

### Judicial drift in the Special Intensive Revision hearings

**Prelims:** General Studies Paper - 1  
Indian Polity and Governance - Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues

**Mains:** General Studies - 2

- Structure, organization and functioning of the Executive and the Judiciary
- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

#### 1. Background

- **Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls** began in July 2025, first in Bihar, later extended to multiple States.
- In **February 2026**, West Bengal Chief Minister appeared before the Supreme Court citing **procedural infirmities causing hardship**.
- On February 9, the Court issued directions to reduce hardship but stated that **no impediment to SIR** would be allowed nationwide.
- The Court has not decided the **constitutionality of SIR**, while the Bihar SIR became a **fait accompli** after the November 2025 elections.

**Fait accompli** means an action that has **already been completed and cannot be changed or undone**, even if it is later questioned or challenged.

#### 2. Challenges

- **Judicial drift:** The Court has **acted as an administrator**, issuing procedural directions, instead of deciding constitutionality, allowing actions to continue and be validated later.
- **Question of power:** The **Representation of the People Act** allows special revision for specific constituencies, **not blanket State or nationwide SIRs**.

- **Inversion of state-citizen relationship:** Existing voters are forced to re-prove citizenship and voting rights without prior suspicion.
- **Precedent ignored:** In **Lal Babu Hussein (1995)**, the Court held **mass deletions invalid** and required individual notices with reasons.
- **Risk of disenfranchisement:** Reports of arbitrary deletions and **misuse of Form 7**, which allows **any person to object to another person's inclusion** in the electoral roll.
- **Inequality impact:** Documentation requirements **disproportionately harm** the poor, marginalised, and women, **deepening material inequalities**.

#### 3. Way Forward

- Treat voter deletions and disenfranchisement as **constitutional issues**, not mere administrative lapses.
- **Address the root problem:** SIRs invert the state-citizen relationship and place excessive burden on individuals.
- Resolve the issue through a **constitutional framework** that affirms dignity and participatory rights.
- Ensure citizens are **not reduced to administrative subjects** in the pursuit of efficiency.

### The CPI base revision exercise measures a slice of life

**Prelims:** General Studies Paper - 1  
Current events of national and international importance

**Mains:** General Studies - 3  
Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

#### 1. Context

- Consumer Price Index **measures the average change in prices of a fixed basket of goods and services consumed by households**.

- It is the main **indicator of retail inflation in India and is released monthly by the National Statistical Office (NSO).**
- The **CPI base year is being updated from 2012 to 2024**, and the new series will be released on February 12, 2026.

## 2. Why the Base Year Needed Update?

- **India's economy and consumption patterns have evolved due to:**
  - ➔ **Urbanization and expansion of services**
  - ➔ **Growth of digital platforms and online shopping**
  - ➔ **Diversification of household spending**
  - ➔ **Rising incomes and lifestyle changes**
- To reflect these shifts, **the CPI base year has been updated to 2024 using data from the Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (2023–24).**

## 3. Changes in the Consumption Basket and Methodology

- The **basket is updated to reflect what people buy today.**
- The **method now follows global standards** but still keeps features specific to India.
- This **helps compare India's inflation with other countries** while staying true to Indian realities.

## 4. Improved Data Collection and Accuracy

**The 2024 CPI framework enhances data reliability through:**

- **Inclusion of online prices** (e.g., telecom services, airfares).
- **Computer-assisted price collection** to reduce manual errors.
- **Greater reliance on official administrative data** (rail fares, postal charges, fuel prices, public distribution system items).
- **Integration of survey data**, digital sources, and government records.

## 5. Conclusion: Continuity with Relevance

- The CPI **revision involved coordination between field offices, experts, and international organisations.**
- The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) **ensured transparency and proper methodology.**
- The updated CPI still **focuses on measuring price changes from a household's point of view.**
- CPI remains an important tool for policymaking and reflects the real-life impact of price changes on people.

## Have States gained from the 16th FC?

**Prelims:** General Studies Paper - 1  
Indian Polity and Governance-Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.

**Mains:** General Studies - 2  
Functions and responsibilities of the Union and the States, issues and challenges pertaining to the federal structure, devolution of powers and finances up to local levels and challenges therein.

## 1. Constitutional Basis of Finance Commission and Devolution

- The **16th Finance Commission**, chaired by **Dr. Arvind Panagariya**, submitted its report for **2026-31.**
- Under **Article 270**, the **net tax proceeds** of the Union are shared between the **Centre and States.**
- The **Finance Commission (Article 280)** is constituted **every five years** to recommend this distribution.
- The **divisible pool** includes taxes such as:
  - ➔ **Corporation tax**
  - ➔ **Income tax**
  - ➔ **Central GST**
  - ➔ **Centre's share of the Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST)**
- **Cess and surcharge are excluded** from the divisible pool.
- In **2025-26**, the divisible pool accounts for about **81% of the Centre's gross tax revenue.**

## 2. Past Recommendations on Devolution

- Until the **13th Finance Commission**, States received **32% of Central taxes (vertical devolution)**, and **Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) funds were given with conditions attached**.
- The **14th Finance Commission** increased States' share to **42%** and **reduced CSS conditional transfers**.
- The **15th Finance Commission** revised the share to **41%** after the **reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir**.
- In **distribution amongst the States (horizontal devolution)**, greater weight has been given to:
  - ➔ **Equity (income gap)**
  - ➔ **Needs (population and area)**
- Less weight was given to **efficiency indicators** like **forest cover, demographic performance, and tax effort**.

## 3. Demands Made by States

### Vertical devolution demands

- Many States demanded increasing the share from **41% to 50%**.
- Some states suggested **45-48%**.
- States also demanded:
  - ➔ **Inclusion of cess and surcharge in the divisible pool**
  - ➔ **Fixing a cap on cess and surcharge**.

### Horizontal devolution demands

- Continued importance for **equity-based criteria**.
- Reduction in weight for **income distance**.
- Industrialised States proposed adding **States' contribution to GDP** as a criterion.

## 4. Key Recommendations of the 16th Finance Commission

### Vertical devolution

- The **Finance Commission recommended keeping the States' share in vertical devolution at 41%** for three reasons:
  - ➔ The **existing tax revenue distribution provides States with adequate financial resources to fulfil their responsibilities**.

- ➔ **Much of the Union's spending through Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) ultimately goes to the States**.
- ➔ **The Union government needs more funds for defence and infrastructure**.
- The Commission rejected:
  - ➔ **Inclusion of cess and surcharge in the divisible pool**
  - ➔ **Capping cess and surcharge**.

### Horizontal devolution

- Introduced a **new criterion: States' contribution to GDP**.
- Emphasised:
  - ➔ **State shares should change gradually**.
  - ➔ **More importance should be given to efficiency and contribution to economic growth**.
- Result:
  - ➔ **Slight increase in share of southern and western States**
  - ➔ **Marginal decrease for large northern and central States**
- Overall outcome: **Status quo with increasing importance given to efficiency**.

### Additional observations

- The **Centre should reduce reliance on cess and surcharge**.
- States should:
  - ➔ **Make subsidies targeted and efficient**
  - ➔ **Control fiscal deficit and debt**
- Both **Centre and States** should undertake **public sector enterprise reforms**.

## Elections in Bangladesh: looking towards the future

**Prelims:** General Studies Paper - 1  
Current events of national and international importance

**Mains:** General Studies - 2  
India and its neighborhood- relations.

### 1. Context

- Bangladesh will hold **general elections on February 12, where about 12.7 crore voters will choose members for 300 seats in Parliament.**
- On the same day, **people will also vote in a referendum on the July Charter**, which proposes major reforms in the country's system.

### 2. Major Contesting Parties

- A **total of 2,034 candidates, including 275 independents**, are contesting.
- Of the **59 registered political parties, 51 are participating.**
- There are **two major blocs: the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), and a 11 party alliance** which includes Jamaat-e-Islami and the National Citizen Party (NCP) among others.
- **Minority Hindu and women candidates** are contesting, though representation varies across parties.

### 3. Status of the Awami League

- The **ruling Awami League (AL), led by former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, has had its registration suspended and activities banned under the Anti-Terrorism Act by the interim government.**
- The **party has boycotted the elections, calling them undemocratic**, and instructed supporters not to vote.

### 4. National Referendum on the July Charter

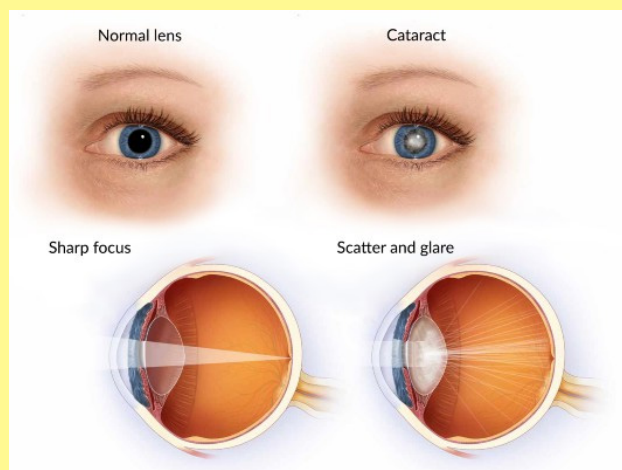
- The July Charter is a **reform document in Bangladesh proposed by the interim government led by Muhammad Yunus** after the 2024 mass protests that led to the fall of the government.
- It **includes 84 recommendations on constitutional, electoral, and judicial reforms.**
- Key proposals are **independent constitutional bodies, a bicameral legislature, and more women's representation.**
- Citizens will vote a referendum of "Yes" or "No" on it along with the general elections.
- If approved, **Parliament must implement it within 180 days.**

### 5. India's Position & Bilateral Context

- India **has been invited as an election observer along with over 330 others** but has not yet confirmed.
- India is Bangladesh's largest trading partner in South Asia.
- **Key connectivity and energy projects such as Kolkata-Khulna rail link, Agartala-Akhaura connection, electricity exports, and other initiatives form the backbone of bilateral ties.**
- **However, relations have been uncertain since the 2024 regime change and future cooperation will depend on political developments.**

### KEYWORDS

#### Cataract



- **Cataract** is a condition in which the **lens of the eye becomes cloudy**, leading to **impaired vision.**
- It is the **most common cause of blindness and visual impairment worldwide**, and is **most often associated with ageing.**
- In some cases, **children may be born with cataracts**, or the condition may develop due to **eye injury, inflammation, or diseases such as glaucoma and diabetes.**
- Cataracts may also be linked to **long-term steroid use** or **exposure to certain types of radiation.**

- Although **cataract surgery is a simple and effective treatment, limited access to eye-care services in many countries** continues to make cataract a major public health concern.
- At present, **there is no known method to prevent cataracts.**

### **Anushilan Samiti**

- The **Anushilan Samiti**, founded in **1902 in Kolkata** by **Satish Chandra Bose** and **Pramathanath Mitra**, was an important **revolutionary organisation in India's freedom struggle.**
- Initially formed as a **youth society and gymnasium (akhara)** promoting **physical training, lathi practice, and social service**, it gradually evolved into a **secret nationalist movement committed to ending British rule.**
- The Samiti focused on **training and capacity-building of members**, spreading **nationalist awareness**, and preparing for a **nationwide revolt against the British Raj.**
- It was associated with prominent figures such as **Barindra Kumar Ghosh** and **Bipin Chandra Pal.**
- After the **First World War**, the organisation **declined as many of its members moved toward socialist politics and the Indian National Congress.**
- It **eventually merged into the Revolutionary Socialist Party before the Second World War.**

## Places in News

### **Brazil**

- Brazil is the **largest country in South America** and the **fifth largest in the world**, occupying nearly half of the continent's landmass.
- It has a **long Atlantic coastline** and **shares land borders with all South American countries except Chile and Ecuador.**
- Brazil contains **most of the Amazon River basin**, which includes the world's largest river system and the **largest tropical rainforest.**
- It is the **seventh most populous country globally** and accounts for about one third of Latin America's population, with **settlements concentrated along the eastern coast.**
- The capital, **Brasília**, is located inland, and Brazil follows a **multiparty federal republic system.**
- **Portuguese is the official language**, while more than two hundred Indigenous languages are spoken, mainly in the Amazon region.

