



Daily News Analysis

The Hindu Important News Articles & Editorial For UPSC CSE

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Page 01 : GS 2 : Indian Polity / Prelims

The Union Home Ministry has clarified that the Central Government has no intention of introducing the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2025 in the upcoming Winter Session of Parliament. The Bill, earlier listed in the Lok Sabha Bulletin, aimed to bring Chandigarh under Article 240, enabling appointment of a full-time Lieutenant Governor and aligning the Union Territory's governance structure with other UTs without legislatures. The announcement triggered strong political reactions in Punjab due to the long-standing and sensitive nature of the Chandigarh dispute.

No plan to introduce Bill on Chandigarh, says Union govt.

Govt. had listed a Bill that would align Chandigarh with other Union Territories in being administered by the Ministry, but following outrage in Punjab, the Home Ministry now says proposal to 'simplify' law-making process is under 'consideration'

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The Chandigarh question

The Centre hurried to issue a clarification on a Bill that aims to align Chandigarh with other Union Territories without legislatures

- On November 21, the Lok Sabha Bulletin listed the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2025 among 10 Bills for the Winter Session
- Chandigarh has been a sensitive issue since the Punjab Reorganisation Act of 1966. Currently, the Governor of Punjab serves as its Administrator

With protests in Punjab, the Ministry issued a clarification

- Proposal is still under consideration, no final decision yet
- It does not seek to alter Chandigarh's governance or administrative structure
- No Bill will be introduced in the upcoming Winter Session

law-making process for the Union Territory of Chandigarh is still under consideration..."

No decision on proposal

"No final decision has been made on this proposal. The proposal in no way seeks to alter Chandigarh's governance or administrative structure, nor does it aim to change the traditional arrangements between Chandigarh and the States of Punjab or Haryana," it said.

"A suitable decision will be made only after adequate consultations with all stakeholders, keeping in mind the interests of Chandigarh. There is no need for concern regarding this matter. The Central Government has no intention of introducing any Bill to this effect in the upcoming Winter Session of Parliament," the Ministry further stated.

Currently, the Governor of Punjab is concurrently the Administrator of Chandigarh, and if the Bill is passed, the Union Territory will be governed by a Lieutenant-Governor.

Congress leader and Rajya Sabha member Jairam Ramesh said that the Parliament Bulletin had listed for "the introduction of a Constitution Amendment Bill to enable the appointment of a full-time L-G for Chandigarh".

"This was immediately and aggressively opposed by the INC and other parties in Punjab whose Governor is also the Administrator of Chandigarh. The Union Home Ministry now says that it has no intention to introduce the Bill in the Winter Session. Yet another example of the Modi Govt's FAST approach to governance - First Announce, Second Think," Mr. Ramesh said.

the Punjab Reorganisation Act of 1966.

The November 21 Lok Sabha Bulletin had listed the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill 2025 among 10 Bills proposed to be passed during the Winter Session of Parliament from December 1.

The description said the Bill is proposed for discussion and passage to align

Chandigarh with other Union Territories without legislatures - such as the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Daman and Diu, and Puducherry - when its Legislative Assembly is dissolved or suspended.

The Ministry said that the "proposal to simplify the Central Government's

Key Background

- Chandigarh serves as the joint capital of Punjab and Haryana since the Punjab Reorganisation Act, 1966.
- Currently, the Governor of Punjab acts as the Administrator of Chandigarh.



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- Article 240 empowers the President to make regulations for certain UTs without legislatures.

Why Did the Proposal Trigger Outrage?

1. Political Sensitivity

- Chandigarh's status is a core federal issue between Punjab and the Centre.
- Punjab claims historical rights over Chandigarh as its capital.
- Any attempt to alter the administrative structure is perceived as weakening Punjab's claim.

2. Perception of Centralisation

- Appointment of a separate L-G could be seen as:
 - Diluting Punjab's traditional control
 - Increasing central authority over the UT
 - Altering existing administrative conventions

3. Lack of Consultations

- Punjab-based parties criticised the move as being taken without stakeholder consultation, going against cooperative federalism.

Government's Clarification

The Home Ministry stated:

- The proposal is only under consideration.
- No final decision has been taken.
- The Bill will not be introduced in the Winter Session.
- The measure is only to "simplify law-making process" and does not alter Chandigarh's administrative structure.
- Any decision will follow consultations with stakeholders.

Broader Constitutional & Federal Issues

1. Federal Balance

- Chandigarh governance highlights India's asymmetric federalism.
- Changes in its administration can have ripple effects on Centre-State trust.

2. Legislative Process Transparency



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- Listing a proposal in Parliament Bulletin and retracting it later raises questions about:
 - Government's internal decision-making
 - Coordination between ministries
 - Political sensitivity assessments

3. Opposition's Critique

- Opposition parties allege a pattern of "announce first, think later".
- They view the move as politically motivated ahead of elections.

Conclusion

The controversy over the Chandigarh Bill demonstrates how even procedural or administrative proposals can trigger intense political reactions when they touch upon federal sensitivities and historical claims. The Centre's decision to withhold the Bill underscores the importance of consultation, transparency, and cooperative federalism in constitutional amendments relating to Union Territories and shared administrative spaces.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques: Consider the following statements regarding Article 240 of the Indian Constitution:

1. It empowers the President to make regulations for all Union Territories, including Delhi and Chandigarh.
2. Regulations made under Article 240 have the same force as an Act of Parliament.
3. Article 240 applies only to Union Territories without legislatures.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans : a)

UPSC Mains Practice Question



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Ques: Explain the historical context behind Chandigarh's status as a shared capital and analyse how administrative changes to Union Territories can influence inter-state political dynamics. **(150 Words)**

Page 01 : GS 2 : Indian Polity / Prelims



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Former Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai, who retired recently, clarified that the Supreme Court's Presidential Reference opinion regarding timelines for Governors in clearing Bills does not overrule the earlier Tamil Nadu Governor judgment. Instead, it only clarifies the law. His remarks come in the backdrop of the ongoing Centre-State tensions over the role of Governors in legislative processes.

Background: What Triggered the Issue?

1. April 8 Supreme Court Judgment (TN Governor Case)

- Held that Governors and the President must clear Bills within three months, failing which the Bill would be "deemed to have received assent."

2. Presidential Reference

- The Union Government sought clarity from the Supreme Court under Article 143 (Presidential Reference).
- On November 20, a five-judge Bench led by CJI Gavai gave an advisory opinion:
 - Governors cannot be forced to follow a strict timeline.
 - They must act within a "reasonable period."
 - "Reasonable period" not explicitly defined.

What CJI Gavai Clarified?

1. Presidential Reference does not overrule a judgment

- It only clarifies the law.
- A judgment remains binding unless overruled in a future case.
- The advisory opinion can point out that the earlier understanding of law was "not correct," but it does not annul the judgment.

2. Court cannot insert timelines not present in the Constitution

- If a timeline is required, it is Parliament's role to amend the Constitution or legislate.





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- Judiciary cannot “legislate from the Bench.”

3. Balanced approach to Governor’s powers

- Strict timelines removed.
- But Governors cannot sit indefinitely on Bills.
- Limited judicial review allowed to examine unreasonable delays case-by-case.
- “Reasonable period” depends on:
 - urgency
 - nature of the Bill
 - security or emergency-related concerns
 - ordinary Bills may be cleared in “one month”

Constitutional Angle

Articles Involved

- Article 200 – Governor’s options on State Bills
- Article 201 – Role of President in certain Bills
- Article 143 – Presidential Reference
- Principle of Reasonableness – imported through judicial interpretation
- No explicit timelines in the Constitution

Federalism Impact

- This case illustrates the tension in Centre–State relations, especially:
 - politicization of the Governor’s post
 - weaponisation of assent powers
 - delay tactics affecting State legislatures



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Implications of the Advisory Opinion

1. More power to Governors?

- Removing strict timelines may increase discretion.
- Ambiguity in "reasonable time" may create further conflicts.

2. Limited judiciary oversight

- Courts can intervene when delays are manifestly unreasonable.
- But they cannot prescribe uniform deadlines.

3. Strengthens constitutional morality

- Highlights restraint: judiciary not willing to read words into the Constitution.
- Emphasises need for legislative clarity, not judicial improvisation.

4. States may still face delays

- Without fixed timelines, States may continue to experience executive obstruction through indefinite sitting on Bills.

Former CJI's View on Colleagues' Differences

- On the dissent of Justice B.V. Nagarathna regarding elevation of Justice Pancholi, he remarked:
 - If dissent had merit, the four other Collegium judges would not have agreed.
- This reflects internal checks within the judiciary on appointments.

Conclusion

The former CJI's remarks underline the nuanced distinction between a judgment and a Presidential Reference advisory opinion. While the new opinion relaxes the strict time-bound requirement, it does not fully absolve Governors of accountability. Instead, it creates a flexible, case-specific framework backed by limited judicial review. The larger debate—rooted in federalism and the constitutional role of Governors—remains unresolved and continues to shape Centre–State relations in India.



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UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques : Consider the following statements:

1. A Presidential Reference under Article 143 is binding on the Supreme Court.
2. A Presidential Reference opinion can overrule a previous judgment of the Supreme Court.
3. The Supreme Court can decline to answer a Presidential Reference.

Which of the statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: b)

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques : Do recurring disputes between State governments and Governors indicate a structural flaw in the Constitution, or are they a result of political misuse of the office? Explain with recent examples. **(250 words)**



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Page : 01 & 04 : GS 2 : International Relations & Science and Tech / Prelims

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's interventions at the IBSA Leaders Summit and the G-20 Summit in Johannesburg underline India's strong push for reforms in global governance systems, particularly the UN Security Council, and the need for human-centric and responsible use of emerging technologies, especially Artificial Intelligence (AI). Together, these speeches reflect India's larger strategic approach: strengthening the voice of the Global South, demanding fair representation in global institutions, and shaping global technology norms.

Part I – IBSA Summit: UNSC Reform as a Necessity

UNSC reforms no longer an option but a necessity: Modi at IBSA meet

Press Trust of India
JOHANNESBURG

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said reform of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) was no longer an option but a necessity, and asserted that the India-Brazil-South Africa troika should send a clear message for changes to institutions of global governance.

Addressing the India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) leaders summit here, Mr. Modi said that at a time when the world appeared fragmented and divided, the IBSA could provide a message of unity, cooperation, and humanity.

He proposed institutionalising the IBSA NSA-level meeting to strengthen security cooperation among the three countries.

"In the fight against terrorism, we must move forward in close coordination. There is no place for any double standards on such a serious issue," Mr. Modi said at the meeting attended by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

The Prime Minister said the IBSA was not just a group of three countries but an important platform connecting three continents, three major democratic nations, and three major economies.

Highlighting technology's crucial role in ensuring human-centric development, the Prime Minister proposed establishing an IBSA Digital Innovation Alliance to facilitate the sharing of digital public infrastructure such as unified payments interface (UPI), health platforms such as CoWIN, cybersecurity frameworks and women-led tech initiatives among the three countries.

"Timely meet"
Appreciating the IBSA Fund's work in supporting projects across 40 countries in sectors such as education, health, women empowerment and solar energy, Mr. Modi proposed the IBSA Fund for Climate Resilient Agriculture to further advance South-South cooperation.

He said the IBSA meeting was timely as it coincided with the first G20 Summit on African soil and marked the culmination of four consecutive G20 presidencies by Global South countries, out of which the last three were by the IBSA members.

This has resulted in several important initiatives focused on human-centric development, multilateral reform and sustainable growth, he said.

Mr. Modi also invited IBSA leaders to the AI Impact Summit to be held in India next year, even as he emphasised the grouping's potential to contribute to the development of safe, trustworthy and human-centric AI norms.

The Prime Minister said the IBSA can complement each other's development and become an example for sustainable growth.

He highlighted cooperation opportunities in areas such as millets, natural farming, disaster resilience, green energy, traditional medicine and health security.

"No ordinary grouping"
Later, in a post on social media, Mr. Modi said the IBSA reflects "our enduring commitment to strengthening the voice and aspirations of the Global South. IBSA is no ordinary grouping."

"Ours is a bond that is heartfelt, carrying with it diversity, shared values and shared aspirations. All three IBSA nations have held the G20 Presidency in the last three years and have used this opportunity to further the human-centric agenda," he said.

The IBSA grouping focuses on promoting South-South cooperation, pushing for reforms in global governance systems and enhancing collaboration among developing nations.

In September, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, Brazilian Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira, and the Minister in the Presidency for Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities of South Africa Sindiswa Chikanga had met on the sidelines of the annual United Nations General Assembly session in New York.

The Ministers had called for an ambitious, comprehensive and profound reform of the United Nations, particularly the UN Security Council, to adapt it to contemporary geopolitical realities and address new global challenges.

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi with South African President Cyril Ramaphosa (left) and Brazil President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. (AP)

1. Call for UNSC Reform



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PM Modi emphasised that reforms of the UN Security Council were no longer optional but necessary. His key argument:

- The current global landscape is fragmented and institutionally outdated.
- IBSA should send a clear and unified message for restructuring global governance.

2. IBSA's Strategic Importance

Modi characterised IBSA as:

- A platform linking three continents (Asia, Africa, South America)
- Three major democracies
- Three emerging economies
- A core voice of the Global South

3. Strengthening Security & Defence Coordination

He proposed:

- Institutionalising the IBSA National Security Adviser (NSA)-level meeting.
- Enhanced cooperation in counter-terrorism, with zero tolerance for double standards.

4. Technology & Development Cooperation

Modi made two major proposals:

1. IBSA Digital Innovation Alliance
 - Sharing digital public infrastructure (UPI, CoWIN)
 - Cybersecurity frameworks
 - Support for women-led tech initiatives
2. IBSA Fund for Climate-Resilient Agriculture
 - Expansion of South-South cooperation
 - Focus on agriculture, environment, and sustainability

5. Convergence of G-20 Presidencies

- Current IBSA meeting coincides with the first G-20 Summit on African soil.
- Last three G-20 Presidencies (India, Brazil, South Africa) have been held by IBSA members.
- This reflects the growing leadership role of the Global South.



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PM calls for global compact on AI to prevent misuse

The pact must be based on certain core principles like effective human oversight, safety-by-design, transparency, and restrictions on AI use in deepfakes, crime, terror activities, says Modi at G-20

Press Trust of India
JOHANNESBURG

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday called for a global compact to prevent misuse of artificial intelligence (AI), and made a strong pitch for critical technologies to be "human-centric", instead of "finance-centric".

Addressing the third session of the G-20 Summit on the topic "A fair and a just future for all - critical minerals; decent work; artificial intelligence", Mr. Modi said technology applications should be "global" rather than "national" and based on "open source" rather than "exclusive models". Mr. Modi said that this vision had been integrated into India's technology ecosystem, and it had resulted in significant benefits, be it in space applications, AI or digital payments, where it is a world leader.

"We must all ensure that AI is used for global good and its misuse is prevented. To do this, we must create a global compact on AI, based on certain core



Laying out a road map: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other world leaders during a session at the G-20 Summit held in Johannesburg on Sunday. PTI

principles, including effective human oversight, safety-by-design, transparency, and strict restrictions on the use of AI in deepfakes, crime, and terror activities," Mr. Modi said.

The Prime Minister said AI systems that impact human life, security, or public trust must be "responsible and auditable". "And most importantly, AI should enhance human capabilities, but the ultimate responsibility for decision-making always remains with humans," he

added. He said that in this age of AI, the approach must rapidly shift from "jobs of today" to "capabilities of tomorrow". "Unlocking talent mobility is essential for rapid innovation. We made progress on this topic at the Delhi G20. We hope that in the next few years, the G-20 will develop a global framework for talent mobility," he said.

Mr. Modi said that under the India-AI Mission, accessible high-performance computing capacity was

being built with the aim of ensuring that AI benefits reached everyone.

The Prime Minister said India would be hosting the AI Impact Summit in February 2026 with the theme "Sarvajanam Hitaya, Sarvajanam Sukhaya" [welfare for all, happiness for all]. He articulated India's message for global well-being, asserting that it stood for development that is sustainable, trade that is trusted, finance that is fair, and progress in which everyone prospers.

1. Preventing AI Misuse

At the G-20 session, PM Modi called for a global compact on AI, stressing the need to prevent:

- Deepfakes
- Cybercrime
- Terrorist use of AI
- Erosion of public trust

Core principles proposed:

- Human oversight
- Safety-by-design
- Transparency standards
- Restrictions on illicit use

2. Human-Centric vs. Finance-Centric Technology

Modi insisted that technology should aim for:

- Human development



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- Ethical deployment
- Inclusive and global access

Not for:

- Profit-centric or exclusive models : This aligns with India's approach in digital governance—UPI, CoWIN, Jan Dhan, and Aadhaar-based digital ecosystems.

3. Ensuring Accountability

Modi stressed:

- AI systems affecting security or public trust must be responsible and auditable.
- Humans must retain final decision-making authority.

4. Preparing for Future Jobs

He emphasised:

- Moving focus from "jobs of today" to "capabilities of tomorrow."
- Unlocking global talent mobility, with hopes of a G-20 framework emerging soon.

5. India-AI Mission and Global Leadership

- India is developing high-performance computing capacity for AI inclusion.
- Modi announced India's upcoming AI Impact Summit (2026) under the theme "Sarvajanam Hitaya, Sarvajanam Sukhaya."

Geopolitical Significance

1. India as the Leader of the Global South

Through IBSA and repeated G-20 activism, India is positioning itself as:

- A representative of developing nations
- A reformist demanding institutional change
- A key player in shaping tech ethics globally

2. UNSC Reform Narrative Gets Stronger

India's argument:

- Current UNSC structure reflects post-World War II realities, not contemporary geopolitics.
- Global South must have permanent representation.
- IBSA's joint push strengthens diplomatic weight.

3. AI Governance as a Future Global Agenda

India is pushing for:

- A universal, rules-based AI system
- Ethical safeguards
- Equal innovation opportunities

This strengthens India's image as a responsible tech power.



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Conclusion

Prime Minister Modi's statements at both the IBSA and G-20 platforms highlight India's dual diplomatic strategy: modernising global political institutions like the UNSC and shaping the emerging global tech landscape with ethical and inclusive norms. Together, these initiatives emphasise India's aspiration to be not only a major economic and strategic power, but also a norm-setter for global governance in the 21st century.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques: Consider the following statements regarding IBSA:

1. IBSA is a trilateral forum comprising India, Brazil, and South Africa.
2. IBSA is a part of BRICS and functions under the BRICS framework.
3. One of the key objectives of IBSA is promoting South–South cooperation.

Which of the statements are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: b)

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques : UNSC reforms are no longer an option but a necessity. Discuss in the context of IBSA's position at the UN.
(150 words)



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Page 06 : GS 3 : Environment

COP30, held in Belém, Brazil, ended with countries acknowledging the need to “transition away from fossil fuels,” but the final Mutirão (coming together) agreement placed greater emphasis on climate adaptation, climate finance,



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and safeguarding developing countries' economic interests. The summit reflected enduring ideological divides on phasing out fossil fuels and highlighted the urgency of scaling up adaptation finance for climate-vulnerable nations.

COP30 stresses 'adaptation' as path to fossil fuel-free world

Countries have called to 'at least triple' adaptation finance by 2035 and to hold a systematic dialogue, with existing UN trade forums on ensuring that measures to combat climate change do not impede trade or growth in developing countries

NEWS ANALYSIS

Jacob Koshy
NEW DELHI

The deliberations at COP30, which concluded in Brazil on Saturday, underlined that while countries agreed upon transitioning away from fossil fuel, more emphasis ought to be laid on adapting to climate change rather than defining road maps to end use of fossil fuels.

As the text of the consensus, called the Mutirão (coming together) agreement, says, countries have agreed to establish a two-year "work programme" on climate finance; called for efforts to "at least triple" adaptation finance by 2035. They have agreed to a systematic dialogue with participation from United Nations' trade forums – for example, International Trade Centre, the UN Conference on Trade and Development and the World Trade Organization – on how measures to combat climate change should not impede trade and growth of developing countries.

Climate finance refers to money that must be dis-



André Corrêa do Lago, COP30 President, sits as Simon Stiell, UN climate chief, left, speaks with other UN officials during a plenary session in Belem, Brazil, on Saturday. AP

bursed by developed countries to developing ones. The aim of COPs (Conference of Parties) has been on delivering climate finance evenly for mitigation (avoiding fossil fuel projects and funding renewable energy) and adaptation (building infrastructure to better shield against climate change, investing in resilient agriculture, and so on). However, mitigation projects are generally more business-friendly and have garnered more attention.

"While the adaptation finance decision wasn't what developing countries

wanted, it helps ensure that funding for adaptation will continue to grow... Even though the deadline is a decade away, developed countries can't be complacent and must immediately get to work, scaling up adaptation support. Having this goal within the framework of the NCQG means that developed countries take the lead, with other countries encouraged to contribute voluntarily," Joe Thwaites, International Climate Finance Director, Natural Resources Defense Council, a global think tank, said in a statement. New Collec-

tive Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQG) refers to an agreement in COP29, Baku, by developed countries to mobilise \$300 billion annually by 2035 and work towards expanding it to \$1.3 trillion annually from all sources.

Ideological divide

The deliberations at the COP through the years have often been framed as a contest between two ideological blocs – those that want hard targets and road maps on phasing out of fossil fuels and those that resist them.

India, for instance, in

the final leg of deliberations on Saturday, expressed "satisfaction with major outcomes" of COP30 such as a Just Transition Mechanism (JTM) and for "delivering the space" to discuss Unilateral Trade-restrictive Climate Measures. "These issues cannot continue to be brushed under the carpet. The Parties have made a beginning here to reverse this trend," a statement by a group of largely developing countries noted. The JTM refers to a process whereby labour systems can be made to adapt to a future away from fossil fuel in a way that promotes justice and equity.

The COP30 Mutirão agreement has no mention of 'fossil fuels' or a road map to end their use – meaning they are not part of the consensus agreement. COP President André Lago's commitment to creating two road maps – one on halting and reversing deforestation and another on transitioning away from fossil fuels in a just, orderly, and equitable manner, is viewed as a placatory measure towards the European Union and countries demanding an end to use of fossil fuels.

Key Outcomes of COP30

1. Strong Emphasis on Adaptation

- Countries agreed to "at least triple" adaptation finance by 2035.
- Establishment of a two-year work programme on climate finance.



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- Recognition that adaptation (resilience-building, climate-proofed infrastructure, agriculture) needs greater global attention compared to mitigation.

Why Adaptation?

- Developing countries disproportionately face:
 - Extreme weather damages
 - Agricultural losses
 - Coastal vulnerability
- Adaptation has historically been underfunded because mitigation is more business-friendly.

2. Systematic Dialogue on Climate Measures & Trade

- COP30 calls for dialogue with major UN trade bodies:
 - ITC, UNCTAD, WTO
- Objective: Ensure climate policies like CBAM, carbon taxes, and supply-chain standards do not hinder trade or growth of developing nations.
- This aligns with India's long-standing demand for addressing:
 - Unilateral trade-restrictive climate measures
 - Global climate inequities

3. Climate Finance: A Core Pillar

- The summit reaffirmed the NCQG (New Collective Quantified Goal):
 - \$300 billion annually by 2035
 - Aiming upwards to \$1.3 trillion per year
- Developed countries expected to take the lead; others can contribute voluntarily.

Developing Countries' Concerns

- Adaptation finance commitments still fall short.



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- Implementation deadlines are long-term (10+ years), causing uncertainty.
- Need for predictable, concessional, and grant-based finance.

4. Ideological Divide: Fossil Fuel Phase-out vs. Space for Equity

No mention of "fossil fuels" in the COP30 consensus text

- The agreement does not include targets or timelines for ending fossil fuel use.
- Reflects resistance from developing nations that:
 - Depend on fossil fuel revenue
 - Require energy access for growth
 - Demand fairness and equity in transition pathways

India's Position

- Welcomed:
 - Just Transition Mechanism (JTM)
 - Platform to discuss unfair trade-restrictive climate measures
- Emphasised that climate transition must be: just, orderly, equitable, and consider development needs.

5. COP President's Separate Road Maps (Not part of the consensus)

To appease countries demanding stronger action, the COP Presidency announced two non-binding road maps:

1. Halting and reversing deforestation
2. Transitioning away from fossil fuels

These serve as political balancing tools but lack legal weight in the final agreement.

Conclusion

COP30 underscores a shifting climate diplomacy landscape where adaptation, fairness, and development space for the Global South take centre stage. While mitigation remains essential, the absence of fossil fuel phase-out targets



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in the final text reveals persistent geopolitical divides. The outcomes reaffirm that any meaningful climate transition must balance climate ambition with equity, finance, and growth needs—especially for developing nations like India.

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques: COP30 has shifted the global climate narrative from fossil fuel phase-out to climate adaptation. Discuss the significance of this shift for developing countries, especially India. **(250 Words)**

Page 10 : GS 2 : Indian Polity

State Public Service Commissions (PSCs) are constitutional bodies created to ensure merit-based recruitment for State civil services. However, frequent controversies, exam cancellations, paper leaks, litigation, and delays have eroded their credibility. As the 2025 National Conference of State PSC Chairpersons convenes in Telangana, the need for structural and procedural reforms has become urgent to restore public trust.



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How can State PSCs be reformed?

How did the Montagu-Chelmsford report lead to the establishment of present-day Public Service Commissions? What is the role of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions? Is a periodical review of the examination syllabi necessary?

EXPLAINER

Gopalakrishna, V.

The story so far: The 2025 national conference of chairpersons of the State Public Service Commissions (SPSCs) is being hosted by the Telangana State Public Service Commission on December 19 and 20. Every year, whenever State PSCs conduct examinations for recruitment, they are mired in one controversy or the other. Aspirants often have to seek judicial recourse, due to which the entire process is delayed, leading to a 'time deficit'. This is an outcome of systemic lapses, both structural and procedural, which exist in almost all State PSCs. This conference would be an apt occasion to discuss such issues and more.

What is the history of PSCs? The PSCs in India are a product of India's struggle for independence. The entry of Indians into the civil services on the role criterion of merit was embedded in the demand for 'self-rule'. The Montagu-Chelmsford report accepted the demand and proposed a permanent office free from political influence to regulate service matters. The first Public Service Commission for the Union was formed in 1925. Later the Government of India Act, 1935 provided for the establishment of one PSC for each province. These provisions were continued by the framers of the Constitution, and so today we have a Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and PSCs in each State to primarily serve the needs of recruitment.

How are these commissions structured? The UPSC functions in a relatively politically sterile environment. The members are appointed based on merit and rich prior experience in public affairs. Moreover, representation of members from all zones of the country is ensured. While the Constitution does not mention minimum age or qualifications, most of the appointed members are at least above the age of 35, and enjoy a reputation of being apolitical. On the other hand, State PSCs operate in a politically opaque environment and the provincial spoils system is visible in the appointment process. The constitutional requirements of minimum age, qualifications and public experience are often a sheer bluff.

The Union government has vast manpower needs. This is matched by financial resources to meet the recruitment obligations of the superannuated and the remunerative needs of fresh entrants. It has also created a dedicated authority, the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions in 1985, to formulate all policies in the field of personnel management. This ensures regular declaration of vacancies by the government enabling the UPSC to notify, conduct and declare the results of the examinations conducted by it with regularity and promptness. In contrast, the manpower needs of the States are limited and not planned. Often, they lack the financial resources to meet the retirement and recruitment obligations of their employees leading to extension of the superannuation age and postponement of recruitment. Most State governments do not have a dedicated Ministry of Personnel. And therefore, vacancies are not notified regularly by the government which effectively means that State PSCs are not required to conduct



Aspirants Applicants of Telangana State Public Service Commission Group 2 warm stage a protest to postpone the exam, in Hyderabad in 2022. <https://www.thehindu.com>

the examinations regularly.

How do they work? The UPSC undertakes a periodical exercise of establishing committees comprising not only of academicians but also civil servants, social activists etc. to recommend changes in the syllabi and achieve a balance between academic and contemporary developments. They are able to tap the best talent from across the country to formulate question papers and also evaluate them. A time tested method of 'inter-se' moderation of scores is followed at different levels of the examination to ensure subjectivity. The UPSC ably balances conflicting interests of transparency and confidentiality by being quick to respond to any lapses and making systemic changes so that aspirants do not often have to seek judicial recourse for grievances.

On the other hand, State PSCs do not appoint committees regularly to redraft the syllabi, are constrained to tap academic resources from within the State and are not able to achieve satisfactory 'inter-se' moderation in evaluation. They also have the daunting task of making complex calculations to accurately incorporate not only vertical reservations but also horizontal reservations. Meeting the demands of regional quotas in the form of rural reservations adds to this complexity. All these lead to continuous litigation in one form or the other delaying the recruitment process. These are some of the main reasons limiting the efficient functioning of State PSCs and their declining credibility. Often aggrieved students comment that they have lost faith in State Commissions and would like the UPSC to conduct the examinations. Time bound structural and procedural reforms are required to restore faith in State PSCs.

What can be done?

First, manpower planning should be systematised and a separate ministry should be created for personnel management. This Ministry should clearly lay out a five-year road map for recruitment as that State PSCs are able to notify and conduct the examination process.

Along the lines of the 124th amendment of the Constitution (1978), which raised the maximum age limit of the members of State PSCs from 62 to 64 years in order to attract meritorious and experienced civil servants, there is a need for another amendment. The minimum age for appointment as a member should be fixed at 35 and the maximum age at 65. The acquisition of minimum age will enable appointment of experienced individuals while increasing the maximum age will enable State PSCs to benefit from the experience of senior civil servants who have retired at 60 for a longer period than under the existing provisions.

This amendment could also specify the necessary qualifications that members need in order to be appointed. For example, in order to be an official member, experience as Secretary to a State government or a post equivalent to this rank should be stipulated while for 'non-official' members 10 years of practice in a recognised profession like law, medicine, or engineering should be stipulated. A mandatory pre-consultation with the leader of the Opposition before appointment may be considered for non-official members. Thus, a State wide panel of eminent people – those with high standing, integrity, merit and independence – should be constituted and periodically updated.

Secondly, the syllabi should be revised periodically, keeping in view the

changing academic scenario and the syllabi for examinations as stipulated by the UPSC. Every proposal for revision should be placed in the public domain and changes can be made after public consultation. Knowledge on State specific areas like regional history, regional economy and regional geography, in which the availability of faculty is limited, should be tested in the objective type format so that there would be no scope for complaint on the grounds of asymmetry of information and value laden correction. Thus, while the preliminary examination may continue in the objective format, the main examination should be a mixture of objective and subjective papers. The process of translation of the questions from English to the regional language should not only involve technology for accuracy but also the human element so that the right meaning is conveyed. Care should be taken to regularly change the pattern of questions so that the role of 'Aid-memoria' both as a source of information for formulating answers, is effectively countered.

Finally, the Secretary of the State PSC should be a senior officer with prior experience as either a Commissioner of School Education or Secretary of the Board of Intermediate Education to enable effective supervision of the examination branch of the Commission. Transparency and confidentiality should be followed on the lines of the UPSC.

If these changes are effected, one would have vibrant Public Service Commissions at the State level on par with the Union Public Service Commission.

The writer is the former Director of State IAS Hyderabad and has been engaged in teaching public administration for the last 35 years.

THE GIST

➤ The entry of Indians into the civil services on the role criterion of merit was embedded in the demand for 'self-rule'.

➤ The manpower needs of the States are limited and not planned. Often, they lack the financial resources to meet the retirement and recruitment obligations of their employees leading to extension of the superannuation age and postponement of recruitment.

➤ State PSCs do not appoint committees regularly to redraft the syllabi, are constrained to tap academic resources from within the State, and are not able to achieve satisfactory 'inter-se' moderation in evaluation.

Historical Background: How the Montagu-Chelmsford Report Shaped PSCs

- During India's national movement, Indians demanded merit-based entry into civil services and protection from political interference.
- Montagu-Chelmsford Report (1918) accepted this demand and recommended establishing a permanent, politically neutral body for service matters.



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- Based on this:
 - The first Public Service Commission was set up in 1926 for the Union.
 - Government of India Act, 1935 created PSCs for provinces.
- The Constitution continued this system, giving us UPSC and State PSCs under Articles 315–323.

Why are State PSCs Facing a Trust Deficit?

1. Political Interference in Appointments

- Unlike UPSC, State PSCs operate in a politically osmotic environment.
- Conventional criteria—age, qualifications, integrity—are often ignored.
- “Spoils system” results in appointments lacking experience or neutrality.

2. Poor Manpower Planning

- States do not have a dedicated Ministry for personnel management.
- Vacancies are irregular, unpredictable, and often delayed due to:
 - Financial constraints
 - Ad-hoc extension of retirement ages
 - Lack of workforce planning
- This makes exam calendars inconsistent.

3. Weak Examination Processes

- Syllabi are not updated periodically.
- Committees to review patterns or content are rare.
- Limited academic pool—State PSCs often rely on local experts only.
- Evaluation suffers due to lack of proper inter-se moderation.
- Complex calculation of:



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- vertical reservations,
- horizontal reservations,
- and zonal/regional quotas leads to litigation.

4. Frequent Legal Challenges

- Errors in question papers, answer keys, translations, reservation allocation, and scoring push aspirants to courts.
- Result: recruitment gets stuck for years → youth unemployment increases → erosion of faith.

Role of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions (MoPPG&P)

- Created in 1985 by the Union Government.
- Manages:
 - personnel policy
 - training (DoPT)
 - grievances
 - pensions
- Ensures regular vacancy reporting by ministries, enabling UPSC to conduct exams annually, smoothly, and on time.
- The absence of similar institutional capacity at the State level is a major reason for the decline of State PSCs.

Is a Periodic Syllabus Review Necessary?

Yes, absolutely.

UPSC updates its syllabi through committees of:

- civil servants
- academics
- subject experts



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- social sector representatives

Periodic revision is important because:

- academic disciplines evolve
- contemporary issues must be reflected
- outdated content makes exams irrelevant
- lack of revision leads to repetitive, predictable patterns
- it helps counter misuse of AI tools by varying question formats

State PSCs lack such committees, making syllabi stagnant and increasing errors.

What Reforms Are Required?

1. Structural Reforms

A. Dedicated State Ministry for Personnel Management

- Similar to the Union DoPT.
- Should prepare a 5-year recruitment calendar.
- Ensure regular vacancy notifications.

B. Constitutional Amendment on PSC Membership

- 41st Amendment (1976) raised retirement age from 60 to 62.
- A new amendment could:
 - fix minimum age at 55
 - fix maximum age at 65
 - stipulate required qualifications
 - define "official" and "non-official" member eligibility
 - mandate consultation with Leader of Opposition



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This would attract experienced civil servants and avoid politicised appointments.

2. Procedural Reforms

A. Periodic Syllabus Revision

- Should be reviewed every 3–5 years.
- Public consultation before finalising changes.
- Objective testing for State-specific subjects (history, geography, economy) to reduce subjectivity.

B. Improve Translation Accuracy

- Combine technology and human editing.
- Many errors arise from poor translation of English questions into regional languages.

C. Mix of Objective and Subjective Papers

- Prelims → fully objective
- Mains → mix of objective + descriptive This reduces evaluation bias while retaining analytical rigour.

D. Stronger Moderation and Evaluation Systems

- UPSC-style inter-se moderation.
- Use external experts from across India to reduce local influence.

E. Strengthen Administrative Capacity

- PSC Secretaries should be senior officers with prior exam administration experience (e.g., School Education Commissioner).

F. Transparency Balanced with Confidentiality

- Quick corrective action
- Real-time updates
- Clear grievance redressal mechanisms



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Way Forward

- The credibility crisis of State PSCs requires urgent political will.
- Reforms should be codified, not depend on individual PSC chairpersons.
- Uniform national standards (minimum eligibility, moderation, evaluation norms) can be developed while preserving State autonomy.

Conclusion

State PSCs were envisioned as pillars of meritocracy, insulated from political pressures, similar to UPSC. However, structural weaknesses, inconsistent manpower planning, politicised appointments, and outdated processes have eroded their credibility. With systematic reforms—structural, academic, and administrative—State PSCs can once again emerge as trustworthy institutions delivering timely, transparent, and merit-based recruitment essential for effective governance in India.

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques: The trust deficit surrounding State Public Service Commissions is a result of both structural flaws and procedural weaknesses. Critically examine. **(150 Words)**



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The letter has won but the spirit has not lost

The Republic of India has had 15 Presidents over 16 presidencies, its inaugural President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad having served two terms. Of the number of Governors appointed since 1947, the figure is too large to be counted.

The holders of these two high offices can do great good, sometimes not a little harm and very or most often, prefer an almost Advaitic selflessness that leaves no mark whatever – a self-protecting mechanism. It is better to be not remembered at all than remembered negatively. I have often wondered why these high functionaries, when they are males as they invariably are, carry pens in the pockets of their coats. The pen is almost a piece of their essential 'getting ready'-ness. It makes them seem ever-ready to sign the paper put up to them, wherever they are.

The master cartoonist, Abu Abraham, immortalised the 1975 moment when the then President signed the proclamation of the national emergency by a searing cartoon that showed him signing the paper when it was brought to him (this time with the stylus) at a very odd moment. Signatures can be affixed all too easily, when what is required is saying, 'No, very sorry, but no.' The reason may be plain gratitude for being where the Excellency wants to be.

Equally, when a signature is declined not out of genuine reservations but out of bias, an Abu Abraham or an R.K. Laxman is needed to depict the scene. Assents when given in fear or refusal out of bias are infractions of Constitutional responsibility.

Reflections from the past

As one who knows that sometimes a signature (and more) can be affixed by a President on his own, without 'aid or advice' and without a care on whether what he was doing would 'go down well or not', I must recall here President R. Venkataraman (his years in office: 1987-92) and President K. R. Narayanan (years in office: 1997-2002). The pen was used by RV, confidently. It was used by KRN, independently. No cabinet as much as whispered disquiet. Morality was not coy with them, nor fairness halting.

The Prime Ministers RV's term coincided with – Rajiv Gandhi, V.P. Singh and Chandra Shekhar – were all strong-willed men but they were first-time incumbents of their pivotal office while RV's experience of political and constitutional office was infinitely bigger. It was natural that they deferred to him when on Bills or other recommendations he had a view contrary to the cabinet's; he put it across to them in one-on-one confidential discussions, that being his way. The fourth Prime Minister who overlapped with RV, P.V. Narasimha Rao, thought-partnered him more than he did his own cabinet colleagues. There was no scope for friction.

In 1997, the Union Cabinet headed by Prime



Gopalkrishna Gandhi

was Secretary to the President, and a Governor of West Bengal and Bihar

Minister I.K. Gujral recommended to KRN the dismissal of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in Uttar Pradesh headed by Kalyan Singh. KRN's world view and that of the BJP did not match. But he was the President of India, not just a resident of Rashtrapati Bhavan, answerable to the values of the Constitution. He did not agree with the recommendation of dismissal and sent it back for reconsideration. The recommendation did not come back.

By 1998, the BJP was in power at the Centre and the newly appointed Governor of Bihar recommended that the government of Rabri Devi be dismissed and President's Rule imposed under Article 356 of the Constitution of India. The Governor had sent what was claimed to be a fool-proof case showing financial mismanagement and poor law and order markers. KRN demurred, and sent the recommendation back. Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee's cabinet did not repeat the recommendation. KRN's action in returning these recommendations had no politics to it. Zero. It had only fairness, Constitutional fairness. It had only morality, Constitutional morality. Fairness and morality are unmistakable. As are their opposites.

RV and KRN could be frank with the government when frankness was called for and they were not misunderstood for the government knew that the frankness came from a desire to caution and correct, not to criticise.

'Alert and alive'

Presidents and Governors are meant to be men and women with minds that are alert and alive to the letter of the Constitution and to its spirit in an evolving nation. They should see that recommendations made to them adhere to the letter, knowing that the letter can be used sometimes to subvert the spirit – an irony that the framers of the Constitution could not have anticipated. Would Babasaheb Ambedkar have thought that could have happened? The Constitution of India has been made by honest intentions for honest actuation.

No file was held by RV and KRN for more than a few days. They did not have to be detective-Presidents. No delay was orchestrated during which confabulations could be held, and opinions sought in huddles, and given in whispers. No pocket was deepened for a pocket-veto to be exercised.

But their sense of Constitutional morality and fairness did not make them look out for flaws or faults or fallibilities as a full-time occupation, 24x7.

The President and Governors are neither robots, nor are they ring-masters. They are not inert rubber stamps that are pressed gently or not-so-gently onto any parchment that the government of the day places before them; they would make laughing stocks of themselves if they

were that. Nor are they pens that can choose any colour of ink or any vocabulary of their choice when expressing a Constitutional view.

Conservative and realistic

The 'answers' of the five-judge Bench headed by the Chief Justice of India (CJI) B.R. Gavai, and including CJI-designate Surya Kant, to President Droupadi Murmu's 16th Presidential Reference is imbued with this verity. The Bench has said that Governors cannot have a date-line fixed by the Supreme Court of India for their study of Bills – upholding the letter of the Constitution. The Bench has also said unambiguously that 'evasive inaction' is not 'on' either – upholding the spirit of the Constitution.

In saying the former, the Bench has been conservative. In saying the latter, it has been realistic. The Bench has made it clear that it knows that action and inaction by Governors may not be because they are studious and industrious but because they may be politically predisposed. The answers of the judges have said that no calendar can be hung on a Governor's wall that says 'This is your deadline'.

Their answers have also placed a clock on their desk that ticks loud and clear and has an informal alarm that can ring if the 'study' has prolonged beyond normal study hours, leaving it open for the delay to be raised in court.

The Constitution of India, especially in matters concerning Centre-State relations – or to put it differently, on matters affecting India's federal polity – takes two to work it, but just one, on either side, to wreck it. Ultimately, the working of a Constitutional arrangement depends on the two – legislature and the Governor/President – playing their roles with respect for the Constitution and for each other.

It is remarkable that the five judges unequivocally declined to school either side, or to assume the role of tutor. They have given neither side victory or defeat. The letter of the law has won, but the spirit of the law has not been defeated. In what is an opinion, not an order (for they were not handling an appeal), they have said what is exactly right: the Supreme Court should not, will not, say how a President or Governor should or should not act. That would amount to 'clutching at a jurisdiction' (a favourite phrase of RV's) which is not their's.

Has the Bench done an exercise in balancing? It has not. It has done an exercise for balance between the power to do right and the right way to do it.

The Indian polity needs to be run not by power games played by adroit players. It needs to be governed by men and women who, when in high office, rise above their limitations. Some incumbents make their offices great, some offices make their incumbents great. The tragedy, as the judges have seen, is that the opposite is equally true.

In the 16th Presidential Reference, the top court has upheld the letter and the spirit of the Constitution



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GS. Paper 2 Indian Polity

UPSC Mains Practice Question : The letter of the Constitution may empower, but its spirit guides. In the context of the role of Governors, discuss how constitutional morality and political neutrality are essential for India's federal balance. **(250 words)**

Context :

The recent five-judge Bench opinion on the 16th Presidential Reference regarding the powers of Governors in withholding, delaying, or returning Bills has revived an important debate in Indian federalism. While the Supreme Court upheld the letter of the Constitution by reiterating that Governors cannot be assigned judicial deadlines for assenting to Bills, it also emphasised that indefinite 'evasive inaction' is unconstitutional, preserving the spirit of cooperative federalism.

Gopalkrishna Gandhi, former Governor of West Bengal and Bihar, uses historical anecdotes to highlight how great constitutional functionaries—such as R. Venkataraman (RV) and K.R. Narayanan (KRN)—balanced constitutional morality, fairness, and independence in decision-making. He contrasts their approach with current tendencies of political predisposition, delay, and misuse of constitutional offices.

Key Issues raised in the article

1. Constitutional Role of Presidents and Governors

- They are expected to act with "alert and alive minds" to both the letter and the spirit of the Constitution.
- They must avoid becoming:
 - Rubber stamps (blindly assenting)
 - Ringmasters (exceeding their authority)
 - Political agents of the Centre or a particular party.

2. Historical Precedents of Constitutional Morality

(a) President R. Venkataraman (1987–92)

- Exercised the power to question or return Cabinet recommendations.
- Clear communication with Prime Ministers, without conflict or delay.
- Demonstrated independence without confrontation.

(b) President K.R. Narayanan (1997–2002)

- Returned the recommendation to dismiss the Kalyan Singh UP government, despite ideological differences with BJP.



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- Returned the Bihar Governor's recommendation to dismiss the Rabri Devi government under Article 356.
- Actions were based purely on Constitutional fairness, not politics.

These instances reflect how constitutional offices can strengthen democracy through independence and integrity.

3. Supreme Court's Position in the 16th Presidential Reference

What the Court Said

- No fixed time-limit can be imposed on Governors/Presidents to study Bills.
- But indefinite delay or "evasive inaction" is unconstitutional.
- Courts will not micro-manage how Governors should act.
- The judgment balances:
 - Constitutional conservatism: respecting the text
 - Pragmatic realism: acknowledging political misuse

What the Court Essentially Did

- Did not give "victory" to either the States or the Governors.
- Placed an informal clock on the Governor's conduct.
- Affirmed that:
 - Letter of the law is protected
 - Spirit of the Constitution remains undefeated

Critical analysis

1. Politicisation of Constitutional Offices

- Increasing friction between elected state governments and appointed Governors.
- Long delays in granting assent to Bills undermine:
 - Legislative supremacy in a democracy
 - Federal balance
 - People's mandate

2. Judicial Modesty vs. Judicial Responsibility

The Court:

- Avoided overstepping its jurisdiction.
- Yet ensured that constitutional morality guides the functioning of high offices. This approach reinforces:
- Separation of powers



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- Spirit of federalism
- Checks without confrontation

3. Need for Constitutional Morality

- Ambedkar warned that a good Constitution can become ineffective if not worked with good intent.
- The article echoes this: "The Constitution has been made by honest intentions for honest actuation."

The crisis today is less about law and more about political culture and moral responsibility.

4. Relevance to Cooperative Federalism

- Governors' delays in assenting to Bills undermine federal stability.
- Court's guidance ensures:
 - No arbitrary interference
 - No legislative paralysis
 - A neutral mechanism to challenge delays

5. Lessons from RV and KRN

- Constitutional morality is personal, not textual.
- Independence can be exercised without hostility.
- High offices need:
 - Integrity
 - Discretion
 - Fairness
 - Courage to say 'No' when required

Conclusion

The Supreme Court's opinion represents a balanced reaffirmation of India's constitutional architecture. By upholding both the letter and the spirit of the Constitution, it protects federalism from political distortions. Gopalkrishna Gandhi's reflections remind us that the health of a constitutional democracy ultimately depends not only on legal provisions but on the ethical conduct of those who hold high office.

As India's polity becomes more complex and contested, the need for Presidents and Governors who rise above politics and embody constitutional morality is both urgent and indispensable. The Court has drawn a line—not rigid but firm—ensuring that while constitutional authorities are free to act, they are never free to act with bias or inaction.



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