PSIR & GS 1,2,3 & 4

Daily Brief

Issue 183 · 23 November 2026

Five readings from the day's newspapers, journals and think tanks, read in full and marked up: context, facts, the author's argument and the UPSC questions.



Amit Pratap Singh
PSIR Optional · ForumIAS

1

Search

THE HINDU

HOME / OPINION / COMMENT

After Shenzhen: how India can forge a fourth pole

Groupings such as G20 and BRICS may be helpful in building networks of trust in an uncertain world but cannot replace the legitimacy of multilateral forums

ON YOUTUBE TODAY
POLITICS & GEOPOLITICS
CLASSROOM

2

The Indian EXPRESS
JOURNALISM OF COURAGE
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NEWS / OPINION / COLUMNS / From Manila, a question: Does Quad membership translate into influence?

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India's Quad agenda is to emerge as a net security provider in the Indian Ocean, protect sea lanes and monitor China's expanding maritime footprint.

3

The Indian EXPRESS
JOURNALISM OF COURAGE
SUBSCRIBE

EXPRESS OPINION

NEWS / OPINION / COLUMNS / ICJ Rohingya verdict: Turning point that may not endure

ICJ Rohingya verdict: Turning point that may not endure

The judgment marks an unprecedented development in the ICJ's jurisprudence: For the first time, it has expressly held a state responsible for committing genocide.

4

The Indian EXPRESS
JOURNALISM OF COURAGE
SUBSCRIBE

OPINION

NEWS / OPINION / COLUMNS / Aazad-Owaisi alliance is a response to dilemma of smaller parties in times of BJP

Aazad-Owaisi alliance is a response to dilemma of smaller parties in times of BJP

Despite a long history of separate Dalit assertion and an independent Muslim politics, democratic politics in India has not resolved the complication involved in this approach

5

Search

THE HINDU

HOME / OPINION / COMMENT

ECI's software use needs reconsideration

ECI resorted to mass elimination of voters using centralised software in 2015 itself by linking voter IDs with Aadhaar data under the National Electoral Roll Purification and Authentic Program, before the top court put an end to it



← the sources we sweep every morning

1 **After Shenzhen, a fourth pole for India** *The Hindu* ▶ video today

2 **Does the Quad give India influence?** *The Indian Express*

3 **The ICJ's Rohingya genocide verdict** *The Indian Express*

4 **Aazad–Owaisi and the smaller parties** *The Indian Express*

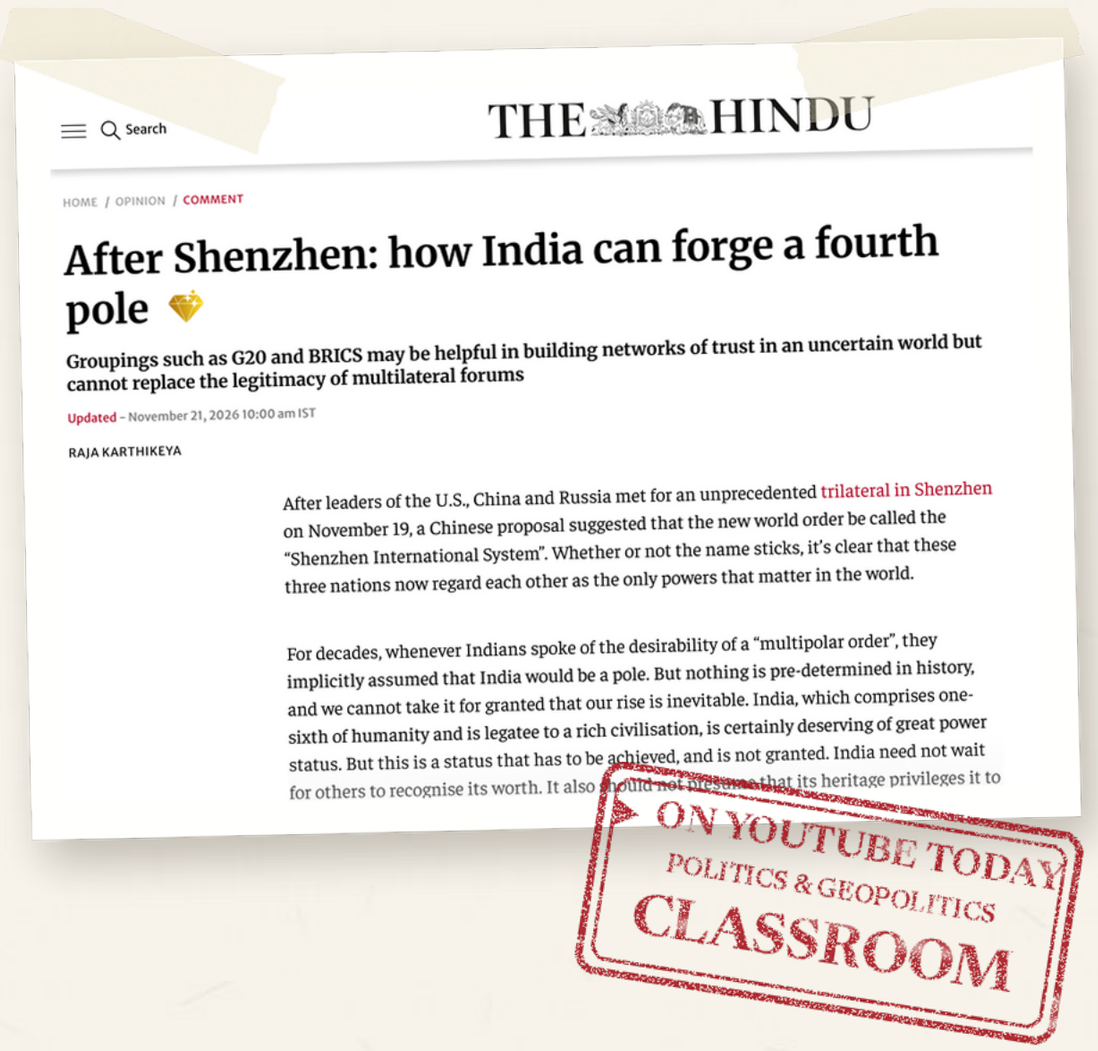
5 **The ECI, its software and the EVM** *The Hindu*

Article (1) of 5

After Shenzhen, a fourth pole for India

The Hindu · *Raja Karthikeya*
21 November 2026

PSIR Paper II, Part B
Recent developments in Indian Foreign policy
Part A
Changing International Political Order
GS Paper II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THE HINDU

HOME / OPINION / COMMENT

After Shenzhen: how India can forge a fourth pole

Groupings such as G20 and BRICS may be helpful in building networks of trust in an uncertain world but cannot replace the legitimacy of multilateral forums

Updated - November 21, 2026 10:00 am IST

RAJA KARTHIKEYA

After leaders of the U.S., China and Russia met for an unprecedented trilateral in Shenzhen on November 19, a Chinese proposal suggested that the new world order be called the "Shenzhen International System". Whether or not the name sticks, it's clear that these three nations now regard each other as the only powers that matter in the world.

For decades, whenever Indians spoke of the desirability of a "multipolar order", they implicitly assumed that India would be a pole. But nothing is pre-determined in history, and we cannot take it for granted that our rise is inevitable. India, which comprises one-sixth of humanity and is legatee to a rich civilisation, is certainly deserving of great power status. But this is a status that has to be achieved, and is not granted. India need not wait for others to recognise its worth. It also should not presume that its heritage privileges it to

ON YOUTUBE TODAY
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Context

On 19 November, Donald Trump, Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin met in Shenzhen, on the sidelines of the APEC summit, for the first trilateral summit of the United States, China and Russia. Their joint declaration called for UN reform, more refined-petroleum supply, a warning to the International Criminal Court not to abuse its jurisdiction, and a dialogue on nuclear risks.

Raja Karthikeya, a geopolitics researcher and former international civil servant, argues that India cannot assume it will be a pole of the new order, and proposes a 'fourth pole'.

Facts

1. A Chinese proposal suggested that the new world order be called the "Shenzhen International System".
2. India is contesting an elected UN Security Council seat for 2028-29 against Tajikistan, which has never sat on the Council.

Article (1) of 5

After Shenzhen, a fourth pole for India

Analytical crux

For decades, whenever Indians spoke of the desirability of a "multipolar order", they implicitly assumed that India would be a pole. But this is a status that has to be achieved, and is not granted. Just as we advanced the non-alignment movement, India can take creative pathways in forging a 'fourth pole': "not one country, but a collective of nations", a collective that will not compromise on sovereignty.

Worth quoting

> *"A new world order is emerging, but nations that were not at Shenzhen need not resign themselves to taking orders."*
>
> — Raja Karthikeya

Asked in UPSC

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

PSIR Paper II, 2025: For India, a multipolar world order would also mean a multipolar Asia. Comment.

— APS

Article (2) of 5

Does the Quad give India influence?

The Indian Express · *Sanjay Bhattacharyya*
23 November 2026

PSIR Paper II, Part B
India and the Global Centres of Power: USA, EU, Japan, China and Russia
Part A
Key concepts in International Relations
GS Paper II


The Indian EXPRESS
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EXPRESS OPINION

NEWS / OPINION / COLUMNS / From Manila, a question: Does Quad membership translate into influence?

From Manila, a question: Does Quad membership translate into influence?

India's Quad agenda is to emerge as a net security provider in the Indian Ocean, protect sea lanes and monitor China's expanding maritime footprint.

Written by: Sanjay Bhattacharyya
3 min read
Nov 23, 2026 07:13 AM IST

Prime Minister Narendra Modi (second from left), Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi (left), US President Donald Trump (third from left) and Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese (right) during the Quad Leaders Meeting, in Philippines. (narendramodi.in via PTI Photo)

The Quad Summit in Manila, the first in two years, was significant not merely for the revival of leadership meetings but also for its wider signalling. To partners, it signalled a transition from strategic intent to operational cooperation. It provided assurances to a democratic ASEAN. And the juxtaposition of the Quad and the Shenzhen trilateral meetings captured a defining feature of contemporary geopolitics: Accommodation by a global

Context

The Quad leaders met in Manila on 17 November, on the margins of the ASEAN meetings: their first summit in two years. India had been due to host the 2025 summit before Washington postponed it. Two days later, Donald Trump met Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin in Shenzhen.

Sanjay Bhattacharyya, a former diplomat who teaches at Jindal Global University, asks whether Quad membership gives India influence.

Fact

1. Quad joint statement, Manila: operational cooperation in maritime security, economic resilience, AI technologies, connectivity extending to the Indian Ocean, cybersecurity and a business leaders' forum; opposition to unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion, without naming China.

Article (2) of 5

Does the Quad give India influence?

Analytical crux

The juxtaposition of the Quad and the Shenzhen trilateral meetings captured a defining feature of contemporary geopolitics: Accommodation by a global power in its simultaneous pursuit of coalitions and great-power consultations. India has strategic relevance, but not yet strategic primacy. Only the accumulation of hard power can leverage India's position as it navigates coalition-building and great-power bargaining. India's diplomacy must not become captive to either.

Worth quoting

"Will the emerging global order be shaped by a small group of great powers or a wider constellation of consequential powers?"

— Sanjay Bhattacharyya

Asked in UPSC

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

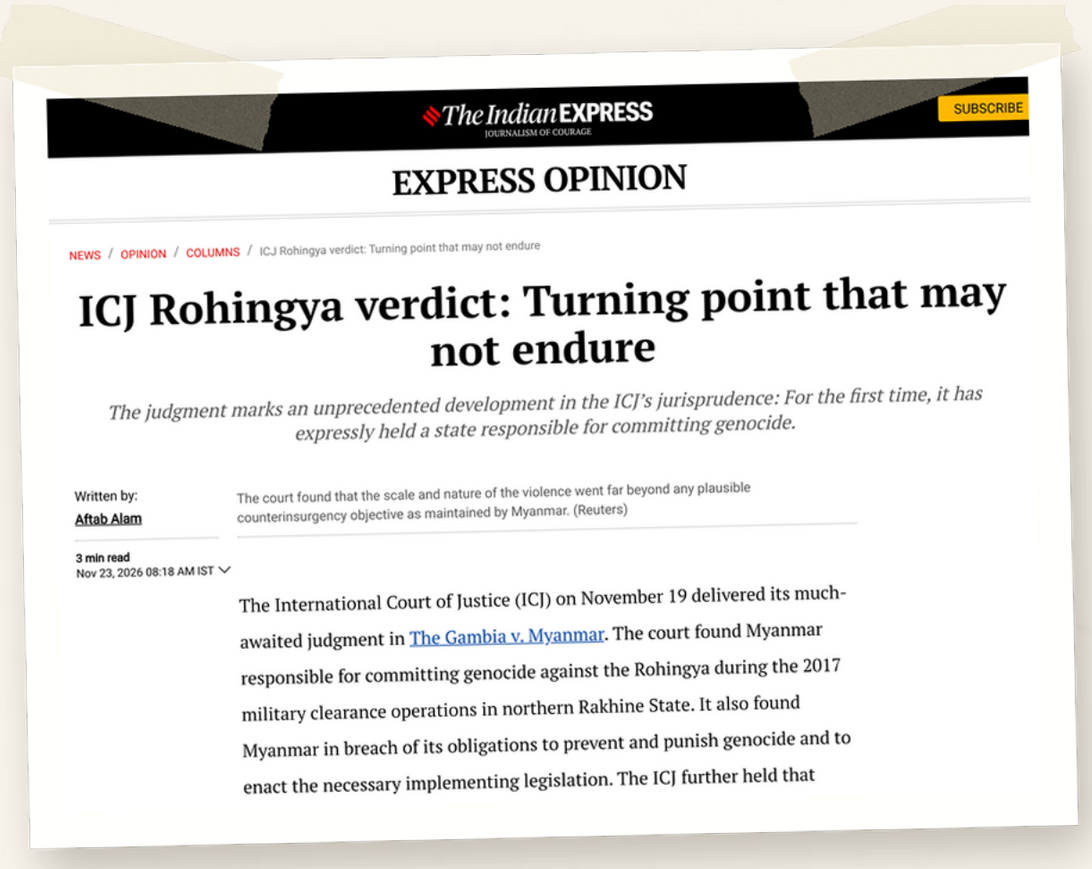
— APS

Article (3) of 5

The ICJ's Rohingya genocide verdict

The Indian Express · *Aftab Alam*
23 November 2026

PSIR Paper II, Part A
Contemporary Global Concerns: Democracy, human rights, environment, gender justice, terrorism, nuclear proliferation
United Nations: Envisaged role and actual record
GS Paper II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EXPRESS OPINION

NEWS / OPINION / COLUMNS / ICJ Rohingya verdict: Turning point that may not endure

ICJ Rohingya verdict: Turning point that may not endure

The judgment marks an unprecedented development in the ICJ's jurisprudence: For the first time, it has expressly held a state responsible for committing genocide.

Written by: Aftab Alam

3 min read
Nov 23, 2026 08:18 AM IST

The court found that the scale and nature of the violence went far beyond any plausible counterinsurgency objective as maintained by Myanmar. (Reuters)

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) on November 19 delivered its much-awaited judgment in The Gambia v. Myanmar. The court found Myanmar responsible for committing genocide against the Rohingya during the 2017 military clearance operations in northern Rakhine State. It also found Myanmar in breach of its obligations to prevent and punish genocide and to enact the necessary implementing legislation. The ICJ further held that

Context

On 19 November, the International Court of Justice delivered its judgment in The Gambia v. Myanmar. It found Myanmar responsible for genocide against the Rohingya in the 2017 military clearance operations in northern Rakhine State, and in breach of its duties to prevent and punish genocide. The Gambia, far from the events, brought the case under the Genocide Convention.

Aftab Alam, dean of the Faculty of International Studies at Aligarh Muslim University, asks whether the ruling will endure.

Facts

1. The evidence supported an estimate of about 10,000 Rohingya killed; more than 700,000 fled to Bangladesh.
2. Earlier ICJ genocide cases: in Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro (2007), Serbia was held responsible only for failing to prevent and punish genocide at Srebrenica; in Croatia v. Serbia (2015), specific intent was not established.

Article (3) of 5

The ICJ's Rohingya genocide verdict

Analytical crux

For the first time, it has expressly held a state responsible for committing genocide. The ICJ concluded that the only reasonable inference was an intent to destroy a substantial part of the protected group, and clarified that genocidal intent can coexist with other motives. While legally binding, the decision lacks an independent enforcement mechanism, leaving its efficacy dependent on state compliance and potential UNSC action.

Worth quoting

> *"Repatriation without restored citizenship, security, freedom of movement, and protection from renewed persecution would be a hollow remedy."*
>
> — Aftab Alam

Asked in UPSC

PSIR Paper II, 2026: International Human Rights frameworks are hostage to politics among nations. Comment.

PSIR Paper II, 2023: What is the structure and functions of International Court of Justice?

— APS

Article (4) of 5

Aazad–Owaisi and the smaller parties

The Indian Express · *Suhas Palshikar*
21 November 2026

PSIR Paper I, Part B
Party System
Caste, Religion and Ethnicity in Indian Politics
GS Paper II


The Indian EXPRESS
JOURNALISM OF COURAGE
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OPINION

NEWS / OPINION / COLUMNS / Aazad-Owaisi alliance is a response to dilemma of smaller parties in times of BJP

Aazad-Owaisi alliance is a response to dilemma of smaller parties in times of BJP

Despite a long history of separate Dalit assertion and an independent Muslim politics, democratic politics in India has not resolved the complication involved in this approach

Written by: Suhas Palshikar
6 min read
Nov 21, 2026 06:48 AM IST

While both the ASP and the AIMIM may do well to learn from that, the lessons should also be urgently learnt by the supposed "mainstream" parties, who are self-appointed challengers to the BJP. (Illustration: C R Sasikumar)

The announcement by Chandra Shekhar Aazad's Azad Samaj Party (ASP) and Asaduddin Owaisi's All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) that they will contest the Uttar Pradesh election jointly raises predictable concerns — of hurting the chances of the Samajwadi Party, which sees itself as the main challenger to the BJP in UP, and presenting ASP and AIMIM as the B Team of the BJP.

Context

Chandra Shekhar Aazad's Azad Samaj Party and Asaduddin Owaisi's AIMIM have announced that they will contest the Uttar Pradesh election jointly. Critics say the alliance will hurt the Samajwadi Party, the main challenger to the BJP in the State, and call the two parties a 'B Team' of the BJP.

Suhas Palshikar, who taught Political Science in Pune, reads the alliance as the dilemma of smaller, sectional parties in a dominant-party system.

Fact

1. The alliance's supporters point out that Dalits and Muslims together account for 40 per cent of Uttar Pradesh's electorate.

Article (4) of 5

Aazad–Owaisi and the smaller parties

Analytical crux

The move by Aazad and Owaisi needs to be seen as characterising the dilemmas faced by most parties, particularly "smaller" ones, within the framework of a dominant-party system. If they join the relatively larger parties, the chances of being swallowed by the latter will mean they cannot exist or expand. It is not just that the BJP's Hindu consolidation cannot be defeated by consolidation of the "non-Hindu" vote; it is also an ideological challenge.

Worth quoting

> *"A politics of all communities predicated on the inversion of social relations and the promotion of the "lower" to higher political roles."*
>
> — Suhas Palshikar, on the BSP's sarvajan samaj drive

Asked in UPSC

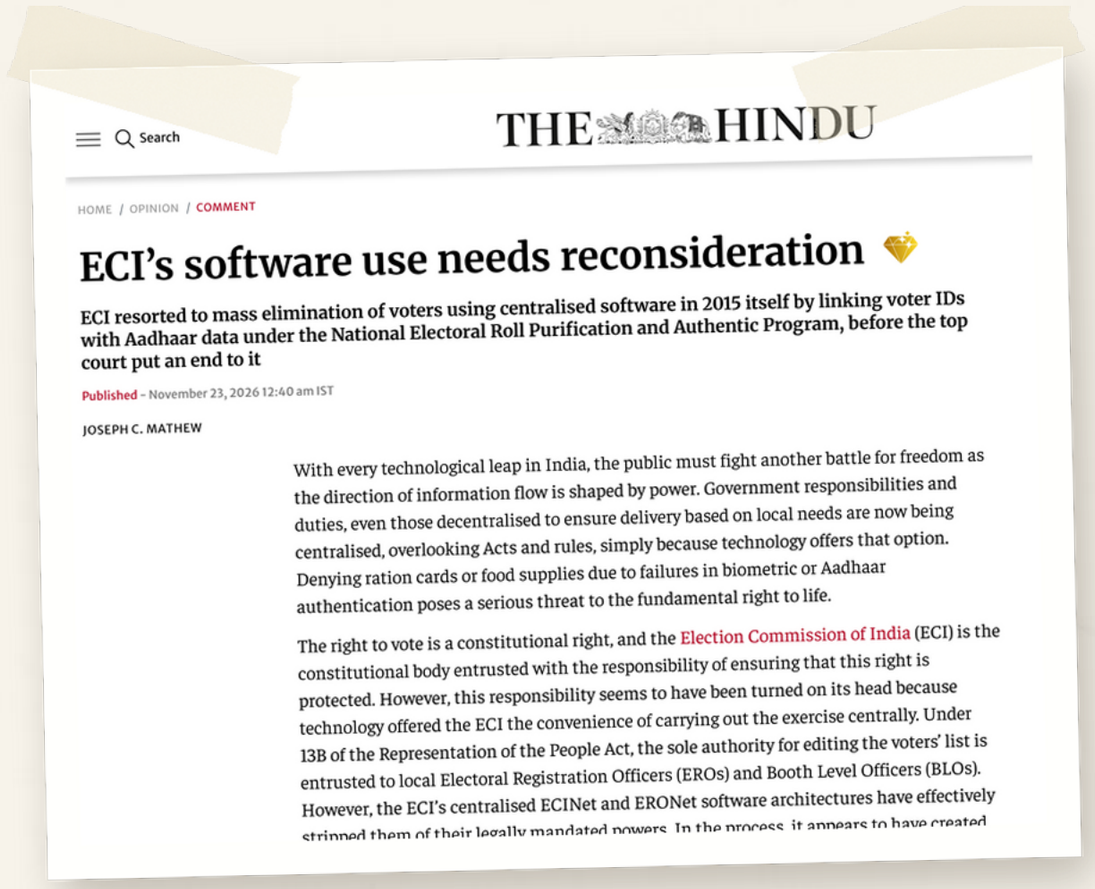
PSIR Paper I, 2025: Illustrate with examples how political parties in India have played a crucial role in drawing the historically disadvantaged groups into the mainstream political system.

PSIR Paper I, 2017: India has moved from 'one-party dominant system' to 'one-party led coalition'. Discuss.

— APS

Article (5) of 5

The ECI, its software and the EVM



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THE HINDU

HOME / OPINION / COMMENT

ECI's software use needs reconsideration

ECI resorted to mass elimination of voters using centralised software in 2015 itself by linking voter IDs with Aadhaar data under the National Electoral Roll Purification and Authentic Program, before the top court put an end to it

Published - November 23, 2026 12:40 am IST

JOSEPH C. MATHEW

With every technological leap in India, the public must fight another battle for freedom as the direction of information flow is shaped by power. Government responsibilities and duties, even those decentralised to ensure delivery based on local needs are now being centralised, overlooking Acts and rules, simply because technology offers that option. Denying ration cards or food supplies due to failures in biometric or Aadhaar authentication poses a serious threat to the fundamental right to life.

The right to vote is a constitutional right, and the Election Commission of India (ECI) is the constitutional body entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that this right is protected. However, this responsibility seems to have been turned on its head because technology offered the ECI the convenience of carrying out the exercise centrally. Under 13B of the Representation of the People Act, the sole authority for editing the voters' list is entrusted to local Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) and Booth Level Officers (BLOs). However, the ECI's centralised ECINet and ERONet software architectures have effectively stripped them of their legally mandated powers. In the process, it appears to have created

Context

Under the Representation of the People Act, electoral rolls are to be edited only by local Electoral Registration Officers and Booth Level Officers; the Election Commission now handles them through central software, ECINet and ERONet.

Joseph C. Mathew, a former IT adviser to the Government of Keralam, argues that this and the EVM safeguards need reconsideration.

Facts

1. The Election Commission's safeguards, as recorded by the Supreme Court in ADR vs Election Commission: the control unit is agnostic to any party or candidate, and EVM units are standalone, not networked, and cannot be connected to any external input source.
2. Symbol loading, as submitted by the Election Commission: a laptop or PC with a symbol loading application creates a bitmap file of the serial number, candidate name and symbol, which is loaded on the VVPAT units.

Article (5) of 5

The ECI, its software and the EVM

Analytical crux

Under 13B of the Representation of the People Act, the sole authority for editing the voters' list is entrusted to local Electoral Registration Officers and Booth Level Officers. However, the ECI's centralised ECINet and ERONet software architectures have effectively stripped them of their legally mandated powers. The foundation of trust in EVMs is the assurance that they are key-agnostic. From the moment the bitmap is loaded, the EVM is no longer key-agnostic.

Worth quoting

"This is not an allegation; but the safeguards presented do not make the system foolproof."

— Joseph C. Mathew

Asked in UPSC

PSIR Paper I, 2021: "The success of electoral democracy can partly be attributed to the status and role of the Election Commission of India." Explain.

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?

— APS

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