



OAS HUB

IDEAL FOR
UPSC, OPSC and Other
Competitive Examinations

English

DAILY CHRONICLE CURRENT AFFAIRS

NEWS CREDIT

PIB/ PTI/ News On Air/ The Hindu/ IANS/ Business Standard/ Times Of India/ Deccan Herald/ Hindustan Times/ BBC News/ Aljazeera/ Mirror.Uk/ Times Now/ Economic Times/ Financial Express/ Indian Express...

NEWS COVERED

Business News, financial news, economy news, company news, politics news, India news, breaking news, Indian economy, International News, Sports News, and many more topics...



Monday, September 28, 2026



TABLE OF CONTENT

- **Make in India Completes 12 Years as India Expands Manufacturing Capacity but Faces Value-Addition and Export Challenges:** *Manufacturing Sector / Production Linked Incentive / Global Value Chains / Export Competitiveness (GS-III)*
- **CEC Removal Row Highlights Constitutional Safeguards, Election Commission Independence and Internal Dissent Over Electoral Roll Processes:** *Election Commission of India / Constitutional Safeguards / Electoral Roll Revision / Institutional Independence (GS-II)*
- **France Renews Push for UN Security Council Reform and Responsible Veto Use Amid Growing Demands for Collective Security:** *UN Security Council Reform / Veto Power / Multilateralism / Collective Security (GS-II)*
- **SWIFT Alternatives and the Global Shift Towards Interoperable Cross-Border Payment Systems:** *Cross-Border Payments / Payment Interoperability / Digital Financial Infrastructure / International Financial System (GS-III)*
- **Allahabad High Court Clarifies That Religious Conversion Does Not Automatically Extinguish Scheduled Tribe Status:** *Scheduled Tribes / Constitutional Safeguards / Tribal Identity / Social Justice (GS-II)*

IMPORTANT INSIGHTS**Make in India Completes 12 Years as India Expands Manufacturing Capacity but Faces Value-Addition and Export Challenges****Recent Developments:**

- **Make in India**, launched on **25 September 2014**, completed 12 years in September 2026, with substantial expansion in electronics, automobiles, pharmaceuticals, steel, defence and renewable-energy manufacturing, while challenges remain in private investment, domestic value addition, employment and integration with global value chains.
- Manufacturing GVA at constant prices recorded a **10.88% CAGR during 2022-23 to 2025-26** under the revised national accounts series. The manufacturing sector contributes around 16–17% of GDP and employs more than 27 million workers.
- The **PLI schemes** across 14 sectors had attracted more than ₹2.40 lakh crore in investment, generated over ₹22.66 lakh crore in production and sales, supported more than ₹15.20 lakh crore in exports and created over 14 lakh direct and indirect jobs by June 2026.
- Recent policy measures have shifted attention from final-product assembly towards **domestic value addition, components, strategic technologies and complete manufacturing ecosystems**.

Make in India: Objectives and Evolution:***Core Objectives:***

- Make in India was launched to transform India into a global hub for **manufacturing, design and innovation** by facilitating investment, fostering innovation, developing infrastructure and improving business processes.
- The initiative sought to address structural constraints affecting manufacturing, including regulatory complexity, infrastructure gaps, limited investment and inadequate integration with global production networks.
- **Make in India 2.0** currently covers 27 sectors, including 15 manufacturing and 12 services sectors, with implementation involving multiple ministries, departments and state governments.

Supporting Policy Architecture:

- The manufacturing ecosystem has been strengthened through **PLI schemes, National Single Window System, PM GatiShakti, GIS-enabled industrial land bank, FDI reforms, industrial corridors, public procurement measures and compliance rationalisation**.
- **PM GatiShakti** seeks to integrate multimodal infrastructure planning, while industrial parks and single-window systems aim to reduce logistical and regulatory bottlenecks.
- The policy approach has gradually moved from attracting investment towards building **sector-specific production capacity and value chains**.

Manufacturing Performance: Sectoral Transformation:***Electronics and Mobile Manufacturing:***

- Electronics production increased from approximately **₹1.9 lakh crore in 2014-15 to ₹13.11 lakh crore in 2025-26**, representing nearly a sevenfold increase.

- Mobile-phone production increased from about **₹18,000 crore to ₹6.27 lakh crore** during the same period, making India the world's second-largest mobile-phone manufacturer by volume.
- Domestic value addition in electronics has also increased, although industry estimates place it at around **18–20%**, indicating substantial scope for deeper component and sub-system manufacturing.
- PLI-supported electronics manufacturing has expanded beyond final assembly into **printed circuit board assemblies, batteries, camera modules, display modules and other sub-assemblies**.

Automobiles, Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices:

- Vehicle production reached **31.03 million units in 2024-25**, around 33% above the 2014-15 level.
- India's pharmaceutical industry recorded annual turnover of **₹4,71,898 crore in 2024-25**, while domestic medical-device manufacturing increased from ₹28,000 crore in 2019-20 to ₹41,500 crore.
- Pharmaceutical PLI schemes have strengthened domestic production of critical APIs, bulk drugs, complex generics and high-value medicines, thereby addressing import dependence in selected segments.

Steel, Defence and Renewable Energy:

- Crude steel production increased from **81.7 million tonnes in 2014-15 to around 170 million tonnes in 2025-26**.
- Defence production increased from **₹46,429 crore in 2014-15 to ₹1.78 lakh crore in 2025-26**, indicating significant expansion of indigenous defence manufacturing.
- Solar-module manufacturing capacity expanded from **2.3 GW in 2014 to 192 GW by June 2026**, while solar-cell capacity increased from 1.2 GW to around 30 GW.
- Manufacturing capabilities are increasingly extending towards **strategic components and technologies**, including indigenous microprocessors for space applications and rare-earth permanent magnets.

Production Linked Incentive Scheme: Manufacturing as Policy Instrument:

Scale and Impact:

- The **PLI scheme** was introduced across 14 strategic sectors to incentivise incremental production and sales, attract investment, increase exports and generate employment.
- As of June 2026, PLI schemes had attracted over **₹2.40 lakh crore investment**, generated more than ₹22.66 lakh crore production and sales, supported over ₹15.20 lakh crore exports and created more than 14 lakh jobs.
- In electronics, PLI support has contributed to higher domestic production and a sharp decline in mobile-phone imports, while pharmaceutical PLI has promoted domestic manufacturing of critical products.

Concentration of Benefits:

- PLI gains remain concentrated in sectors such as **solar modules, pharmaceuticals, automobiles and components, speciality steel and large-scale electronics**.
- This concentration highlights the need to expand manufacturing incentives towards labour-intensive sectors, MSMEs and deeper component ecosystems.

Manufacturing and Global Value Chains:

India's Global Position:

- The **Economic Survey 2025-26** estimated India's share at about **2.9% of global manufacturing GVA and 1.8% of global merchandise exports in 2024**.
- India's limited participation in global value chains is partly associated with relatively low backward participation, particularly in intermediate goods and components.
- Greater integration with global production networks can increase domestic value added and employment through scale effects, even when some intermediate inputs are initially imported.

Export Challenge:

- Non-petroleum goods exports increased substantially during the Make in India period, but India's share of global merchandise exports has remained comparatively modest.
- Therefore, **higher domestic production does not automatically translate into a proportional increase in global export share**.
- Export competitiveness depends on logistics costs, product quality, scale, technology, trade agreements, input availability and integration with multinational production networks.

Key Structural Challenges:

Investment and Capacity Utilisation:

- Private-sector investment remains critical because sustained manufacturing expansion requires **long-term capital formation**, not only government incentives.
- Manufacturing capacity utilisation has improved but remains an important constraint because sustained private investment generally requires adequate utilisation and credible demand conditions.
- Manufacturing FDI has not increased as rapidly as overall FDI across the period examined, indicating the need for greater sector-specific investment attractiveness.

Employment and Labour Intensity:

- Manufacturing expansion has generated substantial employment in selected sectors, but the transformation has not yet produced a proportionate increase in manufacturing's role in total employment.
- **Labour-intensive manufacturing**, particularly textiles, footwear, food processing, furniture and light engineering, can provide greater employment absorption if supported by skills, infrastructure and export access.

Domestic Value Addition:

- Higher output can coexist with significant dependence on imported components and intermediate goods.
- The strategic priority is therefore to move from **assembly-led manufacturing to component-led and technology-intensive manufacturing**.
- Electronics illustrates this challenge: production has expanded rapidly, but domestic value addition remains considerably lower than total gross production value.

Recent Policy Push: From Capacity to Strategic Ecosystems:

BHAVYA Industrial Parks:

- **Bharat Audyogik Vikas Yojana (BHAVYA)** has an outlay of **₹33,660 crore** for developing 100 investment-ready industrial parks over six years.
- The scheme emphasises plug-and-play infrastructure, multimodal connectivity, reliable utilities, digital governance and investor facilitation.
- BHAVYA is intended to reduce the time and infrastructure constraints associated with establishing manufacturing units.

Semicon 2.0:

- **Semicon 2.0**, approved in July 2026, has a total outlay of **₹1,27,500 crore** to strengthen India's semiconductor ecosystem.
- Its focus extends across **chip design, semiconductor equipment and materials, fabrication facilities, advanced packaging, research and development and talent development**.
- The approach seeks to build a complete semiconductor value chain rather than concentrating only on assembly or packaging.

Rare-Earth Permanent Magnets:

- The government has allocated **₹7,280 crore** for integrated manufacturing of sintered Nd-Fe-B rare-earth permanent magnets with a targeted capacity of **6,000 MTPA**.
- The measure addresses a strategic midstream gap between rare-earth processing and downstream applications in electric vehicles, wind turbines, electronics, aerospace and defence.

Way Forward:

From Production to Competitive Value Chains:

- India's manufacturing strategy needs to shift from simply increasing **gross production** towards building competitive domestic and internationally integrated value chains.
- Policy should prioritise **components, capital goods, industrial R&D, advanced materials, logistics, skills and technology diffusion** alongside final-product manufacturing.
- Greater participation in global value chains can provide scale, technology transfer, export opportunities and employment while domestic capabilities deepen.
- Manufacturing policy should simultaneously support **MSMEs and large firms**, because domestic suppliers are essential for achieving higher value addition.
- Stable regulations, predictable taxation, efficient logistics and faster approvals remain necessary to convert policy incentives into durable private investment.

Conclusion:

- Twelve years of Make in India have produced substantial manufacturing capacity across **electronics, automobiles, pharmaceuticals, steel, defence, renewable energy and strategic technologies**.
- The next challenge is qualitative rather than merely quantitative: India needs to convert production growth into **higher domestic value addition, stronger private investment, greater employment intensity and deeper global value-chain integration**.

- The effectiveness of the next phase will therefore depend on whether manufacturing ecosystems can move from final assembly towards **components, technology, capital goods, innovation and export competitiveness**.

Value Addition for UPSC:

GS Paper III Linkages:

- **Industrial Policy:** Make in India represents a shift towards targeted industrial policy through sector-specific incentives and infrastructure creation.
- **Employment:** Labour-intensive manufacturing can support India's employment transition and demographic dividend.
- **External Sector:** Export competitiveness requires deeper integration with global value chains and lower logistics and input costs.
- **Technology:** Semicon 2.0, electronics components and rare-earth magnets illustrate the movement towards strategic technology and critical-input security.
- **Infrastructure:** BHAVYA and PM GatiShakti demonstrate the importance of integrated industrial and multimodal infrastructure.
- **Atmanirbhar Bharat:** The policy increasingly emphasises resilience and domestic capability without completely disconnecting India from global production networks.
- **UPSC Mains Angle:** The central analytical question is not whether manufacturing output has increased, but whether **output growth is translating into domestic value addition, productive employment, investment and sustainable export competitiveness**.

CEC Removal Row Highlights Constitutional Safeguards, Election Commission Independence and Internal Dissent Over Electoral Roll Processes

Recent Developments:

Best Institute for OAS/IAS

- The Opposition has indicated that it will move a motion in both Houses of Parliament seeking the removal of **Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar**, following an Indian Express investigation into objections reportedly recorded by Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi regarding certain Election Commission processes.
- The investigation reported that the two Election Commissioners had formally raised objections on at least **14 occasions over 10 months**, including concerns relating to voter additions and deletions, changes to Form 6 and access to electoral-roll databases.
- The reported disagreements are significant because the **Election Commission of India** functions as a multi-member constitutional body, with the Chief Election Commissioner serving as its Chairman when other Election Commissioners are appointed under Article 324.
- The Election Commission has, however, maintained that decisions of the Commission, including those concerning the **Special Intensive Revision**, were taken unanimously with the approval of all three Commissioners.

Constitutional Position of the Election Commission:

Article 324 and Institutional Mandate:

- **Article 324** vests the superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of electoral rolls and the conduct of elections to Parliament, State Legislatures, President and Vice-President in the Election Commission.
- The Commission consists of the **Chief Election Commissioner and such number of other Election Commissioners as the President may determine**, subject to parliamentary law.
- When other Election Commissioners are appointed, the **Chief Election Commissioner acts as Chairman** of the Commission.
- The constitutional design seeks to provide an institutional mechanism for conducting elections independently from the executive and ensuring electoral administration across India.

Composition and Decision-Making:

- The present Commission consists of **three Election Commissioners**, including the Chief Election Commissioner.
- The Chief Election Commissioner is not constitutionally designated as an absolute superior authority over the other Election Commissioners; the office functions within a **multi-member Commission framework**.
- The 2023 legal framework provides for the transaction of Commission business and allocation of work through the prescribed institutional procedure, making collective decision-making an important aspect of the Commission's functioning.

Appointment of Election Commissioners:

Constitutional and Statutory Framework:

- Appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners is governed constitutionally by **Article 324** and statutorily by the **Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023**.
- The **President** appoints the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners on the recommendation of a three-member Selection Committee consisting of the Prime Minister, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister.
- Eligible candidates must have held a post equivalent to the **Secretary to the Government of India** and must be persons of integrity possessing knowledge and experience in the management and conduct of elections.

Tenure and Service Conditions:

- The Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners hold office for **6 years or until attaining 65 years of age**, whichever is earlier.
- The Chief Election Commissioner receives service conditions and monetary benefits equivalent to those available to a **Judge of the Supreme Court**.
- The constitutional protection relating to removal is substantially stronger for the Chief Election Commissioner than for other Election Commissioners.

Removal of the Chief Election Commissioner:

Constitutional Basis:

- **Article 324(5)** provides that the Chief Election Commissioner can be removed from office only **in like manner and on the like grounds as a Judge of the Supreme Court**.
- The same protection is reflected in **Section 11(2)** of the 2023 Act.
- An Election Commissioner or Regional Commissioner cannot be removed from office except on the **recommendation of the Chief Election Commissioner**.
- This asymmetry creates stronger removal protection for the Chief Election Commissioner while giving the office a special role in protecting other members of the Commission.

Grounds for Removal:

- The constitutional standard for removal of a Supreme Court Judge under **Article 124(4)** is **proved misbehaviour or incapacity**, and the same standard applies to the removal of the Chief Election Commissioner through Article 324(5).
- **Misbehaviour** may involve conduct incompatible with the office or abuse of official authority, while **incapacity** concerns inability to discharge the functions of the office.
- Mere political disagreement, administrative controversy or criticism of an Election Commission decision does not by itself constitute the constitutional ground of proved misbehaviour or incapacity.

Parliamentary Removal Process:

Initiation of Motion:

- Removal proceedings begin with a **notice of motion** by Members of Parliament alleging proved misbehaviour or incapacity.
- For admission, the notice must carry signatures of at least **100 Members of the Lok Sabha** or **50 Members of the Rajya Sabha**.
- The Speaker of the Lok Sabha or Chairman of the Rajya Sabha has the authority to consider whether the motion should be admitted.

Inquiry and Parliamentary Approval:

- After admission, an **inquiry committee** examines the allegations and evidence relating to the alleged misbehaviour or incapacity.
- The removal motion must subsequently be adopted by **a majority of the total membership of each House and a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members present and voting**.
- The requirement that the motion must secure the prescribed special majority in **both Houses of Parliament** makes removal constitutionally demanding.
- After Parliament completes the constitutional process, the **President issues the order of removal**.

2026 Removal Attempt and Current Controversy:

Earlier Motion Against Gyanesh Kumar:

- On **12 March 2026**, Opposition parties submitted motions in both Houses seeking the removal of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar.

- The reported motions were signed by **130 Members of the Lok Sabha and 63 Members of the Rajya Sabha** and referred to issues surrounding the Election Commission's **Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls**.
- The motions alleged partisan and discriminatory conduct and raised concerns relating to electoral-roll revision and investigation of alleged electoral irregularities.
- In April 2026, the **Chairman of the Rajya Sabha and Speaker of the Lok Sabha rejected the motions**, and no reasons were publicly assigned for the decisions, according to the Indian Express report.

Fresh Political Developments:

- The September 2026 demand follows reporting that Election Commissioners **Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi** had independently recorded objections concerning several SIR-related administrative and technological processes.
- Reported concerns included the alteration of **Form 6**, access to electoral-roll databases, centralisation of voter-data systems and procedures concerning addition, deletion and restoration of voter names.
- The reported objections therefore concern the functioning of electoral-roll administration, which directly affects the Election Commission's constitutional responsibility over electoral rolls.

Special Intensive Revision and Institutional Issues:

Electoral Roll Administration:

- The **Special Intensive Revision** is intended to verify and update electoral rolls by identifying eligible electors, correcting discrepancies and removing names that do not meet legal eligibility requirements.
- The recent controversy has focused partly on the extent to which digital systems and centralised databases should interact with the statutory authority of **Electoral Registration Officers** at the constituency level.
- The Indian Express investigation reported concerns from the two Election Commissioners regarding possible centralisation of access to electoral-roll databases and changes in digital procedures.

Form 6 Controversy:

- **Form 6** is used by eligible citizens for inclusion of their names in the electoral roll.
- The Indian Express reported that a new declaration related to earlier SIR electoral rolls was incorporated into Form 6 and that Election Commissioners Sandhu and Joshi had objected to the change, describing it as unauthorised and requiring removal.
- The issue raises broader questions concerning the relationship between statutory electoral procedures, administrative instructions and the Commission's internal decision-making mechanisms.

Why the Removal Safeguard Matters:

Independence of the Election Commission:

- The high constitutional threshold for removing a Chief Election Commissioner is intended to protect the office from **arbitrary executive or political interference**.
- The protection is comparable to that available to Supreme Court Judges, thereby recognising the importance of institutional independence in conducting elections.
- At the same time, strong security of tenure must operate alongside **institutional accountability, transparency and collective decision-making**.

Independence versus Accountability:

- The constitutional framework creates a deliberate balance between protecting the Election Commission from political pressure and permitting removal in cases involving **proved misbehaviour or incapacity**.
- Allegations or political disagreement alone cannot substitute for the constitutionally prescribed inquiry and special-majority procedure.
- Internal disagreement among Commissioners can therefore become relevant to institutional accountability, but its legal significance depends on the specific facts, evidence and statutory framework.

Key UPSC Issues:

GS Paper II Relevance:

- **Constitutional Bodies:** The Election Commission derives its core constitutional mandate from Article 324.
- **Electoral Reforms:** The controversy highlights questions concerning appointment, tenure, removal, internal decision-making and accountability of Election Commissioners.
- **Checks and Balances:** Removal provisions demonstrate how constitutional institutions are protected while remaining subject to parliamentary accountability.
- **Free and Fair Elections:** Accurate electoral rolls, transparent revision procedures and institutional independence are essential components of electoral integrity.
- **Digital Governance:** Centralised electoral databases create opportunities for administrative efficiency but also raise questions concerning access control, auditability, cybersecurity and statutory responsibility.

Conclusion:

- The constitutional protection given to the **Chief Election Commissioner** reflects the importance of an independent election-management institution in a constitutional democracy.
- The current controversy involves two distinct questions: whether the reported administrative decisions complied with the applicable legal framework and whether any alleged conduct satisfies the constitutional standard of **proved misbehaviour or incapacity**.
- The removal mechanism therefore cannot be reduced to a political motion alone; it requires adherence to the constitutionally prescribed process, evidentiary examination and special-majority approval in both Houses of Parliament.
- The wider institutional issue is to maintain a balance between **electoral independence, collective decision-making, administrative transparency and constitutional accountability**.

Value Addition for UPSC:

Constitutional and Comparative Points:

- **Article 324:** Establishes the Election Commission and vests it with superintendence, direction and control over specified elections.
- **Article 324(5):** Provides Supreme Court Judge-equivalent removal protection to the Chief Election Commissioner.
- **Article 124(4):** Provides the constitutional standard of **proved misbehaviour or incapacity** for removal of a Supreme Court Judge.
- **Article 325:** Provides for one general electoral roll and prohibits exclusion from a special electoral roll on grounds only of religion, race, caste or sex.
- **Article 326:** Provides for elections to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies on the basis of **adult suffrage**, subject to constitutional and statutory qualifications.

- **Mains-ready analytical line:** *The independence of an electoral institution is meaningful only when security of tenure is accompanied by transparent procedures, collective institutional functioning and constitutionally enforceable accountability.*

France Renews Push for UN Security Council Reform and Responsible Veto Use Amid Growing Demands for Collective Security

Recent Developments:

- During the **81st session of the United Nations General Assembly**, France renewed its call for strengthening the United Nations system, particularly through **regulation of the veto** and reform of the Security Council. France is holding the presidency of the Security Council during September 2026.
- France and Mexico have advocated since **2015** for voluntary restraint by the permanent members from using the veto in situations involving **mass atrocities**, including genocide, crimes against humanity and large-scale war crimes.
- By September 2026, **127 UN Member States** supported the French-Mexican initiative, including the United Kingdom, which became the second permanent member after France to support it.
- France has also called for broader **Security Council reform**, including expansion of both permanent and non-permanent membership to provide greater representation to Africa, the Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean.
- The proposal seeks to distinguish between the **existence of veto power** and its responsible exercise, rather than immediately abolishing the veto. France argues that veto power should be treated as a responsibility rather than a privilege.

United Nations: Institutional Structure and Security Mandate:

Establishment and Membership:

- The **United Nations** was established in **1945** through the United Nations Charter to maintain international peace and security, promote international cooperation and advance human rights and development.
- The United Nations currently has **193 Member States**, all of which are members of the General Assembly.
- Admission of a new state requires a decision of the General Assembly following a **recommendation of the Security Council**.
- The principal organs of the United Nations are the **General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council, Trusteeship Council, International Court of Justice and Secretariat**.

Security Council:

- The **Security Council** has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security under the United Nations Charter.
- It consists of **15 members**, comprising **5 permanent members and 10 non-permanent members**.
- The permanent members are **China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States**.
- Each permanent member possesses the **veto**, meaning a negative vote by any permanent member prevents the adoption of a substantive Council decision even when the required affirmative votes are otherwise secured.
- The 10 non-permanent members are elected by the General Assembly for **2-year terms**, with seats distributed according to equitable geographical representation.

Election of Non-Permanent Members:

- The General Assembly elects **5 non-permanent members each year** for 2-year terms, replacing half of the elected membership annually.
- The 10 seats are distributed regionally as follows:
 - **5 seats** for African and Asian States,
 - **1 seat** for Eastern European States,
 - **2 seats** for Latin American and Caribbean States,
 - **2 seats** for Western European and Other States.
- A candidate state requires a **two-thirds majority of members present and voting** in the General Assembly.
- Elections are conducted through a **secret ballot** involving the 193 Member States.
- India last served as a non-permanent member of the Security Council during **2021–22**.

Why Security Council Reform Is Required:

Changed Global Order:

- The Security Council reflects the geopolitical structure that existed at the time of the United Nations' creation in **1945**, while the distribution of economic, demographic and political influence has changed substantially.
- Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and parts of the Asia-Pacific region remain inadequately represented in the permanent membership structure.
- Reform is therefore linked to the principle that the composition of the principal body responsible for international peace and security should reflect **contemporary global realities**.

Democratic Legitimacy and Representation:

- The Security Council combines **permanent membership and veto power** with an elected membership that has limited influence over substantive decisions.
- This creates an institutional asymmetry between the permanent and non-permanent members.
- Greater regional representation could strengthen the Council's **representativeness, legitimacy and perceived fairness**.

Effectiveness of Collective Security:

- The veto can prevent collective action even when a substantial majority of Security Council members supports a proposed resolution.
- The problem becomes particularly significant during major conflicts and humanitarian crises when rapid collective action may be required.
- France's position focuses on preventing veto use from paralysing the Council in situations involving **mass atrocities**.

Emerging Global Challenges:

- The post-1945 institutional structure faces challenges arising from **climate change, pandemics, cyber threats, artificial intelligence, terrorism, technological disruption and transnational conflicts**.
- Many of these challenges require collective responses involving states beyond the traditional great-power structure.
- Security Council reform is therefore connected with the broader debate over **multilateralism and global governance reform**.

Veto Power: Constitutional Basis and Reform Debate:

Nature of the Veto:

- The veto originates from **Article 27 of the UN Charter**, under which substantive Security Council decisions require the affirmative votes of 9 members, including the concurring votes of the permanent members.
- In practice, a negative vote by any permanent member blocks the adoption of a substantive resolution.
- The veto was incorporated into the post-World War II institutional structure to secure the participation of the major powers in the collective security system.

French-Mexican Initiative:

- France and Mexico proposed in **2015** that the permanent members should voluntarily refrain from using the veto when a mass atrocity has been determined to have occurred.
- The initiative does **not require immediate amendment of the UN Charter** because it is based on voluntary political restraint by the permanent members.
- France has stated that it has not exercised its veto since **1989**, while continuing to argue that the veto should be exercised responsibly.
- The initiative therefore represents a **working-method reform** rather than formal abolition of the veto.

Limitations to Security Council Reform:

Permanent Member Consent:

- Formal amendment of the UN Charter faces a major structural obstacle because amendments require ratification by **two-thirds of UN Member States, including all permanent members of the Security Council** under Article 108.
- Consequently, the states whose institutional privileges could be affected by reform retain a decisive role in approving the amendment.
- This creates a fundamental tension between the demand for institutional reform and the existing distribution of constitutional power.

Regional Rivalries:

- Expansion raises difficult questions about which states should receive permanent or longer-term representation within each region.
- Regional rivalries can therefore complicate consensus even among states that broadly support Security Council expansion.
- The question of representation becomes particularly complex when multiple states claim regional leadership or strategic importance.

Veto for New Permanent Members:

- There is no universal agreement on whether new permanent members should receive the same veto power as the existing permanent members.
- The **African Union position**, expressed through the Ezulwini Consensus and subsequent reform proposals, supports permanent African representation with veto rights if the veto continues to exist.
- Different positions on the veto therefore create a second layer of disagreement beyond the question of membership expansion.

Charter Amendment Complexity:

- Article 108 requires approval by a **two-thirds majority in the General Assembly** followed by ratification by two-thirds of UN Member States, including all permanent members.
- Article 109 provides another Charter-review mechanism, but amendments emerging from such a process also require ratification by two-thirds of members, including all permanent members.
- The procedural design makes comprehensive structural reform legally and politically demanding.

India and UN Security Council Reform:

India's Case for Permanent Membership:

- India has consistently identified **comprehensive Security Council reform** as a major foreign-policy priority.
- India seeks permanent membership in an expanded Security Council and has worked through groups such as the **G4 and L.69** to build support for reform.
- India's argument is based on its **population, economic weight, contribution to UN peacekeeping, developing-country representation and long-standing participation in multilateral institutions**.
- India has served multiple terms as an elected member but has not held permanent membership since the Council's creation.

Importance for Global South:

- India's permanent representation would strengthen the presence of **developing countries and emerging economies** in the Council's decision-making structure.
- A reformed Council could provide greater institutional representation to regions whose political and economic significance has increased substantially since 1945.
- India's reform position is therefore connected with the wider demand for **representative and inclusive multilateralism**.

Way Forward:

Incremental Institutional Reform:

- **Veto restraint** in cases involving mass atrocities can be pursued through voluntary political commitments without immediately amending the UN Charter.
- Greater transparency in Council deliberations, improved coordination with the General Assembly and stronger accountability for veto use can improve institutional legitimacy.
- France's proposal demonstrates how **working-method reform** can operate alongside the longer-term effort to amend the Council's composition.

Comprehensive Security Council Reform:

- A durable reform package should address **membership categories, regional representation, veto arrangements, working methods, Council size and the relationship between the Security Council and General Assembly**.
- Africa's reform position demonstrates that regional representation and the future of the veto cannot be considered independently.
- Reform should seek to make the Council simultaneously **representative, legitimate, effective and capable of timely collective action**.

Conclusion:

- The 2026 French initiative highlights a central contradiction in global governance: the international community increasingly demands **collective action**, while the Security Council retains a decision-making structure designed in the geopolitical conditions of 1945.
- The French-Mexican initiative seeks to address one dimension of this problem through **voluntary restraint on veto use during mass atrocities**, while France's broader reform proposal seeks expansion of both permanent and non-permanent membership.
- Comprehensive reform remains difficult because any formal Charter amendment ultimately requires the participation of the existing permanent members.
- For India, the reform debate is closely connected with **permanent membership, representation of the Global South and strengthening rules-based multilateralism**.

Value Addition for UPSC:

Key Constitutional and Institutional Provisions:

- **Article 23:** Provides the constitutional basis for the composition of the Security Council, including permanent and elected members.
- **Article 27:** Establishes the voting framework under which substantive Security Council decisions require the required affirmative votes without a negative vote from a permanent member.
- **Article 108:** Prescribes the principal procedure for amending the UN Charter and requires ratification by two-thirds of Member States, including all permanent members.
- **Article 109:** Provides for a Charter-review conference and establishes an alternative framework for considering amendments.
- **French-Mexican Initiative:** Seeks voluntary restraint in the use of veto during situations involving mass atrocities rather than immediate abolition of the veto.
- **African Position:** The African Union's reform model seeks **2 permanent African seats with veto rights if the veto continues**, along with 5 non-permanent seats.
- **UPSC Mains Analytical Line:** *UNSC reform requires reconciling two competing principles: the democratic demand for representative multilateralism and the institutional privileges historically granted to major powers to secure their participation in collective security.*

SWIFT Alternatives and the Global Shift Towards Interoperable Cross-Border Payment Systems

Recent Developments:

- **Geopolitical tensions, financial sanctions and technological advances** have intensified efforts to diversify the global cross-border payments architecture and reduce excessive dependence on a single financial messaging network.
- The **BRICS** framework is examining greater use of **local currencies, domestic payment systems and interoperable payment platforms** for cross-border transactions. The 2025 BRICS Leaders' Declaration called for continued discussions on the BRICS Cross-Border Payments Initiative and recognized progress by the BRICS Payment Task Force.
- India is pursuing both **bilateral payment-system linkages** and multilateral arrangements such as **Project Nexus**, while continuing to expand the international use of the Unified Payments Interface.

- **Project Nexus** has moved from experimentation towards live implementation through a new legal entity established by the participating central banks in 2025.
- **Project mBridge** reached the minimum viable product stage in 2024 and subsequently became a concluded BIS Innovation Hub project, with participating central banks continuing the initiative independently.
- At the same time, **SWIFT itself is developing tokenised and blockchain-based infrastructure**, indicating that the future of cross-border payments may involve transformation and interoperability rather than the disappearance of SWIFT.

Understanding SWIFT and Its Role in Global Finance:

What is SWIFT?

- **Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT)** is a global cooperative messaging network that enables financial institutions to exchange **standardised and secure financial messages** relating to cross-border transactions.
- SWIFT does **not itself transfer, clear or settle money**; instead, it transmits payment instructions between participating institutions, while the actual movement of funds occurs through banks and other financial infrastructures.
- Established in **1973** and headquartered in Belgium, SWIFT is owned and governed by its member financial institutions and operates under Belgian and European Union legal frameworks.

Why is SWIFT Systemically Important?

- SWIFT connects **more than 11,500 institutions across more than 200 countries and territories**, making it a central component of the international financial messaging architecture.
- Its importance arises from **standardisation, network effects, security, interoperability and global reach**, rather than from directly holding or transferring customers' funds.
- SWIFT supports multiple major currencies and financial transactions, including payments, securities and treasury-related messages, thereby facilitating international trade and financial flows.

SWIFT and Financial Sanctions:

- Because international banks depend heavily on SWIFT for standardised financial communication, **restricting sanctioned institutions from the network can significantly impede their ability to conduct international transactions**.
- The experience of **Iran and Russia** demonstrated that exclusion from major international financial infrastructure can increase transaction costs, complicate trade settlements and encourage affected countries to develop alternative channels.
- However, **SWIFT exclusion is not equivalent to freezing all international financial activity**, because transactions can potentially use alternative messaging arrangements, correspondent banking channels and domestic payment infrastructures.

Major Alternatives and Complementary Payment Architectures:

National and Regional Interbank Systems:

- **India's Unified Payments Interface: UPI** is an interoperable instant-payment infrastructure that enables real-time retail payments and has increasingly been connected with foreign payment systems.
 - The **IMF identified UPI as the world's largest retail fast-payment system by transaction volume**, highlighting the significance of interoperability in expanding digital payments.

- India has pursued bilateral linkages with payment systems in countries including **Singapore, the United Arab Emirates, Nepal, Bhutan and France**, supporting faster cross-border retail payments and remittances.
- UPI's internationalisation demonstrates how a domestic digital public infrastructure can evolve into a component of **cross-border payment connectivity**, although it is not a direct substitute for SWIFT's global financial-messaging function.
- **China's Cross-Border Interbank Payment System:** CIPS facilitates cross-border **renminbi payments and settlement** and provides an important component of China's international financial infrastructure.
 - CIPS can reduce dependence on offshore clearing arrangements for renminbi transactions and supports China's objective of increasing the international use of its currency.
- **Russia's System for Transfer of Financial Messages:** SPFS was developed by the **Bank of Russia** as an alternative financial messaging channel and gained importance after Russian financial institutions faced restrictions on access to Western financial infrastructure.
 - Its development illustrates how sanctions can incentivise countries to build **domestic financial messaging resilience**.
- **Iran's SEPAM:** SEPAM is Iran's domestic financial messaging system, and its linkage with Russia's SPFS has provided an additional channel for financial communication between participating institutions.

Multilateral and Technology-Based Alternatives:

Project mBridge:

- **Project mBridge** was developed by the BIS Innovation Hub in cooperation with the central banks of China, Hong Kong, Thailand and the United Arab Emirates, with Saudi Arabia joining as a full participant in 2024.
- It explored a **multi-central bank digital currency platform** using distributed ledger technology to enable faster cross-border wholesale payments and settlement.
- The project reached the **minimum viable product stage in 2024**, demonstrating the potential of wholesale CBDCs and distributed-ledger infrastructure for cross-border transactions.
- The BIS subsequently exited the project after its development phase, while emphasizing that mBridge was not created as a BRICS sanctions-evasion mechanism and was not yet mature enough for operational deployment at the time of its exit.

Project Nexus:

- **Project Nexus** seeks to connect multiple domestic instant payment systems through a **standardised multilateral framework**, allowing participating countries to connect once to a common network rather than establishing separate bilateral connections with every country.
- The founding implementation participants are **India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand**, with India's UPI forming an important component of the network.
- In 2025, the participating central banks established **Nexus Global Payments** to move the project towards live implementation, with the BIS handing over the project to the new entity.
- Nexus addresses key weaknesses in cross-border payments, particularly **high costs, slow settlement, limited access and fragmented technical standards**, while supporting interoperability among existing domestic systems.

BRICS Cross-Border Payments Initiative:

- BRICS is exploring **interoperability among domestic payment systems, greater use of local currencies and technological solutions for cross-border settlements** rather than relying exclusively on a single common currency.

- The emerging approach is better understood as a **network of interoperable national systems** than as an immediate replacement for SWIFT.
- Greater use of local currencies could reduce foreign-exchange conversion requirements and dollar dependence in some bilateral transactions, but it also requires adequate liquidity, convertibility, regulatory coordination and trust among participating economies.

Stablecoins and Tokenised Payments:

- **Stablecoins** are digital tokens designed to maintain relatively stable values by being linked to assets such as fiat currencies.
- Their blockchain-based settlement can operate **24/7**, potentially reducing settlement time and facilitating cross-border transactions without relying entirely on traditional correspondent-banking infrastructure.
- However, wider institutional use faces challenges involving **regulation, reserve transparency, financial stability, money laundering risks, consumer protection and monetary sovereignty**.
- Consequently, stablecoins should be viewed as an emerging payment rail rather than an established replacement for conventional international financial infrastructure.

Why are Countries Seeking Alternatives?

Strategic and Economic Drivers:

- **Sanctions vulnerability:** Dependence on internationally centralised financial infrastructure can create strategic vulnerabilities for countries facing sanctions.
- **Dollar dependence:** Greater use of local currencies can potentially reduce dependence on the US dollar for selected bilateral transactions.
- **Payment efficiency:** New digital systems seek to **reduce transaction costs, settlement time and intermediary dependence**.
- **Financial sovereignty:** Domestic and regional infrastructures provide countries with greater control over critical payment infrastructure.
- **Technological transformation:** CBDCs, distributed-ledger technology and interoperable instant-payment systems are creating new possibilities for cross-border settlement.

Challenges in Building a Post-SWIFT Payment Architecture:

Fragmentation and Interoperability:

- Multiple national systems can create **technical, regulatory and operational fragmentation** unless common standards are established.
- Project Nexus illustrates the importance of interoperability because bilateral connections become increasingly difficult to scale as the number of participating countries rises.

Trust, Regulation and Financial Stability:

- Cross-border payment networks require common approaches to **anti-money-laundering measures, know-your-customer requirements, data protection, cybersecurity and sanctions compliance**.
- Differences in national regulations can prevent otherwise technically compatible systems from achieving seamless connectivity.

Network Effects of SWIFT:

- SWIFT possesses a substantial **network-effect advantage**, because thousands of institutions already use common standards and communication protocols.
- Therefore, creating another technically functional system does not automatically create an equally trusted and globally accepted network.

Currency and Liquidity Constraints:

- Local-currency settlement requires adequate **liquidity, convertibility, foreign-exchange markets and trusted settlement mechanisms**.
- Countries may therefore continue using major international currencies even while developing alternative payment infrastructure.

India's Strategic Significance:

India as a Digital Payments Powerhouse:

- India has developed **UPI as a large-scale interoperable digital public infrastructure**, providing a potential foundation for international payment connectivity.
- Its participation in **Project Nexus** places India within a multilateral effort to connect domestic instant-payment systems rather than merely creating isolated bilateral corridors.
- India can therefore pursue a dual strategy: strengthening **domestic payment sovereignty** while integrating with global and regional payment networks.

Broader Geoeconomic Implications:

- India's approach demonstrates that reducing dependence on a dominant payment infrastructure does not necessarily require abandoning existing global systems.
- **Interoperability, diversification and multiple payment corridors** can provide resilience while preserving access to global financial markets.
- The emerging architecture is therefore likely to be **multi-layered**, combining SWIFT messaging, domestic instant-payment systems, correspondent banking, CBDCs, tokenised assets and regional payment linkages.

Way Forward:

- Promote **interoperable international payment standards** and common technical protocols.
- Strengthen **cybersecurity, data protection, anti-money-laundering and sanctions-compliance frameworks** across interconnected payment systems.
- Expand multilateral platforms such as **Project Nexus** while retaining strong central-bank oversight.
- Encourage responsible experimentation with **wholesale CBDCs and tokenised settlement assets** where they improve efficiency without undermining financial stability.
- Pursue greater **local-currency settlement** where economically viable while maintaining adequate foreign-exchange liquidity.
- Treat the objective as **diversification and resilience of global payments**, rather than assuming that one new platform will completely replace SWIFT.

Conclusion:

The evolution of cross-border payments reflects a broader transition from a highly centralised financial messaging architecture towards a **more diversified, interoperable and technologically plural system**. SWIFT remains deeply embedded in global finance, while UPI, CIPS, SPFS, Project Nexus, mBridge, CBDC platforms and other initiatives are expanding alternative channels for specific payment and settlement functions. The emerging challenge is not simply to create another SWIFT, but to establish **secure, interoperable, cost-efficient and resilient payment connectivity** without compromising financial stability and regulatory oversight.

Value Addition for UPSC:

Key Concepts:

- **SWIFT:** Global financial messaging network; it does not itself settle funds.
- **UPI:** India's interoperable instant-payment infrastructure with growing international linkages.
- **CIPS:** China's cross-border renminbi payment and settlement infrastructure.
- **SPFS:** Russia's alternative financial messaging system.
- **mBridge:** Multi-CBDC platform using distributed-ledger technology for wholesale cross-border payments.
- **Project Nexus:** Multilateral framework for connecting domestic instant-payment systems.
- **BRICS Cross-Border Payments Initiative:** Focuses on payment-system interoperability, local currencies and financial innovation.
- **Stablecoins:** Blockchain-based digital tokens designed to maintain stable value and potentially facilitate continuous cross-border settlement.

UPSC GS Linkages:

- **GS-II:** International institutions, India's role in global governance, BRICS and multilateral cooperation.
- **GS-III:** Digital economy, financial infrastructure, fintech, cybersecurity, monetary sovereignty and economic sanctions.
- **International Relations:** De-dollarisation, strategic autonomy, geoeconomics and Global South cooperation.
- **Essay:** The evolution of globalisation from physical trade connectivity towards **digital financial interoperability and resilient economic infrastructure**.

Best Institute for OAS/IAS

Allahabad High Court Clarifies That Religious Conversion Does Not Automatically Extinguish Scheduled Tribe Status

Recent Developments:

- The **Allahabad High Court in September 2026** held that conversion to another religion does not, by itself, automatically terminate a person's **Scheduled Tribe (ST) status**. The continuation of ST status is a **question of fact**, requiring examination of whether the person continues to possess the essential attributes of tribal identity.
- The Court relied extensively on the **Supreme Court's March 2026 judgment in Chinthada Anand v. State of Andhra Pradesh**, which distinguished the statutory framework governing Scheduled Castes from that governing Scheduled Tribes.

- The Supreme Court held that the **Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 does not impose a religion-based exclusion**, unlike Clause 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950. Therefore, conversion alone cannot determine whether a person remains a member of a Scheduled Tribe.
- The Allahabad High Court applied this principle in a dispute concerning **land transfers involving a claimant from the Bhuiya Scheduled Tribe community** and examined whether her subsequent conduct demonstrated a continuing connection with tribal identity and community life.
- The ruling is significant because it clarifies that **tribal status is linked to continuing substantive tribal identity**, while religious conversion is only one circumstance that may be relevant to determining whether that identity has been severed.

Constitutional Framework of Scheduled Tribes:

Meaning of Scheduled Tribes:

- **Article 366(25)** defines Scheduled Tribes as tribes or tribal communities, or parts or groups within such tribes or tribal communities, which are deemed to be Scheduled Tribes for the purposes of the Constitution under **Article 342**.
- The constitutional definition does not prescribe a religion-based condition for recognition as a Scheduled Tribe.
- The **Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950** identifies the tribal communities recognised as Scheduled Tribes in relation to specific States and Union Territories.

Article 342 and Identification of STs:

- Under **Article 342(1)**, the President may, after consultation with the Governor of the concerned State where applicable, specify tribes or tribal communities as Scheduled Tribes through public notification.
- Under **Article 342(2)**, **Parliament** can include or exclude communities from the notified list through legislation, while the Presidential notification cannot otherwise be varied by a subsequent notification.
- ST recognition is therefore **State or Union Territory-specific**, meaning recognition in one jurisdiction does not automatically establish ST status throughout India.

Basis of Tribal Identification:

- The **Lokur Committee** identified five broad criteria historically used for identifying Scheduled Tribes: **primitive traits, distinctive culture, geographical isolation, shyness of contact with the larger community and socio-economic backwardness**.
- These criteria are not themselves an independent constitutional test for deciding every individual claim; the legally relevant question remains whether the person belongs to a tribe notified under the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 and continues to satisfy the substantive requirements of tribal membership.
- The Supreme Court's 2026 ruling places particular emphasis on **tribal customs, social organisation, community life and community recognition** when conversion or prolonged assimilation creates doubt about continuing tribal identity.

Supreme Court Ruling in Chinthada Anand Case, 2026:

Background and Central Legal Issue:

- In **Chinthada Anand v. State of Andhra Pradesh**, the Supreme Court considered the consequences of religious conversion for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe status.
- The case involved a person originally belonging to the **Madiga Scheduled Caste community** who had subsequently converted to Christianity.

- The Court examined whether a person who professes Christianity could continue to claim Scheduled Caste status under the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950.

Supreme Court's Position on SC Status:

- The Court held that **Clause 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950** creates an express religious restriction.
- A person who professes a religion other than **Hinduism, Sikhism or Buddhism** cannot be deemed to be a member of a Scheduled Caste under the Order.
- Consequently, conversion to a religion outside these three specified religions results in the **loss of Scheduled Caste status**, irrespective of the caste into which the person was originally born.
- The Court also held that a person cannot simultaneously profess and practise a religion outside the specified category and claim Scheduled Caste membership for statutory benefits.
- Once SC status is lost under Clause 3, benefits and protections legally dependent upon SC membership, including those under the **Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989**, cannot be claimed merely on the basis of the person's original caste identity.

Supreme Court's Position on ST Status:

- The Court expressly distinguished the **Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950** from the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950.
- The ST Order **contains no equivalent religion-based exclusion**.
- Therefore, conversion to Christianity, Islam or another religion does not automatically extinguish ST status.
- However, a person must continue to **belong to the tribe in substance**, and the claimant must demonstrate continuing tribal identity where it is disputed.

Test for Continuing Tribal Identity:

Conversion Is Not the Sole Determinant:

- The Supreme Court clarified that ST status cannot be rejected merely because a person has changed religion.
- The decisive issue is whether the claimant continues to possess and is recognised for the **essential attributes of tribal identity**.
- The relevant considerations include **customary practices, social organisation, community life and acceptance by the concerned tribal community**.

Severance from Tribal Life:

- If conversion or subsequent conduct results in **complete severance from the tribal way of life**, the foundational basis of ST status may be considered to have eroded.
- Long-term abandonment of tribal customs, rituals, customary laws and community relationships can therefore become relevant evidence.
- The Supreme Court relied on the principle that a person must continue to be a member of the tribe in substance rather than merely rely upon historical or documentary identity.

Community Recognition:

- **Community acceptance** is an important element because tribal identity is not determined solely by individual self-identification.
- Evidence showing continued participation in tribal customs, social organisation and community life can support a claim of continuing ST identity.

- Conversely, prolonged assimilation into another social and religious community, accompanied by complete abandonment of tribal practices and loss of community recognition, can weaken or defeat such a claim.
- The determination is therefore **fact-specific**, and the competent authority must examine the evidence rather than apply an automatic rule based solely on conversion.

Allahabad High Court Ruling and Tribal Land Rights:

Background of the Dispute:

- The Allahabad High Court considered petitions filed by a claimant who asserted membership of the **Bhuiya Scheduled Tribe community**.
- The dispute concerned land transfers that were challenged under statutory restrictions protecting Scheduled Tribe land from transfer to persons outside the ST category.
- The State questioned the claimant's continuing ST identity on the basis of evidence concerning her marriage, religious practices, family life, names of her children and official records indicating prolonged assimilation into another community.

Restrictions on ST Land Transfer:

- **Section 157-B of the Uttar Pradesh Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforms Act, 1950** restricts a Scheduled Tribe member from transferring land by sale, gift, mortgage, lease or otherwise to a person who is not a member of a Scheduled Tribe.
- The **Uttar Pradesh Revenue Code, 2006** also contains restrictions protecting Scheduled Tribe land from prohibited transfers.
- These provisions seek to prevent **tribal land alienation and dispossession**, which have historically contributed to economic vulnerability among tribal communities.
- The Allahabad High Court's reasoning therefore connects the question of religious conversion and continuing ST identity with the operation of statutory land-protection measures.

Evidentiary Value of ST Certificates:

- A caste or tribal certificate issued by an executive authority is important documentary evidence but is **not necessarily conclusive in every disputed case**.
- The Supreme Court emphasised that claims to Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe status must be supported by clear and reliable evidence where status is disputed.
- In the Allahabad High Court proceedings, the existence of an earlier ST certificate did not prevent examination of subsequent conduct relevant to the claimant's continuing tribal identity.
- Therefore, **documentary certification and substantive identity are related but distinct questions** when the validity of status itself is challenged.

Scheduled Tribes and Constitutional Safeguards:

Fifth and Sixth Schedules:

- The Constitution provides special administrative and governance mechanisms for tribal areas through the **Fifth Schedule and Sixth Schedule**.
- The Fifth Schedule primarily deals with the administration and control of **Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes** in specified States.
- The Sixth Schedule provides autonomous institutional arrangements for certain tribal areas in **Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram**.

- These arrangements recognise the importance of protecting tribal land, customary institutions, community resources and local self-governance.

Political and Institutional Safeguards:

- The Constitution provides **reservation of seats in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies** for Scheduled Tribes in accordance with constitutional provisions.
- **Article 338A** establishes the **National Commission for Scheduled Tribes**, which monitors constitutional and legal safeguards for STs and investigates matters relating to their protection and development.
- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs functions as the nodal Ministry for overall policy, planning and coordination of programmes relating to Scheduled Tribes.

Forest Rights and Tribal Livelihoods:

- The **Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006** recognises specified individual and community forest rights and seeks to address historical injustice faced by forest-dwelling communities.
- Forest rights are particularly important because tribal livelihoods are closely associated with **land, forests, minor forest produce, community resources and customary practices**.

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups:

Identification and Characteristics:

- India officially recognises **75 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)**.
- PVTGs are characterised by extreme socio-economic vulnerability and historically low levels of technological and economic development, along with geographical and social isolation in many cases.
- The Government has adopted targeted interventions because generic welfare measures may not adequately address the specific vulnerabilities of these communities.

PM-JANMAN:

- The **Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan** was launched during 2023-24 for the socio-economic development of the 75 PVTG communities.
- Its interventions cover **housing, drinking water, education, health and nutrition, road and telecommunications connectivity, electrification and sustainable livelihood opportunities**.

Judicial Pronouncements on Scheduled Caste Status:

C.M. Arumugam v. S. Rajgopal, 1976:

- The Supreme Court examined the effect of conversion and reconversion on caste identity and emphasised the importance of **social recognition and evidence concerning continuing caste status**.

Soosai v. Union of India, 1985:

- The Supreme Court considered the constitutional validity of the religion-based restriction under the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950.
- The judgment remains important in understanding the distinction between **caste-based social disadvantage and the constitutional definition of Scheduled Caste status**.

K.P. Manu v. Chairman, Scrutiny Committee, 2015:

- The Supreme Court recognised that **reconversion can potentially restore SC status**, but such restoration cannot be presumed merely from a declaration of reconversion.
- Evidence concerning original caste identity, genuine reconversion and acceptance by the original caste community is relevant.

Commissions and the Debate on Religion and SC Status:***Kaka Kalelkar Commission and Mandal Commission:***

- The **Kaka Kalelkar Commission** and the **Mandal Commission** examined social and educational backwardness and the persistence of caste-based disadvantage in Indian society.
- Their work contributed significantly to the development of India's broader affirmative-action framework, particularly in relation to Other Backward Classes.

Justice Ranganath Misra Commission:

- The **National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities**, headed by Justice Ranganath Misra, recommended making Scheduled Caste status **religion-neutral** rather than restricting it to specified religions.
- The recommendation remains part of the wider policy debate surrounding the relationship between caste disadvantage, religious conversion and affirmative action.

Justice K.G. Balakrishnan Commission:

- In **2022**, the Union Government constituted a three-member commission headed by former Chief Justice of India **K.G. Balakrishnan** to examine whether Scheduled Caste status can be extended to persons who historically belonged to Scheduled Castes but subsequently converted to religions other than Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism.
- The commission's mandate highlights the continuing policy debate over whether historical caste-based disadvantage necessarily disappears after religious conversion.

SC and ST Status: Key Distinction:***Constitutional and Legal Difference:***

- **Scheduled Caste status:** Clause 3 of the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 expressly restricts recognition to persons professing **Hinduism, Sikhism or Buddhism**.
- **Scheduled Tribe status:** The Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950 contains **no equivalent religion-based restriction**.
- **Effect of conversion:** Conversion outside the specified religions results in loss of SC status, whereas conversion alone does not automatically terminate ST status.
- **Core test for STs:** The continuing existence of **tribal identity, customary practices, social organisation, community life and community recognition** becomes decisive where status is disputed.
- **Nature of determination:** Both SC and ST status require membership of a community officially recognised under the relevant Presidential Order, but the legal consequences of religious conversion are materially different.

Significance for Governance and Social Justice:

Protection of Tribal Identity:

- The ruling recognises that tribal identity can have **social, cultural, customary and community dimensions** that are not reducible to religion.
- This approach is particularly relevant in tribal societies where customary institutions and community relationships may coexist with diverse religious practices.

Prevention of Misuse:

- The fact-specific approach also seeks to prevent the indiscriminate use of ST status where a claimant has completely severed ties with the tribe and no longer possesses or is recognised for its essential characteristics.
- At the same time, automatic denial solely because of religious conversion could ignore the constitutional distinction between the SC and ST frameworks.

Balancing Individual Rights and Community Protection:

- The issue requires balancing **freedom of religion, equality, affirmative action, tribal autonomy, community identity and protection of tribal land and resources.**
- A fact-based determination allows authorities to assess the actual relationship between the individual and the tribal community rather than treating religious identity as the sole determinant.

Value Addition for UPSC:

Constitutional Articles:

- **Article 366(25):** Defines Scheduled Tribes for constitutional purposes.
- **Article 338A:** Provides for the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes.
- **Article 342:** Provides the constitutional procedure for specification of Scheduled Tribes.
- **Article 341:** Provides the corresponding constitutional framework for Scheduled Castes.
- **Fifth Schedule:** Administration and control of Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes.
- **Sixth Schedule:** Autonomous administration of specified tribal areas in the North-Eastern States.

Important Laws and Instruments:

- **Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950:** Specifies recognised Scheduled Tribes in relation to States and Union Territories.
- **Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950:** Governs recognition of Scheduled Castes and contains the religion-based restriction under Clause 3.
- **Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006:** Recognises specified forest rights.
- **Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989:** Provides legal protection against specified atrocities against SCs and STs.
- **Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996:** Extends Panchayati Raj provisions to Scheduled Areas with safeguards for tribal self-governance.

UPSC GS Linkages:

- **GS-II:** Fundamental rights, affirmative action, constitutional bodies, vulnerable sections, tribal governance and judicial interpretation.
- **GS-I:** Tribal communities, social identity, cultural diversity and processes of social assimilation.
- **GS-III:** Tribal land alienation, forest rights, natural-resource governance and livelihood security.
- **Essay:** The constitutional challenge of balancing **individual liberty with community identity and affirmative action**.
- **Case-law theme:** The **Chinthada Anand judgment** demonstrates how constitutional status may depend not merely on ancestry or documentation but, in the case of disputed ST identity, on continuing substantive membership of the notified tribal community.



QUESTIONS

1. Consider the following statements:

Statement-I: To deepen domestic value addition, India has initiated a targeted policy and allocated funds for the integrated manufacturing of sintered Nd-Fe-B rare-earth permanent magnets.

Statement-II: Rare-earth permanent magnets are strategic midstream components that are indispensable for downstream applications in electric vehicles, wind turbines, and aerospace technologies.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- (A) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I.
- (B) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct but Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I.
- (C) Statement-I is correct but Statement-II is incorrect.
- (D) Statement-I is incorrect but Statement-II is correct.

2. Consider the following statements:

Statement-I: An Election Commissioner cannot be removed from office by the President except on the recommendation of the Chief Election Commissioner.

Statement-II: The Chief Election Commissioner exercises absolute veto authority over all administrative and electoral decisions of the multi-member Election Commission.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- (A) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement-II is the correct explanation for Statement-I.
- (B) Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct but Statement-II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I.
- (C) Statement-I is correct but Statement-II is incorrect.
- (D) Statement-I is incorrect but Statement-II is correct.

3. Consider the following regional allocations for non-permanent seats in the United Nations Security Council:

- (1) Western European and Other States - 2 seats
- (2) Eastern European States - 1 seat
- (3) Latin American and Caribbean States - 2 seats
- (4) African and Asian States - 5 seats
- (5) North American States - 1 seat

How many of the above regional allocations for non-permanent seats in the UN Security Council are correctly stated as per United Nations rules?

- (A) Only two
- (B) Only three
- (C) Only four
- (D) All five

4. Consider the following financial systems and cross-border payment initiatives:

- (1) SWIFT directly transfers, holds, and settles funds between participating commercial banks.
- (2) Project Nexus connects multiple domestic instant payment systems through a single standardized multilateral framework.
- (3) Project mBridge utilizes a multi-Central Bank Digital Currency (mCBDC) platform built on distributed ledger technology.
- (4) CIPS is China's financial messaging network designed specifically to settle cross-border transactions in Euros and US Dollars.
- (5) SPFS was developed by the Bank of Russia as an alternative interbank messaging channel.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (A) 3, 4 and 5 only
- (B) 2, 3 and 5 only
- (C) 1, 3 and 5 only
- (D) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

5. With reference to Article 342 of the Constitution of India regarding the specification of Scheduled Tribes, consider the following statements:

- (1) The initial specification of Scheduled Tribes in relation to any State or Union Territory is made through a public notification issued by the President of India.
- (2) The President can issue subsequent notifications to include or exclude specific tribal communities from the notified list without reference to Parliament.
- (3) The notification of a community as a Scheduled Tribe in one State automatically confers Scheduled Tribe status upon its members throughout the territory of India.
- (4) Parliament may by law include in or exclude from the list of Scheduled Tribes specified in any notification issued under Article 342(1).

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (A) 1 and 4 only
- (B) 2 and 3 only
- (C) 1, 3 and 4 only
- (D) 1, 2, 3 and 4

ANSWER KEY

1 – Answer (A), 2 – Answer (C), 3 – Answer (C), 4 – Answer (B), 5 – Answer (A)



OAS HUB

DAILY CHRONICLE CURRENT AFFAIRS

In today's fast-changing world, staying updated with current affairs is essential for both academic success and professional growth. Awareness of national and international events not only broadens general knowledge but also sharpens critical and analytical thinking skills. It enables individuals to form well-informed opinions, which are crucial for competitive examinations, group discussions, interviews, and impactful essay writing.

Being well-informed reflects adaptability, awareness, and intellectual curiosity—qualities that are highly valued in a competitive environment. A strong grasp of contemporary issues enhances confidence, widens perspective, and prepares individuals to tackle real-world challenges effectively, ultimately opening the door to better opportunities and long-term personal and career advancement.

-  oashub19
-  oashub19
-  OASHUB22
-  oashub19@gmail.com
-  M5/17, Acharya Vihar Bhubaneswar 751022