



SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS IN INDIA

Chairman of the **16th Finance Commission** stated that frequent elections hinder reforms and proposed simultaneous elections as a solution.

NEED FOR SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS

- **Promotes Consistency in Governance:** Shifts focus to development & policy implementation, reducing costs of multiple elections.
- **Prevents Policy Paralysis:** Reduces prolonged MCC enforcement, enabling smoother governance and policy continuity.
- **Reduces Electoral Fatigue:** Allows parties to focus on public welfare rather than frequent elections.
- **Mitigates Resource Diversion:** Limits repeated deployment of polling officials.
- **Political Opportunities:** Encourages new candidates, reducing dominance.

Challenges

- ⌘ **Managing 96 crore voters, 1 Mn polling booths,** large security forces, and staff training.
- ⌘ Requires **more EVMs and VVPATs**, along with foolproof backup systems.
- ⌘ Adjusting state assembly terms could weaken the federal spirit of the Constitution.
- ⌘ Fewer elections may reduce public scrutiny of governments and leaders.
- ⌘ **Constitutional amendments and new processes** may face court challenges.

The **Constitution (129th Amendment) Bill, 2024** & **Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024** were introduced to implement Simultaneous Elections.

Suggestions

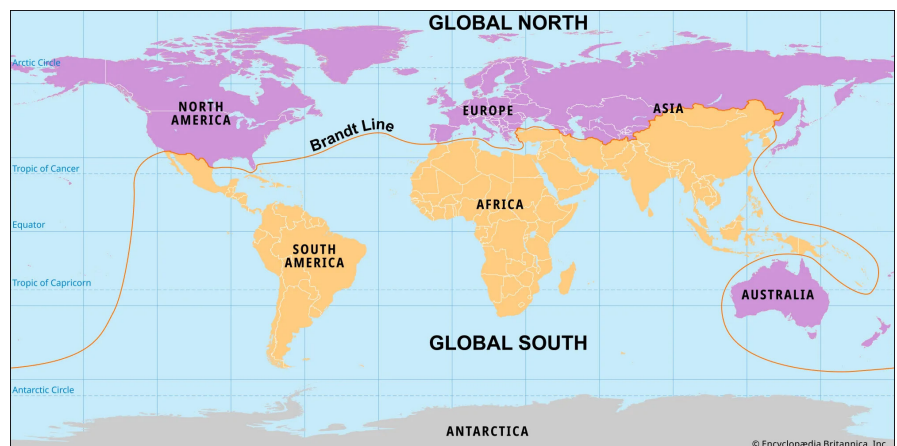
- ⌘ Define procedures, schedules & constitutional amendments, addressing premature dissolutions and by-elections.
- ⌘ Create a **unified electoral roll, upgrade EVM and VVPAT systems**, and use technology for voter verification and result management.
- ⌘ **Run nationwide campaigns through NGOs** and community organizations.
- ⌘ Train election officials on **new technologies** and procedures for smooth implementation.
- ⌘ **Align state election cycles** by advancing or postponing certain state elections.

INDIA AMPLIFYING THE VOICE OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH

The External Affairs Minister convened a meeting of Global South countries to strengthen solidarity and advocate for UN reforms.

India's Role in Championing the Voice of Global South

- ⌘ Mediates b/w North & South, advocating inclusivity in global governance.
 - ❖ **G20 (2023):** Ensured **African Union** as a permanent member.
- ⌘ Pushes for reforms in **UNSC, WB & IMF** to reflect developing nations' voices.
- ⌘ Leads **Mission LiFE, ISA & Green Hydrogen Mission**.
- ⌘ Global leader in **DPI** with **Aadhaar & UPI** systems.
- ⌘ Responds to crises with **Operation Dost** (Turkey) & **Operation Kaveri** (Sudan).
- ⌘ Engages with both the West and South, maintaining a non-threatening leadership model.



Concerns of Global South

- ⌘ **UNSC, IMF & WB governance** favor developed countries, sidelining the Global South.
- ⌘ WTO disputes unresolved, protectionism, and green tariffs hurt developing economies.
- ⌘ Global South suffers the most from climate change, with delayed climate finance and insufficient support.
- ⌘ **Geopolitical tensions** disrupt supply chains, with vulnerable countries facing sanctions and shortages.
- ⌘ **High external debt** and economic vulnerability, worsened by Covid-19 & inflation.
- ⌘ **Pressured to pick sides in US-China or US-Russia rivalries**, undermining autonomy.
- ⌘ Selective human rights advocacy and **external interference in internal matters**.

Complementary Aspects of South-South Cooperation (SSC)	Challenging Aspects of SSC
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Addresses finance, tech, and capacity gaps (e.g., India-UN Development Fund).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Growing South-South trade (India-ASEAN) challenges North’s dominance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Context-specific, sustainable solutions (e.g., Brazilian tech in Africa).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SSC offers non-conditional aid, countering Western influence.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborates with Northern countries (e.g., China-FAO projects in Latin America).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 60% of high-tech exports trade within the South, reducing reliance on the North.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• India’s vaccine diplomacy filled gaps during Covid-19.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Southern powers like India (ISA) challenge North-led models.

Measures to Strengthen Global South’s Voice

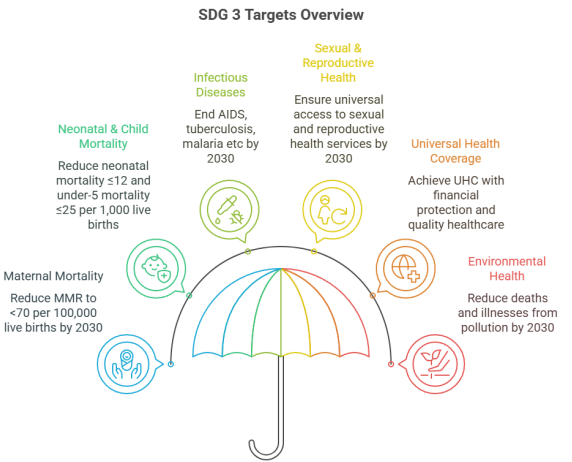
- ⌘ **Collective Platforms:** Institutionalize forums like **Voice of the Global South Summit**.
- ⌘ **Reforming Global Institutions:** Push for **UNSC expansion & IMF/World Bank reforms**.
- ⌘ **Development Finance:** Champion a **Global South Development Fund** for infrastructure & climate projects.
- ⌘ **South-South Trade:** Reduce tariffs & expand initiatives like **Asia-Africa Growth Corridor**.
- ⌘ **Peace & Security:** Mobilize the Global South in **UN peacekeeping & peacebuilding**.
- ⌘ **Global Partnerships:** Use India’s **multi-alignment strategy** to address Southern concerns in global forums.

INDIA'S SDG 3 PROGRESS

India ranked **99th in SDG Index 2025, up from 109th in 2024** but challenges remain in achieving **SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being)**.

India’s Progress on SDG 3

- ⌘ **Maternal Health:** MMR is **97 per 100,000 live births**, far from the target of 70.
- ⌘ **Child Mortality:** Under-five mortality rate is **32 deaths per 1,000 live births**, above the target of 25.
- ⌘ **Life Expectancy:** Average life expectancy is 70, falling short of **73.63-year target**.
- ⌘ **Financial Burden:** Out-of-pocket healthcare expenditure is 13%, double the target of 7.83%.
- ⌘ **Immunisation:** Immunisation coverage is 93.23%, below the target of 100%.



Reasons for Gaps in Achieving SDG 3 Targets	Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access Issues: Poor health infrastructure & economic barriers.• Non-Economic Factors: Poor nutrition, inadequate sanitation, and unhealthy lifestyles increase disease burden.• Socio-Cultural Barriers: Cultural practices & stigma hinder access to medical services, esp. for mental and reproductive health.• Burden of Disease: Ongoing communicable diseases & rise of NCDs, strain health system.• Covid-19 Disruption: Diverted resources led to delayed diagnoses, interrupted treatment, fewer institutional deliveries & setbacks in vaccine coverage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Universal Health Insurance: Implement to reduce out-of-pocket costs and improve healthcare access.• PHCs & Digital Health: Strengthen Primary Health Centres (PHCs) and use telemedicine for remote areas.• School Health Education: Introduce health education covering nutrition, hygiene, reproductive health & mental well-being (e.g., Finland & Japan).• Empower Local Bodies: Empower PRIs & ULBs to manage health initiatives and conduct audits.• Accelerate Schemes: Speed up implementation of Ayushman Bharat, Poshan Abhiyaan, Mission Indradhanush & LaQshya.

GOODS AND SERVICES TAX APPELLATE TRIBUNAL (GSTAT)

FM launched **GSTAT** to streamline dispute resolution & reinforce trust in **India's indirect tax system**.

- ⌘ **Established:** Under the Central Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017.
- ⌘ **Purpose:** To hear appeals against orders by Appellate or Revisional Authorities.
- ⌘ **Objective:** Provide a unified, independent appellate forum for GST disputes across India ("One Nation, One Forum"). Ensure timely dispute resolution, minimize legal friction, and improve business certainty.
- ⌘ **Functions:**
 - ❖ Principal Bench in New Delhi, 31 State Benches across 45 locations.
 - ❖ 2 Judicial Members, 1 Central Technical Member, and 1 State Technical Member per bench.
 - ❖ Focus on structure, scale, and synergy (expertise, technology, and process).
 - ❖ GSTAT e-Courts Portal for online filing, case tracking, and virtual hearings.
- ⌘ **Benefits:**
 - ❖ Protects taxpayer rights with timely justice.
 - ❖ Reduces ambiguity and ensures consistency across India.
 - ❖ Supports MSMEs, exporters, and startups with simplified compliance.

QATAR BECOMES 8TH COUNTRY TO ADOPT UPI

NPCI has partnered with **Qatar National Bank (QNB)** to implement **UPI in Qatar**, following **Bhutan, France, Mauritius, Nepal, Singapore, Sri Lanka & UAE**.

- ⌘ Indians are the **2nd largest group of visitors to Qatar**; UPI adoption reduces cash use and currency exchange hassles.

🔗 **Developed by NPCI**, UPI is a leading digital payment system enabling real-time, secure, low-cost transactions.

🔗 Built on **IMPS and integrates Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AePS)**.

NUCLEAR LIABILITY FUND

India **plans to create a nuclear liability fund under upcoming Atomic Energy Bill**, amending the Atomic Energy Act, 1962, and Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010.

- ⌘ Nuclear power **accounts for <3% of electricity**, but India aims to expand capacity **12-fold by 2047**.
- ⌘ Previous laws deterred investment due to unlimited supplier liability & **lack of legal certainty** in the 2015 insurance pool.
- ⌘ Fund **covers accident compensation over Rs 1,500 cr**, supplementing operator liability; offers a structured framework, **reducing risk for private and foreign investors** in nuclear energy & uranium mining.

CLNDA, 2010

- 🔗 Ensures compensation for nuclear accident victims & defines operator responsibility.; aligns with **Convention on Supplementary Compensation (CSC, 1997)**, ratified by India in 2016.
- 🔗 Operators face **strict no-fault liability**, capped at Rs 1,500 cr. Claims above this will be covered by govt., with its liability capped at rupee equivalent to **300 Mn Special Drawing Rights (SDRs)**.
- 🔗 Under the act, **Nuclear Damage Claims Commission** ensures fair compensation.