

INDIA'S CRUSHING COURT BACKLOGS, OUT-OF-THE BOX REFORM

Context

- The Chief Justice of India (CJI) recently stated that pendency is a perennial drawback that affects the court's role as the timely protector of citizens' rights and remarked that increasing the number of judges may not demolish this problem.
- The purpose of this article is to **investigate innovative instruments, resources and approaches** that are feasible, cost-effective, and generate results in order to address the problem of backlog cases.
- A **Law Commission report** in 2009 had quoted that it would require 464 years to clear the arrears with the present strength of judges. A 2018 paper by **NITI Aayog** said it would take more than 324 years to clear the backlog.

Court	Pendency in 2019	Pendency in 2020	Pendency in 2021	Pendency in 2022
Supreme Court	59,535 (as on December 2019)	64,426 (as on December 2020)	69,855 (as on December 2021)	70,154 (as on March 2022)
High Courts	46,84,354 (as on December 2019)	56,42,567 (as on December 2020)	56,49,068 (as on December 2021)	58,90,726 (as on March 2022)
District & Subordinate Courts	3,22,96,224 (as on December 2019)	3,66,39,436 (as on December 2020)	4,05,79,062 (as on December 2020)	4,09,85,490 (as on March 2022)

Reasons for high court pendency

- **Government, the biggest litigant:** The Centre and state governments are party to 46% of the pending cases in judiciary.
- **Volume of appeals from lower courts:** Almost 40% of the working days of SC judges are consumed in determining admission of SLPs and as much as 90% of those SLPs are rejected, leading to mammoth time wastage of SC.
- **Judge strength:** As of 2021, India had 21.03 judges per million people compared to the UK with 51 and the US with 107 judges per million, leading to poor case disposal.

- **Administrative burden:** The Indian judges spend majority time in scheduling hearings, deciding admission and reviewing docket/listing completion unlike in developed countries where administrative tasks of courts are supported by an external agency.
 - Thus, minimum time is spared to perform the core task of handling cases and delivering judgments.
- **Poor afresh talent:** As large numbers of experienced judges retiring from the High Courts, finding good talent for making new appointments is becoming difficult.

Earlier steps taken to reduce pendency

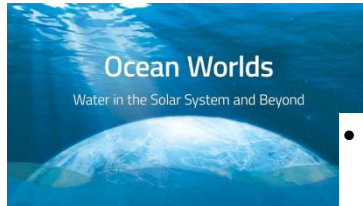
- **Policy formulation:** Adoption of “**National Litigation Policy 2010**” to transform government into an Efficient and Responsible litigant. All states formulated state litigation policies after National Litigation Policy 2010.
- **Legal Information Management and Briefing System (LIMBS):** It was created in 2015 with the objective of tracking cases to which the government is a party.
- **Concept of Plea Bargaining:** It was inserted as a new chapter in Criminal Procedure Code, 1973.
 - Plea Bargaining means a pre-negotiation between the accused and the prosecution where the accused pleads guilty in exchange for certain concession by the prosecution.
 - Its main objective is to reduce the time in criminal trail and give the accused a lesser punishment and helps in fast disposal of cases.
- **Alternate dispute resolution (ADR):** The Legal Services Authorities undertake pre-litigation mediation so that the inflow of cases into courts can be regulated. E.g., Lok Adalat for settling civil and family matter, Gram Nyayalayas, etc.

Conclusion

- Conventional reform prescribes more judges, more courts, more staff and more infrastructure. However, all these need resources of either money or manpower, both of which we lack.
- As a result, the aforementioned **innovative reforms provide a remarkably distinct method that gathers and best utilizes available resources**, both technological and personal, and can have a significant influence.

WATER WORLDS

Recently scientists have discovered two water worlds which are 218 lights years away from the earth.



About:

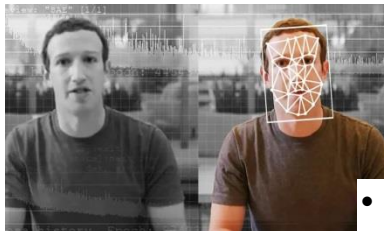
- Two alien planets about 218 light years away from Earth have found a twin in the ocean worlds of Europa and Enceladus- moons orbiting Jupiter and Saturn.

Key findings

- The exoplanets, **Kepler-138 c** and **Kepler-138 d**, are likely water worlds a feature that scientists have theorised for a long time.
- These twin planets of the same size and mass are more massive than Earth but lighter than ice giants Uranus and Neptune.
- They are different from the planets in our solar system, which is chiefly composed of rocky planets like Earth and gas giants like Jupiter.
- The Kepler- 138 c and d are made up of ingredients lighter than rock (rocky planets like Earth) but heavier than hydrogen or helium (gas-giant planets like Jupiter).
- The new planet takes **38 days to complete an orbit.**
- It is in the habitable zone, meaning it is located in an orbit that receives just the right amount of heat from its star to allow water to exist in a liquid form.

DEEPPAKES

China recently issued new guidelines to companies and platforms using the deep synthesis technology.



About Deepfakes:

- Deepfakes are a compilation of artificial images and audio

put together with machine-learning algorithms to spread misinformation and replace a real person's appearance, voice, or both with similar artificial likenesses or voices.

- It can create people who do not exist and it can fake real people saying and doing things they did not say or do.
- The term deepfake originated in 2017, when an anonymous Reddit user called himself "Deepfakes".
- This user manipulated Google's open-source, deep-learning technology to create and post pornographic videos.
- The videos were doctored with a technique known as face-swapping.
- The user "Deepfakes" replaced real faces with celebrity faces.
- Deepfake technology is now being used for nefarious purposes like scams and hoaxes, celebrity pornography, election manipulation, social engineering, automated disinformation attacks, identity theft and financial fraud, cybersecurity company Norton said in a blog.
- Deepfake technology has been used to impersonate former U.S. Presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Facebook chief Mark Zuckerberg and Hollywood celebrity Tom Cruise.

INS MORMUGAO

The Indian Naval Ship (INS) Mormugao, the second warship of the P15B class destroyer ship was recently commissioned.



About INS Mormugao:

- INS Mormugao is named after the historic port city of Goa on the west coast.
- INS Mormugao is the second of the four 'Visakhapatnam' class destroyers, indigenously designed by the Indian Navy's in-house organization Warship Design Bureau and constructed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL), Mumbai

Features:

- INS Mormugao is equipped with Anti-Submarine Warfare capabilities which are provided by indigenously-developed Rocket Launchers, Torpedo Launchers, and ASW helicopters.
- The ship is equipped to fight under **Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical warfare**
- The ship's firepower consists of vertically launched **Barak-8 surface-to-air missiles and BrahMos surface-to-surface cruise** missiles for long-range engagement of shore- and sea-based targets.
- The Visakhapatnam class destroyers have multiple fire zones, battle damage control systems, and distributional power systems for improved survivability and reliability in extreme operational and conflict scenarios.
- They have a **total atmospheric control system (TACS)** that offers protection to the crew from chemical, biological, and nuclear threats, as well as a state-of-the-art combat management system that can evaluate threats using analytical tools and create a tactical picture that includes available resources on board.
- The warships have a secure network for data from its sensors and weapons systems.
- The destroyer will also be armed with indigenously developed 533 mm torpedo launchers and RBU-6000 anti-submarine rocket launchers.
- It can operate two multi-role helicopters — **Sea King or HAL Dhruv**.
- The ship also has rail-less helicopter traversing, and a hangar facility.
- The propulsion system allows the ship to reach a maximum speed of 30 knots (55 km/h), and a maximum range of 4,000 nautical miles (7,400 km).

India's journey of the Destroyer Construction Programme:

- India's indigenous Destroyer construction programme started **in the 1990s with the three Delhi class (P-15 class) warships**, namely INS Delhi, INS Mysore, and INS Mumbai and this was **followed by three Kolkata class (P-15A) destroyers**.
- Three guided missile destroyers of the Kolkata class — INS Kolkata, INS Kochi, and INS Chennai — under the project codenamed 15A.
- Presently, under the **P-15B (Visakhapatnam Class)**, a total of four warships (**Visakhapatnam, Mormugao, Imphal, Surat**) were planned and Visakhapatnam and Mormugao are already commissioned in the Indian Navy.

GOA LIBERATION DAY

December 19 is celebrated as Goa Liberation Day.



About:

- The day is celebrated annually to mark the success of ‘Operation Vijay’ undertaken by the Indian armed forces to defeat Portuguese colonial forces and liberate Goa in 1961.

Operation Vijay:

- Operation Vijay - a 36-hour military operation (started on December 18, 1961 and concluded on December 19, 1961), was about the liberation of the Portuguese territories of Goa, Daman and Diu.
- This was possibly the Indian armed forces' first tri-service operation.
- The Indian Air Force bombed the Portuguese airbase at Dabolim while the army advanced from the north and east into Goa.
- The Indian Navy was tasked with preventing hostile action by Portuguese warships, securing access to Mormugao harbour, and securing the Anjadip Island off the coast of Karwar.
- By the evening of December 19, 1961, Portuguese Governor General Vassalo De Silva had signed the surrender document after Indian armed forces (led by the army and backed by the air force and navy) had outnumbered and outgunned the Portuguese.

Statehood to Goa after its liberation:

- As a result, Goa was brought under the control of the Indian government and became a part of the Indian Union as the Union Territory of Goa, Daman and Diu.
- However, in 1967, a plebiscite was held to determine whether or not the state should merge with Maharashtra and the majority of Goans voted against a merger.
- It remained a Union Territory until 1987, when it was granted statehood. Goa became India's 25th state, while Daman and Diu remained a Union Territory.

World Cup 2022

Argentina won its third World Cup title by beating France 4-2 in a penalty shootout.



About:

- The Football World Cup is an international soccer tournament held every four years to determine the best national soccer team in the world.
- The first official World Cup was played in Uruguay 1930.
- The tournament is the first to be held in the Arab world and only the second to take place in Asia, after Japan and South Korea joint-hosted the event in 2002.
- This edition will be the last to feature just 32 teams, with the tournament being expanded from 2026 inwards in order to feature 48 nations.
- 2026 World cup edition will be hosted by 16 cities in three North American countries: Canada, Mexico and the United States.
- The winner of the FIFA World Cup 2022 will take home \$42 million, which is Rs 3.47 billion in prize money. The runner-up is likely to get \$30 million, which is Rs 2.48 billion.

[NORTHEAST IS NOT LAST PART OF COUNTRY BUT GATEWAY FOR TRADE AND TIES: PM MODI \[NORTH EAST COUNCIL MEETING\]](#)

In News:

- Recently, PM Modi attended the Golden Jubilee celebration of the North Eastern Council (NEC) at Shillong.
- He also addressed an official meeting of the NEC as well as a public meeting on this occasion.
- The Prime Minister also inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of multiple projects worth over ₹2,450 crore.
- These include an integrated beekeeping development centre and 21 Hindi libraries for Mizoram, Manipur, Tripura and Assam.

North Eastern Council (NEC)

- North Eastern Council (NEC) was established by an Act of the Parliament in 1971.
- It was formally inaugurated on 7th November, 1972 at Shillong, and has completed 50 years in November 2022.
- This Council is the nodal agency for the economic and social development of the North Eastern Region (NER)
- NER consists of the eight States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura.
- Since its establishment, NEC has been instrumental in setting in motion a new economic endeavour aimed at removing the basic handicaps that stood in the way of normal development of the region.

News Summary

Key highlights of the speech delivered by PM Modi

- **Red card to challenges in the Northeast region**
- The government has shown the red card to challenges in the Northeast region, including corruption, political nepotism and unrest.
- In football, a red card is shown by a referee to signify that a player must be sent off.
- Border areas in Northeast India are not the last miles of the country. Instead, they are India's main pillars.
- Northeast is the peace and development gateway for trade and other ties with Southeast Asian countries.
- The government is working on developing the border villages, like the Vibrant Border Village project.
- **Act fast for northeast' and 'Act first for northeast'**
- The Centre has been investing heavily in the north-east with the government's motto being 'Act fast for northeast' and 'Act first for northeast'.

- The Centre is spending ₹7 lakh crore in the region compared to ₹2 lakh crore after India's independence.
 - **Infrastructural development**
 - The number of airports in the region increased from nine to 16 and the number of flights increased from 900 to 1,900 in the last eight years.
 - Work is now under way to connect all the State capitals of the region by railway.
 - PM underscored the 50% increase in the length of national highways in the region since 2014.
 - The infrastructure projects in the north-east gained momentum after the launch of the **PM-DevINE scheme**.
 - **Improved digital connectivity**
 - The government has been working on improving digital connectivity in the north-east by increasing the optical fibre network with 6,000 mobile towers being set up at a cost of ₹5,000 crore.
 - The Atmanirbhar 5G infrastructure will help develop the start-up ecosystem and service sector in the region.
 - **Peace and security**
 - Several peace initiatives in the north-east include peace agreements with extremist groups and resolving decades old interstate boundary disputes.
 - The north-east has moved from violence and conflicts in the last eight years to an era of peace and progress.
 - Since 2014, extremism in the region has decreased by 74% while attacks on security forces have come down by 60% and civilian deaths decreased by 89%.
- PM-DevINE scheme**
- The Union Cabinet, in October 2022, approved a new Scheme, Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East Region (PM-DevINE) for the remaining four years of the 15th Finance Commission from 2022-23 to 2025-26.
 - It was announced in the Union Budget 2022-23 to address development gaps in the North Eastern Region (NER).



CROSS & CLIMB ROHTAK



- It is a Central Sector Scheme with 100% Central funding and will be implemented by Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER).
 - It will provide support to infrastructure (in the spirit of PM Gati Shakti), support industries and social development projects which may be larger in size and will also provide an end-to-end development solution instead of isolated projects.
 - It will create livelihood activities for youth and women, thus leading to employment generation.
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