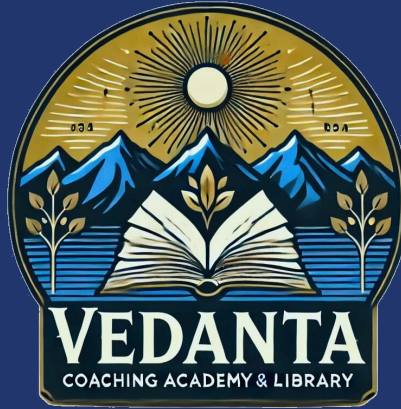




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The Hindu *Analysis*

Daily Current Affairs for UPSC · HPAS/HAS · State PSCs

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◆ TODAY'S INDEX ◆

01	Regulating the Veto: France's UNSC Reform Push	GS 2 · IR	2
02	Removal of the CEC: Fresh Notice against Gyanesh Kumar	GS 2 · POLITY	4
03	The Murky World of Political Party Finance	GS 2 · POLITY	6
04	Policing the Line between Publicity and Justice	GS 2 · GOVERNANCE	9
05	A Chance to Retreat: The Greenland Security Deal	GS 2 · IR	12
06	A Nation's Song: Vande Mataram & Unity in Diversity	GS 1, 2	14
★	Practice Zone: 2 Mains · 10 MCQs · Recap · Trap-Setters	PRACTICE	16

UN SECURITY COUNCIL

ARTICLE 324

ELECTORAL BONDS

RUPPs

BNSS §84

ARTICLE 21

ARCTIC

BIJOE EMMANUEL

6
STORIES

2
MAINS Qs

10
MCQs

7
TRAP-SETTERS

"The use of veto is not a matter of privilege but of responsibility."

— FRANCE'S STANCE AT THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Compiled by
Sapna Chauhan

01 GS 2 · INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS UNSC REFORM

Regulating the Veto: France's Push to Reform the UN Security Council

"The veto is not a privilege but a responsibility"

WHY IN NEWS

At the ongoing session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA), France has proposed steps to strengthen the UN's handling of collective security, especially the use of the veto. France and Mexico announced that **128 states** now back their declaration on restraining the veto in mass-atrocity situations (21 joined in the last four months), and the **U.K.** — another P5 member — has now accepted the principle.

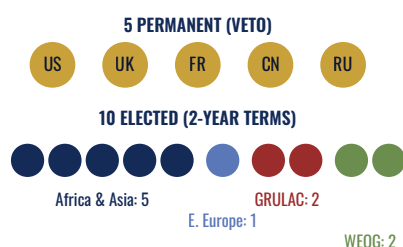
THE PROPOSAL

- France wants the use of veto in the UNSC to be **"regulated"** when the Council deals with humanitarian crises such as in **Sudan** and **Lebanon**, or with cases of **genocide**; it frames the veto as a matter of "responsibility", not "privilege".
- The **France–Mexico initiative** asks the P5 (U.S., U.K., France, China, Russia) to **voluntarily and collectively refrain** from using the veto where mass atrocities are involved. It needs no Charter amendment — it is a political commitment.
- With the U.K. on board, **two of the five** permanent members now accept the principle — a significant shift, since the reform ultimately depends on the P5 themselves.

WHERE DOES THE VETO COME FROM?

- The word **"veto"** **does not appear in the UN Charter**. It flows from **Article 27(3)**: decisions on non-procedural matters need nine affirmative votes "including the concurring votes of the permanent members" — the formula agreed among the wartime Allies (Yalta, 1945).
- By established practice, an **abstention** by a permanent member is **not** treated as a veto.
- The **Liechtenstein initiative** (UNGA resolution 76/262, 2022) took a different route: it does not stop a P5 member from casting a veto, but whenever one is cast, the **UNGA must convene within 10 working days** to debate the issue — adding accountability, not prohibition.

UNSC AT A GLANCE · 15 SEATS · 3 WAYS TO CHECK THE VETO



LIECHTENSTEIN INITIATIVE (2022)

Veto is cast → UNGA meets within **10 working days** → the vetoing member is invited to explain. Accountability, not prohibition.

FRANCE–MEXICO DECLARATION

128

states support voluntary non-use of veto in **mass atrocities**; U.K. has now joined France among the P5.

UNSC — STATIC CORE

- Origin & role:** Established in 1945 under the UN Charter; one of the **six principal organs**, with **primary responsibility** for international peace and security (Article 24).

- ◆ **Composition:** 15 members — 5 permanent (P5) with veto and **10 non-permanent** members elected by the UNGA for **2-year terms**, allocated regionally: 5 African & Asian, 1 Eastern European, 2 Latin American & Caribbean (GRULAC), 2 Western European & Others (WEOG).
- ◆ **Election:** Held annually by **secret ballot**; a **two-thirds majority** is needed even when a candidate is unopposed.
- ◆ **Binding authority:** The UNSC is the **only UN body** whose decisions member states are obligated to implement (Article 25); its resolutions can even encroach on sovereignty through sanctions or enforcement action.
- ◆ **India:** Non-permanent member eight times — 1950-51, 1967-68, 1972-73, 1977-78, 1984-85, 1991-92, 2011-12 and 2021-22. Seeks a permanent seat as part of the **G4** (India, Brazil, Germany, Japan), which backs expansion in both categories.

WHY THE COUNCIL IS SEEN AS LESS EFFECTIVE

- ◆ **Representation deficit:** Africa, a continent of **54 countries**, has no permanent seat; the 1945 power structure is frozen while membership has grown nearly four-fold.
- ◆ **The veto:** Widely criticised as a “self-chosen club of the privileged” — undemocratic, and allowing any one P5 member to block action that displeases it.
- ◆ **Great-power rivalry:** Geopolitical competition among the P5 has repeatedly prevented effective mechanisms on global crises, pushing issues to the UNGA, which can only recommend.
- ◆ **Reform paradox:** Any Charter amendment needs ratification by two-thirds of members **including all P5** (Article 108) — the veto-holders effectively hold a veto over veto reform. That is why voluntary restraint (France–Mexico) and accountability (Liechtenstein) routes are gaining ground.

VALUE ADDITION · REFORM BLOCS & KEY PROVISIONS

Bloc / Provision	What it stands for
G4	India, Brazil, Germany, Japan — new permanent and non-permanent seats; has signalled flexibility on new members not exercising the veto until a review.
Uniting for Consensus	Italy-led “Coffee Club” (incl. Pakistan, Argentina, South Korea) — opposes new permanent seats; prefers longer-term elected seats.
Ezulwini Consensus (2005)	African Union position — at least 2 permanent seats (with veto, if it exists) and additional non-permanent seats for Africa.
IGN	Intergovernmental Negotiations on UNSC reform, held in the UNGA since 2009; no negotiating text agreed yet.
Uniting for Peace (Res. 377, 1950)	UNGA may act when the Council is deadlocked by lack of P5 unanimity — first used during the Korean War.
Article 23 amendment	The only enlargement so far: 11 → 15 members (adopted 1963, in force 1965).

PRELIMS POINTERS

- ◆ “Veto” — not in the Charter; derived from Article 27(3). Abstention ≠ veto by practice.
- ◆ Liechtenstein Veto Initiative: UNGA debate within **10 working days** of a veto (adopted 2022).

- ◆ UNSC presidency rotates **monthly** in English alphabetical order of members' names.
- ◆ Retiring non-permanent members are **not eligible** for immediate re-election (Article 23(2)).

SYLLABUS LINK · GS 2 — Important international institutions, agencies and fora: their structure and mandate; India's interests in global governance reform.



02 GS 2 · POLITY THE HINDU · PAGE 15

Removal of the CEC: Opposition to Move Fresh Notice against Gyanesh Kumar

Independence of the Election Commission and the constitutional shield of security of tenure

WHY IN NEWS

Opposition parties will move a **fresh notice in both Houses** seeking the removal of Chief Election Commissioner **Gyanesh Kumar**, even as an earlier petition moved in the Rajya Sabha on April 24 remains pending with the Upper House Chairman **C.P. Radhakrishnan**. The INDIA bloc may meet to coordinate joint action.

THE STORY SO FAR

- ◆ **March 12:** First notice — signed by **63 Rajya Sabha** and **130 Lok Sabha** MPs — carried **seven charges**, including that the CEC's appointment was “tainted” (the law governing his selection is under challenge in the Supreme Court) and that his previous postings reflected “deep executive embeddedness”. It was **dismissed on April 7**.
- ◆ **April 24:** Second notice in the Rajya Sabha, signed by **73 members**, with **nine charges** — including “mass disenfranchisement” in West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh, “illegal abuse” of power and “asymmetrical enforcement” of the Model Code of Conduct. It is still pending.
- ◆ **Now:** A third, fresh notice with “more specific charges” based on new revelations is planned; the Trinamool Congress, which helped draft earlier petitions, wants swift, united action.

CONSTITUTIONAL SHIELD: SECURITY OF TENURE

- ◆ **Article 324(5):** Subject to any law made by Parliament, the conditions of service and tenure of Election Commissioners and Regional Commissioners are determined by the President.
- ◆ The **CEC can be removed only in the same manner and on the same grounds as a Supreme Court judge**, and his service conditions **cannot be varied to his disadvantage** after appointment.

Opposition to move fresh notice in Parliament for Gyanesh Kumar's removal

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

The Opposition parties will move a fresh notice in both Houses of Parliament seeking the removal of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, even as a previous petition moved in the Rajya Sabha on April 24 is pending with Upper House Chairman C.P. Radhakrishnan.

The Opposition is also gearing up for joint action on the issue and could soon call for a meeting under the banner of the Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA). A senior Opposition leader said that a dialogue is going on among like-minded parties to discuss the modalities.

In view of the Cockerham Janta Party's 48-hour ultimatum calling for Mr. Kumar's resignation, the INDIA bloc is anxious not to be seen as latecomers on the issue. “The Opposition will certainly be moving, especially in light of the



Gyanesh Kumar

new revelations. Our earlier motion submitted on April 24, in the RS had nine specific charges. That motion is still pending. There will be more specific charges,” Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said.

‘Must act swiftly’

The Trinamool Congress, which played a key role in the drafting of two previous petitions for Mr. Kumar's removal, said a new petition should be moved at the earliest. “The Trinamool is very happy to play the role of a squirrel in the garden. The Opposition has to act unitedly and

swiftly,” party leader Derek O'Brien said.

It was on March 12 that the Opposition first moved a notice seeking Mr. Kumar's removal. This notice was signed by 63 Rajya Sabha MPs and 130 Lok Sabha MPs. It contained seven charges against the CEC, including that his appointment itself was “tainted, with the law governing his selection, facing a challenge in the Supreme Court. The Opposition also claimed that Mr. Kumar's previous postings reflected “deep executive embeddedness”. This notice was dismissed on April 7.

On April 24, the Opposition again moved a notice in the Rajya Sabha, signed by 73 Opposition members, this time with nine charges. The 13-page notice made several allegations including “mass disenfranchisement” in West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh, the “illegal abuse” of power and “asymmetrical enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct”.

THE HINDU · PAGE 15 · GS 2

- ◆ Other Election Commissioners or Regional Commissioners can be removed only **on the recommendation of the CEC**.
- ◆ The **CEC and other ECs (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023** lays down the resignation and removal process — it retains the same constitutional procedure.
- ◆ **Grounds:** Only two — “**proved misbehaviour or incapacity**” (as for SC judges under Article 124(4)).
- ◆ **Terminology trap:** “Impeachment” is used loosely in political discourse, but the Constitution reserves the term for the **President (Article 61)**. For judges and the CEC, the correct term is **removal**.

REMOVAL PROCEDURE (JUDGES (INQUIRY) ACT, 1968)

1 · NOTICE Motion signed by 100 LS or 50 RS members, given to Speaker / Chairman.	2 · ADMISSION Presiding Officer may admit or refuse the motion.	3 · INQUIRY 3-member committee: SC judge, HC Chief Justice, distinguished jurist.	4 · REPORT Not proved → motion dropped. Proved → report to the House.	5 · VOTE Special majority in both Houses, same session.	6 · ORDER Address presented to the President , who orders removal.
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- ◆ **Special majority** = majority of the **total membership** of the House **and** not less than **two-thirds of members present and voting**.
- ◆ The CEC has the **right to defend** himself before the inquiry committee — making the process **quasi-judicial**, not merely political.

ANALYSIS: ACCOUNTABILITY VS INDEPENDENCE

- ◆ **High threshold by design:** The removal bar insulates the poll body from the executive and the ruling majority — no CEC has ever been removed, and no SC judge removal motion has ever succeeded.
- ◆ **Gatekeeping concern:** The decision to admit or reject lies with the Presiding Officer; repeated dismissals or long pendency invite charges of partisanship, while frequent notices risk politicising a constitutional office.
- ◆ **Appointment question:** The 2023 Act replaced the CJI (interim arrangement in *Anoop Baranwal v. Union of India*, 2023) with a Union Cabinet Minister on the selection panel — the basis of the “tainted appointment” charge now before the Supreme Court.
- ◆ **Way forward:** A transparent, bipartisan appointment process, time-bound decisions on admitted notices, and institutional responses to allegations (e.g., on electoral rolls) would protect both the credibility of the ECI and the dignity of the removal mechanism.

VALUE ADDITION · STATIC LINKAGE — WHO REMOVES WHOM?

Office	Grounds	Procedure
President	Violation of the Constitution	Impeachment (Art 61): charge by $\frac{1}{4}$ members of either House with 14 days' notice; passed by 2/3 of total membership of each House.

Office	Grounds	Procedure
SC / HC Judge	Proved misbehaviour or incapacity	Art 124(4) / 217 — special majority in both Houses in the same session; Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968.
CEC	Same as SC judge	Art 324(5) + 2023 Act — same manner as SC judge.
Election Commissioners	—	By the President, only on the recommendation of the CEC .
CAG	Same as SC judge	Art 148 — same manner as SC judge.

- ◆ **2023 Act — Selection Committee:** Prime Minister (Chair), Leader of Opposition / leader of the largest opposition party in Lok Sabha, and a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the PM; a **Search Committee headed by the Law Minister** prepares a panel of five.
- ◆ **Tenure:** 6 years or till 65 years of age, whichever is earlier; salary equal to that of a Supreme Court judge; no reappointment.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- ◆ Part XV (Articles 324–329) deals with elections; Article 324 is described as a “reservoir of power” for the ECI.
- ◆ ECI became multi-member in 1989, briefly reverted, and has been three-member since 1993; first CEC — Sukumar Sen.
- ◆ Gyanesh Kumar is the first CEC appointed under the 2023 Act.

SYLLABUS LINK · GS 2 — Appointment to various constitutional posts, powers, functions and responsibilities of constitutional bodies; Parliament — functioning and conduct of business.



03 GS 2 · POLITY & GOVERNANCE THE HINDU · PAGE 10 · OP-ED

The Murky World of Political Party Finance

Ashok Lavasa (former Election Commissioner): the ECI should scrutinise political parties and political finance rather than legitimate voters

WHY IN NEWS

A recent BBC investigation revealed extraordinary donations received by six **Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPPs)**, reviving questions on opaque party finance, tax exemptions and the Election Commission's reluctance to act.

THE IRONY AT THE CORE

- ◆ Political parties — the principal stakeholders of electoral democracy — find **no mention in the Constitution except in the Tenth Schedule** (anti-defection).
- ◆ They exist as “**associations**” under the fundamental right of **Article 19(1)(c)**; no effort has been made to define their legal character as a company, trust, society, firm or not-for-profit.
- ◆ Yet they enjoy **income-tax exemption** in an unparalleled manner — sometimes becoming “receptacles of inexplicable monies”, much like shell companies serving unstated purposes.

THE RUPP PUZZLE

- ♦ **ADR report (July 18, 2025):** a 223% rise in declared income of RUPPs in FY2022-23; of 2,764 RUPPs, only 739 filed financial records with the ECI.
- ♦ **ECI press note (August 9, 2025):** 334 RUPPs out of 2,854 were 'delisted' as part of a "continuous strategy" to clean up the system.
- ♦ **Delisting ≠ deregistration:** The ECI is generally not empowered to deregister parties. Even delisted or unrecognised parties remain eligible to receive contributions under **Section 29B, RPA 1951**, and enjoy tax treatment under **Section 13A, Income-tax Act**.
- ♦ **History:** On October 16, 1994, CEC T.N. Seshan issued an order under the **Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968**, highlighting the "ad hocism" in parties; he later introduced **Paragraph 16A**, empowering the ECI to suspend or withdraw recognition for failing to observe the MCC or ECI directions — a power rarely used.
- ♦ Guidelines under **Section 29A** (registration) require a party to contest elections within **five years** of registration; one not contesting continuously for **six years** is to be taken off the list.

The murky world of political party finance

One of the enduring ironies of the Indian political system is that political parties, which are considered the principal stakeholders of electoral democracy, do not find a mention in the Constitution, except in the Tenth Schedule. They exist as "associations" in furtherance of the fundamental rights under Article 19. No effort has been made to define and straitjacket their legal character to conform to being a company, trust, society, firm or a not-for-profit company. Even so, they continue to enjoy the benefit of income-tax exemption in an unprecedented and unparalleled manner, sometimes becoming mysterious receptacles of inexplicable monies. Just as there are shell companies that fulfil unstated purposes, there are shell political parties that serve an insidious intent. And thereby hangs a tale.

The mystery of political funding

That tale was partially unravelled by a recent BBC investigation that revealed extraordinary donations received by six Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPPs). A well-known yet intriguing aspect of Indian politics — ugly and ubiquitous — stands exposed. Political parties and their benefactors thrive in this system, even if it appears reprehensible, unlawful and disturbing.

Earlier, the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) released a report on July 18, 2025, which found a 223% rise in the declared income of RUPPs in FY2022-23. It noted that, of the 2,764 RUPPs, only 739 had submitted their financial records for the year to the Election Commission of India (ECI), the sole custodian, under the law, of the fate and fortunes of political parties.

In a press note, "Cleaning up the Electoral System" (August 9, 2025), the ECI said it had 'delisted' 334 RUPPs out of 2,854 "as part of a comprehensive and continuous strategy...to clean up the electoral system." It would be interesting to see whether the six parties in question are part of the ECI's "continuous strategy".

On October 16, 1994, T.N. Seshan, then Chief Election Commissioner of India, issued an order under the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968, in which he highlighted the "ad hocism" and the "sorry state of affairs prevailing in almost all political parties in the country, whether recognised National or State parties or registered-unrecognised parties". He observed, "I have yet to come across any party whose affairs are being run in accordance with the provisions of its constitution or rules and regulations." Through the order, T.N. Seshan put all political parties on "notice" to set their house in order, declaring that the ECI would not remain a "mute spectator". In subsequent guidelines prescribing the format for registration under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1951, the ECI stated in paragraph 3(xiii) that a party seeking registration must declare in its constitution that it will contest elections within five years of registration and that, if it does not "contest elections continuously



Ashok Lavasa
Former Election Commissioner of India and a former Union Finance Secretary

The Election Commission of India should scrutinise political parties and political finance rather than legitimate voters

for six years", it shall "be automatically taken off the list of recognised parties".

"Taking off" or 'delisting' does not mean deregistration, as the ECI is not generally empowered to deregister political parties. Similarly, even if RUPPs are 'unrecognised', they remain eligible to receive contributions under Section 29B of the RPA, while their tax treatment is governed by Section 13A of the Income-tax Act. "Recognition" is governed by Order 6 of the Election Symbols Order, which distinguishes between 'recognised' and 'unrecognised' political parties for the purpose of allotting symbols and lays down the criteria for their classification. T.N. Seshan amended the Symbols Order and introduced Order 16A, which empowers the ECI to "suspend or withdraw recognition of a recognised political party for its failure to observe MCC [Model Code of Conduct] or follow lawful directions and instructions of the Commission". That provision sits, rather harmlessly, in the statute book, empowering an ECI that has generally been reluctant to strike.

Hence, whether 'delisted' or 'unrecognised', the parties remain eligible to receive contributions. It is a matter for investigation whether such donations continued to qualify for tax exemptions, given that the intent behind the delisting was to disqualify them.

The scale of 'political wealth'

A paper published by Venkatesh Nayak, a senior researcher at the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (which was also reported by a leading media site), revealed that 22 political parties collectively had ₹18,742.31 crore at their disposal for the 2024 general election. This included funds in their kitty when the election was announced and ₹7,416.31 crore in donations raised between the announcement and the completion of the election. After the election, these parties had ₹14,848.46 crore remaining in their custody, including cash in hand, money held in bank accounts and fixed deposits, after incurring ₹3,861.57 crore in election-related expenditure during the campaign period, according to the accounts submitted to the ECI.

The study found that, over the last decade, the exchequer 'lost' ₹11,813 crore in taxes due to exemptions for political donations, with individual donors and Hindu Undivided Families overtaking corporates in donating to political parties. In FY2022-23, individual donors claimed exemptions worth ₹2,275.85 crore, dwarfing corporate claims of ₹514.4 crore and those of firms and associations, at ₹115.71 crore. Declared donations to political parties increased from ₹714 crore (43 parties) in 2015-16 to ₹7,203 crore (27 parties) in 2023-24. Yet, only 41.76% of total donations, amounting to ₹28,287 crore over nine years, were claimed as tax-exempt, raising questions about the remaining 58%. Mr. Nayak asks: "What incentives are driving them to donate without tax relief? The lack of transparency obscures answers."

What added the thickest layer of secrecy was

the so-called reform of electoral bonds introduced by the ruling party in 2018, which made the entire business of political finance murky. Although the scheme was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of India in 2024, the details of the donations subsequently disclosed raised questions that remain unanswered. Most RUPPs were not eligible to receive electoral bonds, as they were restricted to parties that had "secured at least 1% of the votes in the latest Lok Sabha or State Legislative Assembly elections". Who, then, made these contributions, and why?

The top court and ECI must act

Political parties have shown scant interest in transparency. They united in resisting the 2013 order of the Central Information Commission (CIC) bringing them under the Right to Information Act. Interestingly, besides the CIC, neither the ECI nor the Supreme Court has shown any inclination to enforce it. The Income-Tax Department and the Enforcement Directorate might not consider it a priority to scrutinise the accounts of political parties as they do those of ordinary taxpayers. The ECI lacks the mandate, intent or wherewithal to question the accounts mechanically submitted by political parties. Submission of the accounts is enough to comply with the letter of the law, even if its spirit gasps. How will that spirit be revived, and who will revive it?

It is incumbent upon the Court to order a court-monitored probe into the saga of electoral bonds and the alleged *quid pro quo* in the petitions pending before it. The probe should also examine the phenomenon of 'insignificant' RUPPs receiving and spending huge contributions without participating in the electoral process in any substantial manner. Surely, such "shell" parties cannot justify spending crores as "administrative expenses".

Exercising its powers under Article 324 — described by the Court in the landmark judgment of *Kanhiya Lal Omar vs R.K. Trivedi and Others* as a "reservoir of authority" for the ECI — the ECI should order political parties to have their accounts audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India or its nominee. It should also consider imposing a limit on expenditure by political parties during elections, a measure it has recommended repeatedly. Tax exemptions on donations should be limited to the prescribed expenditure limit. All other donations that enrich the parties should be fully taxed.

The ECI should establish an automatic procedure to 'deregister' any RUPP that does not contest elections in accordance with its guidelines and develop a centralised digital portal where all registered parties can upload their financial data in standardised formats.

Let the ECI spend its energy and authority on "purifying" the electoral environment rather than on chasing genuine electors off the electoral rolls. Until then, 'We the People' must continue to scream "*Hami yaha chhau* (we are here)".

THE HINDU · PAGE 10 · GS 2 · ASHOK LAVASA

THE SCALE OF 'POLITICAL WEALTH'

MONEY TRAIL · CHRI STUDY (VENKATESH NAYAK)

₹18,742 cr**WITH 22 PARTIES**

for the 2024 general election;
₹3,861.57 cr spent in the
campaign period.

₹11,813 cr**TAX 'LOST'**

by the exchequer over the last
decade due to exemptions for
political donations.

41.76%**CLAIMED TAX-EXEMPT**

of ₹28,287 cr donations over nine
years — what about the
remaining 58%?

- ◆ Declared donations rose from **₹714 crore** (43 parties) in 2015-16 to **₹7,203 crore** (27 parties) in 2023-24.
- ◆ In FY2022-23, **individual donors** claimed exemptions worth ₹2,275.85 crore — dwarfing corporates (₹514.4 crore) and firms (₹115.71 crore).
- ◆ **Electoral bonds (2018)** added “the thickest layer of secrecy”. The scheme was **struck down by the Supreme Court in 2024**, but disclosed details raised unanswered questions. Most RUPPs could not receive bonds, which were limited to parties securing **at least 1% of votes** in the last Lok Sabha / Assembly election.

TRANSPARENCY DEFICIT

- ◆ Parties united to resist the **2013 CIC order** bringing them under the **RTI Act**; neither the ECI nor the Supreme Court has shown inclination to enforce it.
- ◆ The Income-Tax Department and ED do not scrutinise party accounts as they do ordinary taxpayers'; the ECI lacks the mandate or will to question mechanically submitted accounts.

SUGGESTED REFORMS

- ◆ **Court-monitored probe** into electoral bonds and alleged *quid pro quo*, and into ‘shell’ RUPPs receiving huge sums without contesting.
- ◆ Using **Article 324** — the “reservoir of authority” (*Kanhiya Lal Omar v. R.K. Trivedi*, 1985) — the ECI should order party accounts to be **audited by the CAG** or its nominee.
- ◆ Impose a **ceiling on party expenditure** in elections; restrict tax exemption to donations within the prescribed limit and **fully tax** the rest.
- ◆ **Automatic deregistration** of non-contesting RUPPs and a **centralised digital portal** for standardised financial disclosures.
- ◆ The ECI should spend its energy ‘purifying’ the electoral environment rather than “chasing genuine electors off the rolls”.

VALUE ADDITION · LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF PARTY FINANCE

Provision	Content
Section 29A, RPA 1951	Registration of political parties with the ECI.
Section 29B	Parties may accept voluntary contributions (not from government companies).
Section 29C	Annual report to ECI of donations above ₹20,000.
Section 13A, IT Act	Tax exemption for party income, subject to accounts, audit and filing.

Provision	Content
Section 77, RPA	Caps a candidate's expenditure; there is no cap on party spending.
INC(I) v. Institute of Social Welfare (2002)	ECI can deregister only if registration was obtained by fraud, the party renounces allegiance to the Constitution, or it is declared unlawful.
ADR v. Union of India (2024)	Electoral Bond Scheme struck down as violating voters' right to information under Article 19(1)(a).

PRELIMS POINTERS

- ◆ Recognition of National / State parties: **Paragraph 6** of the Election Symbols Order, 1968.
- ◆ Paragraph 16A (Seshan era) — suspension/withdrawal of recognition for defying MCC or ECI directions.
- ◆ Delisting a RUPP removes symbol-related benefits; it is not deregistration.

SYLLABUS LINK · GS 2 — Salient features of the Representation of People's Act; transparency and accountability; electoral reforms. GS 4 — Probity in public life.



04 GS 2 · GOVERNANCE THE HINDU · PAGE 10 · OP-ED

Policing the Line between Publicity and Justice

Rupin Sharma (DGP, Nagaland): before releasing the photograph of a person accused, arrested but not yet tried, police must ask whether the investigation requires it

WHY IN NEWS

A **Supreme Court PIL** seeking a nationwide protocol on police media briefings has raised a question Indian policing has quietly avoided — **under what law** do police publish photographs of accused persons, should they, and where should it stop? In January 2026, the Court noted the *amicus* had prepared a **Police Manual for Media Briefing** and directed States to evolve policies based on it within **three months**.

THE PRACTICE AND ITS JUSTIFICATION

- ◆ Within minutes of an arrest, a face — handcuffed, flanked by policemen, sometimes garlanded with placards listing the crime — circulates on social media, often **before the accused is produced before a magistrate**.
- ◆ Yet wanted-person photographs and reward notices have **solved crimes, recovered missing children** and brought fugitives to book — the alerted public does what a thinly stretched force cannot.
- ◆ **“The justification is strong; the legal architecture is weak.”** What is needed is a clear legal basis, not a habit inherited from precedent.

CURRENT LAW: A PATCHWORK

- ◆ **No single statute** permits or prohibits police from publishing photographs of accused persons — only colonial-era regulations, an identification statute and general criminal procedure.

- ◆ **Section 84, BNSS 2023** (Section 82, CrPC): courts may **proclaim absconders** and publish proclamations; attaching a photograph is settled practice. But it is triggered **only after a warrant fails** — no basis for publicity at the investigation stage.
- ◆ At investigation stage, publication rests on the **general powers of the Investigating Officer** — everyone must assist police, and the IO may examine anyone with relevant information. Social-media appeals are a digital version of the old **“Hue and Cry Notice”** in State Police Manuals.
- ◆ **Reward announcements** stand on firmer ground — **State Police Regulations under the Police Act, 1861**, vesting sanctioning authority from the SHO up to the State government. No warrant is needed; it is administrative discretion.
- ◆ **Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022** governs taking, storage and use of measurements (including photographs) for identification — but is **wrongly cited** as enabling publication; it says nothing about circulating them.

CONSTITUTIONAL LIMITS

- ◆ **Article 21** jurisprudence has sharpened: the **presumption of innocence** is central, and broadcasting an arrested person's face as a *fait accompli* of guilt, before charges are framed, can cause **real, irreversible harm**.
- ◆ The **Rajasthan High Court** termed such practices **“institutional humiliation”** — digital circulation is permanent, searchable and indifferent to later acquittal.
- ◆ The **BPR&D** drafted a manual on media briefings and shared it with the MHA in **July 2024**.
- ◆ **Absolute red lines already exist**: a juvenile in conflict with law cannot be identified except in the child's best interest with the Juvenile Justice Board's permission; a sexual assault survivor's identity is protected by law. The real debate concerns the **ordinary adult** — accused, arrested, not yet tried.

THE DISTINCTION THAT MATTERS — WAY FORWARD

- ◆ Publication sits on a scale: **legitimate investigative necessity** (crime prevention, public order) at one end; **showcasing police achievements** at the other — the latter serves optics at the accused's expense and can prejudice public opinion before trial.
- ◆ **Global practice**: U.S. law treats “wanted” notices as public-record exceptions but frames them carefully (“alleged”, “wanted for questioning”); British policing more conservatively withholds arrested persons' identities altogether.
- ◆ **A codified, uniform national protocol** — not an outright ban — that: distinguishes proportionate, need-based disclosure from prejudicial publicity; mandates blackout categories (juveniles, sexual-offence complainants); requires **time-bound review and takedown** once the purpose is served or the accused is discharged/acquitted; and applies uniformly across States.
- ◆ **The one test**: Is the disclosure **necessary to the investigation**, or merely convenient to the narrative?

VALUE ADDITION · LINKAGES FOR ANSWER WRITING

Concept / Case	Relevance
K.S. Puttaswamy (2017)	Privacy is a fundamental right under Article 21 — dignity and informational privacy of the accused; tests of legality, necessity and proportionality.

Concept / Case	Relevance
Right to be forgotten	Recognised by some High Courts for acquitted persons seeking removal of online records – relevant to takedown norms.
Police – State List	Entry 2, List II – hence the need for a model national protocol adopted by States.
Section 72, BNS	Prohibits disclosing the identity of victims of certain sexual offences (earlier Section 228A, IPC).
Section 74, JJ Act 2015	Bars disclosure of the identity of a child in conflict with law or in need of care.
GS 4 angle	Proportionality, dignity, media ethics, “trial by media” vs public interest.

Policing the line between publicity and justice

Within minutes of an arrest anywhere in India today, a face – handcuffed, flanked by policemen, sometimes garlanded with placards cataloguing the crime – starts circulating on social media, often before the accused is produced before a magistrate. A Supreme Court of India PIL seeking a nationwide media protocol/police media briefings has forced a question that Indian policing has quietly avoided: under what law do we do this, should we do it, and where should it stop?

Photographs of wanted persons and reward notices have solved crimes, helped recover missing children, and brought fugitives to book years after trails went cold – the public, alerted, has done what a thinly stretched police force alone could not.

The justification is strong; the legal architecture is weak. What is needed is a clear legal basis, not a habit inherited from mere precedent.

Current law and practice

No single statute permits or prohibits police from publishing photographs of accused persons. What exists is a patchwork of colonial-era regulations, an identification statute and the general architecture of criminal procedure.

Section 84 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023 (Section 82 of the Code of Criminal Procedure or CrPC) allows courts to proclaim absconders and publish proclamations in newspapers. It says nothing about photographs, but attaching one has become settled practice because it serves the purpose of securing the person's appearance. This judicial process is triggered only after a warrant fails; it does not, however, provide a basis for publicity at the investigation stage.

Publication at the investigation stage rests instead on the general powers of an investigating



Rupin Sharma

IPS officer who is the Director General of Police, Nagaland

Before releasing the photograph of a person accused, arrested, but not yet tried, police must ask whether the investigation requires it

officer (10): every person must assist the police in preventing and investigating offences, and an IO may examine anyone with relevant information. Publishing photographs on social media to solicit identification, trace absconders or find witnesses is a digital-age extension of the old “Hue and Cry Notice”, in State Police Manuals – provisions that predate Independence and whose language (“description of the subject”) is broad enough to plausibly cover photographs and rewards.

Reward announcements stand on firmer, narrower ground, typically governed by State Police Regulations under the Police Act, 1861, which vest sanctioning authority in a hierarchy ranging from the Station House Officer (SHO) to the State government. No prior warrant or proclamation is required; it is an exercise of administrative discretion, not a judicial precondition. The Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022, governs the taking, storage and use of measurements – including photographs – for identification, but is often wrongly cited as enabling their publication. It says nothing, however, about circulating them.

Constitutional limits

Article 21, jurisprudence has sharpened, not softened. Presumption of innocence remains central to criminal justice, and courts increasingly recognise that broadcasting an arrested person's face as a fait accompli of guilt, before any charge is framed can cause real, irreversible harm. The Rajasthan High Court termed such practices “institutional humiliation” digital circulation is permanent, searchable and indifferent to later acquittal.

The Bureau of Police Research and Development prepared a draft manual on media briefings by police personnel and shared it with the Ministry of Home Affairs in July 2024. In January 2026, the Supreme Court said the *amicus*

had prepared a Police Manual for Media Briefing and directed the States to evolve appropriate policies based on it within three months. Some categories are already absolute red lines: a juvenile in conflict with the law cannot be identified except in the child's best interest and with the Juvenile Justice Board's permission; a sexual assault survivor's identity is protected by law. The intriguing debate concerns the ordinary adult – accused, arrested, but not yet tried.

The distinction that matters

Publication sits on a scale: at one end, legitimate investigative necessity – crime prevention, public order and law-and-order purposes; at the other, the showcasing of police achievements. Photographs released merely to showcase arrests serve police optics at the accused's expense and can prejudice public opinion before trial.

American law treats “wanted” notices as public-record exceptions to privacy law, but agencies are trained to frame them carefully – “alleged,” “wanted for questioning” – to preserve the presumption of innocence even while seeking help. British policing, more conservatively, withholds arrested persons' identities altogether.

What is needed is not an outright ban on soliciting public assistance – that would be legally unwarranted and self-defeating – but a codified, uniform national protocol that distinguishes proportionate, need-based disclosure from prejudicial publicity; mandates blackout categories such as juveniles and sexual-offence complainants; requires time-bound review and takedown once the investigative purpose is served or an accused is discharged or acquitted; and applies uniformly across States.

One question before any photograph goes out could be a beginning: is the disclosure necessary to the investigation, or merely convenient to the narrative?

THE HINDU · PAGE 10 · GS 2 · RUPIN SHARMA

PRELIMS POINTERS

- ◆ Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022 replaced the Identification of Prisoners Act, 1920.
- ◆ BNSS Section 84 ↔ CrPC Section 82 (proclamation for person absconding).
- ◆ Police Act, 1861 – colonial statute still underpinning most State police regulations.

SYLLABUS LINK · GS 2 – Government policies and interventions; role of police in governance; fundamental rights.
GS 4 – Ethics in public administration.

05 GS 2 · INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS GS 1 · GEOGRAPHY THE HINDU · PAGE 10 · EDITORIAL

A Chance to Retreat: The U.S.–Denmark–Greenland Security Deal

The Greenland agreement allows Donald Trump to scale down his threats

WHY IN NEWS

On **September 22**, the leaders of the **U.S., Denmark and Greenland** signed a new security deal which, according to President Trump, would allow the U.S. to do “what is necessary in Greenland” — a compromise after months of U.S. acquisition threats.

BACKGROUND

- ◆ Trump first raised acquiring Greenland, a Danish territory, in his **first term**. After returning in **January 2025**, he vowed to make it American territory “one way or the other”, even floating the use of force.
- ◆ This incensed **Denmark** — a **founding member of NATO** — and America's European allies. Denmark reasserted sovereignty but, as a compromise, offered an **expanded U.S. military presence**.

WHAT THE DEAL PROVIDES

- ◆ **New U.S. facilities** at Narsarsuaq in the south (site of a WWII U.S. airfield) and Mestersvig in the east — adding to Pituffik Space Base (formerly Thule), where some **150 U.S. troops** are stationed.
- ◆ Even if Greenland (population ~50,000) becomes **independent**, it would respect the deal and **stay in NATO** — effectively giving the U.S. **indefinite access** to military facilities.
- ◆ **No hostile (non-NATO) power** may establish military facilities or invest in sensitive areas, mainly **rare earths** — formalising Denmark's earlier blocking of Chinese investments.
- ◆ It builds on the **1951 U.S.–Denmark defence agreement**, which gives Washington broad rights to build bases; the U.S. had **30+ bases** during WWII and the Cold War, most later shut.

ASSESSMENT

- ◆ **A retreat and a re-endorsement:** For Trump it is a retreat from the acquisition demand; yet it re-endorses the U.S. as Greenland's **primary security provider**.
- ◆ **Strategic drivers:** Concern over **China and Russia** in the Arctic (including alleged espionage); melting ice opening previously impassable routes; rare-earth resources; control of the North Atlantic approaches.



- ♦ **Outcome:** On paper, Greenland remains a **self-governing, autonomous territory** within the Kingdom of Denmark while the U.S. becomes its **strategic patron** with greater control – acceptable to Washington, NATO and Copenhagen.
- ♦ **Larger lesson:** Coercive rhetoric among allies strains alliance trust; the deal shows how sovereignty concerns can be reconciled through basing and investment-screening arrangements rather than territorial change.

A chance to retreat

The Greenland agreement allows Donald Trump to scale down his threats

President Donald Trump first raised the possibility of acquiring Greenland, a Danish territory, during his first term in office. After his return to the White House in January 2025, he doubled down on his threat, saying that he would make the island American territory one way or the other. This incensed Denmark, a founding member of NATO, as well as America's other allies in Europe. Denmark reasserted its sovereignty over the island but, as a compromise, promised to let the U.S. expand its military presence. On September 22, the leaders of the U.S., Denmark and Greenland signed a new security deal, which, according to Mr. Trump, would allow the U.S. to do "what is necessary in Greenland". For Mr. Trump, who had even raised the possibility of using force to take over the territory, the deal is a retreat from his acquisition demand. But at the same time, it re-endorses the U.S. role as the primary security provider – it already stations some 150 troops in Greenland at its Pituffik Space Base. Under the agreement, Washington would build military facilities in Narsarsuaq in the south, where the U.S. had an airfield during the Second World War, and in Mestersvåg in the east, along the Norwegian Sea.

The 1951 U.S.-Denmark security agreement provides Washington the broad rights to build military bases in the ice-covered island. During the Second World War and the Cold War, the U.S. had more than 30 bases and installations on the island. Most were shut down over the years, particularly after the Cold War. In recent years, Trump administration officials raised concerns about the growing activities of China and Russia in the Arctic, including alleged espionage. As the Arctic region's strategic profile is rising – partly because melting ice opens up previously impassable regions – the U.S. wants to consolidate its position and believes that Greenland would play a key role in that strategy. The agreement says that even if Greenland, which has a population of around 50,000, becomes independent, it would respect the deal with the U.S. and stay in NATO. In other words, this provides the U.S. indefinite access to the island's military facilities. The deal also stipulates that no hostile power (non-NATO countries) can establish military facilities in Greenland or invest in its sensitive areas (mainly rare earths). Denmark has already blocked Chinese investments in the territory and the deal effectively formalises that restriction. So, on paper, Greenland could remain a self-governing, autonomous territory within the Kingdom of Denmark, while the U.S. would be its strategic patron with greater control – a diplomatic arrangement acceptable to Washington, NATO and Denmark.

THE HINDU · PAGE 10 · EDITORIAL · GS 2

VALUE ADDITION · GREENLAND & THE ARCTIC — FACT FILE

Aspect	Details
Geography	World's largest island; about 80% covered by an ice sheet; capital Nuuk (south-west coast); lies between the Arctic and North Atlantic oceans, north-east of Canada.
Status	Autonomous territory of the Kingdom of Denmark — Home Rule 1979, Self-Government Act 2009 (recognises the right to independence); Denmark handles defence and foreign policy.
EU	Left the European Economic Community in 1985 — an Overseas Country and Territory of the EU.
Arctic Council	Est. 1996 (Ottawa Declaration), 8 member states incl. Denmark (for Greenland); India an observer since 2013 .
India's Arctic links	Arctic Policy 2022; research station Himadri at Ny-Ålesund, Svalbard (Norway), since 2008.

Aspect	Details
Strategic geography	GIUK gap (Greenland–Iceland–UK) — naval chokepoint to the North Atlantic; emerging Northwest Passage and Transpolar routes.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- ◆ Pituffik Space Base — northernmost U.S. military installation; renamed from Thule Air Base in 2023.
- ◆ Narsarsuaq (south) — WWII airfield site; Mestersvig (east coast) — new U.S. facility sites.
- ◆ 1951 U.S.–Denmark Defence of Greenland Agreement — legal basis for U.S. presence.

SYLLABUS LINK · GS 2 — Effect of policies and politics of developed countries on India's interests; GS 1 — Important geophysical phenomena and location of critical geographical features.



06 GS 1 · SOCIETY & MODERN HISTORY GS 2 · POLITY THE HINDU · PAGE 10 · EDITORIAL

A Nation's Song: Vande Mataram and the Spirit of Unity in Diversity

National symbols exist to hone the bond of citizenship — the debate over compulsion and conscience

WHY IN NEWS

After the song's **150th anniversary (2025)**, the Union government has pushed for all **six stanzas** of *Vande Mataram* to be recited; the **MHA** issued directions in 2026 and Parliament passed the **Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Act, 2026**. A petition by **T.M. Krishna** in the Supreme Court argues this amounts to compulsion.

HISTORICAL COMPACT

- ◆ Patriotism is not just reverence for a territory or flag but **solidarity with fellow citizens**; national symbols exist to hone that bond. The editorial argues that when they are modified to compel a majoritarian version, their purpose is defeated.
- ◆ **1937**: The **Congress Working Committee** resolved that only the **first two stanzas** of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Vande Mataram* be sung at national gatherings, since later stanzas invoke the motherland as Hindu deities.
- ◆ **January 24, 1950**: When *Jana Gana Mana* was adopted as the National Anthem, President **Rajendra Prasad** declared that *Vande Mataram* — though the Constitution does not mention a “national song” — would be **“honoured equally”**.
- ◆ Since then, the two-stanza version has let citizens of all faiths share a song that stirred the freedom struggle, popularised by artistes such as Lata Mangeshkar and A.R. Rahman.

WHAT HAS CHANGED

- ◆ The **2026 Amendment** extends **Section 3 of the 1971 Act** — which punishes intentionally preventing the singing of the National Anthem or disturbing an assembly engaged in it — to the **National Song**.

- ◆ *Per se*, it does not compel anyone to sing or define the song's stanzas. But read with MHA orders that prescribe an official six-stanza version, **mandate mass singing** at public functions and place it **before the Anthem**, petitioners argue it amounts to compulsion.
- ◆ **The government's stated rationale** is to accord the National Song respect on par with the Anthem during its 150th-anniversary commemoration; the editorial, however, sees the moves as imposing uniformity and passed with little debate.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL TEST: BIJOE EMMANUEL (1986)

- ◆ The Supreme Court held that **no law obliges anyone to sing** the Anthem; **standing in respectful silence is no offence**; and **executive instructions without statutory backing** cannot curtail fundamental rights (Articles 19(1)(a) and 25).
- ◆ The Court has observed that the State may decide **what** the National Song is, but **cannot penalise conscientious objectors**.
- ◆ **The editorial's ask**: apply *Bijoe Emmanuel* in full, set aside the MHA's orders, and clarify that **silence cannot be read as “disturbance”** – reverting to the freedom generation's vision of unity in diversity.
- ◆ **Other view**: Supporters hold that honouring a song central to the freedom movement is a legitimate expression of national identity, and that the law only penalises *disruption*, not non-participation – the scope of the orders is what the Court must settle.

VALUE ADDITION · NATIONAL SYMBOLS — STATIC LINKAGE

Item	Key Facts
Vande Mataram	By Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (Sanskritised Bengali), c. 1875; included in the novel <i>Anandamath</i> (1882); first sung at the 1896 INC session (Calcutta) by Rabindranath Tagore.
Jana Gana Mana	By Rabindranath Tagore; first sung at the 1911 INC Calcutta session; adopted as National Anthem on 24 January 1950 ; full version ~52 seconds.
Article 51A(a)	Fundamental Duty to respect the Constitution, its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and National Anthem – the National Song is not mentioned.
1971 Act	Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act – covers the Flag, Constitution, Anthem (Section 3); now extended to the National Song.
Shyam Narayan Chouksey	2016 interim order made playing the Anthem in cinema halls mandatory; modified in 2018 to make it optional.

PRELIMS POINTERS

- ◆ The Constitution mentions neither a “national song” nor Vande Mataram's status – it rests on the 1950 Constituent Assembly statement.
- ◆ *Bijoe Emmanuel v. State of Kerala* (1986) – three Jehovah's Witness children; right to remain silent upheld.
- ◆ 1937 CWC decision: only the first two stanzas for national occasions.

A nation's song

Vande Mataram's rendition must be in the spirit of unity in diversity

Patriotism is not just reverence for a territory or a flag but is the embodiment of solidarity with fellow citizens in a nation-state. The idea of a nation as a bond transcends family, community or faith, uniting citizens through common values and a pursuit of prosperity. National symbols and anthems exist to hone that bond. When they are changed or modified to compel citizens to accept a majoritarian version, their purpose is defeated. India's freedom fighting generation understood this. Which is why, in 1937, the Congress Working Committee resolved that only the first two stanzas of Bankim Chatterjee's *Vande Mataram* should be sung at national gatherings, since the later stanzas invoke the motherland as Hindu deities. When *Jana Gana Mana* was adopted as the National Anthem on January 24, 1950, India's first President Rajendra Prasad said that *Vande Mataram*, even though there is no mention of a "national song" in the Constitution, would be "honoured equally". Since then, the two-stanza version has allowed citizens of all faiths to partake in a song that stirred the freedom struggle and popularised by artistes such as Lata Mangeshkar and A.R. Rahman.

In the last year or so, the BJP-led Union government has sought to unsettle this inclusive compact. Since the song's 150th anniversary in 2025, it has pushed for all six stanzas to be recited. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) issued directions and circulars in 2026 and Parliament passed the Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Act, 2026 with little debate – actions that are in line with the BJP's habit of imposing uniformity and majoritarian preference on all citizens. The amendment extends Section 3 of the 1971 Act, which punishes anyone who intentionally prevents the singing of the National Anthem or disturbs an assembly engaged in such singing, to the National Song. *Per se* it does not compel anyone to sing or define the National Song or its stanzas. But read alongside the MHA orders, which prescribe an official version of all six stanzas, mandate mass singing at public functions, and place the song before the anthem, it amounts to compulsion, as a petition by T.M. Krishna in the Supreme Court has argued. The Court has rightly observed that the state may decide what the National Song is, but cannot penalise conscientious objectors in line with *Bijoe Emmanuel* (1986). This judgment held that no law obliges anyone to sing the Anthem, standing in respectful silence is no offence and executive instructions without statutory backing cannot curtail fundamental rights. The Court must apply *Bijoe Emmanuel* in full, set aside the MHA's orders and make it clear that silence cannot be read as "disturbance". By reverting to the vision of the freedom generation, the Court will do justice to the idea of unity in diversity.

THE HINDU · PAGE 10 · EDITORIAL · GS 1, 2

SYLLABUS LINK · GS 1 — Modern Indian history (freedom struggle), unity in diversity; GS 2 — Fundamental rights, judiciary, and functioning of the executive.

Practice Zone

MAINS · PRELIMS · RECAP · TRAP-SETTERS · IN THE NEWS

Mains Practice 2 QUESTIONS · 250 WORDS · 15 MARKS EACH

MAINS Q1 · GS 2 · INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

"The veto has turned the UN Security Council into a hostage of great-power rivalry." Critically examine the recent initiatives to regulate the use of the veto and suggest a way forward for Security Council reform in India's interest.

"वीटो ने संयुक्त राष्ट्र सुरक्षा परिषद को महाशक्तियों की प्रतिद्वंद्विता का बंधक बना दिया है।" वीटो के प्रयोग को विनियमित करने की हालिया पहलों का समालोचनात्मक परीक्षण कीजिए तथा भारत के हितों को ध्यान में रखते हुए सुरक्षा परिषद सुधार हेतु आगे की राह सुझाइए। (250 शब्द, 15 अंक)

Approach

Intro: UNSC's primary responsibility (Art 24) and the veto's basis in Art 27(3); cite paralysis in recent crises (Sudan, Lebanon, Gaza, Ukraine). **Body — initiatives:** France–Mexico declaration (voluntary restraint in mass atrocities; 128 states, U.K. joins); Liechtenstein initiative (UNGA debate within 10 working days); ACT group code of conduct. **Critical view:** voluntary, non-binding; Art 108 makes P5 gatekeepers; U.S., China, Russia yet to commit; risk of selective application. **India's interest:** G4 demand for expansion in both categories, Africa's Ezulwini claim, text-based IGN, India's record in peacekeeping. **Conclusion:** incremental accountability now, structural reform through a time-bound negotiating text.

Keywords to use: responsibility to protect (R2P), reformed multilateralism, accountability over prohibition, Article 108 gatekeeping, text-based negotiations.

MAINS Q2 · GS 2 · POLITY & ELECTORAL REFORMS

Political parties are the principal stakeholders of India's electoral democracy, yet they remain largely outside the ambit of transparency and accountability. Discuss the gaps in the regulation of political finance and suggest reforms.

राजनीतिक दल भारत के चुनावी लोकतंत्र के प्रमुख हितधारक हैं, फिर भी वे पारदर्शिता और जवाबदेही के दायरे से काफी हद तक बाहर हैं। राजनीतिक वित्त के विनियमन में विद्यमान कमियों की विवेचना कीजिए तथा सुधारों के सुझाव दीजिए। (250 शब्द, 15 अंक)

Approach

Intro: Parties appear only in the Tenth Schedule; exist as Art 19(1)(c) associations yet enjoy Section 13A tax exemption. **Gaps:** RUPP proliferation (ADR: 223% income rise, only 739 of 2,764 filed accounts); delisting ≠ deregistration (2002 SC ruling); electoral bonds opacity (struck down 2024); no cap on party spending (Sec 77 RPA); resistance to RTI (2013 CIC order); weak IT/ED scrutiny; ₹11,813 cr tax forgone. **Reforms:** CAG-empanelled audits under Art 324 (*Kanhiya Lal Omar*); statutory power to deregister; party expenditure ceiling; digital disclosure portal; limit tax-exempt donations; state funding debates (Indrajit Gupta Committee, 1998). **Conclusion:** clean money is the foundation of free and fair elections.

Prelims Practice 10 MCQs

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the UN Security Council veto:

1. The word “veto” is explicitly used in Article 27 of the UN Charter.
2. Under the Liechtenstein initiative, the UNGA convenes within 10 working days of a veto being cast.
3. The France–Mexico initiative seeks voluntary non-use of the veto in cases of mass atrocities.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q2. With reference to the non-permanent members of the UNSC, consider the following statements:

1. They are elected for two-year terms by the UN General Assembly by a two-thirds majority.
2. A retiring member is eligible for immediate re-election.
3. Five seats are allocated to African and Asian States.

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 |

Q3. Consider the following statements regarding the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC):

1. The CEC can be removed only in the same manner and on the same grounds as a Supreme Court judge.
2. Other Election Commissioners can be removed only on the recommendation of the CEC.
3. A notice of motion for removal must be signed by at least 50 members of the Lok Sabha.

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

Q4. Under the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023, which one of the following is **NOT** a member of the Selection Committee?

- (a) The Prime Minister
(b) The Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha
(c) A Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister
(d) The Chief Justice of India

Q5. Consider the following statements about political parties in India:

1. Political parties find mention in the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution.
2. Registration of political parties is provided under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.
3. The Election Commission has a general power to deregister any registered party that does not contest elections.

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

Q6. The case *Kanhiya Lal Omar vs R.K. Trivedi and Others*, recently in the news, is associated with:

- (a) Striking down of the Electoral Bond Scheme
(b) Article 324 as a “reservoir of authority” enabling the ECI’s Symbols Order
(c) Disqualification under the Anti-Defection Law
(d) Bringing political parties under the RTI Act

Q7. Consider the following statements:

1. The Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022 replaced the Identification of Prisoners Act, 1920.
2. The Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act, 2022 expressly authorises police to publish photographs of arrested persons on social media.
3. Section 84 of the BNSS, 2023 corresponds to Section 82 of the CrPC on proclamation of absconders.

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

Q8. With reference to Greenland, consider the following statements:

1. It is a self-governing, autonomous territory within the Kingdom of Denmark.
2. Pituffik Space Base, a U.S. military installation, is located in Greenland.
3. Greenland is a member of the European Union.

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

Q9. Consider the following pairs:

1. Himadri — Svalbard (Norway)
2. Narsarsuaq — Greenland
3. Nuuk — Iceland

How many of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two
(c) All three (d) None

Q10. Consider the following statements:

1. *Vande Mataram* was composed by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and appears in his novel *Anandamath*.
2. Article 51A(a) expressly mentions respect for the National Song as a Fundamental Duty.
3. In *Bijoe Emmanuel* (1986), the Supreme Court held that standing respectfully while not singing the National Anthem is not an offence.

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 Key & Rationale

Q	Ans	Rationale
1	b	“Veto” is not in the Charter — Art 27(3) speaks of “concurring votes of the permanent members”. Statements 2 and 3 correctly describe the two initiatives.
2	c	Article 23(2) bars immediate re-election of a retiring non-permanent member; 1 and 3 are correct.
3	a	A removal notice needs 100 Lok Sabha or 50 Rajya Sabha members — not 50 in the Lok Sabha.
4	d	The 2023 Act replaced the CJI (interim Anoop Baranwal arrangement) with a Cabinet Minister nominated by the PM.
5	a	ECI cannot generally deregister parties (<i>INC(I) v. Institute of Social Welfare</i> , 2002); it can only ‘delist’ RUPPs.
6	b	The 1985 judgment called Article 324 a “reservoir of power” and upheld the Election Symbols Order. Electoral bonds — ADR (2024); RTI — CIC order (2013).
7	c	The 2022 Act governs taking and storing measurements; it is silent on publishing or circulating them.
8	a	Greenland left the EEC in 1985; it is an Overseas Country and Territory of the EU.
9	b	Nuuk is the capital of Greenland, not Iceland (Reykjavík). Pairs 1 and 2 are correct.
10	c	Art 51A(a) mentions the National Flag and Anthem only; the National Song is not named.

Quick Revision Recap

01 · UNSC Veto: France calls the veto a “responsibility, not privilege”; France–Mexico declaration on voluntary non-use in mass atrocities now has 128 backers and the U.K.; veto rests on Art 27(3), not the word “veto”; Liechtenstein initiative (2022) — UNGA debate within 10 working days; Art 108 gives P5 a say over any Charter change; India — 8 terms, G4.

02 · CEC Removal: Fresh Opposition notice against CEC Gyanesh Kumar; March 12 notice (63 RS + 130 LS MPs, 7 charges) dismissed April 7; April 24 notice (73 RS MPs, 9 charges) pending; removal like an SC

judge — 100 LS / 50 RS signatures, 3-member inquiry committee, special majority in both Houses in the same session, President's order; grounds: proved misbehaviour or incapacity; "impeachment" only for the President (Art 61).

03 · Party Finance: Parties only in the Tenth Schedule; RUPP income up 223% (ADR); 334 RUPPs delisted (not deregistered); Sec 29A/29B/29C RPA and Sec 13A IT Act; ₹11,813 cr tax forgone; electoral bonds struck down (2024); reforms — CAG audit via Art 324, party spending cap, auto-deregistration, digital portal.

04 · Police Publicity: No statute permits or bars publishing accused persons' photos; BNSS §84 only after warrant fails; Police Act 1861 regulations for rewards; CP(I) Act 2022 silent on publication; Art 21 presumption of innocence; Rajasthan HC — "institutional humiliation"; SC (Jan 2026) — States to frame policies within three months; need for a uniform, proportionate protocol.

05 · Greenland Deal: Signed September 22 by the U.S., Denmark and Greenland; new U.S. facilities at Narsarsuaq and Mestersvig; Pituffik hosts ~150 U.S. troops; Greenland stays in NATO even if independent; bar on hostile-power bases and rare-earth investment; builds on the 1951 agreement.

06 · Vande Mataram: 1937 CWC — first two stanzas; 24 January 1950 — "honoured equally"; 2026 Amendment extends Sec 3 of the 1971 Act to the National Song; T.M. Krishna petition; *Bijoe Emmanuel* (1986) — respectful silence is no offence.

PRELIMS TRAP-SETTERS

✗ "Veto is conferred by name in the UN Charter." — **No**; it derives from the "concurring votes" clause of Article 27(3).

✗ "The CEC is impeached by Parliament." — **No**; the CEC is *removed*. Impeachment applies only to the President.

✗ "ECs enjoy the same removal protection as the CEC." — **No**; ECs are removable on the CEC's recommendation.

✗ "Delisting a RUPP means deregistration." — **No**; delisted parties can still receive contributions under Section 29B.

✗ "The CP (Identification) Act, 2022 allows publication of accused persons' photographs." — **No**; it covers only taking, storage and use for identification.

✗ "Special majority means two-thirds of total membership." — **No**; it is a majority of total membership *and* two-thirds of those present and voting.

✗ "The Constitution names Vande Mataram as the National Song." — **No**; its status rests on the Constituent Assembly statement of 24 January 1950.

Places & Persons in News

Name	Why in News
Gyanesh Kumar	Chief Election Commissioner; Opposition moving a fresh removal notice.
C.P. Radhakrishnan	Rajya Sabha Chairman (Vice-President); the April 24 notice is pending with him.
Ashok Lavasa	Former Election Commissioner and Union Finance Secretary; author of the op-ed on party finance.
T.N. Seshan	Former CEC; 1994 order on party affairs; introduced Paragraph 16A of the Symbols Order.

Name	Why in News
Rupin Sharma	IPS officer, DGP Nagaland; author of the op-ed on police publicity.
T.M. Krishna	Carnatic vocalist; petitioner in the Supreme Court against compulsion in singing the National Song.
Narsarsuaq & Mestersvig	Sites in south and east Greenland for new U.S. military facilities.
Pituffik Space Base	U.S. base in north-west Greenland with ~150 troops.
Sudan & Lebanon	Humanitarian crises cited by France to argue for regulating the veto.
Liechtenstein	Led the 2022 UNGA “veto initiative” for accountability debates.

Connect the Dots THEME MAP FOR ANSWER WRITING

Theme	Today's Stories	Static Anchor	Use In
Independence of constitutional bodies	CEC removal notice; ECI's role in party finance	Art 324, 2023 Act, <i>Anoop Baranwal</i> (2023)	GS 2 — constitutional bodies; essay on institutions
Accountability of power	UNSC veto regulation; police publicity	Art 27(3), Art 108 of UN Charter; Art 21	GS 2 IR & governance; GS 4 case studies
Rights vs State	Vande Mataram; photos of accused	Arts 19, 21, 25; <i>Bijoe Emmanuel, Puttaswamy</i>	GS 2 fundamental rights; GS 4 dignity
Transparency in democracy	RUPPs, tax exemptions, electoral bonds	RPA §§29A–29C; <i>ADR v. UoI</i> (2024)	GS 2 electoral reforms; GS 4 probity
Arctic geopolitics	U.S.–Denmark–Greenland deal	Arctic Council; India's Arctic Policy 2022	GS 2 IR; GS 1 geography; GS 3 critical minerals
Reformed multilateralism	France–Mexico and Liechtenstein initiatives	G4, IGN, Ezulwini Consensus	GS 2 — India & global institutions

Prelims Bytes QUICK FACTS FROM TODAY'S THEMES

- ◆ The UNGA has **193** members; decisions on important questions need a **two-thirds majority** of members present and voting (Article 18).
- ◆ Under **Article 324(2)**, the President appoints the CEC and other Election Commissioners.
- ◆ The **Model Code of Conduct** has no statutory backing — it evolved through consensus among parties and is enforced by the ECI.
- ◆ The **Election Symbols Order, 1968** was issued under Article 324 read with Rules 5 and 10 of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961.
- ◆ The **BNS, BNSS and BSA** came into force on **July 1, 2024**, replacing the IPC, CrPC and Evidence Act.
- ◆ Greenland's ice sheet is the **second-largest** in the world, after Antarctica's.
- ◆ The **Faroe Islands** are Denmark's other self-governing territory.
- ◆ *Anandamath* is set against the backdrop of the **Sannyasi Rebellion** in late-18th-century Bengal.
- ◆ Tagore's original *Jana Gana Mana* has **five stanzas**; only the first is the National Anthem.
- ◆ India's research station in the Arctic, **Himadri**, was set up in **2008** at Ny-Ålesund, Svalbard.