



Temple attack: PM urges Canada to uphold the law

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



CONTEXT: PM Narendra Modi strongly condemned the violence at the Hindu Sabha Temple at Brampton near Toronto and said such actions will “never weaken India’s resolve”. Mr. Modi slammed the recent reports of surveillance targeting Indian diplomats in Canada and described such actions as “cowardly”.

“I strongly condemn the deliberate attack on a Hindu temple in Canada. Equally appalling are the cowardly attempts to intimidate our diplomats. Such acts of violence will never weaken India’s resolve. We expect Canadian government to ensure justice and uphold the rule of law.”

- PM Narendra Modi

Pro-Khalistan crowd came to the temple which was hosting a consular camp that Indian diplomats had organised for the Canadian and Indian life certificate beneficiaries. For the sake of the beneficiaries, the High Commission in Ottawa and Indian missions had planned similar consular camps at multiple locations. The protesters in the pro-Khalistan crowd chanted slogans against the Indian government and Mr. Modi that soon spiralled into a confrontation, with the protesters resorting to violence and entering the temple premises.

Indo-Canadian Member of Parliament Chandra Arya critical of pro-Khalistan elements in Canada condemned the incident. Chandra Arya alleged of Khalistani effectively infiltrating the Canadian law enforcement agencies hinting of the Canadian Police had not acted professionally while dealing with the pro-Khalistan protesters. Mr. Arya called upon Hindu-Canadians to “step up and assert their rights and hold politicians accountable”.

Indian Army resumes patrolling in Depsang

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONTEXT: The Indian Army has successfully patrolled one of the five Patrolling Points in Depsang Ara of eastern Ladakh, the Leh-based 14 Corps announced late on Monday, marking the resumption of patrolling in the area for the first time since disengagement was undertaken last week and after the stand-off that began in May 2020.

Last Wednesday, disengagement was completed from Demchok and Depsang in eastern Ladakh, which were also the last two friction points of the 2020 stand-off, amid a return to the pre-April 2020 status quo. Following completion of disengagement, both sides undertook verification to confirm it on the ground. Ground commanders, of the ranks of Brigadier and below, held meetings last Wednesday to work out the

modalities for patrolling at Depsang and Demchok.

The Indian Army successfully conducted patrol to one of the patrolling points in Depsang following the consensus reached between the Indian and Chinese Side for disengagement and resumption of patrolling in Depsang and Demchok. Following this, the Army resumed patrolling in Demchok a day later.

Disengagement along LAC

Patrolling arrangement
Foreign secretary Vikram Misri said India and China have arrived at an agreement on "patrolling arrangements" along the LAC, "leading to disengagement and a resolution of the issues that had arisen in these areas in 2020."

Resolving pending fissures
The breakthrough in negotiations will pave the way to solve the dragging impasse in Depsang Plains and Demchok, thus far the two remaining friction points in eastern Ladakh

How the impasse began
Standoff on the LAC began with a skirmish between Indian and Chinese troops on the banks of Pangong Lake in May 2020. A brutal clash at Galwan Valley in June 2020 killed 20 Indian soldiers and an unspecified number of Chinese troops

"We reached an agreement on patrolling. With that...we have gone back to where the situation was in 2020, and...the disengagement process with China, you can say, has been completed."
- S Jaishankar, external affairs minister

The Indian Army resumed patrolling at Depsang carrying out patrols up to Patrolling Points 10, 11, 11A, 12, and 13 in the area which it last managed to access in January 2020. Patrolling Points 11A, 12 and 13 are located on the Limit of Patrolling (LoP) area, 10 and 11 are located much before LoP. Depsang is also the place where the distance from the LoP to the LAC is the maximum.

With disengagement now completed from all the friction points, the next step is to work out new patrolling norms along the LAC and resume patrolling at other friction points as well — Galwan, Patrolling Points 15 and 17A in Gogra Hotsprings area, and north and south banks of Pangong Tso — where currently buffer zones are in place.

However, given that there has been a stand-off at Demchok since 2017 and the latest agreement is for restoring the ground situation to pre-April 2020 situation, it is not clear up to what point the Army would get to patrol in the Demchok area.



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J&K Assembly's first session begins, L-G calls for restoration of Statehood

POLITY & GOVERNANCE



CONTEXT: Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha in his address on the first day of the first session of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly on Monday underscored the need to restore Statehood to the Union Territory.

Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha praised the people for the high voter turnout in the elections. The Union Territory Government will make all efforts for the restoration of full Statehood and constitutional guarantees available to a State. It would be a befitting reciprocation of the faith reposed by the people in our

democratic institutions. It reflected the enduring faith of the people in democratic processes.

The Lieutenant-Governor's speech sounded in tune with the ruling National Conference's approach. Mr. Sinha promised to strive for measures on many fronts, including addressing the issue of unemployment and promoting tourism, industry, horticulture and the power sector. He announced distribution of free power up to 200 units to deserving families.

People's Democratic Party legislator Waheed-ur-Rehman Parra bringing a resolution, against protocol, on revocation of Article 370, causing an uproar. The issue of revocation of Article 370 dominated the first day of the Assembly when Mr. Parra moved the resolution. The PDP legislator's move triggered a ruckus in the House, with the BJP MLAs up in arms.

SC issues directions to States, UTs to improve remission policy for convicts

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The Supreme Court has issued a slew of directions aimed at standardising and improving the transparency of policies governing permanent remission for the convicts in the country.

The Bench comprising Justices Abhay S. Oka and Augustine George Masih hearing a suo motu case of 2021 titled as "Policy Strategy for Grant of Bail" directed all States and Union Territories to inform convicts of any rejection of applications for permanent remission within one week. The Bench mandated greater accessibility to policy information, timely communication of decisions, and individualised consideration of cases to prevent arbitrary conditions.

They will also have to forward copies of these rejections to the district legal services authorities concerned to ensure appropriate steps were taken to provide legal aid to the convicts. The order calls for comprehensive steps by the State authorities to ensure that convicts who qualify for remission are adequately informed and their cases are fairly considered. It emphasised that the current remission policies, including any future modifications, must be made available in prisons across the country and

uploaded in English on the relevant government websites.

Jail officials were instructed to ensure that convicts eligible for remission were informed of these policies as the top court was critical of the practice of withholding remission consideration due to pending appeals. It clarified that pending conviction appeals alone did not justify delays, although applications may be held pending if there were ongoing appeals filed by the state for sentence enhancement or acquittal.

The Bench advised against applying “stereotype conditions” for remission grants, underscoring that any conditions should be tailored based on the specific details of each case. It referred to its October 21, 2024, order in a case reinforcing that decisions on remission must reflect thoughtful deliberation. The court would deliberate on December 3 to address additional issues, including whether States must provide reasons for all remission rejections and consider eligibility independently of convict applications.

Factory activity rebounded in October from 8-month low in Sept.

ECONOMY & DEVELOPMENT

CONTEXT: The survey-based HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers’ Index (PMI) inched up to 57.5 from 56.5 in the previous month, breaking a three-month streak of deceleration after hitting an eight-month low in September that marked the recovery of manufacturing activity in India’s private sector in October.

The 400-odd factories surveyed for the index by S&P Global Market Intelligence reported an acceleration in output growth in October, with new orders and international sales driving the uptick. Fresh export orders rebounded in October, after rising at the mildest pace in 18 months during September, with firms reporting new deals from clients in Asia, Europe, Latin America and the U.S. Production volumes rose, led by robust gains in consumer and investment goods, with companies referring to demand buoyancy, positive sales pipelines and favourable market conditions as key factors.



FIGURE: Line chart representation of the HSBC India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers’ Index (PMI)

Just around 23 % of surveyed firms had expected output growth a year ahead. In October, producers were became more optimistic about future output volumes, with an “above average” level of positive sentiment.

Price pressures rise

Inflationary pressures increased as input costs rose at a three-month high pace, with firms attributing most of these pressures to freight, labour and material costs. In response, firms opted to raise output price at a solid rate that outpaced the trend.

Firms ramped up hiring from September, with about 10 % of the surveyed firms reporting higher staff even as 1 % of them shed jobs. Firms also significantly scaled up pre-production inventories. Importantly, confidence levels also improved from September, when they had hit the lowest level since April 2023.

Manipur's non-Naga Thadou community lends support to NRC

INTERNAL SECURITY

CONTEXT: Thadous, one of the oldest and largest non-Naga tribes of Manipur, has extended support to the N. Biren Singh government's move to implement the National Register of Citizens (NRC). During a convention of the community in Guwahati on November 1 and 2, they also adopted a resolution to back the Manipur government's war on drugs.

Since May 3, 2023, the Thadous have been caught in the ethnic conflict between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities. They have been asserting their identity as distinct from that of the Kukis, many of whom are perceived as settlers from adjoining Myanmar.

The participants at the convention resolved to support the NRC exercise if initiated by the Centre in Manipur. We are of the view that the proposed exercise is aimed at securing Indian national interest and safeguarding the rights, welfare, and interests of the citizens and indigenous communities. We acknowledge the efforts of the State government in addressing the concerns of its citizens and ensuring their well-being," the resolution read.

Call for peace

Calling for peace and a non-violent solution to the ethnic conflict in Manipur, the Thadous said they are one of the original 29 native or indigenous tribes of the State and were recognised as an independent Scheduled Tribe under the 1956 Presidential Order of the government of India.

Renewed terror

INTERNAL SECURITY

CONTEXT: In late October, a series of attacks in Kashmir killed 10 civilians and two soldiers, with many of the victims being non-local workers. The violence appeared designed to instil fear among non-locals and to provoke a disproportionate response from the security forces, tactics commonly employed by militants in the region.

The administration, including the Lieutenant-Governor's office and the new National Conference-led government, must prevent militants from provoking excessive security responses that could harm local communities. The condemnation of the attacks by all segments of the Kashmiri polity, including separatist leader Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, should send a strong message to those supporting militants. While discontent with the Union government's actions persists, it has not led to the widespread violence seen in the 1990s. With a new government in place, there is an opportunity to better isolate militants. Key steps include ensuring the safety of non-local workers through security audits and encouraging local cooperation to bring militants to justice.

In recent years, insurgents in Kashmir have shifted their focus from primarily targeting security forces to attacking civilians, including non-local labourers and Kashmiri Pandits. This change in strategy appears aimed at polarizing society along communal lines and exploiting discontent with the Union Government to recruit militants. While anger over security force actions has fuelled militancy, the Kashmiris' resilience has prevented a full-scale insurgency, as past experiences have made them wary of extremism. This was evident in the rejection of extremist candidates in recent elections. Ultimately, addressing people's grievances and winning their trust is key to ending militancy.

Time for action

ECOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

CONTEXT: The greenhouse gas emissions must peak before 2025 at the latest and decline 43 % by 2030 to have any chance at keeping global temperatures from exceeding 1.5 0 C of pre-Industrial levels, multiple scientific assessments have said that. All the collective commitments summed by countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions would lead to only a 2.6 % decrease in global greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, compared to 2019 levels. Global emissions have only increased every year, with 53 billion metric tonnes emitted in 2023.

Most wealthy countries are reluctant to make sacrifices in their lifestyles, while poorer, developing nations aim to achieve similar prosperity. The only viable solution, therefore, is for developing countries to become wealthy without following the fossil-fuel-driven path that rich nations have taken. However, the costs associated with this—transitioning to cleaner, but land-intensive and more expensive renewable energy sources—remain a major point of contention. In 2009, during the climate summit in Copenhagen, developed nations committed to providing \$ 100 billion annually by 2020 as "climate finance" to help developing countries make this shift.

The United Nations is responsible for verifying whether climate finance goals have been met, but a lack of clarity on what constitutes 'climate finance' and delays in the financial crediting system have led to frustration among developing countries, who feel the goals remain unmet. The 2016 Paris Agreement mandates that a new collective finance goal (NCQG) be set by 2025, with the \$ 100 billion target as a baseline. Developed countries also argue that major emitters like China and India should contribute to this fund. Another key issue is carbon markets, where rich countries or companies fund renewable energy projects in developing nations in exchange for tradeable carbon credits, though defining clear rules for this system remains difficult. The passage concludes that climate negotiations often become bogged down in complex legal details, and calls for concrete action to tackle the issue.



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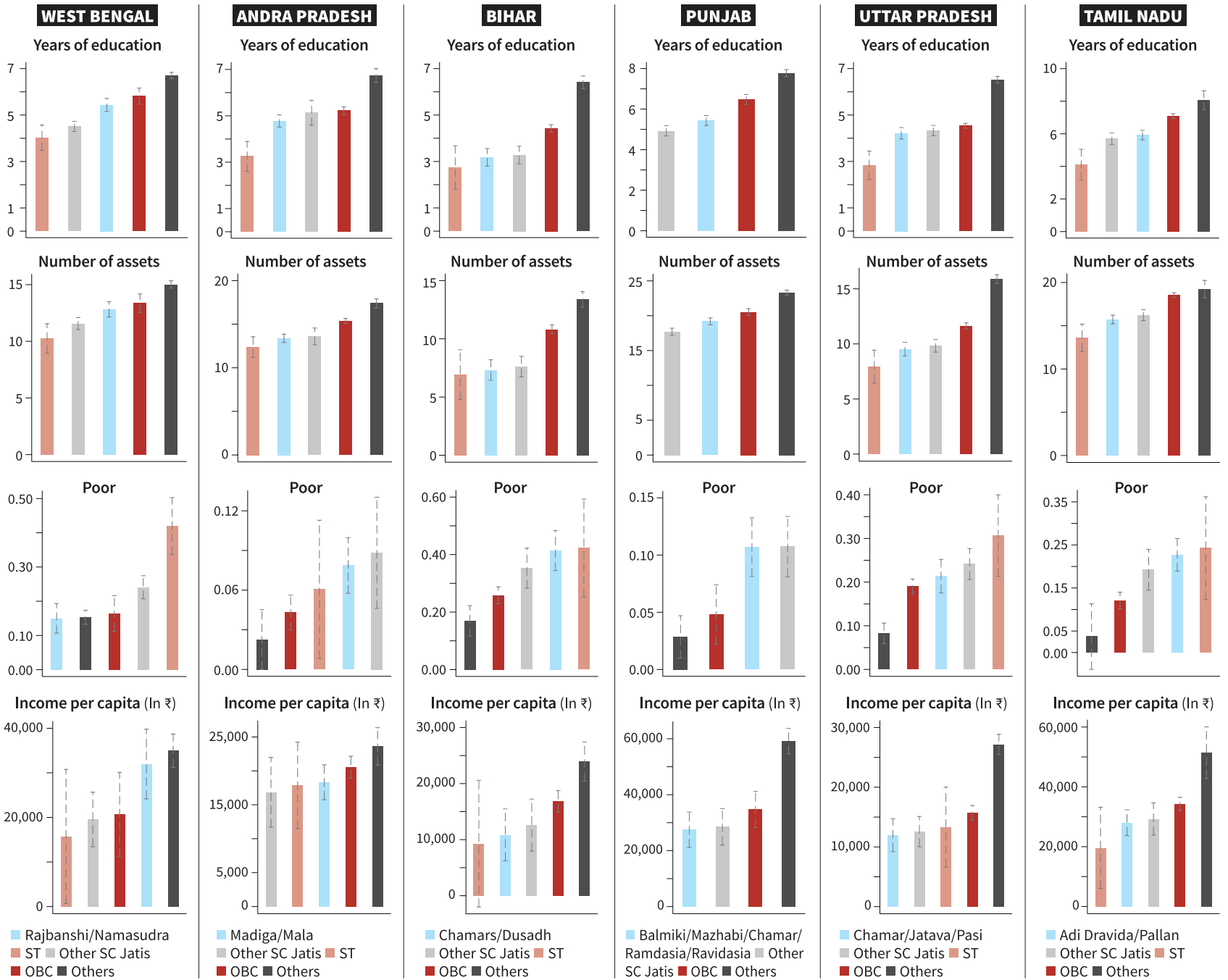


Does data justify subdivision of quotas?

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

Do States need quotas within quotas?

Using data from six major States, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal, the authors analyse whether the most marginalised SC groups within the broader SC category have benefited from reservations



India's reservation system, aimed at uplifting historically marginalized communities like Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), has facilitated access to higher education, government jobs, and public offices. However, after 75 years of independence, there are growing concerns about its effectiveness, particularly regarding unequal benefits among subgroups within the SC category. Recent debates, spurred by a Supreme Court ruling, have raised the possibility of implementing a "quota-within-quota" system to ensure more equitable distribution of benefits. While some states, like

Punjab, have tested this approach, its effectiveness remains debated.

A deep dive into caste quotas

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution, believed that legal equality alone would not dismantle caste-based inequalities. Reservations were introduced to promote substantive equality by providing opportunities for SCs and STs in education, employment, and government. However, the Supreme Court's recent verdict highlights that the reservation system has led to uneven outcomes, with some SC groups benefiting more than others. This has sparked calls for a more nuanced approach to affirmative action that accounts for the diversity within the SC category. The passage examines data from six major states—Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal—to explore whether certain SC castes have disproportionately benefited from reservations.

What data from different States tell us

In Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, the differences between major SC groups (Malas and Madigas in Andhra Pradesh, and Adi Dravida and Pallan in Tamil Nadu) are small, with both groups showing similar improvements in education and employment by 2019. However, in Punjab, where the SC quota has been subdivided since 1975, the policy has helped disadvantaged groups like the Mazhabi Sikhs and Balmikis improve socio-economic outcomes. In contrast, Bihar's attempt to create a "Mahadalit" category in 2007, meant to aid the most marginalized SC groups, was undermined by political pressures, diluting its effectiveness. Overall, while there are some disparities within the SC category, the gap between SC groups and upper-caste groups remains much larger.

Are reservations accessible?

In states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, less than 50% of SC households have caste certificates, limiting their access to reservation benefits. In contrast, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh have higher certification rates (60-70%), but these states are exceptions. This reveals a fundamental issue with the reservation system: poor access. Before focusing on subdividing the quota, the priority should be improving access to reservations, ensuring that all eligible SCs can benefit from them.

Is quota-within-quota the solution?

The idea of a 'quota-within-quota' has merit in states like Punjab, where disparities among SC subgroups exist, but in states like Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, the benefits of reservations are already fairly distributed, making further subdivision unnecessary. Political motivations, as seen in Bihar, can undermine the effectiveness of quota subdivision by turning it into a political tool rather than a means of social justice. The Supreme Court's suggestion to introduce a "creamy layer" exclusion for SCs also requires stronger evidence. While reservations have helped create a Dalit middle class, which may eventually reduce stigma, this process is ongoing, and discrimination persists despite economic mobility. Additionally, there is a critical need for updated, accurate data, such as from the national Census, to guide reforms. The reservation system has helped millions escape poverty, but to remain effective, it must focus on improving access for all SCs and address the broader disparities between SCs and upper-caste groups. Any reforms should be based on solid evidence and genuine need, not political expediency.



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—Benjamin Franklin



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