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DAILY BRIEF



PSIR OPTIONAL BY
Amit Pratap Singh
| ForumIAS |

ABOUT THIS INITIATIVE

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.

SOURCES SCANNED TODAY



ARTICLE 01

A press card is not a precondition for protection : Bar & Bench

ARTICLE 02

Coal states and the fiscal cost of the transition : ORF

ARTICLE 03

Baku, Ankara and the limits of Turkic unity : The Indian Express

ARTICLE 04

Rubio’s visits and the India–US reset : Lowy Institute

ARTICLE 05

China’s export controls: the output, not the capability : ORF

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 press card is not a precondition for constitutional protection

Columns

A press card is not a precondition for constitutional protection

A press card can explain why a person is at a protest; it cannot decide whether she leaves with her liberty and dignity intact.



Context

On 15 October the Supreme Court heard about 32 petitions on alleged police excesses during the protests against the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls and the Chief Election Commissioner. One strand of them concerns women journalists who say male police personnel harassed and manhandled them at protest sites.

For the Centre the Solicitor General said the government cannot tell who is a reel maker and who is an independent journalist, and Justice Joymalya Bagchi said the Court will examine the varying levels of protection available to accredited journalists, freelancers, independent journalists and influencers. The piece argues that if protection shrinks to those who can prove they are journalists, it does not survive the Constitution.

The author writes in Bar & Bench. He runs through the Article 19(1)(a) line of cases, separates facilities that may follow a profession from rights that attach to every person, and closes with four proposals the Court could issue that police could actually apply.

A press card is not a precondition for constitutional protection

Facts

- ***What the Court is examining :*** On October 15 the Supreme Court heard about 32 petitions on alleged police excesses during protests against the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls and the Chief Election Commissioner. Justice Joymalya Bagchi said the Court will examine the varying levels of protection available to accredited journalists, freelancers, independent journalists and influencers.

- ***The constitutional position :*** Unlike the First Amendment in the United States, the Indian Constitution has no separate fundamental right of press freedom; it is read into Article 19(1)(a). In MSM Sharma v. Sri Krishna Sinha (1959) the Supreme Court said the press stands on no higher footing than the citizen's freedom of speech and expression, and that no privilege attaches to the press that is distinct from the freedom of the citizen.

- ***Why credentials are not the line :*** Three Indian Express journalists were reportedly detained despite showing valid press cards. A woman journalist who accused a police officer of sexual harassment was booked under the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act on the officer's complaint, along with two other journalists, and Senior Advocate Indira Jaising told the Court that the Act was being misused to pre-empt her case.

Analytical Crux

1. Gathering information is the first step of speech, and recording public officials performing sovereign functions in a public place is not passive observation; the better view is that documenting such conduct is part of Article 19(1)(a), subject only to restrictions that Article 19(2) permits, and not holding a press card is not a ground listed in Article 19(2).

Analytical Crux (contd.)

2. Under Article 14, a classification needs a rational nexus to its purpose; credentials have that nexus with access-based facilities, but none with bodily integrity or freedom from arbitrary coercion, which every person holds equally.

3. Every use of police powers must rest on a lawful ground, follow the applicable safeguards and involve only force that is necessary and proportionate, and those tests apply the same way to a reporter and a reel-maker; doubt about who someone is cannot change what the law requires before a person is detained or struck.

Verbatim Quotes

"A press card can explain why a person is at a protest; it cannot decide whether she leaves with her liberty and dignity intact."

- Shivam Aggarwal

India's Energy Transition: The Fiscal Challenge for Coal-Dependent States

India's Energy Transition: The Fiscal Challenge for Coal-Dependent States

AUTHOR : MANINI

Expert Speak Terra Nova

Published on *Oct 28, 2026*

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India's energy transition must address the fiscal and structural vulnerabilities of coal-dependent states to ensure a just transition and equitable distribution of costs

Context

India passed 500 gigawatts of installed electricity capacity last October, with renewables making up more than half. The piece begins by separating installed from delivered: of the 52 percent non-fossil installed capacity, only around 29 percent generates electricity.

That capacity is concentrated in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, and largely leaves out the coal states – Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal. The author's argument is that for those states this is a fiscal-federalism question before it is an energy one.

The author writes for ORF. The piece sets out the institutional, fiscal and market barriers the coal states face, the structure of coal revenue and who controls it, and what a Finance Commission award would have to count for the transition to be called just.

India's Energy Transition: The Fiscal Challenge for Coal-Dependent States

Facts

- **What coal still carries :** Coal still generates 74 percent of India's electricity. Odisha, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh together hold 69 percent of India's coal reserves and produce 63 percent of its coal; including Madhya Pradesh raises their combined share of national coal output to 75-80 percent.

- **The revenue at stake :** Royalties on extraction, state GST on sale and contributions to the District Mineral Foundation together yielded INR 31,281.7 crore for state treasuries in FY 2023-24. Between 2014 and 2023 major coal-producing states earned INR 1.52 lakh crore from royalties and related levies, and for Jharkhand coal royalties and levies make up around 30 percent of its own tax revenue.

- **The frozen royalty :** Royalty rates are still fixed and revised solely by the Centre under the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957. The rate has been frozen at 14 percent ad valorem since May 2012, the Ministry of Coal has recently reaffirmed that it has no plan to revise it, and Odisha alone estimates that royalty stagnation costs it close to INR 10,000 crore a year.

Analytical Crux

1. Policies designed at the central level tend to reform the country uniformly, but states differ widely in fiscal structure, institutional strength, infrastructure, and storage capacity; renewable energy markets respond to these differences unevenly.

Analytical Crux (contd.)

2. As coal output plateaus and mines close, these states face twin pressures: diminishing royalty, DMF, and GST inflows, and rising costs ranging from new renewable purchase obligations to grid upgrades and worker and community transition spending.

3. Future Finance Commission awards, as well as any national just-transition fund, should factor in states' falling royalty, GST, and DMF revenues as long-term fiscal losses, alongside income distance and contribution to GDP, and reflect them when distributing central tax revenues.

Verbatim Quotes

"The adjustment is not a one-time shock but a structural hole in state budgets."

- Manini

Opening in Baku should encourage Delhi's exploration of changing Eurasian landscape

Premium

Opening in Baku should encourage Delhi's exploration of changing Eurasian landscape

Azerbaijan's energy resources and transport links give it influence across the Caucasus, inner Asia and the Greater Middle East. Closer engagement can help Delhi expand its access to these regions and strengthen its wider continental diplomatic presence

Written by:
C. Raja Mohan

6 min read
Oct 28, 2026 06:29 AM IST

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Context

S. Jaishankar's visit to Baku last week pointed to a reset with Azerbaijan after ties soured. Indian perceptions of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Pakistan as a strategic bloc had hardened during Op Sindoor in May 2025, when calls to boycott Turkey and Azerbaijan spread through television and social media into travel and trade.

The argument is that nationalism and self-interest outlast political affiliations based on religion and ethnicity. Baku's ties with Islamabad were thinner than the language of brotherhood suggested, and its solidarity with Ankara is now showing strains as Azerbaijan prepares to hand the chair of the Organisation of Turkic States to Turkey.

The author is a contributing editor on international affairs for The Indian Express, and a professor and director at the Motwani Jadeja Institute of American Studies, Jindal Global University, Delhi. He sets the Turkic question against Central Asia's multi-vector diplomacy and argues that India must engage the changing Eurasian landscape.

Opening in Baku should encourage Delhi's exploration of changing Eurasian landscape

Facts

- ***How the bloc hardened :*** Delhi flagged the 2021 Islamabad Declaration by Turkey, Azerbaijan and Pakistan, which backed Pakistan's position on Kashmir, and their "Three Brothers" military exercise in Azerbaijan that year gave the partnership a memorable label. Indian perceptions of the three as a strategic bloc hardened during Op Sindoor in May 2025.

- ***Where Ankara and Baku differ :*** Azerbaijan's restrictions on Islamic headscarves in schools drew sharp criticism from conservative Turkish voices; Baku defended its secular order, rejected outside interference, and issued arrest warrants for Turkish nationals accused of incitement. Azerbaijan also values its strategic relationship with Israel, including defence cooperation, while Turkey, the first Muslim-majority country to recognise Israel in 1949, is now sharply at odds with it.

- ***What Central Asia will not sign :*** The Turkic Council, established in 2009, became the Organisation of Turkic States in 2021, bringing together Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, with Turkmenistan an observer. Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev rejected proposals to turn the OTS into a military alliance or geopolitical bloc, and Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan also belong to the Russia-led Collective Security Treaty Organisation.

Analytical Crux

1. The Central Asian republics welcome Turkish investment, transport links and military technology, but they pursue multi-vector partnerships, much like India's multi-alignment, and seek partners to strengthen sovereignty and widen their choices while retaining freedom to engage other powers.

Analytical Crux (contd.)

2. Azerbaijan borders Russia and Iran, connects westwards through Georgia and Turkey, and looks across the Caspian towards Central Asia; its energy resources and transport links give it influence across the Caucasus, inner Asia and the Greater Middle East.

3. India does not object to other countries having relations with Pakistan, but it does seek their neutrality in India-Pakistan disputes; Pakistan's friends have interests of their own, some of them overlap India's, and exploring that common ground is better than giving Islamabad a veto over Delhi's diplomatic choices.

Verbatim Quotes

"Shared religious and ethnic identities can facilitate practical cooperation, but they do not automatically produce a unified strategic bloc."

– C. Raja Mohan

Rubio’s visits are not enough to reset India–US relations



Rubio’s visits are not enough to reset India–US relations

Structural ties endure, but Trump’s flip-flopping on energy policy has done lasting damage to Washington’s relationship with New Delhi.

Chietigj Bajpaee 29 October 2026 4 min read

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio’s visit to India last week triggered two opposing narratives: one that the India–US relationship remains in chronic decline, and another that it continues to move from strength to strength. As with most things, the reality is somewhere in the middle.

Context

Marco Rubio's visit to India last week triggered two opposing narratives: that the relationship is in chronic decline, and that it continues to move from strength to strength. The piece puts the reality somewhere in the middle and calls the relationship sticky.

Its evidence for stickiness is structural: bilateral trade in goods and services grew to around US$240 billion in 2025, India conducts more joint military exercises with the United States than any other country, and technology cooperation continues. Its evidence for damage is the record of US policy on India's purchase of Russian crude.

The author writes in the Lowy Institute's Interpreter. He argues that two pillars of the relationship have weakened under Trump, and names a long-delayed bilateral trade agreement and a Quad leaders' summit as the watchpoints for a structural shift.

Rubio's visits are not enough to reset India–US relations

Facts

- ***Why Mumbai and Jamnagar :*** Rubio visited Mumbai and Jamnagar but not New Delhi. Jamnagar is home to the world's largest refinery, owned by Reliance Industries, and the visit was rooted in India becoming the second-largest buyer of Venezuelan heavy crude after the United States captured Nicolás Maduro in January. It followed Trump's March announcement that Reliance will invest in a major refinery in Brownsville, Texas.

- ***The Russian oil whiplash :*** Trump's administration slapped 50 per cent tariffs on India and threatened secondary sanctions. In February 2026 the United States reduced tariffs as the framework for an interim trade deal was reached in exchange for New Delhi suspending Russian oil purchases. In September the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026 authorised tariffs of up to 100 per cent on the five largest buyers of Russian oil and gas, including India; with the United States now buying Russian diesel itself, Trump waived those penalties in October, with Rubio indicating a 60-day review to follow.

- ***The two watchpoints :*** India's finance minister says trade talks have hit a "plateau", and no Quad leaders' summit has taken place in over two years. Recent claims that a deal is near, and plans for a Quad leaders' summit in Manila in November, are the author's cause for some hope.

Analytical Crux

1. Despite the war of words between New Delhi and Washington over the last year, fuelled by tariffs, sanctions, and tightening visa rules, structural engagement remains strong: bilateral trade in goods and services grew to around US$240 billion in 2025, and India continues to conduct more joint military exercises with the US than any other country.

Analytical Crux (contd.)

2. The fundamental problem with the Trump administration's approach to India is that it prioritises short-term interests over long-term strategic considerations; the values debate is non-existent in Trump's might-is-right, hemispheric worldview, and the China factor has lost salience, as each country is independently seeking to reset relations with Beijing.

3. Rubio's visits to India's financial and energy capitals help to strengthen India's strategic indispensability to the US, but a lasting reset in the bilateral relationship needs to go beyond episodic achievements; rather than platitudes or dealmaking, the strategic rationale of the India-US relationship needs to be rediscovered and revived.

Verbatim Quotes

"Two key pillars of the India-US relationship have weakened under Trump: the countries' shared democratic values and India's role as a counterbalance to China."

- Chietigj Bajpaee

China’s New Export Controls: Selling the Output, Keeping the Capability

China’s New Export Controls: Selling the Output, Keeping the Capability

AUTHOR : MANOJ JOSHI

Expert Speak Raisina Debates

Published on *Oct 28, 2026*

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Having moved from imitation to the frontier in AI, biomedicine, and solar, Beijing is now deciding who may follow it there, and India may be among those left waiting

Context

On 16 October China's Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Science and Technology proposed adding AI, biomedicine and photovoltaic technologies to the catalogue of technologies prohibited or restricted from export. Three days later the Ministry of Commerce and Customs placed certain tunnel boring machines, dredgers and specialised excavators designed for use above 3,000 metres under export control.

The piece reads the design of the measures rather than their headline: the aim is not to block products but to stop transfers of the underlying know-how, so that supply chains stay bound to China. The Manus affair, in which Meta was able to acquire a Chinese-founded AI agent app without tripping any existing control, is given as the loophole being closed.

The author writes for ORF. He reads the altitude threshold against India's building along the Line of Actual Control, counts the technologies on each of the three lists, and sets the measures against India's production-linked incentive schemes in electronics, solar modules and pharmaceuticals.

China's New Export Controls: Selling the Output, Keeping the Capability

Facts

- **The three lists :** The AI provisions run to 23 proposed technologies, covering large models, agents, chip design, computing clusters, and cyber and information-processing capabilities. Five technologies are proposed for biomedicine, covering cell and gene therapies and small interfering RNA drugs. The photovoltaic list contains 12: thin-wafer fluidised-bed polysilicon and perovskite cells would be prohibited outright, while TOPCon and heterojunction would need a licence.

- **The altitude threshold :** On 19 October certain tunnel boring machines and their components, dredgers, and specialised excavators designed for use above 3,000 metres were placed under export control. Civilian demand for such equipment at that height is slight, except where roads and tunnels are being driven through the Himalayas, which India is doing along the Line of Actual Control. The measure never names India.

- **The drone list :** The same 19 October order recalibrated drone export controls. Covered items now include unmanned aerial vehicles that fly beyond natural line of sight with an endurance of three hours or more, or a range of 300 km or more, along with radios above 30 dBmW or capable of controlling more than 10 aircraft, aerosol dispersal systems above 80 litres, high-power brushless motors, carbon-fibre propellers, and technologies for flight control, autonomous navigation, sense-and-avoid, whole-system design, and counter-UAS operations.

Analytical Crux

1. Countries pursuing a China+1 strategy depend on importing components, process knowledge, equipment, and engineers; a factory in India or Vietnam making solar cells or biologics needs more than a purchase order, it needs the know-how, and restrict that and the +1 remains a showroom rather than a competitor.

Analytical Crux (contd.)

2. China has acquired the means to monitor, slow, or block the flow of its AI technology whenever it chooses; a licensing regime requires no dramatic announcement, only discretion, delays can be passed off as bureaucratic, and refusals can be left unexplained.

3. Even an overseas factory built with Chinese equipment may remain within the scope of the controls after the machines are installed; the restriction thus follows the technology across the border and persists after delivery, which would affect upgrades, servicing, and the re-export of what they produce.

Verbatim Quotes

"Beijing is, in effect, trying to keep the capability at home while exporting the output."

- Manoj Joshi

UPSC LINK

- **PSIR Paper I, 2026:** Evaluate the Centre-State relation with reference to Article 293 and analyze its implications for the Indian federal structure.

- **PSIR Paper II, 2026:** QUAD requires more robust architecture than the summit driven mode to tide over the current challenges. Elaborate.

- **PSIR Paper II, 2026:** India has adopted multi-alignment to fulfill its core values and interests in International relations. Discuss.

- **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 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:** Examine the evolving pattern of Centre-State financial relations in the context of planned development in India. How far have the recent reforms impacted the fiscal federalism in India?

- **PSIR Paper II, 2024:** "Deglobalisation is displacing globalisation." Comment.

- **GS Paper II, 2024:** Critically analyse India's evolving diplomatic, economic and strategic relations with the Central Asian Republics (CARs) highlighting their increasing significance in regional and global geopolitics.

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