

## ● POLITY

## ● ECONOMICS

## ● TECHNOLOGY

## ● ECOLOGY

## POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

## GOVERNORS CANNOT SIT ON BILLS PASSED BY HOUSE: SC

**CONTEXT:** The Punjab government filed a case with the Supreme Court because Governor Banwarilal Purohit refused to approve important laws passed by the state legislature. The Supreme Court ruled that the Governor cannot refuse to approve laws simply because he doubts the validity of the meeting in which they were passed.

**BACKGROUND:**

- In India, a Governor is the head of state in a state, appointed by the President of India.
- The Governor has the power to assent to or withhold assent to bills passed by the state legislature.
- The Governor also has the power to prorogue (end) or summon (start) the state legislature.

**STORY SO FAR:**

- The Punjab government passed several important laws in a special meeting of the legislature.
- Governor Banwarilal Purohit refused to approve the laws, arguing that the meeting was invalid.
- The Supreme Court ruled that the Governor cannot refuse to approve laws simply because he doubts the validity of the meeting in which they were passed.
- The court also said that the Governor is a "titular head" of the state and does not have the power to make decisions that affect the governance of the state.
- The court ordered the Governor to approve the laws immediately.

**POINTS To CONSIDER:**

- The Governor's power to withhold assent to bills is limited. He can only withhold assent if he believes that the bill is unconstitutional or if it is against the interests of the state.
- The Governor's power to prorogue or summon the legislature is also limited. He can only prorogue or summon the legislature if he is advised to do so by the state cabinet.
- The Supreme Court's ruling is a significant victory for the Punjab government and for the principle of legislative supremacy.

**ANALYSIS:**

The Supreme Court's judgment in the Punjab Governor case has significant implications for India. The court's reaffirmation of the principle of legislative supremacy is a set back to the Governor's power to withhold assent to bills passed

by the state legislature. It also strengthens the position of the Speaker of the Assembly, who is now the sole judge of the lawfulness of the House's proceedings. The judgment is likely to have a significant impact on the future relationship between Governors and state legislatures.

The Governor's decision to withhold assent to the bills on Sikh gurdwaras, the police, and higher education was widely seen as an attempt to undermine the elected government. The Supreme Court's ruling has now put an end to this dispute and has allowed the state government to proceed with its legislative agenda.

The judgment is also a victory for the principle of federalism. The Supreme Court has reaffirmed that the states are sovereign entities and that the Governor is not a superior authority over the state legislature. This is a significant development in Indian federalism, as it has been a long-standing debate over the extent of the Governor's powers. The judgment is likely to have a ripple effect across India, as it is likely to be cited in future cases involving the powers of Governors and state legislatures. It is also likely to lead to a closer scrutiny of the Governor's role in Indian politics.

**CRITICISM OF THE JUDGEMENT:****Weakening the Governor's Role as a Check on the Legislature**

The Governor's role as a check on the legislature is crucial in ensuring that the legislature does not pass laws that are unconstitutional or against the interests of the people. By limiting the Governor's power to withhold assent to bills passed by the legislature, the Supreme Court's judgment could weaken the Governor's ability to perform this important role.

Critics argue that the Governor's power to withhold assent is a necessary safeguard against legislative overreach. They point out that the legislature is elected on the basis of a popular mandate, but the Governor is appointed by the President. This difference in their source of power gives the Governor a more objective perspective on the legislature's actions.

They also argue that the Governor is better equipped to assess the constitutionality of bills than the legislature itself. The Governor has access to legal experts and advisors who can provide guidance on complex constitutional issues. The legislature, on the other hand, may not have the same level of expertise.

**Increasing Political Interference in the Legislature**

By limiting the Governor's power, the Supreme Court's judgment could lead to more political interference in the legislature. Critics argue that the Governor's power to withhold

assent acts as a deterrent to political interference, as the legislature knows that the Governor could block their bills if they are motivated by political considerations rather than the public interest.

Without this deterrent, critics argue that the legislature could become more susceptible to pressure from special interest groups or political parties. This could lead to the passage of laws that benefit a small group of people at the expense of the general public.

### Setting a Precedent for Governors to Challenge the Legislature's Decisions

The Supreme Court's intervention in this matter could set a precedent for Governors to challenge the legislature's decisions more frequently. Critics argue that this could create a climate of uncertainty and instability in the legislature, as it would be constantly under the threat of being challenged by the Governor.

This could make it more difficult for the legislature to pass important legislation and could lead to a more adversarial relationship between the legislature and the Governor.

**CONCLUSION:** Overall, the Supreme Court's judgment in the Punjab Governor's case is a landmark decision that will have a significant impact on the Indian polity. It is a victory for the principle of legislative supremacy, federalism, and the elected government.

processes. They have the power to assent to or withhold assent to bills passed by the state legislature.

**ISSUE:** The Governor of Tamil Nadu, R.N. Ravi has been accused of delaying or withholding assent to 12 important bills passed by the state legislature. This has created a "constitutional deadlock" and is threatening to bring the administration of the state to a grinding halt.

### ARGUMENT OF GOVT. of TAMILNADU

The Tamil Nadu government has filed a petition in the Supreme Court accusing the Governor of acting in a manner that defeats the rights of the people of the state to welfare legislation. The government has also accused the Governor of politically motivated conduct for denying sanction to probe authorities in corruption cases against public servants.

### SUPREME COURT'S RESPONSE

The Supreme Court has issued formal notice to the Union of India through the Home Ministry to respond to the petition. The court has also asked the Attorney-General of India to be present in court on November 20.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- The Supreme Court has previously ruled that the Governor cannot withhold assent to bills passed by the legislature indefinitely.
- The Governor's power to withhold assent is limited to cases where they believe that the bill is unconstitutional or against the interests of the state.
- The Governor is expected to act on the advice of the state cabinet, except in certain areas where the Constitution gives them discretion.

### CONCLUSION:

The Supreme Court's decision to issue a formal notice to the Union of India is a significant development in this case. It suggests that the court is concerned about the Governor's actions and may be prepared to intervene. The outcome of this case could have a significant impact on the role of Governors in India.

## POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

# T.N. GOVERNOR HOLDING BACK BILLS A MATTER OF CONCERN: SC

**CONTEXT:** Supreme Highlights that Article 200 of the Constitution mandated the Governor to act very soon when bills passed by the state legislature were presented to him for declaration of assent.

**BACKGROUND:** The Tamil Nadu government has filed a petition in the Supreme Court accusing the Governor of acting in a manner that defeats the rights of the people of the State to welfare legislation. The government has also accused the Governor of politically motivated conduct for denying sanction to probe authorities in corruption cases against public servants.

The Supreme Court has issued formal notice to the Union of India through the Home Ministry to respond to the petition. The court has also asked the Attorney-General of India to be present in court on November 20.

**POINTS TO CONSIDER:** The Governor of a state in India plays a crucial role in the state's administrative and legislative

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*“Doing nothing is very hard to do. You never know when you’re finished.”—Leslie Nielsen*

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

## DURING TALKS WITH U.S., INDIA BATS FOR TWO-STATE SOLUTION TO END ISRAEL-PALESTINIAN CRISIS

**CONTEXT:** India reiterated the need for a two-state solution to end the current Israel-Palestinian crisis, during a ministerial meeting between India and the United States on Friday.



The Foreign and Defence Ministers of both countries focused on the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel and called for the “immediate release” of those being held hostage in the Gaza Strip. The Ministers reiterated that India and the U.S. stand with Israel against terrorism and called for adherence to international humanitarian law, including with regard to the protection of civilians. They called for the immediate release of all remaining hostages. There was no mention of a ceasefire; instead, India and the U.S. called for “humanitarian pauses” in the conflict. Vinay Mohan Kwatra, Foreign Secretary added that India had proposed the “two-state solution and early resumption of dialogue” as a way forward in dealing with the crisis.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken’s interactions in Delhi were a continuation of his diplomacy on the Israel-Palestinian crisis which has taken a heavy humanitarian toll due to the continued Israeli bombardment of the Gaza Strip. The joint statement reflected Mr. Blinken’s recent arguments made during a meeting with Arab Foreign Ministers in Amman on November 4, where the U.S. had refused to call for a ceasefire in Gaza.

The ‘2+2’ meeting was led by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on the Indian side, and Mr. Blinken and U.S. Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin. A broad range of issues, including the India-Canada spat over Khalistani groups and the upcoming election in Bangladesh, were discussed.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

## INDIA, U.S. IN AGREEMENT ON STRATEGIC ISSUES, SAYS

**CONTEXT:** India and the United States increasingly find themselves in agreement on strategic issues, including countering China’s aggression, promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific, and addressing regional security challenges.

During the talks, there was a particular focus on enhancing defence industrial cooperation and getting both sides to co-develop and co-produce defence systems.

### Move welcomed

Mr. Austin welcomed India’s decision to become a full member of the Combined Maritime Forces, a multilateral construct headquartered in Bahrain. The India-U.S. defence relationship has evolved into a strategic partnership characterised by mutual trust, shared values, and a growing recognition of common interests in maintaining regional and global security. India and US share a focus on maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region, recognising the criticality of safeguarding vital sea lanes, and promoting stability; our teams are working on the substantive outcomes.

India and US are charting new pathways of cooperation by pursuing stronger defence, industrial engagement, easing of technology restrictions, resilient supply chains in all domains, and maritime security. India and US are negotiating deals for the purchase of 31 MQ-9B unmanned aerial vehicles, and for the licensed manufacture of General Electric’s F-414 jet engine in India, which has been chosen to power the LCA-MK2.





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## INTERNAL SECURITY

## 168 VILLAGES ALONG CHINA BORDER TO GET ROAD CONNECTIVITY IN A YEAR: SHAH

**CONTEXT:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah participated at the 62nd Raising Day parade of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), the primary force deployed along the 3,488-km China border in Dehradun.



Union Home Minister Amit Shah committed for providing connectivity to 168 villages along the China border by road and other forms of communication within one year. He stressed the role of border villages in ensuring internal security and the noted the role of vibrant village programme (VVP) in ensuring all facilities and infrastructure. A budgetary allocation of ₹ 4,800 Cr had been made to create adequate infrastructural, health and educational facilities in 662 border villages of 19 districts under the VVP. Before 2014, the average spent on border infrastructure was ₹ 4,000 Cr per year and in the past nine-and-a-half years, it had trebled to ₹ 12,340 Cr on an average with money being spent on road, border outposts and infrastructure.

Home Minister noted that seven battalions of the ITBP were sanctioned by the government and out of them, four battalions would be deployed shortly. Mr. Shah said these seven battalions and one sector headquarters would be built at a cost of approximately ₹ 3,000 Cr.

Mr. Shah said that among the many new initiatives taken on Friday, the Self Sustainable Energy Building (SSEB) was very special because built at an altitude of 17,000 feet in the cold desert this building would become a symbol of self-reliant India that would keep the soldiers safe at a temperature of 180 – 190 Celsius.

*“Intelligence plus character-that is the goal of true education. — Martin Luther King Jr.*



## INTERNAL SECURITY

## TREMORS REVEAL GAPS IN EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM

**CONTEXT:** The Government and private early alert systems did not reach many of the people who could feel palpable tremors, when tremors hit Delhi and surrounding areas following the 6.4 magnitude earthquake last week in Nepal and the 5.6 magnitude aftershock.



Neither, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)'s Cell Broadcast Alert System (CBAS) nor the Android Earthquake Early Warning system of Google send out alerts in the national capital. The Android Earthquake Early Warning system supplements the government's efforts on earthquake alerts and aims to provide people with advance notice that can help them stay safe.

The Android Earthquake Early Warning system alerts did go out immediately in many areas around the India-Nepal border, where the shaking was strongest. Google has clarified that it warns users only if the shaking in their area can expect to cross a value of 3.5 on the Modified Mercalli Intensity (MMI) Scale, a measurement of shaking during earthquakes that serves as an alternative to the Richter scale.

At an MMI value of three (“weak” shaking), the United States Geological Service's description of the scale says that tremors are felt “quite noticeably by persons indoors, especially on upper floors of buildings,” and at four (“light” shaking), the tremors are felt “indoors by many, outdoors by a few”. The tremors in both cases, in New Delhi, appear to have been in the lower end of these two MMI values, meaning Google did not send alerts to everyone who felt shaking, as the intensity did not seem as risky in places like Delhi.

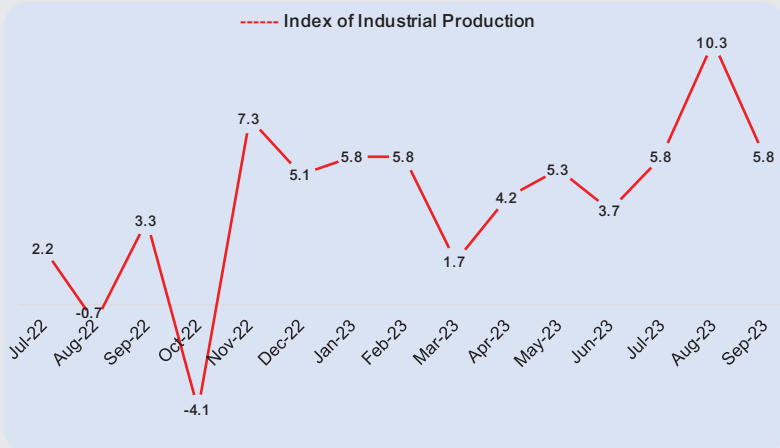
As for the CBAS, which is the alert system that works through telecom operators, no alerts went out anywhere in North India, even in places near the Nepal border where shaking was intense.

“Common applications of Cell Broadcast include delivering emergency alerts such as severe weather warnings (eg, Tsunamis, Flash Floods, Earthquakes), public safety messages, evacuation notices, and other critical information.

**ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT**

## SEPT. IIP GROWTH FALLS TO 5.8%

**CONTEXT:** India's industrial output slid to a three-month low of 5.8% in September from a 14-month high of 10.3% in August, with manufacturing growth halving to 4.5% from the 9.3% recorded in the previous month.



**FIGURE:** Line chart representation of the Index of Industrial Production growth rates (on Y-o-Y basis in per cent).

Consumer durables' production rose just 1 %, while non-durables' production grew 2.7 % in September, despite a beneficial base effect from last year when both segments tanked by 5.5 % and 5.7 %, respectively.

Electricity and mining growth moderated to 9.9 % and 11.5 %, respectively. Primary goods grew the fastest at 8 %, cooling from 12.4 % in August, followed by infrastructure and construction goods that were up 7.5 % and capital goods, which rose 7.4 %. Intermediate goods output grew 5.8 %. While only seven of 23 manufacturing sectors had clocked a contraction in August, nine segments saw drops in output in September, led by furniture (-20.2%). The apparel segment contracted 17.9 %, worse than the 17.1% decline clocked in August.

Overall industrial output is up 6 % in the first half of this year, with mining up 8.7 %, electricity 6.1 % and manufacturing 5.7 %. Most economists expected September's Index of Industrial Production, or, IIP to reflect sharper growth.

**ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT**

## NET DIRECT TAX COLLECTIONS AT ₹ 10.6 LAKH CRORE; NEARS 60% OF TARGET

**CONTEXT:** India's net direct tax collections grew 21.8 % to ₹10.6 lakh crore by November 9, with personal income tax revenue rising 31.8 % and corporate taxes increasing 12.5 % from the year-earlier period.

The total refunds for the year so far to ₹ 1.77 lakh Cr, including ₹ 27,000 Cr of tax refunds were remitted to taxpayers over the past month. The pace of growth in the net direct tax kitty was 21.8 % a month ago as well, indicating the momentum is sustaining.

The net income tax collection so far is 58.15 % of the total Budget Estimates of Direct Taxes for 2023-24 and the provisional figures continue to register steady growth. Gross direct tax collections stood at ₹12.37 lakh Cr, 17.6 % higher than the year-earlier period. Corporate Income Tax (CIT) and Personal Income Tax (PIT) grew 7.13 % and 28.3 %, respectively. Combined with the Securities Transaction Tax, or STT, personal tax collection rose 28 %. After adjustment of refunds, the net growth in CIT collections is 12.48 % and that in PIT collections is 31.77% (PIT only) and 31.26 % (PIT including STT).

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*“Education is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self-confidence.” - Robert Frost*

## POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

## REVAMPING THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM TO FIT THE BILL

**CONTEXT:** The government has introduced 3 new bills to replace the core laws of India's criminal justice system: the Indian Penal Code (IPC), the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), and the Indian Evidence Act (IEA). These bills are currently being examined by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs.

**BACKGROUND:** The criminal justice system in India is based on a set of laws that were enacted during the colonial era. These laws, including the Indian Penal Code (IPC), the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), and the Indian Evidence Act (IEA), have been amended over the years, but they are still largely outdated and do not reflect the complexities of modern society.

In recent years, there has been growing calls for a comprehensive overhaul of the criminal justice system. The government has responded by introducing three new Bills

- the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita Bill,
- the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita Bill, and
- the Bharatiya Sakshya Bill.

These Bills will replace the IPC, the CrPC, and the IEA, respectively.

The government is replacing three old laws with three new ones. This is a good opportunity to update the laws to make them fairer and more effective. The new laws should be clear and easy to understand. They should also work well with the other laws that are already in place.

### MODERNISING JURISPRUDENCE:

#### Seven issues related to modernising jurisprudence

**Whether civil law should be included:** The CrPC currently includes provisions for the maintenance of wife and children after divorce and allows compounding of some offences by the affected person. The question is whether such matters should be dealt with under the civil code.

**Whether a reformative system should be created:** There is a move towards making community service a form of punishment. However, several minor offenses are not compoundable, which means they will go through the process of trial and conviction.

**Whether maintenance of public order and the process of criminal prosecution should be in the same law:** The CrPC currently includes provisions charting out the process of arrest and trial as well as items such as Section 144 that empower the district magistrate to impose various restrictions.

**Whether various directions of the Supreme Court of India have been codified:** The Bill codifies the procedure for mercy petitions. However, there is no codification of various directions related to arrests and bail.

**Whether the Bills try to ensure consistency of implementation:** Typically, penalties for offences specify a range, with the judge expected to specify the sentence within the range based on the circumstances of each case. However, for some offences, the range may be very wide.

**Whether the age provisions have been updated for modern norms:** The IPC currently specifies that a child below the age of seven years cannot be accused of an offence, and provides such exemption until 12 years of age, if the child is found not to have attained the ability to understand the nature and consequences of his conduct. The question is whether these age thresholds should be raised.

**Whether gender related offences have been updated:** The Bill is in line with the Supreme Court judgment which struck down the offence of adultery. Section 377 of the IPC, which was read down by the Court to decriminalise same sex intercourse between consenting adults has been dropped. The Justice Verma Committee, in 2013, had recommended making marital rape an offence; this has not been done.

### OVERLAP WITH SPECIAL LAWS

The IPC, which was enacted in 1860, specifies offenses and penalties. However, several laws have been enacted since then to deal with specific offenses, leading to duplication and inconsistency across these laws. In some cases, the penalties are different, and a person may face prosecution under different laws for the same action. This has been addressed in some cases, such as the Legal Metrology Act, 2009, which states that provisions of the IPC related to weights and measures will not apply. However, the Bill overlaps with several other Acts, and abortion continues to be an offense though it is permitted under certain conditions under the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971. The Bill replacing CrPC retains the provision requiring maintenance of a parent though a special Act was passed in 2007 regarding this.

### DEFINITIONS AND DRAFTING

The Bill replacing the IPC provides that a person suffering from mental illness is not an offender. The definition of mental illness is the same as in the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017. The new Bill will provide full exemption to someone who is addicted to alcohol or drugs but not to a person who is unable to understand the consequences of their actions due to mental retardation. Some illustrations in the laws have become obsolete and should be updated to events from modern life. Parliament should examine these Bills with great care so that they create a fair, just and efficient criminal justice system.

**CONCLUSION:** The Indian government is introducing three new bills to replace the core laws of the country's criminal justice system. These bills aim to modernize jurisprudence, address overlaps with special laws, and improve the overall drafting of the laws. The changes are significant as they represent a major step towards updating the criminal justice system to reflect the complexities of modern society.

One of the key changes is the introduction of a reformatory system that emphasizes community service as a form of punishment. This shift away from purely punitive measures is in line with modern trends in criminal justice. Additionally, the bills codify various Supreme Court directions and ensure consistency of implementation across different laws.

The bills also address overlaps with special laws by repealing provisions that are already covered by other statutes. This will help to streamline the criminal justice system and reduce confusion. Additionally, the definition of mental illness is updated to align with the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017.

Overall, the three new bills represent a significant step forward in the modernization of India's criminal justice system. The changes are designed to make the system fairer, more effective, and more consistent with modern jurisprudence.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

# THE U.S.'S SIGNAL OF A HUGE DIGITAL SHIFT

**CONTEXT:** For some years now, such digital trade proposals have been the hottest agenda at various plurilateral trade negotiations and at the World Trade Organization (WTO). Countries such as India and South Africa, and some other developing ones, have stoutly resisted the U.S.-driven digital trade agreements juggernaut.

The U.S. withdrew from its centerpiece digital trade positions at the WTO — those about data flows/localisation, access to source code, and location of computing facilities. The declaration represents a watershed moment about how the global digital economy and society will evolve going forward.

### From flat to a split digital world

A free digital trade agreement — with free data flows, without the need to share the source code of digital products, and allowing remote computing facilities — could similarly be employed globally by China to now outsmart the U.S. digitally. It could help bring China on an equal footing with the U.S. in accessing global digital markets, and in driving and controlling the world's digitalisation, in all sectors. Apart from the economic challenge, the U.S. also considers any pervasive Chinese digital presence globally as a major security threat.

Such Cold War-like economic and security-related exclusions, and blocs building, may at least be as important a reason behind the U.S. declaration as the stated one of preserving policy space. Even though having withdrawn from these all-important positions in the WTO digital trade negotiations, where China cannot be excluded, the U.S. may still. Such deals will be led by the U.S., and, significantly, be limited to its allies. The Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) and the Americas Partnership for Economic

Prosperity (APEP) are two such initiatives by the U.S. to pursue push for data flow, source code, and facilities location, related provisions in regional digital trade deals, in some form or the other and similar interests.

The historic declaration by the U.S. can, therefore, be seen in two different lights. At one level, it signals a full global acceptance that preserving national policy space around data flows, source code, and location of computing facilities is key to all-important digital regulation. This is a most welcome development. But at another level, what indeed is rather worrying is that it could firmly herald the splitting of the global digital space, structures and value-chains into two competing blocs — one led by the U.S. and other by China. This is already happening, but could now pick up a new momentum.

### Resisting digital dependencies

India should make the most of the new global consensus on the need for strong digital regulations to rein in Big Tech and manage AI, including through policies related to data, source code, and location of computing facilities. Developing countries should grasp this opportunity with both hands to urgently shape new paradigms for national digital regulation.

Developing countries must adopt a new digital regulation paradigm should combine with strong digital industrial policies to bolster domestic digital industry. Countries should aim at creating globally open standards, open protocols, and open digital public infrastructures that would ensure genuine global-scale interoperability. This would enable open global digital value chains, allowing easy switching across global digital trade partners — suppliers or consumers.

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

## ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

# STUBBLE TROUBLE

**CONTEXT:** North India faces severe air pollution in October-November, exacerbated by stubble burning; Delhi residents experience health issues amid worsening air quality.

**BACKGROUND:** Air pollution, a "hidden killer," affects organs, causing diseases. In 2019, 1.67 million Indians died prematurely due to air pollution. India ranks eighth globally in the worst air quality index. The Indo-Gangetic Plain, including Delhi, faces annual winter pollution spikes due to factors like stubble burning. The Supreme Court ordered states to halt stubble burning. Political blame arises over the issue, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive solution.



## NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

- **Reduction in Stubble Burning:** The number of stubble-burning incidents in Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh has decreased in 2022 compared to the previous year, based on data from the Consortium for Research on Agroecosystem Monitoring and Modelling from Space Lab.
- **Current Stubble-Burning Data:** In 2023, Punjab recorded 22,981 stubble-burning incidents from September 15 to November 8, a decrease from the 33,090 incidents during the same period in the previous year.
- **Regional Impact on Delhi's Air Quality:** Stubble burning accounted for a significant proportion of PM2.5 particulate matter in Delhi, reaching 35% on November 3. Meteorological factors played a role in exacerbating pollution levels.
- **Factors Influencing Pollution:** Atmospheric scientist Professor Sachchida Nand Tripathi highlights the impact of weather factors, such as a lowered boundary layer and changing wind directions, contributing to worsened pollution levels during a specific period.
- **Farmers' Compulsion to Burn Stubble:** Farmers face challenges managing large amounts of paddy straw annually. Many resort to burning due to the lack of timely

and affordable alternatives for crop residue management, despite awareness of the environmental consequences.

- **Need for Crop Diversification:** Farmers emphasize the importance of government support for crop diversification through a minimum support price and assured purchase of produce for crops other than paddy and wheat.
- **Health Concerns and Future Outlook:** Stubble burning contributes to a spike in air pollution, causing health issues. With a significant portion of paddy yet to be harvested, concerns arise that pollution levels may further escalate, impacting respiratory health in the region.

## GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

- **Government Subsidies for Crop Residue Management:** Punjab government provides subsidies on CRM machines, encouraging farmers to use surface seeders and sell stubble to biomass energy plants.
- **Increased Demand and Earnings:** Farmers benefit from the rising demand for stubble in biomass energy plants, industrial boilers, and paper mills, earning substantial income.
- **Challenges of Small-Scale Farmers:** Many small-scale farmers, constituting a significant portion in Punjab, find mechanized farming solutions impractical and financially burdensome.
- **PPCB's Initiatives:** The Punjab Pollution Control Board (PPCB) promotes paddy straw utilization in power plants and boilers, leading to a 125% increase in usage to 4.5 million tonnes.
- **Delhi's Disregard for Pollution Concerns:** Despite rising pollution levels, people in Delhi continue outdoor activities, including playing and partying, reflecting a lack of awareness or urgency about the environmental impact.

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