



● POLITY

● ECONOMICS

● TECHNOLOGY

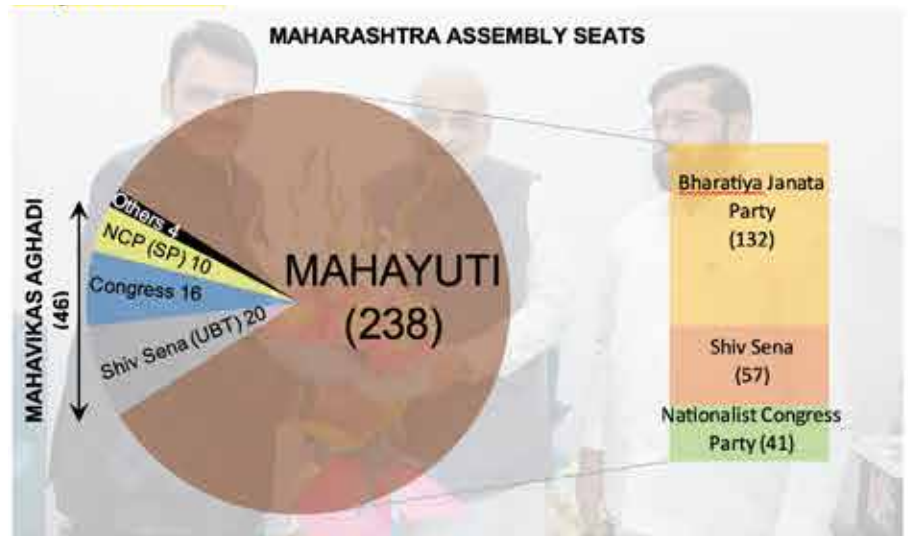
● ECOLOGY

Maharashtra meet ends without decision on CM

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: BJP national president J.P. Nadda and Union Home Minister Amit Shah held a marathon meeting with Mahayuti leaders, including caretaker CM Eknath Shinde and his deputies Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar in an effort to end the deadlock over the next Chief Minister of Maharashtra.

The BJP-led Mahayuti alliance secured a decisive mandate in the recent Maharashtra Assembly election, winning 230 out of 288 seats. The BJP emerged as the dominant partner with 132 seats, while Mr. Shinde's Shiv Sena and Ajit Pawar's NCP won 57 and 41 seats respectively. The Congress-led MVA suffered a significant setback, with the Congress winning only 16 seats, Sharad Pawar's NCP(SP) securing 10, and Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena (UBT) managing 20. The BJP might keep the CM's position to itself for all five years, amid speculations that the formula of one CM and two Deputy CMs to continue.



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Armies making great progress in implementing settlement: China

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONTEXT: The Chinese Defence Ministry acknowledged the Armies of India and China are implementing the settlement reached between the two countries for disengagement and resumption of patrolling at Demchok and Depsang in eastern Ladakh.

The frequency of patrolling would be a maximum of one a week by each side in Depsang and Demchok. Talks are continuing between the two sides for the resumption of patrolling at the other five friction points where buffer zones are in place following disengagement.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh met his Chinese counterpart, Admiral Dong Jun, in Laos on the sidelines of the 11th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus. During the meeting, Mr. Singh called for reflecting on the lessons learnt from the unfortunate border clashes of 2020 and "take measures to prevent recurrence of such events and safeguard peace and tranquillity along the India-China border".

Both sides agreed to work together towards a road map for rebuilding mutual trust and understanding. The meeting came against the backdrop of the disengagement and the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and



Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the BRICS summit.

The two sides have since completed disengagement from Depsang and Demchok, the last two remaining friction points of the 2020 stand-off, and have resumed coordinated patrolling. On November 4, the Indian Army announced that it had patrolled one of the five patrolling points in Depsang, PP 10, and shortly after, the Chinese People's Liberation Army too resumed patrolling.

Lok Sabha extends tenure of Waqf JPC

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The Lok Sabha on Thursday adopted a motion extending the term of the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) on the Waqf Amendment Bill till the end of the Budget Session in 2025.

The Lok Sabha constituted the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) on August 8, and the panel was supposed to submit its report on the last day of the first week of the Winter Session, which is November 29, Friday.

The motion for extension was adopted just before the House adjourned for the day amid protests by the Opposition over the Adani issue and violence in Sambhal in Uttar Pradesh. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju criticised the Opposition protests, though the government had agreed to their demands for extension of the tenure of the committee and a debate in the House on certain issues, despite everything being discussed before.

Following the opposition protests, Speaker Om Birla had adjourned the House till noon. The resolution for extending tenure of the JPC on Waqf Bill was moved by committee Chairman and BJP leader Jagdambika Pal and approved with a voice vote. The decision to seek extension was taken after the panel's meeting on November 27. Opposition parties have criticised the amendments proposed by the Bill to the existing Waqf Act, alleging they violate the religious rights of Muslims.

In Busan, India says it will not back 'use' of plastic alternatives

POLITY & GOVERNANCE



CONTEXT: At the ongoing UN-led Global Plastic Treaty negotiations at Busan, India has struck a contradictory note opposing being pushed to the "use" of these products, technologies, and services, though it "encourages the research, innovation, and development of sustainable alternatives and non-plastic substitutes".

India has pushed back against a suggestion by the Chair of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-5) to "reduce the use of primary plastic polymers and associated chemicals of concern in plastic products". Chemicals of concern are used in making goods but which are associated with harm.

Semantics at play

India's position in negotiations regarding plastic waste and pollution. While India is committed to reducing plastic waste and promoting sustainable alternatives, it

rejects being forced to use certain products or materials. Single-use plastics are only one type of plastic, and different plastics have varying levels of recyclability.

India emphasized that any agreement on plastic pollution should align with other multilateral agreements, respect national priorities and the right to development, and ensure that developing countries receive financial and technical support, including technology transfer. This support should follow the principle of "Common But Differentiated Responsibilities," which originates from climate negotiations, where developed countries, responsible for most historical emissions, are expected to assist in reducing future global emissions.

Plastic alternatives

There is a lack of clarity on the availability and effectiveness of sustainable alternatives to plastic. While India has allowed biodegradable and compostable plastics, uncertainty about their actual degradability and composting processes has hindered their widespread use. An investigation by the Centre for Science and Environment reveals that India introduced 24 million tonnes of plastic packaging since 2022, with a recycling capacity of only 9.8 million tonnes. Of the 15 million tonnes of plastic waste generated annually, only 20 % is collected. This waste management issue has led to calls for limiting plastic production, as discussed in international negotiations.

Before negotiations began, INC-5 Chair Luis Vayas Valdivieso presented a "non-paper" containing a reference document with 32 articles addressing various aspects of plastic waste, pollution, and production control. While most countries support the document, there are disagreements, particularly from China, India, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, and the U.S., who view halting plastic production as disruptive. As a result, every sentence in the 18-page document is contested, with countries requesting modifications based on their individual concerns.

Census 2025 as a comprehensive citizen registry

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The 2025 Census includes an exercise to update the National Population Register (NPR), which is the first step for the establishment of the National Register of Indian Citizens (NRIC). Grasping the full scope and implications of this initiative is essential.

The National Register of Indian Citizens (NRIC) is mandated by the Citizenship Act of 1955. Initially conceptualized after the 1951 Census, it gained importance following the Subrahmanyam Committee's recommendations after the Kargil war in 1999, which called for a comprehensive database of citizens and non-citizens. This led to the inclusion of Section 14A in the Act, making registration of Indian citizens compulsory and authorizing the issuance of identity cards. Several pilot projects, such as the Multi-Purpose National Identity Card (MNIC) and fishermen identity card, have been launched with varying success.

As a verified registry with more benefits

The NRIC primarily aims to strengthen national security by maintaining a verified citizen registry. It also helps reduce identity fraud, prevent duplication, and enable targeted welfare programs to ensure benefits go only to eligible recipients. The National Population Register (NPR) is the first step in this process, gathering demographic and biometric data from all usual residents to distinguish citizens from non-citizens.

The multi-phase NRIC process begins with creating a comprehensive database using demographic data collected during Census houselisting operations. Biometric data is then gathered to prevent duplicate records. Public claims and objections are invited to ensure transparency, followed by a verification and appeals process to improve accuracy. Inquiries into citizenship status are conducted to finalize the NRIC, which differentiates citizens from non-citizens. The process concludes with the issuance of identity cards as required by the Citizenship Act.

The 2011 Census collected individual details such as name, gender, date of birth, marital status, place of birth, nationality, family relationships, residency, and socio-economic indicators. The 2025 Census is expected to follow a similar pattern, but biometric data collection will likely be excluded since this information is already available in the Aadhaar database.

Aadhaar versus NRIC

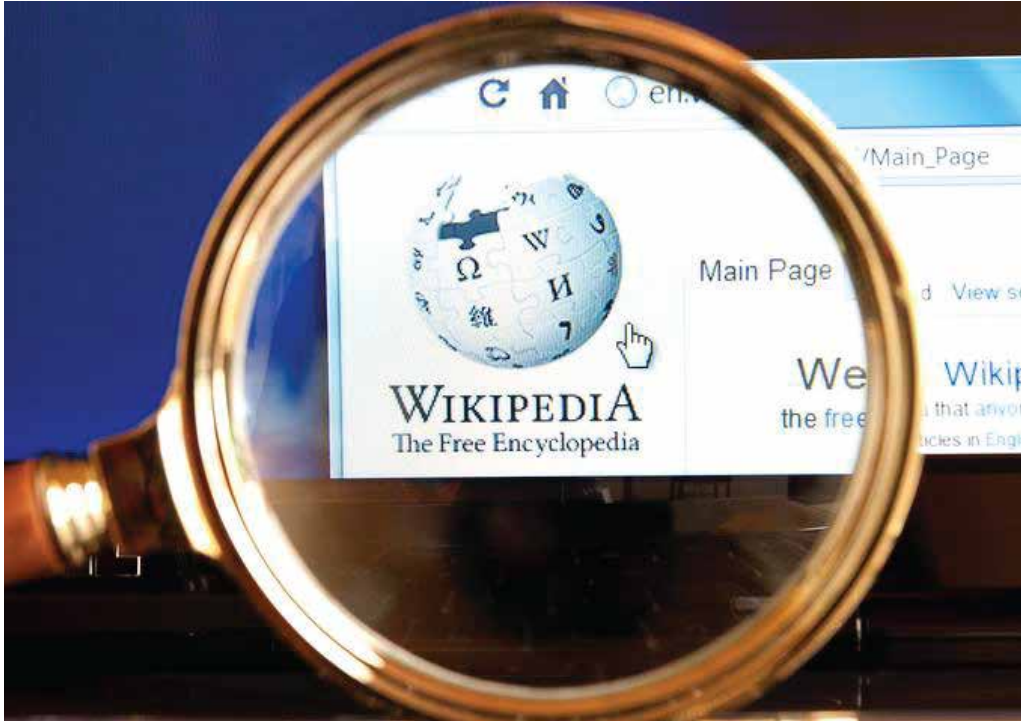
Aadhaar and the NRIC serve different purposes. Aadhaar, issued by UIDAI, provides a unique identification number for all residents of India, regardless of citizenship, and is primarily used for identity verification and accessing services. In contrast, the NRIC is focused on citizenship verification, creating a comprehensive citizen registry. While Aadhaar is inclusive of all residents, the NRIC is specific to citizens, and both systems complement each other in India's governance and security framework.

The Assam exercise and privacy concerns

Assam's updated National Register of Citizens (NRC) in 2019 aimed to identify illegal immigrants, particularly from Bangladesh, but faced criticism for its accuracy and fairness, with many rural and less-educated residents unable to meet documentation requirements. This highlighted the potential challenges of implementing a nationwide NRIC. Concerns about data privacy, misuse of biometric and demographic information, and exclusion of communities with limited documentation persist. The process also involves significant logistical challenges, requiring streamlined procedures and public awareness. For the NRIC to be inclusive and effective, citizens must stay informed, verify their records, and actively participate in ensuring transparency and fairness.

Wikipedia and ANI's defamation suit

POLITY & GOVERNANCE



Earlier this year, Indian news agency Asian News International (ANI) filed a defamation suit against Wikimedia Foundation Inc. and three Wikipedia 'administrators' before the Delhi High Court. A single-judge Bench subsequently directed Wikimedia on August 20 to disclose the administrators' details.

What is Wikipedia?

Wikipedia is a community-driven encyclopaedia freely available on the Internet. Volunteers from around the world work together to populate and maintain it. While not all pages on Wikipedia are of equal quality, it has acquired a reputation of being reliable because its editors include field experts and the platform allows anyone to communicate their knowledge freely as long as they abide by the guidelines.

How is Wikipedia populated?

Wikimedia, which hosts Wikipedia, filed

an appeal after a single-judge Bench ordered it to reveal the identities of three administrators involved in editing ANI's Wikipedia page. ANI sued, claiming defamatory statements on its page, such as accusations of propaganda and spreading fake news. When ANI editors tried to correct these statements, other editors reversed their changes, and Wikipedia later imposed 'extended confirmed protection' to prevent further edits by ANI-associated users. ANI argued that Wikimedia, by allowing this, violated its obligations as an intermediary under the Information Technology Act 2000 and the 2021 Intermediary Guidelines. The court ordered Wikimedia to submit subscriber information of the administrators in sealed covers.

Will Wikimedia lose safe-harbour protection?

Wikimedia Foundation Inc., a U.S.-based non-profit, does not control content on Wikipedia but provides the technical infrastructure to support the platform. It ensures editors can create pages while following community-developed guidelines, which require statements to be backed by reliable, verifiable sources. Wikipedia prohibits original research and encourages continuous editing for accuracy. Pages on controversial topics may be protected, with 'extended confirmed protection' restricting edits to experienced editors, and 'full protection' limiting edits to administrators. Wikimedia has no role in selecting these editors or administrators, as they are elected by the Wikipedia community based on their experience and contributions.

What effect will loss of safe-harbour status have?

Wikipedia has earned its reputation for reliability through its democratic structure, which allows anonymous editing without fear of retaliation, and by enforcing a policy against original research. Any judicial or legislative intervention requiring the disclosure of editor information, including administrators, could harm the platform's reputation. It may discourage future editors, who could be concerned about reprisals or uncertain legal interpretations of Wikipedia's operations in India.



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Adani group loans: Indian lenders kick off a review

ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT

CONTEXT: Indian banks are reviewing their Adani exposure and whether they need to tighten due diligence, after the group's billionaire founder Gautam Adani was indicted by U.S. authorities over an alleged \$ 265 million bribery scheme.

Adani Group's listed stocks, which had lost \$ 34 billion in market value, have started to recover as some partners and investors showed support. While State Bank of India (SBI) will continue lending to Adani projects nearing completion, it will exercise caution to ensure all terms are met. Other banks with smaller exposures, including Bank of India, Union Bank, ICICI Bank, Canara Bank, IDBI Bank, and RBL Bank, are taking similar precautions. A regulatory source stated that no bank is excessively exposed to Adani, and there is no cause for concern within the banking system.

Adani Group received public support from Abu Dhabi's International Holding, which reaffirmed its commitment to investing in the conglomerate. Shares of Adani Green Energy, the company involved in bribery allegations, rose by 10 % on Thursday, reaching the maximum gain limit for the second consecutive day. Adani Energy also saw a 10 % increase.



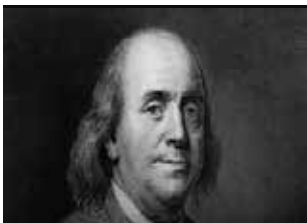
CCI launches probe into Google on real money gaming platform WinZO's complaint

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has ordered an investigation into Google following an allegation of anti-competitive conduct favouring specific firms raised by the real money gaming platform WinZO, that offers a suite of pay-to-win games like rummy, ludo as well as fantasy sports.

WinZO criticized Google Play's policy of only allowing rummy and fantasy games on its app marketplace, claiming it benefits a small number of large players and distorts the market. The policy, part of a pilot launched by Google, currently limits real money gaming apps to rummy and fantasy sports providers like Dream11, which WinZO argued disadvantages its platform, as it offers a wider range of games. Google did not immediately respond to inquiries regarding the Competition Commission of India's (CCI) order.

WinZO has also taken legal action against Google in the Delhi High Court, complaining about browser warnings when users install its apps on Android devices. Additionally, WinZO alleged that Google Pay wrongly flags transactions as suspicious when users load money into WinZO wallets, which it sees as anti-competitive behavior. The Competition Commission of India (CCI) is investigating the matter, with a final decision pending after hearings. In 2022, the CCI fined Google ₹2,273 crore for violating competition laws in its dealings with phone makers and the design of Google Play.



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—Benjamin Franklin

Govt unveils first round of offshore mineral auction

ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT

CONTEXT: The Government unveiled the first round of auction of mineral blocks in offshore areas with 13 mines — three lime mud, three construction sand and seven polymetallic nodules and crusts — being put on sale.

The exploration of these offshore blocks will strengthen the country's mineral wealth as part of the Critical Minerals Mission. The allocation will ensure India's foray into exploration and development of undersea mineral resources within its offshore areas. These minerals are critical for infrastructure development, high-tech manufacturing and green energy transition. Offshore areas include territorial waters, continental shelf, exclusive economic zone and other maritime zones of the country.

U.S. targets scrap as it looks to close the critical minerals gap

ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT

CONTEXT: The Longhorn tin smelter plant in Texas, built with federal funds in 1942 to reduce the country's import dependency closed in 1991.

Tin remains a critical metal, especially for circuit-board soldering, and the U.S. is looking to reduce its reliance on imports, which currently make up 75 % of its annual consumption. With no domestic mines or active reserves, the U.S. aims to close the import gap through increased recycling. The Department of Defence has awarded \$ 19 million to Nathan Trotter & Co. to expand domestic recycling capacity and recover more of the 38,000 metric tons of tin scrap exported annually. Recycling, or urban mining, is seen as a key component of achieving critical minerals self-sufficiency. Urban mining, or recycling metals, offers several advantages



over primary mining, including lower costs and significantly reduced energy consumption, requiring up to 90 % less energy for metals like aluminium. It is also much more environmentally friendly, emitting 80% less greenhouse gas. Expanding domestic recycling capacity can reduce the need for new mining projects, with a shorter permitting process. While recycling won't fully replace new mines, it could reduce global demand for new mining by 25-40 % by 2050, according to the IEA, though its full potential has yet to be realized.

The share of secondary supply of copper in global demand has decreased from 37 % in 2015 to 33 % in 2023, while recycled nickel fell from 33 % to 26 %. In contrast, aluminium saw an increase in recycled supply, rising from 32 % to 35 %, due to strong waste management programs and regulations. However, the U.S. lags behind, with secondary copper accounting for only 30 % of its consumption, below the global average. The U.S. is also the largest exporter of copper and aluminium scrap, much of which is sent to China.

The main issue is the decline in U.S. scrap processing capacity, especially for handling old materials that require detailed sorting before being recycled. The U.S. also lacks an efficient collection system for recycling. For example, the recycling rate for aluminium cans, which are easy to recycle, is below 50 %, resulting in \$ 800 million worth of valuable resources being sent to landfills annually—almost enough to build a new primary smelter.

Battery challenge

Recycling EV batteries presents unique challenges, particularly with the growing use of lithium-iron-phosphate (LFP) batteries, which now make up around 40 % of the global market. Unlike batteries with valuable metals like nickel and cobalt, LFP batteries have low-value core metals, making recycling economically less attractive. This may require alternative pricing models, such as toll-based recycling. Additionally, a global regulatory framework for recycling EV batteries is still being developed, with significant variation in waste codes for black mass across different countries and regions.

China currently dominates the middle processing stage of the metal supply chain, particularly in the recycling of spent batteries. This creates a potential dependency for Western countries. The IEA report suggests that many challenges in recycling, including for EV batteries, can be addressed with the right policies at both national and international levels. A successful recycling model is demonstrated by the lead-acid battery industry, which has recycling rates as high as 99 % in developed countries like the U.S. and Europe. This high recycling rate reduces the need for new lead mines.

BOJ's retreat from low rates heightens Japan's debt troubles

ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT



CONTEXT: The Bank of Japan's retreat from a decade-long radical stimulus is pressuring the government to rethink big ticket spending packages with additional debt, a challenge made more daunting by political demands for permanent tax breaks.

Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba's administration plans to spend 13.9 trillion yen (\$ 92 billion) for a package of steps to cushion the blow from rising living costs, funded by this year's supplementary budget to be finalised on Friday. Mr. Ishiba's ruling coalition is also seen swallowing opposition party demands for permanent tax breaks, which analysts say may slash next year's tax revenues by 4 trillion yen. Such steps would come in the wake of the BOJ's exit from ultra-low interest rates, which increases

the cost of funding Japan's 1,100-trillion-yen debt pile—the biggest among advanced nations and nearly double the size of its economy.

Contrary to other advanced nations that had phased out pandemic-mode stimulus, Japan continues to compile big spending packages thanks in part to still-low interest rates. But Japan can no longer rely on the BOJ to keep borrowing costs low as it ditched its yield cap in March, laid out a plan to taper bond purchases and signalled its resolve to keep hiking short-term rates from the current 0.25 %.

Japan is expected to spend 27 trillion yen, or 24 % of this year's total budget, on debt-servicing costs. While the 10-year bond yield is well below the 2.1 % the ministry used to craft this year's budget, the cost could balloon if bond yields spike.

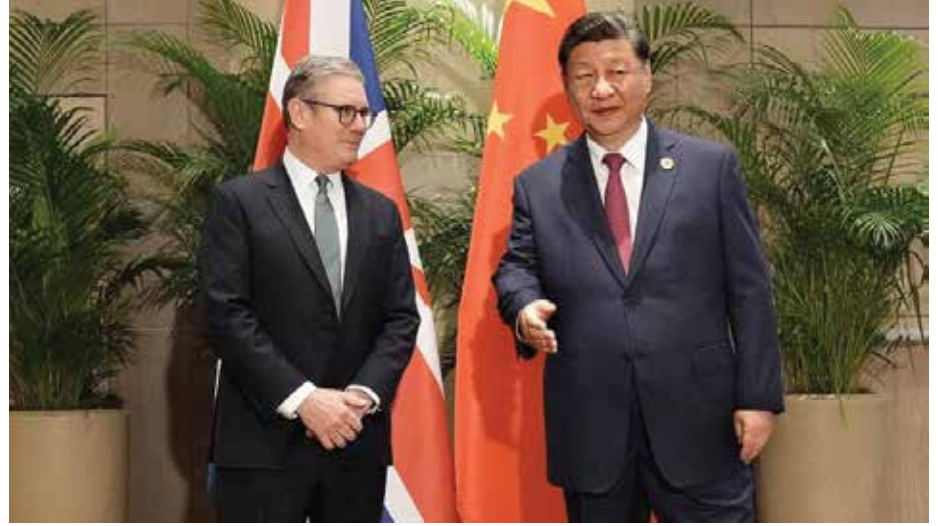
An advertisement for Vedhik IAS Academy. It features a smiling woman with long brown hair in the foreground, wearing a plaid shirt over a red top. In the background, there is a blurred image of a classroom or lecture hall. The Vedhik IAS Academy logo, which consists of a red spiral, is positioned to the right of the woman. Below the logo, the text reads "VEDHIK IAS ACADEMY" and "The New Learning Mantra". A white box with black text says "Comprehensive Coaching For 568 Government Jobs". At the bottom, the website address "www.vedhikiasacademy.org" is displayed.

Britain charts tricky trade course as Trump threatens tariffs

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONTEXT: Britain will aim to convince Donald Trump its services-dominated trade with the United States should escape the worst of tariffs even as it cautiously repairs ties with the European Union and nurtures commercial links with China.

Mr. Trump has proposed blanket tariffs of 10 % to 20 % on imports, including big tariffs on Canada, Mexico, and China. This poses a challenge for Britain's trade-dependent economy, particularly after Brexit strained its relations with the European Union, its largest trade partner. Despite the U.S. and UK both reporting trade surpluses with each other due to different statistical methods, Britain relies heavily on services, not goods, for exports to the U.S., which



may shield it from Trump's tariffs targeting manufactured items. Business Secretary Jonathan Reynolds emphasized Britain's commitment to advocating for free trade with the U.S. while addressing trade barriers with the EU. However, a Trump adviser suggested Britain may have to choose between strengthening ties with the U.S. or the EU.

Ruled out

Britain has ruled out rejoining the EU's single market or customs union but seeks to "reset" its relationship with the EU, aiming to negotiate a new veterinary agreement to reduce border checks. Liam Byrne, chair of the business and trade committee, argued that balancing ties with the U.S., EU, and China is crucial. While pursuing closer EU ties might hinder a full Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the U.S., Byrne believes sectoral agreements could be more effective in avoiding tariffs. Over 40 % of British exports go to the EU, compared to 22 % to the U.S. Both the UK and the EU view the new Labour government's approach as constructive, though discussions, especially on youth mobility and agricultural standards, are expected to be challenging. Reynolds emphasized that a deal on reducing farm and fish product checks was possible due to similar agricultural standards, but an FTA with the U.S. would face significant hurdles due to agricultural disagreements.

Hasina slams Yunus govt., seeks release of ISKCON's Chinmoy Das

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



CONTEXT: Awami League leader and former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina on Thursday called for the release of a Hindu monk arrested by the authorities in Bangladesh 'without delay'.

Ms. Hasina condemned the murder of an assistant public prosecutor during communal clashes in Chittagong and urged the people of Bangladesh to unite against the Mohammad Yunus-led interim government. She also called for the immediate release of a leader from the Sanatan religious community who was unjustly arrested. Hasina condemned the burning of a temple in Chittagong and the attacks on various religious sites, including mosques, churches, and Ahmadiyya community properties. She

emphasized the need to protect religious freedom and the security of all communities' lives and property.

Chinmoy Krishna Das, a prominent leader of the Bangladesh Sommilito Sanatani Jagran Jote and ISKCON in Bangladesh, was arrested on Tuesday for allegedly disrespecting the national flag during a protest in Chittagong. His arrest, along with the denial of bail, sparked a clash between his supporters and the police, which resulted in the murder of an assistant public prosecutor.

Ms. Hasina condemned the killing of a lawyer in Chittagong and called for justice for victims of similar assaults over the past three months. She warned that the Yunus government, which she accused of seizing power unconstitutionally, would face consequences for human rights violations if it failed to punish those responsible. Hasina also criticized the Yunus government for economic failures, including its inability to control the prices of essential goods and provide security for citizens, condemning both direct and indirect assaults on the public.

Why Netanyahu accepted a ceasefire with Hezbollah

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONTEXT: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accepted a ceasefire with Hezbollah, bringing a temporary respite in the region.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu launched a military invasion of Lebanon on October 1, aiming to allow over 60,000 displaced Israelis to return home after Hezbollah rocket attacks. However, nearly two months later, he accepted a ceasefire with Hezbollah. The agreement includes Hezbollah withdrawing its troops and weapons north of the Litani River, while Israel pulls its forces from southern Lebanon. The Lebanese Army will monitor the ceasefire. Israel reserves the right to resume fighting if Hezbollah violates the terms or re-arms itself. The future of the displaced residents remains uncertain.

Three reasons

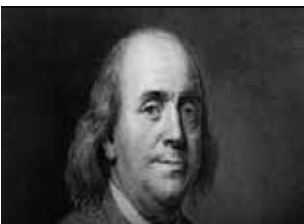
Prime Minister Netanyahu provided three reasons for accepting a ceasefire with Hezbollah: to shift focus towards Iran, to resupply Israeli forces facing fatigue from the two-front war, and to isolate Hamas in Gaza. Israel had dealt significant blows to Hezbollah, including attacks on its rank and file using pager and walkie-talkie explosions, and heavy bombings targeting Hezbollah's senior leadership, including Hassan Nasrallah. Hezbollah strongholds in south Beirut and villages in southern Lebanon were also bombed.

Israel managed to separate Hezbollah's actions in Lebanon from the conflict in Gaza. Initially, Hezbollah launched rockets into Israel in October 2023 in solidarity with Palestinians. Former Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah had previously stated that the group would only declare a ceasefire if Israel did the same in Gaza. However, Hezbollah agreed to a ceasefire in exchange for Israel's ceasefire and withdrawal from Lebanon, while Israel continued its war in Gaza.

Israel did not achieve its objectives in Lebanon. Despite two months of fighting, Israeli troops made limited territorial gains and failed to significantly weaken Hezbollah's rocket capabilities. On November 24, just before the ceasefire, Hezbollah launched over 250 rockets into Israel, hitting high-security targets, including Prime Minister Netanyahu's private residence and a military base in Binyamina.

Heat of war

Israel faced heavy casualties in Lebanon, losing around 35 soldiers in October. Unlike the situation in Gaza, where Hamas operates as a loose insurgency, Israel encountered intense resistance in Lebanon. The U.S. also pressured Israel over its actions in Lebanon. The current ceasefire is based on UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which called for a full Israeli withdrawal and disarmament of Hezbollah. While Israel withdrew in 2006, Hezbollah grew stronger. Although Hezbollah has been weakened, it remains a powerful force, and relying on the Lebanese army to enforce the ceasefire seems unrealistic given past failures. Mr. Netanyahu may present the ceasefire as a victory, but the situation on the ground suggests otherwise.



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—Benjamin Franklin

Bushra Bibi emerges as a protest figure, defending jailed husband Imran Khan

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Bushra Bibi, the wife of jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan, has emerged as a prominent figure in Pakistan's political turmoil. Previously shielded from public view and assumed to be non-political, Bushra Bibi has recently stepped up to defend her husband, rallying his supporters. Her actions have surprised many, as it was expected that she would not pose a political threat. The protests led by Imran Khan's party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), brought Islamabad to a halt, with 10,000 supporters defying government bans. The unrest resulted in nearly 1,000 arrests and the deaths of five security forces members.

First direct appeal

In the days leading up to the protest, Bushra Bibi, the wife of jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan, made her first direct appeal to PTI supporters, urging them to defend her husband. She gained attention by appearing on top of a truck during the clashes between protesters and security forces, rallying the crowd with a passionate promise to stay until Khan's return. Pakistan's Interior Minister blamed her for the chaos. A faith healer, Bushra Bibi married Khan in 2018, and her relationship with him lends her credibility among protesters. She was arrested before February's elections over corruption and breaking Islamic law.

Bushra Bibi's prominent role in the PTI protests has sparked internal divisions within the party, as some leaders clash with her influence. While her involvement helps mobilize supporters, it has also caused controversy, including her recent criticism of Saudi Arabia, forcing the party to backtrack. Bibi encouraged protesters to march to the capital's center, despite prior agreements to stay on the outskirts. Imran Khan downplayed her political influence, stating she only transmits his messages, with the PTI media department also emphasizing that she led the protest as his wife, not as a political leader.

Family politics

Bushra Bibi's increased political involvement has drawn comparisons to other women in Pakistan's politics, like Benazir Bhutto and Maryam Nawaz Sharif, who rose to prominence amid family turmoil. While many admire Bibi's courage, her active role in the protests poses a challenge for Imran Khan, especially with his sister Aleema also gaining influence within PTI. Khan, seen as an outsider challenging Pakistan's dynastic politics, must navigate the complexities of family involvement in politics as it could impact his image.

Trump claims win on illegal immigration with Mexico

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CONTEXT: U.S. President-elect Donald Trump declared a win on stopping illegal immigration through Mexico on Wednesday after talking with that country's leader.

In a conversation between U.S. President Trump and Mexico's Claudia Sheinbaum, Trump threatened new tariffs on Canada and Mexico to address illegal immigration and drug issues. He claimed Sheinbaum agreed to stop migration through Mexico, though she clarified that Mexico is already managing migrant caravans. Sheinbaum emphasized that Mexico's stance is to foster cooperation, not close its borders. Despite the uncertainty of the tariffs, Trump framed the exchange as a success, using the threat of tariffs as a strategic tool to influence policy and financial markets.

U.S. President Trump threatened new tariffs on Canada and Mexico to combat illegal immigration and drug issues. He claimed Mexican leader Claudia Sheinbaum agreed to stop migration through Mexico, but Sheinbaum clarified that Mexico is already managing migrant caravans and emphasized cooperation over closing borders. Despite the tariff uncertainty, Trump portrayed the threat as a success, using it as a policy tool to influence both government actions and financial markets.

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The Dhanush-Nayanthara dispute and copyright law

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

CONTEXT: The copyright infringement suit initiated by South Indian actor and producer Dhanush against his peer Nayanthara could fall into either of these categories: a wilful attempt to threaten someone that one dislikes or an action arising out of ignorance of the framework of copyright law.

What is the Dhanush-Nayanthara controversy?

In 2022, Nayanthara married director Vignesh Shivan, who directed the 2015 film Naanum Rowdy Dhaan, produced by Dhanush's company. When Netflix planned to make a biopic on Nayanthara's life, it sought permission to use excerpts from the film. However, Nayanthara claimed she received no response from Dhanush after requesting permission two years ago. As a result, Netflix decided to use a short video clip Nayanthara had filmed herself during the movie's production. Dhanush responded with a lawsuit over the unauthorized use of the clip.

How are films copyrighted?

The legal complexities surrounding the use of a video clip from the film Naanum Rowdy Dhaan in Nayanthara's biopic raises two main questions: (1) which copyrighted work has been infringed and who owns the copyright, and (2) whether a copyright owner has absolute control over the use of their work. Since a film is made up of various copyrightable components, the producer may not own all rights. In this case, no part of the original film was used, suggesting that the producer's rights were likely not violated. Additionally, even if the producer holds the copyright, Indian copyright law allows for certain exceptions, such as fair use, which may allow the use of copyrighted material without infringement.

What is 'fair dealing'?

The concept of "fair dealing" under Section 52(1)(a) of Indian copyright law, which allows certain uses of copyrighted material if deemed fair. A court considers factors like the extent and context of the use when determining fairness. In this case, the use of a video clip in a biopic about Nayanthara, which is related to her life and films, may be seen as essential. The passage also mentions that movie producers may control behind-the-scenes (BTS) footage through contracts, but these contracts must be legally valid. Courts should avoid unjustified copyright claims, especially given that infringements could have criminal consequences.



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