Current Affairs - 06 November 2026

ECI'S SPECIAL SUMMARY REVISION (SSR) AND INTERNAL ADMINISTRATIVE REORGANISATION

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) has announced the Special Summary Revision (**SSR**) of electoral rolls in six States and Union Territories following the completion of the third phase of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR).
- Simultaneously, it has issued a revised work-allocation order to strengthen administrative oversight of its Information Technology (IT) division amid concerns over the centralisation of electoral roll management.

Special Summary Revision (SSR) of Electoral Rolls:

- **Objective**: To ensure accurate, inclusive and updated electoral rolls by enrolling eligible voters, particularly young and first-time electors.
- **Key features and timeline:**
  - **Coverage**: Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Odisha, Sikkim, Chandigarh and Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu.
  - **Advance enrolment**: Eligible citizens who will attain 18 years on April 1, July 1 and October 1, 2027, can submit advance applications.
  - **Polling station rationalisation**: Rearrangement of polling stations must be completed by November 20.
  - **Draft electoral rolls**: Scheduled for publication on November 30.
  - **Claims and objections**: Accepted from November 30 to December 30.
  - **Disposal of claims**: To be completed by January 16.
  - **Final electoral rolls**: Scheduled for publication on January 21, 2027.
- Chief Secretaries have been directed to ensure adequate manpower and administrative resources for the exercise.

Safeguards Against Arbitrary Deletions:

- To prevent wrongful exclusion of voters -

- Applications for deletion involving repeated or multiple entries must undergo field verification.
- Electoral Registration Officers (**EROs**) must personally cross-check deletions exceeding 2% of electors at a polling station.
- Furnishing Aadhaar details in Forms 6 (new enrolment) and 8 (correction, shifting or replacement of EPIC) remains voluntary.
- No application for voter enrolment can be rejected merely because the applicant has not provided Aadhaar details.

- **Significance**: These safeguards seek to balance electoral roll accuracy with the constitutional principle of universal adult suffrage under **Article 326**.

Delay and Transparency Issues:

- **Concerns:**
  - The delay in conducting SSR in States where SIR had been completed became a point of disagreement within the ECI.
  - Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi reportedly raised concerns, including difficulties faced by citizens attaining voting age in registering themselves.
- **Changes made:**
  - A significant transparency-related change is the provision of readable PDF copies of draft and final electoral rolls, without elector photographs, free of cost to political parties, alongside physical copies.
  - Candidates will also be provided alphabetically arranged readable PDF electoral rolls in electronic storage devices on payment at the time of elections.
- **Significance**:
  - This partially addresses the Opposition's demand for **machine-readable electoral rolls** to facilitate comparison with previous lists and identify anomalies.
  - Earlier, the ECI had expressed concerns that providing such data could compromise electoral roll **integrity** and enable **manipulation**.

RIGHT TO INTERNET ACCESS FOR CHILDREN - CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND ONLINE SAFETY

- Access to the internet has become essential for education, information, communication, creativity and participation in modern society.
- The Supreme Court's observations in Just Rights for Children Alliance v. S. Harish (2026) reinforce the importance of internet access, particularly for children, as a gateway to knowledge, creativity and self-expression.
- The constitutional basis for this right can be understood through the following provisions:
    - **Article 19(1)(a):** Guarantees freedom of speech and expression, which includes the ability to access, receive and communicate information through the internet.
    - **Article 19(1)(g):** Protects the freedom to practise any profession or carry on any occupation, trade or business, including activities conducted through the internet.
    - **Article 21:** Protects life and personal liberty, encompassing the broader right to live with dignity and access essential opportunities in a digital society.

Constitutional Framework: Authority-Liberty Coordination

- A constitutional democracy must maintain a balance between the authority of the State and the liberty of citizens. This principle can be described as authority-liberty coordination.
- Reasonable restrictions are necessary to reconcile individual freedoms with wider social interests. The objective is to ensure that restrictions remain constitutionally justified, proportionate and consistent with democratic principles.

Global Approaches to Children's Online Safety

- Several countries have introduced restrictions or safeguards to regulate children's access to social media and digital platforms.

Country	Measures highlighted
Australia	Restrictions on children's social media access
Brazil	Requirement for children to link social media accounts to a legal guardian
China	Screen-time restrictions for children
Indonesia	Restrictions on children's social media use
Malaysia	Measures regulating children's access to social media
UAE	Restrictions on children's social media use

- However, regulatory approaches adopted by other countries cannot automatically be replicated in India. Restrictions must be evaluated in light of India's constitutional framework, social conditions and the importance of digital inclusion.

Balancing Digital Freedom with Online Safety

- A blanket prohibition on internet or social media access may prevent children from benefiting from educational resources, digital services and opportunities for self-expression.
- Instead, a preventive and collaborative approach involving multiple stakeholders is necessary.
- **Role of Parents and Guardians**
    - Parents should encourage responsible internet use, establish age-appropriate boundaries and help children recognise online risks. Digital awareness should focus on informed decision-making rather than excessive restrictions.
- **Role of Government**
    - The government should establish appropriate regulatory frameworks to restrict harmful content, protect children's privacy and ensure accountability of digital platforms.
- **Role of Educational Institutions**
    - Schools and educational institutions should integrate digital literacy and cyber safety awareness into education, enabling children to identify risks and use online resources responsibly.
- **Role of Digital Service Providers**
    - Technology companies and online platforms should strengthen content moderation, privacy safeguards, age-appropriate settings and mechanisms for reporting harmful activities.
    - The emphasis should be on preventive safeguards and shared responsibility rather than restricting children's fundamental rights.

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AGNIPATH SCHEME REVAMP: WHY 100% ABSORPTION DOESN'T MEAN RETURN TO REGULAR RECRUITMENT

Recently, the Centre approved a major overhaul of the Agnipath scheme, allowing all Agniveers undergoing training to eventually join the armed forces as regular soldiers.

The change comes as the first batch of Agniveers nears completion of their four-year tenure this month. However, officials clarify this is not a return to pre-Covid regular recruitment — it retains the scheme's core structure with modifications.

Agnipath Scheme

- Introduced in 2022, Agnipath recruits candidates aged 17.5 to 21 years into the Army, Navy, and Air Force for a four-year tenure.
- Recruits are called Agniveers.

What Has Changed?

- **25% of Agniveers** continue to be selected on merit for absorption as regular soldiers after four years — unchanged from the original scheme.
- The remaining 75%, who earlier exited with the Seva Nidhi package, will now get an additional two-year engagement (total six years), after which they too can join as regular soldiers — subject to willingness and meeting selection criteria.
- **Net effect:** 100% of Agniveers now get a pathway to permanent service, though not simultaneously or automatically.

The Seva Nidhi Package

- A compulsory retirement-cum-transition fund: 30% of an Agniveer's salary is deducted monthly and deposited into the Agniveer Corpus Fund, matched by the government.
- On completing four years, Agniveers receive a tax-exempt lump sum of ~₹11.71 lakh (with interest).
- Those opting for the two-year extension get enhanced pay and an enhanced Seva Nidhi package if they later choose not to join the forces.

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- **Trade-off:** Agniveers serving the extended term lose eligibility for reserved quotas in paramilitary forces, PSUs, and state government jobs.
- No Agniveer receives monthly pension or gratuity.

Scale of Impact

- Over 3 lakh Agniveers are currently training across the three services.
- Army: ~2.8 lakh Agniveers, with ~19,000 completing their four-year tenure this round.
- Navy: ~2,500 completing tenure this month.
- Air Force: ~2,900 completing training as the first IAF batch, next month.

Why This Isn't "Regular Recruitment"

- Chief of Defence Staff General N.S. Raja Subramani clarified that Agnipath continues, only with modifications:
  - Only 25% are selected as regular soldiers immediately after four years, on merit.
  - The rest must complete a total of six years before becoming eligible.
  - Seniority-wise, those joining after the two-year extension rank below batchmates absorbed after four years.

How It Differs from Pre-Covid Recruitment?

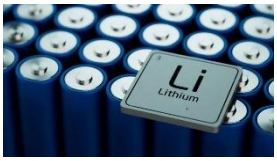
- Agniveers thus retain the **choice to leave or continue** at two stages — a flexibility absent in the old system — backed by the Seva Nidhi cushion if they exit.
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Aspect	Pre-Covid Recruitment	Agnipath Scheme
Permanency	Permanent from Day 1, with pension	Conditional, staggered entry
Exit	Only via voluntary retirement/court martial	Agniveers can choose to leave at 4 or 6 years
Flexibility	None	Career choice at two decision points

Benefits for the Military

- No major pension savings, even with 100% absorption, since benefits still apply.
- Helps address the personnel shortage caused by halted recruitment during Covid-19 — critical given post-Galwan and post-Operation Sindoor security demands.
- Fosters competitive spirit, as Agniveers strive to be among the top 25% selected early.
- Creates a blended force: experienced soldiers alongside a youthful Agniveer cohort.
- Those who leave after service gain transferable skills and training for civilian careers.

CAPEX SUPPORT SCHEME TO PROMOTE CRITICAL MINERAL PROCESSING



- It provides targeted **capital expenditure (CAPEX) support** for establishing **domestic critical mineral processing facilities**.
- **Time Period:** It will run for five years, from **FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31.**
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Mines, Government of India.
- **Objectives:**
  - **Promote domestic processing capacity:** Help set up **high-purity Lithium and Nickel processing plants.**
    - **Lithium plants** will process ores and concentrates (excluding brines) into **battery-grade products**, while **nickel plants** will produce **Class-1 nickel or battery-grade nickel sulphate**, with cobalt recovery.
  - **Build a resilient value chain:** Strengthen the Lithium and Nickel value chain by filling the missing link in processing.
- **Financial Outlay and Support:**
  - The scheme offers a **capital subsidy of 30%** of eligible investment for setting **up four processing plants.**
  - These include two Lithium plants of at **least 30 kt capacity** each **and two Nickel plants** of at least **50 kt capacity each**. Support is capped at ₹500 crore per Lithium beneficiary and ₹900 crore per Nickel beneficiary.
- **Selection and disbursement:**
  - Beneficiaries will be selected through a **two-stage process**: technical qualification followed by financial bidding.
  - Two beneficiaries will be selected for **each mineral based on the least-cost criterion,** prioritising bidders seeking the lowest government support.
  - Incentives will be **disbursed in three tranches** linked to the achievement of specified milestones.

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SELF-RELIANT INDIA FUND

The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), Government of India, organised an "Awareness Workshop on the Self-Reliant India (SRI) Fund for Supporting Women-Led MSMEs".

- It has been set up to **infuse Rs. 50,000 crore as** equity funding in those MSMEs which have the potential and viability to grow and become large units.
- Under this fund of Rs. 50,000 crore, there is a provision of **10,000 Crore from the Government of India** and Rs**. 40,000 Crore through Private Equity/Venture Capital funds.**
- It operates through a **mother-fund and daughter-fund structure** for equity or quasi-equity investments.
- It is being implemented by **NSIC Venture Capital Fund Limited** (NVCFL), which is an **Alternative Investment Fund (AIF) of Category II** registered with SEBI.
- The Government of India through the **Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises** (MoMSME) is the anchor investor.
- SRI fund is oriented to provide the **funding support through NVCFL to the Daughter Funds** for onward provision to MSMEs as growth capital, in the form of equity or quasi-equity, for the following:
    - **Enhancing equity/equity**-like financing to MSMEs and listing of MSMEs on stock exchanges.
    - **Supporting faster growth of MSME** businesses and thereby ignite the economy and create employment opportunities.
    - **Supporting enterprises** which have the **potential to graduate beyond the MASME** bracket and become National/International Champions.

- **Supporting MSSMEs,** which help make India self-reliant by producing relevant technologies, goods, and services.

- The Daughter Funds shall invest at **least 5 times** the amount of capital contribution received from SRI Fund (net of fees and expenses) in MSMEs, covered under the **Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises Development Act, 2006.**

EXERCISE MALABAR 2026



- It is a **multilateral naval exercise.**
- **Participating Countries:** India, Japan, the United States and Australia
- MALABAR 2026 provides an opportunity for participating maritime forces **to enhance operational coordination, strengthen interoperability** and exchange professional expertise through a series of engagements in harbour and at sea.

Phase:

- **Harbour Phase:** It will include professional interactions and coordinated planning, followed by the sea phase involving INS Sahyadri and participating units of the United States, Australia and Japan.

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