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02ND OCTOBER 2026

Headlines:

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- Supreme Court Orders Fresh Probe into 2012 Karnataka Rape-Murder Case
- Malacca–Singapore Model for Resolving the Strait of Hormuz Crisis
- India's EV Transition: Two- and Three-Wheelers Lead, Cars Lag
- India Joins Partners for Multilateralism (P4M) Initiative



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1. Women's Safety in Public Spaces: From Restrictions to Responsive Governance

GS Paper: GS-I – Society | GS-II – Governance, Police & Justice Delivery

Why in News?

- Recent sexual assault cases in Delhi have renewed concerns over the effectiveness of measures introduced after the 2012 Nirbhaya case.
- NCRB data cited in the article indicates a substantial rise in reported crimes against women between 2012 and 2024.

Constitutional Framework

- **Article 14:** Equality before law.
- **Article 15(3):** Permits special provisions for women and children.
- **Article 21:** Protects life, dignity and personal liberty.

Key Concerns

- **Implementation gap:** Safe City projects, Mission Shakti, Nirbhaya Fund initiatives, One Stop Centres and helplines require effective last-mile implementation.
- **Technology ≠ safety:** CCTV, lighting and emergency systems are effective only when functional, monitored and integrated with rapid response.
- **Justice deficit:** Delayed investigation and trials can undermine deterrence and access to justice.
- **Unsafe public spaces:** Parks, public transport and poorly monitored urban areas require targeted safety interventions.
- **Gendered restrictions:** Asking women to avoid certain places or timings shifts the responsibility for safety from institutions to women.

Way Forward: Prevention–Protection–Prosecution

- **Prevention:** Regular safety audits of vulnerable locations; improve lighting, transport and urban design.
- **Protection:** Gender-sensitive policing, functional emergency systems and rapid response mechanisms.
- **Prosecution:** Improve investigation quality, victim support and timely adjudication.
- Shift from scheme-based to outcome-based policing, with measurable targets and institutional accountability.
- Address patriarchal norms, gender socialisation and violence-supportive attitudes through education and community interventions.

2. Gandhian Non-Violence: From India's Freedom Struggle to a Global Political Method

GS Paper: GS-I – Modern Indian History | GS-II – International Relations

Why in News?

- Reflections on Gandhi's unfinished global mission highlight the continuing relevance of Ahimsa and Satyagraha beyond India's freedom struggle.

- Gandhian methods influenced several civil-rights and non-violent movements across the world.

From Indian Struggle to Global Method

- Gandhi transformed non-violence from an ethical principle into an organised method of mass political action.
- Satyagraha combined truth, non-violence, civil disobedience, voluntary suffering and moral persuasion.
- His constructive programme complemented resistance by focusing on social reform, self-reliance and community participation.
- Its strength lay in enabling mass participation, political visibility and moral pressure.

Global Influence

- U.S. Civil Rights Movement: Martin Luther King Jr., Bayard Rustin and James Lawson drew upon Gandhian ideas.
- The Montgomery Bus Boycott demonstrated the adaptation of non-violent resistance to a different political and social context.
- Gandhian ideas subsequently contributed to wider thinking on civil resistance, peacebuilding and conflict transformation.

Contemporary Relevance

- Non-violent action can provide tools for addressing asymmetric power relations through collective mobilisation.
- It remains relevant to democratic protest, human dignity, reconciliation and peacebuilding.
- India's association with Gandhian values also contributes to its soft power and diplomatic identity.

Limitations

- Non-violence is not universally successful; outcomes depend on political context, organisation, public support and the response of authorities.
- Its application to contemporary conflicts should therefore be assessed contextually rather than treated as a predetermined solution.

Way Forward

- **Institutionalise dialogue:** Strengthen mediation, negotiation and peaceful dispute-resolution mechanisms before conflicts escalate.
- **Promote civic education:** Incorporate constitutional values, non-violence, empathy and peaceful dissent into education and public discourse.
- **Strengthen democratic spaces:** Ensure peaceful protest, civil society participation and freedom of expression within constitutional limits.

- **Use non-violent approaches in peacebuilding:** Integrate community participation, reconciliation and restorative approaches into conflict-resolution efforts.

3. Electoral Roll Integrity: Preventing Misuse of Form 7

GS Paper: GS-II – Polity & Governance | Electoral Reforms

Why in News?

- During the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, reports of large numbers of Form 7 applications have raised concerns about possible misuse of the deletion/objection mechanism.
- The issue highlights the need to balance accuracy of electoral rolls with protection against wrongful exclusion.

What is Form 7?

- Form 7 is used to object to a proposed inclusion or seek deletion of an existing electoral-roll entry. Grounds include death, under-age status, permanent shifting, duplicate enrolment or non-citizenship. Election Commission of India
- Form 7 can be submitted through the ECI's online voter-services platforms as well as through the prescribed process. Election Commission of India
- Role of ERO: The Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) processes claims and objections and must follow the prescribed electoral-roll procedure before deciding on deletion.

Constitutional & Legal Framework

- **Article 324:** Vests the ECI with superintendence, direction and control of elections.
- **Article 326:** Provides for elections to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies on the basis of adult suffrage.
- **RPA, 1950 + Registration of Electors Rules, 1960:** Provide the statutory framework for preparation, revision and correction of electoral rolls. Election Commission of India
- **Section 31, RPA 1950:** Knowingly making a false statement or declaration in connection with the preparation, revision or correction of an electoral roll, or inclusion/exclusion of an entry, is punishable with imprisonment up to one year, fine, or both. India Code

Key Concerns

- **Mass/Fraudulent Applications:** Unusual volumes of deletion objections can burden electoral administration and potentially create risks of wrongful exclusion.
- **Due Process:** A deletion request must be appropriately scrutinised; filing Form 7 itself does not establish that a voter should be deleted.
- **Digital Vulnerability:** Online submission improves accessibility but also requires safeguards against coordinated or automated misuse.
- **Institutional Accountability:** Unusual patterns of additions or deletions require systematic verification, monitoring and transparent reporting.

Way Forward

- **Risk-based scrutiny:** Use data analytics to flag unusually high Form 7 activity, abnormal geographic patterns and other anomalies for enhanced verification.
- **Transparent disclosure:** Publish aggregated Form 6, Form 7 and Form 8 data to facilitate public scrutiny and independent analysis.
- **Effective deterrence:** Investigate demonstrably false declarations and enforce the applicable provisions of electoral law.
- **Digital safeguards:** Strengthen authentication, audit trails and anomaly-detection mechanisms while ensuring accessibility for genuine electors.

4. Vande Mataram and Freedom of Conscience: Balancing National Symbols with Fundamental Rights

GS Paper: GS-II – Polity & Constitution

Why in News?

- The ongoing debate over Vande Mataram, its prescribed version and legal protection has revived questions concerning national symbols, patriotism and freedom of conscience.
- The Supreme Court is examining the constitutional challenge; its observations should be distinguished from a final judgment.

Historical & Constitutional Context

- Vande Mataram, composed by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, became an important symbol of India's freedom struggle.
- In 1937, the Congress Working Committee adopted the first two stanzas for national gatherings, taking into account concerns regarding the religious imagery in the later stanzas.
- On January 24, 1950, the Constituent Assembly adopted Jana Gana Mana as the National Anthem and accorded Vande Mataram a position of honour, recognising its historic role in the freedom struggle.

Fundamental Rights & Duties

- **Article 19(1)(a):** Freedom of speech and expression.
- **Article 25:** Freedom of conscience and freedom to profess, practise and propagate religion.
- **Article 14:** Equality before law.
- **Article 51A(a):** Fundamental Duty to respect the Constitution, its ideals and institutions, the National Flag and the National Anthem.
- **Bijoe Emmanuel v. State of Kerala (1986):** The Supreme Court held that students who respectfully stood during the National Anthem but did not sing it on grounds of conscience could not be compelled to sing.

Core Constitutional Issue

- The debate involves balancing respect for national symbols with:
 - Freedom of conscience;
 - Religious and cultural pluralism;
 - Individual autonomy;
 - Constitutional patriotism.

Way Forward

- Promote respect for national symbols through civic education while ensuring that legal obligations remain consistent with fundamental rights.
- Any restriction on individual liberty should have a legitimate aim, legal basis and constitutional justification, and satisfy proportionality.
- Preserve national symbols while respecting India's pluralistic social fabric.
- Encourage patriotism rooted in constitutional values, dignity, fraternity and equal citizenship.

5. FCRA Amendment Bill, 2026: Parliamentary Scrutiny and Civil Society Regulation

GS Paper: GS-II – Polity & Governance | Parliament & Parliamentary Committees

Why in News?

- The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026, introduced in the Lok Sabha on March 25, 2026, was referred to a 31-member Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) on August 12 for detailed examination.
- Concerns have been raised regarding the adequacy of stakeholder consultation during the Committee's scrutiny.

FCRA Framework & Proposed Changes

- The FCRA, 2010 regulates the acceptance and utilisation of foreign contributions by individuals, associations and organisations.
- The framework seeks to ensure that foreign contributions do not adversely affect national interest, sovereignty, integrity and public order, while enabling legitimate organisations to function transparently.
- The Bill proposes provisions concerning vesting, supervision, management and disposal of funds and assets when FCRA registration is cancelled, surrendered or ceases.
- It also proposes a Designated Authority and changes relating to penalties and investigation.

Key Constitutional & Governance Issues

- **Parliamentary scrutiny:** A JPC enables detailed examination, evidence-gathering and stakeholder consultation, strengthening deliberative law-making.

- **Associational freedom:** Regulation must balance national-interest concerns with Article 19(1)(c), which guarantees the right to form associations or unions.
- **Due process & proportionality:** Regulatory action affecting registration, funds or assets should involve clear procedures, reasoned decisions, hearing opportunities and effective remedies.
- **Property & remedies:** PRS has raised concerns regarding the adequacy of appeal mechanisms in certain situations involving renewal and vesting of assets.

Way Forward

- Ensure adequate time and meaningful stakeholder consultation before finalising JPC recommendations.
- Provide procedural safeguards, reasoned decisions and effective avenues of appeal against adverse regulatory action.
- Apply proportionality while balancing national security, financial transparency and associational freedom.
- Strengthen parliamentary committees as institutions of evidence-based, consultative and accountable law-making.

Effective FCRA regulation requires a balance between national security and financial accountability on one hand, and constitutional freedoms, due process and a legitimate civil-society space on the other.