The 2019 version had in turn replaced a 2006 law, which prescribed lesser punishments.

3) It stipulates that the complaints made under the Act will be investigated by a police officer not below the rank of a sub-inspector. The offences will now be tried by a sessions court.

Introducing the bill on Friday, Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur said the 2019 Act did not have a provision to curb mass conversion, and “therefore, a provision to this effect is being made.” The bill seeks to amend sections 2,4,7 and 13 and insert section 8A in the 2019 Act.

(Source: The Tribune & The Hindu)

Topic: Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Amendment Act 2022

Importance: Himachal HPAS Prelims and Mains

What is the news?

- The Himachal Pradesh Assembly passed the ***Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Amendment Act 2022***.

Purpose:

- Seeks to enhance the limit of borrowings of the state government.
- The Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur-led BJP government increased the state's borrowing limit to more than three percent of the state's total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by approving the FRBM Act in the assembly.

Opposition:

- The Opposition protested the amendment in the Act, saying that party programs were being organized from the exchequer, in such a situation, the amendment to the FRBM Act is unnecessary.
- Defending the move, Thakur said the global economy has been affected due to the COVID pandemic and Himachal has also not remained untouched by it.
- Pointing out that the fiscal deficit was 4.23 percent in 2013-14, which reached 4.70 percent in 2016-17, the

chief minister claimed, “We have managed to bring it down to 2.70 and presently it is at 2.99. Since our borrowing limit has been fixed at three per cent under the Act, we are revising it.”

- During the discussion on the amendment introduced in the House, Leader of Opposition Mukesh Agnihotri accused the government spending extravagantly of buying luxury vehicles, helicopters and organizing mega events. He questioned the need to buy a bulletproof vehicle in Himachal and the Chief Secretary being allowed to buy a vehicle worth Rs 50 lakh.

(Source: thestatesman)



Topic: MOU

Importance: Himachal HPAS Prelims and Mains

What is the news?

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the ***HP State University and Tribhuvan University Kathmandu Nepal.***

Objective:

- The main objectives of the MoU are Tribhuvan University and HPU Shimla agree to base their exchanges on the principle of reciprocity.
- Apart from this, the exchange of students will be university-wise.
- Students of HPU Exchange will be accepted to Tribhuvan University. Faculty and staff exchange. In addition to academic collaboration and representation in the Board of Studies is to conduct joint research, conference and publication.

(Source: divyahimachal)

Topic: Glory for State

Importance: Himachal HPAS Prelims and Mains

What is the news?

- Anuj Kumar, Professor PK Vaid Research Scholar, IcdeOL, has been selected to participate in the Action for Earth-Global Leaders Summit 2022 to be held in Singapore. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will be held from August 23 to 25 by the UN-sponsored Global Hemisphere.



Why important?

- Anuj Kumar is the only Indian to represent the country vis-à-vis HP University in the field of research and development on this international platform.

About the Action for Earth-Global Leaders Summit (GLS 2022):

- The Action for Earth-Global Leaders Summit (GLS 2022) is a three-day summit to be held at the Plaza in Singapore. Representatives from ASEAN, Africa, Asia and Europe are expected to participate in an interactive dialogue to discuss and demonstrate best practices on UNSDG focusing on water life on land, clean water and sanitation, climate change, life in communities and cities, etc.
- Anuj Kumar has done his PhD in the discipline of Public Administration, State University, Shimla-05. Research work on electronic and plastic waste management through extended producer responsibility in the state under the guidance of PK Vaid.

- He is actively engaged in the process of teaching learning and works for the upliftment of the society.

(Source: divyahimachal)

Topic: E-Governance

Importance: Himachal HPAS Prelims and Mains

What is the news?

- The state electricity board will now send bills to consumers on emails along with SMS on mobile phones.
- The board management has appealed to consumers to register mobile phone numbers and e-mails on the board's website or sub-divisional level offices to avoid online forgery.
- In the future, electricity bills will be released by the electricity board only through these two means.

Pankaj Dadhwal, managing director of the board:

- He has advised to use only the certified application of the board. Download the certified HPSEBL Smart Meter app only through Google Play Store or Apple App Store.
- The board has also refused to take any responsibility in cases of any such disturbance in case of download of various unauthenticated apps.

(Source: Amar Ujala)

Some More HP News:

1) The first-of-its-kind and unique Tiranga Yatra in Himachal Pradesh will be held in Palampur on August 14. In this journey, the tricolor of one thousand meters that is One kilometer long will be hoisted gracefully.

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- UPSC Prelims Test Series
- UPSC Mains Test Series

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- UPSC Prelims Test Series
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