Unrest in Poland

Why in news?

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Opposition to the recent judicial reforms has led to large scale protest against the ruling government in Poland.

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What are the recent developments?

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- Poland’s right-wing government, the ruling conservative Law and Justice (PiS) party, has been bringing major changes to democratic institutions ever since it assumed office in 2015.
- PM led government has abolished the tribunal that adjudicates on the constitutionality of laws relating to its powers.
- It is in the process of eliminating principle of checks and balances by concentrating power in the hands of the president.
- It also introduced measures to control the media.
- It also introduced following measures to curb judicial independence.\n
    1. All judges of the Supreme Court should step down, except those whom the President chooses.
    2. Parliament to be given control over judicial appointments.
- These moves have created dissent among the people
- It is being opposed by President Andrzej Duda himself.
- He recently vetoed these two measures that was clearly against the rule of

law.
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- However, he did assent to another controversial measure which empowers the justice minister to sack the heads of lower courts.
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What is the government's rationale?

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- The ruling government claims that the present system created after the fall of communism in Poland in 1989 is unpopular and needs alternatives.
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- Popular surveys however suggest that people are not in favour of any undemocratic alternatives.
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What are the implications of these changes?

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- These legislations have provoked a crisis in relations with the European Union.
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- It has sparked one of the biggest political conflicts since Poland overthrew communism in 1989.
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- EU is concerned about the politicisation of the courts and said that it would move to block Poland’s voting rights if it goes ahead with its plans.
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Source: The Hindu

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