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BRIEF ISSUE 179

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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

Electoral rolls as a welfare database : The Hindu

ARTICLE 02

Gen Z and the politics of spontaneity : The Indian Express

ARTICLE 03

Poverty decline, and what it leaves out : Deccan Herald

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India’s window before Congress shifts : Deccan Herald

ARTICLE 05

When foreign policy met the kitchen table : CFR

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.

Epic failures: on electoral roll, welfare

The electoral roll cannot be used to determine welfare beneficiaries

Updated - November 07, 2026 09:19 am IST

Context

The Union Panchayati Raj Minister, Rajiv Ranjan Singh, has said that voter identity cards with biometric authentication will replace Aadhaar as the basis for identifying beneficiaries under his Ministry's schemes. The editorial treats this as a proposal to turn the electoral roll into a welfare database. Since several States prepared their rolls through the Special Intensive Revision, a contested electoral exercise would then decide who receives public money.

The argument rests on what the Supreme Court has already held. In its judgment of 27 May on the Bihar revision, and in its observations on West Bengal's orders removing deleted persons from the Public Distribution System and the Annapurna Yojana, the Court confined the Election Commission to a limited enquiry into citizenship and restricted the consequences of deletion to the roll and the vote alone. It also called the voter card a derivative document.

The editorial reads the Minister's remarks as evidence of a second purpose. With growth in tax revenues slowing, pruned rolls offer a way of narrowing the claim on welfare. Read alongside the delayed Census and the altered procedure for appointing Election Commissioners, the newspaper sees a pattern that weakens the constitutional welfare state, and asks the Court to decide the pending petitions quickly.

Epic failures: on electoral roll, welfare

Facts

- **What the Minister has proposed :** Union Panchayati Raj Minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh stated that voter identity cards, with biometric authentication, will replace Aadhaar as the basis for identifying beneficiaries and making payments under his Ministry's schemes. The electoral roll, prepared in several States through the Special Intensive Revision by the Election Commission of India, would become the dataset used to vet the identities of beneficiaries.

- **What the Supreme Court has held :** In its 27 May judgment on the Bihar Special Intensive Revision, the Court held that the Election Commission may undertake only a "limited enquiry" into citizenship, and that "any action taken pursuant thereto is confined to electoral consequences alone". It described the EPIC as "a derivative document, issued on the basis of inclusion in the electoral roll", which cannot verify that same roll.

- **West Bengal deletions and appeals :** In West Bengal, lakhs of names were deleted from the electoral rolls, many of them for disputed "logical discrepancies". Of the appeals heard for reinstatement, 93 per cent resulted in the restoration of names by September 2026. The Court has said it is yet to adjudicate on the legality of the Election Commission's "logical discrepancies" method.

Analytical Crux

1. The electoral roll, prepared in several States through the flawed Special Intensive Revision by the Election Commission of India, will become the dataset to vet the identities of beneficiaries; this contradicts the Supreme Court judgment that any action taken pursuant to a limited enquiry into citizenship is confined to electoral consequences alone.

2. Not every citizen is an eligible voter, and tying benefits to the electoral roll is illogical and also cruel; in West Bengal lakhs were deleted from the rolls, many for dubious logical discrepancies, and 93% of the appeals heard for reinstatement resulted in the restoration of names by September 2026.

Analytical Crux (contd.)

3. The BJP-led coalition sees the pruned electoral rolls as a way to limit welfare, especially at a time when growth in tax revenues has slowed; inordinately delaying the Census, changing the procedure to appoint Election Commissioners and using the resultant rolls cut at the heart of the constitutional welfare state.

Verbatim Quotes

"Not every citizen is an eligible voter, and tying benefits to the electoral roll is illogical and also cruel."

– The Hindu

Gen Z and the politics of spontaneity are here to stay

Gen Z and the politics of spontaneity are here to stay

The energies of the young are indispensable to the Opposition's campaign for the restoration of democracy. A meme can remove a minister but winning a constituency takes organisation. That is what the established parties can still offer when they share the ticket and the stage

Written by:
Sagarika Ghose

Nov 7, 2026 06:49 AM IST

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Context

Sagarika Ghose argues that protest and agitation have produced a new grammar of politics in India, built around a young and impatient electorate. She reads two images as evidence: Mamata Banerjee seeking out Abhijit Dipke of the Cockroach Janta Party at the INDIA rally at Ramlila Maidan, and the 29-year-old CPI(ML) leader Neha Bora walking in front alongside Rahul Gandhi. Indian politics, she notes, has long been a senior establishmentarian club.

She offers three reasons for the shift. Instagram and the new media have democratised the public square, so a meme now travels faster than an old-style rally and satire works as a subversive device. The issues themselves have changed, with jobs, examinations and free expression defining young lives in ways that cut across the older divides of caste and religion. And the politics of spontaneity has displaced the long, rambling speech.

The author draws a double conclusion. Choreographed communication, she writes, is at heart anti-young, because the audience is expected to watch rather than talk back, and a generation raised on filters recognises a filter when it sees one. Yet spontaneity alone will not win seats: a meme can remove a minister, while a constituency takes organisation, which established parties still supply when they share the ticket and the stage.

Gen Z and the politics of spontaneity are here to stay

Facts

- **The demographic arithmetic of 2029 :** At least one in every four eligible voters will be aged 18-29 in 2029. In 2014, when Narendra Modi first came to power, first-time voters chose the BJP over the Congress by two to one. Twelve years on, a 76-year-old Prime Minister speaks of "yuva shakti", yet his cabinet has only one minister under the age of 40.

- **Earlier precedents in youth politics :** Sanjay Gandhi, whose legacy the author calls contested, pioneered youth politics by placing the Youth Congress at the centre of power. Rajiv Gandhi became Prime Minister at 40, encouraged young leaders and lowered the voting age to 18. Mamata Banerjee, a Youth Congress firebrand, defeated the Left stalwart Somnath Chatterjee in Jadavpur in 1984 at the age of 29.

- **Tamil Nadu and the new messaging :** In Tamil Nadu, Chief Minister Vijay may have benefited from his superstar appeal, but the author holds that his defining badge was freshness, a leader not weighed down by family legacy, divisive rhetoric or ideological dogmas. Simple messaging through Instagram reels, she writes, trumped the traditional Dravidian pitch and helped determine the election outcome.

1. India's democracy has discovered the power of a young and impatient demographic that no party can afford to ignore; at least one in every four eligible voters will be aged 18-29 in 2029, and Gen Z is helping shape the political conversation and even, as seen in Tamil Nadu, determining election outcomes.

2. Instagram and the new media have democratised the public square, and in an era of hyper politics and hyper media a meme travels faster than an old-style rally; satire and laughter are subversive, liberating devices, and staid public discourse is helpless against their power.

Analytical Crux (contd.)

3. Caste and religion remain important, but they can no longer be assumed, because a leaked paper does not check your surname; the long, rambling speech is dying, and the young want leaders who do not talk down to them, but are with them.

Verbatim Quotes

"A meme can remove a minister but winning a constituency takes organisation."

- Sagarika Ghose

Poverty reduction: Beyond welfare gains

India needs to make steady and substantial investments in all these areas to secure real progress.

DHNS Last Updated : 07 November 2026, 00:54 IST

Context

The editorial examines the World Bank's India Poverty and Equity Brief of October 2026, which places India among the fastest decliners in poverty anywhere in the world. The Bank credits strong consumption growth, rising employment among women, and welfare measures that include expanded social transfers. The newspaper accepts the figures as a credible achievement, then asks whether a fall measured this way amounts to a durable escape from poverty.

The editorial sets those numbers against other evidence. The Global Hunger Index of 2026 places India 100th among 122 countries, with high rates of undernourishment, stunting and wasting among children. The brief itself records a very wide earnings gap between the best-paid and worst-paid tenth of workers, while the World Inequality Lab finds wealth concentrated at the top. Growth, the paper concludes, has been jobless and inequitable.

From this the editorial draws a caution about method. If government largesse rather than earned income lifted households above the line, the improvement cannot be called a genuine drop in poverty. Statistical measures, even accurate ones, do not capture deprivation, which is finally about access to food, healthcare, education and housing. Steady and substantial investment in those areas is what the newspaper asks for.

Poverty reduction: Beyond welfare gains

Facts

- **What the World Bank brief reported :** The World Bank's India Poverty and Equity Brief of October 2026 found the proportion of Indians living below the lower middle-income line of 4.2 US dollars a day fell from 57.7 per cent to 16.1 per cent between 2011 and 2023, with an estimated 496 million people crossing the threshold. Extreme poverty, against the 3 US dollars a day benchmark, declined from 27.1 per cent to 2.6 per cent.

- **Counter-evidence on hunger and inequality :** The 2026 Global Hunger Index ranks India 100th among 122 countries, with high rates of undernourishment, stunting and wasting of children. The brief records median earnings among the highest-paid 10 per cent of workers as roughly 1,200 per cent higher than the lowest-paid 10 per cent in 2023. The World Inequality Lab 2024 report puts over 40 per cent of national wealth with the top 1 per cent.

- **Work, formality and women's participation :** The Multi-dimensional Poverty Index fell to 15.5 per cent in 2022-23. Against this, youth unemployment has been high over the last ten years and NITI Aayog estimates graduate unemployment at 13 per cent. Real earnings have been stagnant. Only 23 per cent of non-farm paid work is formal, and only 31 per cent of women participate in paid work.

Analytical Crux

1. The World Bank's India Poverty and Equity Brief - October 2026 has reported that the country has recorded one of the fastest rates in poverty decline globally, and the proportion of Indians living below the lower middle-income line of $4.2 a day fell from 57.7% to 16.1% between 2011 and 2023.

2. Economic growth has been jobless and inequitable, favouring higher-income brackets more than the poorest strata; the 2026 Global Hunger Index ranks India 100th among 122 countries, with high rates of undernourishment, stunting, and wasting of children.

Analytical Crux (contd.)

3. If the government largesse distributed in multiple ways accounts for the upliftment of people above the poverty line, that cannot be termed a genuine drop in poverty; poverty is primarily about inadequate access to food, healthcare, education, housing, and other necessities.

Verbatim Quotes

"Statistical measures of poverty do not present a full account of the situation, even when they generate accurate figures."

– Deccan Herald

A window for India before the US Congress shifts

The core of the relationship remains, with strong, continued support for defence cooperation, technology, and the Quad.



Brigadier Anil Raman (retd) Last Updated : 07 November 2026, 00:55 IST

Context

Brigadier Anil Raman (retd) writes on the weeks that separate the United States midterm result from the seating of a new Congress on 3 January. The Democrats have gained control of both houses, but the old Congress remains in place until then, the Republicans still control both chambers, and Donald Trump holds all the levers of government. India, he argues, faces two different Washingtons and needs two different plans.

The lame-duck weeks are where business can still be closed. A Republican Senate can confirm nominees that an incoming Democratic majority would not, and conservatives may press an ageing justice to retire so that the court's majority is secured for a generation. For India, the openings are a trade deal that Marco Rubio called close in October, and an understanding on Russian oil before the sanctions pause runs out in mid-December.

From January the arithmetic changes. Democratic committee chairs will use their oversight powers, resist further waivers on Russian oil, and bring human rights, religious freedom and Kashmir back to the agenda, while scrutinising arms sales to Pakistan. The author therefore recommends two tracks at once: finish what is possible with the White House, and start building relationships on Capitol Hill, where India must also find a new Republican champion.

A window for India before the US Congress shifts

Facts

- **The calendar of the transition :** A new Congress takes its seat in Washington on 3 January. States will finish counting and certifying results through November and December, with Alaska on 18 November and Mississippi's Senate sooner. Trump attends the ASEAN and APEC summits in mid-November in Manila and Shenzhen, then hosts the G20 in mid-December, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi among those attending.

- **The two deadlines facing Delhi :** In October, Marco Rubio said Washington was "trying to finalise a trade deal with India" and was "very close to doing that". The administration also waived the tariffs of up to 100 per cent that the Sanctioning Russia Act allows on the largest buyers of Russian energy, a group that includes India, and Rubio announced a 60-day pause ending by mid-December.

- **Who will hold the gavels from January :** Robert Garcia, the Democrat likely to chair the House Oversight Committee, has named four targets and warned officials to "lawyer up". In March, Senator Ruben Gallego and Representative Sam Liccardo called an earlier Russian oil waiver "dangerous, self-defeating, and indefensible". India also loses John Cornyn, the Republican co-chair of the Senate India Caucus, who leaves in January.

Analytical Crux

1. For India, the next eight weeks and the eight months following will require two very different plans, because the Republican-controlled Congress is operating in a lame-duck session, but this session is very important and it can affect politics for a generation.

2. India should secure that trade deal before January, while Trump controls trade and a friendly Congress is in place, and Delhi should use these weeks to frame what comes after the 60-day pause while those who granted it are still in charge.

Analytical Crux (contd.)

3. Democrats are more hawkish on Russia, which makes Russian oil Delhi's main new risk, while their committee chairs will scrutinise arms sales to Pakistan, human rights will return to the agenda, and talks on religious freedom and Kashmir are likely.

Verbatim Quotes

"India must find a new Republican champion because its position in Washington has always been through bipartisan support."

- Brigadier Anil Raman (retd)

In These Midterms, Foreign Policy Mattered



EXPERT TAKE UNITED STATES

In These Midterms, Foreign Policy Mattered

CFR President Michael Froman analyzes the results of the midterm elections.

PUBLISHED
November 6, 2026 2:58 p.m.

Context

Michael Froman, President of the Council on Foreign Relations, argues that foreign policy decided an American election for once. Midterms are usually fought on domestic ground, but affordability dominated this one and voters traced their costs to the Iran war and to tariffs. His frame is the meeting point between foreign policy and the kitchen table, which the Council's own polling across the country had already recorded during the summer.

He then asks what a Democratic Congress can actually do, and answers that it is less than many abroad assume. Legislation on tariffs or on Iran would meet a veto unless attached to a must-pass bill such as the defence authorisation or an appropriations measure. Oversight of the Pentagon may grow, but Congress is unlikely to undercut the President's military posture. Ukraine, where the purse strings matter, is the test case.

Froman's implication is continuity with room for recalibration. Tariffs are easier to impose than to remove, and they now raise substantial revenue, yet this President has changed course before when prices became political. Narrowing tariffs to strategic goods and sparing allies and partners, he suggests, would let the President keep his signature economic policy while answering the affordability verdict that the election has delivered.

In These Midterms, Foreign Policy Mattered

Facts

- ***What the Council's polling found :*** Council fellows travelled the country over several months conducting opinion polls and speaking to voters. The summer poll with Morning Consult found that 75 per cent of Americans were concerned about affording food and groceries, and that 41 per cent of those surveyed saw tariffs as raising prices. Rebecca Lissner reported that voters in Wisconsin and Arizona were anchored foremost in anxieties about affordability.

- ***The fiscal weight of tariffs :*** Tariffs bring in about 200 billion US dollars a year, paid by consumers and by manufacturers that rely on imported inputs. Last November, days after Democrats swept races in Virginia, New Jersey and New York City on a message of affordability, the President quietly exempted more than two hundred food products, including beef, coffee and bananas. Last month he reduced tariffs on certain products from Canada.

- ***Turnout and the state contests :*** Nearly 123 million votes were cast, just short of half the eligible population, bettering the 2022 turnout but falling below the 50 per cent mark of 2018. Democrats also took key statehouses from Texas to Ohio, running on slowing the expansion of data centres through moratoriums and lesser restrictions, and a number of local referenda restricting data centre construction passed.

Analytical Crux

1. More often than not, foreign policy is irrelevant to election outcomes, particularly midterms, but this week's results demonstrate what happens when foreign policy meets the kitchen table: voters were anchored foremost in anxieties about affordability and linked that to the Iran war and tariffs.

2. There is little Congress is likely to be able to do; if Congress were to legislate on tariffs or Iran, it would likely face a presidential veto, unless it can package its actions with a must-pass bill such as the National Defense Authorization Act, a debt limit increase, or an appropriations bill.

Analytical Crux (contd.)

3. Tariffs are easier to put on than they are to take off, and in the context of the federal government's fiscal challenges it might prove difficult to wean ourselves off a source of revenue, paid by consumers and by manufacturers that rely on imported inputs, which brings in about $200 billion a year.

Verbatim Quotes

"It has often been said that foreign policy issues will not win you an election, but they sure can lose you one."

- Michael Froman

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?

- **GS Paper II, 2026:** Can the constitutional mandate of rights-based welfare be effectively realised in the context of non-integrated governance and minimal public investment? Examine.

- **GS Paper II, 2026:** To what extent do pressure groups, social movements and corporate lobbies deepen pluralistic democracy in India by representing excluded interests? Analyse whether the growing convergence of corporate wealth and political power poses a threat to the autonomy of formal democratic institutions.

- **GS Paper I, 2026:** Evaluate the impact of globalization on Indian youths with reference to social, political, economic and cultural spheres.

- **GS Paper II, 2025:** Inequality in the ownership pattern of resources is one of the major causes of poverty. Discuss in the context of ‘paradox of poverty’.

- **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.

- **PSIR Paper II, 2025:** Trump’s unilateral imposition of reciprocal tariffs on scores of countries poses impending threat to the future of the rule-based multilateral global trading system under the WTO. What options do the WTO members have to salvage the organization?

- **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.

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