

## 1. Kingmaker to Casualty: The Fall of Jagmeet Singh

### Why now?



Jagmeet Singh, Canada's first non-White leader of a major federal party, has resigned after a devastating electoral defeat. His New Democratic Party (NDP) plummeted from 25 seats to just 7, losing official party status. Singh's political future is now uncertain.

His departure may open the door for a reset in India-Canada relations, which had deteriorated under Justin Trudeau — in part due to Singh's perceived support for Sikh separatist elements.

### A Symbol of Diversity and Controversy

When Singh became NDP leader in 2017, he was hailed as a milestone in Canadian politics — a practising Sikh, the first turban-wearing Member of Provincial Parliament in Ontario, and the first non-Christian to lead a major party.

While he helped Trudeau's minority government deliver major social reforms like universal dental care and pharmacare, Singh also became closely associated with pro-Khalistan elements, regularly criticizing India.

### Tensions with India

- In 2013, India denied him a visa over remarks on the 1984 anti-Sikh riots.
- He amplified Trudeau's 2023 claim that India was linked to the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar.
- Singh called for diplomatic sanctions on India and a ban on the RSS in Canada.
- His stance contributed to the breakdown in New Delhi–Ottawa relations.

### Why the NDP Lost in 2025

Several key factors led to the party's collapse and Singh's personal defeat in Burnaby Central:

#### 1. Association with an Unpopular Government

Singh's alliance with Trudeau blurred the NDP's identity, tying it to a fading administration.

#### 2. Khalistan Controversy

His support for Sikh separatists alienated moderate voters and much of the Indian diaspora.

#### 3. Violence and Diaspora Tensions

Clashes in cities like Toronto and Vancouver created unease about importing sectarian unrest into Canada.

#### 4. Nationalism vs. Trump

Trump's aggressive rhetoric toward Canada spurred a nationalist wave. Voters flocked to the Liberals and Conservatives, leaving little space for smaller parties.

## 5. Abandonment of Working-Class Issues

Singh's focus on foreign interference and identity politics distanced the NDP from its working-class roots. Economic issues like inflation and housing were overlooked.

### What Comes Next?

Singh's resignation removes a vocal supporter of Khalistan politics from Canada's political center. Prime Minister Mark Carney, signaling a desire to rebuild ties with India, may now face fewer domestic hurdles.

### The NDP's Crossroads

To remain relevant, the NDP must:

- Reconnect with its working-class base.
- Undertake grassroots outreach.
- Refocus on economic and local issues over identity politics.

Carney, however, still lacks a majority in the 343-seat House of Commons and may need cross-party support for key legislation.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains paper II; International Relations

Source: Indian Express

## 2. Caste Census Approved by Cabinet

### Why Now?



### Caste enumeration to be part of upcoming population census, announces Union govt

The Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs (CCPA) has approved caste enumeration in the forthcoming population census, said Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw.

The Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the inclusion of caste enumeration in the upcoming Census.

### Background: A Long-Standing Demand

Since 1951, Indian Censuses have recorded data on Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and religious groups — but not on other caste categories.

The last comprehensive caste data was collected in the 1931 Census. Though caste data was gathered in 1941, it was never published.

After independence, successive governments avoided caste-based enumeration, despite repeated demands, especially from parties representing Other Backward Classes (OBCs), such as the RJD, SP, and DMK.

### From Census to SECC: A Shift in Approach

#### The 2011 Census Debate

In 2010, Law Minister Veerappa Moily proposed caste data collection for the 2011 Census. However, the Census Commissioner rejected the idea, citing logistical issues.

Home Minister P. Chidambaram explained in Parliament that Census enumerators were not trained to verify caste claims and that such data collection posed practical difficulties.

### **SECC 2011**

Under political pressure, the UPA government launched a separate Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) in 2011.

- Conducted after the regular Census
- Cost: Nearly ₹4,900 crore
- Caste data was never officially released
- The raw data was handed to the Ministry of Social Justice, which appointed an expert group for classification, but the report remains unpublished

### **Recent Political Momentum**

Leading up to the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, most political parties, including Congress and even the BJP in Bihar, supported a caste census.

Congress, under Rahul Gandhi, highlighted the underrepresentation of OBCs in government leadership.

While Congress gained significantly in the polls (99 seats, up from 52), the BJP lost its single-party majority and suffered setbacks in key states.

Several states have started their own caste-based surveys, calling them "surveys" to avoid legal and constitutional issues, since Census is a central subject.

### **Past Resistance by Centre**

In April 2021, the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) recommended the inclusion of OBC data in the Census.

However, in July 2021, the central government told Parliament that it had decided not to collect caste-wise data beyond SCs and STs.

Several petitions demanding a caste census are currently pending in the Supreme Court.

### **What's Next?**

The 2021 Census, delayed due to COVID-19, is yet to be scheduled.

The Census has two parts:

- House Listing and Housing Census
- Population Enumeration

The questionnaire was already finalised, and the Registrar General's tenure was extended till August 2026, indicating preparation is underway.

Implications

- Census data will influence delimitation of constituencies, scheduled post-2026
- Women's reservation in legislatures also depends on fresh Census and delimitation
- A caste census may strengthen demands for:
  - Expanded reservations
  - Sub-categorisation within OBCs

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

Source: The Hindu

### 3. Raghuji Bhonsle's sword returned

#### Why in News?



The Maharashtra government reclaimed the iconic sword of Maratha warrior Raje Raghuji Bhonsle I at an auction in London for Rs 47.15 lakh. Raghuji Bhonsle was ruler of Nagpur kingdom, one of the kingdoms in the Maratha Confederacy.

#### What are the features of the sword?

The spine of the sword is inlaid in gold with an inscription in Devanagari script. The inscription reads Shrimant Raghuji Bhosale Sena Saheb Subah Firang, suggesting that the sword could be ceremonial.

Sena Saheb Subah was a title of high military rank that was associated with the Maratha Empire, and would be usually conferred by the Chhatrapatis of Satara. The person receiving the title would also get a sword and robe.

This particular sword is likely a gift from Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj to Raghuji Raje Bhonsle who was conferred with the title of Sena Saheb Subah.

Relevance: GS Prelims; Miscellaneous

Source: Indian Express

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