PSIR & GS 1,2,3 & 4

Daily Brief

Issue 186 · 28 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

The Indian EXPRESS
JOURNALISM OF COURAGE

The delimitation question we need to ask: What happens when the Rajya Sabha is diminished?

As Parliament meets to discuss the delimitation proposals, the hope is that MPs will also reflect on these aspects to ensure that a larger Lok Sabha does not weaken the Rajya Sabha. This is not an outcome that our Constitution framers would have wanted

2

ORF OBSERVER RESEARCH FOUNDATION
Ideas · Forums · Leadership · Impact

The Rhetoric of Forgetting: Why Nepal's "Old Baggage" with India Matters

3

THE HINDU

Pressure tactics: On the new U.S. tariffs on India

The new U.S. tariffs must not erode India's stand on a trade deal

Updated - November 27, 2026 07:59 am IST

4

Economic&PoliticalWEEKLY
ISSN (Print) - 0012-9976 | ISSN (Online) - 2349-8846

Editorials Columns Commentary Web Exclusives Special Articles Archives Open Access

Don't Mourn Cop31

It spurned hypocrisy, not serious commitment to arrest climate change.

5

THE WIRE English

HOME POLITICS ECONOMY WORLD SECURITY LAW SCIENCE SOCIETY CULTURE ENVIRONMENT SERIES COLUMNS SPECIALS

The ICJ Reminds Us that Rules-based International Order Can't Survive the Normalisation of Genocide



← the sources we sweep every morning

1 **Delimitation and the Rajya Sabha** *The Indian Express*

2 **Nepal's 'no old baggage' with India** *ORF*

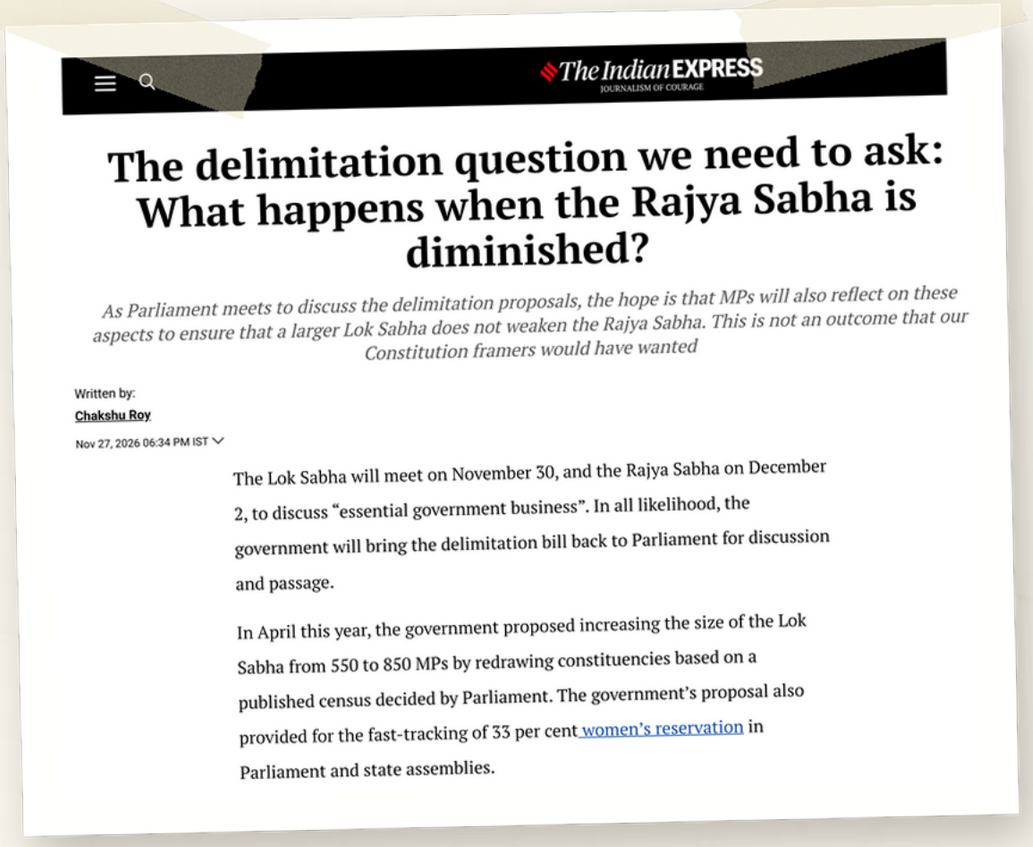
3 **Tariffs as a pressure tactic** *The Hindu*

4 **COP31 without a cover text** *EPW*

5 **The ICJ's Rohingya genocide ruling** *The Wire*

Article (1) of 5

Delimitation and the Rajya Sabha



The Indian EXPRESS
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Written by:
Chakshu Roy
Nov 27, 2026 06:34 PM IST

The Lok Sabha will meet on November 30, and the Rajya Sabha on December 2, to discuss "essential government business". In all likelihood, the government will bring the delimitation bill back to Parliament for discussion and passage.

In April this year, the government proposed increasing the size of the Lok Sabha from 550 to 850 MPs by redrawing constituencies based on a published census decided by Parliament. The government's proposal also provided for the fast-tracking of 33 per cent women's reservation in Parliament and state assemblies.

The Indian Express · *Chakshu Roy*
27 November 2026

PSIR Paper I, Part B, Topic 4(a)
Principal Organs of the Union Government: Envisaged role and actual working of the Executive, Legislature and Supreme Court.
PSIR Paper I, Part B, Topic 7
Federalism
GS Paper II

Context

In April, the government proposed raising the Lok Sabha's strength from 550 to 850 by redrawing constituencies. Opposition parties objected that the States' relative shares of seats would change, and the House rejected the constitutional amendment bill.

Parliament meets again from 30 November. A revised bill giving every State 50 per cent more Lok Sabha seats is expected. Chakshu Roy asks what a larger Lok Sabha would mean for the Rajya Sabha, whose strength the April bill left unchanged.

Facts

1. A joint sitting to break a legislative deadlock has been held only three times, the last in 2002 on the Prevention of Terrorism Bill.
2. A constitutional amendment of 2003 caps the Council of Ministers at 15 per cent of the strength of the Lok Sabha or the State Assembly.

Article (1) of 5

Delimitation and the Rajya Sabha

Analytical crux

The framers of the Constitution chose a bicameral legislature to strengthen the legislative process: the Rajya Sabha could put the brakes on hasty legislation passed by a popularly elected government. A larger Lok Sabha and an unchanged Rajya Sabha would ensure that a government with a majority in the Lok Sabha would always prevail in a joint sitting. This will alter the constitutional scheme of bicameralism and stifle the Rajya Sabha's legislative voice.

Worth quoting

> *"Over the years, successive governments have talked things over, resolved differences, and built consensus without needing to resort to a joint sitting."*
>
> — Chakshu Roy

Asked in UPSC

PSIR Paper I, 2025: The decision to conduct Population Census-2027 has reopened the debate on delimitation in India. Discuss its various aspects.

PSIR Paper I, 2026: Critically comment on the shifts in the functioning of the Indian Parliament in the last two decades.

— APS

Article (2) of 5

Nepal's 'no old baggage' with India


ORF OBSERVER RESEARCH FOUNDATION

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The Rhetoric of Forgetting: Why Nepal's "Old Baggage" with India Matters

AUTHOR : GAURAV BHATTARAI

Issue Briefs Published on Nov 26, 2026 PDF Download Add as preferred on Google

Introduction

Nepal's Finance Minister Swarnim Wagle made a statement at the NDTV World Summit 2026 in New Delhi that provoked many back home: "There was a time when nationalism in Nepal was associated with anti-India sentiment. But that era is over."[1] Although this statement deserves closer attention for being politically convenient and historically careless, Wagle's words extended the political and diplomatic language of "no old baggage."

The term itself is a new one in the glossary of Nepal–India diplomatic communications. During their June 2026 visits to New Delhi, leaders and ministers associated with Nepal's incumbent Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP)-led government told their Indian counterparts and the media that they would approach relations with India freed from the burdens of the past.

ORF · *Gaurav Bhattarai*
26 November 2026

PSIR Paper II, Part B, Topic 3
India and South Asia
GS Paper II

Context

The Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) won Nepal's March 2026 elections by a landslide. On visits to New Delhi in June 2026, its leaders said that Nepal carries 'no old baggage' in relations with India.

Gaurav Bhattarai of Tribhuvan University asks what that baggage is. He examines three unresolved issues: Nepal's proposal to revise the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship, the border disputes over Lipulekh–Kalapani and Susta, and the report of the Eminent Persons Group (EPG).

Facts

1. India–Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship: signed on 31 July 1950. Under Article 10, either party may terminate it by giving one year's notice.
2. Eminent Persons Group on Nepal–India relations: constituted in 2016. Its joint report, completed in 2018, has not been formally received by the two governments.

Article (2) of 5

Nepal's 'no old baggage' with India

Analytical crux

'No old baggage' should not be interpreted as a call to forget or deny the unresolved issues that have shaped Nepal–India relations. The 1950 Treaty, the border disputes and the EPG report are not simply remnants of the past but active elements of the present. Removing the baggage means confronting these issues rather than declaring them irrelevant, and transforming them into an agenda for negotiation based on sovereign equality.

Worth quoting

> *"A fresh start cannot be achieved through political amnesia."*
>
> — Gaurav Bhattarai

Asked in UPSC

PSIR Paper II, 2020: Discuss the future prospects of Indo-Nepal relations in the context of the recent publication of new Nepalese map wrongly claiming Indian territory.

— APS

Article (3) of 5

Tariffs as a pressure tactic


THE HINDU

Pressure tactics: On the new U.S. tariffs on India

The new U.S. tariffs must not erode India's stand on a trade deal

Updated - November 27, 2026 07:59 am IST

The latest U.S. tariffs on India are nothing more than a pressure tactic to push for the signing of a trade deal. The U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) has proposed to levy a tariff of 25% for India's apparent use of strategic excess manufacturing capacity to the detriment of American industry. This is the second-highest tariff rate the USTR has applied across the 14 countries that it has taken action against. The pressure on India does not come from the 25% rate but from the 17% this could be reduced to if it signs a trade deal with the U.S. This latest action is yet another example of how, despite the frothiness of India-U.S. trade relations over the past year and a half, the actual substance has not changed. The 25% rate now proposed, which is net of existing tariffs, is nearly the same as the 26% rate that U.S. President Donald Trump had first announced when he unveiled his 'Liberation Day' reciprocal tariffs in April 2025. Indeed, it is exactly the same as the 25% tariff he finally imposed in July 2025, before he imposed an additional 25% for India's Russian oil imports. The 17% rate is also only marginally lower than the 18% that the two countries had agreed on in their joint statement in February 2026. It is also just one percentage point lower than the tariffs on competitors such as Indonesia and Malaysia. The allegation of India having excess capacity does not hold water. Indeed, were India to have excess manufacturing capacity in any sector, it would be the Government of India that would be the first to announce it with great fanfare, instead of denying it as it did. After all, that has been its aim since 2014.

Yet, even a basic assessment of India's import dependence and the fact that manufacturing's share in GDP is lower now than a decade ago shows that India is far from having excess manufacturing capacity in any sector. Further, higher tariffs are unlikely to reduce America's imports of the goods from India that it does depend on. The USTR mentioned generic pharmaceuticals, telecommunication equipment, and renewable energy goods. The first two are items that India has developed expertise in, which is distinct from strategic excess capacity. A relatively small tariff disadvantage will not substantially erode the attractiveness of these Indian products. Renewable energy imports from India have swelled because the U.S. is reducing its purchases from China. Hanging over all of this are the 100% tariffs related to the purchase of Russian oil, which have only temporarily been paused. India has so far held off on signing a deal, and must go ahead with one only if it is convinced that the benefits at least equal the costs.

The Hindu · *Editorial*
27 November 2026

PSIR Paper II, Part B, Topic 5
India and the Global Centres of Power: USA, EU, Japan, China and Russia.
PSIR Paper II, Part A, Topic 8
Evolution of the International Economic System
GS Paper II, GS Paper III

Context

The United States Trade Representative (USTR) has proposed a tariff of 25 per cent on India. It alleges that India uses strategic excess manufacturing capacity to the detriment of American industry. The rate could fall to 17 per cent if India signs a trade deal.

The Hindu's editorial calls the tariff a pressure tactic. It rejects the allegation: manufacturing's share in India's GDP is lower now than a decade ago. Tariffs of 100 per cent related to India's purchase of Russian oil are paused only temporarily.

Facts

1. United States tariffs on India: 26 per cent announced in April 2025 ('Liberation Day'); 25 per cent imposed in July 2025; a further 25 per cent for Russian oil imports.
2. India–United States joint statement, February 2026: the two countries agreed on a tariff rate of 18 per cent.

Article (3) of 5

Tariffs as a pressure tactic

Analytical crux

The tariffs are a pressure tactic: the pressure does not come from the rate proposed but from the rate this could be reduced to if India signs a trade deal. Despite the frothiness of trade relations, the substance has not changed. The allegation of excess capacity does not hold water, and a relatively small tariff disadvantage will not substantially erode the attractiveness of Indian products.

Worth quoting

> *"India has so far held off on signing a deal, and must go ahead with one only if it is convinced that the benefits at least equal the costs."*
>
> — The Hindu, editorial

Asked in UPSC

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 III, 2025: What are the challenges before the Indian economy when the world is moving away from free trade and multilateralism to protectionism and bilateralism? How can these challenges be met?

— APS

Article (4) of 5

COP31 without a cover text

EPW · *Editorial*
27 November 2026

PSIR Paper II, Part A, Topic 11
Contemporary Global Concerns: Democracy, human rights, environment, gender justice, terrorism, nuclear proliferation.
GS Paper III


Economic&PoliticalWEEKLY
ISSN (Print) - 0012-9976 | ISSN (Online) - 2349-8846
Editorials Columns Commentary Web Exclusives Special Articles Archives Open Access
Don't Mourn Cop31
It spurned hypocrisy, not serious commitment to arrest climate change.
Acknowledging real differences is, more often than not, better than covering up the rift with language spun finer than a spider's web. In this light, the conclusion of the 2026 climate summit in Antalya, Türkiye without a cover text, as has been the practice at these meets, technically Conferences of Parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, is progress, rather than a setback. The host Türkiye presented a draft that did not mention the phasing out of fossil fuels, to the consternation of the European Union and most committed climate champions, and instead, argued for extensive deployment of carbon capture for use and storage (CCUS). The text also waffled on the rich world's commitment to provide adequate financing for mitigation in the developing world, to India's dislike. It makes sense to continue hard work for a better COP32, scheduled for 2027, with Ethiopia playing host, than to bemoan the lost opportunity at the just-concluded COP31. That said, to say that COP31 collapsed would be to ignore the progress made on several of the 160 items discussed at the summit, which form the nuts and bolts of progress on the climate agenda.
This is the first time serious attention was focused on CCUS at a climate summit, with the rich world dismissing it all along as an expensive distraction from the main task of reducing additional emissions. By identifying climate change mitigation as reduction of additional emissions, rather than carbon dioxide removal (CDR) from the atmosphere to swiftly deplete the existing stock of atmospheric carbon, the rich world has short-changed the developing world. According to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, an estimated 58% of the human-generated greenhouse gas accumulation in the atmosphere over 1850–1989 had already taken place. That is, before developing countries had started registering robust growth and adding to emissions, the rich world had already done much global-warming damage, and have continued to produce large additional proportions of the global stock of atmospheric carbon. The sensible form of mitigation would have been to deplete the stock of atmospheric carbon, rather than to identify mitigation with reduction of additional emissions. Developing world representatives at climate summits allowed themselves to be placated with the phrase, common but differentiated responsibilities (and "respective capabilities" was tagged on later) and did not demand depletion of the stock of emissions as the principal means of arresting climate change.

Context

COP31, the 2026 climate summit in Antalya, Türkiye, ended without the cover text that usually closes a Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The host's draft did not mention phasing out fossil fuels and argued for carbon capture for use and storage (CCUS). The European Union objected, and India disliked the wording on finance from the rich world.

EPW's editorial reads this as progress. It argues that mitigation should mean removing carbon already in the atmosphere, a task mainly for the rich world.

Fact

1. COP32 is scheduled for 2027, with Ethiopia as host.

Article (4) of 5

COP31 without a cover text

Analytical crux

By identifying climate change mitigation as reduction of additional emissions, rather than carbon dioxide removal to deplete the existing stock of atmospheric carbon, the rich world has short-changed the developing world. If removal is the principal form of mitigation, the major responsibility for cleaning up the mess would fall on the rich world. It was hypocrisy that was spurned at COP31, not any commitment to curb global warming.

Worth quoting

> *"Acknowledging real differences is, more often than not, better than covering up the rift with language spun finer than a spider's web."*
>
> — EPW, editorial

Asked in UPSC

PSIR Paper II, 2018: Would you agree that the on-going debates on international environmental politics continue to be marred by a new North-South ideological divide over historical responsibility and developmental model? Illustrate your answer with suitable examples.

PSIR Paper II, 2020: Examine the role of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and other major efforts by the UN to address the global environmental crisis.

— APS

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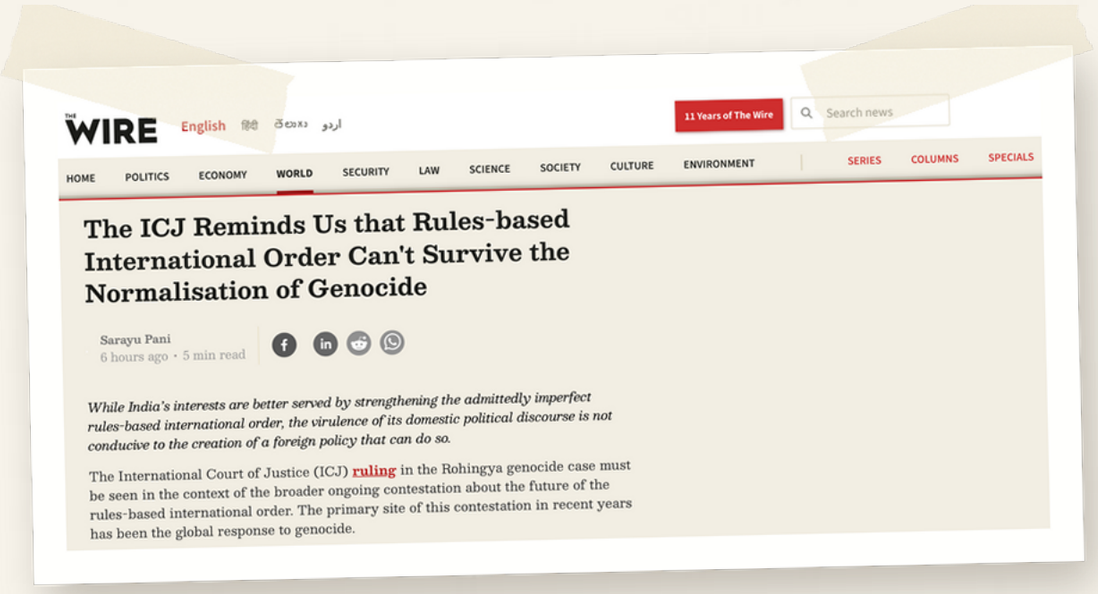
The ICJ's Rohingya genocide ruling



The Wire · *Sarayu Pani*
28 November 2026

PSIR Paper II, Part A, Topic 11
Contemporary Global Concerns: Democracy, human rights, environment, gender justice, terrorism, nuclear proliferation.
PSIR Paper II, Part A, Topic 9
United Nations
GS Paper II

Context

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has ruled against Myanmar in the Rohingya case, filed by The Gambia under the Genocide Convention. The judgment is binding, but Myanmar has said it will not comply. India has noted the judgment and supported the safe, speedy and sustainable return of the Rohingya.

Sarayu Pani, a lawyer, places the ruling within a wider contest over the rules-based international order. She argues that this order serves India's interests, and that India's domestic political discourse hinders a foreign policy that would strengthen it.

Facts

1. Genocide Convention cases at the International Court of Justice: The Gambia filed against Myanmar, and South Africa against Israel.
2. The United States announced its withdrawal from the World Health Organisation and the Paris Climate Agreement in January 2025, and from a further 31 UN agencies in January 2026.

Article (5) of 5

The ICJ's Rohingya genocide ruling

Analytical crux

For Sarayu Pani, the Genocide Convention lies at the heart of the post-World War II order: when this moral consensus is dismantled, other foundational principles will likely not survive. What replaces it is a multipolar world where a country must be powerful or have no voice at all. In her view, India's interests are better served by strengthening the admittedly imperfect order, but its domestic political discourse is not conducive to such a foreign policy.

Worth quoting

> *"For countries that are not major powers, the cost of doing nothing and failing to protect what is left of the rules-based order could well be too high."*
>
> — Sarayu Pani

Asked in UPSC

PSIR Paper II, 2019: Evaluate the role of the International Court of Justice in inter-State disputes.

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

— APS

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4 Compare — A model answer for every question: flow, critical view, quotations.

5 Rewrite — Rewrite and submit again. The rewrite is checked once more.

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