

## Policing

### What is the issue?

- Indian police is having a chaotic time, especially the Delhi police, in their bid to maintain law and order as people out in streets protesting.
- So, the floor has been unwittingly yielded to the police and for them to act in the manner they deem fit, and in the interests of public peace.

### What is the theoretical proposition?

- Protests and demonstrations no doubt form the core of democracy.
- They are unexceptionable as long as they do not disrupt the life of the common man or cause damage to public property.
- In an ideal world, we may expect this clear-cut theoretical proposition to work perfectly.
- But in the raw, emotion-ridden and violence-prone streets of the present times, this clinical allocation of respective space has repeatedly proved to be mere pontification.
- This is established by events of the past few days in the national capital.

### How did the media report?

- Some media reporting has tended to be one-sided.
- They tended to portray the police as the villain of the piece and the protesters as harmless and pacifist.
- This binary picture is deceptive and misleading, because it is blind to the truism that the police do enjoy a measure of operational autonomy, free from the dictates of other state agencies.

### What is the observed political influence?

- Public opinion has been built around a few gross **misconceptions** about modern policing.
- It is too simplistic to look upon the police as merely an agency that has been caught in the crossfire between the establishment and protesters.
- The unpleasant changes of **political circumstances** over the decades have **deprived the police the luxury of resting on the statute book** and responding to a developing situation.
- They have to be proactive and react within split seconds to an incendiary

situation arising from contentious political situations.

- While doing so they are bound to overstep the contours of law.
- It is erroneous belief to argue that the police cannot **enter institutions** unless they are invited to do so by its heads.
- There is no law that prohibits the police entry by itself into the institutions, and any attempt to frame such a law will be silly to the core.
- The police are obligated under law to intervene wherever and whenever they apprehend danger to lives.

### **What is to be said about the quantum of force needed?**

- Another bone of contention relates to the **quantum of force** that the police can use in quelling disorder.
- The amount of force used is related mainly to the strength of the mob, its composition, its mood and the kind of weapons it has at its command.
- **Mob control techniques** are a part of the **police curriculum** in major training institutions.
- Their impact depends on the imaginative nature of the instruction.
- In the wake of violence across the country, the police leadership would do well to concentrate on this important aspect of policing.
- In a democracy such as ours we certainly need a civilised and humane police.
- However, this shouldn't dilute the need to have a potent force that won't hesitate to use the resources at its command to re-emphasise the dictum that democracy can flourish only when violence is checked.
- The senior police officers should devote time to **improve the quality of policing** in the field.

**Source: The Hindu**