

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.



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Amit Pratap Singh
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SOURCES SCANNED TODAY



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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.

CEC selection can't rest on goodwill of the majority

ThePrint

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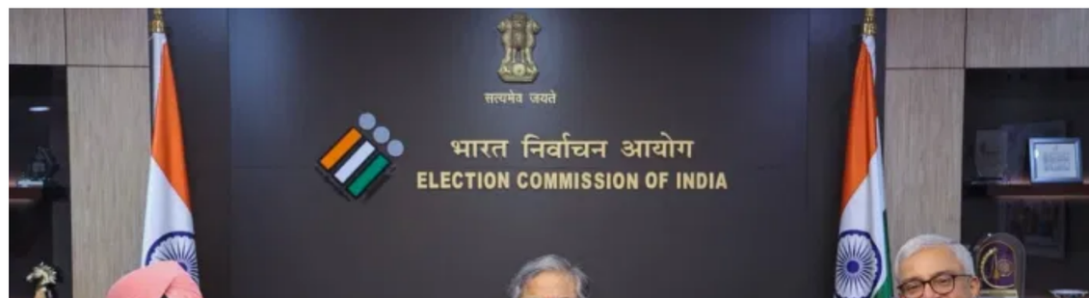
Opinion

CEC selection can't rest on goodwill of the majority. Apply merit, seniority & transparency

Here is a suggestion that prevents 'capture by rules'. Can we design something that makes neutrality and fair play a matter of rational choice?



SANJEEV CHOPRA 13 October, 2026 08:58 am IST



Context

With the challenge to the 2023 law on appointing Election Commissioners now before the Chief Justice, a former IAS officer proposes a selection method built on merit, seniority and transparency.

Facts

■ **Anoop Baranwal (2023) :** *Until Parliament made a law, the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and the Chief Justice of India were to advise appointments.*

■ **The 2023 Act :** *A Cabinet Minister named by the Prime Minister replaces the Chief Justice, which gives the government a 2:1 majority on the panel.*

■ **Split Bench :** *On 23 September 2026, Justices Dipankar Datta and Satish Chandra Sharma differed, and the challenge to the 2023 Act went to the Chief Justice for a five-judge Constitution Bench.*

Analytical Crux

Article 324(2) made the appointment of the Election Commission subject to a law of Parliament, but no such law came for seven decades, so the executive alone chose the people who would conduct the elections it contested. The Anoop Baranwal judgment brought the Leader of the Opposition and the Chief Justice into the choice; the 2023 Act removed the Chief Justice and gave the government a built-in 2:1 majority. Chopra wants neutrality built into the rules, so that even a self-interested government finds a neutral choice rational. He proposes a list of the twelve senior-most Secretaries due to retire within six months, an option for the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition to strike out up to two names, and selection on recorded election duty. He also notes that the Chief Justice sits on the panels for the CBI chief and the Lokpal but not on those for the CVC or the CIC, so his exclusion breaks no constitutional rule, though it has raised questions about the Commission's neutrality.

Verbatim Quotes

"Independent institutions cannot rest on the goodwill of whoever holds a majority."

- Sanjeev Chopra

Crackdown on Jantar Mantar 2.0, amid other closures, calls for redemocratisation

OPINION

Crackdown on Jantar Mantar 2.0, amid other closures, calls for redemocratisation

Systemic suppression drowns the democratic urge, diminishes people’s access to democracy and disincentivises fair competition. This is where the strength of closures matters.

Written by:
Suhas Palshikar

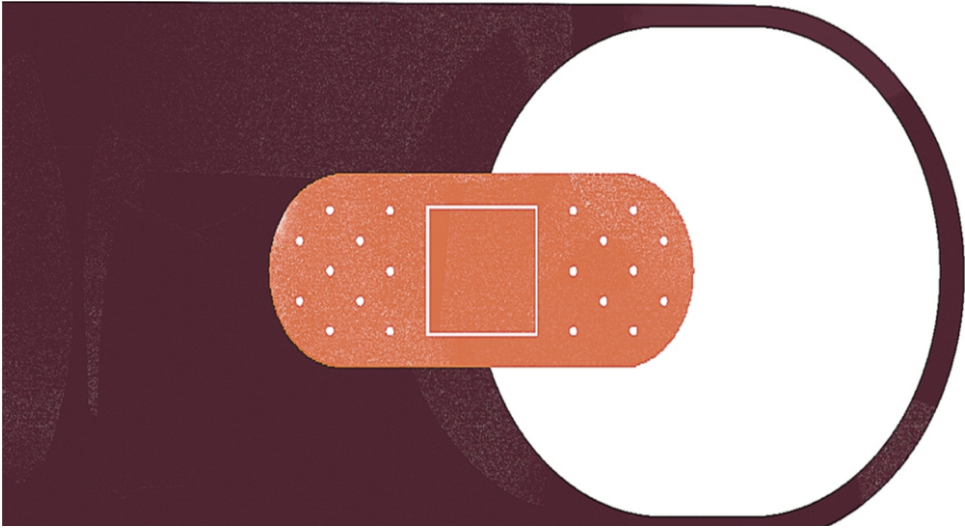
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Facts

Context

As the police in Delhi block protests over the revision of electoral rolls, in which opposition parties demand the removal of the Chief Election Commissioner, a political scientist reads the crackdown as one more 'closure' in Indian democracy.

■ **Two labels :** *Electoral autocracy and competitive authoritarianism both assume some competition and a possible electoral majority.*

■ **Party splits :** *In Maharashtra, the symbol of a split party went to its breakaway faction.*

■ **First democratisation :** *It joined the awakening over rights that Jyotirao Phule argued in the late 19th century to the institutionalisation of elections through the Constitution.*

Analytical Crux

Palshikar treats the recent curbs as a chain of 'closures': voters deleted from the rolls, parties split with their symbols handed to breakaway groups, protest sites sealed and courts that decline to act. The labels electoral autocracy and competitive authoritarianism assume that some competition survives; his concern is that the competition itself is draining away. He separates democratic resilience, which works through elections and the courts, from re-democratisation, which needs new political action outside those channels. *The Bharat Jodo Yatra and the July protest at Jantar Mantar are his two examples of ruptures that sought to bypass the closures. His model is India's first democratisation, which joined the awakening over rights to the institutionalisation of elections through the Constitution, now to be renewed through citizen inclusion and citizen assertion. Because such regimes still depend on winning elections, he places the burden on a united opposition rather than on civil society alone.*

Verbatim Quotes

"Is India willing to explore the path of re-democratisation?"

- Suhas Palshikar

America Shouldn't Let Go of the Middle East

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America Shouldn't Let Go of the Middle East

Why Disengagement Is Not the Answer

PHILIP H. GORDON

October 12, 2026



PHILIP H. GORDON is the Sydney Stein, Jr., Scholar at the Brookings Institution. He served as National Security Adviser to the Vice President in the Biden Administration and as White House Coordinator for the Middle East in the Obama administration. This essay is adapted from a forthcoming contribution to the 2027 edition of *Great Decisions*, a publication of the Foreign Policy Association.

[More by Philip H. Gordon →](#)

Context

As the Iran war revives calls in Washington to leave West Asia altogether, a former White House coordinator for the Middle East argues for staying engaged with a smaller and cheaper presence.

Facts

■ **Hormuz** : *Before Iran closed it, the Strait carried a quarter of the world's seaborne oil trade and nearly a fifth of its LNG.*

■ **US footprint** : *Over 50,000 troops at more than a dozen large bases, far more than before the 1991 Gulf War.*

■ **Pakistan link** : *Saudi Arabia signed defence pacts with Pakistan in 2025 and with Turkey and Pakistan in 2026; its Crown Prince has said it would need a bomb if Iran got one.*

Analytical Crux

Gordon accepts the critics' diagnosis: three decades of wars, large bases and near-unconditional backing for Israel have cost the United States trillions of dollars and delivered little. He rejects their remedy of full withdrawal, because American interests remain in the global oil price, in stopping an Iranian bomb that could push Saudi Arabia and Turkey to follow, and in Gulf capital tied to American technology. His middle course rests on smaller and dispersed bases, diplomacy as the main tool against Iran's nuclear programme, pipelines that bypass Hormuz, and conditions on arms for Israel and for Gulf partners that have fuelled conflicts in Africa and Yemen. He expects public weariness with open-ended wars to hold future presidents to this narrower line. For India, the argument bears on the security of its energy imports through Hormuz and on how far the Saudi-Pakistan pact changes the balance in the Gulf.

Verbatim Quotes

"But complete disengagement, tempting as it is, would be an unnecessary gamble."

– Philip H. Gordon

Trump's Targeting of Indian IT Firms Hits India-US Ties Again

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THE DIPLOMAT

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Trump's Targeting of Indian IT Firms Hits India-US Ties Again

Washington announced last week that it would not accept or process applications from top Indian IT companies for H-1B visas.



By Elizabeth Roche



Context

Weeks before Secretary of State Marco Rubio's visit to New Delhi, Washington suspended eight technology firms, four of them Indian, from a programme that sponsors foreign workers for green cards.

Facts

■ **PERM freeze** : On 8 October, US Secretary of Labor Keith Sonderling announced the suspension of Infosys, TCS, Wipro, HCL Technologies and four other firms from the PERM green-card route.

■ **MEA response** : India said talent mobility helps both economies and called terminology with colonial connotations deeply offensive, after J.D. Vance described foreign workers as indentured servants.

■ **US dependence** : The United States takes 54.1 per cent of India's software and IT-enabled services exports, the dependence that GTRI's Ajay Srivastava sees as the bigger risk.

Analytical Crux

NASSCOM says relatively few workers move from H-1B visas to permanent residency through PERM, so the direct effect may be small, but naming four leading Indian IT firms weeks before a high-level visit sends a sharp signal. Read with Vance's remark, the move has added to the chill in ties, and there is speculation in India that it is meant to show Trump's domestic audience, before the November mid-term elections, that his administration is tough on immigration. Roche's point is that the move strikes the people-to-people link that she calls the strongest anchor of India-US ties. *It adds to other irritants: a trade pact still unsigned, Washington's courting of Pakistan, last year's deportations in shackles and the threat of American sanctions on buyers of Russian oil.* The options the article sets out for India are wider export markets, more Global Capability Centres at home and taking up the PERM freeze in the Rubio-Jaishankar talks.

Verbatim Quotes

"People-to-people relations have always been the strongest anchor of India-U.S. bilateral ties."

- Elizabeth Roche

Sri Lanka's Economic and Geopolitical Balancing Act

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ARTICLE

Sri Lanka's Economic and Geopolitical Balancing Act

Economic recovery has brought Sri Lanka a modicum of stability, but domestic strains and great-power rivalry could test how long it lasts.



By Avinash Paliwal
Published on Oct 6, 2026

Introduction

On March 4, 2026, Sri Lanka was caught off-guard when the U.S. Navy submarine, the USS *Charlotte*, sank the Iranian frigate, IRIS *Dena*, 19 nautical miles off Sri Lanka's southwest Galle coast. The attack left 104 crew members dead and brought the 2026 Iran war

Avinash Paliwal
Nonresident Scholar, South Asia Program



Context

After a US Navy submarine sank an Iranian frigate off Galle in March, a Carnegie paper asks how long Sri Lanka's neutrality among India, China and the United States can hold.

Facts

■ **IRIS Dena** : A US submarine sank the Iranian frigate off Galle on 4 March 2026, killing 104 crew; Sri Lanka's navy rescued 32.

■ **Thirteenth Amendment** : Adopted in 1987 under Indian pressure, it created nine provincial councils, but Sri Lanka has held no provincial council election since 2014.

■ **Cyclone aid** : After Cyclone Ditwah, India offered a package of 450 million dollars, 100 million of it in grants; China offered one million dollars in emergency cash and relief worth one million yuan.

Analytical Crux

Sri Lanka's neutrality is a balance among three powers, learnt in the 2022 collapse, when China refused to rework its loans and India eventually stepped in with about 4 billion dollars. Colombo now rebuilds trust with India, keeps China's money while limiting its strategic footprint, and faces far less Western pressure on human rights than it once did. Paliwal argues that India's dispersed, people-centred projects in the north and east have earned more political goodwill than China's large assets in the south, such as Hambantota. *India also has considerable bargaining power through the Thirteenth Amendment and accountability for the civil war, and New Delhi uses it with restraint to protect the trust it has built.* The balance could break if a naval clash between major powers near Sri Lanka forced Colombo to choose, a risk the IRIS Dena sinking showed to be real.

Verbatim Quotes

"Arguably, India's people-centric strategy has generated more political dividends than China's capital-intensive engagement."

- Avinash Paliwal

- PSIR Paper II, 2026: Accelerating of Chinese influence across South Asia is fundamentally reshaping the region's geopolitical landscape. This is a big foreign policy challenge for India. Analyse.
- 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: The world currently has been in the throes of a twin process of 'democratic backsliding' and 'democratic backlash'. How would you explain this paradox?
- PSIR Paper II, 2024: "India and USA have become such strong strategic partners that they need not become formal allies." Comment.
- PSIR Paper II, 2024: Despite deep ties, India's relations with Sri Lanka have seen strains due to China's growing influence in Sri Lanka through investments and economic dominance. Analyse.

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