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DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS DATED 29.03.2026

GS Paper II: Current Affairs

1. Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Bill, 2026

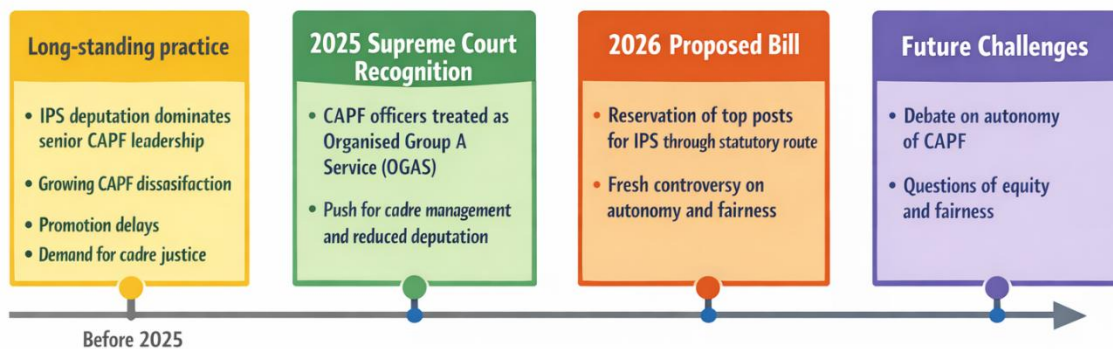
a. Introduction

The proposed Central Armed Police Forces (General Administration) Bill, 2026 highlights a long-standing structural issue within India's internal security system—the relationship between the Indian Police Service (IPS) and the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs).

At its core, the debate is not merely administrative but also constitutional and ethical, involving questions of fairness in career progression, respect for judicial authority, and the need for an efficient security apparatus.

Thus, the issue lies at the intersection of governance, federalism, civil services reform, and internal security.

Evolution of the CAPF–IPS Debate



b. Background and Conceptual Foundation

The Central Armed Police Forces operate under the Ministry of Home Affairs and form the backbone of India's internal security system. These include:

- Border Security Force (BSF)
- Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)
- Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)
- Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)
- Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)

A major turning point occurred in 2025 when the Supreme Court recognised CAPF officers as part of an Organised Group A Service (OGAS).

Implications of OGAS Status

- Requires a clear hierarchical structure
- Ensures predictable and time-bound promotions
- Mandates independent cadre management
- Strengthens professional identity of CAPF officers

Supreme Court's Observation on Deputation

- Long-standing deputation of IPS officers to CAPFs should be gradually reduced
- Aim was to correct imbalance in career progression
- Intended to enhance institutional autonomy of CAPFs

c. Key Provisions of the Bill

The Bill seeks to formalise the role of IPS officers in CAPFs through legislative backing.

Reservation of Senior Posts for IPS Officers

- 50% of Inspector General (IG) posts reserved
- More than two-thirds of Additional Director General (ADG) posts reserved
- All Special Director General (SDG) and Director General (DG) posts reserved

Shift from Executive to Statutory Framework

- Earlier system relied on flexible executive orders
- Bill introduces rigidity through legal mandate
- Reduces scope for future administrative adjustment

d. Significance from the Government's Perspective

From the government's standpoint, the Bill strengthens coordination and operational efficiency.

Enhanced Centre-State Coordination

- IPS officers bring experience from state policing systems
- Better handling of law and order, intelligence, and coordination
- Facilitates smoother interaction between CAPFs and state police

Improved Operational Efficiency

- Uniform leadership structure across forces
- Greater interoperability during joint operations
- Faster decision-making in complex scenarios e.g., counter-insurgency

Unified National Security Approach

- Ensures consistency in command across regions
- Important for sensitive areas like borders and insurgency zones
- Aligns CAPFs with national strategic objectives

e. Concerns and Structural Challenges

The Bill raises multiple legal, administrative, and human resource concerns.

Constitutional Concerns

- Possible dilution of Supreme Court's intent
- Raises issues related to separation of powers
- Questions legislative override of judicial reasoning

Career Stagnation in CAPFs

- Officers face long delays in promotions, often over a decade
- IPS officers progress faster within the same structure
- Leads to institutional inequality and frustration

Impact on Morale and Welfare

- Increased cases of voluntary retirement
- Stress-related issues among personnel
- Reduced motivation and organisational commitment

Weakening of Institutional Identity

- Leadership dominated by external cadre (IPS)
- Reduced incentives for internal specialisation
- Loss of institutional memory within CAPFs

Operational Limitations

- Deputed officers may lack long-term field experience
- Limited familiarity with specialised terrains e.g., high-altitude borders
- Affects continuity and expertise in leadership

f. Comparative Perspective

Globally, many democracies follow a model of internal cadre-based leadership.

United States

- Agencies like FBI and Border Patrol have independent cadres
- Leadership emerges from within the organisation

United Kingdom

- Specialised police forces operate with minimal external deputation
- Emphasis on institutional continuity and expertise

India's Hybrid Model

- Combines deputation with internal promotions
- Current imbalance indicates need for recalibration

g. Way Forward

A balanced and sustainable reform strategy is required.

Gradual Reduction of Deputation

- Align with Supreme Court's recommendations
- Avoid abrupt disruptions in administration
- Ensure smooth transition to internal leadership

Strengthening Internal Cadre Management

- Time-bound promotions
- Transparent career progression pathways
- Parity in service conditions with IPS

Institutionalised Coordination Mechanisms

- Joint training programmes
- Integrated command structures
- Inter-agency coordination platforms

Upholding Constitutional Principles

- Legislative action must respect judicial reasoning
- Maintain balance between legislature and judiciary
- Preserve institutional harmony

Human Resource Reforms

- Address stress and welfare issues
- Improve working conditions
- Enhance morale and professional dignity

Conclusion

The CAPF Bill, 2026 is not merely a technical reform but reflects a deeper tension within India's administrative framework between efficiency and equity.

While coordinated national security is essential, it must not come at the cost of fairness in career progression and institutional autonomy.

A calibrated approach—grounded in constitutional values, professional merit, and organisational justice—will be crucial to ensure that India's internal security architecture remains both effective and just.

GS Paper II: Current Affairs

2. Scheduled Caste Status, Religion and Reconversion – Supreme Court Ruling (2026)

a. Introduction

The question of Scheduled Caste (SC) status in India is deeply connected to both historical discrimination and constitutional design. The Supreme Court's 2026 ruling in *Chinthada Anand v. State of Andhra Pradesh* revisits this issue, especially in the context of conversion and reconversion.

The judgment clarifies the legal position but also raises a deeper question: *Does caste-based disadvantage really disappear when a person changes religion?*

Thus, the issue lies at the intersection of social justice, religion, and constitutional law.

b. Constitutional and Legal Background

The identification of Scheduled Castes is governed by Article 341 of the Constitution.

Constitutional Framework

- Article 341 empowers the President to notify SCs
- Implemented through the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950
- Parliament can amend the list, but states cannot alter it

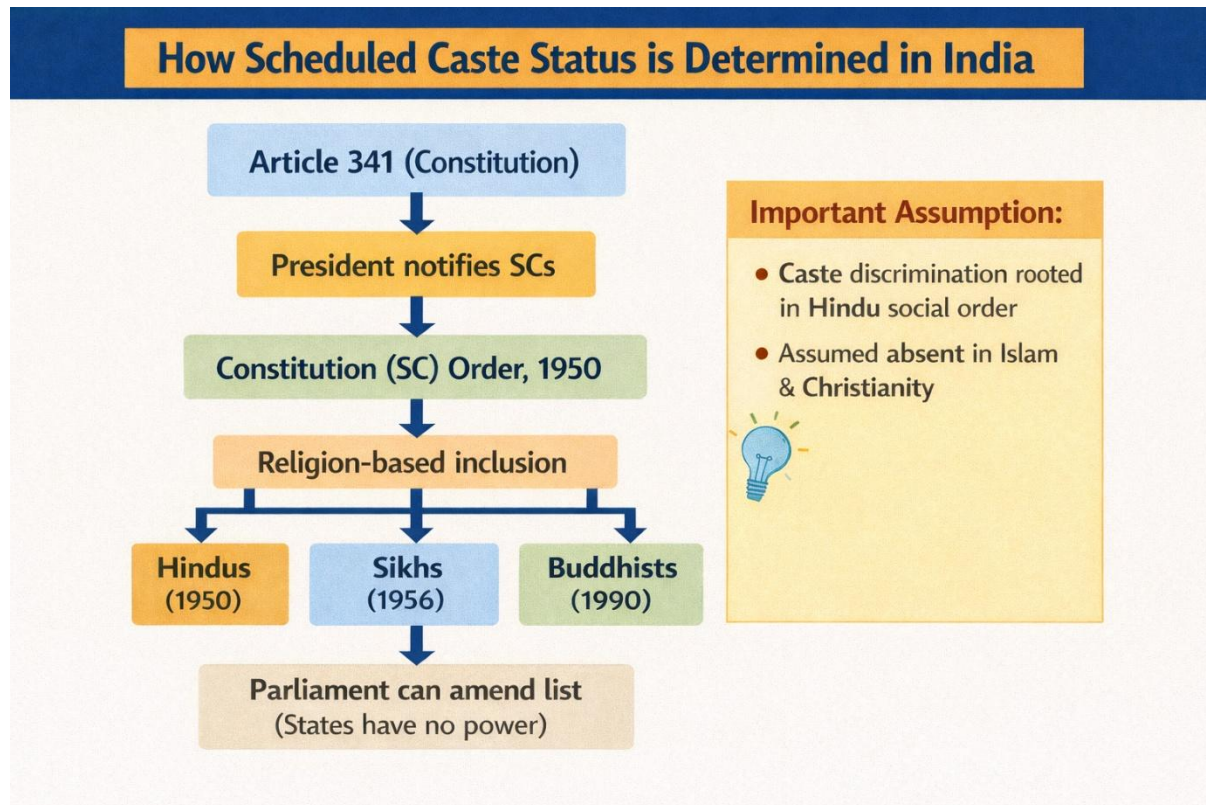
Religion-Based Restriction

- Initially limited to Hindus (1950)
- Extended to Sikhs (1956) and Buddhists (1990)

- Excludes Muslims and Christians

Underlying Assumption

- Caste-based discrimination seen as rooted in Hindu social order
- Assumes absence of caste hierarchy in other religions
- Forms the basis of exclusion from SC benefits



c. Key Observations of the Supreme Court

The Court reaffirmed and clarified several principles regarding SC status.

Religion-Specific Nature of SC Status

- SC status is explicitly linked to religion under the 1950 Order
- Conversion to unrecognised religions (Islam/Christianity) leads to immediate loss
- “Profess” means openly practising a religion

Effect of Conversion

- Loss of reservation in education and employment
- Loss of protection under SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act
- Based on assumption that caste hierarchy does not exist in these religions

Reconversion and Restoration

- Possible only if person returns to Hinduism, Sikhism, or Buddhism
- Must prove original SC identity
- Reconversion must be genuine, not for benefits
- Acceptance by original caste community required
- Must adopt customs and practices of that community

Burden of Proof

- Entire burden lies on the claimant

- Evidence must be strong and credible
- Makes restoration legally stringent

d. Debate on Dalit Muslims and Christians

The ruling has reignited demands to extend SC status beyond current religious limits.

Arguments for Inclusion

- Caste-based discrimination continues even after conversion
- Social stigma and occupational segregation persist
- Denial of benefits creates inequality

Government's Position

- Current framework is constitutionally valid
- Based on historical understanding of caste
- Any expansion requires careful review

Ongoing Institutional Examination

- Justice K. G. Balakrishnan Commission studying the issue
- Focus on empirical and sociological evidence

e. Distinction between Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

A useful comparison helps clarify the uniqueness of SC status.

Basis of Identification

- SC: Based on caste and social discrimination
- ST: Based on tribal identity, culture, and geography

Role of Religion

- SC status is religion-linked
- ST status is religion-neutral

Effect of Conversion

- SC status is lost upon conversion to certain religions
- ST status generally remains unaffected

f. Critical Analysis

The judgment has both strengths and limitations.

Strengths

- Provides clarity and consistency in law
- Prevents misuse of reservation benefits
- Reinforces constitutional framework

Limitations

- Assumes caste disappears after conversion
- Ignores evidence of continued social discrimination
- Creates gap between law and ground reality

Constitutional Concerns

- Raises questions about secularism
- Links benefits to religious identity
- Challenges idea of substantive equality

g. Way Forward

A balanced and evidence-based approach is needed.

Revisiting the 1950 Order

- Update framework based on current realities
- Consider empirical data on discrimination
- Ensure constitutional consistency

Focus on Actual Disadvantage

- Move beyond rigid religious categories
- Identify real social and economic deprivation
- Ensure benefits reach genuinely marginalised groups

Institutional Coordination

- Role of judiciary, legislature, and expert commissions
- Ensure legitimacy and acceptance of reforms
- Maintain coherence in reservation system

Conclusion

The Supreme Court's ruling clarifies the legal position on SC status, conversion, and reconversion. However, it also brings into focus an unresolved question:

Is caste-based disadvantage limited to certain religions, or does it persist across them?

Answering this requires balancing constitutional principles with evolving social realities, so that India's social justice framework remains both legally sound and socially meaningful.

GS Paper III: Environment

3. India's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), 2035

a. Introduction

India's updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) for 2035 marks the next phase of its climate policy under the Paris Agreement. It reflects both continuity and incremental ambition.

However, it also raises a key analytical question:

Are NDCs actually driving climate change action, or are they simply reflecting changes already happening in the economy—especially in the energy sector?

Thus, the issue lies at the intersection of climate policy, economic transformation, and global commitments.

b. Understanding the Concept of NDC

A Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) is a country's formal climate pledge under the Paris Agreement.

Core Features

- Specifies targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Includes plans for clean energy expansion
- Outlines contribution to global climate goals

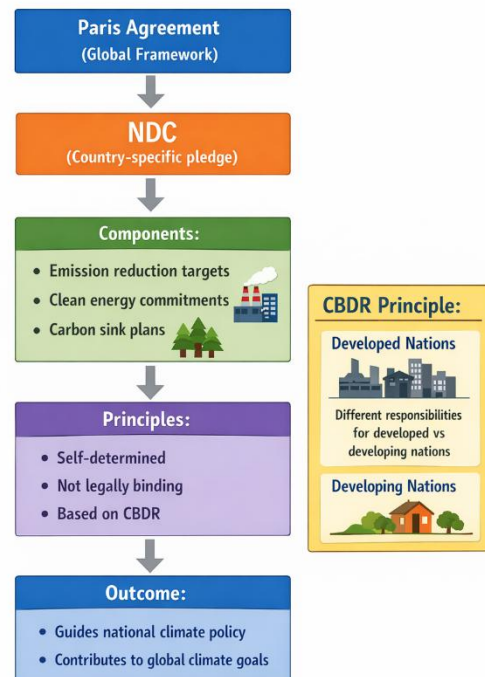
Nature of Commitments

- Self-determined, not legally binding internationally
- Based on national priorities and capacities
- Reflect balance between development and environmental responsibility

Principle Behind NDCs

- “Common but Differentiated Responsibilities” (CBDR)
- Developed and developing countries have different obligations
- Allows flexibility for countries like India

How Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) Work



c. Key Features of India’s Updated NDC (2035)

India’s 2035 targets build upon its earlier 2030 commitments.

Expansion of Non-Fossil Energy

- Target: 60% of installed electricity capacity from non-fossil sources
- Includes solar, wind, hydro, and nuclear energy

Emissions Intensity Reduction

- Further reduction in emissions per unit of GDP
- Focus on energy efficiency rather than absolute emission cuts

Carbon Sink Enhancement

- Increase forest and tree cover
- Aim to absorb more carbon dioxide

Ground Reality Context

- Over 50% of installed capacity already non-fossil (by 2026)
- Targets aligned with ongoing trends

d. Role and Purpose of NDCs

NDCs serve multiple functions at both national and global levels.

Policy Guidance

- Provide medium-term direction to climate policy

- Align development with sustainability goals

International Accountability

- Countries report progress periodically
- Enhances transparency and global trust

Increasing Ambition

- Each successive NDC must be stronger than the previous one
- Encourages gradual strengthening of commitments

Core Limitation

- Effectiveness depends on actual policy implementation
- May reflect trends rather than create change

e. Positive Implications of the New NDC

The updated NDC has several important benefits.

Investment and Policy Certainty

- Clear targets attract long-term investments
- Boost sectors like renewable energy and green manufacturing

Strengthened Global Position

- Demonstrates India's commitment to climate action
- Enhances credibility in global negotiations

Power Sector Transformation

- Accelerates shift to solar, wind, and other clean sources
- Influences transport (EVs) and industry electrification

Alignment with Development Goals

- Improves energy security
- Reduces dependence on fossil fuel imports
- Promotes domestic manufacturing

f. Limits of the NDC Framework

There is growing recognition that NDCs are not always the main drivers of change.

Role of Market and Technology

- Falling cost of renewables drives transition
- Technological innovation accelerates change

Influence of Industrial Policy

- Government incentives shape sectoral shifts
- Global supply chains affect energy transition

Nature of NDCs

- Often document existing trends
- May not trigger new structural changes

g. Evidence from Recent Emissions Trends

Recent developments show how India's climate transition is unfolding.

Positive Developments

- Slowing growth of CO₂ emissions (2025)
- Decline in power sector emissions
- Rapid addition of renewable capacity

Uneven Progress

- Steel and cement sectors still emission-intensive
- Continued dependence on fossil fuels

Key Insight

- Strong progress in electricity sector
- Slow transition in heavy industry

h. Structural Contradictions in India's Climate Strategy

India's climate approach shows a dual character.

Clean Energy Expansion

- Rapid growth in renewable capacity
- Ambitious non-fossil targets

Continued Fossil Fuel Dependence

- Expansion of coal-based power
- Growth in petrochemicals and fossil-fuel industries

Infrastructure Challenges

- Underutilisation due to weak grid infrastructure
- Limited transmission capacity

Carbon Sink Constraints

- Difficulty in expanding forest cover
- Ecological and land-use limitations

i. Global Context

India's experience mirrors global trends.

Strengthened Commitments

- Many countries have updated NDCs
- Increasing global climate ambition

Persistent Gaps

- Insufficient progress towards 1.5°C target
- Continued fossil fuel dependence globally

Key Lesson

- Incremental progress is happening
- Deep structural transformation is still lacking

j. Way Forward

India's climate strategy must move from targets to transformation.

Strengthening Energy Systems

- Improve grid infrastructure
- Expand energy storage
- Enhance system flexibility

Industrial Decarbonisation

- Focus on steel, cement, petrochemicals
- Promote green hydrogen and clean technologies

Reducing Fossil Fuel Dependence

- Avoid long-term infrastructure lock-in
- Gradually shift away from coal

Improving Carbon Sinks

- Focus on quality, not just quantity
- Promote ecological restoration

Integrated Policy Approach

- Link climate policy with energy security
- Align with industrial growth and public health

Conclusion

India's updated NDC for 2035 provides direction and continuity to its climate policy. However, the real drivers of change lie in structural shifts within the economy, especially in the energy sector.

The key challenge ahead is to resolve the contradiction between rapid clean energy expansion and continued fossil fuel dependence.

Only when climate commitments lead to deep, economy-wide transformation will NDCs evolve from statements of intent into instruments of meaningful change.

Reader's Note — About This Current Affairs Compilation

Dear Aspirant,

This document is part of the PrepAlpine Current Affairs Series — designed to bring clarity, structure, and precision to your daily UPSC learning.

While every effort has been made to balance depth with brevity, please keep the following in mind:

1. Orientation & Purpose

This compilation is curated primarily from the UPSC Mains perspective — with emphasis on conceptual clarity, analytical depth, and interlinkages across GS papers.

However, the PrepAlpine team is simultaneously developing a dedicated Prelims-focused Current Affairs Series, designed for:

- factual coverage
- data recall
- Prelims-style MCQs
- objective pattern analysis

This Prelims Edition will be released separately as a standalone publication.

2. Content Length

Some sections may feel shorter or longer depending on topic relevance and news density. To fit your personal preference, you may freely resize or summarize sections using any LLM tool (ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, etc.) at your convenience.

3. Format Flexibility

The formatting combines:

- paragraphs
- lists
- tables
- visual cues

—all optimised for retention.

If you prefer a specific style (lists → paras, paras → tables, etc.), feel free to convert using any free LLM.

4. Monthly Current Affairs Release

The complete Monthly Current Affairs Module will be released soon, optimized to a compact 100–150 pages — comprehensive yet concise, exam-ready, and revision-efficient.

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