

Important Issues of the Day

- **Faiths and fences – GS 2**
- **Non-fossil capacity – GS 3**
- **S-400 – GS 2**
- **BRICS – GS 2**
- **G7 – Prelims**

Faiths and fences: On reservation benefits, religious groups

Limiting reservation benefits to specific religious groups is appropriate

Updated - March 27, 2026 01:56 am IST



READ LATER



Add as a preferred source on Google

The Supreme Court of India has reiterated a long-held, yet contested, principle of India's anti-discrimination jurisprudence — that protections and special provisions for Scheduled Caste (SC) communities will be **available only to those who practise Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism**. The March 24 Court judgment arose from a Christian pastor who sought protections under the **SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act**, in Andhra Pradesh. The

- **The Supreme Court of India has reiterated a long-held, yet contested, principle of India's anti-discrimination jurisprudence — that protections and special provisions for Scheduled Caste (SC) communities will be available only to those who practise Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism.**
The March 24 Court judgment arose from a Christian pastor who sought protections
- **under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, in Andhra Pradesh.**
- **The Court upheld a High Court decision that any member of the SC community who has converted out of the three religions specified in the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950, issued under Article 341, ceases to be an SC member.**
- **The original definition of SC included only Hindus, but was extended to Sikhs (1956) and Buddhists (1990).**

- **C communities began using religious conversion itself as an act of assertion and autonomy. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar himself led a mass conversion of SC members to Buddhism.**
- **Notably, he converted to Buddhism in 1956, the year when all SC communities practising the Sikh religion were brought under special provisions, including reservation.**
- **Under Explanation II to Article 25(2) of the Constitution, the definition of Hindu includes the Sikh, Buddhist and Jain faiths.**
- **Rules for Reconversion: If a convert wishes to reclaim their SC status by reconverting to Hinduism, Sikhism, or Buddhism, they must provide strict, unimpeachable proof.**

- **This includes demonstrating genuine renunciation of the converted religion, adoption of original caste practices, and clear acceptance back into the original caste community.**

- **Contrast with Scheduled Tribes (ST): The Supreme Court of India noted that under the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950, there is no religion-based restriction on ST status.**

- **An ST individual who converts to Christianity or Islam does not automatically lose their tribal status, provided they continue to maintain their tribal customs, identity, and are accepted by their community.**

- **Constitutional Framework: Under Article 341 of the Constitution, the President of India has the power to specify the castes, races, or tribes that are officially deemed Scheduled Castes.**

- **Once the initial Presidential list was published, only the Parliament of India has the authority to add or remove communities from the SC list through legislation.**

-

Q. Which one of the following categories of Fundamental Rights incorporates protection against untouchability as a form of discrimination? (2020)

- (a) Right against Exploitation**
- (b) Right to Freedom**
- (c) Right to Constitutional Remedies**
- (d) Right to Equality**

Tepid promises: On India and non-fossil capacity

India must enhance battery storage to fully use **non-fossil capacity**

Updated – March 27, 2026 01:44 am IST



READ LATER



Add as a preferred source on Google

India came in late, but it was worth the wait. A section of the **Paris Agreement**, under which all countries except the United States have agreed **to keep temperatures from rising beyond 2°C of pre-Industrial times**, requires updating their targets every five years from 2020. As of December last year, India and Argentina were the only two G-20 countries that had not announced updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) for 2035.

- **India came in late, but it was worth the wait. A section of the Paris Agreement, under which all countries except the United States have agreed to keep temperatures from rising beyond 2°C of pre-Industrial times, requires updating their targets every five years from 2020.**
- **As of December last year, India and Argentina were the only two G-20 countries that had not announced updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) for 2035.**
The latest set of NDCs by India commits to, by 2035, an installed electric capacity that is 60% from non-fossil sources; reducing, by 47%, the intensity of emissions per unit of GDP and having a 3.5 billion tonne-4 billion tonne CO2 carbon sink.
- **This is an update over India's 2020 NDCs: of an installed electric capacity that is 50% from non-fossil sources; reducing, by 45%, the intensity of emissions per unit of GDP and having a 2.5 billion tonne-3 billion tonne CO2 carbon sink.**

- **As a developing nation, India — a significant contributor of net emissions in recent years but below the world average in per capita emissions — will not cut annual emissions but promises to emit less carbon per unit of energy and source more of its power from non-fossil sources.**
 - **It has also committed to being net zero by 2070 through increasing its tree and forest cover (which absorb CO₂) and the recently announced technology pathways such as carbon capture, utilisation, and storage.**
 - **India already met its 2030 non-fossil target last year, with 52% capacity installed.**
 - **The rub is that only about 25% of the power generated is non-fossil due to insufficient battery storage which is unable to harness all the available solar and wind power.**
- The Power Ministry's National Generation Adequacy Plan itself expects 70% of the projected**
- **installed 1,121 GW capacity by 2035-36 to be non-fossil.**

- **It is tempting to laud India for embellishing its green commitments amidst a war in WestAsia that has squeezed supply of a vital fossil fuel.**
- **However, without actual improvements in generated supply, these numbers mean little.**
- **With the war demonstrating the chokehold that a fossil fuel has, India must exhibit more urgency toward enhancing battery storage and improving its electric grid to better utilise existing non-fossil capacity.**

The term 'Intended Nationally Determined Contributions' is sometimes seen in the news in the context of

(a) pledges made by the European countries to rehabilitate refugees from the war-affected Middle East

(b) plan of action outlined by the countries of the world to combat climate change

(c) capital contributed by the member countries in the establishment of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

(d) plan of action outlined by the countries of the world regarding Sustainable Development Goals

GS 2

S-400 deliveries accelerated as India enhances air defence capability

India signed a \$5.43 billion deal with Russia in 2018 for five squadrons of the S-400 system

Updated - March 26, 2026 11:08 pm IST - New Delhi

- **Amid ongoing tensions in West Asia, India is set to receive the remaining two units of the S-400 air defence system from Russia this year, with one expected as early as next month and the final delivery scheduled for November.**
- **India signed a \$5.43 billion deal with Russia in 2018 for five squadrons of the S-400 system. So far, three units have already been inducted into service, with the remaining two now expected to be delivered within the stipulated timeframe. In Indian service, the S-400 has been named 'Sudarshan Chakra'**
- **The system is capable of engaging aerial threats at ranges of up to 400 km, including fighter jets, ballistic missiles, and drones.**
-

- **Detection range: up to 600 km; tracks up to 300 targets simultaneously.**
Advanced phased-array and panoramic radars offer 360° coverage and stealth
- **detection.**
Simultaneously engages 36 targets; guides 72–160 missiles at once; Can neutralize threats flying at speeds up to Mach 14 (4.8 km/s or 17,000 km/h).
- **Response time: 9-10 seconds.**
-
- **40N6: Long-range missile (400 kms)**
- **48N6: Medium-range missile (250 kms)**
- **9M96E2: Short to Medium-range missile (120 kms)**
- **9M96E: Short-range missile (40 kms)**

Willing to work with India for ‘common interests’ in Global South, BRICS: China

Following a meeting between Foreign Minister Wang Yi and outgoing Indian ambassador Pradeep Kumar Rawat in Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian says the two sides view each other as “development opportunities”

- **China is willing to work with India for upholding “common interests” in Global South and the BRICS grouping, said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) of China on Thursday (March 26, 2026).**
- **Following a meeting between Foreign Minister Wang Yi and outgoing Indian ambassador Pradeep Kumar Rawat in Beijing, Chinese MoFA spokesperson Lin Jian said the two sides view each other as “development opportunities”.**
- **India is the current chair of BRICS and the next BRICS summit is scheduled to be held in India.**
- **He said India and China should deepen exchanges and support each other in platforms like BRICS and the SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) as the world deals with “turbulence, unilateralism and protectionism”.**

- **BRICS brings together eleven major emerging markets and developing countries of the world: Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and United Arab Emirates.**
BRIC was formalised at the first meeting of BRIC Foreign Ministers on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York in 2006. The inaugural BRICS Summit was convened in Yekaterinburg, Russia, in 2009.
- **It was agreed to expand BRIC into BRICS with the inclusion of South Africa at the BRIC Foreign Ministers' meeting in New York in 2010.**
Accordingly, South Africa attended the 3rd BRICS Summit in Sanya in 2011.
- **Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and UAE became full member of BRICS from January 2024 and Indonesia in January 2025.**

- **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation is an Eurasian intergovernmental organisation and economic and security alliance.**
Origin: Began as the “Shanghai Five” (1996)—China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan—focusing on resolving border disputes and fostering security.
- **In 2001, Uzbekistan joined, and the group evolved into the SCO with a wider mandate of cooperation.**
- **SCO mainly focuses on regional development and security issues like regional terrorism, ethnic separatism, religious extremism, etc.**
Official languages: Russian and Chinese.
-

- **10 Members: China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India, Pakistan, Iran, Belarus.**
- **India and Pakistan joined the grouping in 2017 in its first round of expansion.**
- **Observers: Afghanistan, Mongolia.**
- **Dialogue Partners: Turkey, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Azerbaijan, etc.**

The Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) is a permanent organ of the SCO that serves to promote cooperation of member states against the three evils of terrorism, separatism and extremism.

It is headquartered in Tashkent.

The head of RATS is elected for a three-year term.

•

•

Prelims

Jaishankar, French counterpart discuss Iran, Hormuz at G7 meet

The participation of External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar in the G7 meetings signified “the importance France attaches to closely associating India — currently holding the BRICS presidency — with its G7 presidency”, the French government said

- **External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar arrived in France on a two-day visit to represent India as a partner country at the Foreign Ministers' Meeting of the G7 (Group of Seven) advanced economies.**
- **The Minister held bilateral talks with his French counterpart Jean-Noël Barrot in Abbaye des-Vaux-de-Cernay on Thursday (March 26, 2026), which included an “in depth” discussion on West Asia as per the French government’s readout of the meeting.**
- **The participation of Mr. Jaishankar in the G7 meetings signified “the importance France attaches to closely associating India — currently holding the BRICS presidency — with its G7 presidency”, the French government said.**
- **The G7 (Group of Seven) is an informal forum of the world’s most advanced economies — France, Germany, Italy, the UK, Japan, the US, and Canada.**

- **The European Union (EU) participates as a non-enumerated member, with leaders from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, and United Nations (UN) often invited to its meetings.**
- **Origin & Evolution: The G7 was formed in 1975 as the G6 (US, UK, France, West Germany, Japan, Italy) in response to the 1973 oil crisis and financial turmoil, with Canada joining in 1976 to make it G7. The year 2025 marked the 50th anniversary of the G7.**

It became G8 in 1997 with the inclusion of Russia, but reverted to G7 in 2014 after
- **Russia's expulsion over the annexation of Crimea.**
- **Informal grouping: No formal treaty, no permanent secretariat or bureaucracy.**
- **Rotating Presidency: Each member hosts and leads discussions in turn.**

G20

G8

G7

Germany



U.K.



France



Canada



U.S.



Italy



Japan



Russia



Turkey



European Union



Argentina



Brazil



South Korea



Mexico



China



Indonesia



Saudi Arabia



Australia



India



South Africa

