



SC pulls up TN Governor, sets deadline to clear bills

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Context

- The Supreme Court on Tuesday slammed Tamil Nadu Governor R.N. Ravi's conduct as "unconstitutional", criticising his prolonged inaction on 10 key Bills. The court noted that he failed to act for months before swiftly referring the Bills to the President, only after they were re-passed by the State Legislature and came under judicial scrutiny.
- The top court deemed the 10 Bills to have received assent, declaring President Droupadi Murmu's actions — assenting to only one, rejecting seven, and not considering two — to be void.
- It also **fixed time limits, of one to three months, for Governors to take action on future Bills.**
- The court said that a **Governor must be a "friend, guide and philosopher" to the State**, not a hindrance. "A Governor is envisaged as a sagacious counsellor... What unfolded in the current litigation was quite the opposite," a Bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan observed.
- Justice Pardiwala, who authored the judgment, said that Mr. Ravi had acted as a **"roadblock" by delaying action on the Bills sent to him for consent by the Assembly under Article 200 of the Constitution.**
- **Article 200** gives a **Governor three choices**:
 - 1to assent,
 - 2withhold assent, or
 - 3reserve the bills for consideration by the **President.**
- A **Governor cannot indefinitely delay exercising his or her choice**, the court said.
- "Once a Bill is presented to the Governor, he is under a **Constitutional obligation to opt for one of the three choices...** The phrase 'as soon as possible' permeates Article 200 with a sense of expediency and **does not allow Governors to sit on Bills and exercise pocket veto over them**".

On the clock

SC sets time frame for Governors, saying the phrase 'as soon as possible' permeates Article 200 with a sense of expediency

■ A Governor has a maximum of **one month** to withhold assent on the aid and advice of the State Cabinet

■ A maximum of **three months** is given to return the Bill with a message specifying reasons if the Governor withholds assent contrary to the Cabinet's advice

■ The Governor has **three months** to reserve a Bill for the President's consideration against the advice of the Cabinet

■ The Governor 'must' grant assent to a Bill re-passed by the State Legislature under Article 200 within a **maximum of one month**

