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## Current Affairs - 24 November 2025

### THE CONSTITUTION (131<sup>st</sup> AMENDMENT) BILL 2025 - CHANDIGARH UNDER ARTICLE 240?

- The Union Home Ministry has clarified that the Central Government has **no intention of introducing** the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill 2025 in the Winter Session of Parliament to bring Chandigarh under Article 240.
- The proposal triggered sharp political backlash in Punjab, reviving long-standing tensions related to Chandigarh's status, rooted in the Punjab Reorganisation Act, 1966.
- Chandigarh is a Union Territory (UT), but is also the **shared capital** of Punjab and Haryana. The Governor of Punjab currently holds **additional charge** as the Administrator of the UT of Chandigarh.
- **Stakeholder consultation:** Decision will be taken only after adequate consultations with Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh administration, other stakeholders.

#### Proposed Change:

- **Parliament bulletin:**
  - Lok Sabha bulletin (Nov 21) listed the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill 2025 for introduction.
  - **Objective:** Include Chandigarh under Article 240, allowing the President to make regulations for the UT.
  - **Effect:** Enable **appointment** of an independent Administrator/Lieutenant Governor.
- **Article 240:**
  - Empowers the President to frame regulations for certain UTs - Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Puducherry (when Assembly is dissolved/suspended).
  - **Presidential regulations** can override Acts of Parliament applicable to that UT.
- **If applied to Chandigarh:**



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- Chandigarh would come under direct administrative control of the Centre, similar to other UTs without legislatures.
- Punjab Governor would no longer serve as Administrator.

### Key Constitutional and Administrative Issues:

- **Sensitive federal question:** Chandigarh's status is historically linked to state reorganisation and **linguistic federalism**. High political stakes for both Punjab and Haryana.
- **Administrative implications:** Changing role of Administrator from Punjab Governor to LG shifts decision-making, Centre–State power dynamics, control over land, policing and administration.
- **Inter-State power balance:** Haryana continues to operate from Chandigarh without setting up its own capital.
- **Political symbolism:** Chandigarh represents Punjabi identity, legacy of reorganisation, incomplete implementation of 1970 promise.
- **Historical commitments:** Transfer promises made in 1970 remain unfulfilled, complicating any new move.
- **Governance stability:** Risk of administrative friction if the governance model is altered abruptly.
- **Legal and constitutional complexity:** Bringing Chandigarh under Article 240 may require nuanced constitutional interpretation.

### Conclusion:

- The controversy over including Chandigarh under **Article 240** highlights the deep-rooted historical, political and constitutional sensitivities surrounding the city.
  - The episode reflects the need for careful federal negotiation and respect for long-standing commitments made to Punjab and Haryana.
  - A balanced, consultative approach remains essential to ensure administrative efficiency without disturbing the delicate **inter-state equilibrium**.
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### BANGLADESH AT A CROSSROADS AFTER HASINA VERDICT

Bangladesh's former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been sentenced to death by the International Crimes Tribunal for crimes against humanity committed during the 2024 student-led protests.

Living in India since her government collapsed in August 2024, Hasina was convicted for ordering the killing of 12 unarmed protesters in Dhaka and Ashulia on August 5, 2024. Five of the victims were burned after death, and one was allegedly burned alive.

She also received a life-term sentence for inciting violence, directing the use of lethal weapons, and authorising attacks using helicopters and drones.

The verdict has triggered intense political reactions across Bangladesh and is expected to shape the run-up to the February 2026 national elections.

#### **Hasina's Fate: Exiled, Convicted, and Politically Isolated**

- Former PM Sheikh Hasina, now living in India since August 5, has dismissed her death sentence as politically motivated.
- The verdict, tied to her brutal 2024 protest crackdown that killed 1,400 people, seals her political future for now.
- Her return to Bangladesh appears impossible, effectively removing her from national politics.
- **Awami League in Leadership Crisis**
  - Hasina left Bangladesh without establishing a successor, creating deep uncertainty within the Awami League.
  - The party, currently banned from elections, is struggling without a clear strategy or leadership, and many leaders feel abandoned amid widespread public hostility.

#### **Yunus's Rise: Interim PM and Symbol of Justice**

- Interim leader **Muhammad Yunus**, who returned during the 2024 chaos, has positioned himself as a reformist figure.



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- He welcomed the verdict as a signal that “no one is above the law.”
- While the Army and political parties grow impatient over delayed elections, the ruling strengthens his image as a leader delivering justice and stabilising the nation.

### **BNP’s Position: Seeking Political Revival**

- The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) hailed the verdict as justice served.
- After decades of political marginalisation and legal battles, BNP sees an opportunity to regain power in upcoming elections.
- However, internal challenges remain—particularly how Khaleda Zia will project her exiled son Tarique Rahman as the party’s PM candidate.

### **Jamaat-e-Islami’s Unexpected Strategy**

- Jamaat-e-Islami, gaining momentum after major student union victories, has surprisingly demanded Hasina’s **return from India**—a move aimed at pressuring New Delhi and strengthening its nationalist credentials.
- The party aims to emerge as a powerful force in the 2026 election, either allying with BNP or becoming the primary opposition.

### **India’s Calculated and Cautious Stand on the Hasina Verdict**

- New Delhi responded by saying it has “noted the verdict” issued by the International Crimes Tribunal of Bangladesh against former PM Sheikh Hasina.
  - The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) refrained from condemning or endorsing the ruling, signalling a carefully calibrated position.
  - **Commitment to Bangladesh’s People — Not Its Current Regime**
    - India emphasised its commitment to the “best interests of the people of Bangladesh” — focusing on peace, democracy, inclusion, and stability.
    - The wording is significant: India did not echo support for the Bangladesh government but referenced the broader population.
    - The term “inclusion” implicitly signals India’s preference for allowing the Awami League to participate in the coming elections.
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### REFORMING STATE PSCS - ADDRESSING STRUCTURAL GAPS

- Public Service Commissions have their origins in India's struggle for self-governance.
- According to the historical overview, the demand for merit-based entry into civil services was central to the early nationalist movement. This led to:
  - The **Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms**, which proposed an independent office regulating service matters,
  - Establishment of the **first Public Service Commission in 1926**,
  - Provisions in the **Government of India Act, 1935**, mandating PSCs for each province, which the Constitution later retained; today, we have the UPSC and State PSCs.

### Structural Differences Between UPSC and State PSCs

- **UPSC's Strong Governance Framework**
  - The UPSC operates in a politically insulated environment, ensuring independence and professionalism. Members generally:
    - Are above 55 years of age,
    - Have rich experience in public administration,
    - Come from diverse zones of the country.
  - The Union government further institutionalised recruitment processes by creating the **Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions (1985)**, enabling regular manpower planning and timely declaration of vacancies.
- **State PSCs' Politicised Environment**
  - In contrast, State PSCs function in a "**politically osmotic environment**", where:
    - Appointments tend to reflect political proximity rather than experience,
    - States lack dedicated personnel ministries,
    - Vacancies are declared irregularly due to fiscal constraints,

Exams are conducted infrequently, leading to widespread litigation and delays.

- These structural factors form the foundation of the credibility crisis facing State PSCs.



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### Reform Measures to Strengthen State PSCs

- **Institutional and Manpower Reforms**
    - Institutionalise manpower planning,
    - Provide a five-year roadmap of vacancies,
    - Ensure predictable exam cycles.
  - **Constitutional Amendments for Professional Appointments**
    - The 41<sup>st</sup> Constitutional Amendment (1976) raised the PSC member age limit from 60 to 62. Experts suggest further modifications:
      - Minimum age: 55 years,
      - Maximum age: 65 years,
      - Mandatory qualifications, e.g., former State Secretary for official members, 10 years' professional experience for non-officials,
      - Consultation with the Leader of the Opposition, ensuring bipartisan selection.
    - Such criteria would help constitute panels of individuals with proven integrity, expertise, and independence.
  - **Exam Reforms for Fairness and Transparency**
    - Periodic syllabus revision with public consultation,
    - Objective-type testing for State-specific subjects,
    - Mixed question formats (objective + descriptive) in mains,
    - Improved translation processes using technology plus human verification,
    - Frequent changes in question patterns to reduce overreliance on AI tools by candidates.
  - **Strengthening Administrative Leadership**
    - The Secretary of State PSC should be a senior officer with experience in school or intermediate education boards.
    - This would enhance oversight of examination processes and replicate UPSC's emphasis on balanced confidentiality and transparency.
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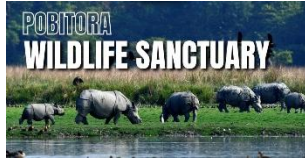


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### POBITORA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY



- It is located in the **eastern region of Guwahati, Assam.**
- It is in **close proximity to the Mayong village** that is renowned as the **Black magic capital of India.**
- This wildlife sanctuary was established in 1998 with a total area of 48.81 sq.km.
- The sanctuary **consists of the Rajamayong Reserve Forest and Pobitora Reserve Forest.**
- The region was **once part of the vast floodplains of the Brahmaputra River** and was known for its rich flora and fauna.
- **History:**
  - Pobitora became a reserved wooded area in the year of 1971 with the approval of the Government of Assam Tourism.
  - The Government of India included Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary with the association of a **rhino breeding program** named **“Indian Rhino Vision 2020”**.
  - The landscape is **dominated by alluvial grasslands** and dense patches of tall **elephant grass.**
- **Flora:**
  - **72%** of Pabitora consists of the **wet savannah of Arundo donax, Erianthus ravennae, Phragmites karka, Imperata cylindrica, and Saccharum spp.**
  - **Water hyacinth (Eichornia crassipes)** is a major problem, especially to waterfowl, as it forms thick mats on the water surface.
- **Fauna:**
  - It is known for holding the **highest density of Greater One Horned Rhinoceros** in the country.
  - Besides rhinoceros, the other animals are **leopard, wild boar, Barking deer, wild buffalo, etc.**
  - It is also home to more than 2000 **migratory birds and various reptiles.**



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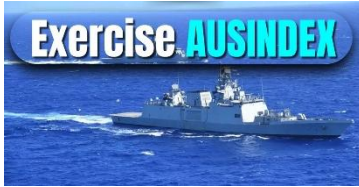
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### EXERCISE AUSINDEX

- It is a **bilateral exercise** held between **India and Australia**.
- It is a major **biennial maritime exercise** which has been **conducted since 2015**.
- **Aim:** The exercise is aimed at significantly boosting interoperability and deepening the strategic partnership between the two maritime nations.
- **Key Facts about Exercise AUSIDEX 2025:**
  - The warships and aircraft of both navies conducted intense **joint operations, focusing on anti-submarine warfare**, gunnery exercises, and advanced flying operations.
  - The **Indian Naval Ship INS Sahyadri**, alongside **HMAS Ballarat** participated in the Exercise.

### **Other Exercises conducted between Australia and India:**

- Ex AUSTRAL HIND (Bilateral Exercise with Army)
- EX PITCH BLACK (Australia's multilateral air combat training exercise)
- Malabar Naval Exercise
- Quad (Multilateral Naval Exercise).

### MOSS



- It is a small nonvascular **spore-bearing land plant** belonging to the taxonomic **division Bryophyta**.
- Mosses existed as early as the **Permian Period** and more than 100 species have been identified from fossils of the **Paleogene and Neogene periods**.
- It is among the earliest land plants and has colonised some of the **harshest environments** on the planet, including **Antarctica, volcanic fields, and deserts**.
- **Types of Moss:** Of the 10,000 and more types of mosses on the planet, there are three main types: **peat moss, granite moss and true moss**.



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- **Distribution:** Mosses are distributed throughout the world except in salt water.
  - **Habitat:** It is the **small plant** commonly found in damp, shady spots is already known for its resilience on Earth.
  - Moss **reproduces through spores**, which are the equivalent to a flowering plant's seed.
  - **Ecological Significance:**
    - Ecologically, mosses **break down exposed substrata**, releasing nutrients for the use of more-complex plants that succeed them.
    - They **also aid in soil erosion** control by providing surface cover and absorbing water.
    - They are important in the **nutrient and water economy** of some vegetation types.
    - Mosses can be **effective indicators of c02 emissions** that pollute the air. They can also signal if an ecosystem has been damaged or harmed by acid rain.
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### HUSSAIN SAGAR LAKE



- It is an **artificial lake** located in **Hyderabad, Telangana**.
  - It is also called **Tank Bund** and lies on a **tributary of River Musi**.
  - It spreads across an area of **5.7 sq.km**. It is **one of the largest man-made lakes in Asia**.
  - It is the **largest heart-shaped mark** among the marks formed by **78 heart-shaped lakes** and **9 heart-shaped islands** on the face of the earth.
  - It was **built during the reign of Ibrahim Quli Qutub Shah by Hussain Shah Wali in 1562**
  - It is **renowned for its monolith of Lord Buddha** that stands right in its centre.
  - It had been of significance in the early days since it connected the twin cities of **Hyderabad and Secunderabad**.
  - Till 1930, the lake was used for irrigation and drinking water requirements.
  - **Over the years**, Hussain Sagar Lake has **become polluted** through the entry of untreated sewage and industrial effluents through the **nalas** that flow into the lake.
-