Politics Vs Bureaucracy - Delhi

Why in news?

There is an ongoing tussle between the elected government and the bureaucracy in Delhi.

What is going on in Delhi?

- **Government** - Delhi CM Kejriwal has said there was “de facto President’s Rule” in the national capital.
- Mr. Kejriwal, Deputy Chief Minister, and some ministers have been staging a sit-in at the Raj Niwas.
- They called attention to an "illegal strike by Delhi government officers".
- They demanded that Lieutenant-Governor order an end to what they call a strike by officers.
- **Bureaucracy** - But Raj Niwas and the IAS officers’ association has said there is no strike.
- Passing of the state budget and the accompanying budget session are pointed as proofs of a working machinery.
- However, they admit to being part of what is at least a ‘non-cooperation campaign’.
- They have restricted communication with the political executive to the written form alone since February.
- Also, not attending meetings convened by Ministers.
- This was in protest of the alleged assault on Chief Secretary by AAP MLAs at
Mr. Kejriwal’s residence.

- The bureaucrats claim they feel vulnerable in the absence of Ministerial assurances of their safety.

What is the tussle for?

- Delhi witnesses a tussle for “full statehood” versus “partial statehood”.
- Relations between the Chief Minister and Lieutenant General in Delhi has for long been a concern.
- But this has less to do with constitutional correctness and more with the political compulsions.
- The principle of special sensitivities for national capitals exists for Delhi too.
- This is on account of the national, international importance, geographical location and strategic significance.
- This makes the claim to “full statehood” for Delhi to be treated differently.

What are the implications?

- It results in a fractured arrangement of power-sharing.
- This applies to law and order, land and services residing with the central government.
- This arrangement has always been contested by the state government.
- Such constitutional arrangements militate against the preferences of the “elected government”.
- The compromises and restrictions defeat the purposes of democracy and accountability in elected governments.
E.g. the formation of the present Delhi government was followed by the LG’s office imposing many constraints.

- It disabled the power of the state government to transfer employees.
- Also, restrictions were imposed on ordering vigilance probes on complaints or proceeding against corrupt officials.

Why is the issue significant?

- Trust between the political class and bureaucracy is necessary for good governance.
- The impasse in Delhi suggests a total breakdown in the relations between the two sections.
- This spate between the LG and the CM has further diminished the nobility of constitutional offices.
- The government must introspect and adopt a more mature approach to the bureaucracy.

Source: The Hindu, Indian Express