

POLITY

Context: Governors who oppose elected regimes shouldn't leave room for criticism.

About

The fact that two States have petitioned the Supreme Court of India over the actions of their governors highlights the issue of political appointees in Raj Bhavan abusing their power to obstruct or at least postpone the implementation of decisions made by elected regimes.

The Question

- Kerala and Tamil Nadu have expressed concerns about the length of time it takes to ratify laws that the legislature has passed.
- Tamil Nadu is also upset that plans to appoint people to State Public Service Commissions, authorize the prosecution of certain former Ministers, and pardon some of the guilty have not been carried out.
- While they are not required to ratify any decision, governors' practice of stalling bills and decisions particularly in states that are not controlled by the national government may be questioned.
- For example, some governors seem opposed to the very notion of changing university laws if they aim to exclude chancellors who are always the governors themselves from the vice-chancellor selection process or from creating new universities in which governors are not chancellors is the question.
- The concept of Governors serving as ex-officio vice-chancellors at most universities is merely a custom made possible by their original charters.

The errors

- Regrettably, some governors use the lack of an assent deadline to thwart laws that the legislature has passed.
- It would have seemed that the Telangana government's petition, which prompted the Supreme Court to remind constitutional authorities that the word "as soon as possible" appears in Article 200 of the Constitution and contains significant "constitutional content," would have instilled in them a sense of urgency when it came to considering bills.
- The Court intended to say that it would be unconstitutional for governors to hold onto bills indefinitely without making a decision.
- The States should also exercise caution when making decisions and avoid raising issues with the decisions' viability.

Conclusion

One example is the lack of a formal procedure to solicit applications and evaluate the relative merits of candidates prior to designating the chairperson and members of the Tamil Nadu Public Service Commission. The more important thing to remember is that the Constitution's "aid and advice" clause expressly limits the governors' ability to operate, and they should not abuse their discretionary powers.

ECONOMY

Government initiatives and policies for development across a range of sectors, as well as the problems that result from their conception and execution, include universal basic income.

Why in News?

The Work FREE pilot project, which began in Telangana in 2022, has brought attention to the benefits that Universal Basic Income (UBI) can provide for individuals and families.

A Work FREE Pilot Project: What Is It?**About:**

- Funded by the European Research Council, the project is a joint venture between the India Network for Basic Income, the Montfort Social Institute in Hyderabad, and the University of Bath.
- For 18 months, an adult participating in the pilot receives Rs 1,000 and a child receives Rs 500.

- In five Hyderabad slums, 1,250 people are assisted by the pilot program.
- The Work FREE pilot project is portrayed as a game-changing Endeavour, emphasizing the beneficial effects it has had on people and families.
- A number of Telangana residents who suffered from the relocation have found stability in their finances thanks to UBI support. They greatly increased her income by starting a bangle business with the help of the financial support.
- The residents also used the money to pay utility bills, buy groceries, fuel, clothing, and other necessities, which typically make up the majority of their monthly expenses.

Other Similar Pilot Project:

- 2011 saw the implementation of the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) pilot in Madhya Pradesh and Delhi. In Delhi about 100 families who were below the poverty line received Rs 1,000 each month.

What is Universal Basic Income (UBI)?

About

- Universal Basic Income (UBI) is a social welfare program in which all recipients receive an unconditional transfer payment on a regular basis as a guaranteed income.
- A basic income system aims to reduce poverty and take the place of other need-based social programs, which might involve more bureaucracy.
- Generally speaking, UBI is meant to be available to everyone, or a sizable portion of the population, under no, or very few, restrictions.

Advantages:

- **Poverty Alleviation:** This strategy lowers income inequality and poverty by guaranteeing a minimum income floor to all individuals, particularly the most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. Additionally, it can aid in the payment of necessities like food, healthcare, education, and housing.
- **A Health Stimulus:** Reduces stress, anxiety, and depression brought on by poverty and financial instability, thereby improving both physical and mental health. Additionally, it can make better nutrition, hygiene, and health care more accessible to people.
- **Simplified Welfare System:** By substituting different focused social assistance programs, it is possible to simplify the current welfare system. This gets rid of the complications brought on by eligibility requirements, benefit cliffs, and means-testing while also cutting administrative costs.
- **Improving Individual Freedom:** The Universal Basic Income (UBI) gives people more financial security and autonomy to make decisions about their personal, professional, and educational pursuits.
- **Economic Stimulus:** Directly places money in the hands of people to promote consumer spending and propel economic expansion. It can strengthen regional companies, increase consumer demand for products and services, and produce job openings.
- It can encourage people to start their own businesses, take chances, and take part in artistic or charitable endeavors that might not be financially feasible otherwise.

Drawbacks

- **Cost and Fiscal Sustainability:** In order to finance Universal Basic Income (UBI), additional taxes, spending reductions or debt would be necessary. Inflation, labor market distortions, and slower economic growth are further potential effects.
- **Generates Inverse Motivations:** decreases efficiency and productivity as well as the desire to work. Additionally, it might foster a culture of apathy, entitlement, and dependency. It might also deter people from obtaining training, education, and skills.

- Pressures Associated with Inflation: It might exacerbate inflationary pressures. If everyone gets a set amount of money, companies may raise the prices of goods and services in order to take advantage of the extra revenue that is available in the market.
- **Possibility of Dependency:** There's a chance that some people will grow accustomed to receiving the basic income and become dependent on it, which could lower their motivation to pursue personal and professional development.

Which other options exist for Universal Basic Income?

- **Quasi-UBRI:** A variation of universal basic income (UBI) is a cash transfer that is given to all people, without conditions. In order to address agrarian distress, the former Chief Economic Adviser suggested giving a direct monetary transfer of Rs. 18,000 annually to every rural household in India, with the exception of those who are "demonstrably well-off."
- **Transfers of Direct Benefits (DBT):** This program avoids using middlemen or in-kind transfers by sending subsidies or cash straight to the recipients' bank accounts. DBT seeks to lessen corruption and leaks while enhancing the effectiveness, accountability, and transparency of welfare delivery.
- Programs like Pradhanmantri Jan Dhan Yojana and PM Kisan are excellent illustrations of DBT's effectiveness.
- **Conditional Cash Transfers (CCT):** This program gives low-income households cash in exchange for meeting specific obligations, like having their kids vaccinated, attending school, or going to checkups. CCT seeks to encourage behavioral change while also enhancing the poor's human capital and long-term results.
- **Additional Income Support Programs:** These are programs that give financial or in-kind support to particular populations in need, like women, farmers, the elderly, the disabled, etc. These programs seek to empower and include these groups while addressing the unique vulnerabilities and difficulties they face.
- **Employment Guarantee Schemes:** The MGNREGA is a successful example of one such scheme currently in place in India. These programs give rural households a written guarantee of work for a predetermined number of days each year. It is possible to guarantee that people have access to employment opportunities and can support themselves by growing and improving such programs.
- **Universal Basic Services:** India should place more emphasis on offering basic services like clean water, sanitary facilities, healthcare, and education than on establishing a universal basic income. Through guaranteeing that every citizen has access to these services, the government can raise living standards generally and lessen inequality.

The Way Ahead

- Care should be taken to balance the amount given so as not to discourage recipients from working while also supporting them. Strong support systems are recommended as supplementary actions to increase the efficacy of UBI, such as universal healthcare and education.
- Even though UBI principles are upheld by these programs, like cash transfers, there is a chance that potential beneficiaries may be left out because they frequently target particular demographics.
- The introduction of universal basic income (UBI) is recommended as a more effective way to lessen financial misallocation and leakages in current welfare programs.

PRELIM FACTS

1. Adaptation Gap Report 2023 released by United Nations Environment Programme

Context: Adaptation is the process of reducing a country's or community's susceptibility to climate change by enhancing their ability to absorb its impacts.

The adaptation gap is the disparity between actual adaptation and social goals.

- It is determined by preferences connected to the effects of climate change, as well as resource constraints and conflicting agendas.

Key highlights of the report

- Adaptation financing requirements are 10-18 times more than existing public flows.
- The adaptation funding gap is growing, now standing at US\$194-366 billion per year.
- Noneconomic losses such as cultural heritage and indigenous knowledge have been disregarded in the loss and damage action plan.
- Only 2% of international adaptation financing with a gender tag is gender responsive.

Recommendations

- By 2025, developed countries should double their climate adaptation funding from 2019.
- Increase budget labeling and tracking in order to include adaptation into budget planning.
- Increase private investment through measures such as resilience bonds and insurance.
- Leverage remittances, which frequently contribute significantly to GDP.
- Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are being financed in order to encourage them to develop adaptation-relevant products and services.
- Implementation of Article 2.1(c) of the Paris Agreement, with the goal of coordinating financial flows with a low-carbon, climate-resilient growth path.

2. White hydrogen

- Scientists have discovered a large reservoir of white hydrogen in France.
- White hydrogen is also referred to as “natural,” “gold” or “geologic” hydrogen.
- It is naturally generated within the Earth’s crust through water-rock reactions.
 - Process involves interactions between water molecules and iron-rich minerals, such as olivine, at high temperatures and pressures.
- Potential Applications: in industries like aviation, shipping, and steel production.

3. Russia has withdrawn its ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)

- Russia withdrew from CTBT ratification in order to align with the US.
 - The United States has not ratified the CTBT, claiming difficulties in determining whether or not participating countries follow the Treaty's requirements.
- CTBT prohibits all nuclear explosions, whether military or benign.
- It aims to form the CTBT Organization (CTBTO) to oversee the global prohibition.
- Its verification regime consists of the following elements:
 - International Monitoring System (IMS)
 - International Data Centre (IDC)
 - Inspections on-site
- It was opened for signature in 1996, and has been signed by 187 nations and ratified by 178.
- It is yet to formally enter into force as it requires ratification by 44 specific nations 8 of which yet to do so.
- These included US, India China, Pakistan, North Korea, Israel, Iran, Egypt.
 - India has neither signed nor ratified CTBT because it considers the treaty discriminatory.
 - India calls for universal and complete nuclear disarmament in a time-bound manner.
- Compared to more than 2000 nuclear tests between 1945 and 1996, less than a dozen nuclear tests have been conducted following its adoption

4. Lucy Mission

- NASA's Lucy mission has discovered that the asteroid Dinkinesh is actually a binary system of two asteroids.

- Launched in 2021, Lucy is the first space mission to explore Jupiter Trojan asteroids.
 - Trojans are a group of small bodies (remnants of early solar system) that orbit the Sun in two “swarms” along the orbit of Jupiter.
 - Trojan asteroids are most likely made of same primordial material that led to formation of outer planets (Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune).
- Over its 12 year mission (2021-2023), Lucy will fly past various asteroids like Eurybates, DonaldJohanson, Polymele, Leucus, etc

5.Gundla Brahmeswaram Wildlife Sanctuary (GBWS)

Over 50 grass species were identified during a survey on ‘Grasses Identification and Grassland Management’ at GBWS.

About Gundla Brahmeswaram Wildlife Sanctuary

- It is a protected area, situated between Kurnool and Prakasam districts in Andhra Pradesh.
- Lies between two hill passes known as "Mantralamma kanuma" and "Nandi kanuma".
- Immediately to the north of this sanctuary is Nagarjunasagar Srisailem Tiger Reserve.
- Gundlakamma River flows through it.
- Forest Type: Dry mixed deciduous forest, moist dry deciduous, semi evergreen, dry deciduous scrub forest and dry savannahs.
- Fauna: Animals Sloth Bear, Wild Dog, Striped Hyaena, Jungle Cat, Grey Langur, Lesser wooly horse-shoe bat etc

ANSWER WRITING

1. What is the difference between empathy and sympathy? How can empathy help a civil servant in understanding the needs and feelings of the stakeholders and delivering better public service?

Introduction

Empathy is the ability to share and comprehend another person's emotions, whereas **sympathy** is a feeling and expression of care for someone, frequently accompanied by a want for them to be happier or better off. Empathy is placing ourselves in the shoes of another person and imagining how they feel, whereas sympathy entails appreciating their sentiments from our own perspective.

In the context of civil service, empathy can play a crucial role in understanding the needs and feelings of stakeholders and delivering better public service:

- **Enhanced Understanding:** Empathy allows civil servants to better understand the perspectives and experiences of the people they serve. By actively putting themselves in the shoes of stakeholders, civil servants can gain deeper insights into the challenges, concerns, and aspirations of the community.
- **Improved Communication:** Empathetic civil servants are more effective communicators. They can listen more attentively and ask the right questions to ascertain the true needs and emotions of their constituents. This leads to more open and constructive dialogue, fostering trust and cooperation.
- **Tailored Solutions:** With a high level of empathy, civil servants can create more personalized and effective solutions. By truly comprehending the unique circumstances of different stakeholders, they can design policies and programs that address specific needs and are more likely to succeed.
- **Reduced Conflict:** Empathy can defuse potential conflicts and disputes by acknowledging the emotions and concerns of various parties. This can pave the way for consensus-building and conflict resolution, creating a more harmonious and stable environment.
- **Adaptation to Changing Needs:** In a rapidly evolving world, empathy allows civil servants to adapt to the changing needs and feelings of their stakeholders. They can remain responsive and relevant, ensuring that public services evolve in step with societal developments.

Conclusion

While sympathy may elicit a sense of care and concern, empathy takes it a step further by deeply understanding and connecting with the emotions and needs of stakeholders. Civil servants who practice empathy can foster more positive relationships with the public, leading to better-informed policies, improved service delivery, and a stronger, more inclusive society.

MCQs

- Which one of the following is the best description of 'Alycaeus himalayae', that was in the news recently?
 - A newly discovered snail species**
 - An invasive alien plant
 - A newly discovered medicinal plant
 - A rare species of freshwater fish
- Bulava Ballistic Missile, recently seen in the news, was developed by which one of the following countries?
 - Iran
 - Russia**
 - China
 - North Korea
- With reference to the Lamprey, consider the following statements:
 - It is a primitive jawless vertebrate species.
 - It is endemic to the African continent.
 - It is found in sea as well as freshwater habitat.
 How many of the above statements are correct?
 - Only one
 - Only two**
 - All three
 - None
- The rock-cut temples of Ellora in India primarily belong to which religions?
 - Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism**
 - Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity
 - Buddhism, Sikhism, and Jainism
 - Hinduism, Buddhism, and Zoroastrianism
- World Dyslexia Day is celebrated on which day?
 - 10 January
 - 12 April
 - 8 October**
 - 22 December
- Consider the following statements regarding the 'FIND Festival '23'.
 - The FIND Festival is an initiative by Ekya Schools, aimed at fostering a transformative dialogue in K-12 (kindergarten to 12th grade) education.
 - Ekya is a community of children, educators, and parents where everyone learns together.
 Which of the above is/are true?
 - 1 only
 - 2 only
 - 1 and 2 both**
 - Neither 1 nor 2
- Consider the following statements:
 - The Red Blood Cells are also known as Erythrocytes.
 - RBCs contain the iron-rich protein called haemoglobin that gives blood its red colour.
 - Haemoglobin is essential for the survival of chondrocytes, the cells that form cartilage.
 - Haemoglobin helps chondrocytes cope with low oxygen levels by transporting oxygen within the cells.
 How many of the above statements are correct?
 - Only one
 - Only two
 - Only three
 - All four**
- With reference to 'Global Onchocerciasis Network for Elimination (GONE)', consider the following statements

Statement 1- Onchocerciasis is commonly known as "river blindness" caused by parasite

Statement 2- London Declaration is based on Neglected Tropical Disease..

 Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?
 - Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement II is the correct explanation for Statement-I
 - Both Statement-I and Statement-II are correct and Statement II is not the correct explanation for Statement-I**
 - Statement-I is correct but statement II is incorrect
 - Statement -I is incorrect but Statement -II is correct
- With reference to 'Kaleshwaram lift irrigation project (KLIP)' consider the following statements
 - KLIP is a multipurpose irrigation project on the Krishna River.
 - It is claimed to be the world's largest multi-stage and multi-purpose lift irrigation project.
 - The project will also support Mission Kakatiya scheme.
 How many statement(s) given above are correct?
 - Only one
 - Only two**
 - All three
 - None
- 'Zero-day attacks' a term often seen in news is related to
 - Insurgency operations
 - Cyber crime**
 - Attack during religious events
 - Ceasefire violation