# Governors Vs State Governments

## What is the issue?

- The endless squabbles between the Governors and respective State governments in Kerala and West Bengal are alarming.
- These Governors have arrogated to themselves an activist role, which is at the heart of the tensions.

## What did the Governors do?

- **Kerala Governor** Arif Mohammad Khan has made repeated public statements on controversial questions such as the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019.
- He has said that it was his duty to defend the laws made by the Centre.
- He must be mindful that the Constitution envisages the execution of popular will through an elected government.
- **West Bengal Governor** Jagdeep Dhankhar often appears eager for the next spectacular showdown with the State government.
- The parties barring the central ruling party in both States are agitated over the proactive and provocative roles of their respective Governors.
- The active profiles of these Governors are symptomatic of a larger malaise of degrading relations between the Centre and States ruled by parties opposed to the central ruling party.

## What is the Constitutional role of the Governor?

- The Constitution seeks to bolster centripetal forces in this vast and diverse country, and the Centre's power to appoint Governors is one such.
- The Governor's constitutional role has been debated and interpreted through several cases.
- But ingenious occupants of the office have managed to push the boundaries with unprecedented moves.

## How is this office being used?

- Sagacious occupants have used the Governor's office to promote national integration.
- Many others have merely acted as agents of the ruling party at the Centre.
- Using a pliant Governor to undermine a State government or engineer a

legislative majority is an old and secular trick used by all parties at the Centre.

## How is the current conflict different?

- State government-Governor conflicts have hence not been rare, but what makes the current situation extraordinary is the political context.
- No other government in the past has sought to construct a centralising narrative for the nation as the current one at the Centre.
- No government in the past has been as intolerant as the current one is towards its diversity.
- In this schema, the Governor appears to have a critical, instrumental role.
- In 2019, the ignominious role played by the then Governor of Jammu and Kashmir in ending its special constitutional status is instructive.

## How the Governor's office should be?

- The Governor's role as a link between the State and the Centre shall not be an imperial one.
- The office of the Governor must be a dialogic and consultative one.
- The combative posturing in Kerala and West Bengal will bring more disarray, no unity.
- The Centre must treat State governments with the respect that democratically elected governments deserve.

**Source: The Hindu**

