

Kerala's University Laws (amendment) Bills

❖ Context

- Recently, The Kerala government has passed the **two University Laws (amendment) Bills** in the State Assembly to amend laws relating to the **governance of State universities** and to **remove Governor as the Chancellor of said universities**.

Key Highlights

- The proposed legislations will **amend the statutes of 14 universities** established by legislative Acts in Kerala and remove the Governor as the Chancellor.
- The Bills will give the government power to **appoint eminent academicians as Chancellors** of various universities.
- It will **end the Governor's watchdog role** in university administration.
- The Bills also provide provisions to limit the term of the **appointed chancellor to five years**.

Rationale Behind the Bill

- The **UGC guidelines** (partially mandatory for State universities earlier) have been made legally binding for all universities by way of recent SC rulings.
- An **executive order issued by the Centre (UGC guidelines)**, undermines the Assembly's powers under the Concurrent List of the Constitution.
- The **Punchhi Commission** on Centre-State Relations recommended not to entrust the Governor with powers that are not envisaged in the Constitution and which may lead to controversies.

Case of Central Universities

- Under the **Central Universities Act, 2009**, and other statutes, the **President of India shall be the Visitor** of a central university.
- With their role limited to presiding over convocations, **Chancellors in central universities are titular heads**, who are appointed by the President in his capacity as Visitor.
- **The Vice Chancellor too are appointed by the Visitor from panels of names** picked by search and selection committees formed by the Union government.
- The Act adds that the **President, as Visitor, shall have the right to authorise inspections of academic and non-academic aspects** of the universities and also to institute inquiries

Articles Related to Governor

- **Governor has a dual role vis-s vis State Government:**
 - He is the **constitutional head of the state**, bound by the advice of his **council of ministers (CoM)**.
 - He **functions as a vital link between the Union Government and the State Government**.
- **Article 153:** There shall be a Governor for each State. One person can be appointed as Governor for two or more States.
- **Article 163:** There is a CoM with the CM at the head to aid and advise the Governor in the exercise of his functions, except some conditions for discretion.
- **Article 200:** Governor assents, withholds assent, or reserves the bill for the consideration of the President passed by the Legislative Assembly.
- **Article 213:** Governor may promulgate the Ordinances under certain circumstances.

Eastern Zonal Council

❖ Context

- Union Home Minister attended the Eastern Zonal Council meeting in Kolkata recently.

Composition of Zonal Councils

- In the light of the vision of Pandit Nehru, five Zonal Councils were set up vide Part-III of the States Re-organisation Act, 1956.
- The present composition of each of these Zonal Councils is as under:
- **The Northern Zonal Council**, comprising the States of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, National Capital Territory of Delhi and Union Territory of Chandigarh;
- **The Central Zonal Council**, comprising the States of Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh;

Organisational Structure of Zonal Councils:

- **Chairman** - The Union Home Minister is the Chairman of each of these Councils.
- **Vice Chairman**- The Chief Ministers of the States included in each zone act as Vice-Chairman of the Zonal Council for that zone by rotation, each holding office for a period of one year at a time.

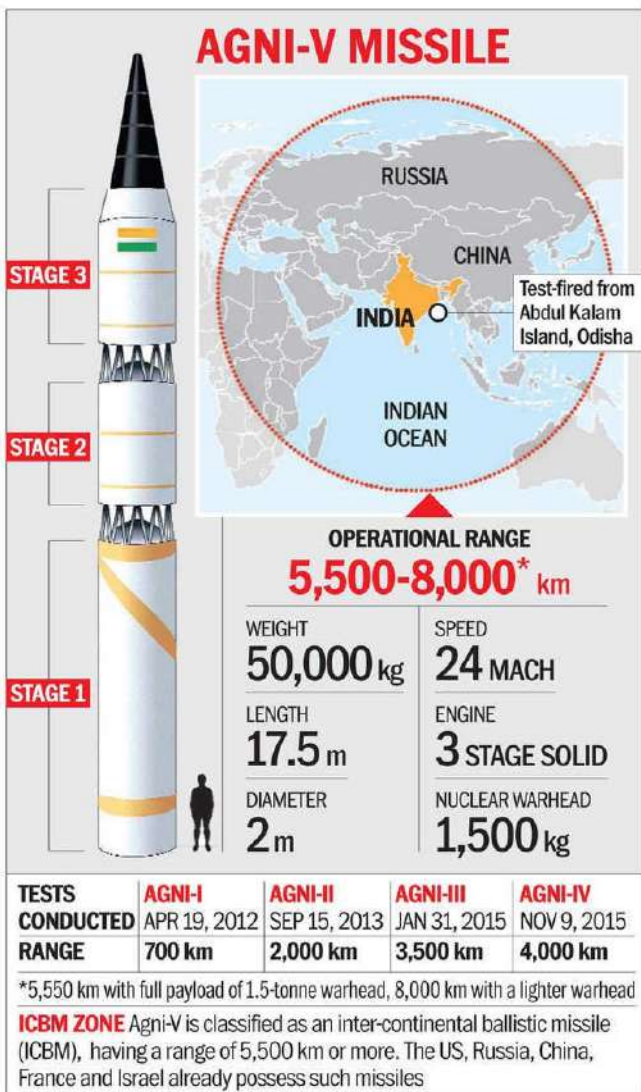


- **The Eastern Zonal Council**, comprising the States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Sikkim and West Bengal;
- **The Western Zonal Council**, comprising the States of Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra and the Union Territories of Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli;
- **The Southern Zonal Council**, comprising the States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and the Union Territory of Puducherry.
- Note:- The North Eastern States i.e. (i) Assam (ii) Arunachal Pradesh (iii) Manipur (iv) Tripura (v) Mizoram (vi) Meghalaya and (vii) Nagaland are not included in the Zonal Councils and their special problems are looked after by the North Eastern Council, set up under the North Eastern Council Act, 1972.
- **Members-** Chief Minister and two other Ministers as nominated by the Governor from each of the States and two members from Union Territories included in the zone.
- **Advisers-** One person nominated by the Planning Commission for each of the Zonal Councils, Chief Secretaries and another officer/Development Commissioner nominated by each of the States included in the Zone.
- Union Ministers are also invited to participate in the meetings of Zonal Councils depending upon necessity.

News in Between the Lines

Agni-5

AGNI-V MISSILE



❖ Context

➤ Recently, a successful flight test of India's **long-range surface-to-surface nuclear capable ballistic missile, Agni-5**, was undertaken.

❖ Key Highlights

- Agni-5 was earlier tested last year in October by the The Strategic Forces Command (SFC) independently for the first time.
- Agni-5 has been successfully tested multiple times since 2012.

❖ About Agni-5

➤ Background

- The development of Agni missiles **started in early 1980** under the **Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme** spearheaded by scientist and former President Dr A P J Abdul Kalam.

➤ Developed By

- Defence Research and Development organisation (DRDO).

➤ Features

- This is a nuclear-capable missile, which **uses a three-stage solid-fuelled engine.**
- It is **capable of delivering a 1.5 tonne nuclear warhead.**
- The missile can be launched from road and rail platforms, making it easier for it to be deployed and launched at a quicker pace.

➤ Range

- Medium to Intercontinental versions of Agni missile systems 1 to 5 have varying ranges — starting from 700 km for Agni-1 to **5000 km and above for Agni-5.**
- Agni-V can bring almost the entire Asia, including the northernmost part of China, as well as some regions in Europe under its striking range.

➤ Side Note

- In June 2021, DRDO successfully tested **Agni P**, a canisterised missile with a range capability between 1,000 and 2,000 km.
- **Agni-6** is also said to be under development, with a range starting at 8000 km.

❖ Context

Doxxing

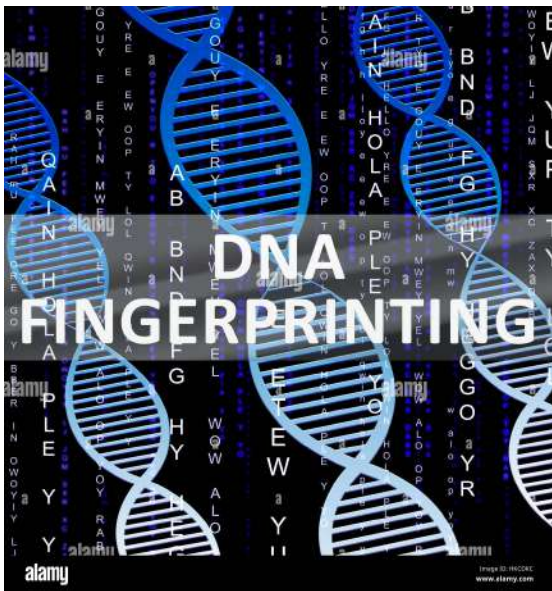


➤ Recently, Twitter has suspended the account of several journalists in the United States, and according to its owner Elon Musk, this was in continuation of the social media platform's new **anti-doxxing policy**.

❖ About Doxxing

- Doxxing is **publishing and analyzing others' personal information on the internet** with a malicious intent that can reveal the person's real identity
 - It could make them victims of harassment and cyber-attacks.
- **This private information includes**
 - One's address, phone number, financial information, etc.
 - Physical location information, including street addresses, GPS coordinates or other identifying information related to locations
- Doxxing is used to **shame or punish people who would rather stay anonymous**, because of their controversial beliefs or other types of non-mainstream activity.
- Doxxing **can result in emotional distress, loss of employment and even physical harm or death.**

DNA Fingerprinting



❖ Context

➤ Recently, Shraddha Walkar, victim of Delhi murder case, bones identified using **DNA Fingerprinting**.

❖ DNA Fingerprinting

- DNA fingerprinting was **first developed in 1984 by Alec Jeffreys in the UK**, after Jeffreys discovered that no two people could have the same DNA sequence.
- **Each person's DNA, except for identical twins, is unique.**
- By analyzing selected DNA sequences (called loci), a crime laboratory can develop a profile to be used in identifying a suspect.
- **There is DNA in most cells** in the human body, even a minuscule amount of bodily fluid or tissue can yield useful information.
- **DNA can be extracted from many sources**, such as hair, bone, teeth, saliva, and blood.
- Samples may even be extracted from used clothes, linen, combs, or other frequently used items.
- Advanced DNA fingerprinting can make separate prints of various individuals even from a sample mixture found at the crime scene.
- **According to a US Congressional Research Service report, DNA evidence is used to solve crimes in two ways-**
 - **If a suspect is known**, that person's DNA sample can be compared to biological evidence found at a crime scene to establish whether the suspect was at the crime scene or whether they committed the crime.
 - **If a suspect is not known**, biological evidence from the crime scene can be analyzed and compared to offender profiles in existing DNA databases to assist in identifying a suspect.

Electoral Bond Scheme

❖ Context

➤ The Supreme Court recently agreed to examine in January 2023 a plea to refer to a Constitution Bench petition accusing the electoral bonds scheme of illegally facilitating anonymous donations to political parties days before polls are due.





Electoral Bonds Scheme

The scheme

- Poll bonds to be sold through notified banks
- Firms can buy the bonds with money and show the sum in their balance sheets
- They can then transfer these bonds to any political party without declaring the name



The controversy

- The clause of not naming the political party may encourage firms to trade bonds for policy tweaks in their favour

❖ Electoral Bond

- An electoral bond is like a promissory note that can be bought by any Indian citizen or company incorporated in India from select branches of the State Bank of India.
- The citizen or corporate can then donate the same to any eligible political party of his/her choice.
- The bonds are similar to bank notes that are payable to the bearer on demand and are free of interest.
- An individual or party will be allowed to purchase these bonds digitally or through cheque.

E-20 Fuel



❖ Context

- Petroleum Minister recently said that India will soon launch E-20 fuel with 20% blending of ethanol by 2025 the ethanol production in the country would reach 1000 crore litres.

❖ Key highlights

- India is looking forward to setting up an international biofuel alliance under India's G20 presidency.
- India has achieved the target of 10 percent blending of ethanol and produced 455 crore litres of ethanol in 2021, saving around 40,000 crore rupees on import of crude oil, helping the farmers and conserving the environment.
- There are 43 plants that produce green ammonia and the target is to increase such plants to 5000 in number.
- In the coming days CNG, CBG and Electric Vehicles will be promoted across the country to reduce dependency on crude oil imports.

Matsya Sampada Yojana



❖ Context

- The government has recently said that the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana envisages generating direct and indirect employment opportunities to about 55 lakh personnel in the fisheries and aquaculture sector by 2024-25.

❖ Key highlights

- The Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) was launched in September 2020 with an aim to double the income of fish farmers and fishers in the country.
- It focuses on sustainable development of India's fisheries sector and is a part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat scheme.
- The scheme adopted a "cluster or area-based approach" to create fisheries clusters.
- The scheme focuses on activities with potential to generate employment such as seaweed and ornamental fish cultivation.
- It also emphasizes on the breeding technique for quality brood, seed & feed and species diversification.
- With implementation of the scheme, the government aims to help reduce post-harvest loss from 20-25% to 10%.

Decline in the Cases of TB in India

❖ Context

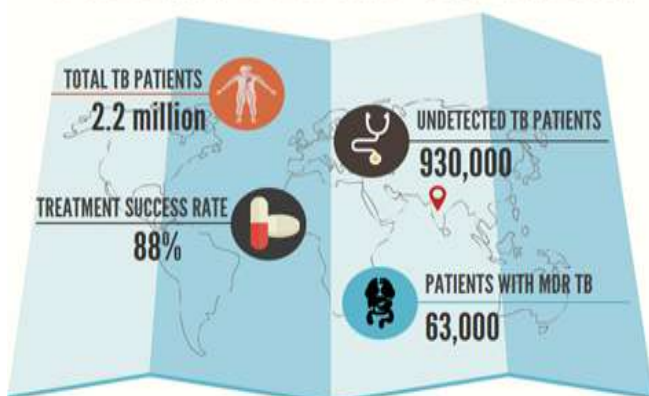
- The incidence of TB in India has reduced by 18% from 256 per lakh population in 2015 to 210 per lakh population in 2021.

❖ Key highlights

- The government has developed a National Strategic Plan (2017 to 2025) for ending TB in the country by 2025.



TUBERCULOSIS IN INDIA



- The key focus areas of the plan are early diagnosis of all the TB patients and prompt treatment with quality assured drugs.
- Ni-kshay 2.0 portal has been developed and made available in public domain for facilitating the community to register as Ni-kshay Mitra.
- Periodic reviews are done to monitor the progress of the initiative at National and State levels.

❖ **About TB**

- Tuberculosis (TB) is a dangerous and highly contagious bacterial disease caused by Mycobacterium tuberculosis.
- It primarily affects the lungs, but if left untreated, it might spread to different parts of the body.

FICCI Annual Convention



❖ **Context**

- Recently Defence Minister addressed the 95th FICCI Annual Convention in New Delhi.

❖ **Key highlights**

- The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) is a non-governmental trade association and advocacy group based in India.
- The Convention is scheduled to be organized in physical cum digital mode and is being attended by a high-powered audience, comprising of policymakers, corporates, social organizations, media among others.
- The theme of the Convention this year is "India@100: Amrit Kaal, Sustainable & Inclusive."

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