Delhi Government's Street Protests

What is the issue?

\n\n

\n
- Delhi government has come to the streets in protest against excessive interference by the Lt. Governor and the non-cooperation of officials.
\n
- This is rooted in the demand for "full statehood" versus "partial statehood" for Delhi and is more about political compulsions and less about constitutionality.
\n

\n\n

Why is Delhi's apparatus a stress point?

\n\n

\n
- Delhi is the seat of the Union Government and hence holds national and international political significance along with other logistical issues.
\n
- While the territory has been granted partial statehood and has a functional state government, tensions over jurisdictions has always existed.
\n
- This is the result of a fractured power arrangement in Delhi, with "law and order, land, services" (usually state subjects) residing with the union.
\n
- Such constitutional arrangements militate against the preferences of the "elected government", which is accountable to the citizens.
\n
- Significantly, even when the same party was at power in both the centre and the state, there were tensions between the Delhi CM and the Lt. Governor.
\n

\n\n

What is present political situation in Delhi?

\n\n

\n
- The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) formed the government after winning 67 of the 70 seats in the 2015 Delhi assembly elections.
\n
- But subsequently, the LG's office imposed more constraints on the state government's powers by disabling its power to transfer employees.
\n
- In addition, the state government was also deprived of ordering vigilance probes on complaints or proceeding against corrupt officials.
\n
- While these moves were off questionable intent, the imprudent theatrics employed by the state government effectively resulted in the case losing steam.
\n
- The fact that AAP (which rules Delhi) has clearly poised itself as an anti-BJP party has only aggravated the political tensions.
\n
- On that count, the Centre successfully and, perhaps unfairly, checkmated the state government, thereby curtailing AAP's political clout.
\n

\n\n

What is the current crisis about?

\n\n

\n
- The Delhi government has alleged that bureaucrats are not showing up to work and have thereby brought the state machinery to a stand-still.
\n

\n\n

\n
- The IAS association has refuted the allegations (that the bureaucrats are hampering the work of the government) as "unwarranted and baseless".
\n
- The association points to the passing of the state budget and the accompanying budget session as proofs of a working machinery.
\n
- But the Delhi Cabinet has nevertheless started an agitation against the interventionism of the Lt. Governor and non-cooperation of bureaucrats.
\n

\n\n

What is the way ahead?

\n\n

\n

- Trust between the political class and bureaucracy is necessary for good governance, which in Delhi's case has clearly broken down.
\n
- While protests by the Delhi Government are tending to imply that the entire bureaucratic machinery is being non-cooperative, this is unlikely to be true.
\n
- Also, considering its salience, Delhi can't afford prolonged mudslinging and street activism, as it might take a toll on the nation's wellbeing.
\n
- As responsible administrators, Delhi ministers need to introspect on their conduct and choose better ways to express dissent.
\n
- Painting the entire system as corrupt and resorting to sensationalism has its limits and can lead to build up of a chaos culture, which is undesirable.
\n
- While the demands for greater autonomy are indeed legitimate to some extent, any such devolution needs to be considerate of Delhi's political importance.
\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: Indian Express

\n

