

DAILY PT POINTERS

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The Hindu-Polity and Governance(GSII)-Page 10

How are symbols allotted to political parties?

Why was the Viduthala Chiruthaigal Katchi denied a common symbol by the ECI in Tamil Nadu?

Rangarajan. R

The story so far:

The Naam Tamilar Katchi (NTK) that secured 3.9% and 6.5% votes in Tamil Nadu in 2019 and 2021 respectively, has been allotted a new common symbol (Mike). The Viduthala Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) that secured 1.09% and 0.99% votes in 2019 and 2021 has been denied a common symbol (Pot). This has raised questions about the allotment of symbols to 'registered unrecognised parties'.

What do the rules specify?

A party is recognised as a 'national' or 'state' party under the provisions of the Election Symbols (Reservation and

along with 6% of votes polled or (c) securing 8% of votes polled in a general election. Symbols are allotted to political parties and contesting candidates as per the provisions of the Symbols Order by ECI. In the largest democracy where a sizeable population is still illiterate, symbols play a crucial role in the voting process. A recognised political party has a reserved symbol that is not allotted to any other candidate in any constituency. For registered but unrecognised political parties, one of the free symbols is allotted as a common symbol during an election if that party contests in two Lok Sabha constituencies or in 5% of seats to the Assembly of a State as the case may be.

What is the current issue?

secured at least 1% of votes polled in the State on the previous occasion when the party availed of this facility. Such an unrecognised party should however apply for a symbol every time in the prescribed format. This application can be made any time during the period commencing six months prior to the expiry of the term of the Lok Sabha or State Assembly as the case may be. The symbols are thereafter allotted on a 'first-come-first-served' basis.

In the above cases, the NTK had secured more than 1% of votes in the last two elections with the common symbol of 'Ganna Kisan'. However, since they applied for that symbol only in February 2024, the ECI had allotted that symbol to Bharatiya Praja Aikya Party (BPAP), that

in 2021. The VCK notably has one Lok Sabha MP and four MLAs in Tamil Nadu contesting on the 'Pot' symbol in 2019 and 2021 elections.

What can be the way forward?

The ECI has decided on the applications of NTK and VCK as per existing rules. However, it is counter intuitive from a layman's perspective that the NTK which secured more than 6% of votes polled is not allotted the previous common symbol of its choice. It would be equally baffling for an average voter that the VCK which has elected representatives is ineligible to obtain a common symbol. The two VCK candidates have been eventually allotted the free symbol of 'Pot' by the respective returning officers.

The existing threshold for recognition of a party may continue. The candidates set up by recognised parties enjoy the advantage of being listed at the top of the ballot in the Electronic Voting Machine. Nevertheless, the ECI may consider amending the rules that registered unrecognised parties that secure at least 1% of votes polled in a previous election or have an elected representative in the Lok Sabha or State Assembly, shall have the right to be allotted a common symbol

THE GIST



The Viduthala Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) that secured 1.09% and 0.99% votes in 2019 and 2021 has been denied a common symbol (Pot).



The VCK was declined allotment of a common symbol as it had failed to secure 1% of votes polled in the elections to the State Legislative Assembly in 2021.



Rule 10B of the Symbols Order provides that the concession of a common free symbol shall be available to a 'registered unrecognised party' for two general elections.

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) is responsible for the allotment of symbols.
- This is done under The Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968, which is meant "to provide for specification, reservation, choice and allotment of symbols at elections in Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies, for the recognition of political parties..."

Do you know?

The Election Commission reviews the poll performance of recognised parties after every State Assembly election or general election to the Lok Sabha. The rules for recognition as a national party are specified by the Commission in para 6B of the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968.

A party becomes eligible to be accorded national status if it fulfil one of the following conditions: (a) if it is recognised as a State party in at least four States, (b) if it secures 6% of the total votes polled in four States in the last Lok Sabha or Assembly elections, and in addition, gets four of its members elected to the Lok Sabha, or (c) if it wins 2% of seats in the Lok Sabha from at least three different States.

The Hindu-GS3(Defence)Page 14

New generation ballistic missile Agni-Prime successfully flight-tested

Agni-P has a range of 1,000-2,000km and was tested for the first time in June 2021. It is lighter than earlier Agni missiles

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THE HINDU BUREAU



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Agni-P is a two-stage canisterised solid propellant ballistic missile with dual redundant navigation and guidance system, according to DRDO. It has a range of 1,000-2,000km and was tested for the first time in June 2021. It is lighter than all the earlier Agni series of missiles.

Do you know ?

- Agni series of missiles constitute the backbone of India's nuclear weapons delivery which also includes the Prithvi short range ballistic missiles and fighter aircraft.
- India has completed its nuclear triad and operationalised its second strike capability with nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine INS Arihant undertaking deterrence patrols.

The Hindu-IR(GSII)/Economy(GSIII)

What is 'Basel III endgame' and why are U.S. banks worked up about it?

The rules, applying to banks with over \$100 bn in assets, would overhaul the way the biggest banks manage their capital, with knock-on implications for lending, trading activities; banks say additional capital is unnecessary and will hurt the economy and have aggressively lobbied against the project

EXPLAINER

Reuters

The U.S. Federal Reserve said last month it will make significant changes to a sweeping proposal for stricter bank capital requirements known as the "Basel III endgame" in a win for Wall Street banks that have waged an unprecedented campaign to water down the rule. What is Basel and why is it so contentious?

The rules, which would apply to banks with over \$100 billion in assets, would overhaul the way the biggest banks manage their capital, with knock-on implications for lending and trading activities.

Banks say additional capital is unnecessary and will hurt the economy, and have aggressively lobbied against the project.

'Basel III endgame'

The Basel Committee on Banking Supervision is a panel convened by the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) in Basel, Switzerland, which aims to ensure regulators globally apply similar minimum capital standards so that banks can survive loan losses during tough times.

The committee's "Basel III" standard was agreed after the 2007-09 global financial crisis. It includes



Sweeping overhaul: The U.S. proposal would overhaul how banks gauge their risk, Reuters

numerous capital, leverage and liquidity requirements. Regulators across the world have worked for years to implement many of those standards, and the so-called "endgame," agreed in 2017, is the final iteration. The "endgame" proposal, unveiled in July, refines Basel's approach to setting capital based on the riskiness of banks' activities.

The U.S. proposal would overhaul how banks gauge their risk, and in turn, how much capital they should set aside as a cushion against potential losses. The main areas of focus are credit risk, market risk and operational risk.

On credit risk, regulators are seeking to end banks' ability to use their own internal risk models

when determining how much capital should be held against lending activities, like mortgages or corporate loans.

Federal Reserve Vice Chair for Supervision Michael Barr said those internal models can often underestimate risk, as banks are incentivised to keep their capital costs low. Instead, regulators would prefer uniform modelling standards across large banks. Similarly, the proposal would establish new requirements for how banks gauge the risk posed by swings in the markets and potential losses from trading. Regulators say these market risks are currently being understated.

When assessing these risks, banks will be permitted to continue using inter-

nal models approved by regulators, although Mr. Barr has said standardised models may be required for particularly complex risks. Banks will also have to model trading risks at the level of the individual trading desk, as opposed to an aggregate level.

All told, the changes would result in higher capital needs for banks with large trading operations. Gauging operational risk is a key new area of the Basel Endgame. This refers to the potential losses banks could face from unexpected sources, such as failed internal policies, management mistakes, litigation costs or external events. Similar to credit risk, regulators are looking to replace existing internal models with a standardised approach, which would take into account a bank's various activities and historical operational losses when calculating capital costs.

'Well capitalised'

While the rules have been years in the making, banks had hoped U.S. regulators would offer relief elsewhere by making tweaks to existing capital requirements to help offset the new hikes. They argue banks are well-capitalised, having withstood the COVID-19 pandemic and regularly clearing the Fed's annual stress tests, and any capital hikes are unjustified. Banks have also complained that regulators have not provided sufficient data to justify the new increases, and have even threatened to sue.

Mr. Barr said that most banks already have enough capital to meet the requirements, and those that need to raise funds could do so by retaining earnings for

less than two years while still paying dividends. And regulators have also pointed to the failure of three lenders in 2023 as evidence they need to be vigilant.

Following months of criticism and pressure from the industry, U.S. regulators are expected to meaningfully reduce the impact of the proposal in a broad rewrite, Reuters reported in March. The agencies are expected to significantly lower the overall capital impact of the new rules. Fed Chair Jerome Powell confirmed that trajectory when he told Congress last month he expects "broad, material" changes to the plan.

The Fed and other regulators are currently digesting hundreds of public comments submitted on the proposal, most of which have been critical. Regulators are also expected to conduct additional data analysis around the proposal.

No timeline has been set for completing the rule-writing project, and an open question is whether regulators opt to re-propose the rule following the rewrite. Such a step could ease industry complaints by giving them a chance to offer more feedback, but would significantly delay the effort and potentially imperil it, as regulatory leadership could change following the November presidential election.

CALLS FOR EARLY TESTING

Prostate cancer cases in India set to double by 2040: Lancet

ANURADHA MASCARENHAS
PUNE, APRIL 4

TWO YEARS ago, a 64-year-old general surgeon in Pune complained of backache and was diagnosed with an advanced stage of prostate cancer that had already spread to his spine. Yet he had no early symptoms like difficulty in passing urine. Many Indian men, like him, are being diagnosed in late stages and succumbing to the disease, says a latest Lancet Commission paper, which has projected prostate cancer incidence in India to surge sharply by 2040.

According to the International Agency for Research on Cancer projections, which Lancet has factored in its analysis, prostate cancer incidence in India will double to about 71,000 new cases per year by 2040. Prostate cancer accounts for three per cent of all cancers in India, with an estimated 33,000-42,000 new cases diagnosed annually.

"A large proportion of patients in India are diagnosed in advanced stages which means that the cancer has spread at the time of diagnosis. As a result, about 85

SYMPTOMS TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Difficult or disturbed urine flow
- Frequent urination, especially at night
- Inability to empty the bladder completely
- Pain or burning during urination
- Change in bowel habits
- Swelling or fluid build-up in the legs or feet
- Blood in the urine or semen.
- Pain in the back, hips or pelvis
- Painful ejaculation
- Unexplained weight loss



come countries predicted to see the highest increase. The findings will be presented at the European Association of Urology Congress on April 6. Globally, prostate cancer accounted for around 3,75,000 deaths worldwide in 2020, making it the fifth leading cause of cancer death among men.

This surge can be prevented, according to Dr Murthy, provided all men over 60 get tested early with the same rigour that women are advised for breast screenings after 40. This will pick up the cancer at a treatable stage than men who consult a doctor when it's too late. "Early detection and education programmes will help

both cancerous and benign tissue in the prostate glands, is pushing up numbers," Dr Murthy says. The main risk factors are age and genetics, which, according to him, are aggravated by additional factors like smoking, obesity, a poor diet and lifestyle.

Why early awareness, detection are important

Prostate cancer may cause no signs or symptoms in the early stages and it is only in the advanced stages that patients report symptoms like trouble urinating, bone pain, blood in the semen or urine and others. "You may manage your lifestyle but early screening in Indian men, especially those above 60 years, is required

PSA tests — to high-risk men in London aged 45 and over.

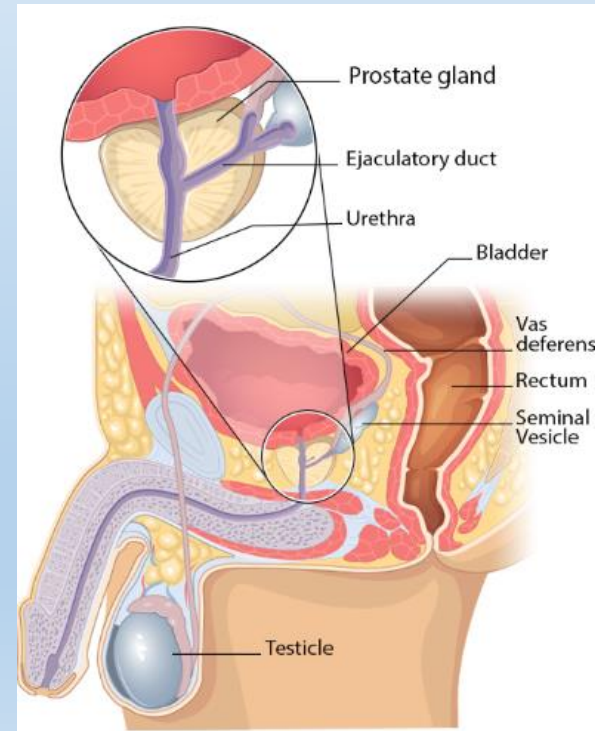
Dr Kamlesh Bokil, a noted surgical oncologist in Pune, suggests taking a digital rectal examination too. "The enlarged gland stops the urine flow. The urine accumulates in the bladder. It is like a flush tank where there is dribbling of urine but it is still accumulated in the bladder by almost 1 to 1.5 litres," he adds. The Lancet authors have recommended use of MRI scans and PSA tests to screen men at high risk of prostate cancer in high-income countries.

Match diagnosis with expanding therapies

The WHO recommends one megavoltage radiotherapy unit per million people. To meet this recommendation, India would need an additional 600 or so units to ensure that the 800,000 people with cancer who require radiotherapy each year can be adequately treated. Access to radiotherapy has increased but mostly in urban areas. Coverage of modern radiotherapy treatments within government health schemes has improved but the poorest sections have little access even to palliative radiotherapy, the Lancet Commission authors

When cancer starts in the prostate, it is called prostate cancer.

- The *prostate* is a part of the male reproductive system, which includes the penis, prostate, seminal vesicles, and testicles.



HEADLINES OF THE DAY



Indian Express-Defence(GSIII)-Page 9



- The Army has started the induction of control and reporting systems under 'Project Akashdeep' to bolster its air defence capabilities.
- Developed by Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), the project is aimed at significantly enhancing the operational efficiency and integration of the Army's air defence mechanisms.
- "The Akashteer Project is a cutting-edge initiative designed to automate air defence control and reporting processes by digitising the entire process.

Indian Express-Polity and Governance-Page 14

Before SC: Can states levy excise duty on industrial alcohol?

JOY SINHA KARPURAM
NEW DELHI, MARCH 4

EXCISE DUTY levied on alcohol is a key component of a state's revenue, with states often adding an additional excise duty on alcohol consumption to drive its income up. For example, in 2023, Karnataka hiked the Additional Excise Duty (AED) on Indian Made Liquor (IML) by 20%.

However, when it comes to 'industrial alcohol', do states have the power to regulate and tax it? This is the question that a 9-judge Bench of the Supreme Court is hearing.

What is the current case before the SC?

The Bench headed by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud began hearing arguments on April 2 on whether state governments have the power to regulate and control the sale, distribution, pricing and other factors relating to 'industrial alcohol'. Industrial alcohol is used as a raw material to create other products, and is not meant for human consumption.

Entry 8 in the State List under the Seventh Schedule gives states the power to legislate on the production, manufacture, possession, transport, purchase and sale of 'intoxicating liquors'. At the same time, Entry 52 of the Union List, and Entry 33 of the Concurrent List mention industries, whose control is 'declared by Parliament by law to be expedient in public interest'.

Notably, subjects in the Concurrent List can be legislated upon by both states and the Centre, but where a central law exists, the state law cannot be repugnant to it. Industrial alcohol is listed in the Industries (Development and Regulation) Act, 1951 (IDRA).

Essentially, the question before the apex court is whether states can regulate industrial alcohol or whether the Centre exercises exclusive control on the subject.

Has the SC considered this issue earlier?

In 1989, a 7-judge Constitution Bench in *Synthetic & Chemicals Ltd v. State of Uttar Pradesh* held that states' powers, as per Entry 8 of the State List, were limited to regulating

'intoxicating liquors' which are different from industrial alcohol.

The SC acknowledged that states' power to regulate consumable alcohol must include the power to 'prevent and/or check industrial alcohol being used as intoxicating or drinkable alcohol'. But the court found that

the taxes and levies in question were designed primarily to increase the revenue collected by the state – not as measures to regulate the use of industrial alcohol, or prevent its conversion to drinkable alcohol.

Essentially, the SC said that only the Centre can impose levies or taxes on industrial alcohol, which is not meant for human consumption.

However, in a point that would be brought up decades later, the SC did not consider its prior Constitution Bench decision in *Chitika Ramji v. State of UP (1956)* where five judges upheld a legislation enacted in UP to regulate the supply and purchase of sugarcane. This Act was challenged on the grounds that under Section 18-G of the IDRA, the

Centre had exclusive jurisdiction over regulation of the sugar industry.

In contrast to its *Synthetic & Chemicals Ltd* decision, the court held that Section 18-G is not meant to 'cover the entire field' and the state still had power to legislate on matters relating to the sugar industry under

Entry 33 of the Concurrent List.

EXPLAINED LAW

How did this lead to the case now before the SC?

In 1999, the UP government issued a notification introducing a 15% fee for any sale made to licence holders under the UP Excise Act, 1910 for 'alcohol used directly or...as solvent for vehicles and appear[ing] in the final product to some extent'. This was challenged by a motor oil and diesel distributor who claimed that the Centre exercised exclusive jurisdiction over industrial alcohol as per Section 18-G of the IDRA.

In February 2004 the Allahabad High Court struck down the 1999 notification, holding that the state legislature did not exercise power over the general regulation of denatured spirits, only

over drinkable alcohol. It directed the state to refund any fees collected with a 10% per annum interest from the date the fee was deposited. This decision was appealed at the SC, which then stayed the Allahabad HC judgment in August that same year.

In 2007, the court referred the case to a larger bench, noting that the *Tika Ramji* case 'had not been brought to the notice of the seven-judge Bench which decided the *Synthetic and Chemicals* case'.

In order to determine whether states can exercise their powers under Entry 33 of the Concurrent List or if Section 18-G gives the Centre exclusive jurisdiction in matters relating to industrial spirits, in 2010 the case was referred to a nine-judge Bench.

What have the states argued so far?

Senior Advocate Dinesh Dwivedi, appearing for the State of UP, said that the phrase 'intoxicating liquors' in Entry 8 of the State List includes 'all liquids containing alcohol'. He said that 'liquor', 'spirit', and 'intoxicant' were used in excise laws before the

Constitution came into force.

He also argued that the Union's power under Entry 52 of the Union List does not include control over 'finished products' (such as industrial alcohol after the denaturation process), as that is specifically covered by Entry 33 of the Concurrent List. In order to exercise exclusive control over regulation of industrial alcohol, the Centre would first have to issue an order to that effect under Section 18-G of the IDRA. Without such an order, that control would vest with the states, he said.

Dwivedi also cautioned against adopting an approach that would reduce states' powers, relying on Justice Ruma Pal's concurring opinion in *ITC Ltd v. Agricultural Produce Market Committee (2002)*. The SC had held that states are not 'mere appendages of the Centre'. The Centre cannot tamper with their powers. More particularly, the courts should not adopt an approach, an interpretation which has the effect of or tends to have the effect of whittling down the powers reserved to the States'.

The next hearing is on April 9.

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HEADLINES OF THE DAY

PIB:Health(GSII)

President's Secretariat

PRESIDENT OF INDIA LAUNCHES INDIA'S FIRST HOME-GROWN GENE
THERAPY FOR CANCER

ACCESSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE CAR-T CELL THERAPY PROVIDES A NEW HOPE FOR THE
WHOLE OF HUMANKIND: PRESIDENT DROUPADI MURMU

Posted On: 04 APR 2024 2:03PM by PIB Delhi



President Droupadi Murmu launched India's first indigenously-developed CAR T-cell therapy for treatment of cancer, hailing it as a "major breakthrough" that provides a "new hope for the humankind" in the battle against the disease.

Developed by the IIT Bombay and the Tata Memorial Centre, this gene-based therapy will help in curing different types of cancer. This NexCAR19 CAR T-cell therapy is the country's first 'Made in India' CAR T-cell therapy, which will significantly bring down the cost of cancer treatment.

HEADLINES OF THE DAY

News on air :IR(GSII)

NATO Celebrates 75 Years Of Collective Defense Across Europe And North America



- The foundations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) were officially laid down on 4 April 1949 with the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty, more popularly known as the Washington Treaty.
- NATO's purpose is to guarantee the freedom and security of its members through political and military means.
- **POLITICAL** – NATO promotes democratic values and enables members to [consult](#) and cooperate on defence and security-related issues to solve problems, build trust and, in the long run, prevent conflict.
- **MILITARY** – NATO is committed to the peaceful resolution of disputes. If diplomatic efforts fail, it has the military power to undertake [crisis-management](#) operations. These are carried out under the collective defence clause of NATO's founding treaty – [Article 5 of the Washington Treaty](#) or under a United Nations mandate, alone or in cooperation with other countries and international organisations.