DATE 6 november 2026

BRIEF ISSUE 178

PSIR & GS-2
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

Aadhaar, the SIR and 9 crore missing names : The Indian Express

ARTICLE 02

A Democrat Congress and what India loses : The Diplomat

ARTICLE 03

Pakistan's One China policy, in the air : Lowy Institute

ARTICLE 04

Lula's comeback and a hostile Congress : ORF

ARTICLE 05

Sewer deaths and the state's basic error : The Hindu

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.

Who is being left out of voter rolls? What Aadhaar reveals about SIR

Who is being left out of voter rolls? What Aadhaar reveals about SIR

No amount of data obfuscation or statistical jugglery can justify nine crore adults missing from the rolls of just 14 states.

Written by:
Praveen Chakravarty

Nov 6, 2026 06:20 AM IST

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Context

An electoral roll is the list of people entitled to vote in a constituency, maintained by the Election Commission of India. A Special Intensive Revision, or SIR, is a house-to-house re-verification of that list in which an existing entry survives only if the elector supplies the documents the Commission asks for. Aadhaar, by contrast, is a biometric register: each enrolment carries fingerprints and iris scans and is de-duplicated against every other, so one person cannot appear twice under different names.

The Commission announced in March 2025 that it would link voter IDs with Aadhaar to remove duplicates and ghosts, a move the Opposition parties supported. Three months later it announced the SIR instead and set the linkage proposal aside. Fourteen large states have since completed the revision, and the argument over who disappeared from the rolls has run through four long articles in this newspaper between Yogendra Yadav and Jean Drèze on one side and the economist Surjit Bhalla on the other.

Praveen Chakravarty, a Member of Parliament and chairperson of Data Analytics for the Indian National Congress, sets the UIDAI count of adults against the Commission's post-SIR count of electors, state by state. The arithmetic is drawn from official data and can be checked; the conclusion he draws from it is his own, and he is a participant in the dispute he is describing.

Who is being left out of voter rolls? What Aadhaar reveals about SIR

Facts

- **The Uttar Pradesh gap :** Uttar Pradesh has 16.3 crore adults aged 18 and above registered on Aadhaar, per the UIDAI 'Aadhaar saturation report', 2026, against 13.4 crore people on the electoral rolls published after the SIR. That leaves nearly 3 crore adults, or 18 per cent, off the rolls. Even after allowing for deaths, emigration and foreign citizens, Chakravarty puts the shortfall at 2.5 to 3 crore.

- **What the fourteen states show :** Across the 14 large states that have completed the SIR, together holding 70 per cent of India's adults, 9 crore adults on Aadhaar's servers are absent from the Commission's rolls. The missing share runs from 21 per cent in Goa and 19 per cent in Punjab and Uttarakhand down to 7 per cent in Odisha and Tamil Nadu.

- **Two patterns he reads as suspicious :** Goa, Punjab, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh head the table of missing voters, and all four go to the polls in early 2027. The receiving states for migrant labour, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Gujarat, show no surplus of voters over Aadhaar adults, and Bihar sits near the bottom of the table. On roll quality, one Brazilian model's photograph appeared against 22 voters in Haryana.

Analytical Crux

1. If this were just voter apathy, then such apathy should be roughly similar across states, allowing for some variation in political awareness; it is not, because in the 14 large states that have completed the SIR, which together account for 70 per cent of all of India's adults, the apathy factor ranges from 7 per cent to 21 per cent.

2. If inter-state migration can explain this gap between Aadhaar adults and enrolled voters, then receiving states such as Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Gujarat should have more voters than Aadhaarised adults; none does, and Bihar, India's great exporter of labour, should top the table of missing voters: it is near the bottom.

Analytical Crux (contd.)

3. Every Aadhaar holder need not be a voter but every voter is an Aadhaar holder; in March 2025 the ECI itself announced that it would link voter IDs with Aadhaar to weed out duplicates and ghosts, and three months later it suddenly announced the SIR instead, abandoning the Aadhaar linkage proposal.

Verbatim Quotes

"No amount of data obfuscation or statistical jugglery can justify 9 crore adults missing from the rolls of just 14 states."

- Praveen Chakravarty

Why a Democrat-Held Congress in Washington Could Be Bad News for Modi's India

Unlike Trump, who has ignored the Modi government's imperfect democratic record, many Democrats have been vocal in criticizing the erosion of democracy in India.



By **Rushali Saha**
November 06, 2026

Context

The United States Congress holds the power of the purse and can pass legislation, but a President may veto what it passes. Overriding that veto takes a two-thirds majority in both chambers. Foreign policy is the area where a President's own authority runs furthest, because much of it is exercised through executive action rather than statute.

Democrats swept the midterm elections to the House and Senate on 3 November 2026. Indian media read the result as relief for New Delhi: the Indian Express reported a collective sigh of relief in Delhi, the foreign ministry's mood was described as cautiously optimistic, and officials were reported to hope for more room on immigration, trade and energy. Six Indian American legislators now sit in Congress.

Rushali Saha argues the opposite case. She separates what is good for Indian Americans from what is good for the present government in New Delhi, works through the arithmetic of a veto override, and identifies the one issue on which a hostile Congress might actually find a supermajority.

Why a Democrat-Held Congress in Washington Could Be Bad News for Modi's India

Facts

- **What the veto arithmetic requires :** The Democratic Party can pass bills repealing tariffs imposed on partner countries, but Trump retains the veto. Overriding it needs a two-thirds majority in both chambers, that is 290 votes in the House and 67 in the Senate with all members voting, which Saha judges the Democrats unlikely to reach. Trump had warned before the results that he would become 'Mr. Veto', and posted an image of a red cap bearing the word 'VETO' on Truth Social afterwards.

- **The immigration measure that bit :** Trump's suspension of Program Electronic Review Management (PERM) applications for major technology and IT firms, including Microsoft, Infosys, TCS, Wipro and HCL, froze employment-based green card pathways for H-1B holders. Indian Americans are the second largest Asian origin population living in the United States.

- **Where Democratic scrutiny points at India :** Pramila Jayapal, returned for a sixth congressional term, has criticised the Special Intensive Revision, writing on X of the actions of the Indian government to purge 130 million people from the voting rolls. She was among six Democratic lawmakers who wrote to Secretary of State Marco Rubio on 16 October urging him to raise democratic freedoms with Indian officials during his India visit.

Analytical Crux

1. Unlike Trump, who ignored the Narendra Modi government's imperfect democratic record, many Democrats, including Indian American members, have been vocal in expressing their concerns over the erosion of democracy in India; what is good for Indian Americans does not necessarily translate to good for the current government of India.

2. While the Democratic Party can pass bills that seek to repeal tariffs imposed on partner countries, Trump can still use his veto power to overturn legislation; overriding a presidential veto requires a two-thirds majority in both the House and Senate, 290 votes in the House and 67 in the Senate with all members voting, which the Democrats are unlikely to reach.

Analytical Crux (contd.)

3. Given the strong bipartisan support for Ukraine in the past, including from many of Trump's Republicans, it is possible that Congress will be able to muster the supermajority needed to override the presidential veto on legislation concerning action against Moscow; in such a scenario, New Delhi has a lot to lose as it would make Indian purchases of discounted Russian oil more expensive and difficult.

Verbatim Quotes

"assuming that Trump's defeat at the midterm elections automatically implies an improvement in U.S.-India relations oversimplifies a complex dynamic"

- Rushali Saha

Pakistan takes the One China policy into its airspace

A brief airspace restriction reveals how far Pakistan will go to reassure Beijing over Taiwan.

Sana Hashmi

6 November 2026 4 min read

Context

The One China policy is the position a state takes on Beijing's claim that Taiwan is part of China. Strict adherence generally means opposing Taiwan's independence, accepting that claim, and keeping no official ties with Taipei. States interpret it differently: several that adhere to it still trade with Taiwan and run unofficial offices there. Whether a foreign airline may cross a country's airspace is a separate matter, settled by civil aviation arrangements.

Last month Pakistan barred two Taiwanese carriers, the state airline China Airlines and the private carrier EVA Air, from transiting its airspace. Defence Minister Khawaja Asif explained that the aviation division follows the One China policy and only mainland China is allowed. The ban was then abruptly reversed, with both airlines granted access until 27 March 2027 and no explanation of what happens after that date.

Sana Hashmi, a fellow at the Taiwan-Asia Exchange Foundation, takes the episode apart. She shows that the restriction exceeded what the policy requires, weighs two explanations for it, and asks what follows if other states take the same reading.

Pakistan takes the One China policy into its airspace

Facts

- **A restriction China itself does not impose :** Pakistan barred China Airlines and EVA Air from transiting its airspace, a move Hashmi calls all the more unusual given that even China does not impose such restrictions on Taiwanese commercial airlines. The ban was reversed with access granted until 27 March 2027, a temporary arrangement with nothing said about what follows.

- **How thin the Pakistan-Taiwan relationship is :** Just over 900 Pakistani nationals live in Taiwan, among them students, restaurant owners and other professionals. There is no representative office and there has never been one, and there are no direct flights. The only air connection between South Asia and Taiwan is the Taipei-Delhi route, scheduled to resume on 1 December.

- **The precedent, and the body Taipei is kept out of :** In April this year Seychelles, Mauritius and Madagascar withdrew overflight permissions for President Lai Ching-te's planned trip to Eswatini, Taiwan's only remaining diplomatic ally in Africa. Hashmi notes that Taipei has no representation in the International Civil Aviation Organisation, which leaves it without recourse when commercial aviation is used to exert pressure.

Analytical Crux

1. The ban goes beyond what Pakistan's adherence to the One China policy would normally require; the policy does not entail that countries deny Taiwanese commercial airlines permission to transit through their airspace, and such permission is a matter of civil aviation arrangements.

2. There are two possible explanations for Pakistan's decision: that China asked Pakistan to impose the ban to reinforce the One China policy, discourage international engagement with Taiwan and demonstrate Beijing's influence over its partners; or that Pakistan imposed the ban on its own initiative to show its loyalty to China, particularly at a time when it is seeking closer ties with the United States.

Analytical Crux (contd.)

3. The greater concern is whether this sets a precedent: China could use similar pressure to influence other countries that are close to Beijing and strongly adhere to the One China policy, creating problems for Taiwanese airlines, particularly given Taipei's lack of representation in the International Civil Aviation Organisation, and restrictions on commercial aviation can potentially become another means of exerting pressure on Taiwan.

Verbatim Quotes

"restricting a presidential flight is an entirely different issue from denying overflight rights to commercial airlines"

- Sana Hashmi

From Runner-Up to President: Lula's Improbable Return

From Runner-Up to President: Lula's Impr

AUTHORS : VIVEK MISHRA | AKASH TRIPATHI

Expert Speak Raisina Debates

Published on *Nov 06, 2026*

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Context

Brazil elects its president in two rounds: if nobody takes a majority on the first ballot, the top two meet in a runoff. Abstention is high and consequential, since voters who stay home in the first round are the largest bloc available to either side in the second. Bolsonarismo is the political current built around former president Jair Bolsonaro, who is serving 27 years for plotting a coup and is under house arrest.

Flávio Bolsonaro, his son and political heir, led the first round on 4 October by 2.2 million votes. Three weeks later, on 25 October, Lula won the runoff. The result ran against a regional pattern: right-wing victories in Argentina, Chile, Peru and Colombia had left the left holding only two of Latin America's six largest economies.

Vivek Mishra and Akash Tripathi reconstruct how the gap closed, from the targeting of first-round abstainers to the sovereignty argument built on United States tariffs and sanctions, and then set the win against the Congress Lula now has to work with.

From Runner-Up to President: Lula's Improbable Return

Facts

- **The margin and the precedent :** On 25 October Lula won a fourth term, defeating Senator Flávio Bolsonaro by 51.8 to 48.2 per cent of the valid vote. It was the first time since the military dictatorship ended in 1985 that a first-round runner-up has gone on to win the presidency. Lula proved the opinion polls wrong twice in October.

- **Where the votes came from :** Flávio led the first round by 2.2 million votes. Lula's runoff campaign focused on the 33 million Brazilians who had stayed home, the highest abstention rate since 1998. Abstention then fell from 21 per cent to 19 per cent between the two rounds, a sharper drop than in 2022. Lula increased his vote share in all 26 states and the Federal District, by more than 10 million in total.

- **The Congress he has to govern with :** Brazil has elected its most conservative Congress since the return to democracy. The Liberal Party and its allies will hold more than 280 of the 513 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and up to 50 of the 81 in the Senate, and the party is the largest in both chambers. Right-leaning candidates also won the governorships of São Paulo and Minas Gerais.

Analytical Crux

1. Externally, it stopped the rightward shift in Latin American countries that seemed to be affected by politics in the United States; the left's victory has gone against both the regional right-wing wave and anti-incumbency, a consequential social force in highly polarised societies like Brazil.

2. Following the runoff, Lula did not try to preach to the converted; his campaign instead focused on the 33 million Brazilians who had stayed home during the first round, the abstention rate was the highest since 1998, and abstention fell from 21 percent to 19 percent between the two rounds.

Analytical Crux (contd.)

3. Lula may have won the argument on sovereignty at home, but the test of his final term will be whether he can translate this into influence abroad, particularly within his own hemisphere; he will have to contend with a hostile Congress in Brasília, right-leaning governments across the region and an unpredictable administration in Washington.

Verbatim Quotes

"Of Latin America's six largest economies, only Brazil and Mexico are still governed by the left"

– Vivek Mishra and Akash Tripathi

Danger in the sewer: On India's sewer cleaning deaths

India must eliminate situations that lead to sewer cleaning deaths

Updated - November 06, 2026 08:48 am IST

Context

Manual scavenging, the cleaning of excreta from insanitary latrines by hand, is prohibited by the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013. Since that year the law has treated the hazardous cleaning of sewers and septic tanks as a separate category, permitted under conditions. A worker who enters one is exposed to noxious gases whatever the legal label, and members of historically marginalised castes are overrepresented in these jobs.

Four workers died recently in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, cleaning a hotel's food-waste chamber. The courts have been returning to the subject for years: in Safai Karamchari Andolan (2014) and again in Dr. Balram Singh (2023), which raised compensation for a death to 30 lakh rupees and required that outsourced sewer-cleaning contracts not involve workers entering sewers. Notices went to 15 Chief Secretaries for disobeying the 2023 order, including on compensation.

The editorial asks why the deaths continue through all of this, and locates the answer in a claim the government has been making since at least 2021 and in what that claim does to the urgency of inspection.

Danger in the sewer: On India's sewer cleaning deaths

Facts

- **What the official counts show :** Parliament and National Commission for Safai Karamcharis data record 859 deaths on jobs involving sewers and septic tanks between 2014 and 2025, and 1,350 between 1993 and 2025. These are separate counts over different and overlapping reporting windows and cannot be added. The Safai Karamchari Andolan has repeatedly alleged severe under-reporting.

- **The claim that stalls inspection :** The government has maintained since at least 2021 that the practice of manually cleaning excreta from insanitary latrines has been eliminated. The editorial reads this as signalling that it believes it has addressed the root of the problem when it has not, and as freeing administrative bodies of the urgency of inspecting municipalities and private establishments.

- **How liability is evaded :** Private contractors and municipal bodies are known to violate the restrictions on manual cleaning specified in the 2013 Act and Rules, and to evade liability by hiring undocumented daily-wage workers. A significant gap between aims and outcomes has also persisted under the National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem scheme.

Analytical Crux

1. Despite legislation, Supreme Court orders, government programmes, the availability of mechanised cleaning technologies, and exhortations from politicians, India continues to lose sanitation workers to foreseeable, and largely preventable, circumstances; the figures have never tended towards zero even as the Safai Karamchari Andolan has repeatedly alleged severe under-reporting.

2. The government has maintained since at least 2021 that the practice of manually cleaning excreta from insanitary latrines has been eliminated, effectively signalling that it believes it has addressed the root of the problem when it has not, and freeing administrative bodies of the urgency of inspecting municipalities and private establishments.

Analytical Crux (contd.)

3. Private contractors and municipal bodies are known to violate the restrictions on manual cleaning specified in the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act 2013 and Rules, and evade liability by hiring undocumented daily-wage workers; the scourge of such worker deaths thus cannot be eliminated without also formalising their employment and improving social security across caste lines.

Verbatim Quotes

"to maximise administrative assistance, such as by distributing kits, rather than minimising the number of situations that could lead to worker deaths"

- The Hindu

UPSC LINK

- **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.

- **GS Paper II, 2026:** Examine how the separation of powers is practised in India compared to the rigid presidential model of the United States of America. In this context, compare the actual authority of the Indian Prime Minister with that of the President of the USA.

- **PSIR Paper II, 2024:** “India and USA have become such strong strategic partners that they need not become formal allies.” Comment.

- **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, 2025:** Latin America has made moderate success in countering US-led global economic order by forming various organizations emphasizing regional sovereignty, economic integration and alternative development. Discuss.

- **PSIR Paper II, 2026:** Analyse the relevance of India-Brazil economic co-operation in strengthening the bilateral relations between the two countries.

- **GS Paper II, 2026:** Do constitutional bodies like the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) and the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) possess adequate enforcement powers to secure substantive social equality? Suggest measures to enhance their institutional effectiveness.

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