CASE LAW UPDATES

Top 10 Supreme Court Judgments of November 2025

Julie Nigam · 26 Aug 2026

Read about Top 10 Supreme Court Judgment of November 2025 dealing with arrest safeguards, environmental protection, tribunal independence, judicial service, legislative bills and criminal investigation. These decisions show how law evolves in a changing society. The court did so through constitutional interpretation, statutory construction and article 142 directions.

Grounds of arrest must be meaningfully communicated - Mihir Rajesh Shah v. State of Maharashtra (2025 INSC 1288)

Facts

The case arose from a fatal BMW accident in Mumbai. The accused challenged his arrest and remand because the police had not supplied grounds of arrest in writing. The issue involved Article 22(1) and section 47 of Bhartiya Nayaya Suraksha Sanhita, 2023.

Issue

Whether the grounds of arrest must be communicated in writing in every case, and whether failure to do so makes the arrest and remand illegal.

Judgment

- The court held that the grounds must be communicated in a language the arrested person understands. Mere reading out charges or reasons for arrest verbally does not satisfy constitutional requirements.
- They should be supplied in writing within a reasonable time and at least two hours before the production before the magistrate. In urgency, oral communication may precede written communication.

- Failing to provide these written grounds violates fundamental rights articles 21 and 22(1) of the constitution.

Suspicion cannot replace proof - Surendra Koli v. State of Uttar Pradesh (2025 INSC 1308)

Facts

Surendra Koli was the last accused convicted in the Nithari killings. His conviction relied on circumstantial evidence, a confession and alleged recoveries, while accused persons in connected cases based on similar evidence had been acquitted.

Issue

Whether a conviction could be sustained when the investigation contained serious gaps, the confession was doubtful and identical evidence had acquitted accused's in connected cases.

Judgment

- The Supreme court used curative jurisdiction and acquitted Koli. It found Koli's confession under section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1937 as legally unsustainable.
- The court said that he has been acquitted by the high court in 12 companion cases arising from the same incident and same evidence.
- The Bench ruled that keeping him convicted in a 13th case on exact same evidence would create an irreconcilable outcome. This will be miscarriage of justice violating article 14 & 21 of the constitution.
- This ruling reinforces the presumption of innocence and proof beyond reasonable doubt, while showing how poor investigation can harm the accused and victims.

Protection of Environment is the Fundamental Duty of Constitution - In Re: Sarandra Wildlife Sanctuary

Facts

The Sarendra forest in Jharkhand is a large sal first and wildlife corridor. Although an earlier notification treated it as a game sanctuary, the state had not provided effective protection under the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**. Mining and habitat damage were also concerns.

Issue

Whether the state could indefinitely delay the declaration and protection of the Saranda Forest despite its ecological importance and the existence of statutory duties.

Judgment

- The supreme court of India issued a mandamus directing the State of Jharkhand to formally notify approx 314 sq. km of the Saranda forest as a wildlife sanctuary under section 26A of the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**.
- It ruled that the state is statutorily and constitutionally bound to protect the entire 314 sq. km area designated as the **Saranda Game Sanctuary** in 1968.
- The court rejected the Jharkhand government's attempts to downsize the protected area.
- The judgment applies the **public trust principle** i.e. natural resources are held for present and future generations, and protection cannot depend on administrative convenience.

Restoration after ecological damage - In Re: Corbett Tiger Reserve

Facts

- The court had earlier examined illegal construction, tree felling and tiger-safari concerns in Corbett. Over 3,000 to 6,000 trees were unlawfully cleared within the **Corbett Tiger Reserve (CTR)** in Uttrakhand, disrupting critical wildlife habitats.
- Government bureaucrats and the former forest Minister of Uttarakhand bypassed environmental clearances to launch the commercial Pakhrau Tiger Safari project.
- Seeing this ecological degradation, the Supreme court established an expert committee to study the damage, restoration and governance of safaris.

Issues

What measures should be adopted to prevent ecological damage and regulate tourism and conservation activity in tiger reserves.

Judgment

- The supreme court strictly prohibited any tiger safari operations within core or critical tiger habitats across India. The state of Uttarakhand was ordered to completely demolish all unauthorised structures within 3 months.
- The court mandated all state governments to strictly map and notify eco-sensitive zones surrounding national tiger reserves, to establish landscape safeguards against industrial expansion.
- The court also banned all evening & night tourism and introduced restrictions on private resorts within a 5km radius. This includes strict policies regarding garbage management and noise control. The court directly linked the healthy environment to Article 21.

Review and judicial discipline in environmental law - CREDAI v. Vanshakti

Facts

- In May 2025, a two-judge bench of the supreme court in *Vanshakti v. UOI* struck down a 2017 executive notification and a 2021 office memorandum. These government frameworks previously permitted projects to receive retrospective environmental clearances even if they commenced without securing prior mandatory authorisation.
- The **Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India (CREDAI)** and other review petitioners moved a review petition. They argued that the two-judge bench completely overlooked crucial binding precedents. They also emphasised that strict demolition would result in exceptional public welfare loss and extreme economic penalties.

Issue

Whether the earlier decision should be recalled and whether a bench of the same strength could reconsider the legal position without referring the matter to a larger bench.

Judgment

- The Supreme court recalled and reviewed its own Vanashakti judgement, and restored the matters for fresh consideration. The Court ruled that the **Environment Protection Act (EPA), 1986** does not entirely prohibit granting environmental clearances after a project has already started construction. It also held that projects built without prior approval cannot simply walk free. They must face heavy fines, strict penalties and rigorous environmental damage assessments to fix any harm done.
- The majority opinion concluded that the earlier May 2025 judgment was *per incuriam* which means rendered through lack of care.
- Justice Bhuyan emphasized that the Precautionary Principle is the foundation of environmental law. This means environmental damage must be prevented before it begins. Justice Ujjal Bhuyan strongly dissented from the decision, as he believed that allowing retrospective ECs is a ‘step in retrogression’ that damages India’s environmental laws.

Landmark Supreme Court Judgments November 2025

Case	Issue	Held
1 **Chandan Pasi v. State of Bihar**	Whether fair trial under Section 313 CrPC was violated by recording improper and selective copies of the accused's statements.	Court held the trial unfair. Conviction was set aside and fresh statements of the accused were directed to be recorded.
2 **Mission Accessibility v. UOI**	Whether UPSC can be directed to allow scribe changes up to 7 days before the exam for persons with benchmark disabilities.	Court directed UPSC to allow scribe changes up to 7 days before the exam and provide assistive technology to ensure equality and non-discrimination.
3 **AB v. XY**	Whether a woman can recover gold and cash from her ex-husband under Article 21 despite final divorce and settlement.	Court allowed recovery of gold and cash. Adopted a purposive approach and linked security with the right to life under Article 21.
4 **State of Karnataka v. Taghar Vasudeva Ambrish**	Whether GST applies to the property retained by a promoter as a residential dwelling.	Court held GST does not apply. Retained property retains its character as a residential dwelling based on actual use.
5 **Dr. Sohail Malik v. UOI**	Whether ICC of a victim's organisation can conduct fact-finding inquiries across departments, including the accused's department.	Court held ICC can conduct fact-finding even across departments. Disciplinary action remains with the accused's employer.
6 **State of U.P. v. Ajmal Beg**	Whether poverty can be a ground to avoid punishment for dowry deaths under Section 304B IPC.	Court rejected poverty-based reasoning. Directed stronger enforcement, training, monitoring and awareness.
7 **Kiran v. State of Karnataka**	Whether remission powers can be used to impose life imprisonment until natural death.	Court held it cannot. Life imprisonment cannot be imposed until natural death, excluding remission powers.
8 **State of Karnataka v. Gandlli Jeevan Collective Farming Cooperative Society**	Whether long-term cultivation on forest land can be regularised without central clearance.	Court held it cannot. Long-term use cannot regularise cultivation on forest land. Central Government clearance is required.
9 **M.K. Ranjitsinh v. UOI**	Whether Article 21 includes protection from adverse effects of climate change.	Court held yes. Article 21 includes protection from climate change impacts. Case-by-case assessment replaces blanket undergrounding.
10 **In Re: Definition of Aravalli Hills and Ranges**	Whether the existing definition of Aravalli Hills and Ranges is adequate.	Court constituted an expert committee to reconsider the definition and assess ecological risks.

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Tribunal Independence - Madras Bar Association v. Union of India

Facts

The challenge concurred the Tribunal Reform Act, 2021, which repeated provisions earlier invalidated for giving excessive executive control over tribunal appointments, tenure and service conditions.

Issue

Whether Parliament could re-enact provisions already struck down without curing the constitutional defects identified in the earlier judgements.

Judgement

On 19 November 2025, a Constitutional Bench struck the act. It held that the law undermined judicial independence and separation of powers, and criticised re-enactment without curing earlier defects. It also directed work towards a National Tribunals commission. Independent tribunals are essential when citizens challenge government action.

Uniformity in Higher Judicial Services - All India Judge Association V. Union of Indian (2025 INSC 1328)

Facts

The case concerned seniority among District Judges appointed through regular promotion, Limited Department Competitive Examination and direct recruitment.

Issue

Whether an office entering the same cadre through different channels could be assigned seniority through unequal or inconsistent methods.

Judgement

On 19 November 2025, the five-judge Bench directed an annual four-point roster i.e. two regular promotions, one departmental-examination officer and one direct recruit. It also addressed delayed recruitment and the relevant year for seniority. Predictable seniority supports fair administration and an independent, efficient subordinate judiciary.

Limits on Judicial Timelines - In Re: Assent, withholding or Reservation of Bills

Facts

The President referred questions on powers of Governors and President under Article 200 and 201, after an earlier judgement prescribed timelines for dealing with State Bills.

Issue

Whether courts can prescribe fixed time limits, create deemed assent or review the merits of a governor's or President's decision regarding a bill.

Judgement

On 20 November 2025, the Bench held that these functions are generally not reviewable on merits. Courts cannot create deemed assent or impose rigid timelines absent constitutional text. Yet prolonged, unexplained inaction may justify a limited mandamus requiring action without dictating the results. The opinion balances federalism, accountability and separation of powers.

Respect for binding precedent - Rohan Vijay Nahar v. State of Maharashtra

Facts

The case concerned a decision that failed to follow binding Supreme court authority and effect of such judicial disagreement.

Issue

Can a court avoid a binding precedent because it prefers a different interpretation, and what is the effect of such disregard on the legal system?

Judgement

The court held that the judge must follow binding precedents unless the matter is properly referred for reconsideration. Disregarding precedent creates uncertainty, increases costs and damages confidence. Judicial discipline also supports equality because similar cases should ordinarily deceive similar treatment.

Scientific concerns in environmental regulation - In Re: Definition of Aravali hills and ranges

Facts

The court considered the legal definition of the Aravali Hills and Ranges for mining regulation and environmental protection. The court accepted a uniform, scientific definition of Aravalli hills and ranges submitted by a Union Environment Ministry.

Issue

Whether a technical definition based mainly on the height of landforms could adequately protect an ecological connected landscape.

Order

On November 20, 2025, the court accepted the framework and directed a management plan for sustainable mining. Concern arose that a narrow height test could exclude ecologically important areas. The case shows the difficulty of applying objective legal standards to complex ecosystems and the need for scientific material in environment adjudication.

This case was again taken up in December, 2025, where court stayed the earlier guidelines and set up a high-powered expert committee to re-examine the definition, making sure both ecological

connectivity and environmental risks are properly managed

Conclusion

The Supreme court’s November 2025 work covered individual rights and institutional reform.It strengthened arrest safeguards, protected the criminal standard of proof, insisted on precedent tribunal independence, improved judicial-service administration and clarified the limits of judicial power over Bills.

These decisions show how courts help law keep pace with a dynamic society. The court interpreted existing provisions through liberty, equality, accountability, institutional independence and environmental security.