



## Many consular camps in Canada cancelled: India

### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



**CONTEXT:** India cancelled a number of consular camps planned to help citizens of Indian origin with their documentation requirements in view of the security agencies conveying their inability to provide minimum security protection to the community camp organisers.

Pro-Khalistani groups targeted a temple complex and the Indian-origin community at a consular camp organised by Indian diplomats in the Canadian city of Brampton. These incidents has led to a further escalation of tensions between India and Canada.

#### 'Rule of law'

At a media briefing in Delhi, Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal called on the Canadian Government to "uphold the rule of law" and take actions against perpetrators responsible for the violence to justice. Mr. Jaiswal also noted increase in the threats to Indian diplomats. The diplomats have also been "put under surveillance, which is totally unacceptable" and it has been taken up by India with the Canadian government. The Canadian High Commission did not respond to the latest charges by the Ministry, that follow a rapid deterioration in bilateral relations, including the expulsion of each other's diplomats and the decision by India to bring back its High Commission to Canada, Sanjay Verma, over allegations by the Canadian government of involvement of the Indian government including Home Minister Amit Shah in the killing of a Khalistani activist in Brampton last year.

Brampton City Mayor Patrick Brown also shared letters from both the Ontario Gurdwara Council condemning the violence by protestors at the temple, and the Hindu Sabha Temple statement suspending a priest for his alleged involvement in the counter-protests. The Indo-Canadians or Canadians of Indian origin number 1.86 million constitute about 5 % of the Canadian population. Approximately, 180,000 people identify themselves as Indian-origin, represent about 28 % of the city's population.



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# Supreme Court directs liquidation of debt-ridden Jet Airways as 'last resort'

## ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT

**CONTEXT:** The Supreme Court directed the liquidation of Jet Airways to commence as the “last viable resort” to protect the interests of the debt-ridden airline, its creditors, workmen, and employees following the failure of a resolution plan.

A three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud noted speedy resolution, if not, time-bound liquidation essential to prevent further depreciation of the beleaguered airline’s assets. Justice J.B. Pardiwala, who authored the 169-page judgment, invoked the court’s plenary powers under Article 142 of the Constitution to direct the airline into liquidation in compliance with the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) of 2016.

Peculiar circumstances

Almost five years have elapsed without any notable progress since the resolution plan was duly approved by the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLAT). The Supreme Court directed the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLAT), Mumbai to take appropriate steps for appointment of liquidator and all other necessary formalities for commencement of liquidation of the corporate debtor.

The airline’s creditors led by the State Bank of India filed an appeal challenging a judgment of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLAT) in March upholding the resolution plan and transfer of ownership to the Successful Resolution Applicant (SRA), a consortium of Murari Lal Jalan and Florian Fritsch.

# Railways may modify and export old diesel locomotives to Africa

## ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT



**CONTEXT:** The Indian Railways plans to overhaul diesel locomotives that still have a service life of 15 to 20 years left, to suit the export requirements for African countries repurposing them for exports as the Indian Railways intensifies its electrification efforts along its network.

### Orders received

RITES has received two orders for repurposed Indian locomotives from South African mineral and steel plants — one worth ₹ 35 Cr. in the second quarter of the current financial year, and the other worth ₹ 50 Cr. in the third quarter. African countries are keen to receive the locomotives as the revival of their economy depends on mineral

movement, including on rail networks.

### Gauge conversion

The RITES and the Indian Railways needs to convert Indian locomotives that are designed to run on a broad gauge network of 1,676 mm to the much smaller Cape Gauge network of 1,067 mm on which trains run in over 12 African countries, including South Africa. This is the first time ever that we will be attempting gauge conversion for in-service locomotives. Until last year, the Railways had 10,238 electric and 4,543 diesel locomotives.

## Do not hesitate to invoke UAPA, Shah tells State police forces and Central agencies

### INTERNAL SECURITY



**CONTEXT:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah addressing the NIA's two-day Anti-Terrorism Conference, 2024 exhorted the State Police Forces to invoke the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) when required, adding that a National Counter Terrorism Policy and Strategy will be introduced soon to fight terrorism, terrorists, and the entire ecosystem supporting them.

The agencies fighting against terrorism should apply UAPA without hesitation wherever needed and seek assistance from the NIA [National Investigation Agency] for investigations. NIA has registered 632 cases, filed chargesheets in 498 cases and secured conviction in 95

% cases. Union Home Minister Amit Shah also released the Standard Operating Procedure for UAPA investigations.

Mr Shah pointed out the need to legally empower the counter- terrorism agencies and creating an ecosystem that strengthens the fight against it. The Union Home Ministry has coordinated efforts for deradicalisation. The Union Home Minister has established an institutional framework for coordinate strategies developed by various ministries.

The Minister while acknowledging that law and order was a State subject noted that terrorism has no territorial limits and held imperative to strengthen the NIA. Mr. Shah emphasised that a coordinated approach must be adapted from police stations at the State level to the offices of the Directors-General of Police and called for a shift from a 'need to know' approach to a 'duty to share' approach.

## 'Rules cannot change midway of public services recruitment'

### POLITY & GOVERNANCE

**CONTEXT:** A five-judge Constitution Bench led by Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud held that the eligibility criteria, or the "rules of the game", for selection of candidates to public services could not be changed midway once the recruitment commenced.

The Constitution Bench, in the unanimous 44-page judgment, held that the laws, rules and procedure governing recruitments to public services, both of the Union and the States, must be governed by the overarching principles of the fundamental rights of equality and non-discrimination. The court held that eligibility criteria for placement in a recruitment select list cannot be modified partway through the process unless allowed by existing rules or explicitly permitted in the recruitment advertisement, provided it aligns with those rules. Any change must comply with Articles 14 (Right to Equality) and 16 (Equal Opportunity in Public Employment and Non-Discrimination) of the Constitution and satisfy the test of non-arbitrariness.

However, the judgment said a spot on the select list would not guarantee a candidate the indefeasible right to be appointed even if vacancies were available. However, on the other hand, the state or any of its instrumentalities could not arbitrarily deny appointment to a selected candidate. Courts have consistently frowned upon tinkering with the rules of the game once the recruitment process commences.

Two categories

The “rules” roughly fell into two categories — one which prescribes the eligibility criteria or the essential qualifications of the candidates seeking employment; and the other which stipulates the method and manner of making the selection from amongst the eligible candidates. The court explained that a “recruitment process” began with the issuance of the advertisement calling for applications and ended with filling of the vacancies. The recruitment must follow the extant rules and adopt a procedure which was transparent, non-discriminatory, and non-arbitrary and had a rational nexus to the object sought to be achieved. The rules concerned were binding on the recruiting body both in terms of procedure and eligibility criteria.

## Removing bran on millets reduces the benefits of eating them: study

### AGRICULTURE RELATED MATTERS



**CONTEXT:** A recent paper titled ‘Impact of debranning on the nutritional, cooking, microstructural characteristics of five Indian small millets’ in the peer-reviewed journal Nature Springer noted that removal of the bran from millets results in decreasing the protein, dietary fibre, fat, mineral and phytate content in them while increasing the carbohydrates and amylose content squandering away the benefits of eating millets.

#### High in minerals

Millets are high in minerals such as calcium, iron, phosphorus, and potassium, and they are an excellent source of phyto-chemicals such as phenolic compounds when compared with other major cereals

(rice, wheat, and maize), conferring a range of health benefits such as anti-aging, anti-carcinogenic, anti-atherosclerogenic, antibacterial, and antioxidant effects.

The Food and Agriculture Organization recognised 2023 as the International Year of Millets and the Indian government went all out to celebrate it. There are differences between polished millets and whole grains, in terms of colour and texture, but if you are buying packaged products, it is difficult to tell.” This particular study looked at the smaller millets — foxtail, little, kodo, barnyard, and proso.

Dehusked millets are nutritious and should be promoted in Indian diets to improve diet quality, debranned millets are nutritionally inferior, can increase the glycemic load of Indian diets. Removing the bran and germ extends the shelf life of millets. Millet bran is rich in fats, and not removing it might reduce shelf life, as it could become rancid faster. De-branning will also reduce cooking time, make the grain softer and less chewy. Millets have their advantages in terms of phytonutrients and protein intake, the type of millets available in the market are highly polished and consuming this results in a high glycemic index, which is not desirable. Millets should be made available as they originally were available in the country, so that they are of benefit to people with diabetes too.”

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# Wikimedia denies receiving notice from Centre on content

## POIITY & GOVERNANCE

**CONTEXT:** The Wikimedia Foundation has not received any notice from the Indian government on its content. A notice was sent to the foundation, though no statement was issued through the Press Information Bureau, and no copy of the notice was released.

The Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting did not have any immediate comment on the non-receipt of its notice. The government's alleged notice was described as calling out a "small group having editorial control", an apparent reference to regular Wikipedia contributors being able to lock down a page to prevent vandalism by only allowing other regular contributors to make changes. The government also complained of "bias and inaccuracies".

The unusual back-and-forth between the government and Wikipedia comes even as the Delhi High Court hears a suit by Asian News International. The news agency is fighting a description in a Wikipedia article on it that characterises it as friendly to the government and a spreader of misinformation on its behalf. The foundation has agreed so far to provide the details it has of users who have added these descriptions to ANI's page in a sealed cover.

The case and the conservative grievances with the supposed liberal slant of Wikipedia's editors have laid bare a key tension between India's growing regulation of online platforms and the online encyclopaedia: what to do with a non-profit that as a policy does not interfere in content decisions by unpaid users.

# Can the state acquire all private property?

## POIITY & GOVERNANCE

**CONTEXT:** A nine-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court, in a majority judgment (8:1), overturned the earlier interpretation formed in 1977 followed by the Supreme Court till 1997 held that not every private resource can be considered a 'material resource of the community' to be used by the government to serve the 'common good.'

### What are constitutional provisions?

The Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP) list out principles that the government should follow to achieve social and economic justice in our society. Article 39(b) in Part IV provides that 'ownership and control of material resources of the community are so distributed as best to subserve the common good.'

The Constitution originally guaranteed right to property and compensation for acquisition as a Fundamental Right under Articles 19(1) (f) and 31 respectively.

- 1971: The 25th Amendment introduced Article 31C, allowing laws made to fulfil Articles 39(b) and (c) to override certain Fundamental Rights, including the right to property, if they served socio-economic objectives.
- 1973: The Supreme Court in the State of Kerala vs. Kesavananda Bharati upheld Article 31C but ruled that it remained subject to judicial review.
- 1977: The Supreme Court in State of Karnataka vs. Ranganatha Reddy upheld a Karnataka law nationalizing private bus transport services. Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer, in a separate 'afterword,' interpreted 'material resources of the community' under Article 39(b) to include all national wealth—both private and public—used to meet material needs.
- 1978: The 44th Amendment removed the right to property from Fundamental Rights, reclassifying it as a constitutional right under Article 300A, requiring any property acquisition by the government to be for a public purpose with adequate compensation.
- 1982: The Supreme Court in the Sanjeev Coke Manufacturing Company vs. Bharat Coking Coal Limited upheld the nationalization of coke oven plants, citing the interpretation in Justice Iyer's minority judgment.
- 1996: The Supreme Court again in Mafatlal Industries Limited vs. Union of India (UoI) cited Justice Iyer's interpretation.

### What is the current ruling?

A nine-judge Supreme Court Bench in Property Owners' Association vs. State of Maharashtra rejected Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer's earlier interpretation of Article 39(b) that all privately-owned property could be used by the state as a 'material resource' to serve the common good reflecting a rigid economic ideology favouring government control over private resources as outdated, with India shifting from a socialistic model to a market-based, liberalized economy.

It held that to qualify as a 'material resource of the community,' a resource must be 'material' and 'of the community.' The 'public trust doctrine' and context-specific key factors that would determine this are the inherent characteristics of the

resource; its impact on community well-being; its scarcity; and the impact due to its concentration in private hands. Hence, certain resources like forests, ponds, spectrum, mines and minerals may fall within the scope of Article 39(b) even if they are privately held. However, not every private resource automatically qualifies just because it meets material needs. The term 'distribute' in Article 39(b) also carries a wide meaning that can include both government acquisition and redistribution to private players, as long as it serves the common good. Justice Nagarathna concurred partially with the seven-judge majority while opining that all private resources except 'personal effects' like apparel, jewellery etc., can be transformed into a 'material resource of the community' through nationalisation, acquisition etc. Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia wrote the sole dissenting opinion where he upheld the interpretation of V.R. Krishna Iyer in the Ranganatha Reddy case and opined that it is for the legislature to decide on how the ownership and control of material resources is to be distributed.

What is the way forward?

Our economy has changed from a socialistic pattern to a liberalised, market-oriented model. The ensuing growth has uplifted vast majority of people from abject poverty. However, there is also a growing inequality that needs to be addressed. This judgment should protect the small farm and forest lands of marginalised sections from forceful acquisitions by the government. Equally important is the sustainable exploitation and distribution of material public resources within the domain of the government.

## ED searches premises linked to main vendors of Amazon, Flipkart

### ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT

**CONTEXT:** The Enforcement Directorate (ED) searched 19 premises across five States linked to the main vendors of Amazon and Flipkart for suspected violation under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA).

The searches were carried out in Delhi, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Hyderabad, and Panchkula. The ED initiated its FEMA investigation based on several complaints against Amazon and Flipkart, the e-commerce entities providing marketplace, alleging they are violating FDI Rules by directly or indirectly influencing the sale price of goods or services and not providing level-playing field for all the vendors.

Earlier, the Competition Commission of India issued penalty notices to Amazon, Flipkart, and preferred sellers for engaging in anti-competitive practices that adversely hit small traders and kirana stores. In response to multiple complaints filed by the trading community regarding FDI violations and the anti-competitive practices of quick-commerce companies we urge both the CCI and the ED to take swift action to prevent any further irreparable damage to the businesses of small traders.

## China braces for tensions after Trump victory in U.S.

### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



**CONTEXT:** As President-elect Mr. Trump prepares to start his second term in office, China is bracing for unpredictability in its ties with the United States and renewed tensions over trade, technology, and Taiwan.

Mr. Trump campaign promise to slap blanket 60 % tariffs on all Chinese exports to the U.S. would be a blow to China's already unstable economy, which is suffering from high youth unemployment, a lengthy property slump, and government debt. A 60 % duty on Chinese imports could shave off 2.5 percentage points, or about half, of China's projected economic growth.

During Mr. Trump's previous term in office, the U.S. imposed tariffs on more than \$ 360 billion of Chinese products. China and U.S. signed a trade deal in which China committed to improve intellectual property rights and buy an

extra \$ 200 billion of American goods. A research group a couple of years later showed China had bought essentially none of the goods it had promised. Outgoing President Joe Biden retained most of those tariffs and added fresh duties this year on imports including steel, solar cells, and electric vehicles.

Factoring into the trade talks could be Mr. Trump's appeals to Chinese President Xi Jinping to help negotiate a resolution to the Ukraine war. Mr. Trump previously sought Mr. Xi's help in dealing with North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un. China is the largest trading partner of both Russia and Ukraine. These close economic ties give China a unique opportunity to play a greater role in peace-making efforts.

### Case of Taiwan

There is one scenario in which Mr. Trump has threatened to impose even higher tariffs — 150 % to 200 % — on Chinese goods: if China invades Taiwan, a self-ruled democracy that Beijing claims as its own. The U.S. does not recognise Taiwan as a country, but is its strongest backer and biggest arms provider.

Mr. Trump angered Beijing in December 2016 by taking a congratulatory call from Taiwan's then-President Tsai Ing-wen in a breach of diplomatic protocol. No U.S. President had spoken directly to a Taiwanese leader since Washington and Beijing established ties in 1979. Mr. Trump has also said that Taiwan should pay the U.S. for defending it against China, likening the relationship to insurance. Taiwan spends about 2.5% of its GDP on defence, and purchased hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of U.S. weapons this year.

## Air quality commission doubles fine on farmers for stubble burning

### ECOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

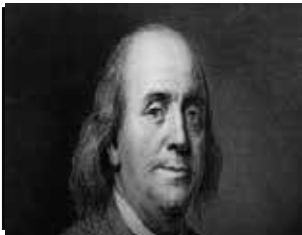


**CONTEXT:** The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) charged with addressing air pollution in the Delhi capital region and surrounding States, has doubled the fines applicable to farmers following multiple raps by the Supreme Court for inadequately addressing stubble burning.

The order noted nodal or supervisory officers appointed by State governments in the National Capital Territory of Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, NCR areas of Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh were "empowered" to impose and collect Environmental Compensation from farmers causing air pollution by stubble burning, as per "revised

rates". Thus farmers who have less than two acres of farm-holding and was expected to pay ₹ 2,500 for each incidence will now have to pay ₹ 5,000, those with between two acres and five acres will see their fines double to ₹ 10,000 and those with more than five acres to ₹ 30,000.

The fines come even as farm fires in Punjab and Haryana show a declining trend and those in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh show an aggregate rising trend, according to a Thursday bulletin by the Consortium for Research on Agroecosystem Monitoring and Modelling from Space Laboratory, Indian Agricultural Research Institute. The organisation reports instances of fires as observed by satellites. Since November 1, there has been a rising trend in the contribution of stubble burning to PM2.5 concentrations in Delhi. From about 14 % in mid-October it has remained above 20 % until November 7 with a peak of 35 % on November 1.



*"If you invest more in your education, then you are likely to get more interest in it."*

*—Benjamin Franklin*

## Tamils need strong representation in Sri Lankan Parliament, says Sumanthiran

### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

**CONTEXT:** Tamil politician M.A. Sumanthiran stressed the need for a stronger representation of the country's Tamil people in Parliament to assert their rights and long-neglected demands.

A senior lawyer and two-time legislator, he is contesting in the November 14 parliamentary elections from the northern Jaffna district for the Ilankai Tamil Arasu Katchi (ITAK), a party that has for decades been the main Tamil voice in the Sri Lankan legislature, including through the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) that it led since 2001. In the last Parliament [2020-24], the grouping had 10 MPs, six down from between 2015 and 2019.

The grave economic crisis of 2022, which led to a people's movement that ousted President Gotabaya Rajapaksa from office, has substantially altered Sri Lanka's political and electoral landscapes.

#### Internal differences

Meanwhile, the party has also been grappling with many challenges, ranging from internal differences to the break-up of its broader alliance. The TNA has disintegrated, with the ITAK's former partners — People's Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE) and Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation (TELO) — breaking away to run on a separate platform called the Democratic Tamil National Alliance (DTNA). The Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), which earlier split from the TNA, has also joined this Alliance.

#### Concerns of Tamils

Fifteen years after Sri Lanka's civil war ended, Tamils continue to demand accountability for alleged war crimes and the elusive political solution. The region is yet to see meaningful economic revival. Voters are also faced with a fragmented Tamil polity. There are 28 seats to be won across the five electoral districts in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. Over 2,000 are running for these seats.

Tamil youth are looking for economic progress through good jobs in the war-affected region, where unemployment is high. They are hoping that our local economy will thrive and give them hope and reason to stay back and work here, rather than migrate elsewhere.

#### Political solution

In the September presidential elections, the ITAK backed Mr. Dissanayake's chief rival, then Opposition Leader Sajith Premadasa. Although the Dissanayake government is yet to clearly spell out its specific proposal for power devolution, the NPP manifesto has pledged to take forward the drafting process of a new constitution that began in 2015.

## Germany in political crisis as Olaf Scholz's ruling coalition falls apart

### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



**CONTEXT:** German Chancellor Olaf Scholz fired Finance Minister Christian Lindner of the pro-business Free Democrats, after Germany's government coalition collapsed in a dramatic fashion.

Mr. Scholz would lead the country with a minority government, made up of his Social Democrats and the Greens until early next year — even as the leader of the biggest Opposition bloc in Parliament, Friedrich Merz from the centre-right Christian Democrats, called for an immediate no-confidence vote and new elections.

Merz meets Scholz

A meeting with Mr. Merz and Mr. Scholz at the chancellery around noontime on Thursday about a possible



date for the next election ended after less than an hour with Mr. Merz leaving without commenting on the talks. Later on Thursday, President Frank-Walter Steinmeier fired Finance Minister Lindner and two other Free Democrats officials who had resigned — Research Minister Bettina Stark-Watzinger and Justice Minister Marco Buschmann — their certificates of dismissal.

Mr. Steinmeier also appointed Jörg Kukies, an economic adviser to Mr. Scholz, as Finance Minister. Agriculture Minister Cem Özdemir from the Greens agreed to take on the Research Ministry. The chancellor hopes that his minority government — Scholz's left-leaning Social Democrats with the remaining coalition partner, the environmentalist Greens — will get the support from Mr. Merz's Christian Democrats in Parliament in the coming weeks, to pass important legislation and plugging the billion-euro hole in the 2025 budget

## U.S. Fed set to cut rates again

### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

**CONTEXT:** U.S. Federal Reserve officials are poised Thursday to reduce their key interest rate for a second straight time, responding to a steady slowdown of inflation pressures.

The Fed's future moves are now more uncertain in the aftermath of the election, given that President-elect Donald Trump's economic proposals have been widely flagged as potentially inflationary.

The Fed has long guarded its status as an independent institution able to make difficult decisions about borrowing rates, free from political interference. Yet during his previous term in the White House, Mr. Trump publicly attacked Chair Jerome Powell after the Fed raised rates to fight inflation, and he may do so again.

The economy is also clouding the picture by flashing conflicting signals, with growth solid but hiring weakening. Even so, consumer spending has been healthy, fuelling concerns that there is no need for the Fed to reduce borrowing costs and that doing so might overstimulate the economy and even re-accelerate inflation.

Financial markets are throwing yet another curve at the Fed: Investors have sharply pushed up Treasury yields since the central bank cut rates in September. The result has been higher borrowing costs throughout the economy, thereby diminishing the benefit to consumers of the Fed's half-point cut in September. Broader interest rates have risen because investors are anticipating higher inflation, larger federal budget deficits, and faster economic growth under Mr. Trump.



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*Corporate office:*  
**Vedhik IAS Academy**  
Samkalp Bhawan, Plot No.15,  
Sector 4, Rama Krishna Puram,  
New Delhi, Delhi-110022

*Regional office*  
**Vedhik IAS Academy**  
202, Raheja Chambers, 12,  
Museum Road. Bangalore -  
560001. Karnataka, India.

*GCC Office:*  
**Bobscoedu,**  
Bobsco Trading & Contracting Co. W. L . L  
Office 22, Dream Tower 1,  
Road: 2701, Adliya, Kingdom of Bahrain  
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