

INDIAN POLITY**Kerala Government Challenges President Assent Withholding over State Bills**

Recently, the Kerala government has moved the Supreme Court against the President for withholding assent to bills passed by the state legislature without disclosing any reasons.

Concerns also raised by the Kerala Government against the Governor : As the Governor keeping the bills for a long and indefinite period & later reserving them for the consideration of the president.

4 Bills are withheld to assent : University Laws (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, 2021, Kerala Co-operative Societies (Amendment) Bill, 2022, University Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2022 and the The University Laws (Amendment) (No. 3) Bill, 2022.

Respondents in the Pleas : The plea listed the Union Home Secretary, the Secretary to the President, the Kerala Governor and the Additional Chief Secretary to the Governor as respondents.

Recent Development : In 2023, Kerala government had moved the Supreme court against the Governor, highlighting the delay in clearing bills which were passed by the Assembly.

In that case, The Supreme court had given its verdict as per a similar case filed by the Punjab government, in which the supreme court held that the “Governor could not thwart the normal course of law making”.

What are the Contentions Cited by The Kerala Government?

State’s Argument Regarding Federal Structure: The state contends that the union government’s action, advising the President to withhold assent to bills passed by the state legislative assembly 11 to 24 months ago, which falls within the jurisdiction of the state government, undermines and disrupts the federal structure of the constitution.

Encroachment on State’s Constitutional Domain: This action represents encroachment into the domain specifically allocated to the state under the constitution, as asserted by the state.

Constitutional Violation by the President’s Act: The state further argues that the President’s act of withholding assent for the four bills without providing any reasoning was highly arbitrary and in direct violation of Articles 14, 200, and 201 of the Constitution.

Questioning the Governor’s Actions: The state questions the bona fides of the Governor’s actions, suggesting they were not carried out in good faith. Hence, the state argues that the referral of the bills to the President must be deemed unconstitutional.

Significance of Kerala Government’s Move :

Opens Up Avenues for Judicial Review in the Decision of President: The Kerala Government’s unconventional action will stimulate a constitutional discourse on the extent of judicial review over the President of India’s decisions.

Contentions Against Governor’s Referral: The Governor should not have referred the Bills to the President, as their subject matters were within the State List of the Constitution, where the State holds legislative powers. None of the Bills conflicted with any Central legislation.

State Bills and the Power of the Governor:

Ordinary Bills: Article 200 of the Indian Constitution includes the process for a state bill to be presented to the Governor for assent.

He may:

- Give his assent to the bill; the bill then becomes an act.
- Withhold his assent to the bill, the bill then ends and does not become an act.
- Return the bill for reconsideration of the House or Houses.
- Reserve the bill for the consideration of the President.

If the bill is passed by the House or Houses again with or without amendments and presented to the governor for his assent, the governor must give his assent to the bill. Thus, the Governor enjoys only a ‘suspensive veto’. He may reserve the bill for the consideration of the President.

State Bills and the Power of the President :

When an ordinary bill is reserved by the governor for the consideration of the President,

President has three alternatives:

- He may give his assent to the bill; the bill then becomes an act.
- He may withhold his assent to the bill, the bill then ends and does not become an Act.
- He may return the bill to the Governor for the reconsideration of the House or Houses of the state legislature.

If the bill is passed by the House or Houses again with or without amendments and presented to the President for his assent, the President is not bound to give his assent to the bill.

He may give his assent to such a bill or withhold his assent.

When a Money Bill is reserved by the Governor for the consideration of the President, President has two alternatives:

- He may give his assent to the bill, the bill then becomes an Act.
- He may withhold his assent to the bill, the bill then ends and does not become an act. Thus, the President cannot return a money bill for the reconsideration of the state legislature (as in the case of the Parliament).

Conditions for the Reserving the Bills for President Assent by the Governor :

According to the Constitution, in one case such reservation is obligatory,

- where the bill passed by the state legislature endangers the position of the state High Court.
- The Governor can also reserve the bill if it is of the following nature:
- Ultra-vires, that is, against the provisions of the Constitution.
- Opposed to the Directive Principles of State Policy.
- Against the larger interest of the country.
- Of grave national importance.
- Dealing with compulsory acquisition of property under Article 31A of the Constitution.

GOVERNMENT POLICIES

Government policies in health

TB Control in India: A Call for Person-Centred Solutions

Globally, and in India, tuberculosis (TB) continues to remain a significant public health challenge impacting millions. Tuberculosis, India Has Set The Target To Eliminate TB By 2025, and Global TB Report 2023 By World Health Organization (WHO).

Tuberculosis (TB): A Global Health Crisis Requiring Immediate Action

- **Slow Progress to Fight Against Tuberculosis:** The challenge is huge and progress is not fast enough despite ambitious goals set by India's health authorities to eliminate TB.
- **Lack of Efficient and High Quality Care:** Access to efficient and high quality care, diagnosis, treatment and support is still not available to every person diagnosed with the disease.
- **Urgent Call for a Paradigm Shift in India's Approach to TB Control:** India requires a shift in its approach to controlling TB, emphasizing the central role of those affected and their lived experiences in addressing this long standing disease.
- **Broadening Perspectives on Tuberculosis Beyond Medicalization:** At times, TB has been excessively medicalized, a tendency common among doctors and public health professionals.
- TB has been overlooked as a humanitarian, gender-specific, economic, and socio-environmental crisis.

TB Control in India Calls for Person-Centred Solutions

Prioritizing Patient and Community Needs:

- The needs and the interests of patients and communities must be prioritized within the care paradigm and the health-care system.
- This principle, echoed by survivors, communities, health experts and policymakers, underscores the need for a person-centred approach to TB care and management.

Understanding Lived Experiences:

- The greatest gap has been in understanding the lived experiences of the affected individual fighting and surviving TB.
- The experiences and challenges faced by the individuals who have previously suffered from TB should be considered in formulating policies to support current TB patients.

Issues faced by TB Patients:

Major problems faced by the TB patients include:

- Social stigma
- Isolation
- Discrimination at Workplaces
- Nutrition
- Mental Health Issues

Major Steps to Tackle TB:

Steps to effectively deal with TB include:

- Testing facilities in rural areas in order to diagnose TB in initial stages only
- Medicines at affordable prices

- Nutrition to diagnosed TB patients
- Proper Air Ventilation
- Tackling myths and stigma attached to TB

Care Needs to be More Humane:

By supporting frontline TB workers, strengthening supply chains and procurement mechanisms, decentralising TB services and empowering local communities, India can reduce stigma, overcome barriers to access and enhance treatment outcomes.

Tapping Technology:

Leveraging technology and innovation holds promise in enhancing TB care efforts in India.

- The adoption of AI and digital health solutions for TB diagnosis, adherence and surveillance can revolutionise the way TB care is delivered and accessed in the country.
- By investing in developing better vaccines, TB can be eliminated.

The path to TB elimination in India requires a concerted effort to prioritise person-centred care, address social determinants of health, and embrace innovation. By adopting a holistic and person-centred approach, India can overcome the barriers that stand in the way of TB control and create a healthier future for all its citizens.

PRELIM FACTS

1. Archaeological Survey of India will 'delist' some 'lost' monuments

- The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has decided to delist 18 centrally protected monuments due to their assessed lack of national importance.
- This is the first large-scale delisting exercise in decades, reducing ASI's purview from 3,693 to 3,675 monuments.
- These monuments, including landmarks like the medieval highway milestone Kos Minar No.13 in Haryana, Barakhamba Cemetery in Delhi, and Telia Nala Buddhist ruins in Varanasi, are considered 'untraceable' as their precise locations or current conditions are unknown.
- The decision follows the criteria outlined in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958
- Delisting means these monuments will no longer receive conservation, protection, or maintenance from ASI, allowing construction and urbanization in the area.

2. COP Presidencies' Troika

- The hosts of upcoming United Nations climate conferences, including the United Arab Emirates, Azerbaijan, and Brazil also known as COP Presidencies' Troika, have called for nations to align their nationally-determined contributions (NDCs) with the goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.
- They aim for these aligned NDCs to be submitted by early 2025.
- The plan advocates for comprehensive NDCs covering all greenhouse gases, with emission reduction targets of 60% compared to 2019 levels by 2035.
- The "COP Presidencies' Troika" refers to a collaborative effort among three countries that have hosted, or will host, consecutive sessions of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- The Troika system is designed to ensure continuity and cooperation in the leadership of these international climate conferences.
- Typically, the Troika consists of the current COP host country, the country that hosted the previous COP, and the country scheduled to host the subsequent COP session.

3. Application Programming Interface (API)

CERT-In and CSIRT-Fin's whitepaper on API security is a step in the right direction.

What is API?

Definition: APIs facilitate communication between software components by providing a set of definitions and protocols. For instance, a weather app on your phone communicates with the weather bureau's software system through APIs to display daily weather updates.

Importance: Integral for innovation in the digital sphere, empowering seamless integration and interoperability.

Usage : Widely used in various industries, including finance, healthcare, e-commerce, social media, and more.

Functionality: Allows applications to access and interact with the features or data of other applications or platforms.

Types : Web APIs, RESTful APIs, SOAP APIs, GraphQL APIs, and more, catering to different use cases.

Benefits: Enhances efficiency, accelerates development, fosters collaboration, and enables cross-platform integration.

Security Challenges: Vulnerabilities include data breaches, unauthorized access, injection attacks, and denial-of-service attacks.

Security Measures: Implementing strong authentication, encryption, rate-limiting, input validation, and regular cyber security audits.

Emerging Technologies: Integration with artificial intelligence (AI) for anomaly detection, predictive analytics, and threat mitigation.

Future Trends: Increasing adoption of APIs in the Internet of Things (IoT), AI, machine learning, and blockchain technologies for enhanced functionality.

Government initiatives: 1. Open Government Data platform (it has over 1 lakh APIs); API Setu

Policy on Open Application Programming (government's approach to the use of Open APIs to promote software interoperability)

2. National Data Governance Policy (aims to standardize APIs for secure data management)

3. National Data and Analytics Platform (or NDAP) (NITI Aayog's initiative that hosts datasets from across India)

4. AI Tool Predicts Neem Fruit Metabolite Content

- Researchers at Jawaharlal Nehru University's School of Biotechnology have developed an Artificial Intelligence-based tool to predict the metabolite content in neem fruits, specifically azadirachtin, which is used as a biopesticide.
- The AI model analyses images of neem leaves and fruits to classify them as having either low or high azadirachtin content, eliminating the need for expensive and cumbersome analytical equipment like high-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC).
- The model, trained using deep learning frameworks and synthetic image augmentation, achieved high accuracy in classifying fruit metabolite content.
- An Android app called Fruit-in-Sight has been developed based on the best predictive model, enabling fruit pickers to quickly assess azadirachtin content in neem fruits in the field, empowering them to select fruits with high azadirachtin content efficiently.
- This innovation is expected to streamline the neem industry without additional cost, time, or effort.

5. Statio Shiv Shakti

The International Astronomical Union (IAU) has approved the name 'Statio Shiv Shakti' for the landing site of Chandrayaan-3's Vikram lander.

- The name 'Statio Shiv Shakti' reflects the duality of nature in Indian mythology, representing both masculine (Shiva) and feminine (Shakti) aspects.
- This name aligns with IAU's guidelines, which prohibit names with political, military, or religious significance.

The IAU, responsible for assigning names to planetary surface features, follows specific rules and conventions for naming.

ANSWER WRITING

Q. The use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) by our adversaries across the borders to ferry arms/ammunitions, drugs, etc., is a serious threat to internal security. Comment on the measures being taken to tackle this threat.

An unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) is an aircraft that carries no human pilot or passengers. In recent times, the utilization of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or drones for illicit activities including the smuggling of arms, ammunition, and drugs across borders has emerged as a significant threat to internal security for India, raising a series of challenges for the national security apparatus.

Use of UAVs by our adversaries across the borders poses serious threat to the internal security as

Facilitation of Terrorism: There have been instances where UAVs were suspected to drop arms and ammunition in Punjab near the India-Pakistan border, raising alarms about how they could equip militant groups within India.

Drug Trafficking: Drones have been intercepted for carrying narcotics across the India-Pakistan border, exacerbating the existing drug abuse problem in states like Punjab.

Surveillance and Espionage: UAVs have been sighted on multiple occasions in Jammu and Kashmir. These aerial vehicles could be used to gather intelligence on troop movement and sensitive installations, echoing espionage risks.

Safety Hazards: UAVs also pose a risk to civilian aircraft. For example, Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport had a scare when a drone was spotted flying dangerously close to a commercial airline in 2017.

Economic Implications: The economic impact of UAVs ferrying counterfeit goods or smuggling expensive materials could undermine local economies and affect public health, as seen with the illegal transportation of tobacco products in some border areas.

Psychosocial Impact: The presence of UAVs, especially near conflict zones like the Line of Control in the J&K, increases stress and anxiety among the local population. Reports of drone activities in these regions have led to increased public fear and anxiety over potential attacks.

Measures Taken to Tackle This Threat

Anti-Drone Technologies: India's DRDO has been developing anti-drone technologies capable of jamming or disabling rogue UAVs. These were notably deployed during the 2020 Republic Day celebrations in Delhi as a preventive measure.

Intelligence Sharing: India collaborates with agencies like Interpol and intelligence units from friendly nations to monitor potential UAV threats. For example, India and the United States have held discussions on intelligence sharing concerning UAV activities.

Legal Framework: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has issued guidelines that lay down the legal framework for operating UAVs. Offenders can face imprisonment, illustrating the gravity of UAV-related offenses.

Research and Development: DRDO is investing in cutting-edge technologies such as "soft kill" measures that can disable UAVs electronically without causing collateral damage. This is part of India's broader initiative to develop indigenous technologies to counter UAV threats.

Training and Capacity Building: Special units within the military and paramilitary forces are receiving specific training on countering UAV threats. The NSG (National Security Guard) and CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force) are among them.

Collaboration with Tech Companies: The Indian government is collaborating with tech companies like Tata and Reliance to develop geo-fencing technologies that prevent UAVs from entering sensitive zones.

Community Engagement: Border communities are often involved in vigilance activities. Eg: In Punjab, local farmers have been encouraged to report any suspicious UAV sightings, acting as a grassroots-level security measure.

As the illicit use of UAVs by adversaries poses a multifaceted threat to India's internal security, a forward-looking, collaborative, and multi-pronged strategy remains essential. By adopting these innovative approaches, India can not only effectively counter the growing drone-related security threats but also foster a balanced and responsible use of this transformative technology.

MCQs

1. Consider the following statements regarding Tuberculosis (TB):
 1. Tuberculosis (TB) is a viral infection that most often affects the lungs.
 2. India aims to eradicate TB by 2030.
 3. The BCG vaccine is the only vaccine against tuberculosis based on a genetically modified form of the pathogen isolated from humans.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) Only 1
(b) 1 and 2
(c) 1,2 & 3
(d) None
2. Consider the following provisions:
 1. Allocation of seats in the House of the People.
 2. Delimitation of Parliamentary Constituencies.
 3. Disqualifications for membership of Parliament and State Legislatures
 4. Conduct of elections

Which of the above provisions are provided in the Representation of the People Act, 1951?

(a) 1,2 & 3
(b) 1 & 2 only
(c) 3 & 4 only
(d) 1,2,3 and 4
3. Consider the following African countries:
 1. Kenya
 2. Tanzania
 3. Botswana
 4. Mozambique

Which of the above nations share borders with the Indian Ocean?

(a) 1,2,4 only

- (b) 1&2 only
(c) 2 &3 only
(d) All four
4. Consider the following statements about Atal Bhujal Yojana (ABY):
1. Atal Bhujal Yojana (ATAL JAL) is being implemented as a Central Sector Scheme.
 2. The National Level Steering Committee of the Atal Bhujal Yojana is chaired by the Prime Minister of India.
 3. The purpose of the scheme is to demonstrate community-led sustainable groundwater management which can be taken to scale.
- How many of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) All three
(d) None
5. Consider the following statements regarding the Jal Jeevan Mission.
1. Jal Jeevan Mission aims to provide safe and adequate drinking water through tap connections to all households in India by 2024.
 2. The Jal Jeevan Mission is based on a community approach to water and includes extensive Information, Education and communication as a key component of the mission.
 3. It also includes elements such as recharge and reuse through grey water management, water conservation and rainwater harvesting.
- How many of the above statements are correct?
- (a) Only One
(b) Only two
(c) All three
(d) None
6. Consider the following statements about the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI):
1. It is the regulatory body for overall supervision and regulation of pensions in India.
 2. It was established in accordance with the suggestions made in the Indian government's OASIS report.
- Which of the above statements is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
7. Consider the following statements regarding 'Bima Sugam' online platform.
1. It will serve as a one-stop destination for insurance-related needs.
 2. The platform aims to centralize data and facilitate policy porting.
 3. Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) owns a majority stake in the platform.
- How many of the above statements is/are correct?
- (a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) All three
(d) None
8. Consider the following statements about the Financing Agrochemical Reduction and Management Programme (FARM):
1. It aims to combat the release of toxic persistent organic pollutants (POPs) into the environment caused by the use of harmful chemicals in farming.
 2. It is led by the European Commission with financial support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF).
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
9. Consider the following statements regarding postal ballots.
1. Members of the armed forces and government employees posted outside India are entitled to vote only by post.
 2. Voters under preventive detention cannot vote by post.
 3. President of India, Vice President, Governors and Union Cabinet ministers have the option to vote by post.
- How many of the above statements are correct?
- (a) Only one **(b) Only two**
(c) All three (d) None
10. With reference to Indian freedom struggle, Usha Mehta is well-known for-
- (a) **Running the secret Congress Radio in the wake of Quit India Movement**
(b) Participating in the Second Round Table Conference
(c) Leading a contingent of Indian National Army
(d) Assisting in the formation of Interim Government under Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru