

Today's Prelims Topics

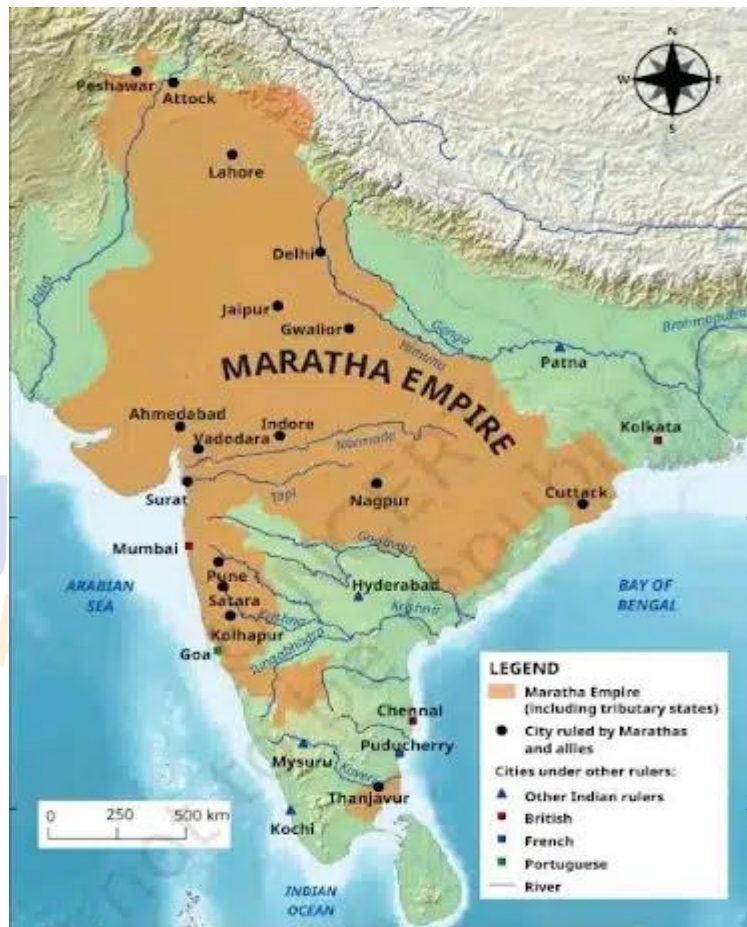
Was Jaisalmer even part of Maratha Empire?

Context

A controversy erupted over an **NCERT Class 8 textbook map** showing Jaisalmer as part of the **Maratha Empire in 1759**, which historians and the former royal family say is historically incorrect.

Maratha Expansion & Nature of Control

- **Northern Expansion** – Under Peshwa Bajirao I, the Marathas expanded into parts of Rajasthan, Delhi, Punjab, Bundelkhand, Orissa, Bengal, and Bihar after consolidating Malwa post-Battle of Bhopal.
- **Tribute over Political Rule** – Marathas often allowed local rulers to stay in power, collecting chauth and sardeshmukhi (tribute) without full political control.
- **Jaisalmer's Status** – Historians agree Jaisalmer was never under Maratha rule or tribute; Maratha expeditions in Rajasthan targeted Jaipur and Jodhpur, not Jaisalmer or Bikaner.
- **Weak Tribute Compliance** – Even major Rajput states like Amber-Jaipur often failed to pay tribute regularly; no records exist for Jaisalmer paying any.



The controversial map in NCERT's Class 8 text book

Patchy Nature of Maratha Authority

- **Irregular Control** – Between the 1730s–1750s, Maratha authority ranged from direct administration to loose agreements easily overturned after armies withdrew.
- **Historians' View** – The Maratha polity should be seen as one of several contemporary powers, not as a proto-nationalist Hindu revival.
- **Reality vs. Claims** – Marathas claimed sovereignty over large regions, but actual authority was uneven and contested.

Map Representation Issues & Suggested Fixes

- **Map Basis** – NCERT says the map was based on earlier published sources and includes direct control, tributary states, and short-term agreements.
- **Missing Disclaimer** – A note on “approximate borders” present in Grade 7 books was omitted in Grade 8.

- **Expert Suggestions** – Use different shades to show direct rule, tributary status, temporary conquests, and spheres of influence to avoid oversimplification.

Source: [IndianExpress](#)



Nickel-Copper-Platinum Group Elements (Ni--Cu-PGE) Sulphide

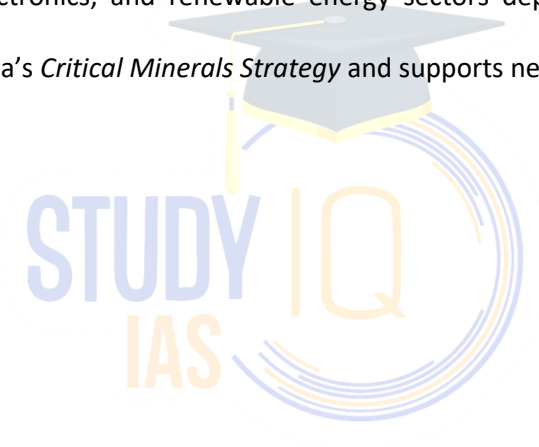
Context

A major potential **Nickel–Copper–Platinum Group Elements (Ni–Cu–PGE) mineral zone** has been **discovered in Chhattisgarh’s Mahasamund district**, marking a significant breakthrough in India's strategic mineral exploration.

Ni–Cu–PGE (Nickel–Copper–Platinum Group Elements)

- **What They Are**
 - A group of critical and strategic metals found in sulphide-rich mafic–ultramafic rocks.
 - Often occur together in complex geological formations.
- **Key Applications**
 - **Nickel (Ni):** EV batteries, stainless steel production, aerospace components.
 - **Copper (Cu):** Electric wiring, renewable energy systems, electronics.
 - **Platinum Group Elements (Pt, Pd, Rh):** Catalytic converters, fuel cells, green hydrogen production.
- **Strategic Importance**
 - Vital for clean energy transition, defence technologies, and advanced electronics.
- **National Relevance**
 - India’s EV, electronics, and renewable energy sectors depend heavily on imports of these minerals.
 - Aligns with India’s *Critical Minerals Strategy* and supports net-zero carbon targets.

Source: [IndianExpress](#)



Awaza Programme of Action (2024–2034)

Context

A landmark framework, the **Awaza Programme of Action (2024–2034)**, was formally endorsed by the Third UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3) in Turkmenistan.

Third UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDC3)



- **Event & Location** – Held in Awaza, Turkmenistan (8 August 2025) under the theme “Driving Progress Through Partnerships”.
- **Main Outcome** – Adoption of the **Awaza Political Declaration** and formal endorsement of the **Awaza Programme of Action (2024–2034)** for the 32 LLDCs.
- **Awaza Programme of Action – 5 Priority Areas:**
 - Structural economic transformation.
 - Trade and regional integration.
 - Transport and infrastructure development.
 - Climate adaptation & disaster risk reduction.
 - Mobilizing financing & partnerships.

Source: [UN](#)

Railways Accidents in 2024-25

Context

- Indian Railways achieved a historic low in **consequential train accidents** — from **1,711 (2004–14)** to **31 in 2024–25** and only **3 in 2025–26 (till June)**.
- **Accidents per million train km** dropped **73%** (0.11 in 2014–15 to 0.03 in 2024–25).

Government Initiatives to Reduce Train Accidents (Indian Railways)

- **Kavach (Train Collision Avoidance System)** – An indigenous automatic train protection system to prevent collisions, control overspeeding, and ensure signal compliance.
- **Electronic Interlocking** – Massive expansion from 2,608 stations (2014) to 7,324 stations (2025) to prevent conflicting train movements.
- **Track Renewal & Upgradation** – Continuous replacement of worn-out rails and use of heavier 60 kg rails for better durability.
- **Ultrasonic Flaw Detection (USFD)** – Increased deployment to detect hidden rail cracks before failure.
- **Fog Safety Devices (FSDs)** – Scale-up from 90 devices (2014) to 25,939 (2025) to improve visibility and safety during foggy conditions.
- **Anti-derailment measures** – Upgrading of track geometry, strengthening of bridges, and stricter maintenance regimes.
- **Fire Safety Improvements** – Enhanced fire-retardant materials in coaches, better fire detection & suppression systems.
- **Crew Training & Human Resource Development** – Simulation-based training for loco pilots, refresher courses, and stricter medical fitness checks.
- **Level Crossing Safety** – Elimination of all unmanned level crossings on broad-gauge routes, installation of warning systems at manned ones.
- **Signal Modernisation** – LED-based signals, better visibility, and integration with centralised traffic control.
- **Rolling Stock Upgrades** – LHB coaches with improved crashworthiness replacing older ICF designs.
- **Use of AI & Data Analytics** – Predictive maintenance using sensors and monitoring data to anticipate failures before they occur.

Source: [IndianeExpress](#)

Quit India Movement

Context

PM Modi paid tribute to Quit India Movement heroes, recalling their role under Mahatma Gandhi's leadership in uniting Indians for independence.

Quit India Movement

- **Launch Date:** 8 August 1942
- **Leader:** Mahatma Gandhi
- **Slogan:** *Do or Die*
- **Nature:** Mass anti-colonial movement demanding immediate British withdrawal from India.

Background

- **Failure of Cripps Mission** (1942) in offering acceptable constitutional reforms.
- Economic hardships and shortages due to **World War II**.
- Rising **nationalist sentiment** after earlier movements (Civil Disobedience, Purna Swaraj demand).
- Britain's weakened state during WWII.

Causes

- **Attitude of British Government**
 - Broken promises on self-rule despite Indian support in WWII.
 - Failure of **August Offer (1940)** and **Cripps Mission (1942)**.
 - British sympathy towards Muslim League's Pakistan demand angered nationalists.
- **Growing Nationalism**
 - Decades-long struggle reached peak impatience in 1942.
 - Experience of **Congress ministries (1937–39)** gave taste of self-rule.
 - Earlier movements like **Individual Satyagraha (1940–41)** built the groundwork.
- **Socio-Economic Factors**
 - Wartime inflation, shortages, heavy taxation, export of rice causing deprivation.
 - Bengal famine (1943) linked to wartime policies.
- **Military Factors**
 - British defeats in South-East Asia.
 - Japanese troops advancing towards Indian borders.
 - British retreat from Burma deepened insecurity.

Launch

- **14 July 1942:** Congress Working Committee at Wardha decided on mass movement.
- **8 August 1942:** All India Congress Committee at Bombay passed **Quit India Resolution**.
- Gandhi's *Do or Die* call given same day.

Demands

- Immediate British withdrawal.
- Provisional government formation post-war.
- Declaration of free India.

British Response

- Arrest of Gandhi, Nehru, Azad, Patel, and others within 24 hours.
- Congress declared unlawful.

Nature of the Movement

- Started as civil disobedience but turned into mass uprising.
- More radical and militant than NCM (1920–22) or CDM (1930–34).
- Gandhi willing to accept **violence in self-defence**.
- Four main features:
 1. Violence against the state tolerated.
 2. Anyone supporting complete independence could join.
 3. Students to take leadership after arrests.
 4. Total defiance of government authority.
- Leaderless after arrests → grassroots-led.
- Underground activities, sabotage, parallel governments.

Key Leaders & Underground Role

- **Jayaprakash Narayan, Rammanohar Lohia, Aruna Asaf Ali, Usha Mehta, Biju Patnaik, Sucheta Kriplani.**
- **Usha Mehta** ran underground radio in Bombay.

Regional Spread

- **Bihar & Eastern UP:** Strong student, peasant, and worker participation. JP Narayan's underground government near Nepal border.
- **UP:** Armed villagers attacked police posts, strikes in Kanpur, Lucknow, Nagpur.
- **Bengal:** Protests, sabotage, tribal and peasant movements linked to QIM.
- **Western India:** Guerrilla attacks; "Azad Government" in Ahmedabad.
- **South India:** K.T. Bhashyam led strikes in Bangalore.

Parallel Governments

- **Ballia (Aug 1942)** – Chittu Pandey: Freed Congress leaders.
- **Tamluk (1942–44)** – Satish Chandra Samanta: Relief work, schools, paddy to poor, Vidyut Vahinis.
- **Satara (1943–45)** – Y.B. Chavan, Nana Patil: *Prati Sarkar*, justice forums, prohibition, "Gandhi marriages".

British Repression

- 100,000+ arrested, Congress banned.
- Casualties: 1,028 (official) to over 10,000 (estimates).
- Support from Muslim League, Hindu Mahasabha, princely states, bureaucracy, and army.

Limitations

- Immediate objectives not achieved.
- Lack of central leadership after arrests.
- Opposition from Muslim League, CPI, Hindu Mahasabha, Ambedkar, Periyar.
- Low Muslim participation; communal divide widened.
- Instances of communal violence.

Source: [PIB](#)

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana

Context

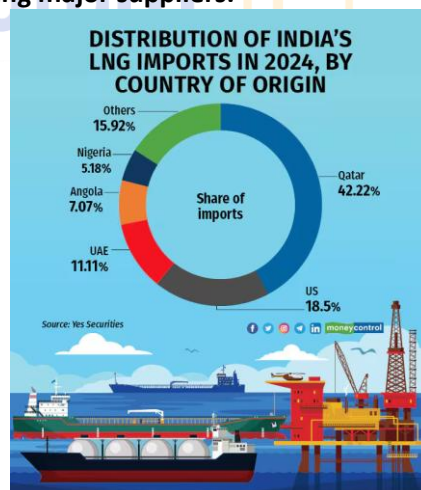
The Union Cabinet has approved the targeted subsidy of Rs.300 per 14.2 kg cylinder for up to 9 refills per year (and proportionately pro-rated for 5 kg cylinder) to the beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) during FY 2025-26 at an expenditure of Rs 12,000 crore.

About PMUY

- **Launched:** May 2016
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG).
- **Aim:** To provide **clean cooking fuel (LPG)** to **rural and deprived households**.
 - Reduce deaths caused by the use of unclean cooking fuels.
 - Prevent respiratory illnesses in children due to indoor air pollution.
- **Target Beneficiaries:** Women from BPL households, including SC/ST communities, those under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gramin), Most Backward Classes, Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and more.
- **Financial Assistance:** Targeted subsidy of Rs.300 per 14.2 kg cylinder for up to 9 refills per year (and proportionately pro-rated for 5 kg cylinder).
 - The first refill and stove are also provided free of cost.
- **Improved LPG consumption by PMUY Households:** Average Per Capita Consumption (PCC) of PMUY consumers which was only about 3 refills in 2019-20 and 3.68 refills in 2022-23 has improved to about 4.47 during FY 2024-25.

Related Fact

- India imports 60% of its LPG requirement.
- Over **90%** of India's LPG imports in 2024 came **from the Middle East**, with **Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE** being major suppliers.



Source: [PIB](#)

Digital Agriculture Mission (DAM)

Context

Digital Agriculture Mission (DAM) gains traction with Farmer ID use in PMFBY, RWBCIS, and KCC, covering crores of farmers and plots nationwide.

About Digital Agriculture Mission (DAM)

- **Launch & Approval:** Approved in **September 2024** by the Government of India.
- **Objective:** To create a **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)** for agriculture, enabling a robust digital ecosystem that delivers **innovative, farmer-centric digital solutions**.
- **Core Components:**
 - **Agri Stack:** A unified digital platform containing agricultural data.
 - **Krishi Decision Support System:** For timely and informed agricultural decision-making.
 - **Comprehensive Soil Fertility & Profile Map:** For precision agriculture and resource optimisation.
 - Other IT initiatives by Central and State Governments.
- **Agri Stack Foundational Registries:** Maintained by States/UTs:
 - **Geo-Referenced Village Maps**
 - **Crop Sown Registry**
 - **Farmers Registry**
- **Purpose & Benefits:** Provides reliable crop-related information to all farmers on time.
 - Helps **digitally identify and authenticate farmers** for accessing benefits such as credit, insurance, and procurement.
 - Enables farmer access to the **digital economy** for input purchase and produce sales.

Recent Achievements of DAM (as of 04 August 2025)

- **Farmer Registry Progress:** **7,04,49,809 Farmer IDs** generated covering all landholding farmers.
- **Digital Crop Survey Expansion:** Conducted in **492 districts** during **Rabi 2024–25**, covering **over 23.5 crore plots**.
- **Facilitating Credit Access:** Farmer ID being used for issuing **Kisan Credit Cards (KCC)** to provide loans to farmers.

Source: [PIB](#)

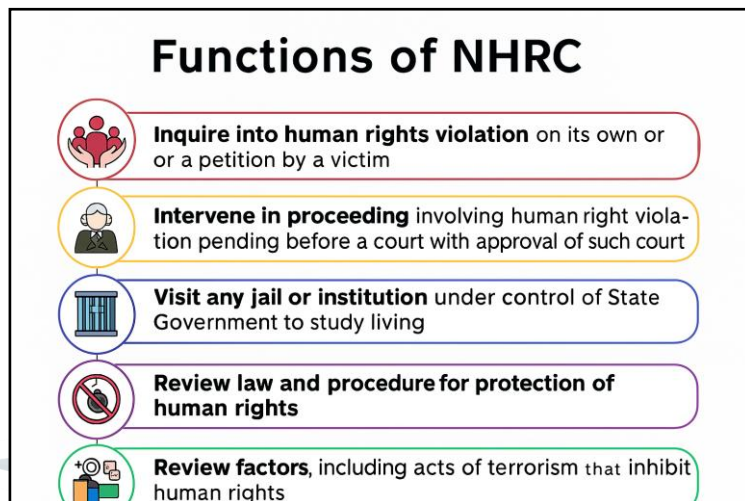
National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

Context

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), India has taken suo motu cognizance of a media report related to the death of 3 children in Meerut district of Uttar Pradesh.

About National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

- **Headquarters:** New Delhi
- **Established:** 1993 under the *Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA)*, amended in **2006 & 2019**.
- **Body:** Statutory body.
- **Definition of Human Rights (PHRA):** Rights relating to **life, liberty, equality, and dignity**, guaranteed by the Constitution or international covenants, enforceable by Indian courts.
- **Appointment:**
 - **Appointed by:** President of India on recommendations of a committee headed by **Prime Minister**.
 - **Committee Members:** PM, Speaker of Lok Sabha, Home Minister, Leaders of Opposition (Lok Sabha & Rajya Sabha), Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha.
- **Composition:**
 - **Chairperson:** A **retired Chief Justice of India** or a **Judge of the Supreme Court**.
 - **Five Full-time Members:**
 - Retired or serving Judge of the Supreme Court.
 - Retired or serving Chief Justice of a High Court.
 - Three other members with **knowledge and practical experience in human rights** (at least **one shall be a woman**).
 - **Seven Deemed Members:** Chairpersons of:
 - National Commission for Minorities
 - National Commission for Backward Classes
 - National Commission for Persons with Disabilities
 - National Commission for Scheduled Castes
 - National Commission for Scheduled Tribes
 - National Commission for Protection of Child Rights
 - National Commission for Women
- **Tenure & Removal:**
 - **Tenure:** 3 years or till 70 years of age (whichever earlier).
 - **Reappointment:** Chairperson & Members eligible.
 - **Removal:** By President for proved misbehaviour/incapacity after Supreme Court consultation.
- **Powers:** Powers of a **Civil Court** under Code of Civil Procedure, 1908:
 - Summon & examine witnesses on oath.
 - Demand discovery/production of documents.
 - Receive evidence via affidavits.
 - Requisition public records.



- Issue commissions for witness/document examination.

Source: [PIB](#)



Editorial Summary

Industrial Accidents

Context

Recent explosions at Sigachi Industries in Telangana and the firecracker unit disaster in Tamil Nadu are not isolated incidents but manifestations of a deeper, persistent national crisis.

Severity of Industrial Accidents in India

- **High Casualty Rates:** At least **6,500 worker deaths in the last 5 years** in factories, construction sites, and mines (~3 fatalities daily).
- **Frequent Incidents:** One serious accident **every two days** in registered factories (DGFASLI data).
- **Concentration in Certain States:** Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, and Uttar Pradesh have a high number of mishaps.
- **Chemical Accident Hotspots:** Over **130 major chemical accidents** (2020–2022) with 218 fatalities.

Reasons for Frequent Accidents

- **Regulatory Non-compliance:** Factories running without **Fire No-Objection Certificates**.
 - Absence of mandatory firefighting equipment and functional alarms.
- **Poor Safety Culture:** Safety treated as a compliance formality, not a core industrial value.
 - Lack of *permit-to-work* systems and hazard identification.
- **Inadequate Training:** Migrant and contract workers often lack safety orientation and can't read safety signage.
- **Negligence in Infrastructure:** Fire exits blocked or locked; improper storage of hazardous materials.
- **Weak Accountability:** Rare convictions; minimal penalties for safety violations.
 - Safety audits reduced to tick-box exercises.
- **Economic Pressures:** Cost-cutting by companies leading to neglect of safety measures.
- **Pattern of Neglect Post-Tragedy:** Cycle of *accident* → *outrage* → *media attention* → *political visit* → *compensation* → *silence*.

Impact of Such Incidents

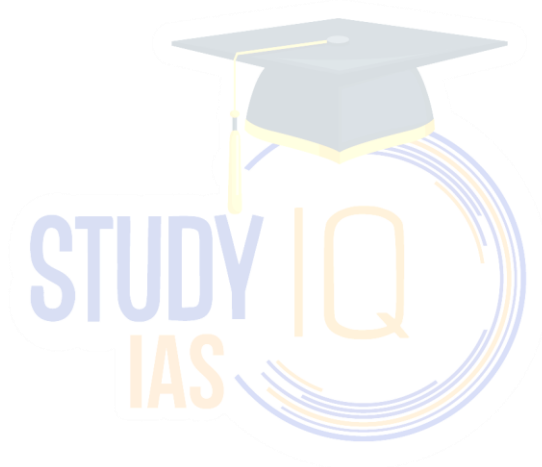
- **Human Cost:** Loss of breadwinners; families pushed into trauma and poverty.
 - Social marginalisation of victims' families.
- **Economic Loss:** Shutdowns, production delays, and damage to plant infrastructure.
 - Compensation payouts and legal costs.
- **Reputational Damage:** Loss of trust in companies and industries.
 - Negative perception in domestic and global markets.
- **Erosion of Workforce Morale:** Reduced motivation and higher attrition among workers.
- **National Productivity Loss:** A weakened and insecure labour force impacting economic growth.

Measures to Avoid Industrial Accidents

- **Strengthen Legal Framework:** Introduce **corporate manslaughter laws** like in South Korea/Singapore to hold top executives criminally liable.
- **Enforce Compliance:** Mandatory **third-party safety audits** with public disclosure.
 - Strict penalties for operating without safety certifications.
- **Safety as Core Value:** Integrate safety into industrial design, inspired by Germany/Japan's practices.
- **Worker Training & Inclusion:** Multilingual safety training for migrant and contract labour.

- Regular mock drills and hazard awareness programs.
- **Digitisation & Transparency:** Create a **national industrial safety dashboard** for real-time risk reporting.
 - Whistle-blower protection to encourage reporting of lapses.
- **Cultural Change:** Shift from a “compliance mindset” to a **prevention-first mindset**.
 - Public campaigns to build awareness about worker safety rights.

Source: [The Hindu](#)



Systemic Flaws in Functioning of ECI

Context

The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, has levelled serious allegations of “criminal fraud” against the Election Commission of India (ECI).

Allegations by Leader of Opposition (Rahul Gandhi) against ECI

- **Fake Voter Registrations in Mahadevapura (Bangalore Central Lok Sabha constituency)**
 - Over **1 lakh fake votes** allegedly created to favour the BJP in the 2024 general election.
- **Five Categories of Alleged Electoral Malpractices**
 - **Multiple registrations** of the same voter within the same constituency.
 - **Identical EPIC (Electors Photo Identity Card) numbers** across different States.
 - **Large number of voters at single addresses** (implausible density).
 - **Multiple votes by the same person in the same booth**, based on recovered booth slips.
 - **Pattern replicated across marginal constituencies** as part of a calculated modus operandi.

Underlying Issues with the Election Commission of India

- **Electoral Roll Management:** Heavy reliance on **self-declarations**; weak verification mechanisms.
 - **Bulky image PDFs** for voter lists instead of searchable formats, making verification cumbersome.
 - Inadequate **door-to-door verification** leading to errors in inclusions and deletions.
 - Risk of **erroneous deletions** (e.g., higher deletion of women voters in Bihar’s SIR exercise despite male-dominated migration patterns).
- **Transparency and Data Access:** ECI defensive in tone, demanding evidence “under oath” unnecessarily.
 - Reluctance to embrace external scrutiny of processes and systems.
- **Electoral Process Safeguards:**
 - **VVPAT Verification:** Limited to small, statistically insignificant samples.
 - **EVM Safeguards:** Resistance to independent expert audits; inadequate security in symbol loading.
 - **CCTV Footage:** Unwillingness to retain booth footage for audit purposes.
 - **Turnout Figures:** Delay in publishing final official data.
- **Campaign and Conduct Regulation:** Weak enforcement of **campaign finance rules** and the **Model Code of Conduct**.
- **Institutional Independence:** Current system of **appointing Election Commissioners** excludes the Chief Justice of India despite Supreme Court recommendations — raising perception issues about neutrality.

Way Forward

- **Electoral Roll Reforms: Comprehensive Voter Roll Auditing** using door-to-door verification.
 - Adoption of **structured, searchable digital formats** for electoral rolls.
 - Periodic **cross-State database matching** to detect duplicates.
 - Special measures to prevent wrongful deletions of marginalised voters.
- **Enhancing Process Transparency:** Publish **turnout figures within fixed timelines**.
 - Retain **CCTV booth footage** for a reasonable audit period.
 - Make **VVPAT verification statistically significant** to ensure greater credibility.
- **Strengthening Technical Safeguards:** Independent third-party **EVM and VVPAT audits**.
 - Comprehensive **audit trail for all EVM commands** and secure protocols for symbol loading.

- **Strengthening Oversight and Accountability:** Implement Supreme Court recommendation for inclusion of CJI in Election Commissioner appointments.
 - Establish **multi-stakeholder consultation platforms** for electoral process reforms.
 - Stronger enforcement of **campaign finance transparency** and **MCC compliance**.
- **Institutional Culture Change:** ECI to **embrace scrutiny as a democratic necessity**, not as an attack.
 - Proactive public communication to build trust in impartiality.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

