



VAJIRAM & RAVI
Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

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Are legal guarantees insufficient in abolishing untouchability?



CONTEXT: Recently, “**purification**” ritual by certain Hindu groups in **Uttarakhand**, at the location where **Mallikarjun Kharge**, who belongs to a **Dalit community**, addressed a public rally, led to a national conversation on the practice of untouchability.

How Do the Constitution and Law Address Untouchability?

- **Constitutional Mandate – Article 17:**
 - enforcing **any disability arising from untouchability** shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.
 - Supreme Court has recognised that Article 17 is enforceable against **non-State actors** as well.
- **Absence of Definition:** allowing the law to address its complex, evolving social manifestations. **Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955** – Further amended in **1976**
 - address familiar forms of untouchability
 - **Not confined to physically keeping somebody out:**
 - punishes a person who “insults or attempts to insult, on the ground of ‘untouchability’, a member of a Scheduled Caste”.
- **National Commission for Scheduled Castes: Article 338** – to monitor, investigate, and safeguard the rights of SCs, holding the powers of a civil court to summon authorities.
- **Surya Narayan Choudhary v. State of Rajasthan (1989):**
 - **The Rajasthan High Court** held that requiring **Dalits to undergo a purification ritual before temple entry** violated Articles 14, 15 and 17, as it imposed a discriminatory condition **not applicable to other devotees.** (Shrinathji temple)
- **Hitesh Verma v State of Uttarakhand (2020):**
 - **Supreme Court** – not every insult to an SC/ST person attracts the provision: the insult or intimidation **must be connected to the victim belonging to the protected community.**

• **Sukanya Shantha v. Union of India (2024):**

- **Supreme Court** struck down **caste-based discriminatory practices in prison manuals** and held that untouchability is **not limited to physical exclusion.**
- Also include discrimination based on a **person’s caste, touch or presence.**

Impact of Legal guarantees

- **Checkmated traditional practices of untouchability:**
 - preventing people from taking the water of wells in public places,
 - access to public places, access to public institutions.
- **Legal instrument to fight against practices of untouchability:**
 - kind of violence that was let loose on Dalit workers in the countryside —that has declined a lot.
- **Increased Social mobility:** Dalits’ social mobility has increased after the Constitution came into force.
 - **Reservation Hatao Andolan**
- **Dignity of labour:**
 - **NAMASTE Scheme:** Central Sector Scheme – zero fatalities in sewer and septic tank cleaning, and promote mechanised sanitation.



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Why legal guarantees insufficient?

- **“Notions in the mind”:** embedded strongly in our social norms
 - **Mahatma Gandhi**, that social conscience needs to change.
- **Shift to Covert Forms:**
 - **Spatial segregation** – ghettoization in housing societies
 - **Algorithm-driven endogamy** – caste-based matrimonial sites
- **Criminal Justice Bottleneck:** Despite the **stringent SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act**, the **conviction rate remains dismally low**.
 - **Witness Vulnerability:** Asymmetrical power dynamics
 - **Economic Dependence:** Landlessness and dependence on dominant castes for agricultural work can enable social boycotts and coercion.
- **Structural Bias:** people adjudicating these cases are not just judicial actors but also social actors.
 - leads to a failure in establishing the **“caste-based intent” of a crime**.
- **Paradox of Political Mobilization:** vote-bank politics – consolidation of caste identities.

Way Forward

- **Concept of the “common”:**
 - textbooks & teacher training + Urban planning
 - **Practices:** inter-dining
- **Incentivizing Social Integration:** robust institutional protection for couples against 'honour' crimes.
- **Establishing Exclusive Special Courts:** SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 – backlogs
 - robust witness protection programs
- **Shift from caste- based politics to Issue-based politics**
- **Economic Empowerment**

Realizing true social democracy demands replacing the entrenched psychology of 'purity and pollution' with the **bedrock principle of constitutional morality**.

Mains Practise Question

“Caste-based notions of purity and pollution have historically reinforced social hierarchies in India. Examine their persistence and influence on contemporary social practices.”

(15 Marks, 250 words)



CONTEXT: SC seeks tighter measures for women safety after Delhi rape case.

Women Safety: A critical Concern

Stats:

- **National Annual Report & Index on Women's Safety, 2025:**
 - By NCW – perception-based reality check on urban safety in India.
 - **Least Safe Cities:** Patna, Jaipur, Faridabad, Delhi, Kolkata, Srinagar, and Ranchi.
 - **Harassment Trends:**
 - 7% of women reported harassment in 2024, rising to 14% for women under 24.
 - Verbal harassment (58%) was most common – public transport (29%) as key hotspots.
 - **Low trust:** 75% of women lack trust in police and legal systems.
 - **Reporting Gaps:** Only 20% of victims reported incidents to authorities, with just 22% of complaints registered and 16% acted upon.
- **National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5):**
 - 30% of women in India between 15–49 years of age have experienced physical, sexual or domestic violence.

Reasons

- **Patriarchal Societal Norms:** women as subordinate
 - **Khap Panchayats** often enforce rigid gender norms.
- **"Broken Windows theory" of policing:**
 - minor administrative lapses such as unattended streetlights, dysfunctional CCTV cameras, dark stretches.
 - **"heightened perception of insecurity"** among citizens and deter them from using public spaces, fueling a **"self-reinforcing cycle" that provides greater scope for crime.**
 - **For ex- Nirbhaya Rape** in a public transportation and **Kolkata rape** in a public hospital highlights the lack of public safe spaces for women.
- **Increased objectification of sexuality in movies**

- **Underreporting of crime:** cultural stigma – **ex-** Brushing off the child molestation issues under the carpet.
- **Lack of Awareness and Education:** **As per NARI, 2025:** 53% were unaware of mandatory Prevention of Sexual Harassment policies.
- **Weak Law Enforcement:**
 - NCRB data shows the conviction rate for rape ranged from 27% to 28% in the 2018–2022 period.
 - **Rape cases since 2018:** average of 84 cases per day & nearly three cases per hour.

India's Commitment to Women's Safety



- **She-Box Portal:** register workplace sexual harassment complaints. It is accessible to all women, regardless of their work sector (organized/unorganized, public/private).
- **Nirbhaya Fund**



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India's Commitment to Women's Safety

Other Important Initiatives for Women Safety



- **Police pink booths:**
 - Launched by the **Delhi government**, these booths are dedicated to addressing the grievances of women passersby.
- **Online Movements and campaigns:**
 - **#CallItOut** because **#ItsNotOK** campaign, **#MeToo** movement, have been launched to facilitate knowledge transfer.

Way Ahead

- **Fast-Track Courts:** recommended by Justice Verma Committee.
- **Increase women's representation in the judiciary.**
- **Enhanced Police Training:** specialized police units like SHE Teams, a division of Telangana Police
- **Improved Survivor Support Systems**
 - **Rape Crisis Centres** like in countries like Australia, Canada, America, United Kingdom, etc, can be set up in India.

Recent Measure by SC:

- **Enhanced patrolling** around educational institutions.
- **Stringent verification of drivers** operating public transport & app-based - aggregators such as Ola, Uber and Rapido.
- **Real-time monitoring** of vehicle.
- Effective implementation of **anti-eve-teasing squads**.
- **Increased Compliance:** Chief Secretary and the Delhi Police Commissioner responsible for **filing periodic compliance reports**.

Mains Practise Question

"Despite multiple legal and institutional reforms, incidents of gender-based violence continue to rise in India. Analyse the underlying reasons for persistent gaps in women's safety."

(10 Marks, 150 words)



Newspaper : The Hindu, **Page No :** 8

Context: PM's *planned December visits to Canada and Brussels*, where formal FTAs are expected to be signed, highlight how **domestic structural reforms and a renewed FTA strategy** are reshaping *India's investment trajectory*.

DATA Point:

- **RBI** – Gross inward FDI *reached a record \$94.8 billion in FY26*.
- **UNCTAD's World Investment Report 2026** – India as *11th among the world's* top FDI destinations.

Why international project finance remains roughly a quarter below its 2021 peak?

- **Issues in Commercial dispute resolution:**
 - nearly *48 million pending cases* as of April, including about six million in High Courts.
 - **Solution:** Better staffing of commercial benches and mediation centres.

Issues

- **Issues with Labour Codes:** messy transitional phase of varied State timelines.
 - **Labour is on the Concurrent List**, implementation depends on State notifications.
 - **Gujarat** moved swiftly to notify rules under all four codes, *while other industrial States are finalising theirs*.
- **Tax Certainty:**
 - **Taxation Laws (Amendment) Act, 2021:** effectively ended the ghost of retrospective tax disputes.
 - **Vivad se Vishwas scheme** – reduce the broader direct-tax litigation backlog.
 - **Compliance, however, has required recalibration.**

- **Mandatory BIS certification under Quality Control Orders:** Intended to safeguard consumers.
 - **Gauba Committee** – QCOs had *grown from fewer than 70 to nearly 790*, covering raw materials and intermediate goods – **increased compliance costs**.
- **Govt. Response:** government *withdrew QCOs on critical intermediate goods*, including PVC, aluminium and zinc, providing relief to manufacturers.
- **Ineffective investor-protection mechanisms:**
 - **India – European Free Trade Association TEPA:**
 - EFTA countries: **Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland**.
 - EFTA aims to invest **\$100 billion in India over 15 years**.
 - **Problem:** lacks an independent bilateral investment dispute mechanism.
- **Global best Practices:**
 - **Singapore** – non-discrimination and investor-protection frameworks
- **Potential of coordinated policy:**
 - India is now the *world's second-largest mobile-phone manufacturer by volume* and meets 99.2% of domestic demand through local production.



GST refund norms eased



SYLLABUS: Prelims: Economy

Newspaper : The Hindu; Page No : 1

About the News

Simplification of GST Procedures:

- **99% of GST-related issues** have reportedly been addressed.
- The measures are expected to **come into effect from April 1, 2027**.

Removal of Arrest Powers of GST Officers: To reduce the scope for coercive enforcement and improve the ease of doing business.

Increase in Prosecution Threshold: from ₹1 crore to ₹5 crore in turnover.

Reduction in General Penalty: reduced from **₹25,000 to ₹10,000**.

- lowers the compliance burden on taxpayers, particularly small businesses.

Simplification of GST Registration:

- **Faceless assessment system:** be introduced for the Central GST system, similar to the existing income-tax system - **implementation planned for 2027-28**.
- **Greater certainty** - documents required for GST registration.
- 61% of taxpayers receive **automatic registration within three working days**.
- To **reduce unnecessary queries and rejections** for low-risk taxpayers.

Relief for Small and E-commerce Businesses:

- Small e-commerce sellers will be allowed to register in a single State rather than every State where they sell goods.

Simplification of Input Tax Credit:

- reducing procedural hurdles in processing ITC claims.
- Export of services was brought into the input tax credit system.

Restrictions on Inter-State Goods Inspection:

- **can be inspected, detained or seized only** by an officer of the **supplier State or destination State**, not an officer of an intermediary State.
- **Goods can be intercepted only** on the basis of **specific intelligence** and with authorisation from a **Joint Commissioner-level officer**.

- **Aim:** to **prevent arbitrary checks** by GST enforcement authorities and improve the movement of goods across States.

The reforms are **guided by the principle of trust** between the government, businesses and taxpayers.

About GST Council

- Set up by the President as per **Article 279A (1)**.
- **Composition:**
 - **Union Finance Minister (chairperson)**, the Union Minister of State (Finance) from the Centre.
 - **Each state can nominate a minister in-charge** of finance or taxation or any other minister as a member.

Functions:

- to "make recommendations to the Union and the states on important issues related to GST.
- resolving disputes between the Government of India and States regarding GST implementation.

Guiding Principles: promote a unified national market and harmonize GST structures.



SYLLABUS: Prelims: Economy

Newspaper : The Hindu; Page No : 8

About the News

RBI's Monetary Policy Decision

- The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided to raise the policy repo rate by 25 basis points (bps) to control rising inflation.
- Retail inflation is projected at 4.9% in Q2, rising to 6% in Q3, before easing marginally to 5.7% in Q4.

Rising Global Oil Prices and Inflation

- **Global oil prices have crossed \$100 per barrel.**
- **Indian oil marketing companies** have so far avoided passing the entire increase in oil prices on to consumers, following government instructions.
- However, this has **created fiscal pressure**, and higher petrol and diesel prices may eventually increase inflation.

Supply-Side Factors Driving Inflation

- A **deficient monsoon** is pushing up food prices, with the pressure expected to continue.
- When inflation is primarily driven by supply-side factors, **raising interest rates has only limited** and indirect effects on prices.

About Monetary Policy stances

- **Accommodative Stance:** Interest rate hike is ruled out
- **Neutral Stance:** Can either increase or reduce interest rate
- **Calibrated Tightening:** Cut in repo rate is ruled out

PYQ – 2023

Q. Consider the following statements:

Statement-I:

In the post-pandemic recent past, many Central Banks worldwide had carried out interest rate hikes.

Statement-II:

Central Banks generally assume that they have the ability to counteract the rising consumer prices via monetary policy means.

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 and 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



Government notifies CAPF Act



SYLLABUS: Prelims: Security

Newspaper : The Hindu; Page No : 12

About Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Act

Unified Umbrella Law:

- To govern recruitment, promotion, seniority, and service conditions for Group 'A' **General Duty officers across all five CAPFs.**

IPS Deputation Quotas: Formally mandates specific quotas for IPS officers on deputation for top leadership positions:

- 50% of Inspector General posts**
- Minimum 67% of Additional Director General posts**
- 100% of Special Director General and Director General posts**

Overriding Authority:

- Grants the **central government powers** to frame rules under this Act **that will prevail over any other existing** law, rule, or order, including previous court judgments.

Continuity Clause: all existing rules, regulations, and financial benefits **remain valid and in force until they are revised or replaced** under the new Act, preventing any immediate disruption.

Rationale:

- To replace the previous fragmented system** - reduce litigation, and bring consistency.
- Ending the "litigation trap":** CAPF cadre officers filed hundreds of lawsuits claiming that IPS "outsiders" were blocking their promotions, by giving the current system **a firm legal (statutory) basis.**
- Strategic Leadership:** Internal security is best managed by those with "Pan-India" administrative experience i.e. **inter-state coordination skills of the IPS** rather than just the tactical combat expertise of the native cadre.

Concerns:

- Overriding Supreme Court:** *Sanjay Prakash Vs Union of India, 2025* - reduce IPS deputation in senior CAPF ranks over two years.
- Formalizes a "Glass Ceiling":** By reserving the top positions for IPS officers - will reduces CAPFs to "second-class citizens".
- "Tactical vs. Generalist" Leadership:** CAPF officers - high-conflict zones (Maoist jungles, Siachen, etc.), v/s **IPS officers** - trained primarily for civilian law and order.



CRPF – Central Reserve Police Force

- Largest paramilitary force in India
- Main agency for internal security



BSF – Border Security Force

- First line of defense along the Pakistan and Bangladesh borders



ITBP – Indo-Tibetan Border Police

- Deployed along the Indo-China border at high-altitude regions



CISF – Central Industrial Security Force

- Provides security to India's critical industrial and strategic Installations



SSB – Sashastra Seema Bal

- Guards the Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bhutan borders



SYLLABUS: Prelims: Environment Conservation
Newspaper : The Hindu; Page No : 16

About PRASHAST

- A school-based Disability screening tool.
- It is **divided into two parts, Part-1 and Part-2** for the preliminary screening of students in schools **to facilitate further referral to assessment camps for disability certification.**
- **NOTE:** PRASHAST is only for screening and referral. *Do not label or diagnose on the basis of this tool.*
- **PRASHAST Part-1:**
 - use by regular teachers for **first level screening.**
 - It **contains objective type items** that need to be tick marked, and the resulting data of all the students is to be **handed over to the school head.**
- **PRASHAST Part-2:**
 - use by **special educators/counsellors/school heads**
 - **second level screening** and **tentative listing of disabilities** in accordance with the **21 categories of disability conditions recognized by RPwD Act 2016.**
 - The results of the second level screening is to facilitate further identification and certification of disabilities.
- **Purpose:** Prevent unscientific diagnosis and needless labelling of children. If some children in the class seem to display lack of interest, low attention – **due to either environmental or disability conditions.**
 - Physically, some of these children may not seem to be like other children in the class.
 - **This does not necessarily mean that they have a disability.**



Q1. With reference to PRASHAST, consider the following statements:

1. It is a school-based tool designed for the preliminary screening of children for possible disabilities.
2. It can be used by teachers to make a definitive diagnosis of disability in students.
3. It facilitates the identification of children who may require further assessment and referral.
4. It covers disability conditions recognised under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 1, 3 and 4 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Answer: b

Q2. With reference to the Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Act, consider the following statements:

1. The Act seeks to provide a unified legal framework governing the recruitment, promotion, seniority and service conditions of Group A General Duty officers across the five Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs).
2. The Act provides for 100% reservation of Inspector General posts for IPS officers on deputation.
3. The Act has been introduced, among other reasons, to reduce litigation and bring greater uniformity to the service conditions of CAPF officers.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) Only One
- b) Only Two
- c) All Three
- d) None

Answer: b

Q3. With reference to the monetary policy of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), consider the following statements:

1. Under the calibrated tightening stance, the RBI rules out a reduction in the policy repo rate.
2. When inflation is primarily driven by supply-side factors, an increase in interest rates may have only limited direct effects on prices.
3. Under the neutral stance, the RBI is committed to maintaining the repo rate at its current level.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: b

Q4. With reference to the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council, consider the following statements:

1. The GST Council is a constitutional body established under Article 279A of the Constitution, with the Union Finance Minister as its Chairperson and representatives of the States as its members.
2. The GST Council's recommendations are legally binding on both the Union and the State governments in all matters relating to GST.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: a

Q5. With reference to EFTA, consider the following statements:

1. EFTA comprises Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.
2. EFTA has committed to investing \$100 billion in India over 15 years under TEPA.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: c





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