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**THE HINDU**



**The Indian EXPRESS**

# **SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT EDITORIALS**

*28th April 2026*

## **TOPICS:-**

- 1. Electoral roll purges raise constitutional questions**  
(GS Paper II Polity)
- 2. Gang of seven**  
(GS Paper II Polity)
- 3. A tightening of the fist in India's digital public square**  
(GS Paper II Governance)

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# 1. ELECTORAL ROLL PURGES RAISE CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS

*(GS Paper II Polity)*

This editorial ‘**Electoral roll purges raise constitutional questions**’ was published in **The Hindu** on 28th Apr 2026, highlights **constitutional, procedural and natural justice concerns** arising from voter deletions under the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls.

## **Electoral Roll Revision and Citizenship Concerns**

- The **Election Commission** used “logical discrepancy” to delete voters in Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Puducherry, raising concerns over large-scale exclusion from electoral rolls.
- The **Special Intensive Revision** was criticised as deeply flawed because lakhs of genuine citizens were allegedly removed or unable to vote, especially in West Bengal.
- **Article 326** makes citizenship, age and absence of legal disqualification the basis for voter registration, making citizenship central to electoral inclusion.
- The **Union Home Ministry** administers citizenship law and must notify documents proving citizenship, but it had not issued such a list.
- The **ECI** prescribed documents for Bihar’s Special Intensive Revision, rejecting commonly used documents such as Aadhaar, ration card and voter identity card.
- Many **rural voters** lacked preserved documents, causing large deletions such as 64 lakh voters in Bihar and 91 lakh voters in West Bengal.

## **Jurisdictional and Legal Deviations**

- The **ECI** can enrol voters but cannot decide citizenship-proof documents, as that power belongs to the Union Home Ministry.
- **Article 324** does not authorise the ECI to assume the Home Ministry’s constitutional function in determining citizenship documentation.
- The **Supreme Court** did not address this jurisdictional issue and only asked the ECI to consider Aadhaar as a relevant document.
- **Section 21** of the Representation of the People Act, 1950 requires roll revision before general or bye-elections and annually as directed by the ECI.
- **Rule 25** of the Registration of Electors Rules, 1960 distinguishes summary revision before elections from intensive revision in non-election years.

- The **election-bound SIR** in Bihar, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal departed from legal practice because intensive revision requires fresh preparation and time.

### Procedural Irregularities and Natural Justice

- The **Registration Rules** require booth-level officers to give enumeration forms through house-to-house visits, but compliance was allegedly weak.
- **Rule 8** requires household occupants to provide information to the best of their ability, so the ECI cannot insist on unavailable documents.
- The **logical discrepancy** category is legally unclear, leaving many citizens removed without transparent statutory basis or clear voter status.
- The **deletion process** allegedly ignored hearings for affected voters, violating natural justice and statutory protection before removing names.
- The **free election** principle cannot be preserved if statutory procedures are bypassed, as fairness depends on lawful voter inclusion.

## BEYOND EDITORIAL

### Technology, Inclusion and Electoral Trust in Voter Roll Management

- **Digital verification:** Electoral roll cleaning should use **ERONET** and BLO field verification to detect duplication, migration and deaths without excluding genuine voters.
- **Inclusive documentation:** Vulnerable groups need flexible proof standards because migrants, women and rural voters often lack uniform documents like **EPIC** or Aadhaar.
- **Social audit:** Local verification through **gram sabhas**, ward committees and draft-roll publication can improve accuracy, transparency and voter trust.
- **Accessible grievance redressal:** Voters should get simple **Form 6/7/8** windows, multilingual notices and doorstep BLO assistance before deletion.
- **Database coordination:** Electoral rolls can use civil registration, migration and death records for **data matching**, but not automatic exclusion.
- **Electoral literacy:** Citizens must be informed through **SVEEP** campaigns, Voter Helpline App and local BLO visits before election periods.
- **Trust-based governance:** Roll purification must balance **accuracy** with inclusion because wrongful deletion directly weakens universal adult franchise.

## 2. GANG OF SEVEN

*(GS Paper II Polity)*

This editorial ‘**Gang of seven**’ was published in **The Hindu** on 28th Apr 2026, highlights how **large-scale defections** and misuse of **merger provisions** have weakened the Tenth Schedule and democratic mandates.”

### Defections and Political Opportunism

- The **AAP-BJP merger** claim by seven of AAP’s 10 Rajya Sabha members increased BJP’s Upper House strength to 113 and pushed NDA above the halfway mark.
- The episode exposed **AAP’s fragility** and BJP’s opportunism, while showing how anti-defection safeguards can be institutionally weakened.
- AAP’s Rajya Sabha collapse reflected **political cynicism**, as its earlier attacks on Congress defections were undercut by defections within its own ranks.
- The exits of four members were described as **opportunistic defections**, while three had joined AAP with some organic political identity beyond Arvind Kejriwal’s dominance.

### Tenth Schedule and Merger Exception

- The **Tenth Schedule** bars elected representatives from defecting from their original party, but permits merger when two-thirds of legislators concur.
- The editorial criticises the **Rajya Sabha Chairman** for accepting the merger claim despite alleged misinterpretation of the constitutional merger exception.
- The **Supreme Court** clarified in 2023 that legislative party and political party cannot be conflated in merger cases.
- A valid **party merger** requires acceptance by two-thirds legislators of the original party, not merely crossover by two-thirds legislative members.

### Judicial and Democratic Concerns

- The claim that two-thirds of one party’s legislators can join another without **disqualification** is legally strained and has been challenged by AAP.
- Past **court interventions** on defections have been inadequate, enabling elected governments to be unsettled through large-scale party switching.
- Repeated defections have rendered the **anti-defection law** impotent, weakening deterrence against betrayal of popular mandates.

## BEYOND EDITORIAL

### Political Party Democracy as the Missing Link in Anti-Defection Reform

- **Internal democracy:** Weak intra-party consultation, seen in leadership-centric parties, encourages factionalism, personality cults and opportunistic exits.
- **Candidate selection:** Transparent nominations, like documented U.K. party primaries, can reduce patronage loyalty and strengthen ideological commitment.
- **Party constitutions:** Enforcing internal constitutions and ECI-notified organisational elections can make parties accountable to members, not just leadership.
- **Ethical dissent:** Legislators need space for principled disagreement, as the Tenth Schedule's whip system often makes defection the only visible protest.
- **Funding transparency:** Opaque party finance, exposed by the Electoral Bonds case, can incentivise inducement-based defections and realignments.
- **Ideological clarity:** Clear party programmes, like CPI(M)'s cadre-based platform, help voters judge principled realignment against mandate betrayal.
- **Democratic culture:** Anti-defection law and the 91st Amendment cannot succeed unless parties practise deliberation, accountability and ideological consistency.

## 3. A TIGHTENING OF THE FIST IN INDIA'S DIGITAL PUBLIC SQUARE

*(GS Paper II Governance)*

This editorial 'A tightening of the fist in India's digital public square' was published in **The Hindu** on 28th Apr 2026, highlights how **draft amendments** to India's **Information Technology Rules** may expand executive control over online speech, platform duties and user data.

### Expansion of Executive Control

- The **draft amendments** to the Information Technology Rules, released by MeitY on March 30, 2026, reshape online speech governance beyond technical clarification.
- **Rule 3(4)** makes platform safe-harbour protection conditional on compliance with advisories, directions and procedures, even when not grounded in formal law.
- This dilutes the **Shreya Singhal** safeguard, where the Supreme Court held platforms must act only on court orders or lawful government notifications.
- Unclear liability may push platforms towards **over-censorship**, as uncertain or unpublished directives make speech expendable under risk management.

## Oversight Architecture and Institutional Ambiguity

- Amendments to **Rule 8** expand state oversight beyond publishers to ordinary users sharing news and current affairs content.
- The **Inter-Departmental Committee** can review and recommend blocking, reviving a framework already facing judicial scrutiny.
- Bombay and Madras High Courts flagged concerns over **Article 19(1)(a)** and media independence, but the draft rebuilds the same architecture before resolution.
- The Committee's role shifts from **grievance redress** to proactive scrutiny, with no clear intervention threshold or hearing guarantee for affected users.

## Data Retention and Chilling Effect

- Expanded **data retention** duties may require storing personal data, browsing activity and communication records beyond other legal mandates.
- Longer retention raises risks of **unauthorised access**, data breaches and function creep, altering citizen-platform relations.
- Overlapping changes create cumulative **self-censorship**, as informal directives, wider oversight and deeper data retention reinforce executive discretion.

## Constitutional Balance and Public Consultation

- Governments may regulate harmful content, but **delegated legislation** must remain within its parent statute and avoid creating unsupported obligations.
- Excessive rule-making can disturb the **regulation-rights** balance, as affirmed in *Indian Express Newspapers v Union of India*.
- The short **consultation period**, ending April 14, heightened concern because such major changes need wider debate and legislative scrutiny.

## BEYOND EDITORIAL

### Co-Regulation and Digital Rights by Design

- **Co-regulatory model:** Digital governance should combine MeitY oversight, platform responsibility, civil society inputs and independent review like the EU's Digital Services Act.
- **Rights by design:** Platform rules should embed privacy, free speech, transparency and appeal mechanisms, as seen in India's Grievance Appellate Committees.
- **Algorithmic accountability:** Users need clarity on algorithmic amplification, as the EU's Digital Services Act requires recommender-system transparency.

- **Trusted flaggers:** Independent audited flaggers, like the EU's trusted-flagger model, can address harmful content without unchecked executive control.
- **Privacy safeguards:** Data retention should follow minimisation, purpose limitation and storage limits under India's Digital Personal Data Protection framework.
- **Transparency reports:** Platforms should disclose takedown requests, government directions, appeal outcomes and error rates, as required under the Digital Services Act.
- **Digital literacy:** Citizens need awareness of misinformation, privacy risks and grievance tools through programmes like Cyber Surakshit Bharat and ISEA.