

GS PAPER 2 – POLITY- JUDICIARY**Solutions to India's judicial inefficiencies**

The article discusses solutions to India's judicial inefficiencies. It highlights court delays, staff shortages, and administrative burdens. Suggestions include measuring performance, delegating administrative tasks to retired officials, and learning from successful projects to improve case management and judicial efficiency.

What are the key issues facing the Indian judiciary?

1. Over 45 million cases are pending in subordinate courts, making up 85% of total cases.
2. District courts are burdened with poor infrastructure, such as a **21% shortage of judicial officers** and **27% shortage of non-judicial staff**. States like Bihar, Rajasthan, and Telangana have staff shortages nearing **50%**.
3. Routine tasks, like issuing summons and setting dates, take up **55% of a judicial officer's time** (as found by the Zero Pendency Courts project).
4. Half of the 90 cases listed daily in an average court get adjourned due to inefficient case-flow management.
5. Many district courts lack technology, such as video conferencing-enabled computers.

What Solutions Did Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna Propose?

Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna suggested two main improvements:

1. **Measuring Court Performance:** By categorizing judges into performance tiers like high, above average, and below average.
2. **Positive Reinforcement:** Rewarding high-performing judges to encourage better outcomes.

What past models can inspire judicial reforms?

1. **Cataract Blindness Project (1990s):**
2. **11 million surgeries** were conducted in five years across seven states.
3. Retired armed forces personnel managed logistics, allowing surgeons to focus solely on surgeries.
4. This demonstrated how delegating non-core tasks improved efficiency.
5. **Delhi Magistrates in the 1960s:**
6. Magistrates balanced judicial, revenue, and law-and-order duties while disposing of **60 warrant cases monthly**.
7. Regular performance scrutiny by the District Magistrate boosted efficiency.
8. Monthly meetings encouraged accountability and improved case disposal.
9. **Retired Officers for Administrative Tasks:**
10. Retired officers from the Controller of Accounts efficiently managed health and population-related tasks.
11. This shows that retired officials, with expertise in workflow management, can handle administrative court duties.

What are the key takeaways?

1. Administrative reforms, not structural changes, can improve judicial efficiency.
2. Collaboration between state law secretaries, court registrars, and retired officials can bring quick results.
3. The goal is to allow judges to focus on judicial work, leading to a faster, fairer justice system.

GS PAPER 3 – AGRICULTURE**Reasons behind the frustration of India's farmers and scientists**

The article criticizes the government for its lack of meaningful agricultural reforms. It highlights policy failures like nano urea, ignored farmer concerns, and a lack of trust-building. It urges the government to prioritize farmers, seek diverse ideas, and rebuild trust.

Why are India's farmers and scientists frustrated?

1. **Policy Inaction:** The government has not introduced meaningful agricultural reforms, despite its intentions, leaving issues like biotech crops and natural farming underfunded and unresolved.
2. **Failure of Nano Urea:** Farmers rejected nano urea outright. Manufacturers had to increase its nitrogen content by 400%, exposing its ineffectiveness. Agricultural universities refuse to endorse it.
3. **Unadopted Initiatives:** Out of 109 climate-resilient seed varieties launched by ICAR, scientists expect less than five to be adopted commercially.

4. **Distrust and Exploitation:** Farmers face fertilizer shortages and are forced to buy nano urea to access subsidized fertilizers, eroding trust.
5. **Ignored Feedback:** Ministers remain inaccessible to farmers and scientists, missing opportunities for innovative solutions and feedback from the ground.
6. **Political Priorities:** Focus on controlling food inflation sacrifices long-term agricultural interests for electoral gains.

What should be done?

1. The government must actively seek ideas from those outside the power structure, such as farmers and independent experts.
2. Listening to feedback can prevent policy failures.
3. Rebuilding trust with farmers is vital for reform success and long-term agricultural development.

GS PAPER 3– SECURITY-CHALLENGES TO INTERNAL SECURITY THROUGH COMMUNICATION NETWORKS, ROLE OF MEDIA AND SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES IN INTERNAL SECURITY CHALLENGES**Concerns about social media's role in democracy**

The article discusses concerns about social media's role in democracy. It highlights how platforms like X (formerly Twitter) are becoming toxic due to ownership influence, like Elon Musk's. It debates the importance of social media for news sharing, the need for moderation to reduce harm, and the value of ethical platforms and decentralized systems for better democratic communication.

What are the Concerns with Social Media Ownership?

1. **Influence on Political Discourse:** Ownership by individuals like Elon Musk raises concerns about bias. Musk uses X (formerly Twitter) as a personal tool to shape political narratives, evidenced by his posts being algorithmically amplified.
2. **Toxic Environment:** The Guardian left X, calling it "a toxic media platform." This highlights how ownership can affect the platform's overall environment.
3. **Neglect of Content Moderation:** Musk eliminated trust and safety teams on X. For instance, during Southport riots, he reposted harmful content, showing the risks of inadequate moderation.
4. **Misinformation and Hate Speech:** Platforms like X fail to moderate local content effectively. India, with its linguistic diversity, lacks adequate moderators, unlike Facebook, which performs slightly better.
5. **Centralized Control:** Monopoly ownership of platforms enables censorship and manipulation, restricting the free flow of unbiased information critical for democracy.

How Critical is Social Media for News Dissemination?

1. Social media is crucial for sharing information because it reaches millions. For example, X has about 350 million users.
2. However, the influence of a few large companies makes it easy for governments to censor information.
3. The decline in referrals from social media and search engines is changing how news is disseminated.

What Measures Should Be Taken to Reduce Social Media Toxicity?

1. **Increase Moderation Staff:** India, with its vast population and multiple languages, has one of the lowest moderator-to-population ratios. Platforms need more staff to monitor hate speech and harmful content effectively. For example, during riots in Sri Lanka, Facebook lacked local moderators and relied on staff in Hyderabad, leading to poor handling of content.
2. **AI for Harmful Content Detection:** AI systems should identify and prevent dangerous behavior. For instance, during England's Southport riots, harmful content spread unchecked on X, even reposted by Elon Musk.
3. **Develop Ethical Platforms:** Decentralized platforms like Bluesky and Mastodon offer safer alternatives, fostering healthy discussions and minimizing harmful content.
4. **Promote Media Literacy:** Schools should teach children how to analyze and verify information, reducing misinformation's impact on users.

How Can Social Media Support Democracy?

1. Social media can be beneficial for democracy when used ethically. Platforms like Facebook, with billions of users, help people connect and share information widely.

2. However, when these platforms are controlled by monopolistic entities, they can undermine democracy.

GS PAPER 3 – ENVIRONMENT**India's urgent need for an Environmental Health Regulatory Agency (EHRA)**

The article highlights India's urgent need for an Environmental Health Regulatory Agency (EHRA) to address pollution and health risks. It emphasizes integrating environmental and health data, adopting global best practices, and promoting sustainable policies for economic growth and public well-being.

What is the need for an Environmental Health Regulatory Agency (EHRA) in India?

1. India faces severe environmental health challenges due to pollution. The air, water, and soil pollutants are linked to many non-communicable diseases, affecting vulnerable groups like children and the elderly the most.
2. India's existing governance model, involving the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), lacks integration with health policies.
3. This results in poor coordination of environmental monitoring and health impact assessments.

How can an EHRA improve India's environmental and public health management?

1. **Centralized Data Integration:** An EHRA can integrate environmental and health data, enabling policymakers to address pollution and health risks effectively. Currently, there is little coordination between the CPCB, MoEFCC, and MoHFW.
2. **Learning from Global Models:** Successful frameworks like the U.S. EPA, Germany's UBA, and Japan's MOE demonstrate how integrated approaches to environment and health enhance governance. For example, the U.S. EPA links air quality control with health outcomes.
3. **Addressing Regional Variations:** Pollution and health challenges vary across regions. An EHRA could work with state and local governments to implement localized solutions.
4. **Promoting Economic Growth:** The U.S. EPA shows environmental regulation spurs innovation and green jobs. Similarly, an EHRA can support India's energy transition and sustainable practices.
5. **Public Awareness and Accountability:** By involving citizens, NGOs, and media, an EHRA can promote awareness and advocate cleaner, healthier living conditions.
6. Additionally, it would help India align with international standards and commitments like the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals.

What challenges might arise with the establishment of an EHRA, and how could they be overcome?

1. **Challenges in Establishing an EHRA**
2. **Bureaucratic Inertia:** Coordination between existing bodies like CPCB, MoEFCC, and MoHFW may face resistance due to overlapping responsibilities and lack of data sharing.
3. **Industry Resistance:** Businesses might oppose stricter regulations, fearing increased compliance costs. For instance, industries could resist pollution control measures similar to those implemented by the U.S. EPA.
4. **Operational Independence:** Ensuring the EHRA operates without political interference is critical for its effectiveness.
5. **How to Overcome Challenges**
6. **Clear Frameworks:** Establish inter-ministerial coordination with measurable objectives for accountability.
7. **Global Examples:** Learn from the EPA's success in promoting green jobs and sustainable practices while supporting economic growth.
8. **Public Involvement:** Educate and empower citizens and NGOs to advocate for cleaner environments and hold industries accountable.

HISTORY GS PAPER-I**Kanhirapoil Megalithic Site**

Megalithic carvings unearthed at Kanhirapoil, Kerala, reveal India's rich prehistoric heritage, offering insights into ancient rituals and cultural practices.

About Kanhirapoil megalithic site:

- **Discovery details:** 24 pairs of carved footprints and a human figure were found on a private property in Madikkai grama panchayat, Kasaragod, Kerala.

- **Artistic features:** Carvings include footprints of varying sizes (6–10 inches), likely representing both children and adults, with a human figure accompanied by circular pits.
- **Cultural parallels:** The findings resemble prehistoric rock art at Avalakki Pera in Udupi and other sites in Kerala, including Edakkal Caves and Erikulam Valiyapara.

About Megaliths:

- **Definition:** Megaliths are monuments made of large stones, often serving as burial sites away from settlements.
- **Chronology:**
 - Megalithic cultures in South India date from the **3rd B.C. to the 1st A.D.** as per Brahmagiri excavations.
- **Geographical spread:**
 - Found in Deccan (south of Godavari), Punjab Plains, Indo-Gangetic basin, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Burzahom in Jammu and Kashmir.
- **Iron usage:**
 - A hallmark of this period, with iron tools for agriculture and weapons discovered across sites like Junapani (Vidarbha) and Adichanallur (Tamil Nadu).
- **Cultural elements:**
 - Subsistence through agriculture, hunting, and animal husbandry; rock paintings depict hunting scenes, cattle raids, and group dances.

PRELIM FACTS

1. Salt Chimneys at Dead Sea

Researchers from the Helmholtz Centre for Environmental Research (UFZ) discovered unique salt chimneys on the Dead Sea floor, a rare geological phenomenon formed by highly saline groundwater.

About Salt Chimneys:

- **Formation:** Created by the upward flow of hypersaline brine from aquifers, leading to the crystallization of halite upon contact with Dead Sea water.
- **Characteristics:** Structures range from 1-7 meters in height with diameters of 2-3 meters. They grow rapidly, up to several centimetres per day.
- **Significance:** Serve as early indicators of sinkhole risks, highlighting areas prone to karstification and ground collapse.
- **Applications:** Potential for autonomous mapping to predict regions at risk of sinkhole formation.



About the Dead Sea:

- **Geographical Location:** A saltwater lake between Jordan, Israel, and the West Bank.
 - Found at 430.5 meters below sea level—the lowest land-based elevation on Earth.
- **Salinity:** Contains 34.2% salinity, making it one of the saltiest water bodies globally, supporting only microorganisms and algae.
- **Physical Dimensions:** Covers 605 sq. km, 50 km long, and 15 km wide at its broadest.
- **Hydrology:** Fed by the Jordan River, with no outlet, losing water mainly through evaporation.
- **Environmental Concerns:** Rapidly declining water levels (~1 meter per year) due to evaporation and restricted tributary flow, impacting regional groundwater dynamics.

2. Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI)

Recently, SECI has been linked to allegations of bribery involving the Adani Group, highlighting governance challenges in public sector operations.

- SECI has been granted the **Navratna status on 30th August 2024** by the Ministry of Finance.

About Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI):

- **Establishment:** Founded on **20th September 2011** under the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).
- **Purpose:** Facilitates implementation of the **National Solar Mission (NSM)** and other renewable energy targets.
- **CPSU for Renewables:** The only **Central Public Sector Undertaking (CPSU)** dedicated to renewable energy.
- **Mission objectives:**
 1. Lead in **large-scale solar installations, plants, and parks.**
 2. Promote solar energy use in remote areas.
 3. Deploy new technologies to harness solar energy.
- **Structure:** Initially a **not-for-profit Section-25 company** under the Companies Act, 1956; later restructured in 2015 into a **Section-3 company** under the Companies Act, 2013.
- **Mandate expansion:** Broadened to cover the entire renewable energy sector, including project development and power trading.
- **Power trading role:** Trades solar power generated under MNRE schemes.

3. The Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty

The Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty was launched at the G20 Summit 2024 in Rio de Janeiro under Brazil's presidency.

- It aims to address the **urgent global challenges of hunger and poverty** exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, economic disparities, conflicts, and climate change.

About Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty:

- **Launch:** Introduced at Brazil G20 Summit 2024.
- **Objective:** Connect countries in need with partners offering technical expertise or financial support to eradicate hunger and poverty.
- **Membership:** 81 countries (**including India**), 26 international organizations, 9 financial institutions, and 31 NGOs and philanthropic foundations.
- **Function:** Acts as a matchmaking platform for sharing proven policies, facilitating technical assistance, and mobilizing financial aid.
- **Key Initiatives (Sprints 2030):**
 1. School meals programs.
 2. Cash transfer schemes.
 3. Support for smallholder and family farming.
 4. Socio-economic inclusion initiatives.
 5. Maternal and early childhood interventions.
 6. Water access solutions.
- **Funding:** Operational costs (\$2-3 million annually) are covered by member countries and global institutions like FAO, UNICEF, and the World Bank.

4.RS-26 Rubezh

In a significant escalation of the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, Russia reportedly used a new type of intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) targeting Dnipro, Ukraine.

About RS-26 Rubezh:

- **Reported Weapon:**
 - The RS-26 Rubezh, a solid-fuelled intercontinental ballistic missile.
 - Capable of carrying **multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRVs)**.
- **Specifications:**
 - Range: **5,800 km**, classified under nuclear arms treaties as an ICBM.
 - Payload: Can carry an **800-kg nuclear warhead** or heavier conventional payloads.
- **Global Significance:**
 - First-ever reported use of an ICBM in an active conflict, primarily designed as a deterrent weapon.
 - The MIRV capability signals advanced nuclear escalation potential.

About Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM):

- **Definition:** Long-range ballistic missile primarily designed for delivering nuclear weapons.
- **Range:** Over **5,500 km**, maximum ranges between **7,000 and 16,000 km**.
- **Speed:** Exceeds **20,000 km/h**.
- **Countries with ICBMs:** Russia, United States, China, France, India, United Kingdom, Israel, North Korea.
- **India's ICBMs:**
 - **Agni V:** Solid-fuelled missile with a range of **7,000–10,000 km**.
 - **Agni VI:** Upcoming iteration with **MIRV capability** (Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Vehicles).

5. Central Value Added Tax (CENVAT)

The Supreme Court has allowed telecom companies to claim Central Value Added Tax (CENVAT) credit for the installation of mobile towers and pre-fabricated buildings (PFBs), which are subject to excise duties.

About CENVAT Credit (Central Value Added Tax Credit)

- It is a mechanism that allows manufacturers and service providers to claim tax credits on excise duty or additional duties paid on input services and input.
- This process simplifies tax and reduces burden on businesses.
- It was introduced in 2004 under **“The CENVAT Credit Rules”**.
- Its main aim was to modify the Previous system **Modified Value Added Tax, or MODVAT**.
- **Benefits**
 - **Preventional of double taxation:** Removes the cascading effect of taxes by allowing credits for taxes already paid at earlier stages.
 - **Promotes Tax compliance:** Business can claim CENVAT credit only if input supplier has paid the applicable taxes to the government.
 - **Encourages business growth:** Incentivise investment in modern technology and capital goods to improve productivity.
- **Applicability of CENVAT Credit**
 - **Excise Duty on Final Products:** For manufacturer and producer of taxable goods.
 - **Service Tax on Output Services:** For service providers offering taxable or exempted services.
 - **Inputs and Capital Goods:** Applicable for partially processed goods which is used during production.

ANSWER WRITING

Q. How can the creation of the AIJS contribute to diversifying India's judiciary and improving the merit-based recruitment process for district judges?

The All India Judicial Service (AIJS) is a proposed centralised recruitment system aimed at appointing district judges across India. Envisioned under Article 312 of the Constitution, AIJS seeks

to standardise judicial appointments, enhance diversity, thereby strengthening the judiciary's efficiency and inclusivity.

Diversifying India's Judiciary through AIJS

- Enhanced Representation of Marginalised Communities:** AIJS can implement uniform reservation policies, ensuring consistent inclusion of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, and women across states.
For instance: The **2006 Parliamentary Standing Committee** emphasised AIJS's potential to improve representation from underrepresented groups in the judiciary.
- Geographical Diversity:** Centralised recruitment allows candidates from various regions to serve nationwide, promoting a judiciary reflective of India's diverse populace.
For instance: A candidate from Kerala could be appointed in Punjab, bringing diverse perspectives to the judicial process.
- Standardised Selection Criteria:** AIJS ensures uniform eligibility and evaluation standards, reducing biases and promoting a more inclusive judiciary.
For instance: The AIJS proposal includes standardised exams and interviews, minimising regional disparities in judge selection.
- Attracting Talent from Diverse Backgrounds:** A national platform like AIJS can appeal to candidates from varied socio-economic and educational backgrounds, enriching the judiciary's diversity.
For instance: Law graduates from rural areas would have equal opportunities to enter the judiciary through AIJS.

Improving Merit-Based Recruitment for District Judges through AIJS

- Transparent Selection Process:** AIJS proposes a clear, merit-based recruitment system, reducing favouritism (**Uncle Judge Syndrome**) and **enhancing public trust** in judicial appointments.
For instance: The AIJS framework includes **objective assessments and interviews**, ensuring selections are based on merit.
- Uniform Training Standards:** Centralised recruitment facilitates standardised training programs, ensuring all judges possess **requisite skills and knowledge**.
For instance: AIJS could establish a **national judicial academy** to provide consistent training to newly appointed judges.
- Efficient Vacancy Filling:** AIJS aims to streamline recruitment, promptly addressing judicial vacancies and reducing case backlogs.
For example: AIJS's objective is to achieve the recommended ratio of **50 judges per 10 lakh population (Law Commission of India)**, currently it is **19 judges per 10 lakh population**.
- Attracting High-Caliber Candidates:** A prestigious national service like AIJS can draw talented individuals, enhancing the judiciary's overall competence.
For instance: Top law graduates may be more inclined to join the judiciary through a respected national examination system.
- Consistency in Judicial Quality:** Standardised recruitment and training under AIJS ensure uniform judicial quality across states, promoting **fairness in justice delivery**.
For instance: AIJS could implement consistent evaluation metrics, ensuring judges nationwide meet high competency standards.

By adopting best practices from global models like the United States' federal judicial appointments, AIJS can enhance judicial efficiency and inclusivity. Aligned with the objectives of the National Judicial Appointments Commission, AIJS could play a crucial role in strengthening India's justice delivery system and reducing the pendency of 4.5 crore cases, while also promoting inclusivity.

MCQ

- As per State of the World's Children Report 2024, which region is projected to host the highest proportion of the global child population by 2050?
 - a) Asia
 - b) Latin America
 - c) Europe
 - d) Africa
- Which of the following is/are valid grounds for disqualification of a Member of

Parliament or a State Legislature under the Indian Constitution?

1. Holding an office of profit under the government of India or a state government (except offices exempted by law).
2. Being of unsound mind and declared so by a competent court.
3. A person is disqualified by or under any law made by Parliament..
4. Membership in more than one political party simultaneously.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 and 3 only **b) 1, 2, and 3 only**
 c) 2, 3, and 4 only d) 1, 2, 3, and 4
3. What is the primary objective of the Central Value Added Tax (CENVAT)?

- a) To increase revenue collection for the central government
- b) To prevent double taxation and reduce cascading taxes**
- c) To incentivize foreign investments in India
- d) To replace service tax with a single indirect tax

4. Consider the following statements regarding the Waves OTT Platform:

1. It supports young content creators and National Creator Awardees.
2. It was launched by Prasar Bharati under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
3. It is supported by BharatNet for enhancing rural connectivity.

How many of the above statements is/are correct?

- a) Only one b) Only two
c) All three d) None
5. With reference to the Megalithic period, consider the following statements:

1. They had complex funeral rituals.
2. The period was characterized by the absence of pottery making.
3. They used iron tools.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- a) Only one **b) Only two**
 c) All three d) None
6. Consider the following:
1. Forest fires
 2. Vehicle exhaust

3. Burning crop residues
4. Burning candles
5. Processing of minerals

How many of the sources listed above are responsible for the emission of particulate matter (PM_{2.5})?

- a) Only two b) Only three
 c) Only four **d) All five**

7. Which one of the following best describes the primary difference between Army Tactical Missile Systems (ATACMS) and Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs)?

- a) Propulsion type
- b) Warhead capacity
- c) Range**
- d) Launch platform

8. Mulla Committee, seen in the news recently, was aimed at:

- a) Establishing a new national police force to combat crime in urban areas.
- b) Regulating the pharmaceutical industry.
- c) Reforming prison conditions and addressing overcrowding issues in Indian prisons.**
- d) Promoting tourism in rural areas.

9. Which of the following statements about Nitrous Oxide (N₂O) is/are correct?

1. N₂O is approximately 270 times more potent than carbon dioxide as a greenhouse gas.
2. Natural sources of N₂O include microbial activity in soils and oceans.
3. N₂O emissions are primarily caused by industrial processes, with negligible contribution from agriculture.
4. N₂O has a relatively short atmospheric lifetime compared to CO₂, lasting around 20 years.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 and 2 only** b) 1, 2, and 3 only
 c) 1, 3, and 4 only d) 2 and 4 only

10. The Telecommunications (Telecom Cyber Security) Rules, 2024, have been issued under which legal framework?

- a) Information Technology Act, 2000
- b) Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023
- c) Telecommunications Act, 2023**
- d) Indian Penal Code, 1860