

PSIR & GS-2

DAILY BRIEF

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Briefs, scans the best academic platforms, national newspapers & leading think tanks to pick the most relevant articles & research. It converts them into crisp, high-impact points you can directly use in your mains answers.



PSIR OPTIONAL BY
Amit Pratap Singh
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Daily Brief · Source Plan (Monday to Saturday)

Common Daily

The Hindu · *The Indian Express* · *Deccan Herald* · *The Statesman*

read every day, alongside the day's sources below

Day-wise Sources

Monday

ORF (*Observer Research Foundation*) · *Foreign Affairs* · *The Diplomat*

Tuesday

MP-IDSA · *EPW* (*Economic & Political Weekly*) · *Gateway House*

Wednesday

Firstpost · *South Asia Monitor* · *ICWA* (*Indian Council of World Affairs*)

Thursday

ORF · *Frontline* · *Bar & Bench* · *World Focus*

Friday

MP-IDSA · *Carnegie Endowment* · *VIF* (*Vivekananda International Foundation*)

Saturday

Firstpost · *Project Syndicate* · *The Economist*

As per relevance, articles from other relevant sources such as NatStrat, ThePrint and The Telegraph (India) will also be included.

A Court divided by its own architecture

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THE  HINDU

A Court divided by its own architecture

The Court needs structural reform to strengthen constitutional adjudication and consistency

Published – October 03, 2026 12:25 am IST



SUHRITH PARTHASARATHY



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Context

A two-judge Bench of the Supreme Court split on 23 September over whether it could even hear the challenge to the 2023 law on appointing Election Commissioners, and Parthasarathy uses the split to ask how the Court is built to decide constitutional questions.

Facts

■ **Split verdict :** *On 23 September, Justices Dipankar Datta and Satish Chandra Sharma divided not on the merits of the challenge to the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023, but on whether a Bench of two could decide it at all.*

■ **Selection committee :** *The 2023 Act gives the choice to the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister, replacing the interim arrangement of Anoop Baranwal vs Union of India (2023), under which the Chief Justice of India was the third member.*

■ **Size of the Court :** *The Court began in January 1950 with six judges against a sanctioned strength of eight; it now has a sanctioned strength of 38, sits largely in Benches of two and spends most of its time on special leave petitions.*

Analytical Crux

Article 145(3) turns on a single test, whether a case raises a substantial question of constitutional interpretation, and the newness of a statute is no part of it. The Anoop Baranwal case had already read Article 324 to require that appointments to the Election Commission be insulated from exclusive executive control, so testing the 2023 Act means applying settled law, which was Justice Datta's position. The deeper fault is structural: a court of 38 judges sitting in Benches of two works less like one constitutional court than like many courts, each speaking in its own voice, as Nick Robinson has argued. Long delay then presents the Court with a *fait accompli*, because Commissioners appointed under the challenged law will have conducted several elections before any verdict. A permanent Constitution Bench needs no constitutional amendment, but it will command confidence only if its members are chosen under transparent roster rules fixed in advance, since on a court of 38 judges the power to assign Benches can shape outcomes. The piece links judicial independence, *stare decisis* and the autonomy of the Election Commission in a single argument about institutional design.

Verbatim Quotes

"Otherwise, the gravest questions facing the republic will continue to be answered only once the answers have ceased to matter."

- Suhrith Parthasarathy

CEC: Not Just the Individual



Reader Mode

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CEC: Not Just the Individual

It is imperative to overhaul the system of appointment and hold the EC accountable.

In the wake of the nationwide protests against the Election Commission of India's (EC's) malperformance, following the arbitrary removal of voters' names from the electoral rolls, and the startling revelation, brought out by an investigative report by the *Indian Express* on 23 September, that the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) took unilateral decisions without consulting his fellow Election Commissioners, should CEC Gyanesh Kumar resign? The principal Opposition party demands it, as do other political parties and civil society groups. That would be ideal—Caesar's wife must be above suspicion, we know. But it is not so much the person as the process of the EC's selection, and the arbitrariness of the Commission's working, that must change. There are plenty of senior civil servants who can outdo Gyanesh Kumar in whatever he does to make the ruling party deploy its talking heads in his aggressive defence. If Tweedledee goes. only to be replaced by Tweedledumber. what is the net gain

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Editorials

Vol. 61, Issue No. 40, 03 Oct, 2026

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Context

After nationwide protests over the deletion of voters' names and a report that the Chief Election Commissioner acted without consulting his colleagues, the EPW argues that the selection and accountability of the Election Commission need reform, whoever holds the office.

Facts

■ **Trigger** : An Indian Express investigative report of 23 September revealed that the Chief Election Commissioner had taken unilateral decisions without consulting his fellow Election Commissioners.

■ **Immunity clause** : The 2023 Act protects members of the Commission for "any act, thing or word, committed, done or spoken by him" in the discharge of official duty; the editorial calls this lifelong immunity and wants it undone.

■ **Citizenship** : The Supreme Court allowed the Commission to determine citizenship "for the limited purpose of assessing eligibility to vote"; the editorial holds that the Commission's only task is to exclude from the roll anyone positively proved to be a non-citizen.

Analytical Crux

The editorial moves the question from whether Gyanesh Kumar should resign to how the Commission is chosen, since a successor picked by the same panel changes little. A committee of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and a Cabinet Minister gives the government two of three votes; restoring the Chief Justice of India as the third member would make a non-partisan Commission more likely, though it would not ensure one. Accountability matters as much as appointment, and the EPW argues that a body created by the will of the people must answer to them through a committee of elected representatives. On the electoral rolls, it calls the Court's decision to let the Commission test citizenship the gravest error, because the Commission is not the competent authority for that task. Treating citizenship as a rebuttable presumption, as Justice Madan Lokur framed it, keeps the burden of proof on the state and off the voter. Read it with Article 324, the 2023 appointment law and the long-running debate on whether voting is a fundamental or a statutory right.

Verbatim Quotes

"But it is not so much the person as the process of the EC's selection, and the arbitrariness of the Commission's working, that must change."

– EPW Editorial

A reflection on two songs and their nationalisms

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THE  HINDU

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A reflection on two songs and their nationalisms 💎

Updated - October 02, 2026 02:46 pm IST

SANJAY HEGDE

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Context

Writing for Gandhi Jayanti, Hegde sets this year's orders and law that make all six stanzas of Vande Mataram official and enforceable against Vaishnava Jana To, the hymn Gandhi lived by, to contrast two ideas of nationalism.

Facts

■ **Executive orders :** *In January 2026 the Union Home Ministry directed that all six stanzas of the National Song be performed at official functions with everyone standing at attention; a July order made the six-stanza text the "official version" and placed the Song before the Anthem.*

■ **Penal law :** *Parliament amended the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971, bringing the National Song within criminal law for the first time; intentionally preventing its singing, or disturbing an assembly engaged in singing it, now invites imprisonment of up to three years.*

■ **The 1937 and 1950 settlement :** *In October 1937 the Congress Working Committee adopted only the first two stanzas for national gatherings, and on 24 January 1950 Rajendra Prasad announced that Jana Gana Mana would be the National Anthem and that Vande Mataram would be "honoured equally".*

Analytical Crux

Hegde separates a nationalism of posture, enforced by order and penalty, from a nationalism of conduct, which asks citizens to be worthy of the nation. The freedom movement settled the Vande Mataram question in 1937 by keeping the two stanzas any Indian of any faith could sing, and the 1950 "honoured equally" formula kept the Song outside the penal net for 55 years. The 2026 orders and the amended 1971 Act reopen that settlement, and T.M. Krishna's challenge now tests whether Bijoe Emmanuel's protection of respectful silence still holds. Justice Joymalya Bagchi's remark that a citizen who stands but does not sing should face no criminal consequence came at a hearing and is not a judgment. Hegde reads Narsinh Mehta's hymn as an early Preamble, finding fraternity, Article 14 equality, secularism and the duties of Article 51A in its lines. The argument fits answers on civic against cultural nationalism and on the limits of compelled patriotism under Articles 19(1)(a) and 25.

Verbatim Quotes

"Vande Mataram tests your posture; Vaishnava Janato tests your conduct."

- Sanjay Hegde

India Misreads US's China Policy as Being Automatically Pro-India

THE

WIRE

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ANALYSIS WORLD

India Misreads US's China Policy as Being Automatically Pro-India



Manoj Joshi

30/Sep/2026 • 5 min read

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The larger lesson of Washington, therefore, is not that the US has abandoned India or embraced China. It is that the strategic relationship between Washington and Beijing will increasingly be conducted on Washington's and Beijing's terms, not India's.

Context

Reading the recent Trump-Xi summit in Washington, Joshi argues that the United States is stabilising its rivalry with China on its own terms, and that India can no longer assume it is Washington's automatic counterweight to Beijing.

Facts

■ **Graham Act** : The recent American law authorises the President to impose tariffs of up to 100 per cent on countries such as China and India that continue to buy Russian oil, yet it drew little or no mention at the summit.

■ **Energy offer** : On 23 September in New York, Secretary of State Marco Rubio told External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar that the United States would "help" India with its energy problems, and the American readout mentioned sanctions on states that engage economically with Russia and Iran.

■ **Cost of American supplies** : Oil and gas from the United States reach India at a significant markup and take up to a couple of weeks to arrive, against less than a week from sources in the Persian Gulf.

Analytical Crux

Since the late 1990s, the American opening to India has rested partly on China, and the Quad, the Indo-Pacific strategy and defence cooperation all grew from that shared concern. Joshi reads the Trump–Xi summit as a turn from confrontation to managed competition, a G2-like dynamic in which Washington compartmentalises its differences with Beijing wherever that serves American interests. India then becomes a partner whose interests sometimes converge with those of the United States and sometimes diverge, as the pressure over Russian oil shows. His prescription is to build enough economic, technological, military and diplomatic heft to deal with both powers without depending on either, since India cannot serve as a permanent counterweight in an American strategy. A wider network with Japan, Australia, Indonesia, the UAE and Israel adds room for manoeuvre but cannot replace national capability. The argument recasts strategic autonomy as a matter of capability, which places it at the centre of the multi-alignment debate.

Verbatim Quotes

"Strategic autonomy, in these circumstances, is not about keeping the US at arm's length. It is about ensuring that India's choices remain its own."

– Manoj Joshi

Why Iran Escalates

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Why Iran Escalates

Tehran's Strategy to Drive America Out of the Middle East

MOHAMMAD AYATOLLAHI TABAAR

November/December 2026 Published on October 1, 2026



Context

As the war that the United States and Israel began on Iran on 28 February continues, Tabaar argues that Tehran has moved from deterrence to continuous offence, aiming to make the American presence in the Gulf too costly to keep.

Facts

- **Opening strikes** : *The United States began bombing Iran on 28 February to destroy its nuclear programme, its missile programme and even its government; the first strikes killed Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, and Iran seized and shut the Strait of Hormuz.*
- **New posture** : *Mohsen Rezaei, now secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, declared that Iran would target American economic assets and oil companies as well as military facilities; in July Iran struck bases in Jordan used by the American military, killing three American soldiers.*
- **Failed diplomacy** : *Tehran holds Washington responsible for the collapse of the memorandum of understanding the two countries signed in June, accusing it of trying to open a new shipping corridor through the Strait of Hormuz.*

Analytical Crux

Tabaar's claim is that the war has changed Iran's strategic aim: its elites now treat 28 February as proof that the United States must be pushed out of the region, and deterrence alone no longer satisfies them. Tehran is building its own version of Israel's "mowing the lawn", a run of limited strikes meant to degrade American military and intelligence infrastructure between major rounds of fighting. Its options climb an escalation ladder, from throttling Gulf energy exports and cutting undersea cables to seizing nearby territory and, at the far end, a dash for a nuclear weapon. A ceasefire may not hold either, because Tehran expects Washington to regroup once the midterm elections are over and strike again. The main restraint is domestic, since authoritarian regimes can fall after overreaching, as Argentina's junta did after the Falklands war of 1982. The article has no India angle of its own, but a closed Hormuz makes it a question of energy security for India as much as of deterrence in West Asia.

Verbatim Quotes

"Iran, then, is adopting a strategy toward the United States defined by escalation and continuous offense."

– Mohammad Ayatollahi Tabaar

UPSC LINK

- PSIR Paper I, 2026: Highlight any five constitutional provisions that restrain the powers of the executive, and evaluate their effectiveness in current times.
- PSIR Paper I, 2026: How did Swadeshi grow into a demand for Swaraj?
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- PSIR Paper II, 2026: Does power transition theory reflect the dynamics of US-China relations?
- PSIR Paper II, 2026: India has recognised that West Asia is not a single contest, but a tangle of rivalries, bargains and anxieties. Comment.
- GS Paper II, 2026: Is the right to vote a fundamental right? Discuss the position of the Election Commission of India while undertaking the revision of electoral rolls. Can it also examine the question of citizenship of voters?

- PSIR Paper I, 2025: There is a debate on the procedure for appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners to the Election Commission of India. Analyse its various aspects.
- PSIR Paper II, 2025: India continues to invoke its time-tested policy of strategic autonomy vis-à-vis both the United States of America and Russia by rejecting US' offer of mediation on Kashmir issue and by refusing to criticize Russia in its ongoing war against Ukraine. Comment.
- GS Paper II, 2025: “Energy security constitutes the dominant kingpin of India’s foreign policy, and is linked with India’s overarching influence in Middle Eastern countries.” How would you integrate energy security with India’s foreign policy trajectories in the coming years?
- PSIR Paper II, 2024: “India and USA have become such strong strategic partners that they need not become formal allies.” Comment.
- GS Paper II, 2024: Explain the reasons for the growth of public interest litigation in India. As a result of it, has the Indian Supreme Court emerged as the world’s most powerful judiciary?

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