

Editorial of the Day – 10.02.2026

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1. Stifling ideas- On Ghooskhor Pandat and FIR (TH)

General Studies 2- Governance

Topic- Indian Constitution—Historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

SUB TOPIC- Fundamental Rights (Article 19), Separation of Powers, and Issues and Challenges Pertaining to the federal structure (Executive vs. Judiciary in regulating speech).

Introduction

The recent directive by the Uttar Pradesh government to file an FIR against the makers of the film Ghooskhor Pandat has reignited the debate on the fragility of artistic freedom in India. This incident highlights the growing conflict between executive power and the constitutional protection of free speech, raising concerns about the "heckler's veto" where the threat of law and order is used to silence creative expression without judicial scrutiny.

Key Details of the Controversy

Executive Action- Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath ordered the filing of an FIR against the film's makers specifically over its title, Ghooskhor Pandat.

Rationale for Action- The state alleged that the title was derogatory, likely to hurt religious or caste sentiments, and could disrupt social harmony.

Immediate Consequence- Following the threat of criminal action, the producer withdrew promotional material, demonstrating how executive pressure can force compliance before any legal verdict.

Shift in Narrative- A matter that fundamentally belongs to the realm of artistic expression was swiftly converted into a law-and-order issue by the state machinery.

Constitutional Provisions & Legal Standards

Protection under Article 19(1)(a)- The Constitution protects freedom of speech and expression, extending this right even to speech that may be unpopular, offensive, or unwelcome to powerful groups.

Limits under Article 19(2)- Restrictions on this right must be reasonable, specific, and proportionate. They cannot be arbitrary executive decisions.

Judicial Distinction- Indian courts have consistently distinguished between speech that is merely "offensive" and speech that actually incites violence or public disorder. Only the latter typically justifies criminal sanction.

From Expression to Policing- The chilling Effect

Bypassing Judicial Scrutiny- The executive threat of using criminal law (FIR) effectively bypasses the judicial process, signalling intolerance toward dissenting or controversial expression.

Coercive Warning- The FIR serves less as a legal remedy and more as a coercive warning to other artists, creating a "chilling effect" where creators self-censor to avoid harassment.

Loss of Democratic Response- When art is silenced by the state, society loses the opportunity for democratic responses such as debate, satire, or boycott, weakening the "marketplace of ideas."

Pattern of State Restrictions on Art

Recurring Censorship- The visual arts sector has increasingly faced executive censorship often without prior judicial findings.

Notable Examples

1. The Kerala Story (2023) – faced bans in certain states.

2. India- The Modi Question – faced removal/blocking.
3. Other films like Kaum De Heere, India's Daughter, and Padmaavat have historically faced similar executive hurdles.

Subjectivity of "Hurt Sentiments"– In a diverse society like India, claims of "hurt sentiments" are subjective and limitless. Relying on them as a basis for criminal prosecution makes the law arbitrary.

Proper Constitutional Approach & Role of the State

Burden of Proof– The state bears the burden to examine speech carefully. If unlawfulness is alleged, the remedy should be judicial review, not executive fiat.

Least Restrictive Measure– Authorities must adopt the least restrictive measure available to address concerns, recording reasons for their actions rather than issuing blanket bans or threats.

Balancing Duty– It is the duty of the Chief Minister and the state to maintain public order *while* protecting free expression. Curtailing speech simply to preserve order (or to appease those threatening disorder) undermines the constitutional balance between authority and liberty.

Conclusion

The Ghooskhor Pandat episode underscores a worrying trend of criminalising dissenting expression. By invoking executive coercion instead of seeking judicial remedy, the state undermines the protective umbrella of Article 19(1)(a). Upholding constitutional proportionality and allowing courts to be the arbiter of speech standards is essential to preserve the democratic fabric of the nation.

Source– <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/stifling-ideas-on-ghooskhor-pandat-and-fir/article70611331.ece>

2. Kashmir defies nature– Tulips bloom in December for first time, months ahead of spring (IE)

General Studies 3– Economy

Topics– Major crops cropping patterns in various parts of the country, different types of irrigation and irrigation systems storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints; e-technology in the aid of farmers.

Sub Topic– Horticulture and Floriculture (Sunrise Sectors), Agricultural Marketing, Supply Chain Management, and Application of Biotechnology/Science in Agriculture.

Introduction

In a significant scientific breakthrough, researchers at the Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST) have successfully achieved the winter blooming of tulips in Kashmir. By inducing flowering in December—nearly four months ahead of the natural season—this innovation promises to revolutionize the region's floriculture economy. It represents a strategic alignment of agricultural science with market demand and tourism, potentially transforming Kashmir into a year-round floral hub.

Scientific Innovation– The Technology Behind the Bloom

Technique Used– The breakthrough was achieved through "Bulb Programming" and "Forcing Techniques."

Bulb Programming– This involves precise control of temperature, light exposure, and planting schedules to regulate the plant's internal biological clock and growth stages.

Forcing Method– This manipulates environmental and chemical factors to induce flowering outside the natural seasonal cycle, a standard practice in advanced floriculture nations like the Netherlands but a first for Kashmir's specific agro-climatic conditions.

Success Rate– In experimental trials, approximately 3,000 out of 4,000 bulbs bloomed successfully in December.

Market Timing– This technology allows growers to target high-demand global holidays such as Christmas, New Year, and Valentine's Day, which fall during Kashmir's traditional non-flowering winter months.

Floriculture as a Sunrise Sector

High-Value Agriculture- Floriculture is identified as a high-income, export-oriented segment of horticulture. Moving away from cereal-centric farming to high-value ornamentals aligns with the national goal of Doubling Farmers' Income.

Employment Generation- The sector offers potential for year-round employment, particularly benefiting women and small marginal farmers who can cultivate high-value crops on small landholdings.

Inclusive Development- By integrating agriculture with the service sector (tourism), it fosters inclusive rural development and diversifies the regional economic base.

Strategic Boost to Floral Tourism

Extending the Tourist Season- traditionally, Kashmir's tulip season is restricted to a brief window in late March to April. Winter blooms can extend the tourism calendar into the lean winter months, reducing the seasonal concentration of tourist footfall.

Economic Multiplier- Last year, Srinagar's Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden recorded nearly 8 lakh visitors, demonstrating the massive economic potential of floral tourism. Off-season flowering stabilizes incomes for local businesses (hotels, transport, handicrafts) that usually suffer during the winter slump.

Replicable Success- This follows earlier successes with autumn chrysanthemum blooms, proving that scientific interventions can successfully diversify floral attractions year-round.

Addressing Import Dependence & Bulb Propagation

Current Challenge- Kashmir currently relies heavily on importing tulip bulbs from the Netherlands. This dependence increases input costs for farmers and leads to a significant outflow of foreign exchange.

Import Substitution (Atmanirbhar Bharat)

1. Centre of Excellence- SKUAST has established a dedicated Centre of Excellence for tulips at Sagam (South Kashmir) with technical support from the Dutch Embassy.
2. Propagation Success- Domestic bulb propagation has seen early success, with bulb numbers increasing from 1 lakh to 3-4 lakh within a single year.

Strategic Goal- Achieving self-reliance in bulb production will lower costs for local farmers and eventually position India as a bulb exporter rather than an importer.

Role of Institutions and Way Forward

Lab-to-Land Transfer- The SKUAST initiative highlights the critical role of agricultural universities in driving applied innovation. The next step is effective extension services to transfer this technology from the "experimental garden" to the "farmer's field."

Commercialization- Large-scale adoption requires the entry of agri-entrepreneurs and startups to commercialize the technology and set up controlled-environment infrastructure (polyhouses/greenhouses).

Skill Development- Training farmers in the nuances of "forcing techniques" and climate-controlled agriculture is crucial for widespread impact.

Model for Hill States- This model of integrating high-tech floriculture with tourism can be replicated in other hill states like Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand to create similar horti-tourism clusters.

Conclusion

The winter blooming of tulips in Kashmir is more than just a botanical achievement; it is a successful convergence of science, commerce, and tourism. By scaling up domestic bulb propagation and encouraging private investment in agri-tech, Kashmir can reduce its import dependence and secure its position as a global leader in floral tourism. This initiative serves as a blueprint for how climate-smart, market-aligned agriculture can revitalize regional economies.

Source- <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/kashmir-tulip-winter-bloom-skuast-floral-tourism-10523369/#~~~text=A%20breakthrough%20in%20tulip%20production,push%20to%20Kashmir's%20floral%20tourism>.