Morality Police of Iran

December 5, 2022
In news– Iran's public prosecutor said that the country's morality police, which is tasked with enforcing the country's Islamic dress code, would be disbanded.
What is Iran's Morality police/ Gasht-e Ershad?

- **The Gasht-e Ershad are part of the police force** and supervised by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, but the elected government has a say in their activities through the Interior Ministry.
- **Both men and women officials are part of the morality police**.
- Mahsa Amini was allegedly beaten by the morality police who had detained her for "incorrectly" wearing the mandatory hijab.
- Over the past weeks, the protests have expanded from anger over the hijab regulation to a wider dissatisfaction with state representatives seen to be reinforcing these laws.
- Iran has a long history of policing the hijab. During the reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi in 1936, the hijab was actually banned in an effort to "modernise" the country.
- The police would then remove the hijab from the heads of women seen wearing it in public.
- While wearing the h**ijab was made mandatory, a force was constituted to enforce the rules on morality and the public appearance of women only in the 1990s**, after the war broke out with Saddam Hussein's Iraq, and the regime felt the need to centralise its power and underline an Iranian national identity.
- Over the years, the strictness with which the morality rules have been enforced has varied in accordance with the nature of the regime in the country's dual theocratic-democratic political system.

- Not only the **enforcement of hijab, but the implementation of other rules on public appearance and conduct** are also the responsibility of the police.
- In 2010, for instance, Iran's Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance issued a template for suitable haircuts for men in order to halt Western influence on culture, and the morality police were tasked with enforcement at salons.
- What a possible disbandment of the force would mean was not immediately clear.