**Front**

**Eight More Regional Plans To Be Prepared**

[**https://www.bragitoff.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/tamil-nadu.png**](https://www.bragitoff.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/tamil-nadu.png)

**Context:** The Directorate of Town and Country Planning has floated a tender to engage consultants for preparation of 8 regional plans across Tamil Nadu and carrying out detailed studies of the regions for infrastructure and economic, business, industrial, tourism activities plans under the Town and Country Planning Act, 1971.

* Eight more regions across Tamil Nadu are set to get their regional plans under the Town and Country Planning Act, 1971.
* The Directorate of Town and Country Planning has floated a tender to engage consultants for preparation of regional plans and carrying out detailed studies of the regions for infrastructure and economic, business, industrial, tourism activities.
* The horizon year of the plans for the eight regions is 2042. The plans are to be prepared for the Chengalpattu, Kancheepuram and Tiruvallur Regional Planning Area (RPA), measuring 6,863 sq.km; the Vellore, Ranipet, Tirupattur and Tiruvannamalai RPA, measuring 12,263 sq. km; the Villupuram, Cuddalore and Kallakurichi RPA, measuring 10,897 sq.km; the Salem, Namakkal, Krishnagiri and Dharmapuri RPA, measuring 18,283 sq.km; the Tiruchi, Ariyalur, Karur, Perambalur and Pudukottai RPA, measuring 15,753 sq.km; the Thanjavur, Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam and Mayiladuthurai RPA, measuring 8,254 sq.km; the Sivagangai, Virudhunagar and Ramanathapuram RPA, measuring 12,578 sq.km; and the Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi, Tenkasi and Kanniyakumari RPA, measuring 13,122 sq.km.

**ADB assistance**

* The regional plan for the Coimbatore RPA, comprising Coimbatore, Erode and and Tiruppur districts and measuring 15,679 sq.km, and the Nilgiris RPA, measuring 2,565 sq.km, are being prepared by the School of Architecture and Planning in Bhopal, according to officials of the Housing and Urban Development Department.
* The regional plan for the Madurai RPA, comprising Madurai, Theni and Dindigul districts and measuring 12,614 sq.km, has been taken up with the financial assistance of the Asian Development Bank.
* A regional plan is a large-scale urban planning aimed at ensuring efficient use of land resources. In 1974, eight regions were created for a planned growth. Subsequently, the government decided to have 12 regions.
* The overall objective is to achieve sustainable development by harmonising social, economic and infrastructure needs through planning and management of land and its resources; to identify the environmental resources and sensitive zones, the development needs of various parts of the region and the development potential of various sectors; and suggest a spatially balanced settlement structure for a harmonised relation between urban and rural areas.
* The government in January framed the Regional Plan (Preparation, Publication and Sanction) Rules, 2021, under Section 122 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1971.

**National**

**SC Examines Allegations Of Rampant Misuse Of PMLA**

[**https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/j8d0cj/article65047353.ece/alternates/FREE\_660/TH13-KDR-SC-exa%2BGRF9GBCKM.1.jpg.jpg**](https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/j8d0cj/article65047353.ece/alternates/FREE_660/TH13-KDR-SC-exa%2BGRF9GBCKM.1.jpg.jpg)

**Context:** The Prevention of Money Laundering Act, which includes extremely overboard offences, has many petitions against its alleged subversion by the government and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and that it is a potent weapon to raid rivals and deny rights.

* The Supreme Court is looking into allegations of metamorphosis of an anti-money laundering law, brought to sniff out drug money, into a potent weapon to raid rivals and deny rights.
* A three-judge Bench is holding back-to-back hearings on petitions filed by people from all walks of life and across the country complaining of the alleged subversion of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) by the government and the Enforcement Directorate (ED).
* Lawyers, including senior advocate Kapil Sibal for Karti Chidambaram, allege that the PMLA is pulled into the investigation of even “ordinary” crimes.
* Sibal reminded that the PMLA was enacted in response to India’s global commitment (including the Vienna Convention) to combat the menace of money laundering.
* Petitioners pointed out that even the Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) — an equivalent of the FIR — is considered an “internal document” and not given to the accused.
* Pursuant to the registration of the ECIR, the ED begins to summon accused persons and seeks details of all their financial transactions and of their family members. The accused is called upon to make statements which are treated as admissible in evidence.
* The court is also examining submissions that the PMLA does not distinguish between an accused and a witness while summoning them.
* The petitioners noted the lack of clarity about the ED’s selection of cases to investigate. Petitioners have submitted that discretion exercised under the PMLA should be guided by rule of law. It must not be “arbitrary, vague and fanciful”.

**International**

**‘Missile Tests By N. Korea Are A Provocation’**

[**https://cdn.statically.io/img/d.newsweek.com/en/full/611412/north-korean-missiles.jpg**](https://cdn.statically.io/img/d.newsweek.com/en/full/611412/north-korean-missiles.jpg)

**Context:** Destabilizing the series of launches by Pyongang, the top diplomats of Japan, South Korea and the United States declared their unity against North Korea and reiterated their commitment to the denuclearisation of the entire Korean Peninsula.

* On 12th February, the top diplomats of Japan, South Korea and the United States declared their unity against North Korea after a series of ballistic missile launches by Pyongyang.
* After a day of meetings in Honolulu, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, South Korean Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong, and Japanese Foreign Minister Hayashi Yoshimasa condemned the series of seven launches by the country as “destabilising” in a joint statement.

**Holding accountable**

* The three diplomats reiterated their commitment to the denuclearisation of the entire Korean Peninsula, and readiness to resume talks with Pyongyang, which has not responded to overtures from the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden in 2021.

**Others**

**Chandernagore’s French Heritage Awaits Facelift**

[**https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/qibdet/article65047376.ece/alternates/FREE\_660/Restoration-of%C2%A0%2BGAS9GAR9V.3.jpg.jpg**](https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/qibdet/article65047376.ece/alternates/FREE_660/Restoration-of%C2%A0%2BGAS9GAR9V.3.jpg.jpg)

**Context:** The architects from France and India were working on the restoration of the Registry Building, a two-storey structure at Chandernagore built in 1875, with the help of a prominent hospitality group as a sponsor of the project.

* The Registry Building, a two-storey structure at Chandernagore built in 1875 and a symbol of French settlement of the colonial town, has been awaiting restoration for a long time.
* Architects, heritage enthusiasts, West Bengal government officials and diplomats, on several occasions in the past few years, visited the crumbling building located on the strand opposite the Rani Ghat jetty on the banks of the Hooghly and promised to restore the structure.
* Emphasising that the structure needed an urgent facelift, French Ambassador to India Emmanuel Lenain said that the restoration of the building would be completed in two or three years.
* There were plans for having a café, restaurant and a boutique hotel with the architectural principle that the original structure remained unchanged.
* Architects from France and India were working on the project, and the French Embassy, the State government and other stakeholders had identified a prominent hospitality group as a sponsor of the project.

**Proposal extended**

* Officials of the French Consulate in Kolkata said that an agreement for the restoration project was drawn up in February 2019.
* After the memorandum of understanding lapsed in March 2021, as not much progress could be made because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the proposal was extended for another 30 months.
* Chandernagore, or Chandannagar, was the first trading post on the eastern bank of the Hooghly, set up by the French in 1696. There are several buildings in the town that are a reflection of the rich architectural heritage of the town.
* Other than the buildings and structures that have been given the heritage tag, 99 Indo-French heritage structures have been identified to be restored.

**Editorial**

**The Era Of Combative Federalism**

[**https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/g1z06l/article65047335.ece/alternates/FREE\_660/Combative-feder%2BGLK9GALSU.5.jpg.jpg**](https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-opinion/g1z06l/article65047335.ece/alternates/FREE_660/Combative-feder%2BGLK9GALSU.5.jpg.jpg)

**Context:** The reversal of the shifting of Indian federalism from co-operative to combative can be done only if the Centre and State ends their power tussle which affects the proper functioning of the Indian government.

* The proposed amendments to the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) (Cadre) Rules of 1954 have triggered another round of conflict between the Centre and the States.
* The amendments proposed by the Department of Personnel and Training, Government of India, will take away the liberty of the States to deny consent for handing over civil servants for Central deputation.
* If there are differences between the Centre and the States, the Centre’s decision will have to be accepted by the States within a specified time period. Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Telangana have objected to the amendments.

**Shifting tides**

* The expression ‘combative federalism’ was used by former Uttarakhand Chief Minister Harish Rawat immediately after his government was dismissed under Article 356 of the Constitution by President’s proclamation.
* In 2016, when the Governor of Arunachal Pradesh decided to advance the Assembly elections, which led to political crisis in the State and then President’s Rule, the Supreme Court had to intervene and set right the constitutional crisis by holding that the Governor’s discretion did not extend to the powers conferred under Article 174.
* The Governor cannot not summon the House, determine its legislative agenda or address the legislative Assembly without consulting the Chief Minister or the Speaker, the Court said.
* In Goa, Karnataka and Maharashtra, we saw examples of the Governor acting beyond his constitutional brief by inviting parties and formations which did not have an adequate majority to form the governments.
* In Rajasthan, the Governor refused to summon a session as desired by the Council of Ministers. This again brought to light how the Centre interferes in State affairs.
* The Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court held that the power of the Lieutenant-Governor of Delhi to differ from the Delhi government and make reference to the President is only with respect to exceptional matters like land, police and public order.
* However, the Supreme Court had to again remind the Delhi government and the Centre in *Ajit Mohan v. Legislative Assembly* , *National Capital Territory of Delhi & Ors* (2021) that for the system “to work well, the Central Government and the State Government have to walk hand in hand or at least walk side by side for better governance.”

**Overt conflicts**

* The deployment of central investigative agencies in the States, much to the displeasure of the States, has also caused trouble for our federal principles.
* The Kerala government decided to take on the Centre by ordering a judicial inquiry against central investigating agencies and their overreach in the State.
* Kerala also witnessed another controversy surrounding Centre-State conflict when the CBI registered an FIR for alleged infractions of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act.
* It said the State government had received foreign contributions from the United Arab Emirates for a housing project. There is no doubt that such investigations, purportedly for political reasons, into the functioning of the State governments have caused considerable dent in the federal architecture of the country.

**Collaborative federalism**

* Combative federalism is anathema to the Constitution which prescribes cooperation and collaboration between the Centre and the States.
* The Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court held in *Government of NCT of Delhi v. Union of India* (2018) that the idea behind the concept of collaborative federalism is negotiation and coordination so that differences which may arise between the Centre and the State Governments in their respective pursuits of development can be ironed out.
* The Constituent Assembly, while framing our Constitution, never envisaged a situation where the Central and the State governments would stand in the way of each other.
* Encroachment by either of the constituent units is strictly prohibited and expressly held abhorrent by the Constitution.