

Kerala university (amendment) bill

- 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 Arif Mohammed Khan as the Chancellor of said universities.

What do the Bills say?

- The proposed legislation 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, thus ending the Governor's watchdog role in university administration.
- The Bills also provide provisions to limit the term of the appointed chancellor to five years.

Why is the State government amending University laws?

- The Minister for Law, P. Rajeev, while tabling the Bills, pointed out that the UGC guidelines, which earlier used to be considered mandatory for Central universities

and “partially mandatory and partially directive” for State universities, had been made legally binding for all universities by way of recent rulings by the Supreme Court.

- “Worryingly, such precedence pointed towards a scenario in which the legislative powers of the Assembly on all subjects on the Concurrent List (of the Constitution) could be undermined through a subordinate legislation or an executive order issued by the Centre,”
- Moreover, the State government has claimed the recommendation of the Punchhi Commission on Centre-State Relations to refrain from “burdening the Governor with positions and powers which are not envisaged by the Constitution and which may lead the office to controversies or public criticism” as the rationale behind the Bills.

What are the arguments against the Bill?

- As described above, the Bills would give the State Government more leeway in appointing its own nominees as VCs of State Universities.
- This would mean a transfer of power over university administration from

the Governor and the UGC to the State Government.

- While both the ruling front and the Opposition seem united in stripping away the Governor's Chancellorship, the Opposition fears that the State Government would try to turn State universities into its fiefdom, leading to the erosion of the autonomy universities enjoy.

THE HINDU

Agni V

- India on successfully test -fired nuclear- capable ballistic missile Agni -V that can strike targets at ranges up to 5,000 km, marking a significant boost to the country's strategic deterrence, people familiar with the development said.
- The test- firing of the missile from the APJ Abdul Kalam Island off Odisha coast comes amid India's lingering border row with China.
- Agni-V can bring almost the entire Asia including the northernmost part of China and regions in Europe under its striking range.

THE HINDU

ABOUT THE AGNI V PROJECT

- The Agni V project is aimed at boosting India's nuclear deterrence

against China, which is known to have missiles like Dongfeng-41 having ranges between 12,000-15,000 km.

- 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.
- The Agni 1 to 4 missiles have ranges from 700 km to 3,500 km and they have already been deployed.
- In June, India successfully carried out a night launch of the nuclear-capable Agni-4 ballistic missile, in a boost to India's military capabilities.

THE HINDU

WB Report on air pollution

- Currently, over 60% of South Asians are exposed to an average 35 g/m³ of PM_{2.5} annually.
- In some parts of the Indo -Gangetic Plain (IGP) it spiked to as much as 100 g/m³ nearly 20 times the upper limit of 5 g/m³ recommended by the World Health Organisation, says the World Bank report.
- The six major airshed in South Asia where air quality in one affected the other were: West/Central IGP that included Punjab (Pakistan), Punjab (India), Haryana, part of Rajasthan, Chandigarh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh;

Central/ Eastern IGP: Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bangladesh;

- Middle India: Odisha/Chhattisgarh; Middle India: Eastern Gujarat/Western Maharashtra;
- Northern/Central Indus River Plain: Pakistan, part of Afghanistan; and Southern Indus Plain and further west: South Pakistan, Western Afghanistan extending into Eastern Iran.
- When the wind direction was predominantly northwest to the southeast, 30% of the air pollution in Indian Punjab came from the Punjab Province in Pakistan and, on average, 30% of the air pollution in the largest cities of Bangladesh (Dhaka, Chittagong, and Khulna) originated in India.
- In some years, substantial pollution flowed in the other direction across borders.
- What this means is that even if Delhi National Capital Territory were to fully implement all air pollution control measures by 2030 while other parts of South Asia continued to follow current policies, it wouldn't keep pollution exposure below 35 g/m³.
- However, if other parts of South Asia also adopted all feasible measures it would bring pollution below that number.

Indo pacific

CHINA ON INDO PACIFIC

- There “is no such concept as Indo-Pacific” which was “created by the United States” to bring in partners such as India to “contain” China.
- “The U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy is becoming a byword for bloc politics,”
- “It professes a desire for international cooperation, but in reality is stoking regional rivalry.
- From Five Eyes and Quad to AUKUS... The real goal of the Indo-Pacific strategy is to establish an Indo-Pacific version of NATO.
- “Five Eyes” intelligence alliance involving Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the U.S. and U.K., and the AUKUS (Australia-U.K.- U.S.) defense pact.
- The Five Eyes (FVEY) is an intelligence alliance comprising Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
- These countries are parties to the multilateral UKUSA Agreement, a treaty for joint cooperation in signals intelligence.
- Informally, Five Eyes can also refer to the group of intelligence agencies in these countries.

- The origins of the FVEY can be traced to informal secret meetings during World War II between British and American code-breakers, which started before the U.S. formally entered the war.
- UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide.

INDIA VIEW

- India has strongly pushed back against China's invoking of NATO as a comparison, and pointed to the fact that India is not a U.S. ally and the Quad was not a military alliance.
- Indian officials have also rejected China's argument that the U.S. was "stoking" recent tensions in India-China relations, which New Delhi attributes to Beijing's aggressive posture along the Line of Actual Control.
- It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities:
 - Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems
 - Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy
 - All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence
 - Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action.

THE HINDU

UN WOMEN

- Iran accused the United States of orchestrating its removal from a UN women's rights body over its response to protests triggered.
- UN Women is the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.
- The federal funds rate is the rate banks charge each other for lending their excess reserves or cash. Some banks have excess cash, while other

How fed rate works?

banks might have short-term liquidity needs.

- The fed funds rate is a target rate set by the Federal Reserve Bank and is usually the basis for the rate that commercial banks lend to each other.
- However, the fed funds rate has a far more sweeping impact on the economy as a whole.
- The fed funds rate is a key tenet of interest rate markets and is used to set the prime rate, which is the rate banks charge their clients for loans.
- Also, mortgage and loan rates, as well as deposit rates for savings, are impacted by any changes in the fed funds rate.
- The Fed, through the FOMC or Federal Open Market Committee, adjusts rates depending on the economy's needs.
- If the FOMC believes the economy is growing too quickly, and it's likely that inflation or rising prices might occur, the FOMC will increase the fed funds rate.
- Conversely, if the FOMC believes that the economy is struggling or might dip into a recession, the FOMC would lower the fed funds rate.
- Higher rates tend to slow lending and the economy, while lower rates tend to spur lending and economic growth.