

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.

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- PM led government has abolished the tribunal that adjudicates on the constitutionality of laws relating to its powers.

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- It is in the process of eliminating principle of checks and balances by concentrating power in the hands of the president.

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- It also introduced measures to control the media.

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- It also introduced following measures to curb judicial independence.\n

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1. All judges of the Supreme Court should step down, except those whom the President chooses.

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2. Parliament to be given control over judicial appointments.

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- These moves have created dissent among the people

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- It is being opposed by President Andrzej Duda himself.

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- 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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