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Headlines:

- Tribunal Reforms Bill, 2026: Ensuring Independence of Tribunals
- Regional Parties in India: Electoral Setbacks vs Enduring Relevance
- Strengthening Protection and Rehabilitation of SC/ST Atrocity Victims
- India-China Border: Peace and Tranquillity along the LAC
- Parliamentary Deadlock and Change of State Name



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1. Tribunal Reforms Bill, 2026: Ensuring Independence of Tribunals

GS Paper II | Polity & Governance | Judicial Reforms

Why in News?

- The Tribunal Reforms Bill, 2026 was passed by the Lok Sabha on 10 August and the Rajya Sabha on 11 August 2026.
- It seeks to reform the tribunal framework amid continuing concerns over executive control, appointments, tenure and institutional independence.

Constitutional & Judicial Context

- **S.P. Sampath Kumar (1987):** Recognised tribunals as alternative adjudicatory mechanisms while requiring constitutional safeguards.
- **L. Chandra Kumar (1997):** Held that judicial review by High Courts and the Supreme Court is part of the Basic Structure.
- **Rojer Mathew (2019):** Supported an independent National Tribunals Commission (NTC) for appointments, administration and oversight.
- **Madras Bar Association (2025):** Supreme Court struck down provisions of the 2021 framework and directed the Union to establish an NTC, emphasising tribunal independence and freedom from executive control.

Key Provisions

- Restores five-year tenure for tribunal members.
- Provides uniform service conditions.
- Introduces a National Tribunals Data Grid to strengthen information and performance management.
- Protects pending appointments from being stranded.
- Seeks to establish an institutional framework for more consistent functioning of tribunals.

Key Concerns

- **Limited NTC autonomy:** The Centre retains significant influence over the Commission's appointments, finances and administration.
- **Delegated legislation:** Section 14 leaves important matters such as qualifications, selection and service conditions to executive rules, raising concerns about excessive delegation.
- **Complaint mechanism:** Under Section 16, a Ministry initially screens complaints before they proceed to the NTC, potentially affecting institutional independence.
- **Removal safeguards:** Executive influence over appointment and removal can undermine the security of tenure and impartiality of tribunal members.

- **Separation of powers:** Tribunals deciding disputes involving government authorities require sufficient insulation from the very executive machinery whose decisions they may scrutinise.
- **Access to justice:** Effective tribunals can provide specialised, faster and less formal adjudication, reducing the burden on constitutional courts.

Way Forward

- Establish a genuinely independent NTC with functional and financial autonomy.
- Ensure transparent, merit-based and judicially insulated appointments.
- Specify essential qualifications and eligibility criteria in the parent legislation rather than leaving them entirely to executive rules.
- Provide strong safeguards against arbitrary removal of tribunal members.
- Ensure independent control over finances, infrastructure and administration.
- Maintain a balance between expert adjudication, accountability and judicial independence.

2. Regional Parties in India: Electoral Setbacks vs Enduring Relevance

GS Paper II | Indian Polity & Governance | Federalism | Electoral Politics

Why in News?

- Recent electoral setbacks and defections involving regional parties have triggered debate over whether they are losing relevance in Indian politics.
- The proposed “One Nation, One Election” framework has further raised questions about the future political space for regional parties.

Electoral Relevance

- **Vote share ≠ Seat share:** Under the First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) system, small changes in vote distribution can produce disproportionately large changes in seats and governments.
- Regional parties have consistently secured around one-third of the Lok Sabha vote share, despite electoral fluctuations.
- Their importance is particularly evident in State Assembly elections, where voters often show stronger preferences for State-level political identities.
- Hence, electoral defeat or fewer governments led by regional parties does not necessarily imply a declining electoral support base.

Role in Indian Federalism

- **Regional representation:** Articulate State-specific linguistic, cultural, economic and developmental interests.

- **Federal bargaining:** Influence national policymaking by negotiating State-specific interests within coalition politics.
- **Political diversity:** Strengthen representation of India's socio-cultural and regional diversity.
- **Power balancing:** Can act as a political counterweight to excessive centralisation of political power.

Emerging Challenges

- **Defections:** Organisational fragmentation can weaken cadre networks and leadership structures.
- **Leadership centralisation:** Personality-driven politics and factionalism may undermine institutional resilience.
- **One Nation, One Election:** Simultaneous elections may increase the salience of national issues and potentially reduce electoral space for State-specific political agendas, though the actual impact remains uncertain.
- **Organisational renewal:** The key challenge is increasingly institutional strengthening rather than merely recovering electoral seats.

Way Forward

- Strengthen internal party democracy, cadre development and institutional leadership.
- Improve responsiveness to regional developmental aspirations.
- Ensure transparent political funding and institutional accountability.
- Preserve meaningful regional representation and federal bargaining within India's democratic framework.
- Maintain a balance between national integration and India's federal diversity.

3. Strengthening Protection and Rehabilitation of SC/ST Atrocity Victims

GS Paper II | Social Justice | Vulnerable Sections | Constitutional & Statutory Bodies

Why in News?

- A Centre-appointed task force has recommended amendments to the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Rules, focusing on stronger relief, rehabilitation and victim protection.
- Separately, the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) has proposed measures addressing tribal land alienation, livelihood protection and counter-FIRs.

Key Recommendations

- **Enhanced compensation:** Increase relief and rehabilitation amounts, currently ranging from ₹85,000 to ₹8.25 lakh, in line with inflation.
- **Relief & Rehabilitation Cells:** Establish dedicated cells in States/UTs for coordinated victim support.
- **Faster accountability:** Send FIRs and charge sheets to concerned government officials within 24 hours.
- **Counselling:** Introduce counselling for victims, dependants and accused to address psychosocial and rehabilitation needs.
- **Victim protection:** Strengthen safeguards against counter-FIRs against persons reporting atrocities.

Tribal Rights Dimension

- Tribal land rights: NCST has proposed measures to protect the livelihoods of ST communities whose lands have been alienated and who are involved in prolonged legal disputes.
- This addresses wider concerns of land alienation, displacement and livelihood insecurity among tribal communities.

Constitutional & Legal Framework

- **Article 17:** Abolition of untouchability.
- **Article 46:** Promotion of educational and economic interests of SCs/STs and protection from social injustice.
- **Articles 338 & 338A:** Constitutional Commissions for SCs and STs.
- **SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989:** Provides a specialised framework for preventing atrocities and ensuring relief and rehabilitation.
- **2018 Amendment:** Strengthened the Act by restoring immediate arrest provisions and restricting anticipatory bail in specified circumstances.

Significance & Challenges

- Strengthens victim-centric justice, dignity, access to justice and institutional accountability.
- Implementation gap: Delays in investigation, weak prosecution, inadequate rehabilitation infrastructure and limited awareness can reduce the effectiveness of statutory safeguards.
- Effective implementation requires adequate funding, sensitive policing, speedy investigation and robust monitoring, while ensuring due process.

Way Forward

- Ensure inflation-indexed and timely compensation.

- Strengthen dedicated relief, rehabilitation and legal-support mechanisms.
- Protect complainants from intimidation while safeguarding due process.
- Address tribal land alienation through speedy and accessible dispute resolution.
- Establish time-bound monitoring and accountability mechanisms for investigation, compensation and rehabilitation.

4. India–China Border: Peace and Tranquillity along the LAC

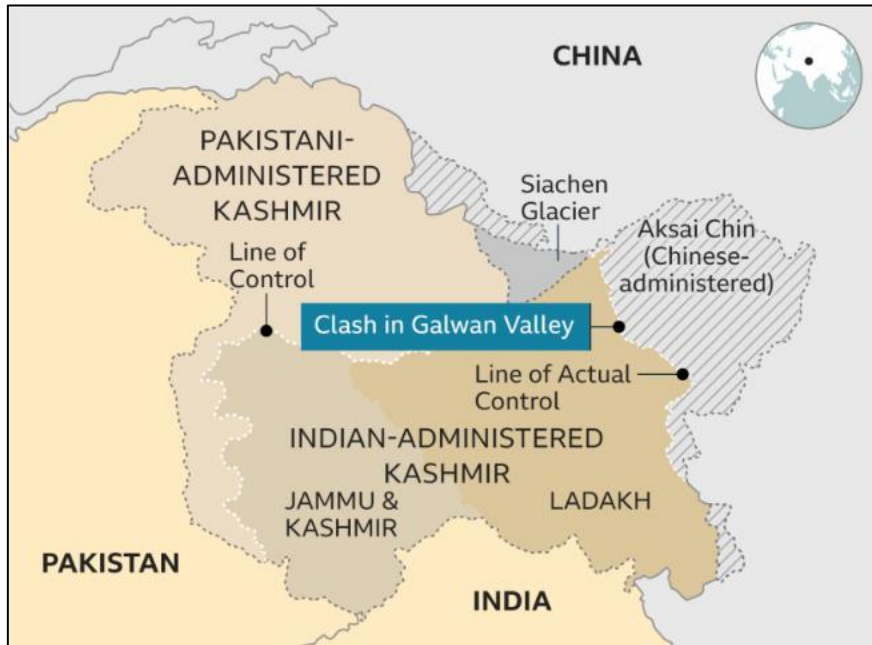
GS Paper II | International Relations | India–China Relations; GS Paper III | Internal Security | Border Management

Why in News?

- Amid fresh allegations of PLA incursions in Upper Subansiri, Arunachal Pradesh, India reiterated that peace and tranquillity along the border are essential for stable bilateral relations.
- The Army had rejected similar allegations in June as incorrect, while the latest claims are being verified.
- The issue comes soon after the 36th Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) meeting on August 6, 2026.

Strategic Context

- **LAC:** The Line of Actual Control remains disputed due to differing perceptions of its alignment and the unresolved India–China boundary.
- **Arunachal Pradesh:** The eastern sector is strategically sensitive due to China's territorial claims and growing infrastructure and military presence in Tibet.
- **Bilateral linkage:** India maintains that the state of border affairs will reflect on the broader India–China relationship.



Border Management

- **Indian Army & ITBP:** Maintain vigilance and border domination along the Himalayan frontier.
- **Border infrastructure:** Roads, bridges, communications and logistics improve rapid mobilisation and operational preparedness.
- **Surveillance:** Enhanced intelligence, satellite monitoring and technological surveillance can strengthen early detection.
- **Vibrant border villages:** Development of border settlements can strengthen local presence, connectivity and border resilience.

Diplomatic & Military Mechanisms

- **36th WMCC Meeting (August 6, 2026):** India and China reiterated the importance of maintaining peace and tranquillity and agreed to continue using existing diplomatic and military channels.
- **Local commander-level meetings:** Facilitate direct communication and help manage localised tensions.
- **Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs):** Regular military and diplomatic communication can reduce miscalculation, accidental escalation and confrontation.

Broader India–China Relations

- **Economic dimension:** Border stability creates conditions for managing trade, investment and wider economic engagement.
- **Strategic balance:** India must simultaneously pursue border security, diplomatic engagement and economic resilience while managing competition with China.

- **National security:** Diplomatic engagement must remain aligned with safeguarding territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Way Forward

- Maintain sustained diplomatic and military communication.
- Resolve outstanding boundary issues through dialogue and established mechanisms.
- Strengthen surveillance, infrastructure and logistical preparedness along the LAC.
- Institutionalise effective CBMs and crisis-management mechanisms.
- Combine deterrence with diplomatic engagement to preserve peace while safeguarding India's territorial interests.

5. Parliamentary Deadlock and Change of State Name

GS Paper II | Indian Polity & Governance | Parliament | Federalism

Why in News?

- Amid continued Government–Opposition deadlock, the Lok Sabha passed the Kerala (Alteration of Name) Bill, 2026 and the National Cooperative Development Corporation (Amendment) Bill, 2026 without substantive debate.
- The episode has renewed concerns regarding parliamentary scrutiny, legislative deliberation, executive accountability and disruptions.

Parliamentary Functioning

- **Legislative scrutiny:** Parliament is not merely a voting body; debate enables scrutiny, identifies unintended consequences and improves legislative quality.
- **Voice vote:** Passing a Bill by voice vote is a recognised parliamentary procedure; the concern arises when substantive legislative deliberation is absent.
- **Role of Opposition:** Effective parliamentary democracy requires meaningful space for Opposition scrutiny and constructive debate.
- **Committee scrutiny:** Parliamentary committees facilitate expert consultation, stakeholder inputs and clause-by-clause examination of legislation.

Key Concerns

- **Erosion of deliberative democracy:** Repeated disruptions or passage without adequate debate can weaken Parliament's deliberative function.
- **Weak committee scrutiny:** Limited examination can reduce opportunities for evidence-based legislative review.
- **Executive accountability:** Disruptions and rushed proceedings may weaken Parliament's ability to hold the executive accountable.

- **Majoritarian decision-making:** Numerical majority should not substitute for deliberation and consensus-building, particularly on matters involving State identity.
- **Efficiency vs scrutiny:** Legislative efficiency is necessary, but it should not come at the cost of meaningful parliamentary scrutiny.

Constitutional Basis for Renaming a State

- **Article 3:** Parliament can form new States and alter the area, boundaries or names of existing States.
- **Presidential recommendation:** A Bill under Article 3 requires the President's recommendation for introduction.
- **State Legislature:** The President refers the Bill to the concerned State Legislature for its views within a specified period.
- **Non-binding views:** The State Legislature's views are not binding on Parliament.
- **Article 4:** Laws made under Articles 2 and 3 may contain consequential provisions and are not deemed constitutional amendments under Article 368.

Federalism & Broader Significance

- **Federal balance:** State renaming involves the constitutional relationship between Union authority and State consultation.
- **Regional identity:** Names may carry significant linguistic, cultural and historical identities.
- **Cooperative sector:** The NCDC amendment provides a secondary dimension concerning cooperative development and institutional support.

Way Forward

- Ensure adequate debate and committee scrutiny for important legislation.
- Promote structured Government–Opposition dialogue to minimise disruptions.
- Strengthen parliamentary mechanisms for legislative accountability and deliberation.
- Encourage consensus-building on issues involving regional and cultural identity.
- Balance legislative efficiency with democratic scrutiny.

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